126. BRITISH STONE CIRCLES.—Mr. Edward Milles Nelson has produced a small work of some thirty pages dealing with British Stone Circles (*British Stone Circles*, by E. M. Nelson, London, R. Atkinson). Although Mr. Nelson does not mention Sir Norman Lockyer's kindred work, he does adopt, to some extent, the same method as the latter author, and utilises those astronomical theories which are, in fact, the property of neither, having been originated by some of the elder antiquaries who are now almost forgotten.

But Mr. Nelson additionally introduces questions of numbers in measurement and proportion, matters which also have been considered by others, and he obtains some entirely new discoveries. To those who find themselves unable to follow the prophets of any of the new cults of our rude stone monuments, the divergencies of result, co-existent with kindred methods, among the more speculative investigators of these remains are not only instructive but satisfying. They afford proof of the fact that ardent theorists find what they expect to find, their methods infallibly discovering it. It is as easy to prove astronomically that a given stone circle was constructed yesterday as to date it any time before the Christian era, and equally simple to adduce evidence in support of either determination. All depends on what features are chosen to be considered essential.

In those monuments, which have been studied both by Sir Norman Lockyer and Mr. Nelson, there is no accord between them as to which are the dominant conditions. Under the names of *Stenness* and *Broigar* respectively, these authors have considered one and the same circle in the Orkneys. The one dates it 700 B.C., on the faith of the May sunset and November sunrise, while the other assigns it to 100 B.C., in virtue of an alignment on the Pleiades. This difference may not be considered great; but at Stonehenge the respective periods adopted are 1680 B.C., and apparently A.D. 1 to A.D. 100. This latter is consequent on the presence of the number 666 in a hidden ratio, alike at Stonehenge and Hestingot. While Hestingot circle, in the Shetlands, is itself dated by a bearing on the star stone *a* Bŏŏtis. This number 666 being introduced, we naturally seek the reason of its presence, and find it

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explained that it was the sacred and secret number of the Sun God. At the end of Mr. Nelson's brochure occurs the following passage :—

"It is obvious that had it not been for the 'number of the beast, six hundred threescore and six,' in the Apocalypse these distances and numbers would have been without meaning. Cannot we go back in imagination 1,850 years to the island of Patmos and see a converted Phœnician High Priest laying at the feet of the beloved disciple his once more cherished possession, the secret number of the Sun God ?"

This number is sought in the various circles and groups of remains in a variety of manners. The author begins by claiming to determine that the Phœnicians were interested in and did not know the precise ratio of the circumference of the circle to its diameter, but made it $2\frac{2}{7}$. Now $\frac{22}{7} \times 3 \times 70 = 666$. Next there is determined an unit of 12·96 English inches, which is termed the "Hestingot foot." By this the monuments are measured.

Then we are reminded of the property of the numbers 3, 4, 5, that $3^2 + 4^2 = 5^2$ and hence that a right-angle can be set out by the use of the first two measurements to any unit as the enclosing sides, and the third as the hypotenuse. On the same principle it appears that the constructors of the Hestingot ring used the numbers 15, 21 and 25·8. We fail to follow the application of the principle ; the figures should have been 15, 20 and 25, but $15^2 + 21^2 = 666$, while $15^2 + 20^2 = 625$, and the one is the 'mark of the beast,' the other is not.

At Avebury, after a reconstruction which supplies 82 suppositions of missing stones by the aid of 11 survivors, the perimeter of a hypothetical ellipse, which is not an ellipse but an approximation, is obtained, the value $2\frac{2}{7}$ is used in place of the true value of Π., and the figure 3,330 in Hestingot feet is the result, which, divided by 5, gives 666. There is nothing now to indicate the division five.

At *Broigar* a triangle is set out joining *Broigar* and *Stenness* circles, with Maes-howe as the third point. The sides are 7,445 feet, 3,549 feet, and 4,566 feet respectively, and if the long side be subtracted from the sum of the other two the number 670 is obtained, which is not 666 but at least near to it.

Stonehenge is treated in yet another manner. There were 30 stones in the outer ring and seven trilithons (now there are not seven, but "there were either seven trilithons, or the building when finished was intended to have seven trilithons.") Thirty stones × seven trilithons × $\frac{22\cdot2}{7}$ = 666; why the value of Π., correct or incorrect, should be introduced does not appear.

These, then, are instances of the manners in which the " Crest of the Sun God " is stated to be impressed on our ancient monuments; simpler and more direct the methods well may have been, but Mr. Nelson writes of one case :— " The Priestly Architects . . . . wished to stamp their temple with the sacred number of the Sun God. They could easily have done this by setting out the Cardinal, or other important stones of indication, 666 feet apart, but then that would have been too apparent, and would have exposed the secret number to the vulgar gaze, so they did it in this ingenious manner."

Even the great Pyramid is made conform to this cult; for the mean of several measurements of its side, less half a foot reduced to problematic cubits (not in this instance to Hestingot feet) = 443·556 = 666 × ·666.

Add to the very varied methods adopted in arriving at the number (666) which the author seeks, the fact that his measurements are mainly based on the Ordnance Survey, of scale 208 feet to the inch, and we can hardly agree in assigning to his results the value which he asks.

There is much that is contentious and very slightly based, and much that is mistaken and inaccurate to which we have not space to refer; and there are some naive remarks which exemplify the author's position and method. We cannot admit that the " Blood-red Phœnician " is as yet firmly established as the architect of our megalithic monuments. Nor do we consider that the " Crest of the Sun God," as above evidenced, establishes the identity of the Phœnicians with the Picts of Scotland, or the other astonishing historical results set forth.

P.S.—There is something uncanny about the number 666, we doubt whether Mr. Nelson is himself aware that the " Crest of the Sun God " is blazoned all over his book.

The title "*On British Stone Circles*" contains by account 21 letters. Starting with the cover we have a book whose title contains 21 letters published at a house bearing the number 10. Twenty-one letters in title × 10, the number of the house in Essex St., × $2\frac{2}{7}\cdot2$ the Phœnician approximation to Π. = 666, the "number of the beast."

On the title page we have the title containing 21 letters and the printing arranged in 10 lines. Twenty-one letters in title by 10 lines of print × $2\frac{2}{7}\cdot2 = 666$.

Passing over the title page and table of contents we find 21 pages of letterpress, including pages of illustrations, summed up on pages 29 and 30 in 10 numbered paragraphs. Twenty-one pages of letterpress × 10 paragraphs of summary × $2\frac{2}{7}\cdot2 = 666$. We commend this study of hidden coincidences to all who call mystic numbers to their aid.   R.H.W.

153. BRITISH STONE CIRCLES (IV., p. 233, par. 126) ERRATA. —Page 233, second line from bottom, for "stone" read *star*.

Page 234, sixteenth line, for "$2\frac{2}{7}\cdot2$ x 3," read $2\frac{2}{7}\cdot2$ × 3.

Page 234, twentieth line, for "$3^2 \times 4^2 = 5^2$," read $3^2 + 4^2 = 5^2$.

Page 234, twenty-seventh line, for "$15^2 \times 21^2$," read $15^2 + 21^2$; for "$15^2 \times 20^2$," read $15^2 + 20^2$.

Page 234, thirtieth line, for "suppositions of," read *suppositious or*.

Page 234, thirty-third line; page 235, sixth line; and page 236, sixth line, for "II," read Π.

Page 236, ninth line, for "in title by 10 lines," read *in title* × 10 *lines*.   R. HANSFORD WORTH.

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* *Sic*: For "l" read "k."   † *i.e.*, Hatherleigh.