

free school, in which reading and writing could be taught; and every town where there were one hundred families should keep a school where youth could be prepared in Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, for the College or University, which in 1638 had been established by the same authority at Cambridge. In 1656 and 1672 the colonies of Connecticut and New Haven enacted similar laws, and from this time the system spread with the extending population of that part of America until it became one of its settled and prominent characteristics, and has so continued to the present day.' "

"The following extracts from the Annual School Reports of 1847 and 1848, prepared by the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, deserve special attention, as well for the beauty of their language as for the nobleness of the sentiments which they express:

" 'The present year (1847) completes the second century since the Free schools of Massachusetts were first established. In 1647, when a few scattered and feeble settlements, almost buried in the depths of the forests, were all that constituted the colony of Massachusetts; when the entire population consisted of twenty-one thousand souls; when the external means of the people were small, the dwellings humble, and their raiment and subsistence scanty and homely; when the whole valuation of all the colonial estates, both public and private, would hardly equal the inventory of many a private individual at the present day; when the fierce eye of the savage was nightly seen glaring from the edge of the surrounding wilderness, and no defence or succour was at hand: it was then, amid all these privations and dangers, that the pilgrim Fathers conceived the magnificent idea of a free and universal education for the people; and, amid all their poverty, they stinted themselves to a still scantier pittance; amid all their toils, they imposed upon themselves still more burdensome labours; amid all their perils, they braved still greater dangers, that they might find the time and the means to reduce their grand conception to practice. Two divine ideas filled their great hearts,—their duty to God and to posterity. For the one, they built the Church; for the other, they opened the School. Religion and Knowledge'—two attributes of the same glorious and eternal truth,—and that

truth, the only one on which immortal or mortal happiness can be securely founded.

" 'As an innovation upon all pre-existing policy and usages, the establishment of Free Schools was the boldest ever promulgated since the commencement of the Christian era. As a theory, it could have been refuted and silenced by a more formidable array of argument and experience than was ever marshalled against any other opinion of human origin. But time has ratified its soundness. Two centuries now proclaim it to be as wise as it was courageous, as beneficent as it was disinterested. It was one of those grand mental and moral experiments whose effects cannot be determined in a single generation. But now, according to the manner in which human life is completed, we are the sixth generation from its founders, and have we not reason to be grateful both to God and man for its unnumbered blessings? The sincerity of our gratitude must be tested by our efforts to perpetuate and improve what they established.'—(Tenth Annual Report to the Board of Education, for 1847, pp. 107, 108)

" 2. The second ground on which I commend this system of supporting Common Schools to your favorable consideration, is its cheapness to parents educating their children. I will select the example of one district, rather better than an average specimen; and the same mode of reasoning will apply to every district in Upper Canada, and with the same results. In one district there were reported 200 schools in operation in 1848; the average time of keeping open the schools was eight months; the average salaries of teachers was £45 7s. 1d.; the total amount of the money available for the teachers' salaries, including the legislative grant, council assessment and rate-bills, was £7,401 18s. 4½d.; the whole number of pupils between the ages of five and sixteen years on the School registers, was 9,147; the total number of children between those ages resident in the district, 20,600; cost per pupil for eight months, about sixteen shilling. Here it will be seen that more than one-half of the children of school age in the district were not attending any school. Now, suppose the schools be kept open the whole year, instead of two-thirds of it; suppose the male and female teachers to be equal in number, and the sala-