"the general consensus of the stars supports the result given." A proof of that statement, a quantitative proof, will be found on pp. 42-44. I cannot encroach on your space to quote it here, but may briefly indicate its nature: P being the pole of the heavens and E the pole of the ecliptic, let $P E C$ be a spherical triangle having $E C 6^\circ$, $P E 23^\circ 27'$, and $P E C 174^\circ 28'$. Describe a small circle with C as centre and $C P$ as radius: then will W , where $E C$ produced cuts the circumference of the circle, be that spot where is situated the so-called "Apex of Solar Motion." The sides and angles given are not arbitrary but depend upon the rate of precession and of the decrease in the obliquity at the commencement of this century, as is shown on page 44 of the pamphlet.

This is a geometrical problem the significance of which your astronomical readers will readily appreciate. The facts it rests on are undeniable, and no alternative explanation to that suggested has hitherto been forthcoming.

A. H. BARLEY.

Leppington House,
Hertford.

MR. BARLEY'S "incautious reader" would be quite correct in supposing that I had not only "seen" his pamphlet but read it carefully. It is not my practice to review works that I have not seen. I have, indeed, followed Draysonian publications with a melancholy interest from my youth up, and I cannot but regard them as an example of ingenuity misapplied.

Mr. Barley in his letter does not touch on the points I made (1) that if the proper motions of stars were due to any shift of the earth's axis, all the stars in a given direction would move together, and there would be no relative shift among them. But in examining photographs of the regions round stars with sensible proper motions (say Capella) the P.M. star is clearly seen to be moving among the faint stars in the background at practically the same rate as that given by the meridian observations. Indeed, Prof. Furuhielm was enabled to detect a very distant companion to Capella by its sharing in its rapid motion relatively to the neighbouring stars. What is it then but "wresting" evidence to deny the reality of Capella's motion. (2) Mr. Barley denies the fact that the ecliptic is moving among the stars, and quotes Drayson as having tried to establish from the observations of Hipparchus that such motion did not exist. This to me appears another flagrant example of wresting isolated observations.

Hipparchus's results were liable to errors of several minutes of arc, whereas modern results are accurate to a second or thereabouts. Hence we can get a better result from 50 years using modern observations, than from 2000 years using those of Hipparchus. The modern observations show unmistakably that the ecliptic is shifting. Of course it is impossible to give all the evidence for this in the course of a letter, but I have arranged a small number of observations in a way that will show an unbiassed reader that such is the case.

The following table gives the North Polar Distance of the star α Geminorum as observed at Greenwich in different years, and also the North Polar Distance of the sun interpolated for the moment that its Right Ascension was the same as that of the star. It is to be noted that the N.P.D. of the star is referred to the mean equator of the year, that of the sun to the apparent equator affected by nutation; we can correct for this approximately by combining observations made about nine years apart when the nutation is opposite in direction and amount.

NORTH POLAR DISTANCE

Year.	Star.	Sun.	Star South	Mean.
1836	66° 44' 7.71"	66° 32' 39.05"	11' 28.66"	11' 22.18"
1844	66 44 5.51	66 32 49.42	11 16.09	
1855	66 44 1.70	66 32 39.92	11 21.78	
1876	66 43 55.85	66 32 39.54	11 16.31	
1885	66 43 54.99	66 33 1.23	10 53.76	11 5.04
1902	66 43 51.90	66 33 2.57	10 49.33	10 54.79
1911	66 43 51.65	66 32 51.40	11 0.25	

It will be seen that in sixty-one years the sun's path has moved southward relatively to the star $27.4''$. The star itself is moving south $10.8''$ per century (Boss), so this has to be added to the southward movement of the ecliptic. It will be understood that I give these figures merely to demonstrate the reality of the movement of the ecliptic, not to determine its exact amount, for which further refinements would be necessary. I chose a star near the solstitial colure (1) because difference of N.P.D. practically agrees with difference of latitude, thus saving reduction; (2) because this is the neighbourhood where the ecliptic is moving south most rapidly. I reiterate my advice to Mr. Barley to study the whole of modern astronomy of position, instead of confining himself to a few selected portions, which he interprets in a way that further study would show to be untenable.

THE WRITER OF THE NOTE.

The Naming of Elements.

SURELY the time has come to abandon the practice of attaching to elements fancy names arbitrarily selected by individuals. When names concerned nobody but a small clique in constant personal communication, and when they had nothing more important to record about an element than the personality of its discoverer, there may have been something to say for the system. Nowadays neither condition is fulfilled. Thousands are interested who have no means of expressing their opinion: and there is something definitely scientific to be said about elements. The new element was discovered as a consequence of a theory of the structure of the atom, and its discoverers should surely be glad to see a record left in the name that their discovery was no lucky fluke.

Dr. Aston, who has discovered at least twice as many elements as anybody else in the history of science, has set a good example; he has waived his right of naming, undoubted under the old dispensation. He has left them unnamed until a consensus of scientific opinion has established a scientific system of nomenclature. Will not others follow his lead? Until its isotopic constitution is discovered, let us simply call the new element 72.

NORMAN R. CAMPBELL.

Sarsen Stones.

REFERRING to the note on the discovery of the above near Maidstone, which appeared in NATURE of February 10, p. 195, may I direct attention to the fact that they occur in considerable numbers of large size, often in groups, near Faversham. The botryoidal concretionary surface-feature is frequently present, but what appears to be of greater interest is that many of the blocks are perforated by long, tubular holes suggestive of the work of marine annelids anterior to the consolidation of the rock. The gravel pits in this district yield large masses of sarsen occasionally. One stone I found recently weighs more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., and can now be seen at the Twickenham Public Library. Full particulars appeared in the local press (*Richmond and Twickenham Times*, December 23, 1922).

C. CARUS-WILSON.

Twickenham, February 19.