

— Much progress is being made in Scotland toward the development of a university extension scheme similar to that described in a recent number of *Science* by Mr. Oscar Browning.

— On account of failing health, Professor Tyndall has resigned his position at the Royal institution.

— The article on the French lycée, which appeared in this journal for Feb. 18, was, by an oversight, not credited to the *Canada educational monthly*, as it should have been.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*.*The attention of scientific men is called to the advantages of the correspondence columns of SCIENCE for placing promptly on record brief preliminary notices of their investigations. Twenty copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent on request.

The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.

Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.

The rudimentary metacarpals of bison.

IN *Science* for Feb. 18 Dr. D. D. Slade notes the fact that the skeleton of aurochs in the Museum of comparative zoölogy has rudiments of the second metacarpals, while the rudimentary fifth metacarpals are wanting. Dr. Slade will, I trust, pardon me for saying that the deduction he would make from this fact is not quite clear to me. If he considers it an individual peculiarity, I heartily agree with him; but, if he concludes from the evidence presented by this one skeleton that the arrangement of the rudimentary metacarpals in *Bison bonasus* differs from that of *Bison americanus*, I desire to protest most emphatically against any such inference.

Just now, by the efforts of Mr. Hornaday, the U. S. national museum has provided itself with a goodly number of skeletons of *Bison americanus*. Examination of four or five of these shows that in every case rudiments of the second and fifth metacarpals are present, the second being always the smaller of the two pairs. As these are all *in situ*, there can be no mistake in the matter. Our mounted skeleton of *Bison americanus* has only the fifth metacarpal present, but this is because the others have (or at least one of them has) been lost. There is a well-defined articular facet present for the second right metacarpal, but none for the left, although this may none the less once have been present.

The skeleton of aurochs in the national museum has, as Dr. Slade notices, the second and fifth metacarpals present. That, as now mounted, the inner metacarpal on one leg is larger than the outer, proves nothing, as a transposition may readily have been made by the preparator; and no one knows better than the writer how easily such a mistake may be made.

Until a far greater number of skeletons of aurochs have been examined, it would seem the safer course to assume that *Bison bonasus*, in the matter of its metacarpals, makes no departure from the usual order of things found in the Bovinae, and that the Cambridge specimen is merely a case of individual variation.

FREDERIC A. LUCAS.

Washington, D.C., April 10.

The Bellville meteor.

Messrs. A. S. Barnes & Co., publishers of school text-books, have just received the following letter, which is copied *verbatim et literatim*, and published for the public good:—

"April 1 1887

"Bellville ohio

"Gents sir to you

We read & hear a great deal of Meteors what thay are i went To see one that fell last fall In november i saw it the papers That it is found hundreds of People went to see it is a curiosly Thair is no print yet discribed Its facts yet as when you see it With the naket eye that some Astronomy aught to have it For the benift for his books It is a curious stone it is the oddes Shaped stone that ever was by man Or all that i talked with that seen it i asked Mr Phiel how Far him & his son was from it When it fell he told me about 4 rods he says it made The earth shake and a Trementous smel of sulpher It shocked him he went to Worke and dug it out and Took it town it raised the Accitement a greate many people Told me that thay would paid him 50 cts for to see but he left it Public for all to see it some said he aught to travil with It and put on exbition but He says that dont suit for he haint got gab enough for That business that will do some One ells he says if he can find out .P. T. Barnums address he Is going to rite to him and Try to sell it to him and Take it with his show for he can make money with it i asked him what he would Take for it he said he might take between 2 or 3 hundred dollars Mr Barns That would suit you in your Great store if you Gents would Have that meteors in your store Thair would thousands of people Would stop and see it and Pay 25 or 50 cts to se it i Must clos for it is almost Train time for i going to Kanes if you want to rite about the meteor or get some one ells Address

A. B. Phiel,

Bellville Richland
County ohio

"For he will give the full Particulars of it

"Yours Truly from
WM. H. BEAM."

A sensitive wind-vane.

The importance of the sensitive wind-vane question may justify still further trespass upon the space which you allot to correspondence. I am obliged to Mr. Curtis for calling my attention to Mr. Osborne's sensitive vane, as I did not know of it before.

On reading Mr. Osborne's paper, however, I find that his plan was essentially different from mine, in that he applied a liquid damper to the registering-apparatus, and not to the vane itself. In my opinion, there is a decided advantage in controlling the motion of the vane. If it be allowed an unrestricted motion, as is generally the case at present, the influence of its false movements and positions must be felt in some degree by the registering-apparatus, even when that is damped as suggested by Mr. Osborne. The direct damping of the vane will be cheaper and less complicated. As to the length of the vane, I believe that a vane controlled in this way need not be over five feet in length. A vane is often subjected to severe vertical strains, and it should be proportioned so as to endure these without danger. Mr. H. Helm Clayton seems to have entirely misunderstood the question under considera-