THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALMANACK.

PAPER READ BEFORE

The Western Reserve and Northern Ohio Historical Society,

January 12th, 1887.

BY

SAM. BRIGGS.

"Here comes the Almanack of my True Date."

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

TRACT No. 69.

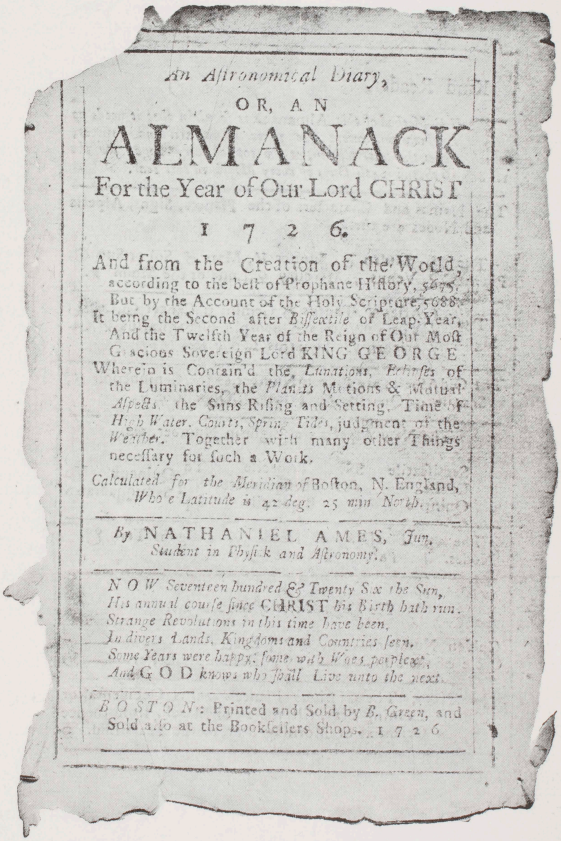
CLEVELAND, O:
LEADER PRINTING COMPANY, 146 SUPERIOR ST.
1887.

Briggs

MY FRIEND:

This circular is mailed to you for the reason that you have the reputation of appreciating a GOOD THING, *and of venerating your ancestors and other antiques.*

The work will be published for the amusement and information of those who may become subscribers, and also for what profit there may be in the venture, or for a home in the County Infirmary, according as the enterprise may be successful or otherwise.



An Astronomical Diary,

OR, AN

ALMANACK

For the Year of Our Lord CHRIST

1726.

And from the Creation of the World, according to the best of Prophane History, 5675. But by the Account of the Holy Scripture, 5688. It being the Second after *Bissextile* or Leap-Year, And the Twelfth Year of the Reign of Our Most Gracious Sovereign Lord KING GEORGE. Wherein is Contain'd the, *Lunations, Eclipses* of the Luminaries, the *Planets* Motions & *Mutual Aspects*, the Suns Rising and Setting, Time of *High Water, Coasts, Spring Tides*, judgment of the *Weather*. Together with many other Things necessary for such a Work.

Calculated for the Meridian of Boston, N. England, *Whose Latitude is 42 deg. 25 min North.*

By NATHANIEL AMES, *Jun. Student in Physick and Astronomy.*

NOW Seventeen hundred & Twenty Six the Sun,
His annual course since CHRIST *his Birth hath run.*
Strange Revolutions in this time have been,
In divers Lands, Kingdoms and Countries seen,
Some Years were happy, some with Woes perplext,
And GOD *knows who shall Live unto the next.*

BOSTON: Printed and Sold by *B. Green*, and Sold also at the Bookseller's Shops. 1726.

Though the title may be misleading, it is not a religious work, and will be found more interesting than the KORAN *or any other of the publications of Mohammed.*

For further particulars, kindly turn over—this leaf.

TO MY FRIENDS:

I am about to publish the articles, humorous, entertaining, wise and otherwise, contained in

THE ALMANACKS OF NATHANIEL AMES, of *Dedham, Mass.*,

which were a popular form of literature in the Colonies 1726–1764, and which publications were continued by his son, of the same name, 1765–1775.

Nathaniel Ames was a physician, and tavern keeper at Dedham, Mass, "a fellow of infinite wit," and if, "by their fruits ye shall know them," he was the father of an interesting family of children; among whom Fisher Ames, a noted Massachusetts lawyer and statesman, and a prominent Federal politician; and Nathaniel Ames, a physician, and Almanack maker, opposed to his brother in politics being a Jeffersonian of the most uncompromising sort.

The Dedham tavern and its neighborhood teems with tales of the elder Ames and his witty sayings and experiences, and the ancient hostelry has the reputation of being the place where the rough draft of the "Suffolk resolutions" was made, which document was the forerunner of the Declaration of Independence.

The popular idea concerning Almanacs is that they always have been a vehicle for the advertisement of medical nostrums, and consequently this class of literature has latterly merited but little praise, and engendered but little curiosity.

Anciently they were a reverenced annual publication, whose advent was anxiously looked for, and whose contents were read and re-read in communities and families which knew no other form of literature.

As these little waifs rarely outlived the year for which their astronomical contents were calculated, a complete collection of any one authorship is quite rare, and the opportunity for reviewing a class of reading and information which furnished much of the amusement and education of our ancestors, is therefore quite limited.

Recently, the contents of "*Poor Richard's Almanack*" has been republished, and those who have read it will admit the vast superiority of Ames' work over the celebrated annual skit of the philosopher Franklin, both in wit, humor and originality.

As an evidence that I am not alone in my estimate, I quote from Moses Coit Tyler's *History of American Literature:*

"Nathaniel Ames made his Almanack a sort of Annual Cyclopædia of information and amusement,—a vehicle for the conveyance to the public of all sorts of knowledge and nonsense, in prose and verse, from literature, history and his own mind; all presented with brevity, variety and infallible tact." * * * Thus, eight years before Benjamin Franklin had started his Almanack, Nathaniel Ames was publishing one that had all its best qualities—fact and frolic, the wisdom of the preacher without his solemnity, terse sayings, shrewdness, wit, homely wisdom, all sparkling in piquant phrase.

As the public expected the Almanack-maker to be a prophet, Nathaniel Ames gratified the public, and he freely predicted future events, but always with a merry twinkle in his eye, and always ready to laugh the loudest at his own failure to predict them aright. He mixes in delightful juxtaposition, absurd prognostications, curt jests, and aphorisms of profound wisdom, the whole forming a miscellany even now extremely readable, and sure at that time to raise shouts of laughter around thousands of fireplaces where food for laughter was much needed.

The contents are therefore expected to interest:—

1. All who imagine that Benjamin Franklin was the only humorous philosopher that the Colonies possessed.

2. All the inhabitants of New England, (particularly Dedham and its immediate vicinity), who have reason to venerate the name of Ames.

3. The antiquary and the student of folk-lore who certainly should regard the republication of the writings of these Colonial philosophers and men of the people, as "a brand saved from the burning."

4. All who love their country, and who should be interested in the first mutterings of the storm that culminated in the independence of the Colonies.

5. All who had ancestors, and are curious to know what they did laugh at, or should have laughed at.

6. The clergyman, who may in the quaint sayings recorded herein, find a text for another beneficial sermon.

7. The politician, who will find in its pages the mirror in which he may view that other self.

8. The physician, who may find recorded some queer remedies, the result of the *guessing* of the period.

9. The farmer will wonder at the patience of the ancient tiller of the soil, and the crude methods used to tickle mother earth out of her store.

10. The poet, who will marvel at the intense fervor of the author, who wooed both *a gentle* and a *muscular* muse, as some of his productions will amply testify.

11. The "man who goes to Lodge" may learn a very ancient estimate of the value of the institution.

12. Those who are fond of prognostications (or otherwise), will wonder at the accuracy of the author's predictions concerning the future of this country, written a generation before the "Declaration" was dreamed of.

13. The humorist, both amateur and professional, cannot fail to enjoy the quips and cranks interspersed with the wisdom of the doctor.

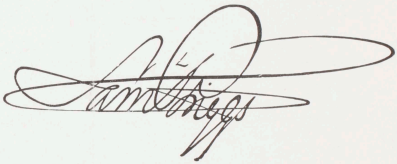
14. And lastly, the general public, who will find this collection quite attractive even in this day of steam and electricity.

Concerning the style of the publication, I will say that the doctor was a better speller than Geoffrey Chaucer, (though his language is at times fully as forcible); hence, with the aid of clear type, excellent paper, and no old style "s's", it is hoped that the production will be frequently, easily and satisfactorily read.

It will contain about 400 pages, will be interspersed with appropriate illustrations, correctly bound in cloth, and explanatory remarks will be injected by the editor, where the original would seem to require them.

The volume, when published, will be issued to SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, and you are solicited to fill out, detach, and forward in the enclosed envelope, the following subscription form.

Faithfully yours,



Vice Pres. Western Reserve and Northern Ohio Historical Society
Corresponding Member Rhode Island Historical Society
and Dedham (Mass.) Historical Society.

CLEVELAND, O., Dec. 1, 1890.

P. S.—It will be forwarded in wrappers, secure from the observation of Mr. Wanamaker, Mr. Comstock, or your most intimate friend.

CHARLES L. WOODWARD,

78 Nassau St., NEW YORK:

I hereby subscribe for.....cop.....of

"THE ALMANACKS OF NATHANIEL AMES,"

at THREE (3) DOLLARS *per copy, and agree to pay for same upon notice of publication.*

.....

P. O. Address,.....

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THE ALMANACK.

ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

"*For I have smelt out of the musty sheets of an old almanack, that at one time or other, even he that jets upon the neatest and sprucest leather; even he that talks all adage and apothegm; even he that will not have a wrinkle in his new satin suit, though his mind be uglier than his face, and his face so ill-favouredly made, that he looks at all times as if a tooth-drawer were fumbling about his gums: with a thousand lame heteroclites more, that cozen the world with a gilt spur and a ruffled boot; will all be glad to fit themselves in Will Sommer his wardrobe and be driven like a Flemish hoy in foul weather, to slip into our school, and take out a lesson.* * * * *All that are chosen constables for their wit go not to heaven.*"

—*Thomas Dekker, Gull's Hornbook, 1609.*

A proper overture for a paper of this character would seem to require that it should be apologetic in its nature—the more so for the reason that the modern instances of the almanack, especially in America, are little more than advertising mediums through which in general the virtues of pills and potions are made known to suffering humanity.

To apologize, therefore, for this review of a class of literature so little esteemed at the present day, would seem to be a superfluity; only remarking that the recently developed taste for things ancient and strange have been the chiefest inducement towards its compilation.

No book or publication has ever been the subject of more ridicule and contempt than the almanack, yet no book has been more universally read, or more highly valued, or more serviceable to its day and generation.

From the earliest times and in all countries they have been consulted and treasured with an almost religious veneration, yet they have been the mark for the shafts of satire, more probably for the reason that they were made the vehicle for conveying to a superstitious public the pretentious prognostications of certain astrological quacks who, being aware of the desire of poor mortality for a glimpse of futurity, gratified their curiosity by "reading the answer in the stars."

An almanack pretends to but little repute, but strangely there has always been a demand for it, and though it has no ambition but to be useful for a few months, it is sought for and purchased by all, and in earlier times constituted the only reading matter in many families; the copies being preserved from year to year for the useful maxims and information which they contained, as well as the practical astronomy which they taught.

The contents of long-neglected garrets, and ancient chests and presses have been exhumed and re-habilitated for the decoration of the walls and mantels of modern apartments, and in this general resurrection the ancient "almanack" makes its appearance with its homely lore to ask also recognition as a shadow of the past, none the less worthy than its compeers, the spinning-wheel, the distaff, and the warming-pan.

In these little waifs is collated much that may be rated as chaff, but there is also much more that may furnish profitable food for reflection and amusement, and when we are aware that the almanack in early days constituted the only method of reaching the people generally, we appreciate the full importance of these publications and gain a clearer knowledge of the tastes and inclinations of the people among whom they were a popular and reverenced class of literature.

He who venerates the sacrifices made in and before the times which tried men's souls, will find in their pages soul-stirring appeals to his love of country, and in some of the articles therein published will note the seeds which were sown that led to political changes in the old world, that sent the despot tumbling from his throne, and that in America culminated in the establishment of the great Republic.

The modern politician may learn that his counterpart existed coeval with the foundation of government in all countries, and be assured that the same "glass eyes" attributed to his profession were provided in earlier days for a similar utility, and were as fully appreciated by the general public.

The clergyman may here find as much homely religious fervor and devotion as he could possibly desire in the most indifferent member of his flock.

The physician can perhaps cull from the quaint medical essays, and old women's remedies therein cited, both wisdom and amusement, if not some apparent trifle which being judiciously and learnedly administered may cause him much fame in his profession, or else the patient to reach eternal bliss by a less circuitous route. Persons who delight in "mery talys," if they may not find the fountain head of modern humor, will undoubtedly discover sufficient familiar faces to convince him that there is but little original on this planet in this department of literature, and that we are still largely dependent on what the world's people denominate "chestnuts" for subsistence of this character.

The poet may cool his brain with some very amusing vagaries of the Muse who appeared to sit at the elbows of the early "students in astronomy, and the mathematicks."

The agriculturist will, in their pages, become partly familiar with the ancient methods of coaxing Mother Earth to yield her store, some of which suggestions might possibly be applied with success to modern tillage.

The family historian, in some of the occasional interleaved diaries perhaps, may discover a "missing link" which may enable him to trace his pedigree—if not to a "pre-Adamite protoplasmic primordial globule," at least locate some humble individual of a past generation that may lead him to more encouraging researches.

The antiquarian and the student of folk-lore may also find in the almanack abundant field for the gratification of their peculiar hobbies by a general perusal of its contents, while the quaint maxims, proverbs and sayings will largely interest the general reader.

And lastly, those who believe in the influence of the stars upon mundane affairs, will find as much mystifying lore, and as many befogging diagrams as could be desired by any worshipper at the altar of the occult.

Notwithstanding the comparative insignificance of the almanack as a literary production, it has an undisputed pedigree, its ancestry being traceable to as remote a period as any written language has existed.

Its presence in a variety of forms, is found in all ages and among all nations, and the history of its origin and development from its birth to its golden age in the last century would be a volume of considerable magnitude.

Authors are divided in opinion concerning the etymology of the word. Some deriving it from the Arabic particle *al* and *manach*, to count. Some from *almaneh*, or New Year gifts, because the Arabian astrologers used at the beginning of the year to make presents of their *Ephemerides*, or astronomical calculations, while others attribute its derivation from the Teutonic *almaen-achte*, or, observations on all the months.

Among all peoples there has been great curiosity manifested concerning the heavens and what exists beyond the confines of this terrestrial habitation of ours; in fact, mankind has been continually struggling to master the infinite. This, probably, was a wise provision —this innate spirit of investigation—for many persons whose tastes ran in this direction, might have found employment in pursuits less calculated to benefit themselves and their fellow creatures, had not kind fortune led them to star-gazing, thereby causing them to overlook other occupations which might have been quite annoying to their neighbors.

The observation of the stars gave rise to astrology, the kindred science of astronomy, and among the ancients the study of the latter gave rise to the belief that the planetary bodies exercised an influence over worldly affairs. The elaboration of this idea originated *judicial* and *natural* astrology. The first named pretending to the foretelling of the fates of nations and individuals, while natural astrology only predicted events of inanimate nature, changes of weather, etc.

Astrology had gained considerable popularity among the earlier nations. The Chaldees were familiar with it, and the Jews during the captivity are said to have practiced the science.

Among the Hindus it was known, and the tribes of Arabia were adepts in the art of forecasting the future by the stars. The Druids also possessed some knowledge of astronomy, and an ancient poem in the primitive Irish (Erse) tongue bears evidence that that nation had some astronomical knowledge at an early day.

The Arabians, however, appear to have been the most advanced students of the sciences of astronomy and astrology, and this nation being at an early period (prior to their expulsion from Spain) the

conservators of art and literature, were probably the first who introduced it into Europe.

Concerning the first publication of an almanack there has been much dispute.

It is related that one Appius Claudius who was engaged in an official capacity at Rome some years since, had in his employ a secretary named Flavius, whose occupation, in common with many persons of his profession, did not so thoroughly occupy his time as to preclude his giving some attention to the affairs of others. This very praiseworthy desire for the accumulation of knowledge found favor with Appius, who encouraged him to look into the mysteries of the priesthood; Appius evidently desiring to add some of their accomplishments to his other business specialties. The secret arrangement by which the priests knew and determined the recurrence of the holy-days devoted to the several gods, had long been a source of speculation to young Flavius, and this ancient prototype of Paul Pry finally made the discovery of the *fasti-sacri*, or *kalendares*, and exposed the entire scheme one morning at the Forum, exhibiting the white tablets to the assembled Senators. This is one account of the first publication of an almanack, and is said to have occurred about 300 years before the Christian era.

The history of written almanacks has not been traced farther back than the second century of the Christian era, at which period it is supposed that they were constructed by the Greeks of Alexandria.

Lalande, an investigator of early astronomical works, did not find any express mention of almanacks anterior to those published by Solomon Jarchus, A.D., 1150.

The earliest almanacks known to exist are in MS. of the twelfth century, and examples are to be found in the libraries of the British Museum, Cambridge and Oxford Universities.

In the Savilian Library at Oxford is a manuscript copy of the almanack published about the year 1300 by Petrus de Dacia, who is supposed to have been the originator of the "*homo-signorum*," the man of the signs, known in later similar publications as the "Anatomy." Peter was a firm believer in planetary influence, as is evident by his lines:

> "*Jupiter atque Venus boni, Saturnusque malignus;*
> *Sol et Mercurius cum Luna sunt mediocres.*"

Contemporary with this author are recorded as almanack writers Roger Bacon, of gunpowder notoriety, 1292; and Walter de Elvendene, 1327.

At Oxford, formerly the seat of British science, were issued the earlier standard almanacks. Here were published the productions of John Somers, 1380; Nicolas de Lynne, 1386, and many others.

An almanack was printed as a literary curiosity in 1812, and was thus introduced:

Almanack for the year 1386. Transcribed verbatim from the Original Antique Illuminated Manuscript in the Black Letter; omitting only the monthly Calendars and some Tables. Containing many Curious Particulars illustrative of the Astronomy, Astrology, Chronology, History, Religious Tenets, and Theory and Practice of Medicine of the Age.

Printed for the Proprietor by C. Stower, Hackney, 1812.

The contents are—

1. The Houses of the Planets and their Properties; 2. The Exposition of the Signs; 3. Chronicle of Events from the Birth of Cain; 4. To find the Prime Numbers; 5. Short Notes on Medicine; 6. On Blood-letting; 7. A Description of the Table of Signs and Movable Feasts; 8. Quantitates Diei Artificialis.

As a specimen the following occurs under the head of—

"*Exposycion of the Synes—Aquarius es a syne in the whilk the son es, in Jan'y, and in that moneth are 7 plyos (pluviose) days, the 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 15, 19, and if thoner is heard in that moneth, it betokens grete wynde, mykel fruit and batel. Aquarius is hote, moyste, sanguyne, and of that ayre it es gode to byg castelles, or hous, or to wed.*"

Arabic notation had then been but recently introduced, and was imperfectly understood, as the clumsy method of expressing more than two figures would indicate, thus 52MCCC20 is put for 52,320.

The earliest specimen in the British Museum is entitled an "English Calender," and is dated 1431. In the Library at Lambeth is a manuscript almanack for the year 1460, with the eclipses noted until the year 1481. The University at Cambridge also possesses a similar manuscript of the date 1482.

After the invention of printing, almanacks were among the first printed books.

The first printed almanack bears imprint 1457.

			Kl Januarius		Sol	medij motus	medij argum	caput draco	ascensiones signorum vel cuiuslibet grad	
					tapricornus	lune	lune			thaurus
					ḡ m̄	S ḡ	S ḡ	ḡ m̄	hore m̄	grad
1	A		Circumcisio domini		20 3	0 13	0 13	0 3	1 24	8
2	b	4	Octaua sancti Stephani		21 4	0 26	0 26	0 6	1 28	10
3	c	3	Octaua sancti Johannis		22 6	1 10	1 9	0 9	1 32	11
4	d	2	Octaua Innocentum		23 7	1 23	1 22	0 13	1 36	13
5	e		non		24 8	2 6	2 5	0 16	1 40	15
6	f	8	Epihania domini		25 9	2 19	2 18	0 19	1 44	16
7	g	7	S. Pisdorus episcopus		26 11	3 2	3 1	0 22	1 48	18
8	A	6	S. Erhardus episcopus		27 12	3 15	3 15	0 25	1 52	19
9	d	5	S. Julianus cũ sociis suis		28 13	3 29	3 28	0 28	1 56	20
10	c	4	S. paulus hremita		29 14	4 12	4 11	0 32	2 0	22
11	d	3		aquarius	0 16	4 25	4 24	0 35	2 4	24
12	e	2			1 17	5 8	5 7	0 38	2 8	25
13	f	10 9	S. Hilarius confessor		2 18	5 21	5 20	0 41	2 12	27
14	g	19	S. Felix confessor		3 19	6 4	6 3	0 44	2 16	28
15	A	18	S. Marus abbas		4 20	6 18	6 16	0 48	2 20	30
16	b	17	S. Marcellus papa		5 21	7 1	6 29	0 51	2 24	1 gemini
17	c	16	S. Anthonius confessor		6 22	7 14	7 12	0 54	2 28	2
18	d	15	S. Prisca virgo		7 23	7 27	7 25	0 57	2 32	4
19	e	14			8 24	8 10	8 8	1 0	2 36	5
20	f	13	S. Fabianus et Sebastianus		9 25	8 24	8 21	1 4	2 40	6
21	g	12	S. Agnes virgo		10 26	9 7	9 4	1 7	2 44	7
22	A	11	S. Vincentius mr̄		11 27	9 20	9 17	1 10	2 48	9
23	b	10	S. Emerentiana virgo		12 28	10 3	10 0	1 13	2 52	10
24	c	9	S. Thimotheus discipulus		13 29	10 16	10 14	1 16	2 56	11
25	d	8	Conuersio pauli		14 30	10 29	10 27	1 19	3 0	13
26	e	7	S. Policarpus presbiter		15 31	11 13	11 10	1 23	3 4	14
27	f	6	S. Johannes Crisostimus		16 31	11 26	11 23	1 26	3 8	15
28	g	5			17 32	0 9	0 6	1 29	3 12	16
29	A	4	S. Valerius episcopus		18 33	0 27	0 19	1 32	3 16	18
30	b	3	S. Modgundis virgo		19 33	1 5	1 2	1 35	3 20	19
31	c	2			20 34	1 18	1 15	1 38	3 24	20
		haf								

Impressum Olme per Johannem Zainer
Anno dominice incarnationis. 1478.

Reduced fac-simile of a page from an Almanack printed at Ulm in 1478, by John Zainer.

Regio-Montanus appears to have been the first in Europe who reduced the almanack to its present form and method, gave the characters of each year and month, foretold the eclipses and other phases, calculated the motions of the planets, etc. He printed an almanack at Nuremburg in 1472, which embraced three Metonic Cycles, or the fifty-seven (57) years, 1475–1531, inclusive. He is said to have been a pupil of the early astrologer, Anton Purbach, who compiled an almanack about 1450–1461, and was at that period placed in his tutelage under the patronage of Mathias Corvinus king of Hungary, which monarch richly rewarded Regio-Montanus fo his *Kalendarium Novum*, which he published for three years at Buda from the press of Martin Hikus. This work found ready sale in Europe at fabulous prices, and was followed by the publications of Bernard de Granolache at Barcelona, 1487, Engel of Vienna, 1491, and Stauffer of Tubingen 1524.

1497.

The earliest almanack known to have been printed in England was "*The Sheapheard's Kalendar*," translated from the French and printed by Richard Pynson, 1497.

The influence of the planets is thus set forth:

"*Saturne is hyest and coldest, being full olde*
And Mars with his bluddy swerde ever ready to kyll.
Sol and Luna is half good and half yll."

The general quality of the verses over each month may be known by this specimen for January:

"*Called I am Januyere the colde*
In Christmas season good fyre I love.
Yonge Jesu, that sometime Judas solde
In me was circumcised for man's behove.
Three kynges sought the Sonne of God above;
They kneeled downe, and dyd him homage, with love
To God their Lorde that is man's own brother."

About the same period appeared an almanack in black letter, entitled:

"*Almanacke for XII Yere. Lately corrected and emprynted in the Flete Strete by Wynkyn de Worde. In the Yere of the reyne of our most redoubted soverayne Lorde Kynge Henry the VII.*"

The general quality of the almanacks for the sixteenth century may be known from the following titles:

1550.

"*A Prognossicacion and an Almanack fastened together, declaring the Dispocission of the People and also of the Weather, with certain Electyons and Tymes chosen both for Physike and Surgerye and for the husbandman. And also for Hawkyng, Huntyng, Fishyng, aud Fowlynge according to the Science of Astronomy, made for the yeare of our Lord God M.D.L. Calculated for the Merydyan of Yorke, and practised by Anthony Askham.*"

"Imprynted at London, in Flete Strete, at the Signe of the George next to Saynt Dunstan's Church, by Wyllyam Powell, *cum privilegio ad imprimendum Solum.*"

The title to the Prognostication is:

"*A Prognossicacion for the Yere of our Lorde, M.CCCCC.L. Calculated upon the Merydyan of Anwarpe and the Country thereabout, by Master Peter of Moorbecke, Doctour of Physicke in the same Towne; whereunto is added the judgment of M. Cornelius Schute, Doctour in Physicke of the Towne of Bruges, in Flanders, upon and concernyng the Disposicion, Estate and condycion of certaine Princes, Contreys and Regions, for the present Yere, gathered out of his Prognossicacion for the present Yere. Translated oute of Duch into Englyshe by Wyllyam Harrys.*"

"Imprynted at London by John Daye dwellyne over Aldersgate, and Wyllyam Seres dwellyne in Peter Colledge. These Bokes are to be solde at the Newe Shop, by the Lytle Conduyte in Chepesyde."

1551.

"*An Almanacke and Prognostycatyon for the Yeare of our Lorde MDLI, practysed by Simon Henringius, and Lodowyke Boyard, Doctors in Physike and Astronomy, &c., at Worcester in the Hygh Strete.*"

1558.

"*A New Almanacke and Prognostication collected for the Yere of our Lorde M.DLVIII, wherein is Expressed the Change and Full of the Moone with their ¾ Quarters. The Varietie of the Ayre and also of the Windes, throughout the whole Yere, with Infortunate Times to Bie and*

Sell, take Medicine, Sowe, Plante and Journey, &c. Made for the Merydyan of Norwiche and Pole Arcticke LII Degrees and serving for all England. By William Kenningham, Physician."

"Imprinted at London by John Daye, dwelling over Aldersgate."

1569.

"An Almanack and prognostication for the yere of our Lorde God, 1569, serving for all Europe, wherein is shewed the nature of the Planettes and Mutations of the Ayer, verie necessarie for all Marchauntes, Marineres, Students and Travelers, bothe by sea and lande. Calculated and gathered by Joachim Hubrighe, Doctour of Physicke and Astronomie of Midelborowe in Sealand; whereunto is annexed a profitable rule to knowe the Ebbes and Fluddes for Marineres; also their courses, soundynges, markes and daungers, all along the coaste of Englande and Normandie; also all the principall Faires and Martes, and where and when they be holden; mete for all those that use the trade thereof. Imprinted at London by Jhon Kyngston for Wm. Pickeryng." This almanack makes especial note of the "dayes good to sett and sowe, to take medicines, to lett bloude, to cut heares, and fortunate and unfortunate dayes," also "the daily disposition of the weather, *with the juste hower and minute of the chaunge.*"

March 3. "Eclipse of the Moone, which bringeth with it verie pestiferous fevers, and other diseases, whyche the Lorde dothe sende among us onely for synne, except we speedyly repente."

"NATURE OF THE PLANETTES."

"*Saturne* is cold and drie: the purse in his hand betokeneth gettynge of money, and the sitting on the chaier betokeneth restynge to wait on his riches. He governs long peregrinations, laboures, slouthe, and affliction; fathers, grandsiers, brothers, servants, and base menne; al black clothes, the inner part of the eare, the spleene and the stomacke."

"*Jupiter* is the best planett in heaven, most frendlye to manne; he maintaines Life, governs the Sanguine, signifyes great menne of estate and the Clergy, signifyer of substaunce, of ages, youth of maistieres; he is the planett of Wisdome, Understandynge, and use Thynges; of manne he rules the lightes, stomache, left eare, arme, and bellie."

"*Mars* is hot and drie, and the crow that he beareth sheweth that as a Raven dothe love ded flesh or carren, right soe doth Mars love to slea menne, he maketh all cursed purverse workes in all nativities; also he holdeth iron, delyghtyng in bloudshed, all thynges done by fier—shortning of journies, and the gathering together of captaines.

"*Mercurie* is variable like as the cocke bloweth above all other fowles, so is this planet hier in imagination of wisdom, and he is stronger than anie other planet; he ruleth quicksilver; he is good with the good, and yll with the evill; he Signyfyes predication, Rhetoric, Geometrie, Philosophie, foresight, versifying. He rules Wednesdaie and Sondaie nighte."

1589.

"An Almanack and Prognostication for 1589 by Gabriel Frende."

This man appears to be the precursor of Doctor Sangrado, and doubtless would have thoroughly endorsed "Col. Pride's Purge," of the Cromwellian Epoch, for he prescribes "phlebotomy and evacuation" for nearly every month in the year, as witness two samples from the months named:

"In May thou may'st with safety
Both Bath and take Purgation;
Use Vomit and Phlebotomy,
And Eyke evacuation."

* * * * *

"September yeeldes frutes pleasantly.
Refrayne, eat not thy fyll.
Take medicine, use Phlebotomy;
Now spice in meates not yll."

After "Finis," he salutes the "Virgin Queen" with a hearty "God save Queen Elizabeth;" and in his valedictory, the Muse prompts these lines:

"Thou hast my guess at daily weather
Here present in thy view.
My credit shall not lie thereon
That every word is true:
Yet some to please I thought it best
To shew my mynde among the reste."

The following titles and excerpts will show the general tendency of the almanacks of the first half of the seventeenth century. It will be observed that the "end of the world" was as confidently expected then as in the days of "Millerism," two hundred years later.

The simplicity of medical treatment will also be noted. Complaints were few—"squinancie" and "vapours" prodominated, and the virtues of certain "pills" and the "spirits of scurvy-grass" much extolled. Doubtless the ills mentioned still afflict the world, but under such thoroughly latinized titles as cause them to be proportionately expensive to cure. The *materia medica* in those times was limited—the back garden providing nearly all that was required. All that was necessary for the physician was an astrological almanack, a few simple instruments and a patient with a strong constitution, to render his success certain and his reputation secure.

1606.

"An Almanack for 1606, imprinted for the Company of Stationers', in a very "smal and Portable Manuel" contained the Psalter and the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer as well as the Calendar, on the bottom of the pages of which for the months quoted, are the following quaint and practical couplets:

Februarie.

"Now everie day set hops you may,
And set for thy pot best hearbes to be got."

April.

"Heare barke go sel ere timber ye fel.
The best that ye knowe for staddles* let growe."

*Hay-stack supports.

October.

"Now sowe thou thy wheate to sel or to eate;
Sowe also thy rie, if October be drie."

December.

"Your timber cut downe; take birds that abowne,
With net or with lime; and thus ends my rime."

1624.

JOHN RUDSTON.

January.

"Now is't a time unmeet to bleed,
Yet Baths with counsell thou maist use.
It is not good to purge, sweat, bleed;
No Physicke take, sweet drinks resfuse."

February.

"Milke, fennish Fowle, and Physicke flye;
Bathe, but use not Phlebotomy:
Take heed of cold, feed warily,
Lest agues breed thy misery."

March.

"Humours this month in man abound;
Let food therefore be choice and sound.
No Physicke take, we purge nor bleed,
But by learn'd counsell and good heed."

April

"Now nature doth resume her power,
Pores opened are, and blood increase;
Therefore this month doth bear the flower,
To cure by Physicke thy disease."

May.

"Take Physicke's ayd for malady,
Use sage thy drinks to qualifie;
Rise early, traverse pleasantly
The Fields that smell most fragrantly."

Annual Circular—Number Eight

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June.

"This month bid spices hot adieu,
Coole meates and herbs are now the best;
To bathe, purge, bleed doe now eschew
If you do love your health and rest."

July.

"In Iune what is prescribed for health
Accordeth best with Iuly's heat:
Coole Baths, to wit in chrystall streames,
Coole hearbs likewise and coolest meate"

August.

"This month the Dogs starre violently
Doth heat the blood and humours frie;
No Physicke or Phlebotomy
Helps now, but breeds infirmity."

September.

"Ripe fruits, but sound in measure eate,
Now spice you may eate with your meate.
Now Dog dayes gone, bathe, purge, and bleed,
And Physicke take, if that you need."

October.

"With good hot broths, and vestures warme,
From cold the body keepe;
Good store of food will doe no harme.
Drinke old good wine, and largely sleepe."

November.

"Now in thy meates use spicery,
But use ye no Phlebotomy;
For Winter's cold Extremity,
Thereby may breed infirmity.

December.

"Let passion's absence, mind secure;
Let warmth thy bodies' health procure.
Then bodies' health, mind tranquiliz'd,
Will deem its state emparadiz'd."

1625.

RICH : ALLESTREE.

"A Prognostication for this present yeare of Grace 1625
A subject well meriting the probation of the Iudicious
Who best know how to confirme their knowledge.

* * * * *

Whereunto is annexed a compendious Table to
Know the Crisis of any man that falleth sicke."

"I marry sir. I count it not amisse
Sir envious Critike ruminate on this :
More things if't pleased me, doth beate my braine
Could I reveale, but that's a fruitlesse paine.
Thinke Momus, speake, do what you will, you're free,
Your deeds, your words, your thoughts are nought to mee."

"When you would purge any part of man's body, let not the Planet which is significator of the part ~~of the~~ be strong or fortunate in the Heaven (if you can tell when it is.) For example, purge not the gall, Mars being fortified. You shall have the parts of man's body, which the Planets are attributed unto set downe for your better knowledge in the fifth page within my almanacke. Stop humours, fluxes or rheumes, the Moone in *Tauro*, *Virgine* or *Capricorno*. Observe that medicines are better to be given in the decrease or wane of the Moone than in her increase or spring.

"Enter into bathes for hot diseases, let the Moone bee in Virgo, Cancer or Scorpio; for cold diseases in Aries, Leo, or Sagittary. Those dayes in which the Moone goeth to the opposition of Saturn are very unwholesome (saith the Astronomer) to take a purgation in, but most fit to provoke vomit.

"An unguent or plaister is best applied when the Moone is in the imaginary signe attributed to the member whereunto it is applyed. But above all remember where the Physitian is not paid the disease goeth backward.

*"Anatomy of wonder great I speake, and yet am dead.
Men sucke sweete juice from these blacke veines, which mother wisdome bred."

1633.

EDWARD POND.

Abreviate of the Foure Termes of Law.

"The first of *Hilarie Term* shall be
On Januarie the twenty-three
And on the twelfth of February
This Term doth end most certainly,
And *Easter Term* from Easter day.
The Wednesday fortnight 'gins alway,
And when th' Ascension day is past
Till Monday next the Term doth last.
On Friday after *Trinitie*
This Term begins assuredly
And as our Lawyers all do write
It ends the Wednesday fortnight.
If *Michaelmas Term* you seek to find
The ninth of October bear in mind,
It ends as I doe well remember
The twentie-eight day of November,"

"Short lines Termes commence end
be the of and ing
Long times cares, turmoyles spend"

The Anatomie.

"Should I but dare t' omit the *Anatomie*,
Which long enough hath gul'd my country friend,
He with contempt would straight refuse to buy
This book, and 't is no *Almanack* contend.
Ask him its use, he'le say he cannot tell;
No more can I: yet since he loves 't so well,
I'le let it stand, because my Book should sell."

*Evidently a tribute to printer's ink.

1634.

JOHN WOODHOUSE.

Generall Rules of Physicke.

"Cut no Weyne, nor let Blood when the Signe is in the place where the incision is to be made, neither when the Sun or Moone are aflicted with the malignant Planets, Saturne or Mars, let it be done in the morning after the Sun-rising and while the patient is fasting. If in the afternoon, then after perfect digestion, the ayre being temperate.

"In letting of blood, the Physition or Chirurgion must be carefull of his patient, for many times the carless and unlearned, by letting off Blood, open a way to dangerous infirmities, and sometimes to present Death. It is not convenient that a leane or weake man or woman, or one that is verie fat or grosse, nor for a child to be let blood. It is to be considered, how it standeth with the Patient inwardly for his Complexion and Age for the time of the yeare and of the day. There fore it is best to let blood in faire, temperate and Sun-shine weather, not to sleepe presently after it, nor to stir violently.

"The best times to let blood be, for the Sanguine, the Moone being in Cancer or Pioces. For the Melancholicke in Libra or Aquarius, and for the Phlegmaticke in Aries or Aquarius.

"For the Phrenzie and Pestilence, Squinancie, Plurisse, Apoplexie, continuall Head-ache, hot burning feaver, or any other extreme paine, or dangerous disease, remedy must be sought with all convenient speed, but then Blood is not to be let in so great quantity as if a chosen time might be taken.

"It is best to bathe, the Moone in Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius for health, but for cleanlinesse in Libra and Pisces.

"Sweatings as they are of two sorts, that is, Naturall, and Artificiall: (so they be for two purposes.) The Naturall Sweat (good heed being taken in opening the pores) will dissolve grosse and thicke Humours, will cleanse the Blood, will comfort the Spirits, will drive away Cold, will help Numnesse and the Dropsie. The Artificiall Sweate will cleanse Scabs, put away Itch, amend dullness in

NICH: CULPEPER, Gent,

Student Astrol. 1652

Prognosticator of

"The Ruine of Monarchy throughout Europe and a Change of the Law,"

and other pleasant and unpleasant Episodes.

hearing, ease the Stone, dissolve the congealed and melancholly blood and humours. But for the better performing and effectual working in these cases, the counsell of the learned Physition is to be desired who will consider many Astrological observations necessary in Blood-letting.

"The best time to sweate in, are the Moone being in Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius."

1653.

JOHN VAUX.

A Prognostication.

"Now it is evident out of *Genesis*, ch. 5, that from Adam unto the Flood be passed 1656 years; it is likewise true how the end of the world by Fire shall be approaching to the like year of our Lord 1656; and if so? it is even at the door.

"The end of all things is at hand,
Now therefore wo unto that land
That doth not now with speed begin
To turn to God and shake off sin.
For Nation doth 'gainst Nation rise
And fearful Signes appear in Skies
Of that same day that's comming on
Which many one least think upon.
Deferre not therefore, but convert
To-day, and burden not your heart,
Lest that you cry when time is gone,
O Lord that we had not so done,
For then the Lord will stop his ear,
And your complaints by no means hear.

* * * * *

"And seeing that the signes forewarning of our last day are continually in our sight, and that the propheticall Scriptures are perfectly accomplished so that in all probability the Sixth day of the world's week is neer expired, I will conclude as I began, *Watch and Pray*."

"The state of Fortune alt'reth soon
Even with the image of the Moon
That's constant with unconstantness,
Now waxing full, then wayning less."

The prophecies of Merlin were published at Paris, 1498; London, 1529–1533; Venice, 1534. He was surnamed Ambrosius, and lived during the 5th century, and his reputed parents were a demon and a Welsh princess, though both Scotland and Wales claimed the honor of his birthplace. He displayed remarkable prophetic powers from his infancy, and possessed some astrological knowledge.

He is incidentally referred to by Shakspeare, Spencer, and Tennyson, and his name gave title to some of the English almanacks of the 16th and 17th centuries.

In England, almanacks began to get into common use in the latter years of the reign of Henry VIII, and continued to increase in popularity with each succeeding year.

Leonard Digges, a mathematician of some repute in the reign of Elizabeth, was the author of a "Prognostication" which was several times issued under the superintendence of himself and his son Thomas Digges during the period 1553–1605.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the almanack attained what might be termed the golden age.

They were the most popular publications in Europe, and during this period astrology reached the pinnacle of popularity.

Everybody, high and low, the learned and the ignorant, found something to interest in their pages. Planetary influence and "lucky days" were respected, and all classes found manifold excitement in prognostications more or less direful. The astrologer ruled "destiny's dark counsel," and royalty itself often trembled before impending misfortunes in the conjunction of planets; pestilence in eclipses, and death and ruin of kingdoms in the advent of a comet.

Astrologers, quick to take advantage of the popular superstition, began to make political predictions; and prognostications were consequently regarded as the most important part of an almanack.

Nostradamus Michael, born at St. Remy, France, 14 December, 1503, d. 2d July, 1566, was a mathematician, philosopher and physician, and in the latter profession gained considerable fame before becoming noted as a "mystagogue." He studied astronomy, and published an almanack which became very popular, so much so that

imitations of them were published, which imitations being attributed to him, and containing nothing but folly, caused the poet Jodelle to satirize him :

"*Nostra damus cum falsa damus, nam fallere nostra est,*
Et cum falsa damus, nil nisi Nostra damus."

That is—

"We give our own things when we give false things, for it is our peculiarity to deceive, and when we give false things, we are only giving our own things."

Some of his prophecies published in 1555 attracted the attention of royalty, and Henry II sent for him to consult him in reference to his children. Charles IX and his mother Catharine de Medici also had much faith in his predictions.

He had the reputation of foretelling the death of Henry II (which monarch died in 1559.) The prediction made in 1555 reads somewhat ambiguously as follows:

"*Le Lion jeune le vieux surmontera,*
En champ bellique par singulier duelle,
Dans cage d'or l'oeil il lui crevera,
Deux playes une puis mourir mort cruelle."

Or,—

"The young lion shall overcome the old one
In martial field by a single duel.
In a golden cage he shall put out his eye,
Two wounds from one: then shall he die a cruel death."

Henry received a wound in the eye from a splinter of a lance while tilting at a tourney with a young captain of his guard, and died in great pain ten days after.

The prediction of the death of Charles I, of England, and the great fire at London, in 1666, ran in this wise:

"*Le sang de juste a Londres sera faute*
Brulez par feu de vingt et trois, les Six,
La Dame antique cherra de place haute
De meme secte plusieurs seront occis."

(The blood of the just shall be wanting in London,
Burnt by the fire of three and twenty the six.
The ancient dame shall fall from her high place,
Of the same sect many shall be killed.)

Another line appears more closely to point the fate of Charles:

"*Le Senat de Londres metteront a mort le Roy.*"

(The London Senate will put the King to death.)

Cromwell's success in Flanders is also alluded to:

"*Le Oliver se plantera en terra firme.*"

(Oliver will get a footing on the Continent.)

These prophecies, with many others of less import, were collated and published, and had many sincere believers long after; even to the latter part of the last century.

Political prophecies through the medium of almanacks grew so alarming, and possibly personal in their character, that Henry III, of France, forbade such to be inserted therein, which prohibition was repeated by Louis XIII as late as 1628. At a much earlier date every almanack was required to be stamped with the approval of the Bishop of the Diocese before publication.

No royal proclamation ever appeared against almanacks in England, as they were generally free from any direct allusion to state affairs. They were, however, under the supervision of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.

The exclusive right for the publication of almanacks was granted by Elizabeth to two members of the Stationers' Company, which monopoly was extended by James I to the Universities at Oxford and Cambridge, and the Company of Stationers jointly; the Universities afterward commuting their rights so that the Stationers practically owned the franchise.

At an early day when Tenison was Archbishop, a near relative of his who was master of the Stationers' Company, thought it a compliment to call at the Episcopal residence at Lambeth in the Company's stately barge, on the Lord Mayor's Day, when the Archbishop sent out creature comforts in the shape of spiced wine, and cakes and ale to the attendants and watermen. This grew into a custom, the Stationers' Company acknowledging the hospitality by presenting to the Archbishop of Canterbury, copies of the several almanacks which they publish.

This ceremony of presentation is still continued, but does not possess the marine and free-lunch characteristics of the olden time.

Thomas Carnan published an almanack in opposition to the Stationers Company for three years, and was as many times imprisoned, but in 1775 the Court of Common Pleas decided in his favor, and terminated the existence of this monopoly which had continued 170 years.

Lord North, in 1779, brought in a blll to renew the Company's privilege, but through the efforts of Erskine in favor of the public the bill was rejected. The remarks of Erskine would bear evidence that the publications of the Stationers' Company in the almanack way were not the highest standard of morality. To quote him: "The worst part of Rochester is ladies' reading, compared with the filth these almanacks contain."

The defeated monopolists, however, still kept the trade by bribing their competitors, and by their influence over the book market.

To return to the golden period of this class of literature:

During the reign of James I, the *Philomaths*, (Lovers of Mathematics) the astrologers again came prominently to the front, even forming themselves into a corporation or society having their annual celebrations and dinners as did the various trade associations and guilds. Elias Ashmole, the antiquary, being prominent on these occasions.

The prosperity of the almanack-makers and their predictions brought to them however the attacks of their opponents.

A few years previous, Rabelais, himself the author of several almanacks, ridiculed the pretensions of the astrologers in his Pantagruelian Prognostication, entitled:

"The most certain, true, and infallible Pantagruelian Prognostication for the year that is to come, for ever and aye. Calculated for the benefit and nodification of the giddy-brained and weather-wise would-be's. By Master Alcofribas Nasier, architriclin to the aforementioned Pantagruel."

Following the example of this illustrious satirist, the wits of this period opened their satirical warfare against the "star-gazers," and the failure and extravagance of their predictions.

Dekker, the play-wright, was prominent in wielding the lash, publishing his "Raven's Almanack," in 1609, a plethora of mock prognostications and comic incidents.

This was followed by the "Owle's Almanack," a publication of similar import, by Lawrence Lisle, in 1618, a medley of ridiculous calculations in imitation of Dekker's work.

The astrologers were a little shaken by this system of lampooning, but still received no permanent injury. The company of stationers however were equal to the emergency, publishing thereafter for a period, two sorts of almanacks — one to suit the skeptics, and the other to tickle the palate of the credulous.

During the troublous times of Charles I and the Commonwealth, the astrological profession again revived and prognostications became more popular, increasing in number and repute; the most noted seers being the celebrated William Lilly and his compeers Booker, Backhouse and Gadbury.

William Lilly, the most successful of these charlatans deserves more than a passing notice. He flourished between the years 1602–1681; born 1 May, 1602; died 9 June, 1681, and was proficient in all the unscrupulous cunning, adroitness, and plausibility, which go to make up the successful quack and impostor. When Charles I was imprisoned at Carisbrooke Castle, Lilly was consulted for the hour which would favor his escape. He was satirized by Butler in *Hudibras* as Sidrophel.

"Do not our great reformers use
This Sidrophel to forebode news?
To write of victories next year,
And castles taken yet i' th' air?
Of battles fought at sea, and ships
Sunk two years hence? the last eclipse?
A total o'er throw given the King
In Cornwall, horse and foot, next spring?
And has not he point-blank foretold
Whats'e'er the close committee would?
Made Mars and Saturn for the cause,
The Moon for fundamental laws?
The Ram, the Bull, the Goat declare
Against the Book of Common Prayer?

Portrait of

WILLIAM LILLY.

Title Page of his Almanack. 1652.

The Scorpion take the protestation,
And Bear engage for reformation?
Made all the royal stars recant,
Compound and take the covenant?"

Lilly was the author of an almanack entitled *Merlinus Anglicus Junior*, and continued its publication from 1644 until his decease, when he was succeeded by his student, Henry Coley.

Lilly published numerous other works among which were:

"A Prophecy of the White King and Dreadfull Dead-man Explained;" "Supernaturall Sights and Apparitions seen in London, 1644, interpreted."

In his life, written by himself, he claims to have had conferences with angels, and further states that the voices of these, much resembled those of the Irish. This autobiography, published after his decease, is a remarkable record of credulity and successful imposture.

He was attached to the Parliamentary Cause, and made a large fortune by his art during the Commonwealth. After the Restoration he was imprisoned, but subsequently released and he returned to the country. After the great fire in London, 1666, he was again apprehended on suspicion of knowing something of its origin. As a summary of his character, a noted writer has said, "Lilly was an exquisite rogue, and never at fault."

The next almanack maker was John Partridge, b. 1644, d. 1714; a shoemaker by trade, acquired some knowledge of Latin, astronomy and astrology, and undertook the publication of an almanack. He was attacked by Swift who published a number of satirical and humorous pamphlets against the shoemaker-astrologer. Swift predicted the death of Partridge—"having consulted the star of his nativity, I find he will infallibly die on the 29th of March next (? 1708) about eleven at night of a raging fever; therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time." After this date had transpired, Partridge publicly denied the predicted catastrophe. Swift followed with *An Elegy on the Supposed Death of Partridge the Almanack-Maker*, followed by

The Epitaph.

"Here, five foot deep, lies on his back
A cobbler, star-monger and quack,
Who, to the stars, in pure good-will,
Does to his best look upward still.
Weep, all ye customers, that use
His pills, his almanacks, or shoes;
And you that did your fortunes seek,
Step to his grave but once a week.
This earth which bears his body's print,
You'll find has so much virtue in't,
That I durst pawn my ears 't will tell
Whate'er concerns you full as well
In physic, stolen goods or love,
As he himself could when above."

NOTE.—Partridge's memory is preserved in Pope's "Rape of the Lock." After Belinda's curl has been appropriated, the poet places it among the constellations thus:

"This the beaumonde shall from the Mall survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray;
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up prayers from Rosamunda's lake;
This Partrtdge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;
And hence the egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis and the fall of Rome."

Following Lilly and Partridge came the noted charlatan, Francis Moore, born at Bridgnorth, Salop, 29 January 1656–7, and who preyed upon the purses of the credulous in the latter part of the seventeenth, and the early portion of the eighteenth centuries, practicing as an astrologer, physician and schoolmaster. Moore prepared an almanack known as *Vox Stellarum*, or Moore's Almanack, for the Company of Stationers from about the year 1680.

It attained a great reputation, and its publication under the same title is continued to the present day.

In 1704 John Tipper, a schoolmaster at Coventry, established the *Ladies' Diary*, as a calendar and with the evident intent to introduce

the study of mathematics to the "gentle fair" as well as other "entertaing particulars peculiarly adapted for the use and diversion of the fair sex." It was not a success as long as "figures" were the chief topic, but when recipes for cookery and preserving were introduced to season, as it were, the mathematical problems presented in versified enigmas, the girls appeared to manifest a little more curiosity.

The "Gentleman's Diary" was brought out as a rival publication to the former in 1741, but one hundred years later, the discreet age having been arrived at, the proprietors concluded to marry them, and since 1841 the pnblication has been continued as the "Ladies' and Gentlemen's Diary."

A noted English maker of almanacks of the eighteenth century was Henry Andrews, who for forty-three years compiled the calculations for "Moore's Almanack" for the Company of Stationers. He was born February 4, 1744, at Frieston, near Grantham, and died at Royston Herts, January 26, 1820. From a very humble beginning he advanced to the attainment of a reputation second to none as an astronomer and mathematician.

1664.

The first humorous almanack, continued as an annual publication, was *Poor Robin, 1664*, which subjected the celestial science to contempt and ridicule. It was entitled

"An Almanack after a New Fashion, wherein the Reader may see (if he be not Blinde) many Remarkable Things worthy of Observation, containing a Two-fold Kalender, viz: The Julian or English, and the Roundheads or Fanatics, with their several Saints-Daies and Observations upon every Month."

"Written by Poor Robin, Knight of the Burnt Island, a well-wisher to the Mathematicks. Calculated for the Meridian of Saffron Walden, where the Pole is elevated 52 degrees and 6 minutes above the Horizon. Printed for the Company of Stationers."

January.

"Now blustering Boreas sends out of his quiver
Arrows of snow and hail, which makes men shiver;
And though we hate sects and their vile partakers,
Yet those who want fires must now turn Quakers."

Weather predictions:

January.

"There will be much frost and cold weather in *Greenland.*"

February.

"We may expect some showers of rain this month or the next, or the next after that, or else we shall have a very dry spring."

This almanack was supposed to have been originated by the assistance of Robert Herrick, the poet. It was published continuously until 1828.

Before leaving the principal domain of the Astrological Almanack, a description of the "Houses" alluded to the therein, may be of interest.

The *Houses*, or *Heavenly Houses*, alluded to in the Astrological Almanacks, were formed by drawing great circles through the North and South points of the horizon, as the meridians pass through the poles, dividing the heavens, visible and invisible, into twelve equal parts—six above, and six below the horizon. These formed the "twelve houses," and were numbered onward beginning with that which lay in the East immediately below the horizon.

The first house was the dominion of *Life;* the second, *Fortune*, or *Riches;* third, *Brethren;* fourth, *Relations;* fifth, *Children;* sixth, *Health;* seventh, *Marriage;* eighth, *Death*, or the upper portal; ninth, *Religion;* tenth, *Dignities;* eleventh, *Friends* or *Benefactors;* twelfth, *Enemies*, or *Captivity*.

The position of the "twelve houses" at the instant of an individual's birth was the *theme* from which to "cast a nativity."

The "houses" had different powers, the strongest being the first, and as it contained that portion of the heaven *about to rise*, it was called the *ascendant*, and the point of the Ecliptic cut by its upper boundary was the *horoscope*. Each "house" was governed by one of the heavenly bodies as its *lord* who was strongest in his own "house."

THE ALMANACK IN AMERICA.

Before proceeding with the development of the weather in America, it may perhaps be interesting to briefly review the condition of the country before the introduction of the bulwark of our liberties.

The portion of America where the almanack first made its appearance was not the most inviting spot in the world for some years prior to that event, and had not improved much in general comfort for a considerable period thereafter. About forty years previous to the date we mention, the land was inhabited by a very simple-minded people, having but few necessities or desires which were supplied in a very satisfactory manner, as far as we can learn. The Anglo-Saxon civilizers—rum, gunpowder and tobacco, had not yet been introduced to their notice, and they had progressed but a little way in scientific investigations. Astronomy had but few charms for these children of nature—the stars were only of utility as guide-posts on pleasant evenings. Astrology had absolutely no development, and the "medicine man," (as in modern times among us) held almost absolute domination of their minds and bodies. A happy condition of things, truly, this primitive state of the aboriginal man! But this is a world of change. One very wet, disagreeable afternoon the neighboring ocean was much agitated, and we are informed that the breaking waves dashed high on a coast which was not only rock-faced, but stern and forbidding. The trees were likewise agitated by the force of the wind, and all the surroundings were decidedly moist and unpleasant. On the said afternoon, which was in the month of December, a small vessel, the like of which had never been seen in that neighborhood before, and which conveyance bore a very unseasonable name made its (or her) appearance in close proximity to the residence of the aborigines mentioned above.

As soon as the weather had cleared up sufficiently to enable the contents of the vessel to be partially dried, the ancestors of Mr. Alden, of Akron, together with Miss Mary Chilton and parents; T. Tinker, Digerie Priest, a "man of war" named Miles Standish, a party by the suggestive name of Carver, Messrs. Winslow and Brewster, with quite a number in the "steerage," proceeded to disembark, taking with them with religious care the mirror now exhibited at the rooms of this Society.

It was not a jolly party—there was nothing in the surroundings to cause jollity—even if their bilious temperaments could have possibly been susceptible of jocosity, or anything akin to it. They had left "Merrie England" to find a place where they could be miserable according to the dictates of their own desires, the condition of their livers and other digestive organs. They went first to Holland, but even the stolid phlegmatic Hollander was too jolly to suit their peculiar notions, and so they chartered the "May Flower and Consort" for a voyage in search of unhappiness, and struck it on the inside of Cape Cod. Miss Chilton, who appeared the most frisky one of the party, went ashore in the first boat, and has the honor of being the first to set foot on the rocks which were henceforth to be dedicated to long-winded sermons and sickness, Psalms, suffering, and sadness for many a year.

The sturdy child of nature, whose domain was thus invaded, looked with amazement upon the peculiar customs of the late arrivals, and reciprocally, the latter were astounded at the apparent cheerful disposition of those who had never seen a white man before. The sample sent was not perhaps quite reassuring even to the untutored savage.

Do not imagine that the new-comers had nothing to lighten up their dreary sojourn in the wilderness. As an employment they endeavored to interest the children of the forest in the peculiar ideas and traditions which they had brought with them in the form of legends and literature. Failing in this, they possibly introduced the *aqua vitae* form of persuasion, for you must know that this potent argument did then, as now, go hand in hand with the advance of civilization. The aborigines took kindly to the "medicine," but it did not shake their ancient faith, however it might have affected their locomotion. Subsequently rewards were offered, bounties were

proclaimed for Indian scalps, and it seemed then as though a more cheerful expression overspread the countenances of the Pilgrims, who were expert at managing the arquebus and caliver.

Two years after the arrival of the first consignment, a ray of cheerfulness appeared about to light up the social sky of New England. In 1622, that jovial limb of the law, Master Thomas Morton, arrived, and it would have seemed that his advent should have in a measure dispelled the gloom which had pervaded Plymouth society, but alas, how often our best intentions bring forth but Hesperian fruit. Thomas undertook a settlement in the neighborhood from which it was his intent that all bilious, sad-countenanced individuals should be forever banished. He succeeded for awhile—drove a thriving trade with the natives, bartered them powder and ball, conversation water, and muskets — opened a military school in which to teach the Indian idea how to shoot, and endeavored according to his peculiar notion to bring the savage to highest state of civilization by the shortest possible route. But Brother Morton's school was as much too far advanced as the "academy of sadness" at Plymouth was too antiquated, to bring about a fellow-feeling between the "salvages" and the new-comers. There arose however, quite providentially, a man who was equal to the occasion, and who took hold of the subject—which subject was Morton—in a manner calculated to definitely settle the difficulty. John Endicott, "the Puritan of Puritans," was conveniently at hand, and immediately proceeded through Mr. Morton and his arrangements. Captain Standish assisted also, and despite Mr. Morton's resistance, the banners of those who "were to pour sunshine over New England's rugged hills and scatter flower seeds throughout the soil," were trailed in the dust, the May pole was cast down, the pastimes of Merrie England were abolished, the name of Merry (Ma-re) Mount was obliterated; salt, for aught we know, was sown on the spot, afterward to be known as Mount Dagon. The sun of merriment and good cheer had set, and jaundice reigned supreme among a people where the whipping post, the stocks and the pillory were considered more congenial diversions.

To think of any sort of cheerful literature at this period would have been sheer folly. No one desired any addition to the stock which had already been brought, and the establishment of a press would have been regarded as the erection of an idol to divert the minds of the people from more serious matters.

These serious matters were evidently the experimenting in suspended animation by the occasional hanging of an obtrusive Quaker, the accelerated expedition of Roger Williams "for opinion's sake" to found his asylum of religious liberty at Rhode Island; the summary banishment of Anne Hutchinson and family to meet a barbarous death at the hands of Indians near Oost Dorp, in New Amsterdam, the bare intelligence of which caused a thrill of joy to permeate the breasts of her persecutors at Plymouth—while perhaps the event was celebrated by a burnt offering of a brace of superfluous aborigines.

But a change was coming—slowly perhaps—but none the less imminent. About twenty years after the first arrival, Harvard College was established at Cambridge, and almost coeval with this event an important factor in the civilization of the Western World, made its appearance. A printing press was set up at the College in 1639, and after the publication of a sheet entitled "The Freeman's Oath," the first book issued therefrom was "an *Almanack*, calculated for New England by Mr. Pierce, Mariner."

The press was managed by Stephen Daye, a native of London, England, who came to the Colony for that purpose. He relinquished the business in 1649, being succeeded by Samuel Green, of whose descendants to the present day there were printers in each generation. The first presses set up in nearly all the English Colonies were established in each by the descendants of Samuel Green, and the first production therefrom was almost invariably an almanack.

The almanack, therefore, is worthy of some consideration, as a part of the literary history of America, and though it has been oftener passed by unnoticed, a recent writer has deemed it worthy of the following merited and generous tribute:

"No one who would penetrate to the core of early American literature, and would read in it the secret history of the people in whose minds it took root, and from whose minds it grew, may by any means turn away in lofty literary scorn from the almanack—most despised, most prolific, most indispensable of books, which every man uses, and no man praises; the very quack, clown, pack-horse, and Pariah of modern literature; the supreme and only literary necessity even in households where the Bible and the newspaper are still undesired or unattainable luxuries."*

*History of American Literature.—Moses Coit Tyler.

In the Colonies these productions partook of much the same quality as those of the Mother Country, and their development progressed much in the same manner. In the beginning they consisted of the calendar merely, and perhaps references to coming eclipses. Later, they embodied astrological predictions—but very few of these prognostications were of a *judicial* nature, being mostly devoted to the weather. Subsequently, proverbs, jests, humorous tales, wise saws, historical sketches, medical essays, political tracts, and other information was added, so that in the course of time the unpretentious calendar of eight pages had increased to a pamphlet of forty-eight pages, at the commencement of the present century.

The collections of American almanacks in the various libraries form a very interesting history of the development of the art of printing, and the rude wood cuts in the earlier issues are in vivid contrast with the artistic creations of the illustrators of modern publications.

Hon. Amos Perry, Secretary and Librarian of the Rhode Island Historical Society, read a very interesting paper on almanacks before the Society in October, 1884, which embraces a description of such treasures deposited in the Library, with a short history of some of the issues in New England. This is the first pamphlet devoted to this subject exclusively that I have noticed, and I am pleased to quote his words concerning their general character.

"Almanacks served our forefather's not only as calendars, but as compendiums or rather medleys of astronomy, astrology, geology, meteorology, biography, history, tradition and science. They contained the dates of notable marriages, births and deaths; of many remarkable events; of college commencements, election days, cattle shows, the sessions of courts; together with enigmas, problems, quaint sayings, tables of distances, and practical information and suggestions of various kinds: and they often served at the same time as diaries and account books. Sea captains noted in them important facts connected with their voyages, as the dates of their departure and arrival, vessels spoken on the passage, and various striking occurrences. Farmers made notes about their cattle, hogs, sheep and crops. Clergymen made minutes showing when and where, and on what subject they preached, and the complexion of their theology, as when the Rev. Ezra Stiles, D.D, wrote: "February 13th, 1789, Gen. Ethan Allen, of Vermont, died and went to Hell this day." Invet-

erate chroniclers like Theodore Foster made their almanacks historical note-books and literary curiosities for the instruction and amusement of succeeding generations.

The earlier almanacks issued after the establishment of the press at Cambridge were the productions of eminent men and scholars, quite all of whom were graduates or undergraduates of Harvard and other New England colleges. Many of these individuals only appended their initials to their works, but among those less modest may be noted the names of Danforth, Oakes, Cheever, Chauncey, Brigden, Flint, Dudley, Holyoke, Clough, Sherman, Brattle, and even the celebrated Mather family, in the persons of Cotton and Nathaniel, found time among their other literary duties to rejoice the world with an occasional *Ephemeris*.

Mr. Foster was a poet-astronomer, and his issue of 1675, commenting upon the massacre of Indians at Canonicus Fort, he says:

> "'Tis feared a thousand natives young and old
> Went to a place in their opinion cold."

After 1702 the authors of Almanacks became more numerous. Many individuals were engaged in the study of the heavens and furnished the results of their investigations, either astronomically or astrologically, over their signatures, to which was appended the title, *Philomath*, or *Philomathemat*. Also, *Lovers of Astronomy*, *Students in Astronomy*, *Physike*, and *the Mathematicks*. These were active competitors for public favor. Woe to the "star-gazer" who now made an error in his "mathematicks," or "prognostications!" His ready rival in his next annual production made liberal use of printers' ink to show up the unfortunate error, and vaunt his own superiority in the "world of figures."

Between the years 1681 and his decease in 1702, the "ingenious Mr. John Tulley" published an almanack. So superior was his education to his contemporaries in America, and so superstitious and ignorant were the common people, that with them he had the reputation of a conjurer, which repute at this day would only be regarded as common sagacity.

In 1686 he appears to have driven all competitors out of the field —perhaps by reason of his poetry, which, though possibly highly entertaining at that period, would be laid on the top shelf now-a-days.

There were, however, rival publications—one entitled the "Harvard Ephemeris," possibly the production of some ambitious undergraduate, besides a remarkable instance of juvenile precocity in the shape of "An Almanack for 1695," by Increase Gatchell, *aet* 16.

About three years prior to the decease of Mr. Tulley, or in the year 1700, Mr. Samuel Clough successfully conducted an almanack until his demise in 1708, which publication was chiefly remarkable for the extreme freedom of the poetical effusions therein.

In the year 1685 appeared the first almanack published in the Colony of Pennsylvania, entitled "*Kalendarium Pennsilvaniense* for 1686, by Samuel Atkins, printed by William Bradford, at Philadelphia." This was followed by numerous other similar publications, notably those of Daniel and Titan Leeds, and Christopher Sower and his descendants, who issued almanacks continuously at Germantown, 1738–1778.

In 1697, J. Clapp published the first almanack issued in the Colony of New York.

N. Whittemore, a pertinaceous squabbler commenced his "Diary" in 1705, continued it until 1729, when it was discontinued, to be revived again in 1738 to be only consigned to the memories of the past, some two years later.

Daniel Travis issued an almanack from 1707–1723, printed both at New York and various places in New England.

From about the commencement of the eighteenth century, it would appear that the censorship of the Colonial Governors who had the supervision of the public prints had been removed, as the *Imprimatur*, accompanied by the signature of either the Governor or Secretary, no longer appeared on the almanacks.

Consequently the freedom of the press being established, everybody who had the inclination "rushed into print," and the almanack manufacturers increased and multiplied throughout the land. Authors and odd titles were numerous: Poor Joseph, 1759; Poor Will, 1770, Philadelphia; Poor Tom, 1759, N. Y.; Poor Job, 1750, Newport, R. I.; Poor Roger, 1762, N. Y.; Poor Thomas, 1763, N. Y., and the monarch of all the "Poor" almanacks, "Poor Richard," from the press, and under the authorship of Benjamin Franklin, appeared at Philadelphia, 1733, and was continued until as late as 1767.

Examples of this almanack now command fabulous prices both in England and America.

"This almanack was remarkable for the numerous and valuable concise maxims which it contained, all tending to exhort to industry and frugality. All the maxims were collected in an address, entitled 'The Way to Wealth.' This has been translated into various languages, and inserted in different publications. This address contained, perhaps, the best practical system of economy that ever has appeared. It was written in a manner intelligible to every one, and which could not fail of convincing every reader of the justice and propriety of the remarks and advice which it contains. The demand for this almanack was so great that ten thousand have been sold in one year; which must be considered as a very large number, especially when we reflect that this country was, at that time, but thinly peopled. It cannot be doubted that the salutary maxims contained in these almanacks must have made a favorable impression upon many of the readers of them."

Contemporary with these appeared "Abraham Weatherwise," at Philadelphia, 1762; Father Abraham, New York, 1759; Copernicus Weatherguesser, New York, 1767; together with "Dutch," Philadelphia, 1737-50; "Quaker," Philadelphia, 1737-8; "American," New York, 1742; "High Dutch," 1749; "English," 1750; and many others of varied titles and authorship.

R. Saunders published in Philadelphia from Franklin's press from 1743 to late in the century.

Roger Sherman, of Connecticut, published his "Diary," 1750-1760.

Hutchins celebrated New York almanack, was commenced by John Nathan Hutchins in 1759, and continued many years.

The first almanack in Rhode Island was "Poor Robin," issued by James Franklin (an elder brother of Benjamin), at Newport, in 1728, which was continued until 1735, and appeared again at Philadelphia, 1742.

Benjamin West was the author of the first almanack printed at Providence in 1763. West was also the author of the "Bickerstaff" Almanacks which appeared at Boston and other New England cities in 1768, and for a number of years thereafter. He was a noted astronomer and mathematician. South Carolina had almanacks pub-

lished by George Andrews, 1760-3. Delaware's first almanack was issued by one Fox, at Wilmington, 1762, and continued for several years; and the first almanack issued in Maryland was printed in 1763 at Annapolis, by a descendant of Samuel Green, of Cambridge, Mass., and the great-grandfather of the late Frederick W. Green, of this city, formerly associated with W. W. Armstrong in the publication of the *Plain Dealer*.

Nathaniel Low commenced his almanack 1762 (none issued in 1766), and the same was continued until early in the present century.

In the year 1726 appeared the most celebrated almanack ever published in America. It was complied by Nathaniel Ames, a physician and inn-keeper at Dedham, Mass., and issued under the title of "An Astronomical Diary and Almanack." Its author was "a man of evident original, vigorous and pungent genius," and his publications appeared annually until his decease in July, 1764.

The following sketch of his ancestry and posperity is copied from the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*:

NATHANIEL AMES, of Dedham, born in Bridgewater, Mass., 1708, was a great-great-grandson of Richard Ames, of Bruton, Somersetshire, England, great-grandson of William Ames, born at Bruton, 6th October, 1605, and who settled at Braintree as early as 1640, grandson of John (eldest son of William) who was born 24th March, 1647, and moved to West Bridgewater about 1672, and son of Nathaniel (second son of John) who was born October 9, 1677.

Nathaniel, the subject of this sketch, was a distinguished physician and mathematician who removed to Dedham and married, in 1735, Mary, daughter of Joshua Fisher, by whom he had a son, Fisher Ames, who died in infancy, but subsequent to his mother's decease, after which a lawsuit took place in which it was decided for the first time that the estate ascended to the father as next of kin to his son, by the Province law, contrary to the English common law.

Dr. Ames married in 1740 a second wife, Deborah, daughter of Jeremiah Fisher, by whom he had: 1. *Nathaniel*, born, 1741; graduated at Harvard, 1761; was a physician; died at Dedham, in 1822, leaving no children. 2. *Seth*, graduated at Harvard, 1764; also a physician, who died at Dedham, 1778. 3. *Fisher*, one of the most brilliant men ever produced in this country; born, April 9, 1758; entered Harvard College at twelve years, and graduated 1774. He died July 4, 1808, aged 50 years and was interred at Dedham. 4. *Deborah*. 5. *William*.

In 1725 Dr. Ames commenced the publication of his almanacks, the first being for the year 1726. His taste for astronomy being acquired from his father (Nathaniel), who took a deep interest in such studies. He published them continuously for thirty-nine years and prepared a portion of the fortieth for the year 1765. The number for that year, and the others subsequently issued until 1775, were published by and in the name of his son Nathaniel."

The Doctor had considerable trouble of a legal nature, but good naturedly put up with the evils of the law's delay. It is related that a case having been decided adversely to his interests in the inn-keeping line, he had a sign painted representing the honorable court tippling about a table with their backs to a huge volume labeled "Province Laws." The Court being apprised of this affront to their dignity, sent an officer for the libel. Ames being advised of their intent removed the offensive caricature, and in its place the astonished officer found a board with these words: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it."

The *Boston Evening Post*, Monday, July 16, 1764, says: "About a fortnight ago was seized with a painful billious disorder, which was followed with a nervous fever, and last Wednesday morning (July 11) died, at Dedham, Doctor NATHANIEL AMES, aged 56 years. Besides his practice in Physick he followed the study of Astronomy from his youth. He has published an ALMANACK annually for 38 years past, to the great, very great Acceptance of the Inhabitants of this Province, as also to the neighboring Colonies and Provinces."

The *Boston Gazette*, of the same date, adds: "His remains were decently interred last Saturday afternoon (July 14)."

After the decease of Doctor Ames, some persons endeavored to profit by his fame, by publishing an almanack for the year 1766, stating that the "son of the lately deceased Dr. Ames, declined furnishing the Public with an Almanack for the year 1766," adding that "The Author has put this Almanack into the same Form with those published by the late Dr. Ames, whose annual performances of this Sort gave general Satisfaction." This almanack was issued over the authorship of "Mr. Ames."

Dr. Nathaniel Ames, the younger, did, however, issue his calendar for 1766.

Worthy Sr I return my hearty thanks to the great
disposer of all Events & to you as the Instrument for
Carrying my sons so far through the Small Pox
i.e. that I may return with safety to a House I
have provided for an Inoculation; I have just paid
away a large sum Since my sons entered the
Hospital; and it is now perfectly low Water
with me but be so kind as to send me your
Bill, and also the Bill for Nursing and all other
Demands and I will discharge them as soon as
possible, the Young Man that lives with me
sent to Mr Seth Sumner of Milton is about
to come to Town to Morrow provided you will give
direction concerning his coming into Town, I
also expect Dr Jeremiah but he is not yet come
I shall use my Interest to send what Patients offer
to you but the bearer waits with company - -
therefore in Haste I subscribe your friend and very
Humble Servt

Nath. Ames

Dedham April 5. 1764

Fac-simile of letter written by Dr. Nath'l Ames of Dedham a short time previous to his decease in July, 1764, and during the prevalence of the small-pox in Massachusetts.

In his comments on the literary ability of Doctor Ames, Mr. Moses Coit Tyler, in his "History of American Literature," remarks that Ames' almanack "was the most popular publication of its kind in New England, reaching the then enormous circulation of 60,000 copies.

In those days of no copyright law, copies were surreptitiously obtained, and quarrels and bickerings among printer's, relative to the "genuine Ames' Almanack," were of frequent occurrence, and occasionally the Doctor himself certified by card to the "correct edition."

Ames' Almanack was regarded as better than Franklin's,* and was probably the most pleasing representative we have of a form of literature that furnished so much entertainment to our ancestors, and that preserves for us so many characteristic tints of their life and thought.

Nathaniel Ames made his "Almanack" a sort of annual cyclopedia of information, of amusement,—a vehicle for the conveyance to the public of all sorts of knowledge and nonsense, in prose and verse, from literature, history, and his own mind; all presented with brevity, variety, and infallible tact. He had the instinct of a journalist; and under a guise that was half frolicsome, the sincerity and benignant passion of a public educator. He carried into the furthest wildernesses of New England some of the best English literature, pronouncing there, perhaps for the first time, the names of Addison, Thomson, Pope, Dryden, Butler, Milton. The pages were prolific with fact and frolic; the wisdom of the preacher without his solemnity, terse sayings, shrewdness, wit, homely wisdom, all sparkling in piquant phrase.

As the public expected the almanack maker to be a prophet, Nathaniel Ames gratified the public; and he freely predicted future events, but always with a merry twinkle in his eye, and always ready to laugh the loudest at his own failure to predict them aright. He mixes, in delightful juxtaposition, absurd prognostications, curt jests, and aphorisms of profound wisdom, the whole forming a miscellany even now extremely readable, and sure, at that time, to raise shouts

*A French encyclopedist declares that Franklin "put forth the first popular almanack which spoke the language of reason," but Franklin borrowed much of the wisdom and wit which he introduced into his almanacks from Bacon, Rabelais, Rochefoucauld, Steele, Swift, DeFoe, and others.

of laughter around thousands of fire-places where food for laughter was much needed, the author wearing the mask of jester only to hide a most earnest and friendly face."

Nathan Daboll, the celebrated mathematican, commenced the publication of an almanack at New London, Conn., in 1773. It was intended in the earlier years for the especial service of seafaring men, but was adapted to the use of "landsmen" as well, and grew into great popularity in Connecticut. The publication of this almanack has continued from the time of its first appearance in 1773 until the present year—still being known as "Daboll's Almanac," the calculations being made by a descendant of the original "Nathan."

The "Thomas" almanacs were (and are yet) very popular in New England, especially in Massachusetts. Of the "Thomas'" publications there were two: One issued by Isaiah Thomas, about 1774, was continued by his son, Isaiah, Jr., until early in the present century; the other "Thomas" almanack was published by Robert B. Thomas, the first issue being made in 1793, and continued until his decease, after which the almanack appeared under the title of "Thomas' Almanack," and its publication is still continued.

This concludes the list of the more important almanacks issued in America prior to the year 1800.

Beyond the publications continued to the present time and herein mentioned, there are few, if any, notable examples of almanack literature published in the present century which may deserve any special mention, unless we except the Anti-Masonic Almanack, which was published at the time of the alleged martydom of Capt. William Morgan, whose alleged taking off furnished such budding political capital during the period 1828-31.

Following this came the Davy Crockett Almanack, illustrated with the daring deeds, both imaginary and actual, performed by this typical frontiersman. To this succeeded the Rough and Ready Almanack, replete with illustrations of the Mexican war, and exalting the candidacy of Zachary Taylor for the Presidency, not to mention "Funny Elton's Comic Almanack," and a score of others that furnished both information and amusement to those of a generation ago.

The almanack published from 1848 to 1880 by George Beckwith, of New Haven, Conn., had a large local circulation and celebrity, due largely to the eccentricity and remarkable intellectual attainments of its author.

With the march of empire westward, the almanack does not appear as a very important item of literature among the settlers of the great West.

Its home in America, and the seat of its greatest popularity appears to have been in the original thirteen colonies, notably the New England and Middle States, and those who emigrated toward the setting sun depended largely upon the production of the eastern presses for their weather forecasts, humor, and religious intelligence. Even at the present day numbers of families in our own State, notably those descended from Pennsylvania stock, would as soon be without a necessary farming implement as not to be possessed of a "Lancaster Almanack," The production of almanacks at an early day in our own State was quite limited, and our library is notably deficient in examples.

The earliest Ohio almanack we possess is "The Western Reserve Magazine Almanack," for 1816, by John Armstrong, teacher of mathematics, and published by James White & Co., at Warren, O. This contains, among other items, a chronological account of principal events in the life of Bonaparte, a chronology of the settlement and important incidents in the earlier history of America. United States Navy List for 1815, a period when we had some pride in our navy and its achievements. The Army Register with Andrew Jackson as Major General Commanding the division in the South, and Winfield Scott, Brigadier General in the same department. A graphic account of Pittsburg as the "Birmingham of America." A Moral and Physical Thermometer, wherein, under the head of Temperance, Cider and Perry, Wine, Porter and Strong Beer are recommended for Cheerfulness, Strength and Nourishment, concluding with a Biographical Sketch of General Zebulon M. Pike. In 1818 first appeared the Columbus Magazine Almanac by William Lusk, a very creditable publication. The larger portion is devoted to a description of the Solar System, the financial condition of the United States, and the Ohio *ad valorem* system of taxation.

At Cleaveland was published in 1831 the "Western Almanack," by Henry Bolles, a publication much the same as the above-named productions, but the miscellaneous articles mostly on the subject of Total Abstinence. Another Cleveland Almanack for 1833 contains the Ohio census for 1830, in which our city is exceeded in popula-

tion by Hamilton, Urbana, Springfield, New Lisbon, Lancaster, Columbus, Steubenville, Dayton, Zanesville, Circleville, Chilicothe, Portsmouth, Canton, Lebanon and Marietta. The Ohio Canal had been in operation but a few years, and was looked forward to for a general impetus in the growth of the State. An artice on the subject remarks: "It is not a little singular that the canal fever has had such a general run, but it is subsiding, and the railroad pulse beats audibly." In 1836 the "Ohio Anti Slavery Society" published at Cincinnati the "American Anti-Slavery Almanack." The copy in the library (1841) is especially devoted to the cause of abolition; the advancement of the interests of the candidacy of James G. Birney, of New York, and Thomas Earle, of Pennsylvania, for President and Vice President of the United States; concluding with a "Ecclesiastical Roll of Infamy," which listed the names of Methodist clergymen who denied the competency of negro testimony at law, and a "Congressional Roll of Infamy," naming northern representatives, who supported the bill denying the reception of petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

This closes the enumeration of the almanacs in the possession of the Society.

With the flood of literature of other classes which for the past twenty years has issued from the press, the almanack has been almost totatlly eclipsed and lost sight of except as an advertising medium, and we would especially ask those who may possess collections or single copies of these relics of the early days, to deposit them in the Library of the Society for the edification of future generations.

"I will conclude All in those pithy Verses of that worthy Gentleman, *Capt. George Wharton*,* which Verses I find often made use of by brutish Plagiaries, without once mentioning of that Learned Persons Name, viz:

Mend, (Gentle Reader) what escapes amiss,
And then it matters not whose Fault it is;
For, all men sin, since Adam first Transgrest:
The Printer sins; I sin much like the rest:
Yet here our Comfort is, though both Offend,
We to our Faults can quickly put—

AN END."

Calendarium Astrologicum, Thomas Trigge, Gent. 1677.

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*Capt. George Wharton, "Student in Astronomy," author of "HEMEROSCOPEION," 1652.