

For the JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.]

SUPERANNUATION.

Although this subject has not been debated before the various Institutes, still I think a few remarks on it will not be out of place. What superannuation means everyone knows. In the civil service of Canada it has been abused by both political parties. There are to-day men on superannuation allowance who are hale and hearty—men who physically and mentally are capable of performing the duties of the office which they were compelled to leave.

I am opposed to the system in any occupation or profession. * * * Who are the men who have produced wealth in the country? Are they not the ones that earn their bread by the sweat of their brow? Do not our farmers, our mechanics, our working men, have the first claim to a superannuation allowance, if we consider the question fairly? We never hear of superannuation for them. Many persons never think about our steady laborers. But let them cease producing and they will see who are the backbone of the country. "Honest labor wears a lovely face." If we must have superannuation let us give it where most deserved.

If it be a good thing let it be general. What, then, will be the state of affairs. By it no more wealth will be produced in the country, perhaps less, as the money in the hands of some, the workmen, would probably bring a better return than an ordinary investment. By it, then, the country is not benefited. In fact no benefit will accrue to any one except the improvident, the careless, the lazy man, who is hoping for the day to come when he will receive his allowance.

If strikes be a good thing let them be general. All will get more wages, but we will not be any better off. Why? Because we must pay more for the articles we buy as the cost of production is increased by the increase in wages.

Every man ought to be able to save something be it ever so little. Many when they look forward to the time when the superannuation fund will be available will forget this. They know that a certain sum will be theirs and they take the world easy. They live from hand to mouth, as it were. They forget that they will be old, that a time will come when they cannot work. Ant-like they should lay in a store for winter.

Is there a teacher, male or female, that cannot lay by fifty dollars a year? At your present style of living you may not be able to do so, but if you curtail a few unnecessary expenses, in nine cases out of ten you will succeed. Can you picture a more pitiable sight than that of a man who goes on from year to year spending all he makes and sometimes more?

Each person must pay a certain amount to raise the fund, hence to the majority who save a little year by year it will be of no benefit whatever. Part of their saving must go into the fund. It is true that they will get a return, but at the most each one cannot get more than he paid in, with perhaps a very slight interest, as there must be some expenses. Therefore getting no more than I would have saved in the shape of principal and losing some in expenses, I, the saving one, am not so well off.

Perhaps you will say that each one will get more than he paid in. How can he? Each one pays in; each one will draw on the fund; where, then, is the extra amount to come from? Some may die off without drawing therefrom. Is it fair to compel a man to pay money and then in case of his death to pay nothing to his family? It is, then, only a benefit to a few who are not worthy of it. If our spiritual welfare is in our own hands, was it ever intended that our temporal welfare should be partly in the hands of others?

How many of our teachers make teaching a life

work? The majority of them are represented by the fair sex, who generally leave it for the field of matrimony. Is it just to compel these to pay a sum of money from which they can reap no benefit? Is it advisable to put a premium on improvidence and carelessness? Are we not possessed of sufficient manhood to scorn leaning on any one? Who does not believe in independence? *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* J. W. H.

THE BULRUSH CATERPILLAR.

Among the most curious productions of New Zealand is the singular plant (called by the natives *Achelo*), the *Spharia Robertia*, or bulrush caterpillar. If nature ever takes revenge, one might imagine this to be a case of retaliation. Caterpillars live upon plants, devouring not only leaves, but bark, fruit, pith, root, and seeds; in short every form of vegetable life is drawn upon by these voracious robbers. And here comes a little seed that seem to say, "Turn about is fair play," and lodges on the wrinkled neck of the caterpillar, just at the time when he, satisfied with his thefts in the vegetable kingdom, goes out of sight, to change into a chrysalis and sleep his way into a new dress and a new life. A vain hope. The seed has the situation. It sends forth its tiny green stem, draws its life from the helpless caterpillar, and not only sends up its little shoot with the bulrush-stem capped with a tiny cat-tail, but fills with its root the entire body of its victim, changing it into a white pith-like vegetable substance. This, however, preserves the exact shape of the caterpillar. It is nut-like in substance, and is eaten by the natives with great relish.—*Juba P. Ballard, in March St. Nicholas.*

ABOUT PRONUNCIATION.—A correspondent of the *New York Times* has some interesting reflections on pronunciation as authorized by Webster's dictionary. He is astonished, as many others have been, to find that squalor is not pronounced "squallor," but as though it were spelled *squaylor*. He was surprised recently by being corrected by the principal of a high school, when he spoke of Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic. Mr. Drysdale maintained that the first word should be pronounced as written, the noun the same as the verb; but on referring to the authority mentioned, he had to admit that it is pronounced *rice*.

The editor of the *Advance* says that some time ago, when sitting in a barber shop in this city the attendant made the remark that it was very warm, and that he *transpired* very freely. When I looked at him in a curious sort of way he offered to bet me \$10 that that was the proper word to use, that there is as good authority for using it in that sense as for the word *perspire*. I never bet, but if I had been a betting man I would have staked any amount that he was wrong. But I found he was right, as any one will who will consult Webster's dictionary. We frequently meet with the expression *reurred*. There is no such verb in the language, and never was; but it has passed into vogue and probably will soon be recognized as good usage.

The Acadians of the Maritime Provinces number 108,603. They are an intelligent and frugal body of people, and their public men are well educated in both languages.

Lectures upon teaching, talks upon methods, etc., may greatly aid in securing their object, but it is practice only, under the eye of criticism, that will make successful oral teaching.

We learn that it is the purpose of the authorities of Acadia College to, shortly, build a large edifice on the grounds for boarding and accommodation for the pupils, the number having so increased that the present houses for the purpose are getting crowded. It is thought the building will cost \$3000.—*Kenilbe New Star.*

Selected for the JOURNAL by "E".]

SHAKSPERE'S HENRY V.

King Henry the Fifth is manifestly Shakspeare's favorite hero in English history. He paints him as endowed with every chivalrous and kingly virtue; open, sincere, affable, yet as a sort of reminiscence of his youth, still disposed to innocent raillery, in the intervals between his perilous but glorious achievements.

Before the battle of Agincourt, the poet paints in the most lively colors the light-minded impatience of the French leaders for the moment of battle, which to them seemed infallibly the moment of victory; on the other hand he paints the uneasiness of the English King and his army in their desperate situation, coupled with their firm determination, if they must fall at least to fall with honor.

He applies this as a general contrast between the French and English national characters; a contrast which betrays a partiality for his own nation, certainly excusable in a poet, especially when he is backed with such a glorious document as that of the memorable battle in question. He has surrounded the general events of the war with a fulness of individual, characteristic, and even sometimes comic features. A heavy Scotchman, a hot Irishman, a well-meaning, honorable but pedantic Welshman, all speaking in their peculiar dialects, are introduced to show us that the warlike genius of Henry did not merely carry the English along with him, but also the other natives of the two islands who were either not yet fully united or in no degree subject to him. Several good-for-nothing associates of Falstaff among the dregs of the army either afford an opportunity for proving Henry's strictness of discipline, or are sent home in disgrace. But all this variety still seemed to the poet insufficient to animate a play of which the subject was a conquest and nothing but a conquest. He has, therefore, tacked a prologue or chorus to the beginning of each act. These prologues, which unite epic pomp and solemnity with lyrical sublimity, and among which the description of the two camps before the battle of Agincourt forms a most admirable night-piece, are intended to keep the spectators constantly in mind that the peculiar grandeur of the notions described cannot be developed on a narrow stage, and that they must therefore supply from their own imaginations the deficiency of the representation. Shakspeare, in celebrating this victory, gives also a hint of the secret springs of this undertaking. Henry was in want of foreign war to secure himself on the throne; the clergy also wished to keep him employed abroad, and made an offer of rich contributions to prevent the passing of a law which would have deprived them of half their revenues. The learned bishops, consequently, are as ready to prove to him his indisputable right to the crown of France, as he is to allow his conscience to be tranquillized by them. After his renowned battles Henry wished to secure his conquests by marriage with a French princess; all that has reference to this is intended for irony in the play. The fruit of this union, from which two nations promised themselves so much happiness in the future, was the weak and feeble Henry VI., under whom everything was so miserably lost. It must not therefore be imagined that it was without the knowledge and will of the poet that a heroic drama turns out a comedy in his hands, and ends in the manner of a comedy with a marriage of convenience.—*Schlegel.*

An attempt to infuse new vigor into the degenerating potato by crossing the cultivated varieties with the wild plant, has been for two or three seasons in progress at Reading, England; and has proved very successful thus far. The hybrid plants produce a good yield of tubers of excellent form and quality.