

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BLANK.—Blank enough—glad to see that your leisure moments are so well employed.

G. H. H.—The MS. is to hand—may be compelled to hold it over for a week or two. Much obliged.

PERGRINE P.—If short and practical, the article would be acceptable.

W. P. LUCAN.—“My Diary, or America in the Midst of War,” has not been republished on this side of the Atlantic. The work is expensive, and is not kept in stock by booksellers here, but it can be procured from England in about six weeks; probable price, nine dollars. Will be happy to order it for you.

A. A. OXON.—Much obliged.

H. S. L., HAMILTON.—We cannot altogether discard politics from the READER, nor do we think our paper is less welcome in the family circle because some space is devoted to the discussion of the topics of the day. To meet the wishes of many of our friends—yourself included—we have determined to give, for a few weeks, two extra pages of our leading story, “Half a Million of Money.”

AGAMEMNON.—We fear your second experiment will be attended with results no less brilliant than the first.

W. H. B.—Aliquis.—Our arrangements are completed for the present.

EROSTRATUS.—You will probably need to exercise that golden virtue—“Patience.” What would you suggest to render the exterior more attractive?

PETER.—We are always happy to receive your “suggestions.”

H. S., AYLMER.—Forward your subscription in a registered letter, and we will mail the READER to your address. Can send the back numbers.

EMMA L.—Miss Amelia Edwards is the authoress of “Half a Million of Money.”

R. C.—We give the lines below :

GALEN AND THE CITY FATHERS.

’Twas in the infancy of great New York,
When all the northern suburb of the city
Was foul with offal, bog, and dirty work;
There Galen killed, or cared, less wise than witty,
He threw apace, for folks were sure to be sick,
But, sick or well,
’Twas hard to tell

Which was the worst to take—his joke or physic.

Near by the Doctor’s house, to his distress,
Reposed a slough of reeking rottenness,
A miasmatic general,
A fathom deep, or thereabouts, I guess,
Tho’ fame, which often makes the great the greater,
Reported that the mud was bottomless.
Sir Galen often warned the City Fathers
To drain the bog, and take the stench away,
But nothing came of all their long palavers,
Until, at last, upon a chilly day
A vicious horse caught ’twixt his teeth, the bit,
And, rushing onward at a rattling canter,
The bog ahead—made one great leap in it,
And dumped a brace of “Fathers” in the centre.

No help was rank or Alderman’s snavity,
Each desp’rate wriggle only sank them lower,
Outranked by that e’en bog pervading power,
Th’ impartial law of gravity.
Out ran the Doctor, when he heard the clatter,
With twinkling eyes and mouth of wide extension;
“The bog,” quoth he,
“At last I see,
Is having your attention,
I’m glad to see you stirring in this matter.”

If some such catastrophe should befall a brace or two of our City Fathers, it might cause them to stir in matters which need their serious attention. A lively roll in the rivers of mud which sometimes disgrace our streets, might prove as efficacious as the leap in the New York bog, celebrated above by our correspondent.

W. R. J., St. URBAIN ST.—Thanks! have you more equally good?

JAS. R.—Unless otherwise stipulated, where an opponent gives the odds of a pawn it must be the king’s bishop’s pawn.

H. F. B.—The pieces, especially the longer, are smoothly written, but are scarcely up to the mark for publication.

GEORGE L.—We are compelled to decline your proposition.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

A new material for paper-making has just been discovered in France. With the root of lucerne M. Caminado has succeeded in making a pulp which can be employed jointly with rags in the manufacturing of paper, and even separately.

MANUFACTORIES OF INDIARUBBER ARTICLES.—There are now in America and Europe more than 150 manufactories of indiarubber articles, employing from 400 to 500 operatives each, and consuming more than 10,000,000 of pounds of gum per annum. The business, too, is considered to be still in its infancy. Certainly it is increasing. Nevertheless there is no possibility of the demand exceeding the supply. The belt of land around the globe, 500 miles north and 500 south of the equator, abounds in trees producing the gum, and they can be tapped, it is said, for twenty successive seasons. Forty-three thousand of these trees were counted in a tract of country thirty miles long and three wide. Each tree yields an average of three tablespoonsful of sap daily, but the trees are so close together that one man can gather the sap of eighty in a day.

THE Madeira bone-cave, which Dr. Adams discovered in 1863, on the south-west coast of Malta, and which he named after the Phœnician mines close by, is to be further explored, the Geological Section having voted 30l. for the purpose. In 1864, Dr. Adams worked at it divers times, until the British Association sent a grant enabling him to clear out fifty-four feet of the cave, which was filled with red earth and stalactite. Here he found sixty to eighty teeth, and numerous fragments of bones, of at least two species of elephant, one a perfect pigmy, the other of larger size, but scarcely equal to the smallest Asiatic elephant; besides vast quantities of a gigantic rat, land tortoise, and swan—the last of colossal dimensions. It has been named *Signus falconerii*, after the distinguished palæontologist, the late Dr. Falconer. Dr. Adams will continue his researches during the winter months.

ANOTHER NEW GUNPOWDER.—Near Potsdam, in Prussia, gunpowder is being manufactured from wood on something like the gun-cotton principle. It is now some years since we first heard of the conversion of sawdust into an explosive by means of acids on the gun-cotton principle; but Captain Schulze, of Potsdam, appears to have carried out the invention into a practical manufacture. By machinery he cross-cuts beech and other timber into very thin veneers, which are easily crumbled into a coarse-grained powder or sawdust, which is then exposed to the action of acids, probably in much the same way that cotton is to form gun-cotton. The grains are thus reduced in size, and rendered explosive when dried, without yielding either smoke or smell in the combustion, but giving a brilliant light suitable for pyrotechnic displays.

WITTY AND WHIMSICAL.

“No man can do anything against his will,” said a metaphysician. “Can’t he, though?” exclaimed Jones. “Don’t I get up at seven o’clock six mornings every week against my will?”

A good deal of the consolation offered in the world is about as solacing as the assurance of the man to his wife when she fell into the river: “You’ll find ground at the bottom, my dear.”

An innkeeper observed a postilion with only one spur, and inquired the reason. “Why, what would be the use of another?” said the postilion, “if one side of the horse goes, the other can’t stand still.”

“ALL morning bitters have a heating tendency or effect,” said a doctor to a young lady. “You will except a bitter cold morning, won’t you, doctor?” inquired the lady.

A DISTINCTION AND A DIFFERENCE.—Jones has discovered the respective natures of a distinction and a difference. He says that “a little difference” frequently makes many enemies, while “a little distinction” attracts hosts of friends to the one on whom it is conferred.

The story of the endeavour to tamper with the loyalty of the Irish soldier during Smith O’Brien’s rebellion is very characteristic of the British soldier in general. “Surely, if you saw Shane, or any of your friends in our ranks, you wouldn’t fire on them?”—“Bo dad,” was the answer, “if the next man was my own mother, I’d shoot him if I got the order.”

CON. FROM THE MELBOURNE “PUNJON.”—Why is a man at work in the north-western portion of Hindostan like our youngest contributor when manufacturing a joke?—He is engaged on the Punjaub (pun job).

BY A MARRIED WOMAN.—“My opinion is, that if men were always straightforward in their ways and actions, there would be fewer ‘tottering limbs’ borne to our doors—especially at night—and no getting up shaky in the morning.”

THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.—We hear that his Holiness the Pope has given positive orders that all his bulls shall be kept within the precincts of the Vatican while the cattle disease is rife.

QUITE OBVIOUS.—It would never answer for two ill-tempered men to go up together in a balloon, because they would be so likely to fall out on the way.

ONE very cold night a doctor was aroused from his slumber by a very loud knocking at his door. After some hesitation he went to the window, and asked, “Who’s there?”—“A friend,” was the answer.—“What do you want?”—“Want to stay here all night.”—“Stay there, then,” was the benevolent reply.

A CURIOUS law case has been tried in France, to discover who was the rightful owner of a well. Swearing and complication were going on about the matter, to a lengthy extent, when the judge, astonished, exclaimed, “But this is all about a little water. What can it matter so very much, that you should both put yourselves to so much trouble and expense about it?” “Monsieur,” replied one of the advocates, dryly, “the pleadings are, both of them, wine merchants.” The value and significance were seen at once, and created a roar of laughter.

A HUMORIST PIQUED.—Theodore Hook was relating to his friend, Charles Mathews, how on one occasion, when supping in company with Peake, the latter surreptitiously removed from his plate several slices of tongue; and, affecting to be very much annoyed by such practical joking, Hook concluded with the question, “Now, Charles, what would you do to anybody who treated you in such a manner?” “Do?” exclaimed Mathews, “if any man meddled with my tongue, I’d lick him.”

A MILKMAN the other day, in speaking of the dullness of the market, said, “I can’t make anything now-a-days, there is so much composition in the business!” He probably told the truth unwittingly.

A South Carolina editor says that money is now so scarce in that State, that when two dollars meet, they are such strangers to each other that their respective owners have to introduce them.

An old lady, when told of her husband’s death, exclaimed, “Well, I do declare, our troubles never come alone. It ain’t a week since I lost my best hen, and now Mr. Thompson has gone too, poor man!”

A man having a very stingy wife, she, on one occasion, received his friends in the drawing-room with a single candle. “Be pleased, my dear,” said he, “to let us have a second candle, that we may see where the other stands.”

A SMALL manufacturer in Fife was lately taking his usual morning walk in his garden, previous to his beginning the labours of the day, when he heard a blackbird pouring forth his sweet melodious strains. Our worthy friend, looking up, thus addressed the feathered songster: “It’s gay an easy for you, friend, to whistle there, when ye hanna a bill to meet the day.” That he did the bird injustice we are sure he will readily acknowledge, when he learns that the blackbird had actually a bill to meet that day.