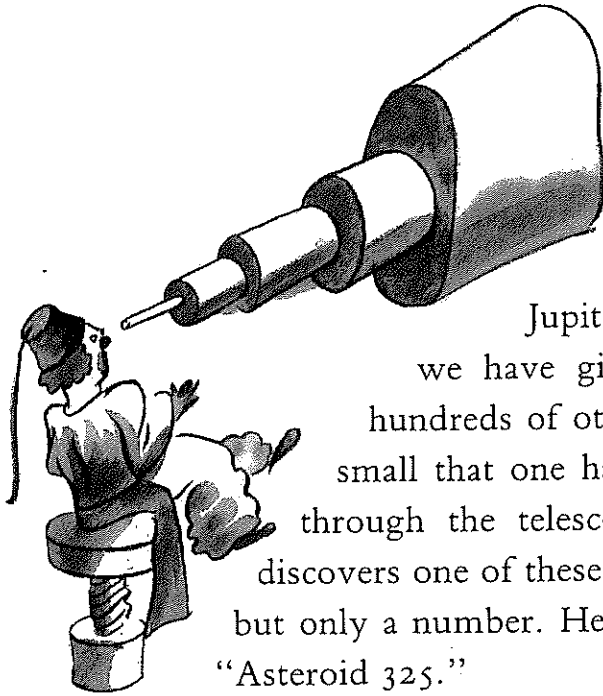


Module 4: Children's Literature

Translation 1 (translated by Katherine Woods, 1943)

I V

I HAD THUS LEARNED a second fact of great importance: this was that the planet the little prince came from was scarcely any larger than a house!



But that did not really surprise me much. I knew very well that in addition to the great planets—such as the Earth, Jupiter, Mars, Venus—to which we have given names, there are also hundreds of others, some of which are so small that one has a hard time seeing them through the telescope. When an astronomer discovers one of these he does not give it a name, but only a number. He might call it, for example, “Asteroid 325.”

I have serious reason to believe that the planet from which the little prince came is the asteroid known as B-612.

This asteroid has only once been seen through the telescope. That was by a Turkish astronomer, in 1909.

On making his discovery, the astronomer had presented it to the International Astronomical Congress, in a great demonstration. But he was in Turkish costume, and so nobody would believe what he said.

Grown-ups are like that . . .

Fortunately, however, for the reputation of Asteroid B-612, a Turkish dictator made a law that his subjects, under pain of death, should change to European costume. So in 1920 the astronomer gave his demonstration all over again, dressed with impressive style and elegance. And this time everybody accepted his report.

IV

THAT WAS HOW I had learned a second very important thing, which was that the planet he came from was hardly bigger than a house!

That couldn't surprise me much. I knew very well that except for the huge planets like Earth, Jupiter, Mars, and Venus, which have been given names, there are hundreds of others that are sometimes so small that it's very difficult to see them through a telescope. When an astronomer discovers one of them, he gives it a number instead of a name.

For instance, he would call it "Asteroid 325."

I have serious reasons to believe that the planet the little prince came from is Asteroid B-612. This asteroid has been sighted only once by telescope, in 1909 by a Turkish astronomer, who had then made a formal demonstration of his discovery at an International Astronomical Congress. But no one had believed him on account of the way he was dressed. Grown-ups are like that.

Fortunately for the reputation of Asteroid B-612, a Turkish dictator ordered his people, on pain of death, to wear European clothes. The astronomer repeated his demonstration in 1920, wearing a very elegant suit. And this time everyone believed him.

