

## Answers to Correspondents.

The Editors will be pleased to answer any queries under this heading, but should the answers be required by post a fee of 10 cents must accompany the inquiry. All queries must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

**Theologuc** The Buddhist scriptures, translated into English, would be about four times as long as our Bible, though in the original they contain less than twice as many words. At the same time, they are so full of repetitions that, if rewritten straightforwardly, they would not occupy so much space as our Bible. The three great Pitakas,—the sacred books of the southern Buddhists—are (1) Vinaya Pitaka (Discipline for the Order), (2) Sutta Pitaka (Discourses for the Laity), and (3) Abhidhamma (Metaphysics).

**Housewife**—The letter stamped on English silver articles will tell you the age of the articles, if properly interpreted. It is made by the Goldsmith's Company of London, who use a different letter each year, going through the alphabet in each kind of type. The date-marks so far are, 1716-1755 Roman capital; 1756-1775 Roman small letters; 1776-1795 small roman black letter; 1796-1815 Roman capitals; 1816-1835 Roman small letters; 1836-1855 old English capitals; 1856-1875 old English small; 1876-1895 Roman capitals. We hope this will enable you to fix the year in which your spoons were made; if not, send them down and we will do our best to find out.

**Big Boy**—We did not know that the old-fashioned and extremely simple game called Tom Tidler's Ground was ever seen in this country. It is with us one of the earliest recollections of childhood. We used to play on a grass field which "Tom" held possession of, the rest going on as far as they dared, saying or singing—"Here we are on Tom Tidler's ground, picking up gold and silver." Those who ventured on the sacred turf were bound to get across to the opposite side, and when one was caught on the way, he at once took Tom's place. The game is a very old one, and the name is probably derived from t'idler (the idler; perhaps from the peculiarity of idlers all the world over, which makes them object to anyone else taking what they are too lazy to take themselves. Tom Tidler is certainly mentioned by Dickens, as you say, in the Christmas Tale, written in 1861: but the game was old before Dickens was born.

**Banker**—Space did not allow us to answer your question last week. The Government of the Bank of England—which is practically entrusted with the whole reserve of the country—comes nearer to an ideal government than any we know of. Two facts are rather startling to outsiders,—firstly, that no banker is allowed to become a Director; and secondly, that most of the directors are decidedly young men.

The reason of the first seeming anomaly, is that all bankers are more or less in opposition to one another, while the Bank of England is supposed to be—and really is—quite impartial. It is found that a collection of prominent London merchants possesses an enormous mass of all-round knowledge of trade and credit, and probably administers the affairs of the Bank far more successfully than a body of trained bankers ever could. The reason of the second is fairly obvious, as a man is usually on the directorate for something like 20 years before he becomes Deputy-Governor, when it is most important for him to be still in the prime of life. The Deputy-Governor invariably succeeds to be Governor, when his power—in connection with those who have already passed the chair—becomes practically unlimited. If you would formulate the points of your queries more clearly, perhaps we could finish them off next week, but your questions are very broad.



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The Kaizer is invariably *galant* to ladies, but the other day he rather astounded a number of troops and civilians by riding to a review at the head of a small regiment of fair *equestriennes*. The incident occurred in this wise, according to a Berlin Correspondent. The Emperor suddenly made his appearance in Potsdam on horseback, and ordered the garrison to be turned out instantly, as is his practice, to test their celerity and efficiency. The mustering-place was the highway between Potsdam and the capital. In a moment the Emperor's buglers awakened the echoes of the old towns of Lichterfeld and Potsdam with a blast that might have brought down the walls of Jericho. There was a clattering of arms and trampling of horses in the twinkling of an eye. Several officers were out having their usual afternoon canter, accompanied by a number of ladies, and the moment they heard the bugle call they struck spurs into their horses and dashed *ventre à terre* in the direction from whence the sounds came. Two or three of the fair dames rode after the speeding warriors, but the Emperor stopped them with a motion of his whip, and begged them to take their places by his side in order to be protected from the crowd. Within twenty minutes the cavalry were drawn up on the highway, and ten thousand sabres gleamed through the air in salute to the Emperor, who rode down the line and commended the troops for their swiftness.

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