

**AN ALMANAC OF
YE OLDEN TIME**

FORTUNATELY for our forefathers, the almanacs had some claims to literary merits in their day. Reading matter was scarce outside of the larger towns of the colonies. Magazines were practically unknown. Filled with prognostications as to the weather, with matches of wisdom and humor, verse and essay, the annual almanac became a compendium of useful knowledge that was most eagerly awaited and was hailed as an important event in many a home. One might say that it was treated as a household god, for hung upon a hook in some corner, it always was ready for instant reference. The wise saws and quaint sayings which ran through its pages were read over time and again by every member of the family.

There were numerous almanacs published during colonial days in this country. The popularity of Poor Richard's Almanac, edited by Benjamin Franklin, went hand in hand with that of its illustrious maker.

The first Ames Almanac, issued in 1726, was conventional in form and closely followed other almanacs of the period. Its maker was a physician. It contained a table of the movements of the planets and sundry prophecies concerning the weather. That the doctor was afraid of severe criticism of this first effort is indicated by the following stanza, which also illustrates the style of his poetry:

Read, then, and learn, but don't all faints object,
Since they can only judge that can correct.

To whom my works appeal, and let I find
The sons of art to favor them incline'd,
With their propitious smiles it shall suffice
To counterpoise the frowns of enemies.

An examination of the files of the Ames Almanac shows that nearly every conceivable subject was discussed by the doctor in its nearly forty years of publication. Sometimes he indulged in flights of imagery, as in November, 1730:

Old winter's coming, void of all delight,
With trembling steps, his head is bald
And white.

His hair with robes of icicles is hung,
His chattering teeth confound his useless tongue.
He makes the rich to spend and poor to buy
For want of that which would their wants supply.

In the opening lines of the almanac for 1738 Dr. Ames takes a fling at lawyers, priests and doctors and blames old, overburdened Adam for their existence. Thus:

Had Adam stood in innocence till now
And his blest sons had deign'd to hold the plow
No labor had fatigu'd nor time had spoil'd
His youth, but spring had ever blooming smil'd.

He lost for self nor heart distressing pain
Had sped the miser nor the rural swain,
Nor vice, as now, with virtue ne'er had vi'd,
And heaven's omnipotence itself deny'd,
Nor lawyers, priests nor doctors ne'er had been
If man had stood against th' assaults of sin.

But, oh, be fall! And so accur'd we be,
The world is now oblig'd to use all three.

Probably the most interesting portions of these almanacs are the bits of wisdom and humor which went

**CHRISTMAS FOX
HUNT IN AMERICA**

WHEN the weather is favorable on Christmas day the members of many country clubs throughout the United States engage in a fox hunt. This is the modern survival of the ancient chase that used to furnish game for the great holiday feast.

Long ago in the middle ages before the day of markets, of storage houses or refrigerator cars the lord and vassals shared the traits of the lion and scorned to eat that which they did not kill. At daybreak on the morning of the holiday the chieftain summoned the men of his clan, and to horse they went in pursuit of the wild boar. Across hills and level stretches, through swamps and across frozen streams they galloped till they came up with the fierce prey.

In the battle that ensued the privilege of the most valorous feats, of undergoing the greatest danger and of finally administering the death stroke was intrusted to the noblest. Then the body of the boar was carried back by the vassals, the body roasted and the head garnished and decorated to take the place of honor in the center of some long table laid in the center of a baronial hall.

Far into morning of the next day would the roasting continue, and the poor gentleman who could drink only one bottle was destined to sad experiences in this bout of mighty bibbers.

The boar has passed from the earth. No longer does the lord kill his own Christmas feast, but in small measure he revives the joys of the holiday hunt by his pursuit of sly reynard. There are in the United States seventy first class clubs devoted to the sport of fox hunting. The season began at Thanksgiving day is at its height by Christmas tide, for then the air is crisp with frost, and the last of the crops that hunters might have damaged have been gathered into the barn and safely stored away.

For persons of wealth these are early risers who, at 7 o'clock in the morning, have gathered near the clubhouse. One comrade joins another, and a merry exchange of Christmas greetings recalls the holiday.

Trotting behind the huntsmen and the whippers-in come the hounds, now quiet and businesslike, but at the word of command ready to break into a very babble of dog noise. Horses, superb horses, strain eagerly at their bridles, anxious to bear their red coated riders off in the chase.

The master of the bounds gives his word of command, and across a cornfield the mad Christmas race starts. To the first fence comes the mad cavalcade. It is a high one. Over, under and through the bars scramble the dogs. Grandly on his horse the master takes the fence. Others follow, some not so gracefully. Some one falls, but the race goes on, all eager to reach that place where in front the hound is giving tongue.

There comes a ditch whose surface is only partly frozen, the middle having the water free. The leap is a bad one, with the footing covered with ice, but one after another the hunters put their steeds at it. Some slip and scramble, splashing seas of mud on their riders, but none cares. Too great is the joy of getting over without loss of time to worry over a couple of pounds of mud added to the weight of what the gallant horse must carry.

A level stretch is reached. The thoroughbreds are put to it to keep up with the dogs. Then come a wider outburst of barking and the capture of a fox. The brush is taken and awarded to the lucky rider who was in at the death.

Then the party turns sedately back, the excitement of the day over. The dogs are returned to the kennel, the horses are carefully rubbed down, the participants in the hunt have their shower bath and are ready to dress for dinner after the most exciting and enjoyable start a Christmas day can well have.

Not only members of the clubs have taken part in this chase. The growing good will between farmer and hunter has turned the attention of the man of agriculture to the delights of his holiday ride. He has mounted his best horse and joined in the race. He, too, returns home to a hearty dinner to tell what a good time he had.

In less aristocratic clubs, such as the many organizations of farmers are in various parts of the country, the hunt is less ornate, but it results in more Christmas killings of foxes.

The wild, rough country of Virginia makes directly following behind the hounds a hazardous, if not impossible, performance. This gives rise to the distinctively American style of hunting, which is to let the hounds work much of the time alone, the hunter following only in spirit, catching a glimpse of the flying pack occasionally, or, guided by their musical baying, trying to catch up at the next station.

In Kentucky the Christmas hunt is held at night, on Christmas eve. The fox hunt is an importation from England, where it still is the favorite sport of the elite at Christmas time. Virginia's early settlers first introduced the custom into the colonies, and General George Washington was one of the most famous of fox hunters. The colonial gentleman was educated to fox hunting as part of her accomplishments, and hundreds of the belles could take a five rail fence as easily as they cut a graceful figure in a minuet.

**WITH DICKENS AT THE
CHRISTMAS HEARTH**

By RICHARD BURTON.

The fact that the centenary of Charles Dickens is to be observed Feb. 7 in this poem particularly appropriate in reading this Christmas.]

BEFORE the Christmas hearth I muse alone
And visions of the past, for grave and gay,
Rise from the ruddy coals: outside the moon
Of homeless winds is chidden by the lay
Sweet sung by children who keep holy day,
Making the season's mood their very own

And slowly, while I gaze and dream and grow
Less lonesome, do the sights and sounds of earth
Fade, and my fancy wanders to and fro
With a great master of lament and mirth,
Who waved his wand to gild the long ago

A wondrous company! Micawber smiles
In spite of poverty, and Little Nell,
She frail a flower, travels her weary miles,
When falls on sleep, and David tries to tell

The trials of the young; now Pickwick's appeal
Matters laughter easy; on a pinnacle
Of sacrifice sits Carton midst war's wiles

Now the air sweetens, for those brothers twain
The blithesome Cherrybles, have preach'd
Their creed
Of kindness; honest Tapley hails again



CHARLES DICKENS, "A GREAT MASTER OF LAMENT AND MIRTH, WHO WAVED HIS WAND TO GILD THE LONG AGO."

A world too pleasant; while their horses speed
The Wellers make the welkin ring in deed,
Lo, Deadlock House looms darkly through the rain.

And, look, the tiny dreamer limps by,
And she, eternal type of faithfulness,
Dorrit, whom prisons do not daunt; her eye
Is for her father; next, in seaman's dress
Quint Captain Cuttle lifts his book to bless

His darlings; Barkis at low tide must die,
Drolls, villains, gentilefolk of all degrees
Make populous the air, a hundred strong,
Last comes, as fits the season, Scrooge,
his knees

Atremble, till he harks the Christmas song
Of love and knows that spite and greed
Are wrong
And how that charity is more than these.

Master of human hearts! No Christmas-tide
Whose chants are not the sweeter and whose cheer
Is not more blest since Dickens lived and died!

The savor of his teachings makes each year
Richer in homely virtues, both endear
Man unto man; hence shall he long abide

With us

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LAST CALL

FOR

**COLLECTIONS DURING
1911**

Now gentlemen, colored men, cracker boys and coons, I want the balance you owe me on this year's account.

**I once heard an old gentleman say:
Bad Debts and Bad Bargains Was Hell**

Now I don't propose to have any old debts after Christmas. I am going to close up the deal, that is, get ready to have another big Mortgage Sale in January. Sometimes, now don't tell me about holding your cotton any longer, I want you to settle because I need my money. Now I know several little stores that have bought seed cotton that did not keep any record of it, I know several men who owe me money who sold cotton that I had a mortgage on and would have them up but they have kin-folks who trade with me and pay me, and I don't want to have any articles, but unless I collect all of the money owing to me I am going to have a talk with the Solicitor about this business at January term of court. There is no use to have up negroes for shooting or for a few sorry negroes for selling whiskey and allow a lot of high church members to run like the wet weather stores and buy cotton at half price when they know it was mortgaged and not keep any record as the law requires.

Now save your money and get ready for a big mortgage sale in January, dates to be announced latter.

At this sale I am going to sell all the buggies that people have bought from me and have not paid for, all the horses, mules, wagons, harness, mowers, rakes, disc harrows, cattle, hogs and a lot of household and kitchen furniture. A lot of them owe me small accounts that I have carried a long time and are about as near out as they ever will be and now is the time to close down. Now you fellows who don't want to be closed out make your arrangements to pay me or get somebody to take up your note. This advertisement will only appear once, after now this space will belong to the Hill Live Stock Co., for later announced sales of mules, horses and buggies on next years time.

K. P. HILL

W. B. MORTON

TO

**BEEF
USERS**

**At
Racket
Store**

Special Attention

is called to the fact that my **OPTICAL OFFICE** equipped with all instruments necessary for making the most thorough and scientific examination of the eye **Is Now Open and Ready For Service.**

The opportunity of having your eyes examined by an experienced specialist is thus offered the public with the assurance that nothing possible shall be left undone to discover the cause of and correct all errors of vision.

Since opening my office, I have had a fine class of trade, a far more liberal patronage than one could expect in as short a while. I am prepared to furnish Auto-glasses and everything in the optical line.

Office Next Door to Hotel Entrance

Office Hours From 10 to 4 O'clock

Land Sale.

By virtue of an order of the Superior Court of Franklin county, made in a special proceeding entitled, Mrs. Sue F. Alford, admx. of L. S. Alford the undersigned commissioner will expose to sale to the highest bidder, at the court house door in Louisburg, N. C. on Monday the first day of January 1912, at 12 o'clock noon, the following described real estate situated in said Franklin county, to wit:

Beginning at a stake, C. M. Vaughan's corner, thence a 1 1-2d e 25.55 chains to a stake, formerly a pine stump, Vaughan's corner in Mrs. Scarborough's line; thence by survey made from copy of Mr. Fuller's survey of about thirty years ago, 87d e 11 10 chains to a stake now Mrs. Yarborough's corner; thence s 8d e 1 chain to an elm; thence e 42.40 chains to an ash on Little Creek; thence s 8d e 1 chain to W. K. Davis corner; thence s 20.50 chains to a pine stump; thence s 8d w 25.25 chains to Little Creek; thence s 5d w about 7 chains to a stake and pointers in Harris's line; thence a new line s 81-2d w 16 chains to a stake south of the creek; thence n 1 1-2d e 3.25 chains to a stake; thence n 88 1-2d w 16 chains to the beginning containing one hundred acres.

The terms of the sale shall be one third cash, remainder in twelve months with interest thereon from date of sale. This the 23th day of November 1911.

R. E. W. RA, Commissioner.

Fire Works!

Now is the time to get your fireworks

I am Selling Them Now

CHEAPER

than I will Christmas eve. For the reason I am overstocked and will continue to sell cheap until my stock is reduced. Buy now before the rush. I have a complete line of candies, cakes, nuts, oranges, bananas, apples, malaga grapes, seeded raisins and cocoanuts and everything else in the confectionery line. I am still selling shoes, underwear and staple dry goods at cost. My stock of heavy and fancy groceries is complete, cheaper than ever before. I sell Tarbell Cheese, I bought futures and have the price right, can save you money on whole cheese. Price 16 8-4.

J. W. KING

Just received 500 ladies and Misses hats to sell at 25, 50, 75 and \$1.00. These hats are all good quality and

...Stylish Shapes...

worth double the money. It will pay you to see them.

Our Dry Goods Department is Complete

We call your attention to our Coat Suits and cloaks for ladies and misses—Ask to see them.

**We Have Opened Up
TOY-LAND**

Under the Racket.

and have lots of Xmas and holiday presents to suit everybody. A lot of pretty things in china, glassware and silver, dolls, tea sets, games, wagons, hobby horses and doll carriages, paint boxes, horns and drums.

Mrs. A. M. Hall



ALWAYS READY FOR INSTANT REFERENCE

with each calendar month. A few illustrations will suffice to show the sort of thing that amused our ancestors.

FEBRUARY, 1728.
Pretty cold, freezing nights, followed with a short storm. Let travelers be upon their guard to defend their noses.

FEBRUARY, 1747.
The farmer now's resoly'd he will not freeze
While he has pipes, tobacco, fire, with good bread and cheese.

OCTOBER, 1752.
Those that are husbands good
Should now get in their cider, grain and wood.

An honest friend is good company, but a good conscience is the best guest.

SEPTEMBER, 1782.
Virtue is prized more than followed.
To some men their country is their shame, and some are the shame of their country.

Love and Time.
"Charm, New Year, of your good grace
These sad wrinkles from Love's face.

"Wan and weary now he seems,
Bring him back the dross, the dreams
"Arch above him April skies,
Kiss the light into his eyes.

"Lead him back to women's feet—
Lure Love's roes from the dead!"

"Nay," the New Year saith; "this day
Hath o'erpass't the daisied way.

"Though he weareth now the thorn,
"Meth the rose leaves it was born,
Love must keep the thorn that's left.

"Nay," the wint'ry morn,
"Love is dead, and Love is born"

—Bullfinch Herald.