

TEACHERS' DESK.

J. C. GLASHAN, ESQ., EDITOR.

Contributors to the 'Desk' will oblige by observing the following rules :

1st. To send answers with their questions and solutions with their problems.

2nd. To send questions for insertion on separate sheets from those containing answers to questions already proposed.

3rd. To write on one side of the paper.

4th. To write their name on every sheet.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. G. DUFF—Oban.—The answers to No. 3 should be 30,000. In No. 8 read \$4,800. "The more." See Davies' larger grammar, page 144 17 (3).

THOMAS CHISHOLM.—Will take up the subject, in a series of articles preparing on English.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

On the Middle Voice.

In the Aryan or Indo-European languages there are too ways of distinguishing voice in verbs, the one by suffixes or inflections called the *formal* or *synthetic* mode, the other by the aid of auxiliary words, generally verbs, called the *auxiliary* or *analytic* mode.

Verbs arrange themselves in two great classes, the symbolic or substantive verbs, and the adjective or presentive verbs. The former are used to join a predicate to a subject; the latter contain a predicate in themselves, and assert it of the subject. Examples of the former class are, "The sign of the Accusative Singular is M in Sanscrit, Teason and Latin." "Selfish, now so thoroughly naturalized in English, was a thorough barbarism two centuries ago." *Tripartite Nature of man*, p. 84, note. "We be twelve brethren" *Gen.* XLII. 32. Of the latter class are, "In the beginning was the word," *St. John* I : 1 "Grammar deals only with the literary forms, functions and habits of words; philology deals with the very words themselves." *Earle*. In the former examples the verb may be replaced by =.

The presentive verbs may be sub-divided into

transitive and intransitive, (a synthetical division), and also into active and passive (an etymological division.) The active is either direct or reflexive.

In most of the Aryan languages, verbs can be used with a secondary and peculiar force, and are then said to be used absolutely. Verbs absolute do not, like verbs active, assert doing by the subject or, like verbs passive, assert enduring by it, but they predicate the condition of it during, after or before the doing of an action by it or to it, consequently these verbs generally take a predicate adjective after them; in fact where adverbs are used, it is almost always by a false analogy. Examples are, 1st (participial), "The field ploughs well," = The field is well (good, easy, see Ans. to 51,) in ploughing. "The lines read smoothly" = The lines are smooth in reading. 2nd, (from nouns) "This fruit tastes bitter," = This fruit has a bitter taste or is bitter in the tasting of it, "The rose smells sweet," = "The rose has a sweet smell."

Dr. Davies in his Analytical and Practical Grammar of the English language p. 52, says,— "Many verbs in the active voice by an idiom peculiar to the English are used in the sense nearly allied to the passive, but for which the passive will not always be a proper substitute. Thus we say, the field ploughs well. These lines read smoothly. This fruit tastes bitter. Linen wears better than cotton. * * * Now in none of the examples given above do the verbs mark the doing of an act by an agent, nor the suffering of an act by an object, but something between the two. To this voice the name of the middle voice is given, as most nearly expressing the idea conveyed by the verb. Verbs which admit of this voice, have also both the active and passive voice."

'Tis a pity the learned Doctor before sending forth the above had not made a little use of the Greek and Latin his University must have required of him before granting him his degree. Perhaps, however, he read the assertion somewhere, that is "an idiom peculiar to the English," and it never