

EDITORIAL NOTES.

INSPECTORS' CONNECTIONS WITH PUBLISHING HOUSES.

WE have more than once, in the columns of THE MONTHLY, pointed out the grave impropriety of School Inspectors having any alliances with educational book-publishers, and of using their position, either openly or secretly, to further their own interests or those of book houses with which they have connection. That we have had occasion to do so, and that there exists an evil against which it is time loudly to protest, the letter which precedes this, from a correspondent of the *Hamilton Spectator*, will abundantly attest. Though the letter unhappily bears the marks of being inspired, in some degree, by personal animus, yet the matter complained of, it cannot be denied, is a fruitful source of moral mischief. The evil, moreover, is aggravated by a manifest lack of literary fitness and aptitude for the work engaged in by certain Inspectors and the publishing house concerned in their operations. This, it would seem, however, has been no bar to the success of their undertakings, as the books compiled by these Inspectors have found their way into the schools by other permits than the Minister's authorization. Officially, we all understand that the text-books in use in the schools of the Province, are those that have been sanctioned by the Department. Practically, however, they are largely those that have the sole approval of a favoured publishing house in Toronto, in the sale of which two Inspectors, at least, have a substantial interest. What the effect must be, in disregarding the Minister's edict to exclude unauthorized books from the schools, and in suffering Inspectors to promote the sale and derive a profit from their circulation, we need not stop to point out. "Place a man's ear," says the Hon. Robt. Lowe, "within the ring

of pounds, shillings, and pence, and you can tell what his conduct will be." But the effect also upon the Inspectorate cannot but be bad. A correspondent of an English journal, complaining recently of an analogous state of things in the Mother Country, writes thus:—"The insidious and covert book-selling of Inspectors was, some years ago, disapprovingly noticed by the Privy Council on Education. Till the London School Board follow the example, making each Inspector sign a Self-Denying Ordinance, which shall be rigorously enforced to the very letter, they will, and deservedly, be subject to popular accusations of unfair practice, and of favouritism and jobbery in their most insidious and reprehensible form." But we do not need warnings from abroad to acquaint us with the mischievous effect of the connection of educational officials with the book trade. The *Spectator's* correspondent recalls the lively experience we have already had of that. While these alliances are permitted, the temptation to both Inspector and teacher to forget honour in self-interest cannot fail to manifest itself. In the case of one of the Inspectors, indeed, the evil has become well-nigh intolerable. Not only does he work for the adoption by teachers of his own unauthorized manuals, but he uses his influence to secure the *entrée* into the schools of a series of others in which he or his publishers (probably both) have a substantial interest. That at this "trade-touting" he is a success no one needs to express surprise, for he is the "Directing Mind," as it is phrased, of all the sentient educational machinery of the Province, and has been allowed to play upon it as he lists. Moreover, he combines in his own person the comprehensive offices of author, book-cavasser, inspector, and examiner, and arrogates to himself powers corresponding to so full-bodied a unity. Added