

STAR PICTURES AND STAR LESSONS.

From Child's Companion.

III.

Our next star picture will need five counters, and these you must place in the shape of a letter W.

When once you can make them neatly in this shape, you must learn where to place them.

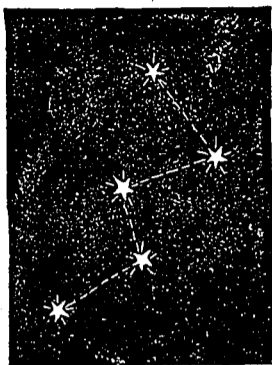


Fig. 4.

This W-shaped cluster of stars is called Cassiopeia, and having made the plough and placed the Pole star, then on the other side of that Pole star place your W. You see that two lines drawn from

the Pole star will give you the two outside stars of the W.

There are about fifty-five stars in this group called Cassiopeia, but these five are the brightest, and the shape is so easy to find and to remember, that we will learn only these five at present.

Now prick all you know—plough, Pole star, and Cassiopeia; put your pin into the Pole star and turn all round, and you will see that when the plough is nearest to you, Cassiopeia is on the far side of the Pole star; and when the plough is farthest the Cassiopeia comes nearest. This is the real movement that you see by night in the sky.

But is it not strange that when you look up into that real sky and see the real shining stars, you hear no sound? Yet they are all whirling along at such a rate—some of them moving one mile and a half every second—that is, 5000 miles every hour. We cannot picture it, it is more than we can imagine. How very great and how wise, and how powerful our Father must be who can guide all these rushing bodies, and keep them in their places century after century!

IV.

We will take for our next lesson the beautiful star Capella, in the group or constellation called Auriga. This very bright star is believed to travel at the rate of thirty miles each second, and it is one of the yellow stars. If you notice carefully you will see how wonderfully the colors of the stars differ. There are white stars, golden or yellow stars, reddish stars, and bluish ones too. To find Capella we must go to the counters again, and place Cassiopeia and the plough and the Pole star as in the last lesson.

Now draw a line from the highest pointer of the plough to the nearest star of the W, and imagine a triangle on this line. The star at its point, as you see it in the figure, will be the chief star in Auriga, that is, Capella. You will also see in the sky that Capella has a triangle close to it of very small stars. This will help you always in finding Capella in the sky when you see this tiny triangle close by the brilliant star with no others near it that shine half so brightly.

But we must not think that because some stars look tiny, therefore they are the smallest. Think how large a fire balloon looks before it goes up. Perhaps you have watched it starting, and looked until it grew smaller and smaller as it went off, till you could only see it as if it were a tiny red spark, and at last it went so very far away that you could not see it at all.

What is it that makes that big blazing ball look so very small? It is the distance, it is too far off for you to see it at last at



Fig. 5.

all, and yet there it really is still the same in size and brightness.

So you see the appearance of a star depends a good deal on the distance it is from our world. Some really smaller stars, because they are nearer our earth, look much bigger and brighter than others which are much larger in reality, only being so very far away they appear to be the smaller of our twinkling lights.

V.

We have now found stars on three sides of the Pole star; we must next learn one which fills the vacant place.

We will place our counters for all we yet know, i.e., Pole star, plough, Cassiopeia, and Capella. Now take a line from your last star of the plough handle, and draw it right up to the farthest star of the W (Cassiopeia); now another line about as long away to the left, and another line from Cassiopeia to meet it. When these lines form a triangle they will meet at a very bright star called Vega.

This is one of the brightest stars in the whole sky, and it shines with a bluish light. The group in which we find Vega is called Lyra or the Lyre, but I think you could hardly trace the shape of a lyre in the five stars which are the chief in this group.

As we spoke in our last lesson of the dis-

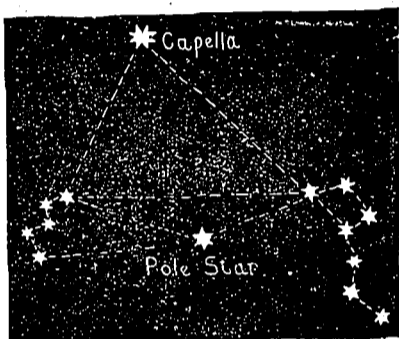


Fig. 6.

tances of the stars, I should like to give you a little idea of how far these heavenly bodies really are from our earth.

Picture now to yourselves a flash of light starting from our sun to come straight to our world. It would take eight and a half minutes to reach us, and in that time it would have travelled thousands of miles each second.

Think what a journey and what a rush: the length of the journey we cannot even picture. Listen to the clock as it ticks out each second, and remember that for each tick the beam of light has been rushing along about 180,000 miles. Then think of the numbers of seconds that there are in eight and a half minutes. What a tremendous distance!

Well this gives you just a faint idea of how far away our sun is from us, and yet

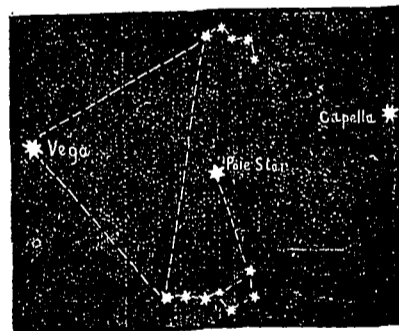


Fig. 7.

there are stars whose light takes three years—twenty years—seventy years—yes, even hundreds of years to reach us! It is too vast—we cannot follow it. It only shows us what a wonderful God ours must be, and what power He has to be able to govern all these rolling mighty bodies, keeping all in perfect order.

We must try to learn more of His wisdom and His power and His love; and some day we shall hear His own voice speak to us, and shall see, face to face, that Almighty Friend who "made the stars also."

TO-DAY for God what hast thou done?
I ask thee, restless mind!
Shouldst thou soar upward to the sun,
Yet peace thou couldst not find.
O, hast thou wasted all thy powers
Upon this fleeting earth?
Or cast away the precious hours,
Unmindful of their worth?
—Kate Cameron.

SWEET WILLIAM,

OR THE CASTLE OF MOUNT ST. MICHAEL.

By Marquerite Bouvet.

CHAPTER XIV.—REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.

Count Philippe and his companion had travelled all night long, when at last the dense blackness melted into gray, and in the ghostly morning light Mount St. Michael and its grim old castle rose from the misty sea. Deep gloom reigned everywhere. It had steeped the lonely place in more than its usual loneliness. It clung to the barren coast, wrapped in silvery vapors, to the gray towers and turrets still but faintly outlined against the leaden skies. Who would have guessed what a sweet vision of freshness and beauty lay hidden in the very highest of those frowning turrets? Like the gray old giant of the forest sheltering its tender nursing in the lofty branch, as far as possible from earth, as near as may be to heaven, so Mount St. Michael held its treasure in its strong arms, safe and close.

The boy William lay there sleeping, surely the fairest born in Normandy; a picture of warmth and color, more than enough to make up for the chill, colorless world outside—color in the dark curls lying loosely on the white pillow, in the tender eyes now hidden by the beautiful eyelids and their fringe of soft black lashes. Who can tell what visions of freedom and happiness delight him now? And there is color not less beautiful on the softly-rounded cheek, glowing with the rosiness of healthful sleep, and in the sweet red lips, parted and half smiling—at fortune, perhaps, who is to do such great things for him this day. Ah, Sweet William, lovely image of childish grace and innocence, sleep but this one hour, and it shall be thy last in the great, dreary dungeon! To-day the sorrows of captivity are at an end for thee, and freedom no longer a vague dream but a glorious reality.

It was very early, and others were asleep at Mount St. Michael besides the gentle William; but in less than an hour after, when it was known that two strangers had arrived at the castle, and that one of them was a young count from France, and the other a sailor whom every one had thought dead these many years, the whole household awoke as if by magic, and all was life and interest. The first of all the honest hearts made glad by these tidings was that of the old Norman peasant when he welcomed back his loved one after all these years of patient waiting. It was through him that the news reached the castle-folk, for the poor old man could not contain his joy. Through him they learned that the Count Philippe was the brother of my lord Geoffrey's fair lady, and that he was come at last to claim his sister's little child. They heard how the ship in which she sailed away from Normandy had been wrecked. They heard the story of the little locket, how the paper in it had been found. They were told how much the little Lady Constance resembled her young uncle, and what a brave, good knight he was, and how he had met my lady at the tournament, and a great deal more; and the greatest excitement prevailed.

All that Duke William heard of these rumors, however, was that a young nobleman from the court of France awaited his pleasure; and as he did not suspect the nature of the young count's visit, and was always glad to make a display before other noblemen, he prepared to give him a most courteous and splendid welcome.

Some hours later all of Duke William's retinue had assembled in the great hall of the castle. The nobles stood in two long lines on either side of my lord, who sat at the one end in his ducal chair, wearing a heavy crown of jewels, arrayed in silk and purple, and beaming down majestically upon every one. Constance sat on a little stool at his feet, with no more charming ornaments than her own bright smile and her crown of golden hair. A look of great expectancy stole into her big eyes. She had been silent for some little time, and was just preparing to begin a series of eager questions, when a movement was heard in the hall and the Count Philippe entered.

A cry of joyous recognition broke from my lady's lips. Disregarding all the rigid formality of such a ceremonial as this, she ran forward to meet him exclaiming,—

"O my lord, you have come all the way from France to see me!"

"All the way from France to see you, my Constance," repeated the young count tenderly, bending over her and putting his arm about her little figure as if he meant never to let her go again.

Every one looked surprised—most of all Duke William, whose expression of surprise was slightly mingled with displeasure; for he resented the young nobleman's familiarity with his little daughter. Count Philippe, still holding Constance by the hand, came forward, and knelt before the duke to receive his greeting. Then he rose, and looking about him with an air of brave assurance, made known his errand, speaking with gentle dignity; for he was a courteous as well as a brave and noble knight.

"My lord," said he, "I am here to undeceive you, for it is plain that you, too, are ignorant of the truth concerning this little lady. Constance is your brother Geoffrey's child and my sister's; and I have, by your gracious leave, come to take her back to her kindred. Your own son, William, is in yonder Great Tower, by what chance I know not; but it will doubtless please you to release him early, and deprive him no longer of a father's love."

A deep stillness fell over the assembled nobles. Duke William's face was ghastly white. His deep eyes gleamed fiercely, and his beetling brows were knit over them in wrath. Constance thought she had never seen my lord look so terrible, and for the first time in her life she shrank from him and was almost afraid.

"What madness is this?" he asked at length, in a voice that trembled with agitation.

Count Philippe drew forth the little locket containing his sister's face. It was the image of Constance. Then he laid the little message before him, and Duke William read the few dim words that had been his undoing. He remained as one transfixed. All breathing was hushed and the room was deathly still.

"And what," said he, after a fearful pause, "is all this about the Lady Constance and my son William? Speak!" he thundered.

The count turned and beckoned to his companion, who was waiting without, saying,—

"This good man, my lord, whom you may remember as once a brave sailor of Normandy, will tell you better than I."

The old mariner then related how nine years ago my lord Geoffrey's fair lady had been taken to his grandfather's hut, and there awaited the ship that was to take her back to France, away from my lord's displeasure; and how she had wept at parting from her little child, and how she had spoken of it as her tender baby-daughter, and begged them to give it her own true name, Constance; and how she had said they must pray and hope and wait, and she would send her brother the count to bring her little one back to her. Then he told of the frightful storm and of her death; and there was not an eye but was dim, save that of Duke William. And lastly he told of the strange misunderstanding about the locket, and the finding of the little paper at last, and the young count's search for him, and indeed all that had happened since. All this he told and could vouch for its truth. But how it happened that after these nine years he had come back and found this same little daughter as happy and free as a bird at Mount St. Michael, and had heard of another child of the name of William who was in the Great Tower instead, he really could not say.

"Mayhap the good nurses, Mathilde and Lasette, who did attend the little ones, may know" more of this than any one else.

Duke William's face had not changed a muscle during the whole of the sailor's narrative; but at these closing words a sudden fear overtook him, and one could see that a terrible struggle was going on within him. His hand trembled visibly, and a cold moisture beaded his dark brow.

"Bring," said he to one of his attendants—"bring hither the two women and—and the child from the tower!"

(To be Continued.)

TRUE GREATNESS can only be the result of a fully rounded character.