

THE LITERATURE OF EDUCATION IN CANADA.*

BY AN OLD HEAD-MASTER.

(From the "Canadian Monthly.")

THE success which has attended the first volume of this serial (the CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY) is a good omen for the future of that system of public education in Canada whose growth during the last half century has won deserved praise in England and the States, and is a factor of such vast importance in the development of this country's nationality. For it is not too much to say that the Public School of the backwoods country section is the unit of our political system. Election of School Trustees, the working of the School Law, and the Section School, is the first lesson learned by our outlying population; a political lesson the more valuable because it is essentially national, not partizan. The handsome volume before us has literary interest in abundance, as we hope to shew by a detailed account of its contents. Its reviews of the best current literature, which are not mere "book notices," are thoughtful, fresh and sensible, and would of themselves make the EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY a help to all who are ambitious of the higher culture. But its special utility consists in its independence. It is independent of the Education Department—so much so that, as we shall have occasion to point out, it has dealt out a trenchant criticism, the more telling because of its self-restrained force and courtesies

of expression. An independent criticism of the Department has become necessary since the growing magnitude of the School System has made it—in Ontario as a fact, in the other Provinces virtually—a branch of our government. For many years a School Journal, the organ of the Education Department, and supported by a grant, was sent through the country gratuitously. It did good service, both with the profession and the public, whose gratitude its able conductor, Dr. Hodgins, merits. But, although as a rule fair to the interests of the people and faithful to the public teacher, its time passed with that of the Chief of the Department, the patriarch whose personal government it represented. For a short time, too short it will probably seem to those who study the history of education in this Province during the last ten years, the interests of the public, the best culture and wisdom of the educated class in Ontario, were represented by the Council of Education, which acted as a check on the bureaucratic element of the Department. This Council was composed in part of such men as Professor Daniel Wilson, Mr. Goldwin Smith, the late Professor Ambery, as representatives of the High and Public Schools and other educational interests. In the midst of a career of unexampled benefit to the public service, this Council was suddenly suspended at a crisis when ministerial weakness yielded to a per-

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