

tions being Algol in Caput Medusæ, β Lyræ and ϵ Aurigæ, which have a *pure white* light. Mira Ceti, in which a periodical change of light was first recognized, has a strong reddish light;* but the variability observed in Algol and β Lyræ proves that this red color is not a necessary condition of a change of light, since many red stars are not variable. The faintest stars in which colors can be distinguished belong, according to Struve, to the ninth and tenth magnitudes. Blue stars were first mentioned by Mariotte,† 1686, in his *Traité des Couleurs*. The light of α Lyræ is bluish; and a smaller stellar mass of $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes in diameter in the southern hemisphere consists, according to Dunlop, of blue stars alone. Among the double stars there are many in which the principal star is white, and the companion blue; and some in which both stars have a blue light‡ (as δ Serp. and 59 Androm.). Occasionally, as in the stellar swarm near κ of the Southern Cross, which was mistaken by Lacaille for a nebulous spot, more than a hundred variously-colored red, green, blue, and bluish-green stars are so closely thronged together that they appear in a powerful telescope “like a superb piece of fancy jewelry.”§

The ancients believed they could recognize a remarkable symmetry in the arrangement of certain stars of the first magnitude. Thus their attention was especially directed to the four so-called *regal stars*, which are situated at opposite points of the sphere, Aldebaran and Antares, Regulus and Fomalhaut. We find this regular arrangement, of which I have already elsewhere treated,|| specially referred to in a late Roman writer, Julius Firmicus Maternus,¶ who belonged to the age of Constantine. The differences of right ascension in these regal stars, *stellæ regales*, are 11h. 57m. and 12h. 49m. The importance formerly attached to this subject is probably owing to opinions transmitted from the East, which gained a footing in the Roman empire under the Cæsars, together with a strong national predilection for astrology. The leg, or north star of the Great Bear (the celebrated star of the Bull’s leg in the astronomical repre-

* *Cosmos*, vol. ii., p. 330. † Arago, *Annuaire pour 1842*, p. 348.

‡ Struve, *Stellæ comp.*, p. lxxxii.

§ Sir John Herschel, *Observations at the Cape*, p. 17, 102. (“*Nebulæ and Clusters*, No. 3435.”)

|| Humboldt, *Vues des Cordillères et Monumens des Peuples Indigènes de l’Amérique*, tom. ii., p. 55.

¶ *Julii Firmici Materni Astron.*, libri viii., Basil, 1551, lib. vi., cap. i., p. 150.