

The Basques themselves do not like the suggestion that in ancient times their language covered the whole Iberian peninsula, but due to recent research by a noted German scholar, Dr. W. H. Schuchardt, "it is today considered the most probable solution of the problem."

Dr. McGuire upsets some rather widely accepted ideas about the Basques. They are not a unified people, he points out, and they never were. They have always been more interested in preserving a whole host of small local autonomies

than they have in a large nationalism, either of all Spain or even of their own racio-linguistic group.

Nor are they proudly self-conscious of their language. Less than half the persons in the Basque provinces know Basque, and a great many of them do not habitually use it. The most popular Basque newspapers are published in Spanish. In brief, the situation is not unlike that in Ireland, where the native language has been "revived" by rather artificial means.

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a slow continuing decline during the winters of 1935-36-37, Dr. Calder says. Before this investigation, slight changes in the brightness of certain members of the group had been suspected but seldom proved.

In this study, Harvard cameras utilized a potassium-hydride photo-electric cell, permitting very exact detection of slow or minute variations in the star light. In all, the relative brightness of twenty-five of the most conspicuous stars in the Pleiades region were observed during the three winters of the survey.

Dr. Calder's report included a reminder, which he did not elaborate, that the spectrum of Pleione formerly had emission lines and resembled that of P Cygni, a star that was at one time a nova. In recent years, he said, the bright lines of Pleione have disappeared.

"That some change has taken place in the Pleiades is borne out by tradition," Dr. Calder said. "Almost all nations of the earth have legends about the 'seven who are now six.' The surprising universality of this impression is difficult to explain unless a now diminished seventh Pleiad formerly was conspicuous."

Six Pleiades are normally visible to the unaided eye, but under exceptional conditions double this number have been noted. Telescopes reveal a population here of several hundred stars which for the most part are members of a physically related aggregation, as is shown by a general unanimity of motion.

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#### ASTRONOMY

## Finsler's Comet Will Grow In Brightness For Next Month

### Can Now Be Seen Without Optical Aid; With Pair of Binoculars, Small Tail Might Be Observed

**F**INSLER'S comet, found by a Swiss astronomer on July 4, has now reached naked eye brilliance in the northern sky, and by mid-August will be as bright as Megrez, the star in the Big Dipper where the handle joins the bowl. At that time it will be passing above the dipper and through the stars of the handle.

Just now the comet is in Perseus, a constellation which can be seen low in the northeast, under the W-shaped group of Cassiopeia, about midnight. It is just bright enough to be seen as a fuzzy spot of light without optical aid if the sky is very clear and free from smoke and glare. A small tail has been observed by astronomers, and this might be seen with a pair of binoculars, which will help in locating the object. Its distance is about

110,000,000 miles, but in August it will be less than half as far away. As it approaches, the tail will increase in prominence. About August 15 it will be nearest the sun, at a distance of about 79,000,000 miles.

Curiously, it was just a year ago that Peltier's comet shone in the evening sky, the first to be seen easily without a telescope since 1910. Finsler's is better placed for viewing, however, for last summer the moon was full at the time the comet was brightest, thus spoiling the spectacle to a large extent. Next month the moon will not appear prominently until about the tenth, and it will not be full until the 21st, by which time the comet, near Arcturus, and high in the western sky, will have begun to diminish in brilliance.

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#### ASTRONOMY

## Legend of Seven Pleiades Gets Astronomical Support

**S**CIENTIFIC corroboration of a world-wide legend, rooted in ancient mythology, that once the six resplendent star "sisters" of the Pleiades numbered seven, was offered by Dr. William A. Calder, of Harvard Observatory.

The star "Pleione," identified by astronomers as "Number Seven" of this

group, has been suspected in the past as the mysteriously disappeared sister, and careful comparative measurements of stellar magnitudes in this region by Dr. Calder tend to confirm this suggestion, it was reported.

Pleione was observed to diminish in light about a sixth of a magnitude in

#### RADIO

## Paris To Have Powerful Television Transmitter

**T**HE WORLD'S most powerful television transmitter is now in limited service at the Paris Exposition, reports the U. S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce.

By fall the peak power of 30,000 watts is expected to be available. Transmission of television pictures from the Eiffel Tower antenna will give a definition of 405 lines to the picture.

Recent demonstrations of television in America have shown a definition of 441 lines to the picture but the power of transmission has been less than the 30 kilowatt effort of the French.

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London's famous clock Big Ben was in error by as much as a second on only five days during the past year, says a report of the Astronomer Royal.