

## EDUCATION IN POLITICS.

(STATE OF NEW YORK.)

ONE would think that an intelligent and independent community would be somewhat scrupulous about parting with the control of its children in the matter of instruction, and would prefer to attend to that matter themselves, rather than to be much superintended by any distant office-holder who happens to be thrust into the position where he can regulate the schools of the State. But the Superintendent of Public Instruction is the head engineer of that vast political machine which has come to supersede all private agency in the formation of the minds and characters of the young so far as it is possible for schools to do it. We say "political machine," because the great work of carrying on primary education in this country is being steadily and rapidly swallowed up in the gulf of politics. Indeed, the fundamental reasons given for the existence of our common school system, and avowedly the sole reasons for which it can be maintained, are political. It is freely admitted that the State has no other warrant for taking in hand the instruction of the young than to shape them as citizens in accordance with the political system we have adopted. As a consequence, the business of administering education is becoming a prominent part of politics, and appointments in all the best-paid positions are being more and more determined by the common influences of political manipulation and intrigue. The influence of this state of things upon teachers, who are now all government office-holders, is a chapter of the subject that cannot be here dealt with, but is full of interest. Our object is now simply to call atten-

tion to a conspicuous illustration of the control of partisan politics over our whole system of State instruction.

No intelligent person will deny that the general subject of education is one of great complexity and great difficulty, and that to control it wisely and improve its practical methods is a task requiring much ability, long and profound devotion to its fundamental questions, and a wide and varied experience in educational work. But very few men can be found combining the rare qualifications needed in a State Superintendent of Education; at the very best these qualifications can only be secured in a partial degree, but this makes it all the more necessary that no effort shall be spared to secure the best talent available for so responsible a trust. It is needless to say that this desirable object is impossible under the political *régime* into which our popular education has now passed. The superintendency of schools of the State of New York has become a foot-ball of partisan faction among the politicians of the New York Legislature. The former Superintendent resigned some weeks ago, to take a more profitable office; and the temporary incumbent of the place will vacate the office in April, to be succeeded by whomsoever the Legislature appoints. A crowd of applicants of all sorts are after the place, lobbying and intriguing in Albany by all the means that are necessary to secure "success" in the scramble for a desirable position. That a competent man will be appointed under these circumstances is virtually impossible, for no thoroughly competent and self-respecting man would enter