

Romance of the Year

Time Civil, Ecclesiastical and Astronomical—Date of New Year Variable—Equinoxes Alone Constant—Customs of New Year's Observance in Ancient and Modern Times.

At this time we celebrate the birth of the New Year and erect another milestone on the road of Time. How few think that 152 years ago the year at this season was old. How came the change? Not by the revolution of the earth, for that is practically unchangeable, but through the intervention of human enactment. Though time, as measured by the motions of the earth, may be taken as constant, yet its divisions into seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, eras, their beginnings and endings, are arbitrary products of the human mind, and therefore variable.

All nations and people have a particular epoch from which they date the era in which they may have lived. The Romans dated their chronological events from the founding of the city. The expression, "The year of Rome," or the letters A. U. C. (ab urbs condita) refers to that particular epoch. The Mohammedans express their sequence of time by "the year of the prophet." The date is from the Hejira, or the flight of Mohammed from Mecca (Hejira is pronounced Hejira, and is an Arabic word meaning flight), which occurred A. D. 622. The Jews reckon their dispensation from the creation of the world, but in reality their chronology begins with the Exodus. Moses intentionally introduced a new calendar, and makes Abib their first month. It has been supposed that the Jewish Sabbath is the same as the seventh day on which God ended His work, but as Moses changed the first month to Abib, he changed the first day also. The first day of this new year was the first day of the first month and the first day of the first week. The Sabbath being held on the seventh day, it must of necessity have been changed also. But being changed, it could not be in correspondence with the seventh day of creation on which God "rested." Christians date their epoch from the birth of Christ, the expression for which is the Latin words Anno Domini, or A. D., the initial letters of the words. Five centuries elapsed before an attempt was made to authoritatively fix the date of the Nativity. This was then undertaken by Dionysius Exiguus (little), who fixed our present chronology. It is now generally allowed that he was four years out in his reckoning, and that B. C. 4 is the correct year. This corresponds with the statement by Irenaeus and Tertullian that Christ was born about the year of Rome 751.

Different nations have begun their count of time at different parts of the twenty-four hours. The ancient Accadians, Babylonians, Syrians, Persians, the modern Greeks and the inhabitants of the Balearic isles reckon their day from sunrise to sunrise. Why the ancient nations began the day at sunrise is evident from their early religion, which was Magism. Fire was a chief object of reverence with them, and the sun as the grand symbol of their worship received especial veneration. Hence they began their day as they began their devotions—with the rising sun.

Others, like the Athenians, the Chinese and the Jews have counted the day from sunset to sunset. Why the Jews begin the day from sunset is potent from their religion. The characteristics of the Jewish religion are in sharp contrast to those of other nations. The aim of Moses was to wean them from the grossness of oriental religions. Hence the contrasts and antitheses. If the worshippers of the elements begin the day with sunrise, then the followers of Jehovah will begin theirs with sunset. Moses can have no concord with error.

The Egyptians and pagan Roman priests began their day at midnight. Most European nations follow the same rule. Americans have also adopted the custom. Astronomers, however, begin the day at noon, when the sun is on the meridian.

The day, meaning thereby light, from sunrise to sunset, was in ancient times divided into twelve equal parts, called hours. A similar division was observed with the night. Thus it will be seen the hour was constantly changing in its duration. The hour of the day in winter, when the days were short, was much longer than in summer, and vice versa. The same, of course, was the case with the nights, also. So that only at the equinoxes were the two series of hours equal. This was most inconvenient and resulted in much confusion.

To Hipparchus, a Greek philosopher, who flourished about B. C. 150, must be given the credit of dividing the day from midnight to midnight into twenty-four hours, or two equal portions of twelve hours each. This system prevails generally at the present day. But astronomers count continuously for twenty-four hours.

The week, as all know, consists of seven days. Christians and Jews hold this division because God created the heaven and the earth (the solar system) and primordial forms of life in six days, and "rested" on the seventh. But it would seem that pagan nations selected seven days because of the seven planets known to them, after which they called the days. The sun and moon were included in the planets. They were:

Sun, Mercury, Venus, Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. We call three days of the week directly after the planets—Saturday (Saturn), Sunday (Sun), Monday (Moon), and four through the Saxon names for the others: Tuesday (Tuesco—Mars), Wednesday (Woden—Mercury), Thursday (Thor—Jupiter), and Friday (Friga—Venus).

The month, no doubt, originated from the phases of the moon. These, sharp and well-defined, are four in number: the new moon, first quarter, full moon and last quarter. Each of these phases occupies about seven days, so that from new full moon to new full moon, there is something more than twenty-nine days, which is called a synodical month, or lunation.

No nation up to the present time has devised a system of absolute accuracy in the measurement of the solar year. Some ancient nations, such as the Chaldeans, reckoned the year as 360 days. This is the principle of that most ancient astronomical term, the Zodiac. The Zodiac is a belt encircling the heavens on each side of the ecliptic, within which the planets known to the ancients always revolve. It extends eight degrees on each side of the ecliptic. It is divided into twelve equal parts, called signs of the Zodiac. It is a great cycle, and is divided into 360 degrees, like all circles; hence 360 days in the Chaldean year.

The Egyptians counted 365 days in their year. As the year contains 265 1/4 days nearly, such systems could not fail to work great inconvenience, for the seasons would move round in a cycle from one time of the year to the other. Let me make this quite plain. Take the winter solstice, for instance, which happens on Dec. 21. At the end of four years the solstice would be not on Dec. 21, but on Dec. 22. The sun would be behind time. In order, therefore, that the seasons should occur at the same time in the civil year, it was necessary to take account of this fraction of a day.

Julius Caesar, the great Roman emperor, determined to rectify the error. He called the celebrated Egyptian astronomer, Sosigenes, to his aid. Sosigenes suggested the addition of a day every fourth year. This day was added to February, and is known to us as "Leap Year," but to the Romans as Bisextile (Bis, twice, sextus, sixth).

This corrected calendar became known as the Julian. But as it made the year consist of 365 days, 6 hours, it was in excess of the actual time by 1/4 minute 10.3 seconds. Small as was this fraction, it accumulated to about one day in every 134 years.

The calendar needed reform. Time, civil and ecclesiastical, required readjustment. But to urge the necessary change was dangerous, as the learned Friar Bacon found to his cost. For pointing out errors in the calendar he received as a reward for the advocacy of the truth a prison, where he remained ten years.

As often happens, ecclesiastical requirements minister to civil necessities. The immediate cause of the correction of the calendar was an error in the time of observing the Easter festival. The Council of Nice, in A. D. 325, decreed that Easter is the Sunday following the full moon, next after the Vernal equinox. Owing to disputes arising from this decree Pope Hilarius, in 463, ordered that the paschal moon should not be the actual full moon, but an ideal one, falling on the 14th day of the moon by the metonic cycle (so-called from Meton, a Greek philosopher, who discovered it. It consists of nineteen years, at the end of which the sun is in about the same position he was at the beginning).

In 1582 it was found that the real equinox fell ten days before the nominal one, and from the error in the Metonic cycle, Easter had got four days wrong. Then Pope Gregory XIII reformed the calendar, called after him the Gregorian calendar, by the aid of Clavius, a learned Jesuit. The equinox of 1582, which should have fallen on March 21, fell on March 11. Gregory cut the Gordian knot by decreeing that Oct. 5 of that year should be counted as Oct. 15.

To the question, "What is time?" We may give the answer, duration, as measured by the solar system. For everyday purposes and artificial divisions mechanical contrivances are necessary.

The first method of measuring time, as far as we know, was by means of the obelisk. The pyramids of Egypt very probably answered the same purpose. Josephus states that Moses erected, at Heliopolis, in Egypt, a pillar for such purposes. "The cloudy pillar" that accompanied the Israelites in their forty years' wanderings in the wilderness, and which was a "pillar of fire by night," most likely answered the same purpose. Pliny states that an obelisk, now on the Thames embankment in London, and known as "Cleopatra's Needle," was erected by Mesophrates about B. C. 1700, likely for similar uses. We all know, I hope, the reference in the Bible to the sundial of Ahab, about B. C. 740. According to St. Jerome, who revised the old Latin Bible into what is called the Vulgate Version of the Holy Scrip-

tures, it was a pillar erected near a flight of steps (translated degrees in the English Bible). Berosus was the first to construct a sundial proper, in B. C. 540—the first recorded in profane history.

But sundials are only useful when the sun shines; hence some other measures of time became a necessity. The Egyptians were successful in inventing such a contrivance. They called it the Clepsydra (kleps, to steal, and hudor, water), by which time was measured by a continuous flow of water at a uniform motion. The Clepsydra is first mentioned by Empedocles, who flourished in the fifth century before Christ. It was brought to a high degree of perfection by a philosopher of Alexandria, named Ctesebius, and continued down to the invention of clocks, probably in the fourteenth century. Watches followed in due course, till they have become an almost necessary requisite of everyday use.

Most people are under the impression that the rotation of the earth has never varied from one complete turn in twenty-four hours. But this is an error. The motions of both earth and moon have not been invariable. There was a time when the lunar month was twenty-nine days instead of twenty-seven, as it now is (Sir R. Ball: Time and Tide). The synodical month, therefore, was between thirty and thirty-one days. (A synodical month is the interval from one new moon to the next.) So that primitive man, reckoning the month as a synodical period, or lunation, may not have been so inaccurate as we in our superior wisdom imagine.

Going back from this epoch to the infancy of the moon, we come to a time when the day and month were of equal duration—about four hours each! Going forward to the old age of the earth, we come to an epoch when the day and month are again equal. But this time, instead of being four hours each, they will be 1,400 hours. Just think of it! One day lasting 1,400 hours! When the day will equal fifty-eight of our present days, what will be the length of the year? But we must not stop at a 1,400-hour day. Going still forward in the far-off future, we come to a time when the face of the earth will be always turned to the sun, as the moon's face is now turned to the earth, and as she will continue to be. Then there will be a perpetual day, for the sun shall never set, literally fulfilling the words of the prophet: "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself." (Is. lx:20.) The romance of time! How it fascinates!

The new year has been observed with festive rejoicings from remotest antiquity. Its celebration by religious, as well as secular observances, prevailed generally among the nations of antiquity. And Egyptians, Hindus, Chinese, Persians, Jews, Romans and Mohammedans, although differing widely as to the time from which they reckon the new year, all regard it with especial interest of a joyous kind.

In olden Roman times the new year, which began in March, was inaugurated by a festive procession, with the priests of Mars carrying the sacred shield before the people. The people wished each other good health and prosperity and exchanged presents.

The Chinese begin the year at the Vernal equinox, and make it one of the most splendid festivals. All classes mingle together, and unite in thanksgiving for mercies received and prayers for a genial season and good crop.

With the Hindus the first day of the new year is sacred to Ganesa, the god of wisdom, to whom kids and wild deer are sacrificed amid illuminations and rejoicings. Among the mountainous tribes a buffalo is sacrificed before vast multitudes of people.

In ancient Persia prisoners were liberated and offenders pardoned. The Persian new year much resembled the Sabbatical year of the Jews.

The Sabaeans held a grand festival on the day the sun entered Aries, one of the signs of the Zodiac. Priests and people marched to the temples and sacrificed to the planetary gods.

In the British Isles the Druids began the year on March 10th, with the solemn ceremony of cutting the mistletoe from the sacred oak. On that day two white bulls were tied by the horns. When a Druid, clothed in white robes, mounted the tree and cut off the mistletoe, after which the sacrifices were offered.

The Mexicans on new year's day adorned their houses and temples and engaged in various religious ceremonies. On such occasion human sacrifice was offered to propitiate the gods.

In modern times it is also an occasion of social rejoicing and interchange of courtesies. In England, under old style, the year began on March 25. On the change of date to Jan. 1, great opposition was offered by the people generally. Many really believed they were being deprived of eleven years of their existence.

Rev. F. P. Duffy, Secretary American Church Bible Institute, Ravenswood, Illinois.

SISTERS OF CHARITY

Use Pe-ru-na for Coughs, Colds, Grip and Catarrh—A Congressman's Letter.



In every country of the civilized world the following letter is from Congressman Meekison, of Napoleon, Ohio: The Peruna Medicine Co., Columbus, O.: Gentlemen: "I have used several bottles of Peruna and feel greatly benefited thereby from my catarrh of the head, and feel encouraged to believe that its continued use will fully eradicate a disease of thirty years' standing."

Dr. Hartman receives many letters from Catholic Sisters from all over the United States. A recommendation recently received from a Catholic institution in Detroit, Mich., reads as follows: "Dear Sir:—The young girl who used the Peruna was suffering from laryngitis, and loss of voice. The result of the treatment was most satisfactory. She found great relief, and after further use of the medicine we hope to be able to say she is entirely cured."

The young girl was under the care of the Sisters of Charity and used Peruna for catarrh of the throat with good results as the above letter testifies. Send to the Peruna Medicine Co., Columbus, Ohio, for a free book written by Dr. Hartman.

Ask Your Druggist for a free Peruna Almanac for 1904.

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are invited to settle in the state of Maryland, where they will find a delightful and healthy climate, first-class markets for their products and plenty of land at reasonable prices. Map and descriptive pamphlets will be sent free on application to H. BADENHOOP, Sec'y State Board of Immigration, BALTIMORE, MD.

W. N. U., Omaha. No. 1—1904

PISO'S CURE FOR CONSUMPTION

CURES WHERE ALL ELSE FAILS. Best Cough Syrup. Tastes Good. Use in time. Sold by druggists.

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until a few years ago was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has proven Catarrh to be a constitutional disease and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only cure on the market. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials. Address F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by Druggists. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

Where Bananas Come From.

Of the \$1,636,172 worth of bananas which came into New York city within the last year, 2,862,000 bunches were from the British West Indies, 1,152,000 bunches from Costa Rica, 877,000 from Colombia and 255 from Cuba. They pay no duty.

Mrs. Whitlow's Soothing Syrup.

For children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25c a bottle.

A big heart usually goes with a big body, but a big head rarely does.

Real Glass House Now Built.

Glass houses of a very substantial kind can now be built. Silesian glass-makers are turning out glass bricks for all sorts of building purposes.

A Rare Good Thing.

"Am using ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE, and can truly say I would not have been without it so long, had I known the relief it would give my aching feet. I think it a rare good thing for anyone having sore or tired feet." Mrs. Matilda Holtvert, Providence, R. I. Sold by all Druggists, 25c. Ask to-day.

Greenland is Thawing Out.

The ice in Greenland is melting more rapidly than it is formed. Comparisons of the descriptions of the Jacobshaven glacier shows that its edge has reached eight miles since 1850, and it has lost twenty to thirty feet in depth.

No chromos or cheap premiums, but a better quality and one-third more of Defiance Starch for the same price of other starches.

The world suspects that a man is in love before he knows it himself.

One of the curious things about a man who wants to borrow money from you today is his eager determination to repay it tomorrow.

A Texas preacher says that some newspaper men's only chance of getting into heaven is on a press ticket.

Clear white clothes are a sign that the housekeeper uses Red Cross Ball Blue. Large 25c. package, 50 cents.

Oldest Librarian in England.

Deiucana Lothrop Bingham, who has had charge of the public library at Manchester-by-the-Sea for more than twenty years, has just celebrated his 82nd birthday. He is said to be the oldest librarian in New England.

I do not believe Pisco's Cure for Consumption has an equal for coughs and colds.—JOHN F. BOWEN, Trinity Springs, Ind., Feb. 15, 1904.

It is easy to induce a friend to laugh at your jokes, but he doesn't always do it in a satisfactory manner.

Good Things to Sell.

James Stillman, president of the National City bank of New York, is a man of few words, but he makes those few count. A famous tip that he is said to have given a friend two months ago has leaked out in Wall Street. The friend in question wrote to him, asking him for advice concerning the market. He had \$500,000 and wanted to make it a million. Here is the reply of Mr. Stillman, written in lead pencil on a sheet of paper 3x4: "Polo ponics, steam yachts and Newport villas are the best short sales in the world."

After having traveled hundreds of miles to wed Charles F. Bateman, a railroad yardmaster of Butte, Mont., Edna Armstrong, 24 years old, organist of the O'Bryanville Methodist church, in a Cincinnati suburb, has returned to her parents' home. She discovered the true state of her feelings soon after she boarded a train with her admirer, and she burst into tears before the city limits of Cincinnati were passed. But she kept on traveling, though she cried all the way to Chicago, where she and Bateman were to wed. Then Detroit was decided upon as the scene of their wedding. "But when we got there," says Miss Armstrong, "Charlie was so discouraged at the way I had acted that he bought me a ticket and sent me back home."

Mr. Grover's Case.

Frederika, Ia., Dec. 28.—Mr. A. S. Grover is now 74 years of age. For the last 30 years he has suffered a great deal of sickness and, although he is a temperate man and never used spirits of any kind, his kidneys had troubled him very much. He said: "I was told I had Diabetes and my symptoms corresponded exactly to those of a young man who died of Diabetes in this neighborhood. My feet and limbs were bloated quite a little. I heard of Dodd's Kidney Pills and at last determined to try them. I took in all ten boxes before I was well and now I can truthfully say that I am all right. The bloating is gone from my feet and legs. I have gained eight pounds in weight and can sleep well at night and every symptom of my trouble is gone. It is some time now since I was cured and I have not the slightest return of any symptom of the old trouble."

Perhaps the time will come when the intelligence of the people will make politics unprofitable.

In order to be popular forgot to say a good deal.