

Answers to Correspondents.

The Editors will be pleased to answer any queries under this heading, but should 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.

SRB: *En pekin* is the exact French equivalent to "in mufti," i.e., out of uniform, in plain clothes. Apropos of pekin there is a good story told of Talleyrand. An officer who had kept him waiting said as an excuse that he had been detained by some *pekins*. "Indeed," said Talleyrand, "what might that mean?" "Oh," said the officer, "we call everyone who is not *military* a pekin." "And *we*?" replied Talleyrand, "call every one military who is *civil*."

R A: The *Scavenger's Daughter* was a peculiar instrument of torture; the name is a corruption of Skevington's, so called from its inventor, Skevington, lieutenant of the Tower of London under Henry VIII. It consists of a broad hoop of iron in two parts fastened together with a hinge. The victim was made to kneel while the hoop was passed under his legs; he was then squeezed gradually till the hoop could be got over his back, where it was fastened.

TONY:—The English Prime Ministers during the present reign are:—Viscount Melbourne (1835), Sir Robert Peel (1841), Lord John Russell (1846), Earl of Derby (1852), Earl of Aberdeen (1852), Lord Palmerston (1855), Derby (1858), Palmerston (1859), Earl Russell (1865), Derby (1866), Disraeli (1868), Gladstone (1868), Disraeli (1874), Gladstone (1880), Salisbury (1885), Gladstone (1886), Salisbury (1886). Gladstone has held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer longer than any other man in this century, viz: under Lord Aberdeen, Lord Palmerston (twice), and Lord Russell, as well as in two of his own ministries.

H. S.:—We have not heard anything definite about the Panama Canal for a long time, and cannot tell you for certain what plans are on foot. Operations were suspended some time ago simply for want of funds to carry them on. There was never any real difficulty in getting workmen, who swarmed from all the corners of the earth, and were not deterred by the fact that a very large proportion were killed off by the climate. In fact, the whole pretext of the stoppage was want of funds. We will try and get you definite information:—possibly some of our readers will supply it.

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