O.

OAK, styled the monarch of the woods, and an emblem of strength, virtue, constancy, and long life. That produced in England is considered to be the best calculated for ship-building. In June, 403, the "*Synod of the oak*," was held at Chalcedon. The constellation Robur Caroli, the oak of Charles, was named by Dr. Halley in 1676, in memory of the oak in which Charles II. saved himself from his pursuers, after the battle of Worcester, 3 Sept. 1651; see *Boscobel*, and *Races*.

The evergreen oak, *Quercus Ilex*, brought from the south of Europe before 1581
The scarlet oak, *Quercus coccinea*, brought from North America before 1691
The chestnut-leaved oak, *Quercus Prunus*, from North America before 1730
The Turkey Oak, *Quercus Berris*, from the south of Europe 1735
The agaric of the oak was known as a styptic in . 1750
Herne's oak, Windsor Park, mentioned in Shakspeare's Merry Wives of Windsor, finally destroyed by the wind . . . . . 31 Aug. 1863

OATES'S PLOT. Titus Oates, at one time chaplain of a ship of war, was dismissed for immoral conduct, and became a lecturer in London. In conjuction with Dr. Tongue, he invented a plot against the Roman Catholics, who he asserted had conspired to assassinate Charles II., and extirpate the Protestant religion. He made it known 12 Aug. 1678, and in consequence about eighteen Roman Catholics were accused, and upon false testimony convicted and executed; among them the aged viscount Stafford, 29 Dec. 1680. Oates was afterwards tried for perjury (in the reign of James II.), and being found guilty, was fined, put in the pillory, publicly whipped from Newgate to Tyburn, and sentenced to imprisonment for life, May, 1685. On the accession of William and Mary he was pardoned, and a pension of 3*l*. a week granted to him, 1689.

OATHS were taken by Abraham, B.C. 1892 (*Gen.* xxi. 24), and authorised (B.C. 1491) *Exod.* xxii. 11. The administration of an oath in judicial proceedings was introduced by the Saxons into England, 600. *Rapin*. That administered to a judge was settled 1344.

Of Supremacy, first administered to British subjects, and ratified by parliament, 26 Hen. VIII. (*Stow's Chron.*) 1535
Oaths were taken on the Gospels so early as 528; and the words "So help me God and all saints," concluded an oath until 1550
The ancient oath of allegiance, which contained a promise "to be true and faithful to the king and his heirs, and truth and faith to bear of life and limb and terrene honour; and not to know or hear of any ill or damage intended him without defending him therefrom," was modified by James I., a declaration against the pope's authority being added 1603
It was again altered 1689
The affirmation of a Quaker was made equivalent to an oath, by statute, in 1696, *et seq.*
Of Abjuration, being an obligation to maintain the government of king, lords, and commons, the church of England, and toleration of Protestant dissenters, and abjuring all Roman Catholic pretenders to the crown, 13 Will. III. 1701
The Test and Corporation oaths modified by stat. 9 Geo. IV. (see *Tests*) 1828
Act abolishing oaths in the customs and excise departments, and in certain other cases, and substituting declarations in lieu thereof, 1 & 2 Will. IV. 1831
Affirmation, instead of oath, was permitted to Quakers and other dissenters by acts passed in 1833, 1837, 1838, and 1863 (see *Affirmation*).
In 1858 and 1860, Jews elected M.P. were relieved from part of the oath of allegiance (see *Jews*).
By 24 & 25 Vict. c. 66, a solemn declaration may be substituted for an oath by persons conscientiously objecting to be sworn in criminal prosecutions . 1861
A bill for modifying the oath taken by Roman Catholics (passed by the commons), was rejected by the lords . . . . . 26 June, 1865
The oath to be taken by members of parliament was modified and made uniform by an act passed 30 April, 1866
New oath of allegiance provided by the 31st and 32nd Vict. c. 72 (1868), to be taken by the members of the new parliament:—"I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to her majesty queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, according to law, so help me God."

OBELISK. (Greek *obelos*, a spit, *monolithos*, a single stone.) The first mentioned in history was that of Rameses, king of Egypt, about 1485 B.C. The Arabians called them Pharaoh's needles, and the Egyptian priests the fingers of the sun. Several were erected at Rome; one was erected by the emperor Augustus in the Campus Martius, on the pavement of which was a horizontal dial that marked the hour, about 14 B.C. Of the obelisks brought to Rome by the emperors, several have been restored and set up by various popes, especially Sixtus V. In London are three obelisks: first in Fleet-street, at the top of Bridge-street, erected to John Wilkes, lord mayor of London in 1775 (see *North Briton*); and immediately opposite to it at the south end of Farringdon-street, stands another of granite to the memory of Robert Waithman, lord mayor in 1824, erected 25 June, 1833; the third at the south end of the Blackfriars-road marks the distance of one mile and a fraction from Fleet-street. An obelisk from Luxor was set up in the Place de la Concorde, Paris, in Oct. 1836.

OBLIVION. In 1660 was passed an act of "free general pardon, indemnity, and oblivion for all treasons and state offences" committed between 1 Jan. 1637, and 24 June, 1660. The regicides and certain Irish popish priests were excepted. A similar act was passed 20 May, 1690. See *Amnesty*.

OBSERVANCE, Fathers of the (or Observants), a name given to certain members of the Franciscan order, about 1363, who voluntarily undertook the observance of their rule in its pristine rigour. This reformation was after a time enforced by the pope.

OBSERVATORIES. The first is said to have been erected on the top of the temple of Belus at Babylon. On the tomb of Osymandyas, in Egypt, was another, and it contained a golden circle 200 feet in diameter; that at Benares was at least as ancient as these. The first in authentic history was at Alexandria, about 300 B.C. erected by Ptolemy Soter.

First modern meridional instrument by Copernicus 1540
First observatory at Cassel 1561
Tycho Brahe's, at Uranienburg 1576
Astronomical tower at Copenhagen 1657
Royal (French) 1667
Royal observatory at Greenwich (*which see*) . . 1675
Observatory at Nuremberg 1678
At Utrecht 1690
Berlin, elected under Leibnitz's direction . . 1711
At Bologna 1714