

CORRESPONDENCE.

LUDOLPH (OR LUDOLFF OR LUCIUS) VAN CEULEN.

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*.

DEAR SIR,—In the archives of St. Pieter's Kerk in Leiden, Holland, this epitaph is recorded :

HIC IACET SEPULTUS MR. LUDOLFF VAN CEULEN, PROFESSOR
 BELGICUS, DUM VIVERET MATHEMATICARUM SCIENTIARUM
 IN ATHENAEO HUIUS URBS, NATUS HILDESHIMIA ANNO 1540,
 DIE XXVIII IANUARIJ, ET DENATUS XXXI DECEMBRIS, 1610,
 QUI IN VITA SUA MULTO LABORE CIRCUMFERENTIAE CIRCULI
 PROXIMAM RATIONEM AD DIAMETRUM INVENIT SEQUEMTEM.
 QUANDO DIAMETER EST 1, TUM CIRCULI CIRCUMFERENTIA
 PLUS EST QUAM

314159265358979323846264338327950288
 10000000000000000000000000000000

ET MINUS QUAM

314159265358979323846264338327950289
 10000000000000000000000000000000 ;

SED QUANDO DIAMETER EST

100000000000000000000000000000000,

TUM EST CIRCULI CIRCUMFERENTIA PLUS QUAM

314159265358979323846264338327950288

& MINUS QUAM

314159265358979323846264338327950289.

On my first visit to Holland in 1935 I tried to locate van Ceulen's tombstone, in the hope of presenting the Mathematical Association with a rubbing of this interesting inscription ; but the grave had changed hands several times, and the coveted epitaph, if still in existence at all, was facing downwards on the underside of some stone recording on its upper surface the usual entirely fictional virtues of some lesser Dutchman, who employed his leisure in some more conventional way than the calculation of π by a method not far in advance of that which Archimedes had employed eighteen centuries before.

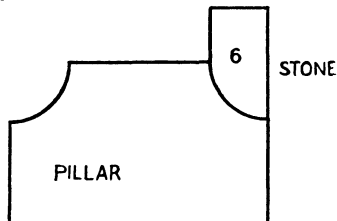
In preparation for a renewed attempt to recover the original epitaph, I have lately appealed to Dr. C. de Jong, President of the "Liwenagel" (Leeraren in Wiskunde en Natuurwetenschappen aan Gymnasia en Lycea), roughly the equivalent of our Mathematical Association. His answer, I think, will be of some interest to our members.

“LEIDEN, 21st March, 1938.

DEAR MR. HOPE-JONES,

It was a great pleasure to me to be able to help you in your attempts to discover the epitaph of Ludolph van Ceulen in St.

Pieter's Church at Leiden. With the help of Miss Le Poole I have succeeded in finding out some points, which will surely interest you. We have discovered that Ludolph's grave was exchanged for another grave by his widow, Dec. 31st, 1610. In the year 1626, Aug. 10th, the grave was sold by the Church-masters to Jonkheer Christoffel van Sac, and afterwards to Mr. Adriaen van Hogeveen (1718). According to the archives, Ludolph's first grave was nr 6 in the 'High Choir'. Now, after a long search, I have found a piece of a tombstone there, *carrying the number 6, but nothing else*. Part of this stone has been cut off so as to fit to one of the great pillars of the Church, in this way :



For this reason I doubt if it will be worth while to turn the stone upside-down ; for, in the most favourable case, you will find only part of van Ceulen's epitaph, and certainly not the whole of it.

I shall be very glad to help you further if you want so. In this case I would like you to give me further directions. I regret that I shall not be in town during the coming School Holidays.

Yours sincerely,

C. DE JONG."

It is presumably through some error in the archives that van Ceulen's widow is recorded as having exchanged his grave on the same day on which, according to his epitaph, he was "denatus", or "disborn".

I hope that I may speak for all members of the Mathematical Association, not only in passing a vote of censure on the Vandals who destroyed such a treasure, but even more in thanking Dr. de Jong most heartily for his co-operation in solving the mystery of its disappearance.

Yours truly,

W. HOPE-JONES.

23rd March, 1938.

" A WEIGHTY MATTER " .

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Fairthorne's interesting letter suggests the question why textbook writers tend to hold the Slug in contempt. I believe the answer to be simple, though silly. The name "slug" sounds idiotic and unscientific. If the inventor of the British Engineer's Unit of Mass had called it a B.E.M. he might have secured