

stand-point. The school book embroglio is the chief cause of dissatisfaction, and certainly reflects no great credit upon the management of the Department. The mistake or weakness of a man, however, can scarcely be construed into the fault of a system. The chief danger of the present arrangement seems to be too intricate connections with the politics of the day, and the possibility of undue favor being granted to partisan friends and supporters. Taken altogether, it is very doubtful if the proposed change would be an improvement, and that it would be advantageous to change, for a comparatively irresponsible Superintendent, our Minister of Education, who, through the government with which he is connected, has to answer to the people at every popular election.

THE USE OF NARCOTICS.—People of all ages and of all climes have been more or less addicted to the use of narcotics in some form or other. The ancient Babylonians, Greeks and Romans drowned their cares in the intoxicating cup, a habit followed by most, if not all, of the civilized nations of to-day, while the latter, apparently not content with this one form, aggravate the consequent evils by their use of tobacco. The Chinaman has won for himself an unenviable reputation by his persistent use of that dangerous drug, opium. The inhabitants of cold Kamtchatka and the adjoining Provinces of Siberia comfort themselves with a species of fungus. The almost universal favorite among the African nations is the Indian hemp, which is also used in the form of *hasheesh* by the dwellers in Syria and Arabia. The natives of Peru and Bolivia were found, by Pizarro, chewing the dried leaves of the cocoa-tree, and they have not abandoned the habit to this day. The question naturally arises, "Why should these things be?" Is the proverb "*Vox populi vox Dei*" true in this case? What are the best means to prevent and cure such a degrading habit? These are questions which should be considered, not merely by the temperance workers, politicians and scientists of our day, but, also, by every one who has at heart the welfare of his fellow man.