

slight thing to cheat the government by smuggling or illicit distilling, how many pride themselves on keeping aloof from elections and taking no interest in politics. Instead of instruction in these most essential matters in our public school reading books, we have lots of religious reflections and devotional poetry, we have also incredible and impossible stories in abundance, the natural effect of which must be to confuse children's ideas, morally as well as intellectually. There is a very good specimen in the Third Book, written by a learned Doctor in an English University, a stupidly impossible story throughout, wherein the rewards and penalties have no relation whatever to the merits or demerits of the actors. No good purpose can be served to the young by such reading as this. Whatever view we may hold as to the genesis of the human faculties, whether we believe that they have been slowly developed by contact with an outer world in which law exists, or, whether we believe them to have been created and adapted at first to a world whose regularity of phenomena is invariable, it would seem to be necessary, before all else, that this natural constitution of things should be kept in view in the education of the young. The only justification—and it is not a sufficient one—for relating an incredible story to a child, is, that it may be a medium for inculcating a moral lesson, but what shall we say to the foolishly impossible tale of the learned Doctor in the Third book, which teaches a lesson the very reverse of moral.

If the Minister of Education would apply himself to the preparation of a national series of School Readers, he would deserve the thanks of all who are concerned about the future of the rising generation.

J. G. W.

HIGH SCHOOL INSPECTION.

To the Editor of the Canada Educational Monthly.

SIR,—Your remarks in reference to High School inspection are very well-timed, and though trenchant, are not more severe than the occasion calls for. You may not be

aware that at the last session of the Legislature this very matter engaged the attention of the members and some of the speeches made during the debate show clearly that it is not the teachers alone who feel the necessity for a change. In some cases, to my own knowledge, an Inspector has visited a school for a few hours hurriedly and sometimes fagged out with other work—university examinations and official engagements. Consequently, he has not been in a proper frame of mind to impress the teacher and his pupils with that respect for the printed financial conclusions that the public interests require. This, however, is greatly the fault of the system. Too much work is undertaken by, and expected from, the Inspectors. Let them devote themselves to their own duties mainly—the improvement of our High Schools.

High School inspection has degenerated into mere visits of observation. In my opinion an Inspector should take a class and show how it should be taught when such assistance may seem necessary. He can, in all cases, at any rate, act as a medium of communicating improved methods employed by different masters.

As this is a serious matter to us, we can afford to omit no important bearing. We all admit that the three Inspectors are highly qualified in their several departments, but the biggest toady in the profession would hesitate to assert that in the advanced stages of all subjects as now taught in our High Schools, they are equally competent, or, to put it in another form, they are not "admirable Crichtons." Some very ludicrous scenes have occurred when an effort has been made to produce the impression that they are. No end of talk has been indulged in to prove—what is now admitted theoretically and practically—that no High School master is able to teach properly all the subjects in the programme, and yet we find our High School Inspectors occasionally examining departments in which their knowledge is notoriously defective, and what is worse, apportioning money on the results of such examinations. The practice of carrying round sets of questions is one that it is now time to give up.