

Fallacies in our Public Schools.

1. It is still believed by many that he is the best teacher who most thoroughly crams the mind of his pupils. To attempt to explode this fallacy is almost a work of supererogation, for although yet credited, it is only by those whose intellectual attainments are such as to place them outside the pale of conviction. To imagine that the thinking powers of any scholar could be cultivated and drawn out by memorizing words and definitions is so manifestly absurd, as to call for very little criticism. That only can be called mental food which becomes assimilated with the mind, and thus constitutes part of the mind itself. The food received into the stomach is not nourishing unless its constituent parts are changed into nerve and muscle and bone. If not so changed then it is not food in the true sense of the term. Nor do the words and definitions constitute any part of true education, unless changed into thought, and incorporated into the incorporeal structure of the mind itself. To believe, then, that a crammed intellect is a cultivated intellect, would be as absurd as to suppose that a man was an athlete because he had a full stomach.

2. As fallacy No. 2, let us mention the too common expression that a teacher should invariably lift a scholar over all the difficulties encountered at school. We often hear it said that Mr. So and So is a good teacher, because he exhibits everything thoroughly to his class, and helps them so kindly out of all their difficulties. We have no objection to the teacher's explaining everything thoroughly to his class, nor do we object to his helping them kindly out of their difficulties, but we do object to the teacher doing this in any case when he can reasonably expect the lesson might be understood, or the difficulty overcome, without his assistance. There is no greater mistake can be committed by the teacher than that of constantly rushing to the rescue of his pupils, and doing for them what they should be trained to do for themselves. One of the great objects of education is to develop the habit of self-reliance—to give the scholar confidence in himself. How

can this be done except by letting him find out his own strength and by training him to rely upon his own efforts? We have known scholars to pass through the greater part of the first arithmetic and scarce know simple division—the teacher having wrought for them all the difficult problems. They were carried over the hard work, not trained to walk over it, and when they reached their journey's end they were neither invigorated nor delighted by the result. We would here most emphatically denounce this so-called education—a process which, if allowed to go on, will result in demoralization. Any teaching that does not strengthen the native energy of the scholar—that does not give him backbone and self-reliance is sully and fatally defective. Canada wants educated men, to be sure, but not educated men whose powers have been dwarfed at school. The men our schools should furnish for future citizenship should be men of pluck and determination—men who were strengthened on their chairs at school, for fighting the battle of life—men who were not afraid to grapple with ordinary, or even extraordinary difficulties, and either find a way to surmount them or make one. The teachers have the power in their hands, either to destroy this spirit of self-reliance or to draw it out.



"God will take care of Baby."

A BEAUTIFUL child had been taught to say, and it could say little else:

"God will take care of baby."

It was seized with sickness, at a time when both parents were just recovering from a dangerous illness. Every day it grew worse, and at last was given up to die.

Almost agonized, the mother begged to be carried into the room of her darling, to give it one last embrace. Both parents succeeded in reaching the apartment just as it was thought the baby had breathed its last. The mother wept aloud, when once more the little creature smiled, moved its lips, and in a faint voice said: "God will take care of baby," and died.—*Selected.*