

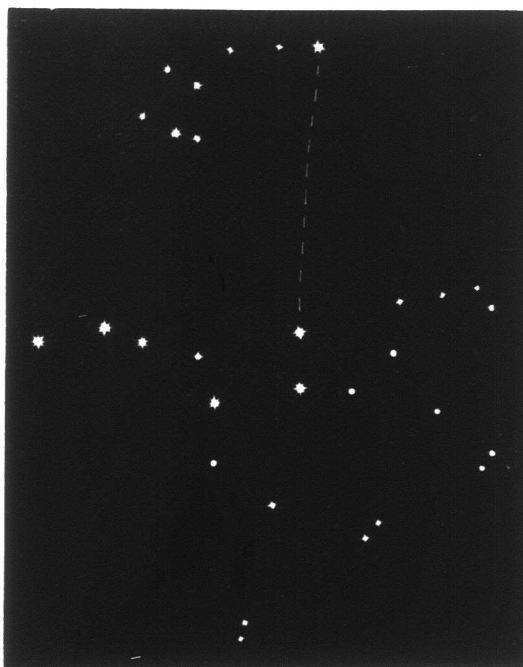
PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

The tone of the debate on the education estimates lately was eminently satisfactory. All who took part in it seemed to recognize that our system of elementary education is still very far from perfection. Sir John Lubbock evidently expressed the general feeling of the House of Commons when he complained that "the great faults of the present system were that it was too bookish and too dry." Mr. Mundella had a good deal to say—and said it well—on the necessity of the education of children being carried on to a much more advanced stage than that at which it now usually stops. "So long as the school life of the child was so short and limited," he said, "it was no use, in his judgment, talking about improved methods or an improved curriculum. So long as a child could enter a factory as a half-timer at ten years of age, or, as was the case in 8,000 or 10,000 parishes in England, children were allowed to leave school after passing Standard IV., it did not matter what their curriculum was, or what their methods were, they could have no good results. It was impossible for them to force a number of compulsory subjects into a child who was to follow the plough-tail before he was eleven years of age. In the counties around London it was found that children left school after passing Standard IV., which they generally did about ten. There could not be a greater waste of money than to educate a child up to ten years of age at the expense of the state, and then turn him out into the world, the eventual result being that by the time he had reached thirteen he had forgotten everything he had learnt." After quoting from the report of Mr. Matthew Arnold, as to the curriculum in force in Germany, showing that in Hamburg, for instance, there are thirteen obligatory subjects taught in the elementary schools, English being one of the subjects, Mr. Mundella pointed out that in Prussia no child leaves school till he is fourteen. Even after he leaves school, unless he can satisfy the school authorities, he must attend the continuation schools until he reaches sixteen or seventeen years of age.—*Nature*.

I often think that if I were a foreigner and had to set about learning English I should go mad. I honestly say I cannot conceive how it is that he learns to pronounce English, when I take into account the total absence of rule, method and system, and all the auxiliaries that people usually get when they have to acquire something difficult of attainment. There is much that may be done with advantage—in the reform of spelling our language. It is not in my power under present circumstances, to offer to give time to the undertaking which I recommend and in which I should gladly have found myself able to join.—*Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Ex-Prime Minister of England*.

AMONG THE CONSTELLATIONS.

No. VIII—THE NORTHERN BEARS.



The sad and solemn night
Hath yet her multitude of cheerful fires;
The glorious host of light
Walk the dark hemispheres till she retires;
All through her silent watches, gliding slow,
Her constellations come, and climb the heavens and go.

Bryant—Hymn to the North Star.

Early in the evening this month *Ursa Minor* and *Ursa Major* can be seen, when it is clear, in the position given above. The tail and about one-half of the body of the Great Bear is the familiar "Dipper," or "plough." The dotted line from the two stars, called the pointers, lead up to the North Pole Star, which is at the top of our map. This star is called Polaris, or *Alpha Ursæ Minoris*. The latter name means Alpha of the Little Bear. Alpha is the name of the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and is therefore generally applied to the brightest star in the constellation. *Beta Ursæ Minoris*, the next brightest, is at the lower end of the parallelogram, and is also known by the Arabian name Kocab. The outline of this constellation is somewhat like the "Dipper" in the Great Bear, and consists of seven stars. The Little Bear is pinned to the sky by the North Pole Star at the tip of her tail. The tail is outlined by the three stars, and the rectangle of four stars forms the hinder half of the body. She is springing in the direction of the tail of the Great Bear. The two pointer stars are in the middle of the body of the latter. The head is over the stars at the right side