

of the most wealthy, but to the orphan she has denied the boon of education.

In a community like that in which we live, where public opinion is divided and sub-divided on almost every subject, it is not to be expected that the best organised system of education would meet the approbation of every individual. In this respect, the system of Maryland has shared the fate of those of other States. Long since has the voice of complaint been heard against our public schools; not, indeed, against the system itself, but against the manner in which it has been conducted in certain localities of the State. Thousands of our fellow-citizens, seeing on the one hand that their complaints were disregarded, and on the other, that the system presented features repugnant to their feelings as christians and as men, have gone out from our midst, and have established schools for the education of their own children. Though they pay their taxes for the support of the public schools, they spurn to participate in the advantages they bestow, so long as these advantages can only be reached at the sacrifice of other and higher obligations, which they owe to their children; and with a zeal worthy of the cause of education they have voluntarily imposed upon themselves an additional tax, for the support of their own schools. In the city of Baltimore alone, these schools, known as "free schools," exceed thirty in number, and in their praise it may be said, that though they have been established and are supported by private munificence, without having received a single dollar from the municipal authority, they will compare in efficiency with any class of schools in the city. They are conducted on principles similar to those of the public schools, their doors are thrown open to the public, thousands of our children are gratuitously taught in the various branches of useful science and instructed in the principles of morality; they are conferring upon the community inestimable blessings, and even the State at large is reaping from their labors a golden harvest; and here the great question arises, should not these schools be recognised by the State in the distribution of her favors?

The solution of this question involves principles of grave importance, not only to the people of Maryland, but to every citizen of this free and happy land. If we turn to the annals of the past, we find the philosophers and statesman of every age, from the dawn of civilization to the present time have been engaged in the solution of this great question:—*How shall the reins of government be directed that the commonwealth may avoid the vortex of anarchy and violence, how shall the institutions of the society be moulded in order to give solidity and perpetuity to State, vigor and energy to the government and happiness to the people.*—At length the grand secret was discovered, and with a unanimous voice, it was proclaimed that the solution of the great problem lay in the education of the people. But time and experience have