

Upper Canada at the head of educated states, and America before any state in Europe. The Protestant states are also far in advance of the Catholic states. Lower Canada, it will be remarked, has not kept pace with France, its mother country. On the whole, we have much cause for rejoicing that America has attained the highest branch of the tree of knowledge.—[Copied by the *Leader* from some unacknowledged source.]

### GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY IN CANADA.

The writer of a letter from Paris, in a late number of the *Montreal Herald*, states:—

"The other evening I had the pleasure of being present at a meeting of the Geological Society of France, where M. Elie de Beaumont, Senator and Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of Sciences, presided, and where I saw many other distinguished savans, De Lenarmon, of the Academy, the Vicomte d'Archiac, DeLess of the Sorbonne, and Barrande, the great continental authority in Silurian Geology.

"Mr. Logan, Director of the Canadian Geological Survey, presented some engravings, from figures, by Professor Hall, of New York, of the Graptolite, a fossil whose nature has hitherto been involved in great obscurity; he gave, at the same time, a description of the position and association of these remarkable fossils, which are from the rocks of Quebec, and afford at a glance to any one skilled in the science, a refutation of the notion that these strata are of the carboniferous epoch. Mr. Logan's communication was received with great interest, and the new light thrown upon the structure of the animal excited a good deal of discussion. He informed the society, that these plates were to constitute part of a first volume of the fossils illustrating the Geological Survey of Canada, soon to be published."

On this extract the Editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, of the 30th June, remarks as follows:—

"The simple announcement, that Mr. Logan is able to exhibit a perfect graptolite, may not seem of much importance to non-Geological readers, and yet it is one which will fill all the Geologists of Europe with delight, and give to the wood clad hills of the country whence the specimen has been procured, a new and extraordinary interest. A graptolite is a small and generally inconspicuous fossil, usually two or three inches in length and one-eighth of an inch in diameter, resembling the plume of a small straight feather. Hence—its name—literally a stone-pen. For the last quarter of a century the most penetrating intellects the world ever saw, have been endeavoring in vain to ascertain in what department of the organised creation it should be classified, and it has been reserved for a native Canadian to settle the point by the production of a perfect specimen from the rocks at Quebec. It might be supposed of little consequence, what should or should not be the nature of a diminutive object, which almost, always only appears like a small black mark upon a rock, but then, when it is known that by these little marks the Geologist is able to explain the structure of extensive regions, and point out the existence or non-existence of those minerals, upon which depends a large portion of the trade and military strength of nations, every particular relating to the structure of our little fossil becomes of even national importance. The graptolite is neither coal, nor iron, nor gold, but it is a trusty guide to those in quest of those minerals. Its value consists in its affording a clue to those secret recesses in which nature has buried her precious stores, and Mr Logan's success in pointing out its Zoological rank, is one of the brightest achievements of modern science. Let us rejoice that the achievement belongs to Canada."

### THE INFANT ASYLUMS OF TUSCANY.

*Communicated by the Venerable Abate Pullicino, Chief Director of Primary Education in the Island of Malta and Gozo.*

In Italy those institutions for elementary education are called Infant Asylums, which in England receive, among other names, that of Infant Schools. The Asylum, in this case, does not mean simply a place of refuge, but is at once a house for protection and instruction.

The Infant Asylums established in the city of Florence deserve particular attention, on account of the admirable manner in which they are conducted.

When I visited them in 1850, they were in a most flourishing condition. They were three in number, situated in three different localities of that capital. On examining what went forward in them, I could not but foresee the great benefits which these institutions must, with time, necessarily produce, by giving a religious education to many poor creatures who would otherwise have been brought up in ignorance and abandonment.

These Asylums are supported by a numerous and respectable society of contributors; some ladies of the city form a conspicuous part of it, and lend their services as directresses. Thirty-six of them divide among themselves the work of the year, three of them doing each month what is necessary for the government of these three Asylums.

Of these three directresses, one occupies herself more particularly

with the instruction of the mistresses, another with the teaching of the infants, and the third with the direction of the industrial occupations in which the infants are practised.

The direction of the institution by these ladies does not exclude the services of a permanent general director, who, assisted by an inspector, renders more vigorous and uniform the management of all these institutions designed for the education of infancy.

The duty of an inspector is to go round continually among the Asylums, observing what goes forward in them, lending the assistance necessary to put in practice the orders of the superiors, and in this way serving as an organ of communication between the Asylums and the board of directors.

Of the three Asylums above mentioned, that situated near the church of St. Ambrose serves for the education of males, and that of St. Joseph, for the education of females; but in both the instruction is given by mistresses only, who in truth make very excellent teachers. The graceful deportment, softness of words, together with power of command, which I observed in those, whom I had the opportunity of meeting in these Asylums, are especially worthy of remark. Before they become mistresses, they are required to teach as apprentices for so long a time as is necessary to render them efficient. And sometimes they become so apt, that it would be difficult to find their equals.

These Asylums, although frequented by a large number of infants, are nevertheless kept with much neatness, and great care is taken that the infants themselves shall also be very clean in their persons, which is a difficult thing with children belonging to the poorer classes; but for this purpose there are the necessary conveniences in the Asylums.

The infants in these institutions come every day at eight o'clock in the morning, and remain there till five o'clock in the evening, so that their parents can occupy themselves with their work, without having any anxiety on account of their little ones. For this purpose, they bring to school with them a little bread in a small basket, so that they may, towards the middle of the day, make a meal, receiving from the Asylum some soup prepared at the expense of the institution itself; the distribution of this soup forms parts of the scholastic occupations of the day. It is distributed by the infants themselves, upon benches prepared for the purpose, with much order, the meal being preceded and followed by a common act of prayer and thanksgiving.

It appears that some persons, as for instance M. Cormenin, in a little work on the Infant Asylums of Italy, condemn the practice, as predisposing the infants to depend on others for their subsistence. But if this observation be true, there remains the doubt whether it is applicable to all places indiscriminately, and to all sorts of circumstances. It is certain that if this soup were not given to these infants, it would be difficult to keep the poor creatures all the day in the Asylum, and thus liberate the parents from all care of them.

The infants are received in these Asylums from the age of two years, and remain there generally till the age of ten.

In the instruction, great use is made of various species of moral tales, with which it is sought to train to virtue the hearts of the children. In this sort of instruction, some of the mistresses in these institutions shew great ability; to assist the imagination, they make use of well-delineated views of the subjects on which they speak, and in this way they succeed in impressing better what they say on the tender mind of those who listen to them.

Both the boys and girls are occupied some hours of the day in works of taste, such as lace and crochet work, and similar things. This is practised with the boys to give them a strong habit of working. Some of the work produced by these infants is very remarkable.

With the above-named Asylums are united further classes, called "classes for finishing;" in these the children educated in the Asylums can, when they have passed the age of infancy, continue their course of instruction.

The Asylums of other cities of Tuscany are conducted very nearly in the same manner as those of Florence. Those at Leghorn, however, deserve to be specially commended. In proportion as this sort of institution is more diffused over Italy, will the road to a complete system of schools of efficient popular education be rendered more easy in that country.

### SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK CITY.

NEW YORK city is gigantic in everything—wealth and poverty, splendor and squalidness, intelligence and ignorance, virtue and vice, all manifest themselves upon a scale of magnitude unapproached and unapproachable, at least on the occidental side of the Atlantic. Men may moralize, and very properly, upon the enormity and the amount of crime in New York; but they ought not, at the same time, to lose sight of the activity of her citizens in every good work.

Among the noble institutions of that city must be reckoned the Common Schools, of which, according to the recent report of the Superintendent, there are, including the Primary, Grammar, Evening, Colored, Normal School, and the Free Academy, the number of two