

CORRESPONDENCE.

We cannot be answerable for the opinions of our correspondents.

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

SUPERANNUATION.

To the Editor of the *Meteor*.

SIR,—I hope you will pardon my presumption if I venture to suggest a solution of the problem with which your genius has failed to cope. But I think that the question which was started by your correspondent "Anti-super-Education" is so important that it well deserves a frank discussion. And in offering a few remarks upon the rules of Superannuation, I wish it to be understood that I am speaking solely from my own experience, and do not pretend to give an explanation which shall represent the opinions either of those who approve of the rules, or of those who are opposed to them.

Though I was not superannuated myself, I confess I sympathize most strongly with the feelings of your correspondent. I am quite certain that there are cases in which moral worth cannot be measured by intellectual development. I know that there are many fellows who cannot imbibe the elegancies of the Classics, or dive into the mysteries of Mathematics,—who are the stumbling-blocks of Form Masters and the despair of their Tutors,—and who, nevertheless, are burning and shining lights in their House and their School, the unfailing supporters of all that is manly and noble, and whose unconscious influence may be traced far beyond the circle in which they have moved, long after they have left.

But though I am quite willing to allow all this, I would ask any impartial Rugbeian whether he can assert that this is true in the majority of cases? And if it be not true, I can see two strong reasons for supporting the rules of Superannuation,—the one intellectual, the other moral.

I trust that I am as little inclined as any one to attach an extravagant value to mere force of intellect. But if a School is anything at all, it is a place of education. If, therefore, those who come to it do not choose to conform to its principle,—do not suffer themselves to be educated,—I think that the School has a perfect right to say "You are not doing your duty by me. You come here

professing to learn, and you obstinately refuse to learn anything. I consider that you have no longer any claims upon me. You must go." Now I maintain that this is what takes place in the majority of cases. A fellow without brains, instead of working doubly hard to make up the deficiency, generally takes the other line, and says "It is no use working; I shall never be a swell. Much better give up work altogether, and stick to football and cricket; I shall, perhaps, be a swell at those. Blow Education!" Has a fellow like this any right to remain at a Public School?

I contend, then, that if Superannuation rules were designed to make the idle industrious, there is every probability that they will effect their object. Nor do I think that it can be justly said that their working is unfair, for I should fancy that the number of really industrious fellows who cannot get out of the Middle School by 16 must be very small. That there are exceptions I have already allowed, and regret as much as anyone; but I do not see how it is possible to make rules to which there shall be no exceptions.

Lest your correspondent should be still unconvinced by what I have said, I would add the following anecdote. At the time when I got into the Lower V. there was in it a very clever fellow, about 18 years of age, who had been bottom the half before. One day I happened to ask him how it was that he had been so low the preceding half? "Why," he said, "this is how it was. The first paper which we had in Long List was an Unseen Paper, and early the next morning — called me and up and said 'Jones, you have done the best Unseen Paper in the whole Form; if you do your other Papers half as well you are certain to get out.' You may fancy what a fright I was in. The bare thought of the Upper V. and Long Copies made my blood run cold, so for the next four papers I sent up *four blanks running!* No, no! I know a good thing when I've got it, and you won't catch me leaving the Lower V. as long as I stay at Rugby." Could the force of absurdity further go? Here was a clever fellow, who might have been in the VI., taking as much trouble to avoid promotion as most fellows take to win promotion! Ought such a paradox to be possible at any really good School?

So much for the first reason. And now for the second, which in my opinion is by far the most important. I think that, as a

rule, big, backward fellows are fatally injurious to the morals of a school. Here again I willingly admit that there are striking exceptions: I am speaking of the majority of cases. It would take too long to discuss all the causes of this, but I may point to two obvious reasons. In the first place big, backward fellows are generally idle, and we all know the verses about idle hands finding some mischief still to do. In the second place, they have no sense of responsibility; they have no character to maintain like fellows in the Upper V. and Twenty; no one looks to them to set a good example to the small boys with whom they associate, and so they generally reverse the matter and set a bad example. They become the leaders of those who are younger and smaller than themselves, and having just wit enough to learn what is bad, are apt tutors in poisoning the minds of others. That this has been the case at Rugby in bygone days no one who has read "Tom Brown" can deny—nay, during my first half at Rugby the Lower Middle was infected with two or three such characters. I remember the language which I used to hear at "Anstey's Hole" when I bathed there; and I remember the ducking which I got from one of these big monsters because I could not repress my disgust at his words and gestures. Happily your readers are ignorant of all this: but let me advise them not to rail at a Superannuation system till they have heard what are the evils which it removes.

I think I have said enough about the general question: I will now address myself to the special grievances of your correspondent. I am not quite sure that I understand his first complaint. Does he complain that he did not know of the existence of a matriculation? or does he complain that there is a matriculation at all? I can scarcely suppose that he means the former. But if he means the latter, let me ask him to answer this question: Rugby is a favoured School; it can have the pick of some of the best material in England; it is compelled to reject numerous applications: under such circumstances, ought it to take any fellow who turns up? is it not bound, in justice to itself, to select those whom it thinks most likely to reflect credit on itself and its system? is it fair to expect that it should crowd its forms with fellows who can scarcely stumble through the Latin irregular verbs? Your correspondent dwells on the fact that he and his father were at Rugby. If he

means to imply that he would like a system of patronage and favouritism, I respectfully submit that he ought to apply to Charterhouse and not to Rugby.

As to your correspondent's second complaint, I venture to think that under the circumstances it would have been more judicious in him if he had not sent his son to Rugby at all. If he knew the rules of Superannuation, he must have known that it was impossible for his son to get out of the Lower Middle into the Upper School between 15½ and 16; and I should, therefore, (had I been in your correspondent's place) have sent him to some school where the rules were less rigorous. Lastly, I venture to think, from my acquaintance both with Rugby and with Oxford, that any fellow who was still in the Lower Middle at 16, would not have much chance of entering any more eminent College at Oxford than St. Mary's Hall or New Town Hall.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,
A. BABINGTON.

To the Editor of the Meteor.

SIR,—I am glad to find that someone has thought it worth while to reply to my letter on the new fellows' hat. Criticism must always be acceptable, and, indeed, to a certain extent valuable, even when it only serves as a means by which aspiring genius may hurl its satire at the unfortunate originators of a new idea.

I had hoped, on first seeing the letter of your correspondent, to find in it some practical suggestion with regard to the proposed change, or, at least, a valid objection against it. I was, however, disappointed after reading through a page of specious and ungrammatical verbosity, to find that the subject remained almost precisely where I left it. There is, in fact, but little to reply to in his effusion,—so I shall not trouble you with many new remarks. Let me begin, however, by saying that, if an "Utter Fool" had only condescended so far as to defend the objections which I raised against the continuance of the wearing of the hat by new fellows, he would have advanced the matter a stage, by, perhaps, presenting it in a somewhat different light. Instead, he merely offers an opinion—doubtless a very valuable one, but which I feel some hesitation in adopting—unbacked as it is by any evidence. Perhaps I ought not to suspect that he could have discussed the matter properly, as, by his own confession, he is unable to see the force of argument.

Still, one cannot help thinking that if he is the "Utter Fool" he represents himself to be, it would have been more prudent, not to say more desirable, if he had withheld his impressions from the public.

It is evident to anyone who will consider the matter that, so far as the question of bullying goes, it is the hat which really brings the annoyance upon the wearer, and not usually the wearer upon himself. The hat, by its peculiarity, must at once attract notice, and so subject its wearer to annoyance. I do not think the point,—that it is an efficient means of curbing conceited individuals, is worth much. Really they are very few who do not get conceit taken out of them in other ways; and it seems unfair to subject the majority to a nuisance, when it is the minority who deserve it. I should be inclined to suppose that your correspondent, on first coming to Rugby, did not receive as much of that estimable system of education, "taking down," as was good for him—and so he does not know in how different ways it may be effected.

He proceeds to assert that the discomfort of wearing a hat is small,—that, on the face of it is so wilful a mis-statement that it requires no answer. A few lines lower down we are informed, in eloquent language, that Rugby is dependent for its very existence upon traditions—and we are then requested to class among them the wearing of a hat by new fellows. No one has a deeper respect for this place than I have; but I was unaware that my respect should be grounded in any degree upon reverence for the new fellows' hats.

The pith of his letter is contained in the last few lines, which do, fortunately, admit of some reply. Apparently, he argues that as the hat is only worn for a short time, it should therefore always be worn. Whereas, surely he must allow that if the wisdom of our predecessors, which he inductively praises, has seen fit gradually to lessen the time for which new fellows are to wear a hat, it becomes us no less to improve upon their rules, and by degrees abolish it entirely.

It is very amusing to notice the high-minded tone he assumes upon the moral and beneficial side of the question. Can you tell us, Sir, what that side is? Such a tone is most proper. I can only regret, for my part, that I have awakened the pious horror of such an utter fool by my "benevolent philanthropy" and "noble disinterestedness."

I have the honour, etc.,

A. H. ST. V.

P.S.—On reading your correspondent's letter a second time, I find that he complains of my having stated the hat to be a bad institution without proving it. I think the following objections are tolerably valid:—The hat is an expensive, faulty, disagreeable, and untidy distinction. Expensive—because a hat costs three times as much as a straw, which would, I believe, last as long as a new fellow's hat. Faulty—because it is a great nuisance to many, while it is not an efficient check upon the conceited few. Disagreeable—especially in hot weather—because it must be worn, frequently, in the case of those whose houses are at some distance from the schools, in the interval between lessons, as well as whenever they want to go into the town. In winter, at punt-about, there are usually lots of fellows in hats, who doubtless would prefer house caps if they had time to get them. Untidy—because no one cares to keep his hat neat, when he knows that it will probably be knocked off in the course of his walk down to lessons.

To the Editor of the Meteor.

SIR,—The letter of "Cosmopolitan," in your number of June 13, complains that house feeling tends to displace school feeling, and is a bad substitute for it. Your leading article in the following number justly remarks, that this exaggeration of the importance of houses, and disintegration of the School, are a growth of modern times.

Nothing is more interesting than the examination of the changes of what we call *feeling*, when conducted with a view to ascertain their causes, and to guide them for the good of the School. Some changes creep in upon us we know not how, for the School reflects from decade to decade the state of English Society, and this has undergone great changes. The marked revolution in the tone of this place thirty years ago was commonly attributed to the personal influence of Dr. Arnold. It was rightly so attributed; but it has been remarked that he had the approval of the whole of society to assist him. At the present moment the increase in the refinement and softening of manners and customs in the School indicates a national as well as a local progress: the exaggeration of the importance of games is a sign of a national as well as a local depreciation, for the time being, of the highest objects of culture.

But the change spoken of in your article, and deplored by your correspondent, has a different origin. It arises from the gradual

destruction of the old balance of influences at work in the School. And wise legislators, be they masters or boys, must study this balance of influences; and, when one side is preponderating by a growth irresistible by local efforts, not merely notice the fact and deplore it and abuse modern times, but aim at establishing counter influences.

The increased importance of games is the main cause of the growth of house feeling. A new boy becomes a member of a community which is pledged to fight shoulder to shoulder for the honour of the house; the equality among the houses renders the competition close: the keenness with which success is desired makes it exciting. He is a member of no other club, of no other society that demands his co-operation, his self-sacrifice, his enthusiasm. The mere contiguity in study and hall and bedroom induces familiarity and friendship; but the clanship of the close is the strongest bond. There they are fellow-soldiers, united in mutual confidence, fighting for a common cause. When the School has a common cause, how closely are the members of the houses drawn together! A member of the Eleven feels his interests instantly widened. Your light blue is the truest cosmopolitan. His sympathies with the Eleven are greater than those with his house. A school Twenty, with a common object, would similarly enfranchise the distinguished caps.

Institutions must therefore be sought, which will unite the interests of the houses, and give them a common cause. Any school society or institution, in which the houses are totally lost sight of, is valuable; and it is obvious that we want more of such societies. Such an influence is pre-eminently the School Chapel. Such also are the School lessons, the School Choir, the School Eleven, the School Rifle Corps. Such, in its degree, is the Natural History Society; such is the *Meteor*, which, thanks to you, Sir, is a "cosmopolitan" magazine. Such would be the Debating Society if it existed; such would be an Essay or Literary Society of any kind. Such may be, if the School will make it so, the establishment of the School reading-room in the Arnold Library. It may become the focus of the intellectual interests of the School. There all may meet as fellow students. For the younger boys a house is a sufficiently large society. The seniors should aim incessantly at increasing the facilities for their intercommunion as members, not of houses, but of the School. This must be one of the

influences to counteract the disjoining effects of rivalry in the games.

Again, the existence of *house caps* and *house ribbons*, coupled with the non-existence of any *school cap* or *school ribbons*, is a significant and by no means unimportant fact. *Feeling* is the result, not of mysterious causes, but of past and present institutions. It cannot be doubted that the fact of the houses distinguishing themselves by dress has a considerable influence on the School in the long run. House caps—the undress—might be tolerated on account of their usefulness in the close as marks of distinction, where distinction is wanted; but straw hats are not very useful for this purpose. I hope this suggestion will be candidly considered when the vexed question of straw hats is discussed, settled as it must be ere long.

It would be easy to point out how the acceptance of these principles should influence legislation on a variety of subjects,—a "Radical's" scheme among them. But I will not trespass further on your space; and beg to subscribe myself,

Your obedient servant,
SENIOR.

To the Editor of the Meteor.

SIR,—I hear that the mission of the *Meteor* which has shot its beneficent rays across the sky of Rugby is to reform every kind of abuse, and to bring everything connected with Rugby up to that pink of perfection, which should befit the celebration of its Tercentenary. I wish it to pierce into a dark subject which the rays of ordinary luminaries have hitherto failed to approach.

It is this, Sir. In our day there was a nasty spirit prevailing in the lower strata of the School. There were some who were not content with affecting to raise class distinctions between those who were all alike Rugbeians, but vented the spleen of mean jealousy on the cleverer town-louts, who happened to get above them in form. They did not openly kick them, but kept up a kind of under-hand bullying, making irritating allusions to the occupations of their parents. I do not mean to say, Sir, that I suffered from this myself, as from the fact of my never rising above the Second Form, I did not excite the jealousy of any very important section of the School, and moreover, I was so thick-skinned that I did not care a screw for being called "pill-maker's devil," or "Holloway's-ointment-distiller," or any other appellative, reflecting on the honourable

trade of a chemist, the hereditary business of my family. But I knew some of my contemporaries, equally inferior in social position, but both cleverer and more sensitive than myself, who had all their prospects of rising in life, and of doing some honour to the name of Rugbeians, cut off through the despicable tyranny of some "sons of guns," who employed a perpetual system of petty annoyance to drive the poor creatures out of the School.

Now, Sir, I do not for one moment wish to insinuate that there could be any depths of meanness so low as this in the year of grace 1867, in the fourth month of the existence of the *Meteor*, but I thought it was possible there might be some, in a school of 500, who, not being gentlemen in the higher sense of of the term, might try to substantiate their claims to mix in good society, not by showing the highbred courtesy, which desires to put others at their ease, but by cringing to the rich, and turning up their noses at the poor.

I hope no offence, if I add that inasmuch as you, Sir, are confessedly the only organ of the School, I trust, you are not a mere barrel-organ, with a set of stereotyped tunes, but that you can extemporize some soul-stirring air which will drum all such offenders out of "Arnold's Own;" and that if you have any barrel at all you will use it to shoot down the skulking foes of enlightenment. But I cease, for I fear you may not agree with me on a point of æsthetics, that all metaphors should be well mixed before they are taken.

I send, as in duty bound, a tithe of my pay (as Capt. of H.M.'s Own Shoeblock Brigade) to the Tercentenary fund, and the pair of boots with which I should like to have it down with any of the pseudo-aristocratic snobs I have alluded to, and have the honour to subscribe myself,

Faithfully yours,

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

To the Editor of the *Meteor*.

Rugby, 13th July, 1867.

SIR,—The game goes merrily forward. The most advanced ideas are propounded by "Four Years," with a brisk and cheerful audacity that is quite refreshing. But more than that. The re-actionaries who desire to maintain that long-condemned abomination, the new boy's hat, have adopted a new tone. The change is significant. They were contemptuous. They have become deprecatory.

They were blustering. They have become plaintive.

"An Utter Fool" (it is his own name) may be left to the tender mercies of "A. H. St. V." The only difficulty in replying to him is, the difficulty of conceiving that any person could really be influenced by such arguments as he submits. And, indeed, it is plain that it was not from such considerations that "An Utter Fool" and his friends arrived at their opinions. They find in their minds a conservative sentiment in favour of the existing system. They hammer out their arguments *ex postfacto*. Effect a change in the old custom, and in a few months these weighty supporters will be found on the side of the new.

Such conservatism is, in my view, very like ivy. It is sombre, it is imposing, it is ever green. It attaches itself to all structures of any age, perhaps by preference to rotten ones. And while it is no real support to anything, its function is to keep together in a fallacious and precarious consistency, an edifice too mouldy and obsolete to be of any use to anybody.

It is of immense advantage to the progress of truth and common sense that "Utter Fools" should be induced to state their case. When they do so, it is odd how different it looks on paper, in ruthless black and white, compared with its seeming cogency when discussed in the wise circle of sympathizing friends. And when riddled by "A. H. St. V.," I have no doubt it will be made to look more different still.

Now, Sir, my object in writing to you is to ask, can we not induce the supporters of others of these childish and tedious distinctions, to shew cause why they should be maintained? In some cases there may be good cause; in others there may be specious pleas, destined to collapse upon examination; others will be found hopelessly bad from the first. In any case discussion will be a clear and unmixed gain to everybody.

For instance, as "Four Years" forcibly asks, why should not this hat grievance be abolished altogether? Why should special privileges in dress be reserved by law or custom for "swells?" Why should flowers (if you will excuse the bull) be to anybody a forbidden fruit? Why should young aspirants to knowledge be at any time debarred from the Hall newspapers, especially when they pay for them? And these are not all. There are many other customs still prevalent, at once petty and vexatious, which

ought to have died a natural death long ago. The old creed, that a new boy is an inferior animal, who should be taught his inferiority by having his life made a burden to him, is not, we hope, to be found as a really living and professed tenet. But it can yet be traced in many of the stock opinions and threadbare stock phrases still in vogue. The creed, I say, is dead. But the defunct and putrescent dogma still pollutes the air.

The real belief of these Conservatives may be analysed into two main articles.

1. That new boys are "coxy" and must be humbled.
2. That these old privileges constitute the splendour and glory of the place.

Now, Sir, (1) is directly and distinctly contrary to experience. The majority of new boys are timid, and even over-anxious to learn the ways of the place, and if some do seem "coxy" (I use that detestable appellation under protest) it is more often awkwardness than vanity. The really loathsome object (which one has quite enough chances of observing) is the Rugbeian of some standing, who has learnt nothing at Rugby but to despise those of his fellows in whom arrogance and conceit are less indurated.

Against (2) also I am equally anxious to proclaim my fervent hostility. Whatever excellence we have here, is certainly not bound up with any old customs at all; except indeed the old customs of uprightness, energy, and goodwill, which are assuredly not promoted by these petulant and contemptible follies.

What we want, Sir, is a more active and penetrating civilisation: a civilisation to remove all social obstacles, to clear away all stumbling-blocks, hindrances, and restrictions: to promote helpfulness, kindness, culture, spirit, and freedom. We want it to be impossible that any young enthusiasm should be checked, as it is so often and so disastrously checked. We want to condemn all roughness and vulgarity of mind, if possible, to extinction, if not, at any rate to obscurity. The spirit which desires to maintain those puerile frivolities will be found fighting against us on the broader issue also. For it is a spirit born of the meanness and selfishness of a few, and fostered by the unreflecting conservatism of the multitude.

Therefore it is, Sir, that we look for your enlightened aid and countenance in this

struggle between stagnation and progress, between the bigot and the

COSMOPOLITAN.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Macedonicus," and "E."—We are sorry we have not room for your letter in this number.

"Ignoramus."—Your letter will appear in the first number of next Term, when we think it will produce more effect than at the end of this.

"L. W."—We will endeavour to insert your letter before the next Speech-Day.

"A Blakeite."—We have not room for more than a note on your subject this number.

"A.D.A.M."—Your letter will appear in our first number next Term.

CRICKET.

THE SCHOOL V. RUGBY CLUB.—This, the return match, was played in the Close on Saturday, July 6th. Notwithstanding the absence of Pauncefote and Wilkes—two of our best batsmen—the School made an exceedingly good show of batting, the captain for the time being taking the lead with a finely played 72. Stokes and Tobin, ma., Steward and Gardner, also showed some very good batting. The Clubs' prospects did not look very flourishing, losing three wickets in 25 minutes. Score:—

RUGBY SCHOOL.

F. Stokes, c Willes, b Carles ..	57
W. Yardley, c Swainson, b Buchanan ..	2
J. T. Soutter, b Buchanan ..	4
S. P. Bucknill, c and b Buchanan ..	72
F. Tobin ma., c and b Raven ..	45
G. E. Steward, not out ..	34
F. Tobin mi., c and b Raven ..	12
J. W. Gardner, c Mordaunt, b Buchanan ..	30
V. Ellis, c Buchanan ..	6
C. K. Francis, b Buchanan ..	13
A. A. Bourne, c Browne, b Buchanan ..	0
Byes 15, 1-b 3, w 13 ..	31
Total	307