

One of the worst consequences of the use of slang is the poverty of vocabulary it causes. A boy who has accustomed himself to use slang constantly, when put in a position where he is expected to speak properly, will immediately become self-conscious and have great difficulty in saying anything. Of course it is impossible for teachers to abolish the use of slang, but their influence can be used to discourage and diminish it. It is painful to notice the attitude some people of influence assume in regard to this question.

The following are the words of Dr. G. Stanley Hall :—

“ Grammatical accuracy and purity of idiom do not come naturally to the child. I should have the children taught to speak anyhow than no how. Slang has its place, it is fundamental; good language is accessory. Slang is childish, for a single word expresses more than whole sentences. It should have a certain place at a certain stage with some children. I pity the teacher who has not a good vocabulary of slang.”

A poor logician can easily detect serious fallacies in those statements.

Certain other improprieties of speech, which cannot be called slang, should be quietly rooted out of the language of children, so that when they have spent a pleasant evening they may not be heard say the next day that they had an “ elegant time last night. ”

One of the greatest benefits a school can confer upon the young is to awaken and foster in them a love for good reading. It is impossible for a child to read a well written book without having his own powers of expression improved.

Aside from the reading matter contained in the ordinary text-books great use can be made of school libraries when it is possible to secure them. By supplying good and wholesome material for reading in this way, the temptation to read cheap and trashy books will be removed.

Of course the parents of most children will act as censors for them and will see that no poisonous books come into their hands. Unfortunately there are some children who are not looked after with sufficient care in this respect. For all such the teacher must act as guardian angel.

The beginning of the cultivation of literary taste can be