

No. II.

SIR,—I now proceed to the consideration of the administrative machinery by which the work of common school education is to be carried on. And first of that part which belongs to the Municipal Corporations. These Corporations should be constituted independent authorities, in all matters connected with the local management of schools, by virtue of the fiscal school jurisdiction which they exercise. As the members of a Municipal Council are elected by the suffrages of a municipality to protect and promote its general interests; its power ought therefore to be supreme within the municipality in every act of assessment and expenditure for local purposes. And so it was previous to the Common School Act of 1850. That Act created an *imperium in imperio*. It constituted a Municipal Board of School Trustees in each municipality independent of the Municipal Council, and invested it with a fiscal power, by which it has been enabled to control the Council in some of its most particular and necessary functions. That Act was predicated on the assumption that a Municipal Council was too cautious, about hazarding a large expenditure, where there was no certainty of the results; and the object was to overrule the disposition of the Council, by compelling the Council to do what it did not want to do, and what was considered at the time, and has been too truthfully verified since, was an extravagant and useless expenditure of public funds. But pray, why, was this anomaly grafted on our municipal system of local self-government? What right had the School Law thus to step in and violate the essential principle of the Municipal Law in force prior to the Act of 1849? The answer is supplied in Dr. Ryerson's Report for 1850, at page 18, where we are told, this arrangement is the same as that existing in the cities and towns of the United States, and that it has worked most efficiently in these cities and towns. Now, any one who knows anything of United States School Reports cannot help knowing that the measure of common school excellence, as of everything else, is determined by the number of dollars which it can realize. The Municipal Councils in the United States, if they had been left to their own independent action, would never have made the school fund sufficiently imposing, and, therefore, never could have secured for the schools the only feature calculated to make them harmonize with the pecuniary public sentiment. We all know that the chief feature of the United

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