

chosen people of God, should bequeath to their immediate posterity such a philosophical spirit as must precede the organization by the whole people of a system of secular education acceptable to all, and accompanied by the social and political equality of religious sects such as no other civilized community has yet achieved—this certainly is a problem well worthy of the study of every reflecting mind. To attribute this national characteristic to the voluntary system, would be an anachronism, as that is of comparatively modern date in New England; besides that the dependence of the ministers on their flocks, by transferring ecclesiastical power to the multitude, only gives to their bigotry, if they be ignorant, a more dangerous sway. So, also, of universal suffrage; by investing the million with political power, it renders the average amount of their enlightenment the measure of the liberty enjoyed by those who entertain religious opinions disapproved of by the majority. Of the natural effects of such power, and the homage paid to it by the higher classes, even where the political institutions are only partially democratic, we have abundant exemplification in Europe, where the educated of the laity and clergy, in spite of their comparative independence of the popular will, defer outwardly to many theological notions of the vulgar with which they have often no real sympathy.

To account for the toleration prevailing in New England and the states chiefly peopled from thence, we must refer to a combination of many favorable circumstances, some of them of ancient date, and derived from the times of the first Puritan settlers. To these I shall have many opportunities of alluding in the sequel; but I shall mention now a more modern cause, the effect of which was brought vividly before my mind, in conversations with several lawyers of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, whom I fell in with on this tour. I mean the reaction against the extreme Calvinism of the church first established in this part of America, a movement which has had a powerful tendency to subdue and mitigate sectarian bitterness. In order to give me some idea of the length to which the old Calvinistic doctrines were instilled into the infant mind, one of my companions presented me with a curious poem, called the "Day of Doom,"