

CORRESPONDENCE.

We cannot be answerable for the opinions of our correspondents.

Contributions for the next number should be sent in by this day fortnight, written on *one* side of the paper only.

Contributions will be received at the *Advertiser* Office, or at Mr. Pepperday's, under cover to the "Editor of the *Meteor*."

To the Editor of the Meteor.

SIR,—We are all naturally anxious to celebrate the coming Tercentenary by improvements in matters connected with the welfare of the School. Allow me to make a suggestion of one way in which this may be done. At present all new fellows, on coming to the School, are compelled to wear a hat for a certain period, not in every case a Term, but always a sufficient number of weeks to make it very unpleasant. Why should not this custom be done away with?

The arguments in favour of keeping it up, at least as far as I have heard, are these:—

1. It is an old custom. 2. It reduces new fellows to a sense of their inferiority. 3. It enables new fellows to be recognised at once. I believe that some go so far as to argue that the evils which you yourself have endured, should likewise be endured by others; this, however, is so utterly absurd on the face of it, that it requires no answer. In reply to the first argument stated, I would say—We have not stood still in other respects; then why in this? If an old custom cannot distinctly be proved good, why retain it simply because it is old? Next I beg to remark, that it simply bores new fellows. If they are, as indeed they sometimes are, conceited when they come, the conceit is speedily taken out of them. If on the other hand, they are sufficiently humble, it only depresses them.

I will allow, in the third place, that it is a most effectual means of distinguishing new boys; but as there are others equally effective and less disagreeable, by which the same object may be arrived at, I confess I cannot see why it should be retained.

I would suggest that, as it is desirable to distinguish new boys—though I have heard some even deny this—there should be an universal rule that they should all wear black straw hats for the first year. If that is too great an innovation, that they should wear the old black riband on a grey straw hat. It would be perfectly easy to mark the distinction between them and those who are in mourning, by adopting for the latter a crape band round the straw. Lastly, they might

wear their house colours arranged somewhat differently to the usual pattern. These are, of course, merely suggestions; the matter must be reserved for mature deliberation. But the main point is to have abolished the compulsory wearing of hats by new fellows. There can be no doubt that the hat is a decided nuisance at any time, but especially in summer, and only an encouragement to others to knock it about. In fact, I should say that among small fellows the new boys are marked out to be bullied thus.

I have stated the case but imperfectly. My main object is to bring the matter before the consideration of the School. I will therefore conclude with expressing a hope that this year may see the abolition of that bugbear of new fellows, the hat.

I am, Sir, yours, &c,
A. H. ST. V.

To the Editor of the Meteor.

SIR,—The subject discussed by "K." in your last has been too long neglected; it is to be hoped that, thanks to his initiative, it will now receive the attention it deserves.

Our Hymn-book contains sixty-seven tunes; of these not more than thirty are worthy of notice; of the thirty, some six or seven are proper to particular seasons, and cannot therefore be sung on ordinary occasions. There are, then about two dozen tunes available for general use. Among the best of these are Crasselius, Angel's Hymn, and Wareham ("K.'s" opinion to the contrary notwithstanding); the first, moreover, is almost the only tune in the book which is correctly given.*

Nor is "K." quite right in his statement

* The tune Crasselius (Rugby School Hymn-book p. 48) is taken from Havergal's "Old Church Psalmody," p. 7. Mr. Havergal states the author to be "Crasselius, a Lutheran Presbyter, at Düsseldorf, cir. 1650," but he does not give his authority. The tune is evidently a contraction of that given on p. 23 of Filitz's "Choralbuch," the melody of which is there attributed to Freilinghausen, and dated 1704; and this again is but an abbreviation of a still longer form given as No. 63 in the "Choral Book for England," which was composed by Rosemüller or by Hintze. The German melody was naturalised among us long before "Crasselius" appeared. A tune known as "Winchester New," L.M., triple time, that came into general use about the middle of the last century, and which is still popular, is also derived from No. 63 of the "Choral Book for England," or from one of its shorter forms. "Winchester New" first appeared in "A Collection of Tunes in three parts," published by Thos. Knibb, some time before 1759. In some collections it is called "Frankfort," a name indicating its German origin. It is worthy of note that "Crasselius" resembles "Winchester New" much more nearly than it does the German tunes, from which we may conclude that the former is but the latter revised.

as to the very frequent repetition of these three tunes. During last term thirty-three tunes (not "about six" as "K." asserts) were sung in the Chapel service, for which no less than sixty-five psalms and hymns were required. If "K." will examine his hymn-book he will find that not a few of the tunes are set to four, and even five, psalms or hymns; repetition is, therefore, unavoidable, and, provided the thing repeated be good, is, I venture to think, unobjectionable. It is not desirable that we should emulate those arrant psalm-singers, the Puritans of New England, who, for generations limited themselves to five tunes; but the "variety" and "prettiness" for which "K." yearns, certainly ought not to be introduced for their own sakes. Some variety is necessary to prevent weariness, but too much change would result in the hymns not being sung at all; for a large number of hymns could not be learnt, or, if learnt, could not be remembered. Neither should prettiness, apart from real musical worth, recommend a tune, because the direct tendency of such music is to corrupt the taste, and to produce a coarse style of singing. Cranbrook, Shirland, and Miles Lane are tunes which a large section of the School would pronounce to be "awfully jolly;" but surely "K." would not pander to *such* a taste! To do so would be an æsthetic crime.

But it is possible to avoid mere prettiness and undue variety without falling into dullness and monotony. There are enough and to spare of standard English tunes having abundance of melody; let these form the bulk of our new book, there will then be no need of the leaden heaviness of the chorale, of the fripperies of the conventicle, or of the wretched tinkering to be met with in the book we now use, which is a marvel in everything but merit.

"K." has pointed out some doggerel rhymes; he might have shown that which is worse,—much unwarrantable alteration in the text of the hymns, unaccompanied by the slightest indication that the originals have been *improved*.

The following remark by the Rev. Henry Parr is applicable not only to most of the tunes, but to many of the hymns:—"The systematic alteration of other men's compositions is both wrong in itself and mischievous in its effects. For the first, it does injustice to the author; as to the second, it deceives and misleads the public."

I am, yours &c.,

E.

To the Editor of the Meteor.

SIR,—The reaction of feeling in the School against the Chapel Hymn-book is at present so strong, that I fear your correspondent "K" expresses a somewhat general tendency to do injustice to the collection; which, though it has the disadvantages of a work hurriedly compiled, contains many exceedingly beautiful specimens. To condemn it as worthless is, moreover, a piece of ingratitude towards the two gentlemen who once lent their unerring taste and musical skill to aid in the compilation of our Hymn-book, and who now guide our tenors and basses in performing the tunes which it contains, adding that strength and breadth which maturer years alone give to the voice. "K.'s" first objection is, that we hear six hymns perpetually, and that those six are poor ones. Now, sir, granting for the sake of argument, that this is the case, I would submit, that to have six poor specimens selected and tediously repeated is not a fault characteristic of this book in particular, but a misfortune which might happen to any collection of homns whatever; and one, too which would inevitably create a prejudice against it, however good it might be. I am also in doubt as to whether any hymns could be efficiently given, if the choir singing them were not provided with notes to aid nature in keeping them to their parts. The charge of quaintness against the paraphrase quoted by "K," is one which would, I fear, apply equally to the original of David; the latter runs "For many dogs have come about me . . . I may tell all my bones; they stand staring and looking upon Me." Psalm xxii. v. 16-17. And yet this (which is by no means the quaintest passage in the Psalms) is sung by those "modern congregations," which boast the latest Ecclesiastical improvements. The same remark would in some degree apply to the second passage quoted: "When John the Apostle heard the fame," etc.; which by the bye, as "K." remarks, is never sung, and therefore cannot be very distressing. I think all will agree with "K," that we want a new Hymn-book, especially as the more important half of the old one, the music, has been omitted in all the copies which have been sold lately; but I do not think that "K.'s" epithets,—"ludicrous," "profane," or "distressing," can justly be applied to any part of the work from which we have sung for years, and to which some of us at least have become not a little attached.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

X. O. R.

To the Editor of the Meteor.

Cambridge, 7th June, 1867.

SIR,—I am an Old Rugbeian, and therefore possess an immemorial right of picking holes in Rugby. When I say further, that my attachment to Rugby can only be fitly described as passionate, and that my interest in it is yearly and daily on the increase, I shall have effectually secured myself against any presumption of malice or cynicism.

The virtue of patriotism is very strong and very deeply rooted in Rugby, as in all institutions or societies with any past or any present nobleness. It is no transient sentiment, doomed to be extinguished by a wider education or experience; it is a vital and vivifying enthusiasm, founded on a deep and pervading gratitude, and only in the meanest minds is it ever dormant or temporary.

As is the feeling of Rugbeians for Rugby, so, and often even stronger, is the feeling of the members of each House for their own more limited society. And here, as there, its good effects are beyond praise. It promotes sympathy, generosity, self-sacrifice; it stimulates and inspires to effort in all departments of activity.

But it is every day more and more forced upon my mind that its good effects are not all. Along with the genuine virtue there has arisen a spurious patriotism, often so externally similar that it is hard to say what is wheat and what is tares, but productive of really pernicious results, and rendering nugatory what would otherwise be incalculably beneficial. It is against the false and not the true patriotism that I wish to raise my voice.

As regards the extreme development of house-feeling which inculcates the hatred and contempt of all other Houses as the first article of belief, I need not dwell long upon that. It only needs to be stated in black and white to reveal its utter irreclaimable baseness. And of course no one really holds this belief in any effective way; it is too absurd. But I am speaking seriously when I say, that it is only the same dogma, developed to its fullest growth, that forms an integral part of the creed of a large number of Rugbeians.

What can be more absurd, for instance, than the bar which public opinion puts upon free intercourse between the Houses? When I speak of public opinion, I mean of course not the enlightened minority, who regret these obstacles as much as I do, but the

feeling of the mass. And there can be no doubt that real freedom of intercourse is discouraged and discountenanced, if not practically prohibited. What is more natural, on the principle of elective affinities—a principle older even than Rugby—than that a fellow's best friend should be in another House! And yet, unless he is able to disregard the populace, how seldom would he dare to visit his friend's study? I know it will be said that to choose your friends in another House, when it is so much more natural that you should be intimate with your own House, is a proof, at the very best, of a cantankerous disposition. And to prove this, instances will be adduced—or would be if it were not too personal—which *primâ facie* appear to be weighty. But, sir, this is only the result of the very thing I complain of. *Why* is it "natural" to choose your friends in your own House? Because society practically debars you from forming real intimacies elsewhere. And of course, where that is so, it necessarily follows that some of those who do seek friends in other Houses are either unable to find friends in their own, or have a peculiar disposition.

The Houses must necessarily live much apart; and living apart must necessarily develop different virtues in different proportions. Nothing could be more beneficial in every way than the freest intercourse and the freest interchange of opinions. Those of similar tastes would find sympathy and encouragement from each other, where now they are not unfrequently damped by isolation, if not too commonly by contempt. Those in each House who struggle against vice and evil of all sorts, and do what in them lies to leave their House better than they found it, would have their hands strengthened by union and sympathy with similar labourers in other Houses. In short I believe that morally, intellectually, and socially alike, the advantage would be incalculable. And it would be gained, I am confident, without the loss of anything the least valuable. The generous rivalry would be quite as eager as ever, while it would lose much of its pitiable narrow-mindedness, and all its brutality. That both of these qualities are on the wane, we have every reason to hope; but it is quite certain that they are neither of them extinct yet.

Hoping for criticism,

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

COSMOPOLITAN.

To the Editor of the Meteor.

SIR,—I am a monomaniac. My monomania is about 23 hours old. It allowed me no sleep last night, and naturally I wish to get rid of it. I hope to do this by writing to you. It consists in wondering why all who uphold the perfection of Rugby, have still to allow that there is no boating here: and this, when there is within a mile-and-a-half of the School gates, a canal, which no doubt its proprietors would be glad to let the use of to the School, and which would do admirably for a bumping race. Objections innumerable of course there are. My present state of mind only allows me to see two; the barges, and turning. With a little care a barge could be passed, except at the bridges, and one or two other places, in any part of the canal; and as far as my experience of barge-men goes, they would willingly stop on exceptional cases for races, for a consideration. As to turning, there are many places on the canal where a four oar, and several where an eight oar could turn.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WHEEL-HIM-TO-THE-POUND.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We must refer hundreds of letters in favour of a new Chapel to higher quarters. All that the *Meteor* can do is to give its vote for re-building.

“A Coal.”—We fear your proposition would not find favour.

“Chorister.”—Is the Chapel Hymn-book out of print? We can see no reason for re-publishing it by instalments in our columns.

“Woolwich.”—Your victim has been already sufficiently punished.

“A former Member of the Choir,” and “A former Member of the Choir.”—You will see that this number is full of your subject.

“A constant Reader.”—We were obliged to apply to your letter the precaution attached to your name.

“O. R.”—Your subject is mentioned in this number.

“Olim Victor.”—We hope you will be satisfied by seeing your signature in print.

“M. or N.”—Your style is unexceptionable. Could you not find a subject to write to us upon?

“Centipede.”—Why not join the Natural History Society?

“H. E.”—We must reserve your letter for a future number.

THE RIFLE CORPS.

Target Practice has been going on vigorously for the last month with the new Hay rifles, which are much liked. The shooting is much better than it was last year, but there is still plenty of room for improvement. The Baldwin Challenge Cup has been shot for twice this Term, and was won the first time by Private Penrose, after shooting a tie with Lance-corporal Acland, with a total of 40; the 2nd time it was won by Lieutenant Graham, in a perfect hurricane, which quite prevented high scores: on the latter occasion Private Whiting was three ahead, but was handicapped six, which lost him the Cup. There is to be a match with the Town Corps on Thursday (this day) on which occasion the XI. will consist of Captain Tobin, Lieutenant Graham, Sergeant Major Walker, Sergeant Piercy, Lance Corporals Acland, Forster, Humphry, privates Crowdy, Fletcher, Penrose, Whiting. The Wimbledon shooting will, in all probability, be in the week commencing Monday, July 8th.