

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SITUATION.

THE remark is neither new nor profound that this is an imperfect world. The year now come to a close has, in matters educational, added much to our experience of this fact. From the top to the bottom of our School system, imperfection, and not a little that is worse, have been dragged out into view. The age, perhaps is an over-critical one, and the year that has passed has spared nothing. But it is well now and again to have a year of reckoning. Periods of somnolence and complacent jog-trotting are never healthy. One particular characteristic of the past year will have struck most of our readers, viz.: the growing disposition to overhaul things, and an impatience with the condition of *laissez-faire*. This spirit has particularly manifested itself in the domain of education. For years our men and systems have gone on in a given groove, and the educational administration has felicitated itself and been happy. Lulled by the times it grew "wooden" and autocratic, and officialism and circumlocution flourished. Then came the disturbing year, and with it the present period of dissatisfaction and unrest. Now, not only the machinery of instruction is being overhauled, but there is a disposition to reconsider its purpose and revise its work. With regard to the machinery of education, THE MONTHLY has already given voice to the protest against its inefficiency and partizan character. Mr. Crooks, we have frequently admitted, is industrious and well-meaning, and as the figure-head of the Department bears himself well to outside observation. Among those who have professionally to do with him, however, the almost universal opinion current is, that he

is not the man for the office. Few, we are repeatedly informed, care to have any personal relations with him, and correspondence with the Department is rarely satisfactory and never pleasant. If we weigh the acts of the man against his manner, we do not improve the picture, for the Minister is unfamiliar with his work, vacillating and inept in dealing with it, and unyielding when, as is often the case, it is wrongly done. A politician, and a party man, he imports into his office the tactics of the one and the prejudices of the other. The scandal connected with the Central Committee, which he has suffered so long to taint the Department, is proof of this. Whatever shuffle he may now make with reference to this body should not exempt him from parliamentary arraignment on the charge. His attitude in regard to the disposition of Upper Canada College, also shews how little he is in sympathy with those whose interests ought to be his. That he should so handicap the institutions that are the best fruit of the school system proves him disloyal to his office and unjust to the profession. The lax, perfunctory work of the Normal Schools, and the University imbroglio, fill up the measure of his cup.

All the while Education cries out for a competent head—one who will not be under the illusion of his office, nor unskilled in the duties that belong to it. Rarely has there been greater need of a man of ability for the post; and in every branch of the system the need is felt. A man of ideas, of enthusiasm in the work, and devoted to its service, was never more a desideratum of the times. The whole educational system is in need of revision. The profession is overcrowded, and the facilities to enter it are greater than the need of the country calls for. The standard