

Contemporary Thought.

THE student who relies upon himself will always succeed. It is better to solve one problem than to copy twenty.—*Normal Index.*

SHOULD we not check our little ones when they make use of slang expressions, instead of smiling upon them as if it were clever? We should teach them that such conversation is demoralizing; that it will actually do them harm; then, as they advance in years, they may dislike and despise it. Mothers, are there not some among you who advise your daughters as they depart from your side to attend some social gathering, to "make a mash," or who, upon their return inquire, "Did you make a mash?" What can a mother be thinking of when she makes such an inquiry? I beg of such a one (for there are those who do this) to pause, to consider what she encourages. You cannot reasonably expect your daughter to become a pure minded woman if you fail to be an example of such. The common slang is erroneously thought witty. True wit may be appreciated among sensible people, but slang never! I would challenge any one to discover anything ennobling, anything womanly, anything even witty about the use of what is now-a-days termed *gentle* slang; for there are those who despise the coarse expressions which so often fall from the lips of the street loafer, who appear to glory in such expressions as "going for him," "getting left," etc. Where shall we find as noble types of womanhood in the future as our past records furnish us if our girls do not rid themselves of this pernicious habit? To work a reformation we must begin with the mothers. Through them we may reach the daughters, hoping for the sons to follow. Let us marshal ourselves in one grand army, mothers and daughters leading the van; sons and brothers will not be willing to be found very far in the rear.—*Christian Intelligence.* ●

THE move of the French Chambers against the priests and nuns is interesting, both as persecution and a matter for philosophical debate. The priests and nuns, under the present system, are allowed to teach in public schools, and all people drawing money from the Government must send their children to these schools. The new law is supported entirely by atheists, who believe the human demand for religion to be a superstition, and only the effect of human teaching. The idea of such men as Gambette and Paul Bert was and is to emancipate the French from "the thralldom of religion." It is but fair to suppose these men are honest in their feelings. But at the same time it is also only fair to say that in America Nature has taught to her children a vastly different lesson. If we judge such a city as Paris by its works—"by their works ye shall know them"—we shall be horrified by the epicureanism, selfishness, sordid love of life, and superficiality which are impressed upon us. These are, then, the results of atheism. In America we behold a different state of the human mind. Is there a persistence here of the Asian and Athenian idea of a pantheistic state? Is there a religion in the air we breathe, and is there none in the Parisian air? For here the wisest men we have, hear within their hearts the

still small voice. These men pray for strength and are stronger. They pray for humility and they are more beloved among men, who thereafter heap greater honours upon them. Perhaps each nation has its self-love, but it seems to us, Americans, that the moral air is better here than in Paris. And if that be so, is it not because we have less of M. Paul Bert's exalted knowledge which is called atheism? We shall make war on the Church and make it with wisdom only after we have begun to envy the moral poise of the average French leader of thought, his amiability, his mercy, and his charity. *The Current.*

THE restoration of energy, which sleep alone can afford, is necessary for the maintenance of nervous vigour, and whereas the muscular system, if overtaxed, at least refuses to work, the brain under similar circumstances too frequently refuses to rest. The sufferer, instead of trying to remove or lessen the cause of his sleeplessness, comforts himself with the hope that it will soon disappear, or else has recourse to alcohol, morphia, the bromides, chloral, etc. Valuable and necessary as these remedies often are (I refer especially to the drugs), there can be no question as to the mischief which attends their frequent use, and there is much reason to fear that their employment in the absence of any medical authority is largely on the increase. Many of the "proprietary articles" sold by druggists and in great demand at the present day, owe their efficacy to one or more of these powerful drugs. Not a few deaths have been caused by their use, and in a still large number of cases they have helped to produce the fatal result. Sleeplessness is almost always accompanied by indigestion in some one or other of its protean forms, and the two conditions react upon and aggravate each other. If rest cannot be obtained, and if the vital machine cannot be supplied with a due amount of fuel, and moreover, fails to utilize that which it is supplied with, mental and bodily collapse cannot be far distant. The details of the downward process vary, but the result is much the same in all cases. Sleeplessness and loss of appetite are followed by loss of flesh and strength, nervous irritability alternating with depression, palpitation, and other derangements of the heart, especially at night, and many other symptoms grouped together under the old term "hypocondriasis." When this stage has been reached the "borderlands of insanity" are within measurable distance, even if they have not already been reached.—*Fortnightly Review.*

WHILE the desirability of connecting the training and certification of teachers with the universities is under consideration, it may be well to place before our readers what is being proposed in New Zealand. Writing on the subject of establishing degrees in pedagogy in the university, Sir Robert Stout (a southern statesman and educationist, whose opinions have been quoted on several occasions) observes as follows:—The subject in its fullest bearing is a very wide and important one, for at its root lies this question: Whether our university education should aim at training specialists or simply at general culture? Some contend that universities should have nothing to do with anything but the humanities; in other words, that the arts degrees are the only degrees that the university should confer. I do not say that there

are not many weighty arguments for such a position. It may be that it is outside the functions of a university to specialise knowledge; but in saying something about the nature of having degrees in pedagogy, I start with the assumption that a university should be an institution for the granting of degrees other than those for arts. There are such degrees as those of medicine, of law, and of music, not to mention the scientific degrees that can be conferred by it. What are these but certificates for special knowledge granted to candidates either before or after their arts course? Now, my proposal is to put the teaching profession exactly on the same platform as the medical, legal, and musical. We have recognized that before a man has a right to call himself a surgeon, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a musical expert, that he should pass a special examination, and the subjects in which he is to be examined are those specially dealing with the profession that he is afterwards to follow. I wish the university to examine teachers, and I desire that some of the subjects in which they are to be examined shall be those which the higher class of teachers at all events should be acquainted with. Can it be said that an arts course is sufficient for a teacher? It may be sufficient, and it may not. But if there are special branches that a teacher should be acquainted with, why should he not have his study directed to them and be examined in them? To my mind the study of mental science is as necessary for the properly-equipped teacher as the study of medicine for the doctor, or of common law for the lawyer. And then again, I think it should be our object in New Zealand to raise our teachers to a higher platform, to make them feel that they belong to a profession. Granting degrees in pedagogy is a means towards this end. I do not believe that our teaching profession has been recognized as it will have to be shortly in the future, if our education system is to be improved. Our young teachers should, if possible, be connected with the university, and then our schools and colleges would be vitalized with the higher educational life. It may be said that the normal schools will give all that is necessary to the teacher. I do not underrate the importance of normal schools; they are a necessity; but I believe that they, without professors dealing specially with logic, psychology, ethics, and the history and development of education, cannot give the tuition required. Even if they could do so, I still think that the university should grant degrees in pedagogy. For if degrees are to be granted in music on what plea can they be refused to teachers? The foregoing are some of my reasons, put in a very brief and condensed form, for moving at the last meeting of the senate for a recognition of the teaching profession by the university. In several American universities (the University of Missouri for example) there is a separate faculty, and degrees are conferred. Were our university to adopt my suggestion, I believe it would be a step in advance, and one that would tend to improve and perfect our education system, which though a noble one, is like all human institutions far from completeness. Indeed I believe considerable evil has been done in the past by it being thought that there is little room for progress in either the system or in methods of education in New Zealand.—*London, England, Schoolmaster.*