

paraged among the little body of their constituents ; they will have the schools as numerous as they can afford, that none of the children may be kept from them by distance ; and the people themselves, feeling they have thus paid for the instruction, are sure to claim the benefit of their own sacrifices by sending their children to get it. Popular education has thus long been the most important subject that occupies and agitates the little villages and neighbourhoods of New-England ; and this stir, this interest, this excitement about it, constitute a more watchful superintendence, and produce a more sagacious adaptation of the means to the end, than could result from any apparatus devised for the purpose by the government, or any other interference of the constituted authorities of the state. One of the most important effects then of the New-England system of Free-schools is, that it has developed this strong popular interest, and made it an effectual agent in popular education.

Another indirect, but more obvious benefit arising from this system is, that it gives an upward tendency to the whole population. It gives the first means of intellectual culture to all, and, with the use of these means, there comes inevitably, in more ingenuous minds, the desire to rise. It is true, the state does little more than give this first impulse and opportunity ; but the people, sometimes with, and sometimes without the assistance of the state, create everywhere the rest for themselves. New-England, besides eleven *colleges*, which are chartered institutions offering the best education America yet affords, possesses not less than one hundred and fifty chartered *academies* ; a sort of gymnasias between free-schools and the colleges, often founded or assisted in their foundation by the state, from which few young men of promise are excluded, and where they receive, certainly not a thorough classical or scientific training, but still one that fits them to be efficient, practical men in the concerns of the world. In this way many are led onward step by step, almost without being aware of it, from the Free-schools, through the academies, the colleges and the studies of a profession, until at last they find themselves suddenly standing, they hardly know how, on the very threshold of life, and entering the most important places in society. The benefits arising from this effect of the Free-schools of New-England are undoubtedly more wide and important than could have been anticipated, and are every day increasing. Many persons in that country are now distinguished in the learned professions, and in the management of the state, who, but for the means offered them in the Free-schools of their native villages, would never have emerged from the humble condition in which they were born.

The last benefit of this system, which is becoming every day more and more perceptible, is that it is certainly the safest, and perhaps the only safe foundation on which to trust the popular institutions of the country. In a government where the people hold *practically* the sovereign power, and where they meet repeatedly every year in their small communities to exercise that power in matters of moment ; where the most important offices in the state are filled *annually* by *universal* suffrage, and where the very elements and action of the constitution are, from time to time, submitted to the same test, it is plain there can be no ultimate security for liberty or property, so deep or so effectual, as a universal education, which shall cultivate the moral sense of the whole people, and, by instructing them in their own rights, make them wise enough to respect the rights of others. Such an education is to be supported by law, on the same principle on which the administration of justice is supported by it ; and