trees, yet the first few pages of Charles Estienne's book contain an interesting account of the gardens of the ancients, with references to several passages in Latin authors where they are referred to.

Was any one ever burnt alive? (7th S. iii. 208.)—As to the case of Savonarola, Miss Busk, so far as I am acquainted with it, may be right or wrong. To doubt, however, that "anybody ever was" burnt alive is, to my mind, of all "historical doubts" the most extraordinary one that I ever heard or read of. The whole current of history is against it. To go no further back than the times of Nero, does not Tacitus say of him that he caused multitudes of Christians to be burnt alive? These are his words ("Ann.," lib. xv. c. 44): "Ut ferarum tergis contecti,...flammamdi, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur." Did not the Druids* much the same by prisoners of war, whom they offered in sacrifice to their gods? And, not to mention others nearer to our own times, are we to take the cases of Cranmer, Bradford, Ridley, and Latimer as nothing more than "ghastly myths," supported as they are by evidence as strong as evidence can be? What does Lingard—surely no friendly witness—say of Cranmer's burning? This: "When the fire was kindled, to the surprise of the spectators, he thrust his hand into the flame, exclaiming, 'This hath offended.' His sufferings were short, the flames rapidly ascended over his head, and he expired in a few moments." As well, indeed, question the behaeding of Anne Boleyn, Sir Thomas More, or Bishop Fisher, as that any one was ever burnt alive. The fact may be "ghastly," but is certainly no "myth."

Edmund Tew, M.A.

[This subject approaches so nearly polemics, further replies are not invited.]

The O'Conor Don (7th S. iii. 128.).—I think J. J. S.'s surmise in regard to the meaning of Don or Dun added to surnames, is the right one—at least I have always held a similar opinion. Personal appearance speedily earned a name for itself in these early days, so it may have happened that this particular O'Conor, being darker skinned than his namesakes, won for himself the name of The O'Conor Don par excellence, &c., the Dark O'Conor. Our forefathers do not seem to have objected to be the bearers even of nicknames. In his privately printed work on Surnames (Boston, 1855), Mr. B. H. Dixon says: "In Ireland, the head of the O'Conors is called The O'Conor Don."

Robert F. Gardiner.

Tavern Sign, "Plough and Sail" (7th S. ii. 388, 475).—In support of this as the original, and not a corrupt form of tavern sign, I find in my collection an Ipswich halfpenny token, payable at Robert Manning's, no date, which has on the reverse the legend, "God preserve the Plough and Sail," surrounding a full-rigged ship and plough with team. The expression is intelligible enough as equivalent to agriculture and commerce.


A Claimant to the Authorship of 'Vox Stellarum' (7th S. iii. 164).—An old volume of almanacs for 1790 contains 'Vox Stellarum,' by Francis Moore, Physician, which, in the introduction, says:—

"The rapid Sale of this Annual Performance, while it bespeaks its public Utility, lays the Editor at the same Time under the highest Obligation of every Exertion in his Power, both to please and inform his kind Readers. Certain it is that both the original Plan, and the manner of conducting it, first brought it to the Fame it has long since acquired. And it appears evident to the present Author that, in order to continue its Reputation, the same Plan, and the same Manner must be strictly adhered to. He gives his Opinion in Mundane affairs according to the Rules laid down by the Ancients, and followed by the first ingenious Projector of this Ephemeris, and in his Footsteps he wishes so closely to tread, that he hopes it may be said of that learned Man now at Rest, Etiam Mortui loquitur."

The measurement of rain is taken at Royston. The second part of the almanack gives "an account of the Eclipses of the Sun and Moon, &c., in the year 1790. By Henry Andrews, Astronomer." It contains a "hieroglyphick," prognostications &c.

Bound up with 'Vox Stellarum' are 'Merlinus Liberatus,' by John Partridge; 'Old Poor Robin' (7th S. ii. 57); 'Speculum Anni; or, Season on the Seasons,' by Henry Season, Licensed Physician and student in the Celestial Sciences near Devizes; 'Ολιβιτα Δόματα,' by Tycho Wing, Philomath "(calculated according to Art, and referred to the Horizon of the ancient and renowned Borough Town of Stamford, formerly a famous University)"; 'Αλασ Ουρανος, The Celestial Atlas; or, a new Ephemeris for the year 1790,' by Robert White, Teacher of the Mathematicks; and the 'Gentleman's Diary' and 'Ladies' Diary' for the same year. These almanacs were all "printed for the Company of Stationers, and sold by Robert Horsfield at their Hall in Ludgate Street." Each one has the Government stamp on the title-page. According to Haydn's Dictionary of Dates this company "claimed the exclusive right of publishing almanacs until 1790, in virtue of letters patent..."