

the amount paid by the public to keep such persons in motion ; and it is almost money wasted. For while Paxton is sending a man to Lowell, Lowell may be sending one to his cousin in Fitchburg, and Fitchburg sending another to Paxton. With a milder law,—if, for instance, citizenship, and three or four years' residence gave a "settlement," such difficulties would be much reduced, and the whole system be made more simple, and therefore cheaper.

I know how hard it will be to persuade the Legislature to interfere with the "Law of Settlement." I know it is a statute of great antiquity. But I do not hesitate to say that, till it is amended, humanity and economy are alike impossible, in the distribution of our magnificent, our more than princely public charities. And I must say, that because it is so ancient, it is quite time that it were adapted to the circumstances arising in the last quarter century.

It was made for a State, of native-born population. It was fair that a town which had reared a man should support him in his age, unless he had lived long elsewhere. There were very few persons in Massachusetts, not born in Massachusetts. And it was but seldom that there was need for a man to move from one town to another, except to reside there for life.

But now we have created a manufacturing interest. Its exigencies vacillate. For their purposes we have made movement easy. If needed at Lawrence, 2000 masons and builders can *débouch* upon Lawrence, and do their work there. We want them to do so. Our prosperity depends on this facility. How idle, then, to retain that arrangement of law, which treats men who for seven, eight or nine years, have established a residence in a town, so created, as if they were *vagrants* there !

Again :—our population is no longer native born. A tenth part of it, probably more, is foreign. Yet the presence of that population is an immense benefit to the towns where it is found. True, the new-comers may be a burden on the towns which have them. But in three or four years, the worth of such persons to a town is as great as it will ever be. And it is but fair that such residents should, in case of necessity, be a charge to the town which they have worked in, and have enriched.

The fairest system of settlement in matters of pauperism, would be, to say that that town should care for a pauper emigrant, in which he had lived the longest since he was of age. But if this seem too complicated, a system, such as I will now give a sketch of, of less detail, will answer our general purposes.