

Dr. Richard Quain, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, in the Notes to his Hunterian Oration for 1869:—"Our system is not precisely the system of the (English) public schools. It takes in natural science, it takes in chemistry. Most of the boys who leave us, after having been there two or three years, will have such a knowledge of chemistry as is perfectly applicable to the arts and manufactures. They have a thorough knowledge of arithmetic and book-keeping. And I consider that all those things are equally necessary for those who go to the universities; for I believe that in part our success in mathematical examinations depends on the fact that our boys can perform the experiments. They have a general knowledge of practical science, so that, if the education were more limited, I think it would be a bad thing." Some first steps towards this degree of attainment in natural science may be taken even in our Public Schools, but the danger of attempting too much, for the sake of mere display, should be carefully avoided.

In the course of the oration above referred to, President Quain observes:—"In order to gain the full advantage of natural knowledge as a branch of education, it is essential that the instruction in some branches should begin at a very early age. In my juvenile lectures (says Faraday before the Royal Commissioners, in support of that view) I have never found children too young to understand intelligently what I told them. They came to me afterwards with questions which proved their capability." President Quain, however, very properly insists that "to whatever extent elementary knowledge or learning may go, it must be real, thorough as far as it goes, giving a complete acquaintance with things and their properties, not with words only. Words should come after, and should strictly represent facts." "By such study," says Dr. Whewell, "of one or more departments of inductive knowledge, the mind may escape from the thralldom and

illusion which reigns in the world of mere words."

The subject of religious instruction, in Public Schools like those of Ontario, which are without exception day schools, and which comprise pupils whose parents are of any or of no particular religious persuasion need not, one would think, require much discussion. Yet few subjects connected with the general question of popular education have been more variously regarded or more warmly treated. It is provided in the school law of Ontario, that "No person shall require any pupil in any such school to read or study in or from any religious book, or join in any exercise of devotion or religion objected to by his parents or guardians; but, within this limitation, pupils shall be allowed to receive such religious instruction as their parents and guardians desire, according to any general regulations provided for the government of the schools." And the Council of Public Instruction has prescribed regulations which empower the clergy of any persuasion, or their authorized representatives to give religious instruction to pupils of their own church, in each Public School, at least once a week after school hours. Thus, in a country in which the semblance of the establishment of religion by the state is disavowed by the express terms of law, facilities are afforded for the operation of the principle of concurrent denominational teaching, to any supposable extent. Theoretically regarded, this arrangement is obviously inconsistent with one of our fundamental political principles: it is, however, seldom reduced to practice, nor has any instance of the abuse of such practice for the purpose of making proselytes to particular religious opinions been known to occur. Some persons in Ontario, as in Britain, are still alarmed by the cry of "godless" when raised against schools and universities. Others who learned its unmeaning or rather its ill-meaning character some forty years ago when the London University was found-