

The Rockwood Review.

ENGLISH SCHOOLS.

It seems to me that the majority of the people of Ontario are of opinion that their system of education is altogether superior to what exists in England. Persons with whom I have discussed this subject, evidently think that there is no school system in England, and that in many places there are no schools accessible. As a matter of fact, there are in England three great school systems, all running concurrently, and side by side. One is the National School System, including the Board Schools, which is practically the same as the Ontario School System, with similar teachers apparatus and buildings. This covers the whole of England so that all children can be accommodated. Next, there is the old Grammar School System, dating from the days of King Alfred, and specially of King Edward VI. In almost every town in England, and in some of the villages, there is a grammar school, supported by property left by the founders, and it is free to the children of its particular town or village. Thirdly, as the Englishman likes to be free to do just as he chooses, he has his great system of private schools. These are schools which are opened anywhere by any persons who choose to do so. Those who teach in them need not have any diploma or qualification, the schools are subject to no inspection, and the teachers use any text books they choose, and teach whatever subjects they like. Naturally, these schools are run very much to please the parents, and that may be the reason why they are so popular. I have an English School List of 1861, a scarce book, which contains the names and addresses of the Principals of 20,000 private schools. It is probable that there is more money invested or involved in the private schools,

than in either the grammar schools or the national school system.

Strange to say, what are called the great public schools of England, such as Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Winchester, are practically private schools, and are most appropriately classed with the private schools, being as it were the apex of the system. They have no more affinity to the National Schools than chalk has to cheese, and would feel any comparison as an insult.

The poor man in England has always a National or Board School of some sort at command, and in most towns and some villages, he has the Grammar School, in addition, as an option. As to the private schools, that is all a matter of money, and they are at all prices. There is a strong prejudice among English people that what is worth having is worth paying for, and if they can possibly scrape together the needful money, they will send their children to a private school. Many of the schools charge as much as \$1,000 a year for each pupil. When nineteen years old I taught in one of these schools, and I was the staff. My Principal took 15 boys at £200 a year each. Without doubt he received over \$10,000 each year, and I was the only teacher he had to pay. It is easy to see from this what important interests are involved in English private schools.

Of late years the English National Schools have been largely changed to Board Schools, in imitation of the American and Canadian schools. This change has done some little good, and a great deal of harm, as it has resulted in the election of the most illiterate persons as School Trustees. Under the old plan the managers were University men, and the introduction of bumptious office-seekers of the Dogberry type in their place has been a great injury to education.

"DOGBERRY.—But, masters, rem-