

1853. The School was established for "all time," and not as an experiment. The cost of buildings, &c., was twenty-seven thousand dollars. It is partly supported from the income of a fund derived from the sale of certain salt-spring lands, and partly by direct appropriations from the State Treasury. The fund is now about sixty thousand dollars. It will eventually reach, as is estimated, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The whole number of pupils instructed, to the present time, is about six hundred; The number now in the school, two hundred.

The Provincial Normal School, at Toronto, Canada West, is one of the most liberally endowed and successful on this continent. It was established by an Act of Parliament, in 1846, and was opened in the old government house, in 1847. In 1852, buildings were erected for the school and for the offices of the Department of Public Instruction, at a cost, including grounds, furniture, and apparatus, of one hundred thousand dollars.

#### THE FRENCH SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION.

"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind," says Aristotle, "have been convinced that *the fate of Empires depends on the education of youth*," and that sentiment has been re-echoed in the poetical expression of Johnson, "that a blighted spring makes a barren year, and the vernal flowers, however beautiful and gay, are only intended by nature as preparatives to autumnal fruit." How peculiarly applicable are the opinions of these two literary sages to the early political history of that country whose educational system we are about to investigate. My purpose in doing so is merely to give a simple statement of the really vast efforts which France is making to educate her people, of the truly great machinery employed, and of that minutely considered system of National Education which rivals, in its comprehensiveness, efficiency, liberality, and completeness of detail, even those noble exertions which Germany, Prussia, and the Swiss states are making for the instruction, promotion, and well being of their inhabitants. Whether the methods employed by France or any of these different countries in carrying out their grand design are applicable to this country, it is not my province to determine. My object being simply to show how different countries, with different degrees of political freedom, and different political constitutions, whose people profess different religious tenets; where democratic governments legislate, and constitutional governments rule; where Jews and Christians commingle; have all contrived to surmount difficulties of greater magnitude than those which stand in our path, and have all united into one body for the accomplishment of a praiseworthy object—namely, the education of the poor. Charlemagne was created sole Emperor of France in 772. In him were united the talents of the warrior, the genius of the legislator, and the magnanimity necessary to form a great politician—born amidst the gloom of barbarism, and savage ignorance, he poured around him a stream of light and glory. Then in France the knowledge of letters was confined exclusively to a few ecclesiastics. Charlemagne, in order to promote science and literature, invited into France men eminent in these departments, from Italy and the British Isles, which in the dark ages were the repositories of the light of learning. *Neque enim silenda laus Britanniae, Scotiae, et Hiberniae, quae studio liberalium artium eo tempore antecellebant reliquis occidentalibus regnis; et cura praesertim monachorum, qui literarum gloriam sibi aut languentem aut depressam, in iis regionibus impigre suscitarent atque uebantur.*

From the death of Charlemagne in 814, till the accession of Louis 15th in 1715, is included the Augustan age of French literature. Since then France has been rent asunder by a Revolution, the developments of which produced the greatest revolutionary storm that ever has been presented in the annals of the world. Since then have flourished the sensational Helvetius, the canting, ultra-transcendental Rousseau, the atheistical Diderot, and others, whose infidel writings inculcated doctrines which were capable not only of destroying all distinction between virtue and vice, but even of shaking to its very centre the entire fabric of the French Empire. Still France was destitute of a system of national education, destitute of that bulwark which may be characterized as chivalry was by Burke "the cheap defence of nations." The master-mind of Napoleon I. saw the necessity and importance of providing for the education of the people, and accordingly he promulgated many laws calculated to enlighten and improve them.

His stormy career, varying fortunes, and short intervals of peace, however, prevented the full realization of his grave designs for the attainment of this desirable object. His overthrow terminated his educational exertions. The government ceased to interest themselves in the matter, and thus affairs stood till the revolution of July convinced French statesmen that something else besides the organization of armies was wanted for the safety and preservation of the Empire. It was not, however, till 1833 when M. Guizot was Minister of Public Instruction, that a comprehensive plan of education was framed, whereby the character and condition of the French nation was to be developed. The chambers now determined upon the extension of education throughout every department and commune of the country. "Differ-

ence of religious opinion," here, as elsewhere, presented itself, but that rock on which so many darling schemes have split, was carefully avoided, and judiciously shunned by that legislative council, not by evasion, desertion, or compromise, but by the great broad principles of liberality and justice. Deeming it absolutely necessary that popular instruction should not be confined to the development of the intelligence, but that it should embrace the whole soul, that it should awaken, strengthen, and elevate the conscience, that body found that *religious instruction* must therefore form an indispensable ingredient in their projected system. Believing that religious principles are the only power that ever have or ever will successfully combat the seductions of passion, we find in the statute of April 25th, 1834, these words upon the elementary schools:—"In all the divisions the moral and religious instructions shall rank first. Prayers shall commence and close all the classes. Some verses of Holy Scripture shall be learned every day. On Sundays and Fast-days the scholars shall be conducted to Divine service. The reading books, the writing copies, the discourses and exhortations of the teacher shall tend continually to penetrate the soul of the scholars with the feelings and principles which are the safeguards of morality, and which are proper to inspire the fear and love of God." And again in a letter which M. Guizot addressed to the teachers of France, he says, "Among the objects of instruction, there is one which demands of me particular notice; or rather it is the law itself which, by placing it at the head of all others, has committed it more especially to our zeal; I refer to MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION. Your labours in this respect ought to be both direct and sometimes indirect." I should not have dwelt on this part of my subject for such a length of time, notwithstanding its primary importance, had not the selfishness of French Jesuits undeservedly taunted with IRRELIGION this magnanimous, liberal, and excellent scheme; or had not the cries that of sect found an echo in the mouths of English Protestants.

In France, as in England, a parent is at perfect liberty to train up his children in virtue or in vice just as it pleases him, and herein perhaps their system is at fault, for in my opinion it is the duty of the State to take care that no child is educated from its earliest years in *immorality*. If a selfish man for the sake of "filthy lucre" deprives his children of all intellectual and moral culture, or if an immoral or even careless parent rears immoral children who ultimately contribute their share to the pollution of the social system, is it not the imperative duty of the State to interpose its intelligence and authority in order to rescue the children of such parents from vicious habits, and thus prevent such accumulated masses of iniquity, which too often are to be observed in our large cities? Certainly it is. But although France has not adopted this important feature which characterizes and pervades the educational systems of Germany and the Swiss States, still she has imitated them in several others of almost equal significance:—*English Literature or Educational Gazette, March 12th.*

#### ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION IN SARDINIA.

The Minister of Public Instruction of Piedmont has prepared a bill for the reform of elementary schools, according to which every commune in the State will be obliged to maintain one of those schools with higher degrees of education in proportion to their population. The masters or teachers are to be provided for out of the revenues of the commune, and the Government is to deduct 5 per cent. from the amount of their salaries, so as to secure to them the right to a pension after 30 years service, an annual subsidy after 20 years, and an extraordinary subsidy after 10 years. Five schools are to be established for the education of proper instruction for the elementary schools; one in Savoy, another in Sardinia, a third in the maritime districts, and two in the other provinces.—*The Times.*

#### THE FIRST SCHOOL IN THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

In no part of the earth have missionary labors done more good than in the Sandwich Islands. The inhabitants of that important group are now amongst the best taught and the most religious nations in existence. But the case was very different in 1820, when the messengers of mercy first landed upon their shores. At that time they were a people without knowledge. They had no written language, no schools, no teachers, and, what was worse, they did not feel their wants, or wish to have them removed. Ignorance is bad; but indifference is worse. Now the Sandwich Islanders were both ignorant and indifferent. This was the case with all classes—the young and the old; the chiefs and the people. The children did not like to plod away over letters and words, spelling and stammering out strange sounds. They would rather climb cocoa-nut trees, or sport in the surf, or chase one another along the coral beach. And their fathers or mothers preferred heathen games and intoxicating drinks to books and slates and Christian teaching.

It was therefore very difficult, at first, for the missionaries to collect and carry on a school. If, by coaxing and kind words, one or two were persuaded to come for a little while, they soon got tired. Many of them, indeed, would stand around the house to see what was doing there, and would stare, and laugh, and shout in the wildest way at any thing which seemed strange to them. But it was not easy to draw them in.

One by one, however, old people and young, parents and children, began to think that learning was a good thing, and that it would be worth while to give themselves a little trouble to get it. This encouraged the mis-