

GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS—THEIR IMPORTANCE.

Some of the leading press of Canada, in the cry for economy in the public expenditure, complain that several hundred pounds have been expended in what they seem to regard as a very culpable, if not a ludicrous manner. We make the following extract:—

“In addition to the various amounts paid for salaries, etc., to those connected with the geological survey, a further expense is being incurred in the publication of works illustrating ‘organic remains’ of defunct bivalves, found in the rocks of some period antediluvian, pre-Adamite, or before the creation itself. It is no doubt, very proper to know the mineral wealth of a country, but there is little utility in devoting hundreds of pounds to printing accounts of *Eucyclostodils*, ‘*Cystideæ*,’ or ‘*Enmostracæ*,’ or wasting the public moneys in the exposition of fossil lobsters, and petrified clams and periwinkles.”

We very much regret to find such oft repeated evidence as this, of the slowness, not of the general public only, but of the more learned among the community, in realizing the importance of, and the national advantages derivable from, the exercise and cultivation of the sciences.

It may appear at a thoughtless glance, almost to amount to a joke, that the public should be taxed for the illustration, or even the mention of such things as “organic remains of defunct bivalves, fossil lobsters, and petrified clams, and periwinkles.” And so, indeed, it would be, were those illustrations for the same object that “Jack the Giant Killer,” in all the glory of red, white, and blue, figures in the pages of our infant literature. When, however, we find them for the purpose of illuminating great truths, for developing and contributing to the greatest and broadest instruments of human progress, the sciences—then the jest will only be obvious to those incapable of looking beyond the frivolous, and unequal to the realization of the value of that which is definite and true.

If the grudging spirit manifested in our extract had been universal—if there had not been some whose estimate of the sciences and their components were more just,—what would have been the condition of the world at the present time? How scanty its history—how obscure the most transparent sources of our civilization! The world's rolling along their everlasting paths, had been but the twinkling stars of our nursery rhymes; mathematics had been circumscribed by addition; chemistry at once the attribute and the reproach of the wizard; geology would have ended in the contempla-