

THE PHYSICAL HEALTH OF OUR GIRLS.

IN a previous article on this subject, which appeared in this magazine more than a year ago, the present writer ventured, not without fear and trembling, to express her views and to sketch some thoughts which had been borne in upon her mind during some seven years of experience in teaching. The great importance of the subject, and the general undercurrent of uneasiness and apprehension about the effect of educational methods now in vogue on that personal vigour and physical health, which is the very last thing that may safely be neglected by the individual or by the nation, was shown by the fact that so incomplete a discussion of the subject as was found in that article immediately obtained a comparatively wide circulation by being republished by the press in Montreal, Toronto, Barrie, and other Canadian cities and towns, and also in the United States and (I am informed) in a certain eastern town in Ontario, and also in Baltimore, Md., enlightened school boards have adopted the suggestion that school boards should appoint a physician to the schools, whose duties should include the careful sanitary inspection of all school sites and premises, and to whom teachers could refer cases in which the evil effects of "cram" and too rapid promotion were evident—cases which the conscientious teacher under present circumstances can do so little either to prevent or cure. For the educational machine goes on forever. Your class assembles at the beginning of the session. Many of them are already beginning to think and talk of being promoted to the "next room," or of "passing their examination," the name of which is Legion, for they are many. And the teacher, poor soul, if she thinks about

it at all, is forced to realize more surely every session, as a new piece of wide red tape is wound round her and securely tied, that she is only part of the machine.

But to return. A writer in the *Popular Science Monthly* for August, on "Teaching Physiology in the Public Schools," speaks strongly (but not too strongly) on the neglect of this subject, and the inefficient, almost useless, way in which it is taught, if taught at all, and adds: "The work should be done by sanitary officers of boards of education."

In 1873, at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, President White, of Cornell University, said:—"First, as regards Public Schools, I would make provision for simple instruction in the elements of physiology and hygiene, either by the use of some short and plain text book, or, what is still better, by lectures from some competent resident physician. I confess that I greatly prefer the latter method. Not only theory, but experience leads me to prefer it."

Never was there such universal testimony as to the risks into which we are blindly rushing, as during the past few weeks, when the products obtained by the revolutions of the cranks and wheels of the educational machine have been held up to public view. We have it on the authority of the *Toronto Empire* that "there is scarcely a State in the Union to the south of us, or a county or district in our own country, in which attention has not been directed at once to the seemingly intellectual brilliancy of the performances (at school commencement), and to the physical deterioration which is plainly to be seen in the majority of cases among the performers. The cram system is producing