SCRUTINY *(Scrutinium),* in the primitive church, was an examination or probation practised in the last week of Lent, upon the catechumens, who were to receive baptism on Easter-day. The scrutiny was performed with a great many ceremonies. Exorcisms and prayers were made over the heads of the catechumens ; and upon Palm Sunday the Lord’s Prayer and Creed were given them, which they were afterwards made to rehearse. This custom was more in use in the Church of Rome than anywhere else, though it appears, by some missals, to have been likewise used, at a much later period, in the Gallican church. It is sup­posed to have ceased about the year 860.

Scrutiny is also used, in the *canon Law,* for a ticket or a little paper billet, in which, at elections, the electors write their votes privately, so that it may not be known for whom they vote. Among us the term *scrutiny* is chiefly used for a strict perusal and examination of the several votes hastily taken at an election, in order to find out any irre­gularities committed therein by unqualified voters.

SCRUTORE, or Scrutoir (from the French *escri­toire),* a kind of cabinet, with a door or lid opening down­wards.

SCRY, in falconry, denotes a large flock of fowl.

SCUDDING, the movement by which a ship is carried precipitately before a tempest. As a ship flies with amaz­ing rapidity through the water whenever this expedient is put in practice, it is never attempted in a contrary wind,

unless when her condition renders her incapable of sustain­ing the mutual effort of the wind and waves any longer on her side, without being exposed to the most imminent dan­ger of being overset.

A ship either scuds with a sail extended on her foremast, or, if the storm is excessive, without any sail at all ; which, in the sea-phrase, is called *scudding under bare poles.* In sloops and schooners, and other small vessels, the sail em­ployed for this purpose is called the *square sail.* In large ships, it is either the foresail at large, reefed, or with its goose-wings extended, according to the degree of the tem­pest ; or it is the fore-top sail., close reefed, and lowered on the cap ; which last is particularly used when the sea runs so high as to becalm the foresail occasionally, a circum­stance which exposes the ship to the danger of broaching to. The principal hazards incident to scudding are gene­rally a pooping sea ; the difficulty of steering, which ex­poses the vessel perpetually to the risk of broaching to ; and the want of sufficient sea-room. A sea striking the ship violently on the stern may dash it inwards, by which she must inevitably founder. In broaching to, that is, inclin­ing suddenly to windward, she is threatened with being im­mediately overturned, and, for want of sea-room, she is en­dangered by shipwreck on a lee-shore.

SCULPONEÆ, among the Romans, a kind of shoes worn by slaves of both sexes. These shoes consisted only of blocks of wood made hollow, like the French sabots.