

Superior, with less romance, called the Pleiades *Madodisson* or the sweating stones, referring to the hot stones arranged in a group in their vapour baths.

Only six Pleiades are usually seen, though as many as sixteen have been made out by keen observers without artificial aid (Mr. A. M. Clarke's article on *The Pleiades*, in *Nature*, April 15, 1886, Vol. 33, p. 561.) Hipparchus mentions the possibility of discovering a seventh member of the group, Ovid too, "Quae septem dici, sex tamen esse solent."

The story of the "Lost Pleiad" is immeasurably antique and cosmopolitan as a myth or a tradition. The Pleiades are included in the great constellation of the Bull.

They are with us a winter constellation. Their position is best found by following with the eye the line made by the belt of Orion northward past Aldebaran and the Hyades.

Alcyoné is of the third magnitude, but was not 1750 years ago the lucida of the collection. The leading place was first assigned to Alcyoné by Tycho Brahe in the sixteenth century. Galileo detected nearly fifty stars in the Pleiades. M. C. Wolf, in 1875, at Paris, made a chart which included stars to the fourteenth magnitude to the number of six hundred and twenty-five, contained in a rectangle  $135' \times 90'$ , in which Alcyoné occupies a nearly central position. By the photographic object glass, stars of the Pleiades down to the seventeenth magnitude have been deciphered, and more than one thousand four hundred have been placed on the photographic retina.

The Pleiades are immensely far off. None of them has any sensible parallax, nor are we informed of their intrinsic lustre, mutual distance or gravitating mass. Recent investigations of the structure of the Pleiades group shew a surprising miniature sidereal system, the richness and variety of which bewilder theoretical conceptions, and recall as anomalous the accumulated wonders of the Magellanic clouds. Groups are collected within the main groups, systems revolve apart, the subordination of which to the laws of a general federative union, leaves their internal liberty of movement unshackled.

The furthest of the suns forming the group are seventy-one times as distant from us as from the centre of their own system; consequently Alcyoné blazes upon them with five thousand times the brilliancy of Sirius. "It would seem," says Mr. Clark, "a star rather than a sun."

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