

EDITORIAL NOTES.

EDUCATIONAL MATTERS IN THE
ONTARIO "STONEHENGE."

THE consideration of Educational questions cannot be said to have been much advanced by the dislocated debates on the subject which, in the past month, have taken place in that Temple of the Druids—the Local Legislature of Ontario. To any one at all acquainted with our educational affairs, few things, we imagine, could have been more intolerable than to have been compelled to sit and listen to the "daily droppings" of debate on the several matters of grave moment connected with education which have fallen from the lips of the "assembled wisdom" during the six or seven weeks it has been gathered together in council. Nothing has wearied our patience so much as the effort we have made to follow the discussion, from day to day, since our last number appeared. To have been a reporter in the House would assuredly have driven us mad; and who shall say what softenings of the brain have not resulted from having to follow the chaotic and objectless mass of criticism which educational topics have recently called forth? One of our leading newspapers, we notice, has withdrawn from the field and abandoned the reporting of the subject. Need we inquire the reason why? It is true that educational matters did not fall into the hands of any but the senior wranglers of the House, and there were always the lucid and gifted utterances (!) of the Minister of Education himself to give zest and sparkle to the debate; but with what result? Only to shew that the House had not got beyond the Eocene period of parliamentary discussion, and that our educational questions could have been better handled by an assembly of Fifth-form boys from the neighbouring Upper Canada College.

The complacent tax-payer may of course console himself with the thought that we must now be nearing the end of the "seven lean years" of Provincial government, and that the days of intellectual famine in our Legislature will consequently soon be over and gone. Whether this be so or not, let us refrain in the meantime from deceiving ourselves with the notion that our chamber of Provincial legislation is a place for educational deliberation, any more than that our Parliaments in general are places that conduce, in any appreciable degree, to "plain living and high thinking." Neither let it be supposed that we have made a gain in giving a representation in the Cabinet to the Department of Education, and in bringing the Bureau within the administration of party politics. Nothing, we humbly think, could be farther from the fact. The experiment, of course, might have been made under more auspicious circumstances, but it might also have been made under much worse. The Central Committee, for instance, might have been a real aid to the Minister, and conserved, instead of debauched, the dignity and character of its office. Its services to education, moreover, might have been disinterested, and of greater practical value. The Minister, himself, might also have been a man of larger views, and of greater enthusiasm in his work. Yet, matters might have been worse than they are: we might, indeed, have had several changes in the incumbency of office. Had the latter taken place, and the book-peddling Inspectors assumed the regency of the Department, we shudder to think how it would have fared with education. Though this misfortune has not befallen it, there has been no lack of effort to counterplot Providence. If intrigue has not always compassed this, incapacity often has. With amazing effrontery, both of these factors have sometimes been at work,