“Chaucer does not give us the Italian scale, do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do, and makes no mention of a fa burden, as Mr. Chappell appears to think.”

I should indeed wonder if Chaucer had referred to such a scale, considering that it did not exist in his time. The scale then began with ut and ended in la.

Mr. Buckton’s interpretation of my thoughts is equally unhappy. I did not suppose (as he evidently does) that the fa in “faburden” was derived from one of the notes of the scale. He supposes fa to mean F; instead of which, every ascending note after a semitone was called fa in Chaucer’s time. But the fa in “fa burden” is not a note at all. Faburden (whether written as one or as two words) is the Italian false bordone.

If Mr. Buckton will but turn to the readiest source, Sir John Hawkins’s History of Music (8vo, pp. 250, 251), he will both see and learn, from many authorities, what a faburden is. I will quote one line: “Brossard says of faburden, it is the burden or ground-bass of a song.” So burden and faburden are one thing. But why called “false”? That Sir John Hawkins’s authorities do not explain. It is because it was “not according to rules of harmony, but preserved the order of motion of the upper part.” So that in taking sixths below F and C, it must sing A-flat and E-flat, and those notes were not in the church scales. Every sharp and flat, except the one in “faburden” was evidently does) that the fa was then termed musica falsa or musica ficta by church writers. Thus it will appear that my thoughts were very different from the way Mr. Buckton interpreted them. The one line quoted above ought alone to demolish his chorus theory.

If Mr. Buckton will in future condescend to give his authorities (like other contributors to “N. & Q.”), he will save himself from much inconvenient sponsorship, and may turn off many a rub. But if he, writing upon music, is to rely solely upon his o Py dixi, and flat contradiction is to be the sum of his argument (as to me, in his “The quinible is that fraction of the octave which we call a fifth”), he must not expect implicit submission to his dicta until he has proved that he knows something of his subject.

W. M. T.

In Cocker’s English Dictionary, 1724, is—

“Quinible, or whinable in music, signifies a treble.” To sing a fifth to an air would be very difficult and very inharmonious. I believe Cocker’s solution is the right one. HAMILTON FIELD.

Clapham Park.

Tomasi: “Vita di Cesare Borgia” (4th S. iv. 410, 550.)—Following the traces indicated by Messrs. Molini & Green—though I gained little information from the reference to Colucci—I am now perfectly satisfied, and am desirous of recording in “N. & Q.” that the Vita was written by Tomasi, and not, as some have supposed, by Gregorio Leti. Leti himself never claimed it as one of his many works. He was merely its editor when it was republished. The title-page of his Monte Chiaro edition describes it as by—

“Tomaso Tomasi, nuovamente ristampata con una giunta considerabile, e con un’amplia Tavola, per maggior commodità del Lettore. Il tutto raccolto dalla diligentia e cura di G. L.”

The aggiunta is incorporated with the work, and a considerable portion of it consists of an account of Savonarola, which is at the close of parte prima. I quote from the edition of 1670, which I have had the privilege of using, in the invaluable library of Sir Thomas Phillipps. There are other editions and translations of it in the library of the British Museum. The editor of an edition of Tomasi’s works (who incorrectly spells the name Tomassi) published s. l. 1789, promised a terza parte, which was to have contained autentici documenti in support of the facts related, but it was either never printed or was suppressed. As the Vita is an authority relied on by English writers, from Gordon downwards, its authorship is a subject of some interest.

W. M. T.

Date of Cardinal Pole’s Death (3rd S. xii. 1409, 465.)—To the authorities already quoted on this subject I add Strype, Eccles. Mem., iii. pt. 2, ed. 1822:—

P. 118. “On the 17th, being Friday in the morning, Queen Mary died. On the 18th the Lord Cardinal Pole died at Lambeth, between five and six in the morning.”

P. 143. “Cardinal Pole died the same day that Queen Mary did, and not many hours after her.”

Dean Hook throws no more light upon this uncertain date. His words are—

“On the morning of the 18th of November, 1558, Reginald Pole breathed his last. . . . He had survived Queen Mary two-and-twenty hours.”—Lives, iii. 446, N.S.

J. M. Cowper.

A Feud about Green Wax (4th S. vi. 93, 142.)

Green wax, which is called “Ver en cite potius verte cire”, in Kelham’s Norman or Old French Dictionary (London, 1779), appears to have been introduced to England with the laws of William the Conqueror. There is no mention made by Kelham or any other authority of any other coloured wax, or of other wax at all. The explanation as to how green wax was applied, and given by me in “N. & Q.” of above date, is, I believe, quite correct. I may add that I have seen old and more modern charters of kings of England and patents sealed with green wax.

Maurice Lenthal, M.R.I.A.

Limerick.

Provincial Glossary (4th S. v. 271 passim; vi. 82.)—A most amusing dialogue in the Scotch