

will it be for the aristocratic preserve. But a serious question has arisen in this connection. In the course of its discussion of the resignation of Principal Cockburn, the *Mail* accuses Mr. Crooks of political favouritism. We hope the Minister will be able to disprove the charge when the House meets. If there is the slightest ground for it, public opinion will soon force a change in the administration of the Department. We can imagine nothing viler—nothing more contemptibly mean—than the use of the official patronage of the Education Department for the support of either political party. With all his faults, no charge of this nature could lie at the door of the late Chief Superintendent; and it behoves Mr. Crooks to give no uncertain sound on so grave a matter. It has also been stated before now, in the public press, that there is a good deal of backstairs influence habitually brought to bear even in the matter of appointing sub-examiners. If the tenth of what is stated by the *Mail* be true, the administration of the Education Department by a political head is a lamentable failure. But *nous verrons*. So far as the College is concerned, its status is now precisely what it was year ago. No one objected to Mr. Cockburn. Indeed, it must be admitted that he possessed some qualifications for the position which it would be difficult to secure in a successor, and that handicapped as he had been for some time, he made a good fight in defence of this peculiar institution. The College, however, still absorbs annually a large sum of money which properly belongs to our Provincial University. It has all along been a huge barnacle on the side of the latter institution, and a standing menace to our High School system; and the friends of good education will rejoice to see restitution made to the proper owner. It would be ungracious, for many reasons, to criticise Mr. Buchan's action in throwing himself into the breach. It is just possible, we may now say, that he will regret the day when, for any reason whatever, he severed his connection with the High School system and accepted a post in an institution which he knows is an anomaly, and

of which, not so long ago, he was a leading opponent. Consistency is a jewel, even in a schoolmaster.

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LITERATURE.

THE present mode of studying English literature in our High Schools is producing some very queer results. Before beginning the study of special periods in English history, the Department very properly expects the High School pupil to obtain a general notion of the whole subject, so that he may be able to trace the connection of events, and not leave school ignorant of the chief facts in our history. The wisdom of this course is obvious. But what is true of English history is true also of English literature. Before taking up special periods, as he does now for the Intermediate and the University, the High School pupil should acquire some knowledge of the outlines of the growth of our literature. In no way could this be done better than by beginning, as soon as he reaches the highest class in the Public School, a course of reading in the masterpieces of our language. Many pupils—most, indeed—now leave school with very hazy ideas about Shakspeare, Milton, Spenser, Chaucer, and the other great names of our literature. To the large majority of pupils who reach the Intermediate stage, these are names and nothing more. To some they are not even names. Tennyson, Browning, Ruskin, Froude, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth, are unknown to almost all. This is not creditable to Canadian education. "But," says some one, "this is the master's fault." The master, we reply, is, under the operation of the present system, a mere machine. If he try to go out of the beaten path, he will be brought up suddenly by his pupils. They care for nothing but what will get them safely through their examinations. The proper course to take is to have our prescribed text-books so constructed that this difficulty will be overcome. In our opinion the study of special periods should be reserved for Honour work in the Univer-