

OLD ALMANAC HOME

Great Boston Water Basin Covers Thomas Homestead.

Founder of Publication Started in 1792 and Long Familiar to All New England Got His Idea from Arithmetic.

Eastern - In the picturesque village of West Boylston, which was swept away by the great water basin of the Metropolitan water board, was the house in which lived for many years Robert B. Thomas, founder of the original Farmers' Almanack.

The old homestead where Mr. Thomas lived the greater part of his lifetime, and many other houses, churches, stores and shops were destroyed.

Practically all the town was offered up to the sacrifice, and over the site of the hamlet now spreads a silvery stretch of water. Upon its placid page the records of the changing seasons—the sunshine, the winds and storms, the courses of the sun, moon and stars, which the old almanac maker loved to follow, will be written for countless years to come.

The Farmers' Almanack is the oldest in this country, and the name of Robert Bailey Thomas has become familiar to New England ears through his connection with this unpretentious little annual, and his example still governs the purpose of the book.

He was born on April 4, 1766. His grandfather was a Cambridge university man and his father was very fond of books. Robert grasped every opportunity to improve his mind. It is rather curious to notice that he had no instruction in mathematics until he was 20 years old.

The study of arithmetic seems to have had a determining influence on his career. His father had many books, and he read them assiduously; among them was Ferguson's "Astronomy," and from this he says "he imbibed the idea of calculating an almanac." He taught school for a few winters, short terms that left the remainder of the year free for the study of astronomy. In time he became interested in bookbinding, then in book-selling and finally, after studying mathematics for a time at a school in Boston, kept by Osgood Carleton, he made calculations for the first number of the Farmers' Almanack.

He published the first number in the latter part of 1792 for the year 1793. It was a significant time in American history, only a few years after the constitution of the United States had gone into effect, and was an era of energetic and intelligent effort in all directions.

The development of a century may be followed step by step through the pages of this little book, and a file of these old calendars would afford an abundance of curious information and prove most interesting reading.

One of the notable things about the Farmers' Almanack is that from the first it has excluded from its pages the picturesque image known as the Man of Signs or the Moon's Man. The figure of a man, surrounded by the 12 signs of the zodiac, each referring to some part of his body by means of a connecting line or a pointing dagger, is still seen in some almanacs and was once regarded as indispensable.

MINISTER GETS 14 CENTS.

"All We Can Spare," Write Bridal Couple Who Wake Parson to Marry Them.

Millville, N. J.—"Won't you come down long enough to marry us," came a voice from the darkness when Rev. James E. Adams, the Methodist Episcopal minister at Marlborough, poked his head out of a second-story window soon after midnight, in answer to a knock on the front door of the parsonage.

"Come around to-morrow. It's too late to marry you to-night," replied the parson.

"No, we are in a hurry, and have driven all the way from Millville to get you to perform the ceremony," said John H. Brandriff, son of Ephraim Brandriff, a Millville merchant, who had rapped at the door.

"Wait a minute," said the domineer. He was soon dressed, and performed the ceremony, with his wife and daughter as witnesses. The bride was Miss Nettie Calkins of Millville. Before the happy couple drove away they handed Rev. Mr. Adams a pink envelope, which fell through the paper as it contained a banknote. The minister says he found inside a piece of heavy paper containing fourteen cents, and on the paper was written: "This is all we can spare now. Will see you later."

The minister has framed the paper and coins, and it adorns the walls of his study. He has added the date and the names of the contracting parties.

GIRLS' FETE IS HUSBAND LURE

Belgian Maidens Hold Annual Festival and Invite A. B. Bachelors to Come and Wed.

Antwerp.—The marriage market is blowing over Belgium. The maidens of Ecaustines, in the province of Hainault, have issued their annual invitation to all available bachelors in the world to come and marry them.

A party will be given to such bachelors as accept the invitation on Whit Monday, May 31, and an opportunity will be given them to make a choice among the feminine youth and beauty of the village. This yearly party at Ecaustines was organized seven years ago and has proved most successful. All the members of the original committee have long been married to bachelors who came from distant places, and their advice to sisters is to go and do likewise.

This year the festival will begin on Whit Monday at 10 o'clock, when maidens will meet arriving bachelors at the station and take them to the town hall to sign the golden book. In the afternoon there will be in the market place a pageant of bachelors, who will be addressed by the president of the maidens' committee. Afternoon tea will be served by the girls, and a concert will conclude the day's festivities.

On the other hand, the bachelors of a neighboring village, Ronqueres, announce a similar fete for Whit Sunday, and all maiden ladies are invited to attend. Whitsuntide in Belgium seems to offer special opportunities to anyone in the world who wants to get married. In the only necessary formality is to send in one's name to the president of either organization before May 15 and an invitation will be forthcoming.

HAMMER IS SURGICAL TOOL

Bit of Steel Which Had Caused Intense Pain, Instantly Removed from Organ with Magnet.

St. Louis.—A magnetic tack hammer, bought for 25 cents in a hardware store, drew a tiny silver of steel from George Schmieler's right eyeball after the finest surgical instruments had failed to perform the delicate operation.

Schmieler, who is 18 years of age, is employed in the plant of a wire rope company, near Clayton. He was hammering a steel chain when a tiny splinter, one-eighth of an inch long, flew into the corner of his right eye.

He thought it would come out, and continued at work, in spite of the severe pain, until noon. Then he went to the office of Dr. G. C. Eggers in Clayton.

Dr. Eggers at once saw that not only the sight, but the eyeball would be lost if the steel could not at once be removed. It had worked its way in so far that with the most delicate instruments he could not, without further tearing the eyeball, get any hold on it.

Then the doctor went across the street to a hardware store and got a magnetic hammer. Returning, he placed the smooth surface near the inflamed eye, in which he had deadened the nerve with applications of cocaine.

In an instant the silver of steel was clinging to the magnetized surface. The injured eye was at once bandaged, and Dr. Eggers is confident that he will be able to effect a cure.

MAN REWARDS HIS MOURNERS

John H. Haase of St. Louis Has Unique Way of Disposing of Part of Fortune.

Shiloh, Ill.—As one way of disposing of a fortune of \$100,000, John H. Haase of St. Louis, who was buried here, paid all of his friends for attending his funeral. The services were held at Belleville, and an old-time acquaintance, Dr. A. E. Hansting, of that town, pronounced the funeral oration and will receive a fee for his trouble, according to the will. Members of a singing society to which the aged man belonged attended in a body. The will provides for the payment of their expenses and leaves \$100 to the organization, out of which the leader is to receive a special fee.

Haase, though 60 years old, had never married. Part of his \$100,000 is left in trust for his sister, should she become widowed. If her husband shall outlive her the money is to go to his niece, Mrs. Clara Loeb, in case she be left a widow.

Catch White Whale; to Be Exhibited.

Atlantic City, N. J.—Floundering in the shallow waters of Bend, within sight of the inlet wharf, a 40-foot white whale fell an easy captive to fishermen the other afternoon. Plans are being made to bring the dead whale to this city and place it on exhibition. The whale was sighted by Capt. Doughty of the yachting fleet, who at first supposed it to be the hull of an overturned craft. Fearing his light boat would sink by the fall of the floundering whale, he sailed across the harbor, got a volunteer crew and harpooned the monster.

Star-Spangled Banner MS. Found.

Washington.—The original manuscript of "The Star-Spangled Banner" has been discovered by the Francis Scott Key Memorial association, which is endeavoring to get possession of it. While it is improbable that the owner of this precious relic, a Baltimore woman, will consent to part with it permanently, the association hopes to be able to borrow the manuscript to place on exhibition at the old Key mansion, in Georgetown, D. C.

PRESERVE CHARM OF VOICE

Proper Care of Organ Which Nature Has Bestowed Is Essential Duty of All.

A sweet voice is a powerful feminine charm. One who admires the masculine voices which are sonorous and full.

We should, therefore, be careful of this organ which nature has bestowed upon us, and improve it if possible. Coarse, shrill and harsh voices may be softened by care and study. A woman with a peacock voice can never charm.

Speak in a low voice, but distinctly. Loud speaking denotes ill-breeding, and sometimes shows a domineering spirit. Many people drown the voices of others in a discussion that they may themselves attract the more attention. To keep the voice at a proper tone, never call from one end of the room to another, nor from upstairs down, nor at any distance where it becomes necessary for one to shout with all his might, as this coarsens and roughens the voice and in time ruins it.

There are persons who, when spoken to, pay no attention, either from abstraction or from indifference, to anything which may proceed from others. The person who speaks is then obliged to raise the voice and repeat, and thus the habit of speaking loudly is frequently formed.

These things occur in families where but little politeness is observed between those who owe one another as much consideration as is due to outsiders.

One should never cry out under the influence of anger, indignation or pain. These cries forever destroy the harmony of the vocal chords. Children should be prevented from screaming when at play.

WANTED MORE COMMON FARE

Daily Meals of Oysters Had Begun to Fall on Palate of Tramp Printer.

An Oregon editor once got a big advertisement from a place which sold nothing but oysters. The place had just opened, and while the proprietor was willing to advertise he didn't have the cash to spend; so the newspaper man took a card which entitled him to ten dollars' worth of oysters. "A few days later a tramp printer strolled into the Gazette office and wanted a job," relates the editor. "I had nothing to offer him, but told the man he might sleep back in the composing room, and as he had no money to buy food, I gave him the meal ticket on the oyster parlor. I didn't hear from him again for more than a week. One day he came into the office looking a bit drawn and worn. 'I don't want to seem dissatisfied with what you've done for me, Mr. Carter,' he said, 'and I'm willing to admit that the luscious bivalve is a wonderfully fine bit of food; but for heaven's sake, can't you get an ad. from a ham and egg emporium?'"

Indignant at Loss of Beard.

Samuel Stiegler, a barber in that section of Brooklyn known as East New York, appeared in court the other day to explain why he cut off Morris Kreutzer's 40-year growth of whiskers without orders. Kreutzer climbed in the barber chair after instructing the barber to trim his beard and dozed into a gentle slumber. When he awoke he screamed with rage and mortification when he saw that he was clean shaven. As he is 66 years old and his beard was the pride of his life and part of his religion, he had the barber arrested. Stiegler declared he understood Kreutzer to say he wanted a shave and as the customer slept soundly during the operation he did not learn of his error until the work was done.

Kettledrum a Perfect Instrument.

The kettledrum, Mr. Gabriel Cleather contended, was perfectly competent to produce atmosphere as well as rhythm. Even to tune the instrument three things were required—a perfect musical ear, a fine sense of touch and five years' experience. After playing over a kettledrum melody written 30 years ago from Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable," Mr. Cleather continued: "I venture to say that outside of the musical profession not one person in a hundred of those who listen to an orchestra to-day knows that a kettledrum has notes and can give out a melody." No instrument, he added, had a greater range of power than the kettledrum, for none could be played more softly and none had greater penetrating power.

Translated into English.

Every one has heard the story of the Englishman who was told, when asking what was done with all the superfluous fruit grown in California: "We eat what we can, and what we can't we can."

The joke was told to another Englishman, who received it with rather a sickly smile, and upon his return home gave his own version of it. "Queer people, those Americans," he said. "Peculiar sense of humor. They told me as one of their choice jokes that when asked what they did with their fruit that was left over, they answered that 'They ate what they could and what they couldn't they could.'"

The New Version.

There are a good many prize fighters and bridge jumpers in the literary field. But—

"The publication of a manuscript does not necessarily imply a lack of literary merit."

WINDMILL MADE INTO CHURCH

Novel House of God That Serves for Small Congregation in England.

Twelve years ago, when the villagers living off the border of Rogate heath, Surrey, England, had no place of worship nearer than the parish church, a service was held in a school room close by and was so well attended that the authorities looked around for a suitable permanent building.

The erection of a church was out of the question, but there stood on the heath the remains of an old mill, a picturesque feature in a beautiful bit of landscape. Inspection showed that once the rats were got rid of a comparatively small outlay would furnish and render the mill fit for public worship, and soon it was opened as the Chapel of the Holy Cross.

The interior of the chapel arouses interest. Four buttresses, four feet thick by six feet in height, serve as rests for two massive beams which cross each other in the center and support an upright shaft cracked with iron bands. The buttresses make four natural alcoves. The entrance door stands in one, and immediately opposite is the altar; the harmonium is placed in a third, and the bellringer sits close beside it and rings his bell. The fourth is occupied by the congregation. The rent of this novel church is only 25 cents a year.

ANTIQUITIES MADE TO ORDER.

Switzerland Proves Itself in No Way Behind the Rest of the World in This Connection.

Switzerland will have an additional attraction this season for the tourists. "The one hundredth anniversary of the struggle for independence will be celebrated, and the thrifty inhabitants of the little republic," says an American tourist, "always watchful for the color, are making great preparations for the various celebrations. Aside from the pageant and other civic festivities, they are laying in a stock of historic souvenirs, for which they know there will be a ready market. An Innsbruck paper says that one of the popular manufactured antiquities is the Swiss flag of a hundred years ago. A new one is made to resemble a centenary by a process which includes fading the colors in the sun, bespattering it with tallow and laying it in the granary, where the mice soon give it the necessary tattered appearance. Finally it is subjected again to the rays of Father Sun, is mounted on a worn-gate, broken staff, and is then ready for the English or American tourist in search of centennial trophies."

Saving an Ancient Fresco.

It is not only in this country that church restorers are allowed to do much as they like. An interesting story comes from Hal. The church is under restoration, and the workmen came across traces of a fresco. Its existence had been unknown, and according to the plans the plaster was to come away. Fortunately a townsman knew a process by which the plaster could be taken off intact on canvas. He obtained permission to make the experiment, and it has been carried out with success. He is said to be now the possessor of a valuable fifteenth-century painting. The Brussels museum authorities have brushed the existence of the painting, and they are endeavoring to prevent the alienation of this interesting work of the middle ages.—London Globe.

Robins' Curious Nesting Places.

The two robins which have built their nest in the cover of a meter at the Market Drayton Electric Light works have many precedents in the choice of unconventional nesting places. A year or two ago a robin's nest was built on a book shelf in a night nursery at Chislehurst which was occupied without interruption by a nurse and child. Four eggs were laid, and two young birds were hatched out. Two other robins built their nest on the axle of a colliery wagon in daily use at Seghill, in Northumberland. Among other curious nesting places have been the breast pocket of a scarecrow at Ashbourne, a nail box in a village forge, the skeleton of a crow, and the ridge range butts at Ticehurst, Sussex.—Westminster Gazette.

Buried Treasures in Morocco.

In Morocco it is customary for a man to bury most of his riches in a place known only to himself. This custom is practiced by all Moors, for they cannot trust their own family, who would murder them directly it was known where the money was.

At the death of the head of a family in Morocco digging operations commence at once, but seldom is the money discovered. There must be many fortunes buried away in odd corners of the country. An instance came under the writer's notice at one of the coast towns. During the demolition of a house a considerable sum of money was found built into the wall.

Population of M—A.

Because the News and Courier stated the obvious conclusion, from the fact that water pipes do not freeze in hades, that there are no plumbers in that region, some of our contemporaries are vilifying it in their narrow, partisan way. In spite of this, we now declare that the amount of gas constantly escaping from hades shows that what plumbers may be there are apprentices.—Charleston News and Courier.

Then She Got Fired.

"Who's the pretty girl?" "She's the baby's new nurse." "I suppose she understands her business?" "Yes, she's a graduate, and she'll take good care of baby; she says no one shall kiss the baby while she is around."

I Guess She's Right.

"I guess she's right; I wouldn't want to kiss the baby while she was around."

TURKISH DUTY OF REJOICING

Hospitable Welcome Accorded to All During the Month of Ramadan.

Every year in Turkey, in the month of Ramadan, as they term it, which is the month when the Koran was revealed, in 24 parts, to Mohammed—it was for years a general custom in Turkey for the Turks to open their houses at 12 o'clock, the Turkish sun set time, to strangers and anyone was permitted to enter and take supper, a meal the Turks call *oufftar*. During Ramadan

No matter how poor or how rich the persons, and whether a complete stranger or near friend, they come just before the sunset hour, and all are seated at the truly hospitable table before 12 o'clock. Immediately after the roar of the cannons announcing sunset the Turks eat either an olive or a date, it being the legend that the holy prophet did this, and those who smoke may begin as soon as the date or olive, supposed to be the fruits of paradise, disappears. Then come jellies, as it is a belief in Turkey that sweets "collect the senses," whatever that may mean. Oddly enough, soups follow the sweets, and then after that eggs cooked in butter are served, followed in turn by mutton chops or roasted meat, these are succeeded by a sort of sugarless pudding, called *beurek*, and after this the famous *baclava* or *kadlaf*.

After all this more meat courses, fish, and vegetables are served, and such sweets as rice milk (*gullaj* *sud-laj*), native blanc mange (*mahallebi*), *plaf* with *hishad* or *junket* (*yaourt*) and coffee.

RECALLS FAMOUS GOLF MATCH

Projected Game Brings Back Contest in Which Royalty Was Involved.

The projected golf match between two well known amateurs and a leading member of the London stock exchange for a stake of \$2,500 recalls to the Westminster Gazette the famous foursome in which the duke of York, afterward James II, took a prominent part on the Leith links in the year 1682. It was really an international contest, in which the duke, with John Paterson, a golfing shoemaker of great repute, championed Scotland against two noblemen of England, a heavy wager depending on the issue. The duke and the cobbler had an easy victory, thanks largely to the man of the last, and John Paterson's share of the stakes was so substantial that he was able to build a goodly house in the Canongate, in a wall of which the duke caused a stone to be placed bearing the Patersons arms with the motto, "Far and sure," a tribute to the cobbler's driving powers. Paterson's house survives to-day.

Poetry and Patriotism.

Zakria Topelius, the most popular poet Finland has ever known, was a lover of his native land above all else. Once, says Paul Waineman in "A Summer Tour in Finland," he wrote as follows to a little Finnish boy who was at the time residing in England for his schooling: "You are in a great and rich country, but never forget that you are only an exile."

It Quizzes Victoria herself.

It quizzes Victoria herself should write and offer you a post in her kingdom, remember that you must answer. "I cannot, because I have a cottage waiting for me when I am grown up. It has a roof higher than the loftiest hall in Windsor Castle. That roof is the blue sky of my own land."

Youth's Companion.

Holland's Famous Bird. The stork is treated with great and singular respect in the Netherlands. These strange birds may be seen here and there, almost everywhere in the south, but I do not remember seeing any in the north. The house selected by the stork for a nesting place is considered fortunate, and very special facilities are provided by the householders to enable it to build a nest comfortably. At The Hague many of these birds are maintained at public expense. The first that I saw was from a window of the railway train as we were crossing the "Hollandediep" when a chimney-top came into view on which were two of the long-legged creatures, preening themselves, their nest, an unsightly bundle of sticks and straws, littering the housetop.—The Chautauquan.

The Man to Be Watched.

Always suspect a man who affects great softness of manner, an unrefined evenness of temper, and an enunciation studied, slow and deliberate. These things are all unnatural, and bespeak a degree of mental discipline into which he that has no purpose of craft or design to answer, cannot submit to drill himself. The most successful knaves are usually of this description, as smooth as razors dipped in oil, and as sharp. They affect the innocence of the dove, which they have not, in order to hide the cunning of the serpent, which they have.—Colton.

At the Museum.

"On this platform, ladies and gents," said the lecturer, "you see Sig. Pankey, the legless wonder, or human stump, who was reduced to the condition in which you behold him by a shark in the Indian ocean 14 years ago. Sig. Pankey, as you see, has no legs whatever, and his principal and only occupation nowadays, ladies and gents, is eating his head off. Proceeding to the next platform, I call your attention to the Egyptian mummy, supposed to be that of Rameses the Great."

There Are Others.

"Bings is afraid that he may be prosecuted for polygamy." "Why, he is married to only one person, ain't he?" "That is what he thought for a while, but now it appears that he married her whole family, and there are seven of them."

LIVED WITH ARTEMUS WARD

Lecturers for a Wonder Appreciated Work of Great American Humorist.

On the occasion of Artemus Ward's professional visit to London, which he carried out long before his death, J. E. Prason Muddock says in his book, "Pages from an Adventurous Life," that the American humorist's adventures of his "show" were as full of funny surprises as the lectures themselves. One that tickled the general public was this: Artemus Ward delivered Lectures Before All the Crowned Heads of Europe Ever Thought of Delivering Lectures.

And an excerpt from his lecture on "Drawing," is quoted by Mr. Muddock as a particularly delightful bit.

"I haven't distinguished myself as an artist," Ward said, in his inimitable way, "but have always been mixed up in art. I have an uncle who takes photographs in his spare moments, and I have a servant who takes everything he can lay his hands on at any moment."

"At a very tender age I could draw on wood. When a mere child I once drew a small cart-load of raw turpentine over a wooden bridge. It was a raw morning. The people of the village recognized me. They said it was a raw turpentine drawing. That shows how faithfully I had copied nature. I drew their attention to it, so you see there was a lot of drawing in it."

"The villagers, with wonderful discernment peculiar to villagers, said I had a future before me. As I was walking backward when I made my drawing I replied that I thought that my future must be behind me."

CROW WORRIED THE GOLFERS

Bird of Fastidious Tastes Would Swoop Down and Steal Only the New Balls.

The crow seems to be attracted to golf balls in a way wholly peculiar from the rest of the bird species. In parks where the rook and the crow abound one can notice them sitting in the trees or hopping about the putting greens in the distance watching the ball with a direct or sidelong glance expressive of the keenest interest and curiosity, which is soon translated into a desire to carry it off to the roost in the neighboring wood.

The Kew gardens adjoin the Mid Surrey course, and in the royal preserve there used to be a fairly large colony of crows nesting among the trees. Of this colony there was one particular crow who found his greatest amusement in mingling among the golfers and in disconcerting their play by indulging in repeated predatory campaigns against their golf balls.

His policy was to hover in attendance on those players who used new white balls only. Those on which the paint had been chipped or which had been used in play for several rounds by an economical player were always rejected by his particular bird as being beneath his fastidious attention.—From the Field.

Madman's Wild Course.

According to advices from Vallia doid, Spain, a dangerous lunatic who was about to be confined to an asylum, succeeded the other day in eluding the vigilance of his friends and rushed into the street. Here he fell upon a postman, and, snatching his sword from him, killed him with it. The lunatic then took possession of the man's revolver, and continued upon his wild career through the city, firing right and left as he ran. A number of police and gendarmes started in pursuit, emptying their rifles and revolvers at the maniac, who was eventually shot down, but not until he had seriously wounded three persons. The noise of the firing caused a panic, and the doors of houses and shops were hastily shut. The excitement did not subside for some hours.

What He Saved.

A prominent Democratic politician, who lived at Allentown, was appointed to the position of naval officer at Philadelphia during the second Cleveland administration. While in the city he made a host of friends and all of his waking hours, when he was not engaged in official duties, were spent with these gentlemen, attending various interesting and costly entertainments. At the expiration of his term of office he returned home, and his good mother, who was an old-fashioned German woman, said to him, curiously:

"John, what did you save during the four years you were in office?" "Mother," he said, "with a smile lighting up his countenance, 'I accomplished wonders—I saved my life.'"

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