be told that a given inscription does not exist, when it is merely not among such as may be read as one runs.

A. STAPLETON.

SHAKESPEARE'S SIGNATURES. (11 S. v. 490; vi. 72, 153, 255).—My attention has been called to W. B.'s question referring to a statement made by Oswald Platt, viz., that in a copy of Florio's 'Montaigne' in the British Museum there is a 'signature' of William Shakespeare.

We read in the 'Dictionary of National Biography' under the heading 'Florio':—

"One copy of the 1603 edition of the Montaigne at the British Museum contains an autograph signature said to be by Shakespeare himself. It was purchased as a genuine autograph for £140 in 1838...Sir Frederick Madden in a letter...vouched for the authenticity of the autograph. But later investigation has left little doubt that it is an eighteenth-century forgery."

I remember that when I was at the British Museum they did not wish me to see it, but the moment I saw a photograph of it, I said, "1750 is the date of that writing."

There is no escape from the fact that we possess nothing that can be claimed to be written by William Shakespeare. There is nothing excepting the six so-called signatures, which I have proved, beyond cavil or question, were all written by skilled law-clerks. Permit me again to repeat the important fact that there are no autograph signatures of private parties written in law-script after 1550.

Ben Jonson tells us that the man could neither read nor write. In 'Every Man out of his Humour' the rustic who had just bought a coat of arms is placed upon the stage, and there can be no doubt that the man is intended to represent William Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, gentleman, since his motto is said to be "Not without mustard," Shakespeare's motto being "Not without right." This man, who is spoken of with great contempt, is described as an "essential clown," which means unquestionably that he is totally unable to read or to write. We are told the same story in 'As You Like It,' where "William," who is hailed as "gentle" (that is, he is shown to possess a coat of arms), is described as born in the forest of Ardennes (Shakespeare was born near the forest of Arden), and, in reply to a question, says that he is "not learned." This again means that he was totally unable to read a line of print. At that period a man who could read half a dozen lines of print (with assistance) was, in the eye of the law, "a learned man," and could claim benefit of clergy, and so save his neck.

EDWIN BURNING LAWRENCE.

13, Carlton House Terrace, S.W.

[Mr. Tom Jones and S. W. also thanked for replies.]

AUTHORS WANTED. (11 S. vi. 250).—(1) The "Hertfordshire Incumbent," according to the British Museum Catalogue, was J. W. Blakesley. (2) The Catalogue of the Thomason Tracts in the British Museum, i. 45, gives November, 1641, as the date of publication for 'Triple Episcopacie.' No author is assigned to it. EDWARD BENSLEY.

The "Hertfordshire Incumbent" who edited the 'Memoirs of Russia,' by Hermann v. Manstein, was J. W. Blakesley, Vicar of Ware, afterwards Dean of Lincoln. I believe that from about 1845 to 1860 he wrote many letters to The Times, published with the above signature.

DRIMA.

LAWRENCE (11 S. vi. 248).—From Lippincott's 'Biographical Dictionary' the following has been copied, which may be of interest to the inquirer:—

"Lawrance (John), a judge, born in Cornwall, England, in 1750. He emigrated in 1787 to the City of New York, where he practised law, and rose to distinction in his profession. He was a delegate to the Congress of the Confederation in 1785-87, and represented the City of New York in the Congress of the United States from 1789 to 1793. In 1794 he was appointed a judge of the district court for New York. He was elected a Senator of the United States for New York in 1796, and resigned his seat in 1800. He was a Federalist, and a personal friend of Alexander Hamilton. Died at New York in November, 1810."

T. F. DWIGHT.

La Tour de Peilz, Vaud, Switzerland.

IRISH GENEALOGY. (11 S. vi. 249).—Mrs Cope will find interesting and valuable MSS. on the above, relating to British and Celtic families, in Trin. Coll., Dublin, and the British Museum.

Charles S. King, Bt.

St. Leonards-on-Sea.

MORDAUNT'S INDEX TO 'JACKSON'S OXFORD JOURNAL' (11 S. ii. 289).—Vol. I., containing obituary notices in the years 1753-4-5 (price 2s.), is, or was, procurable on application to J. Hussey, 20, Doughty Street, Mecklenburg Square, W.C.

R. A. SHRIMPTON.