

How it is possible that any man in his senses could, at this time of day, deliberately arrange a school text book in the form of a Catechism, is more than I can well understand. A system more eminently calculated to degrade the work of teaching into mere parrotry, and to extinguish the very germs of original thought and the exercise of the reasoning powers, it would be hard to find; and till this "little book" appeared I had imagined was one confined, to at least in matters of secular knowledge, to the worst class of young ladies' boarding schools.

In this volume we have a striking illustration of the objections to books on scientific subjects, written by men who are not practical scientists. The author, in his attempt to treat of such subjects, in what is generally called a "popular manner," continually falls into grave errors, and employs, in his definitions and descriptions, language that can only be characterized as *incorrect*. As for example, when he states that "Hydrogen is imbibed by vegetables and becomes solid," or that "the leaves perform the same office in the vegetable kingdom as the lungs perform in the animal kingdom," I mention these merely as samples of what are scattered through the book. You can find many more for yourselves by a little examination of its pages. Such statements as these are not calculated to give true ideas either to teacher or pupils, and when combined with the intolerable dryness of the Catechism style, they render the whole affair more than utterly useless.

From my previous experience of the Reverend Doctor's writing, I entertained the idea that he was capable of expressing his meaning in correct and forcible language. But what can we say of such sentences as the following:

"These leaves (the parts of the Calyx) are called *Sepals*, and are generally green, though in the *Fuchsia* they are white or red."

Does he mean that in no plant except the

*Fuchsia* are the sepals other than green? This is the meaning his language undoubtedly conveys.

"Is it not discouraging," he asks, "that valuable manure should all be washed into the deep earth by rains?"

But our spirits are considerably raised by the unexpected answer. "It would be very discouraging if it were true, but fortunately it is not true."

Or this: "Many housekeepers know not how to cook potatoes; they peel the potatoes, and put them into cold water to soak; both of which modes of cooking them is wrong." I should think both modes *were* wrong, if you like the syntax. I should not like to be compelled to eat *my* potatoes cooked in either of these two ways, either by "peeling" them, or by "putting them into cold water to soak," and yet some housekeepers, it appears, subject the same potatoes to both processes without producing a result satisfactory to the author. The Dr., I believe, is not an Irishman, perhaps the nature of the subject influenced his language.

I may remark here, the part which treats of Botany, short as it is, is even worse than the rest. I defy any teacher, who gets his knowledge from this book, to convey any clear idea of it to a class. I could give many instances of the careless use of language, and the general mistiness of expression which characterize this part of the subject but I forbear. Let any one having even an elementary knowledge of the subject examine it for himself, and the truth of what I say will be abundantly manifest.

If we are to have Chemistry taught in our Public Schools, it must be in other fashion than can be done by following our author's lead. The teacher absolutely requires some book as a guide to his own study and research, and one which shall not only indicate the experiments best adapted to illustrate the subject, but which shall also fully describe the apparatus required, and the