

Early in the January evening, just as it has been for thousands of years at this season, the Great Bear and Little Bear will be nearly in the position described in our diagram. The tail and about half of the body of the Great Bear is the group of stars familiar to all, known as the Great Dipper or Plough or Charles's Wain. The dotted line from the two stars, called the pointers, lead up to the North Star or Polaris which is the end of the curved handle of the Little Dipper. Both Dippers contain seven stars. Notice on a clear night that the middle star of the handle of the Great Dipper is double, both stars being clearly seen by the naked eye. The outline of the handle of the Little Dipper is not clear because the two stars between Polaris and the dipper portion are dim.

But the true pole of the heavens, round which all the stars *seem* to revolve is not Polaris, but a point about two moon breadths from this star. About six o'clock in the evening and at about the same hour on New Year's morning the North Star is exactly on opposite sides of the true North Pole.

Midway between the Greater and Lesser Bears winds the constellation of the Dragon, marked by a wavy line of faint stars; and underneath the handle of the Great Dipper is the constellation of the Hunting Dogs, whose brightest star is Cor Caroli, of the third magnitude. There are other constellations in the vicinity; including the head and paws of the Great Bear, but they have few conspicuous stars.

Early in the school year I have my children write a composition, "The Story of My Life." They tell of their early childhood, parents, their homes, and former school life. They also tell about what they wish to do when they have finished and graded school. Each child names the thing which he wants most, giving his reason. This makes one more acquainted with the children, and is a great help in dealing with the different dispositions. The reading of the compositions furnishes an interesting half hour's work in connection with the language work.—*Selected.*

The value of your teaching is not the information you put into the mind, but the interest you awaken.—*G. Stanley Hall.*

Suggestions for Studying Shakspeare's "Julius Cæsar."

BY ELEANOR ROBINSON.

The play of *Julius Caesar* was probably written in 1600 or 1601, after the English historical plays, and the three great comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, and before the great tragedies of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*. As a Roman historical play it may be grouped with *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*, but like them, it is not a mere chronicle-history play but a tragedy based on historical facts, selected and arranged to suit the dramatist's purpose. From another point of view, *Julius Cæsar* is usually coupled with *Hamlet*, both being what are called "tragedies of reflection."

The historical facts that Shakspeare used were taken from Plutarch's *Lives* of Cæsar, Brutus and Antony. The extracts on which the play is based are printed in most annotated editions, *e. g.*, in Rolfe's, the Clarendon Press, and the Pitt Press editions, but the student is urged to read the three *Lives* in full.

The following summary will give some idea of the political situation at the opening of the play.

59 B. C. Beginning of the actual downfall of the Roman Republic, by the formation of the first triumvirate, Cæsar, Pompey and Crassus. These three men secured for themselves the control of the state.

54 B. C. Crassus is killed in war against the Parthians.

49-48 B. C. Civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, ending in Pompey's defeat and death, and leaving Cæsar master of the Roman world. The Senate makes him perpetual dictator, with powers of censor, consul and tribune.

The historic period of the action of the play is from February, 44 B. C., to October 42 B. C., nearly two years and three quarters. The chief events of this period which are used in the play are:

The Lupercalia, Cæsar's refusal of the Crown, February 15, B. C. 44; Cæsar's murder, March 15, B. C. 44; Cæsar's funeral, March 19 or 20, B. C. 44; Arrival of Octavius at Rome, May, B. C. 44; Formation of the Triumvirate, Octavius, Antony, Lepidus, November B. C. 43; Battle of Philippi, October B. C. 42. (*Pitt Press Ed. introduction*).