

of New England at this moment. Of the free schools which they have founded, and the plan of education adopted by them for children of all sects and stations in society, they feel justly proud, for it is the most original thing which America has yet produced. The causes of their extraordinary success and recent progress, well deserve more attention than they have usually received from foreigners, especially as it seems singular at first sight, and almost paradoxical, that a commonwealth founded by the Puritans, whom we are accustomed to regard as the enemies of polite literature and science, should now take so prominent a lead as the patrons of both; or that a sect which was so prone to bibliolatry that they took their pattern and model of civil government, and even their judicial code, from the Old Testament, who carried their theory of the union of Church and State so far as to refuse the civil franchise to all who were not in full communion with their Church, and who persecuted for a time some non-conformists, even to the death, should nevertheless have set an example to the world of religious toleration, and have been the first to establish schools for popular education open to the children of all denominations—Romanist, Protestant, and Jew.

If any one entertains a doubt that the peculiar character stamped upon the present generation of New Englanders, in relation to religious and political affairs, is derived directly and indisputably from their Puritan ancestors, let them refer to the history of Massachusetts. According to the calculation of Bancroft, the first Puritan settlers of New England are the parents of one-third of the whole white population of the United States. Within the first fifteen years (and there never was afterward any considerable increase from England) there came over 21,200 persons, or 4000 families. Their descendants, he says, are now (1840) not far from 4,000,000. Each family has multiplied on the average to 1000 souls, and they have carried to New York and Ohio, where they constitute half the population, the Puritan system of free schools, which they established from the beginning. When we recollect that the population of all England is computed to have scarcely exceeded five millions when the chief body of the Puritans first emigrated to the New World, we