

NEAR PICTURES AND STAR LESSONS.



Perhaps you have been out to tea sometimes, lately, and when you were coming home you did so like to look up and see the bright stars shining in the dark sky, and you wished you knew more about them.

Of course you all know the little verse:

“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!”

But that only makes you wonder all the more what those little twinklers are which sparkle so beautifully. And then sometimes, when going to bed, you have pulled aside the curtain just to peep out and see the lovely shining stars.

Now wouldn't it be very, very nice if you could tell the names of some of those stars and know something more about them? I feel sure you would like it as much as two tiny boys did for whom these star pictures were first made, and when nurse came to fetch them to bed they ran off so gladly—to think that they might peep out and see their shiny friends the stars—for they did seem like friends when they knew their names, and knew just the right place in the sky to look for them.

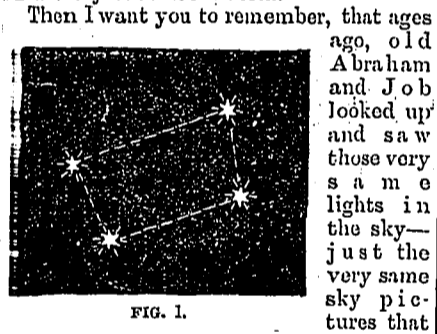


FIG. 1.

Then I want you to remember, that ages ago, old Abraham and Job looked up and saw those very same lights in the sky—just the very same sky pictures that I want you now to learn to see.

First, we will learn to draw one star picture with counters on the table, and when the first bright starlight night you must ask if you can look out and find that same picture in the sky.

Each take four counters and lay them like this—to make the figure of a plough—only without the handle first—like Fig. 1.

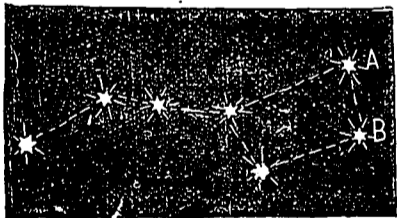


FIG. 2.

Now three more counters to form the handle, like Fig. 2.

Next gather up the counters, and with those seven make again the plough all by yourselves.

This figure you can see in the sky both summer and winter, only you must ask some one to show you which is the north, and then stand facing that way and see if you can pick out those seven very bright stars. Sometimes you will find the plough with the handle up, and sometimes the handle will be down, but its shape is always the same.

The two end stars are called pointers (A, B, Fig. 2), and next time we will learn what they point to. Now if you know quite well how to lay the figure of a plough on the table, try next and prick that figure on a piece of paper, putting a round hole for each star. Then hold it up to the light and you have a shining picture of our sky plough, just like it will shine when you

look out at night towards the north. This plough forms part of a group of stars called “The Great Bear”—or *Ursa Major*

II.

To-day we must see what those pointers in the plough point to. Make out your plough with seven counters once more, and now a long way up in the same direction as the pointers point to, put one counter. That counter will represent what is called the Pole star.

It is not so bright as the seven stars of the plough, but I think you cannot help finding it in the sky when once you find the pointers, and take a sort of line from them till you come to one star which is brighter than any others near it.

Each of these twinkling stars which you see is really a sun—yes, a blazing sun like ours, only some of these are much, much larger than our sun. But they are so far away that they seem to us like fireflies.

Our bright sun itself, if it could move away from us as far as these stars are now, would itself look like a twinkling star and nothing more.

Round this Pole star, which we have just learned as our new star for to-day, all the other stars seem to turn. We will try and picture it for ourselves.

First draw the plough on a piece of paper, with the Pole star in its proper place in a line from the pointers; and through the Pole star place a pin and stick it firmly into a book or table. Then, if you turn the paper slowly round, you will see that the plough moves round the Pole star; and sometimes it



FIG. 3.

will have its handle up and sometimes down—upside down when it gets opposite to you, and in its old place when it comes right round to you again. But you see it never moves farther away from the Pole star—it only goes round and round it.—*Juvenile Instructor.*

SWEET WILLIAM,

OR THE CASTLE OF MOUNT ST MICHAEL.

By Marguerite Bonnet.

CHAPTER XII.—COUNT PHILIPPE.

With a gentle and prosperous wind, the fair Norman vessel soon entered into port at Calais. Already the gay city was alive with the spirit of the prodigious feast. Everything was stirring, and had a wonderfully festive look. Even the working-people, dressed out in their Sunday costumes, seemed for the time to have little else to do besides watching the gay multitudes flocking toward the place of meeting. The road thither was hung with garlands, and strewn with flowers, and lighted by hundreds of flaming torches. Gorgeous equipages rolled by incessantly, while strains of martial music echoed far and wide; and it really seemed as if the whole world were on a glorious holiday.

My little Lady Constance, who had been in ecstasies all the way, was now quite bewildered by this new magnificence. Her bright blue eyes were bigger and brighter than ever, and her active little tongue could hardly ask questions fast enough. She entirely forgot Nurse Lasette's injunction, and her unrestrained prattling and exclamations of surprise and her merry ringing laughter were quite improper for a little lady of the nobility. But my lord the duke was mightily amused by it all. He said his little daughter's amazement was a far more interesting sight to him than all the king's tournaments; and many of his noble friends said so too.

When Constance reached the beautiful field, she found there was still a great deal more to delight her. Such wonderful

things as she saw—magnificent tents decked and hung in golden tapestries, and gorgeous banners waving overhead, and golden statues of lions and other monstrous creatures, which she admired greatly, and fountains that ran wine as freely as water, and sparkled like rubies in the sunlight. Then there were horses without number—strong handsome horses, splendidly caparisoned, and wearing crests of tall white plumes on their proud heads; and their riders were clad from head to foot in bright armor, and carried long spears that flashed and glittered so that the scene was dazzling to the eyes. Indeed there seemed to be no end of pomp and glory; and Constance felt that this was certainly the grandest spectacle she had ever looked upon. She had never supposed there were so many people in the world, and such amiable and courtly people too; for every one had a smile for the pretty bright-haired child who went about hand in hand so confidently with the grim and redoubtable Duke William.

On the day after the arrival, Constance went with her father to visit the tents of some great lords whose names she could not remember, they were so long and strange; and the flattering remarks which her beauty and winning ways called forth on every side were as music to the vain old ears of my lord. He had never been admired by any one himself, and he knew it. He had always before hated those who were, and shown his envy in some unpleasant way. But with this child it was different. She was a part of himself, and he felt that all her charms and graces were but a reflection of his own greatness, and a thing to be proud of and glory in. Some of these great people actually said she was a rival for the pretty queen herself, and better fitted to grace the court of France than the bare rocks of Mount St. Michael; at which Duke William smiled pleasantly and his ambitions rose high.

But her little ladyship, who happily was ignorant of all ambition, and still more unconscious of all her attractions, spoke up with her usual artless daring,—

“But I shall never leave Mount St. Michael, except with—”

“Except with whom?” demanded my lord.

“Except with some one I love very, very much,” answered she, looking up at him with a bright mischievous little smile.

And my lord, thinking she meant him, was pleased that his great friends should see how perfectly she loved and trusted him. He had had little enough love and trust to boast of, forsooth, and hers was now the sweetest thing in life to him.

On the next day the games began; and Constance was installed in one of the airy pavilions, in the midst of a group of fair ladies, beautifully dressed in light silken robes, with dainty laces about their shoulders, and roses blooming freely upon their cheeks. Nurse Lasette stood near by and when my lady saw something that particularly astonished her, or when her little feelings became too much for her, she would draw Lasette's face down to hers and whisper in her ear, “O nurse, if Sweet William could but see all this!”

Constance soon noticed that many brave and handsome knights hovered continually about their pavilion. It is a curious thing but one may nearly always see brave young knights wherever there are lovely ladies. Constance did not yet know this great law of attraction; so she watched them all with deep interest, and amused her nurse with her comments.

“The ladies must love the brave knights very much to give them such beautiful knots of ribbon,” said she; “and look! some of them are throwing down flowers. Why do not the young lords kiss the pretty ladies for their pains, Lasette?”

But Lasette was at a loss to say why the young noblemen should prove themselves so thoughtless and ungrateful.

Presently my lady was interrupted in her ingenuous reflections. A young knight stood beside one of the flower-decked pillars of their bower, and directed his glances so often towards the little figure in white that Constance began to notice him particularly. He was alone. He neither spoke with the fair ladies above him, nor received flowers and favors from their hands. He had an absent look in his eyes, except when he looked at Constance, and then she observed that he smiled a little. She thought him

very handsome and manly. He wore such a beautiful cloak of crimson velvet, fastened on the shoulder with a large silver clasp. One end of it was gracefully thrown back, and revealed a splendid girdle and sword-hilt all inlaid with precious stones. She liked his face, too—for it was a pleasant face, fairer than that of most men—while his hair was almost as yellow as her own.

“I wonder what lady he is looking for,” she mused, as she studied him with her wide-awake blue eyes. But as she was unable to satisfy herself on this point, she soon became interested in some of the lively combats that were going on.

As for the young nobleman, he watched the games but little that day. Every now and then Constance found his eyes upon her, and after a little she began to think that he was looking for no less a lady than her little self. Whenever she broke out into some exclamation of delight, or clapped her little hands, or made some artless remark to her nurse, he watched her, following all her movements and smiling as if in sympathy with her enjoyment.

Many eyes watched the pretty child that day, but none so furtively as the young lord's; and many spoke of her that night, but the young nobleman did not—he only took with him the memory of her bright young face, and spent a great portion of the night in thinking.

As for my lady, when she laid her tired little head on her pillow that night, she wondered if she would wake in the morning and find it all a dream. Her thoughts wandered to the old fortress in Normandy, and it seemed years since she had left it. All that she had seen since then went through her mind in rapid succession; and lastly she thought of the great distance between her and the little cousin she loved, and but for that thought she felt this had been the happiest day of her life.

On the third day, and on all the days following, Constance went again with her nurse to the ladies' pavilion. Each day she saw the young lord standing alone near the same pillar, and looking at her with the same searching look in his blue eyes. At last one day he came and spoke with her, and asked her in a courtly way what she thought of the king's great tournament. He had a kindly voice as well as a pleasant face, and Constance was disposed to be very friendly with him. So she told him in her quaint little way, how pleased and surprised she had been, and how like a great lady she felt, as she watched the brave way in which the young knights were disporting themselves in the lists.

“It is a noble sight,” she said. “There is only one thing I miss—just one thing.”

“And what is that?” inquired her friend.

“There is not in all this great assembly a single face that resembles Sweet William's.”

“Sweet William!” repeated the nobleman; “that is a dainty name enough. And pray, who is Sweet William?”

“My cousin—my little twin-cousin who lives in the Great Tower at Mount St. Michael. I am so fond of him, and he is fond of me. I think of him all the time, even while I am seeing such great and curious sights as these; and I wish that he were with me. It was such a pity to come away and leave him shut up in that Great Tower—but there! I have again forgotten,” she added hastily. “Nurse told me never to speak of Sweet William to any one, but she said ‘to any one at Mount St. Michael;’ and you are not at Mount St. Michael, so it is no great wrong.”

The young lord looked surprised, but after a pause he said,—

“It is no wrong at all. I am not of Mount St. Michael, but of Chalons. I am the Count Philippe of Chalons, and I have never been in Normandy. But I had a sister once who was there—a sweet and beautiful lady,” he said. And as he looked more intently at the little girl he added under his breath, “And you are wonderfully like her—wonderfully like her!”

(To be Continued.)

THERE ARE ABOUT 600,000 drunkards in the United States. How many cities of 40,000 inhabitants each would these drunkards form?

IT WILL be a part of the joy of heaven that there we shall always want to do what is right; it will always be right to do what we want to.—D. H. Parkhurst, D. D.