

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

## HIGH PRESSURE IN SCHOOLS.

THE subject of "cramming" in our educational systems is seemingly, at last, in a fair way to be brought effectively before the public mind, with, we trust, the result of mitigating the ever-growing evil, and of securing the curtailment of some of the studies on the programmes of our Public Schools. The subject has for the past three years received repeated attention in THE MONTHLY; and in the July-August number, in this department, the present writer strongly protested against the whole apparatus of our School system being directed to the purpose of working up a pupil to pass an examination. Now the daily press is taking up the matter, and in the *Globe* we have an instructive controversy on the subject between that journal and the City School Inspector. We are under no call to interfere in the fray, and therefore may leave the disputants themselves to fight it out. The *Globe* manifestly makes out a good case; for the evil is one that taints our whole educational system, and not that alone of the Toronto School Board. Mr. Hughes, on the other hand, writes from a full knowledge of the working of the City Schools, and naturally enough takes the defensive side, in the interest of his own administration. But obviously he writes from the official point of view and from that of the administrator, and closes his eyes and ears to the notorious evils complained of by parents of children attending the schools, viz., to the time taken up, and the consequent injury to health, in the pupils having to labour at home every evening to enable them to stand well in their class next day and thus secure their full markings. Mr. Hughes—who, by the way, writes better in his communications to the daily press than in his contributions to the

*School Journal* or to his educational manuals—ranges, however, over so wide an area in his letters to the *Globe*, that the subject of "cramming" is apt to be smothered under piles of print. But *this* is the subject that urgently calls for ventilation, not only in its operation in the Toronto Schools, but especially in the High Schools of the Province; for the forcing system obtains everywhere, and will do so so long as it is made the interest of the High School Master, at any rate, to forget that *teaching* is his occupation, and, by the system in vogue, is constantly impressed with the fact that it must ever be subordinate to the financial strategy of "passing" so many pupils through his hands, and at any sacrifice of his own individual convictions, and of regard for the lasting benefit of his charge, bends his whole energies to getting them by hook or crook through the "Intermediate." There can be no doubt that much of the evil against which there is now an outcry has its source in the wholly obnoxious system of "Payment by Results," and in the centralization which, though in some measure a necessity, has grown increasingly under the present *régime*. That some other plan will have to be devised is clearly shewn by the increasing expense and cumbrousness of the present system, and by the frequency of the grave improprieties coming to light in various sections of the Province in connection with the machinery of its working. In many respects it would be conducive to the morals, at least, of teachers, inspectors, examiners, and pupils, were local examinations, by a fairly competent Resident Board, made to take the place of that of the Department; and we are inclined to think that were this plan resorted to, the schools would do better work and the pupils have more justice done them. One thing, at all events, should be insisted upon, viz., a cur-