

before in any country in the world. This consists not so much in the absence of pauperism, or in the individual liberty enjoyed by every one in civil and religious rights, but in the absence of the influence of family and fortune—the fair field of competition, freely open to all who aspire, however humble, to rise one day to high employments, especially to official or professional posts, whether lay or ecclesiastical, civil or military, requiring early cultivation. Few will realize their ambitious longings; but every parent feels it a duty to provide that his child should not be shut out from all chance of winning some one of the numerous prizes, which are awarded solely on the ground of personal qualifications, not always to the most worthy, but at least without any regard to birth or hereditary wealth. It seems difficult to foresee the limit of taxation which a population, usually very intolerant of direct taxes, will not impose on themselves to secure an object in which they have all so great a stake, nor does any serious obstacle or influence seem likely to oppose their will. There is in no state, for example, any dominant ecclesiastical body sufficiently powerful to thwart the maxims of those statesmen who maintain that, as the people are determined to govern themselves, they must be carefully taught and fitted for self-government, and receive secular instruction in common schools open to all. The Roman Catholic priests, it is true, in the state of New York, where there are now 11,000 schools in a population of two millions and a half, have made some vigorous efforts to get the exclusive management of a portion of the school funds into their own hands, and one, at least, of the Protestant sects has openly avowed its sympathy in the movement. But they have failed from the extreme difficulty of organizing a combined effort, where the leaders of a great variety of rival denominations are jealous of one another; and, fortunately, the clergy are becoming more and more convinced that, where the education of the million has been carried farthest, the people are most regular in their attendance on public worship, most zealous in the defense of their theological opinions, and most liberal in contributing funds for the support of their pastors and the building of churches.