

Kinjin. But here the narrator makes Capricorn and the star Wega represent the lovers.

The native Australians knew the whole of Aquila as **Totyarguil**, one of their mythical personages, who, while bathing, was killed by a kelpie; their stellar Eagle being Sirius.

It was in the stars of our constellation, to the northwest of Altair, that Professor Edward E. Barnard discovered a comet from its trail on a photograph taken at the Lick Observatory on the 12th of October, 1892—the first ever found by the camera.

Argelander catalogued 82 naked-eye stars in Aquila, including those of Antinoüs; Heis gives 123.

α , 1.3, pale yellow.

Altair is from a part of the Arabic name for the constellation; but occasionally is written **Althair**, **Athair**, **Attair**, and **Atair**; this last readers of *Ben Hur* will remember as the name of one of the shaykh Ilderim's horses in the chariot race at Antioch. And the word has been altered to **Alcair**, **Alchayr**, and **Alcar**.

In the *Syntaxis* it was 'Αετός, one of Ptolemy's few stellar titles, probably first applied to α , and after the formation of the figure transferred to the latter, as in other instances in the early days of astronomy. Even six or seven centuries before Ptolemy it was referred to as 'Αιετός where the chorus in the 'Pῆσος, until recently attributed to Euripides, says:

What is the star now passing?

the answer being:

The Pleiades show themselves in the east,
The Eagle soars in the summit of heaven.

It is supposed that long antecedent to this it was the Euphratean **Idchu**, the Eagle, or **Erigu**, the Powerful Bird, inscriptions to this effect being quoted by Brown, who thinks that it also was the Persian **Muru**, the Bird; the Sogdian **Shad Mashir**, and the Khorasmian **Sadmasij**, the Noble Falcon.

In Mr. J. F. Hewitt's *Essays on the Ruling Races of Prehistoric Times* it is asserted that later Zend mythology knew Altair as **Vanant**, the Western Quarter of the heavens, which earlier had been marked by our Corvus.

With β and γ it constituted the twenty-first *nakshatra* **Çravana**, the Ear, and probably was at first so drawn, although also known as **Çrona**, Iame, or as **Aqvattba**, the Sacred Fig Tree, Vishnu being regent of the asterism; these stars representing the Three Footsteps with which that god strode through the heavens, a Trident being the symbol.

In China α , β , and γ were **Ho Koo**, a River Drum.

In astrology Altair was a mischief-maker, and portended danger from reptiles.

Ptolemy, who designated the degrees of star brilliancy by Greek letters, applied β to this as being of the 2d magnitude, whence some think that it has increased in light since his day. It is now the standard 1st magnitude according to the Pogson, or "absolute," photometric scale generally adopted by workers in stellar photometry, and is largely used in determining lunar distances at sea; while Flamsteed made it the fundamental reference star in his observations on the sun and in the construction of his catalogue.

Its parallax,¹ $0''.214$, considered by Elkin as nearly or quite exact, indicates a distance of about $15\frac{1}{2}$ light years.

Its spectrum is of Pickering's class Xb of Secchi's first type, but peculiar, with very hazy solar lines between the broad hydrogen lines.

Altair has the large proper motion of $0''.65$ annually; and Gould thought it slightly variable.

It marks the junction of the right wing with the body, and rises at sunset about the 15th of June, culminating on the 1st of September.

Near it appeared, in A. D. 389, an object, whether a temporary star or a comet is not now known, said by Cuspinianus to have equaled Venus in brilliancy, which vanished after three weeks' visibility; and there is record of another, of sixty years previous, in this constellation.

5° to the eastward of Altair, according to Denning, lies the radiant point of the **Aquilids**, the meteor stream visible from the 7th of June to the 12th of August.

β , 3.9, pale orange.

Alshain is from Shahin, a portion of the Persian name for the constellation; but Al Achsasi termed it **Al Unuk al Ghurāb**, the Raven's Neck.

It is the southern of the two stars flanking Altair; yet, although it bears the second letter, is not as bright as γ or δ .

γ , 3, pale orange.

Tarazed, or **Tarazad**, from the same Persian title, lies north of Altair.

These three stars constitute the **Family of Aquila**, the line joining them being 5° in length.

¹ A parallax of $1''$ represents a distance from the earth of 3.26 light years; a light year, the astronomers' unit in measuring stellar distances,—light traveling 186,327 miles in a second of time,—being about 63,000 times the distance of the earth from the sun. But no star thus far investigated has so large a parallax; that of the nearest, α Centauri, being only $0''.75$.