

CORRESPONDENCE.

MUNCHAUSEN SUBSTANTIATED.

On one occasion when that illustrious and veracious traveller, Baron Munchausen, was pursuing the enemy into the gate of a fortified town, the portcullis dropped and cut off the hinder part of his horse. Heated by the conflict and the routing of the enemy, he rode to a tank to give the faithful animal some water. The horse drank like the parched earth after a six-months' drought, until the Baron finally looked around and saw the mutilation, and found that as fast as the horse drank, the water ran out of his sliced-off body, and that his thirst would probably never be slaked.

The universal verdict of the reading public for many years has placed Munchausen high upon the long list of writers whose tales are more interesting than true, and yet physiologists tell us that in the simple narrative which I have just briefed the Baron was one of the first to voice a great physiological fact. That is, that while thirst is felt in the mouth and throat, it is in reality a general craving of the whole system, and that no amount of water in the mouth alone will prevent an animal from dying of thirst.

Now, as Munchausen was ahead of his generation as a physiologist, why should we not more patiently search in his works for other truths? Just as we have our investigators and expert interpreters of hidden meanings in Shakespeare and Browning, and the Wagner music dramas, why should not societies be formed for the investigation and interpretation of Munchausen?

All this, however, is theoretical and suggestive, and introductory to the statement that I know of a chain of facts which resemble Munchausen's horse-decorpitation story, and briefly and without further plea, the facts are these:

There is a genial little caterpillar which disports itself among the leaves of the Washington shade trees in the month of August, and which is known to its select circle of acquaintances as the fall web-worm. There is also an enterprising green bug of predatory instincts which is called the soldier-bug, and which, afflicted with as strong and persistent a thirst as that of a Kentucky colonel, seeks continually to assuage it by drinking the blood of the fall web-worm. In this gory pursuit, however, the soldier-bug has a strong rival in the wheel-bug, who, if the former is compared to the Kentucky colonel, must be likened for thirst to the Georgia Judge—the