

national colleges of the Province has been confessedly beneficial, even when they were offering to it most persistent opposition. The distinguished scholar, Sir Edmund Head, to whose intelligent sympathy and aid, while Governor-General of Canada, we were largely indebted during some of the most critical years in the history of this institution, not inaptly designated it "the College Militant!" It has successfully withstood assaults in which rivals who agreed in little else conjoined to disparage and despoil it. I observe that the learned Chancellor of Victoria University in his address at its last Convocation, when commenting on religious teaching and influences as requisites assumed to be incompatible with a purely national system, remarked in all friendly apology for us:—"I do not think the senate or the executive officers of the Provincial University can be justly blamed for the secular character of that institution. They have done what they could consistently with the constitution imposed on them by the Legislature." I give my friend Dr. Nelles all credit for the good feeling which animated him; but I must disclaim, on behalf of this institution, any such apologetic tone. On the contrary, we claim to have achieved what in older countries they are still only striving for; and so to be no less in harmony with the spirit of the age than with the aspirations of our Canadian people. While this college is, in the thoroughest sense of the term, a secular college, and is free to every Canadian, alike as a student or a professor, without distinction of race or creed, we do not stand aloof from the churches; but, on the contrary, are organized on a system in which some of the largest and most influential bodies of Christians find they can heartily co-operate. Experience,

indeed, so far from tending in any degree to alienate them, has enabled us to invite them to a closer union and more active co-operation, without trenching on the essentially secular basis of a national university. Whatever some Canadians may think of it, the system commands the admiration of strangers, well qualified to form an impartial judgment. We were visited last year by the British Association, including among its members some of the foremost representatives of modern science. Among these was Professor Boyd Dawkins, a distinguished graduate of Oxford, and now professor of geology in Owens College. To him our whole system of education was a subject of interest. Referring to it in an address which he delivered after his return to England, he speaks of Toronto as the centre of Canadian energy and enterprise, and then adds: "The result of all this is now shown in the magnificent university which exists there; a university which is open to all, and free from all religious or sectarian prejudice. It is a distinctly secular institution; and, so far as I know, it is the very first secular teaching university which has been established in this world; being in this respect the predecessor of Owens College and the Victoria University of England. And in that of Toronto is another thing which is well worthy of our attention in England, namely, that the various religious sects have each their own place: There is a college called by the name of John Knox; another bearing that of Wycliffe; a college for members of the Baptist persuasion; and St. Michael's College, which represents the Roman Catholic element;" and he adds, in unqualified commendation: "I mention all these things to show you that Toronto is a very advanced place."

With our system thus commanding