

XXXVI

PROGRESS IN CIVILIZATION BETWEEN 1800 AND 1860 (Continued)

We must educate or we must perish.—*Daniel Webster.*

222. The Education of the Masses.—We learned (p. 183) that by 1800 the education of the masses had made little headway. The statesmen of that time, however, saw clearly that a system of free schools was necessary. They were giving the common people the right to vote, and they understood that an ignorant voter is a dangerous person, and that where the people rule it is as necessary to have free schools as it is to have armies and navies.

At an early date, therefore, it became the policy of many States to provide for the education of children free of charge. New England had always had an excellent system of private schools, and for that reason public schools in this section were somewhat late in coming to the front. About 1837, however, Horace Mann began to draw the attention of the people of New England to the importance of education. Mann loved learning with all his heart and loved it for itself. When a boy of fifteen he had so much respect and veneration for a book that he would, he said, as soon stick a pin into his own flesh as into the pages of a book. This great educational leader went up and down in Massachusetts, and in the other States of New England, and urged the people to spend more money on their schools, to employ better-trained teachers, and to build better school-houses. Mann's efforts were for the most part successful, and by 1860 there was a well-organized system of free schools in every New England State.

The Middle and Southern States were quick to see the im-