

BOY SKY-GAZER REAL SCIENTIST

Knoxville, Tennessee Lad, 8 Years Old Progresses in Astronomy

Youth is aflame with knowledge—knowledge such as only nature students and mediate professors ordinarily boast—in the case of a year-old William Gannaway Brownlow II, of Knoxville, Tenn.

William is on terms of intimate acquaintanceship with such noteworthy as Betelgeuse, light years, Orion's belt and Castor and Pollux. That is to say, he is a competent astronomer.

Two years ago he began peering into the heavens with a telescope; his father responded and last Christmas presented him with a costly telescope—a sizeable affair with a four and a half inch objective lens. With this he sweeps the heavens every clear night.

NEA Service and The Observer asked William to write a story about the stars as he has come to know them. Here it is, just as he prepared it.

By WILLIAM G. BROWNLOW II Eight-Year-Old Knoxville, Tenn., Astronomer (Written for The Observer and NEA Service)

If early in the evening you look toward the southeast portion of this month's sky, you will see four very bright stars that make a large diamond.

The lowest one, farthest to the east, is Sirius, the brightest star in the heavens. Sirius is only eight light years distant from the earth. A light year refers to the distance light travels in a year—six million miles.

At the top point of the diamond, much higher up and to the south, is Aldebaran, the red eye of the bull.

The other two corners of the diamond are in the constellation Orion. The upper one is Betelgeuse, which is 400 million miles through and so large that if the sun were in its center, its circumference would take in the orbits of both the earth and Mars.

The other star is Rigel, a white, hot star of great size, 400 light years distant. It is one of the greatest of the suns. Our own sun at this distance could be seen only with a good telescope.

Between Betelgeuse and Rigel are three bright stars in a line which form Orion's belt, from which hangs his sword. In the sword is the great nebula of Orion—a glowing gas which even a strong field glass will show only as a small patch of light. In this nebula is Theta, a quadruple star. Above Aldebaran are the Pleiades, which everybody knows. Higher up in the east, above Sirius, is the first magnitude star Procyon, in the "Little Dog." Higher still are the twins, Castor and Pollux, and overhead is Capella.

Castor is a double star which my telescope shows as two stars turning about each other. Each of these also is double, but astronomers know this only by studying their light with a spectroscope—they are so close together.

This whole region has the most bright stars that can be seen with the naked eye of any region in the sky.

Jupiter is low in the southwest at this time of year, and is bright enough to be seen before it gets dark. Mars is to the south higher up. Both Mars and Aldebaran are red, but Mars is brighter and makes a steadier light, without twinkling.

FICKLE PUBLIC TASTE CONCERNS MRS. INSULL

The wife of a multi-millionaire can afford to experiment with improvement of the drama. Fickle public taste is a barrier, however, and next season Mrs. Samuel Insull, wife of Chicago's public utilities magnate, and the former Gladys Wallis of the stage, will vary the tactics whereby she is trying to interest the Middle West in meritorious theater fare. Two American plays were presented by Mrs. Insull's company this season but next year, it is hinted, she will turn to Ibsen and Shakespeare. Mrs. Insull played the feminine leads in her last two productions and won high commendation, despite her long absence from the stage.

WOMEN ATHLETES ASK PLACE IN OLYMPICS

French women athletes want their place in the Olympic sun. The International Feminine Sporting Federation has asked the Olympic authorities to set aside two days for women at the 1928 games in Amsterdam. It asked also for a place on the jury of awards and announced its intention of seeking places on the various National Olympic committees. The success of the effort is doubted by the men, who have expressed opinions.

WOMEN VOTERS ASK OF PARTY FINANCES

Connecticut women are out to learn who fills the purses of political parties, who controls the purse strings and how the money is spent. The Connecticut League of Women Voters apparently feels that enfranchisement has extended women's interests from family to state finances for these are questions arising most frequently at League meetings.

CHAMPION COURSE EUREN SMART GOLFER

Harrison R. ("Jimmy") Johnston, who carried the name of St. Paul to great heights in golf competition, has changed his residence and business to Minneapolis, and hereafter will play under the banner of the Minkahda club. The national amateur championship matches will be played over the

Minkahda course and Johnston will be thoroughly at home when the big drive starts. He has been Minnesota champion for six years, won the western amateur title in 1924 and played on three Walker cup teams. His business is selling bonds.

Village trustees of Ellensburg, N. Y., have forbidden the throwing of snowballs.

Ballet Remains Russian Spectacle; Performances Unequaled, Is Claim

MOSCOW, Jan. 18 (AP)—Russia, the land of the ballet, maintains its dancing spectacles unimpaired in beauty and originality, even though the seats are beyond the reach of the average citizens. Performances embracing all the old as well as modern ballets are produced nightly at the National theater here and in Leningrad. Critics assert that for technique, rhythm, beauty of costumes and execution the Russian ballet is unequalled.

In Russia ballet dancing is regarded as a serious profession, on an equal plane with dramatic acting or opera singing. A course of eight years is required before a girl or a youth is qualified to take even a minor part in the ensemble.

A large ballet school is maintained by the state, where children from the age of 8 to 15 years are put through a thorough course of

gymnastics, calisthenics, dancing, pantomimes, music, acting and esthetics. Each set of muscles of the legs and arms is trained separately, and particular stress is laid on the control and movement of the spine.

Ballet spectacles in which five hundred or six hundred dancers participate are not uncommon in Moscow. The costumes, an heritage from the old Tsarist regime,

are of beauty, variety and taste. The settings and scenery, too, are of a high artistic and mechanical order. There is one ballet in which castles, parks, waterfalls, lakes and mountains are shown with impressive effect. In such harmony and coordination do the vast numbers of dancers perform that the audience has the impression of a single great entity on the stage working with precision.

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