MILLIONS IN CALENDARS FOR ALL

Range From the Half Cent Article to 60-Cent Art Works — Chaldean, Aztec and Roman Have Made the Calendar What It Is.

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

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Washingtn, Nov. 14.—American business men have paid $18,000,000 for their stock of 1909 calendars to be given away between now and the first of January. Advertising calendars come to almost every office and household, are accepted as a matter of course, are used every day during the year for reference, and are thrown away.

One calendar making firm has 150 traveling men who are on the road all the time. The stock of calendars for 1909 has been printed and most of it distributed. The calendar makers have forgotten about 1909, and they are out now hustling for business for the season of 1910.

Calendars of the kinds which are distributed gratis range in cost from one-half cent to sixty cents each. There are very few sixty-cent ones, and there are very few half-cent ones. Many of the "art" calendars which are given away with apparent prodigality cost as much as twenty cents each.

There isn't a town in the country big enough to have electric lights and waterworks that hasn't a half dozen concerns whose managers think it wise to remember their patrons with a holiday gift in the form of a calendar. Banks are the heaviest buyers of calendars in the whole business world. Almost every bank outside of the very large cities gets out an annual calendar, and most of them seem to think it wise to pay a good price and get one of high grade.

The free distribution of calendars has largely displaced the free almanac which was a feature of the holiday season a generation ago, and which still maintains its sway in the more rural sections of the country. The free almanac, in its turn, had displaced the old-fashioned high-priced almanac, which had to be purchased every year for the guidance of a well-regulated family.

Calendars Once Reliable.

The fact that everybody can have a calendar for the asking, and that there is never any question of dates, is so generally accepted that it is interesting to go back to the days when such things were not dreamed of. The oldest calendar almanac printed in English which is contained in the enormous calendar collection of the library of congress at Washington, is Richard Grafton's Perpetual Calendar, printed in London in 1611, the fourth year of James I.

Mr. Grafton evidently sought to supply a long-felt want, and he issued this little volume with its tables of time which would enable anybody to calculate the date in any year. One of the tables is entitled "a sure method of finding the day of Easter forever." Evidently the "sure method" was not explained to the satisfaction of every reader of Mr. Grafton's calendar, for on the fly-leaf, written in the quaint handwriting of the days of King Charles is the following:

"Memorandum: That a mutual obligation was made upon ye 5 day of March betwixt Mr. Rowland Plater and my self That iff Easter day fall to be upon the 22 day of March in ye year 1668 he should pay to me ye sum of five pounds of lawfull money of England to be paid to me upon ye day after Easter, being Easter Monday ye 23 day of March, 1668. But if it should not fall upon ye said 22 day of March 1668 then I am to pay him ye said sum of five pounds upon ye day and year before Mentioned: Attest: Tho. Sharpe."

It was 340 years ago that the two English worthies backed their varying judgments as to the coming of Easter with good coin. Easter came that year upon April 1, but as England had not then adopted the new style calendar, the English Easter was on March 22 and the good Master Thomas Sharpe won his bet. Times have changed and many calendars have outlived their usefulness in these 340 years, but, as that old memorandum attests, sporting blood is sporting blood, then, now and always.

Russia Behind the Times.

The most important movement touching the calendar now under way is the agitation in Russia for the adoption of the new style or Gregorian calendar. Russia still uses the old style or Julian calendar, and consequently is 12 days behind the rest of the Christian world in its dates.

The Julian calendar takes its name from Julius Caesar, the first great calendar reformer. The ancient Roman year was so imperfect that it was necessary to interpolate an extraordinary year of 445 days in order to bring the vernal equinox back to the date of March 24, where it had been in the reign of the Roman king Numa, 700 years before Caesar. At the same time the 10 months of the old Roman year were increased to 12; the year was made to consist of 365¼ days, the nearest approach yet made to the length of the true solar year; and it was arranged to add an extra day each four years. That was the beginning of the leap year as we know it. Caesar gave the months the number of days still reckoned to them, with the exception that August had but 30 days and February had 29 in ordinary years and 30 in leap years. July was named for Julius Caesar and when his nephew Octavius became emperor under the title of Augustus Caesar, the next month was called August. Augustus wanted to have just as long a month as his great uncle, so he took one day off February and gave it to August.

No change has been made in the order of months since that time and the only change in the days has been in the added day of leap year. Caesar interpolated the intercalary day between February 24 and 25.

How Leap Year Performs.

The Romans numbered backwards from three fixed dates in each month, the Calends, the Ides and the Nones. The Calends was always the first of the month, so that, in the backward Sreckoning February 24 was the sixth calend of March. The extra day was put in after the sixth calend and was called "the second sixth," or the "bissextile" day. It was not until two centuries ago that the added day was made February 29.

But with all the great reform Caesar accomplished, he did not take into account an error of 11 minutes, 10.38 seconds, in the length of his civil year, although his astronomers knew of it at the time. That error amounts to three days in each 400 years. By the time Gregory the Great came to be pope the error had amounted to 13 days. There was great agitation for a reform of the calendar led by the English monk Roger Bacon, who is credited with the invention of gunpowder. The pope decided to reform the calendar, rightly thinking that he would by that act make his name stand out in history as one of the most illustrious of the successors to St. Peter.

So it was in 1582 that the Catholic countries dropped 10 days out of the month of October and the new style or Gregorian calendar, was adopted. It was arranged to correct the error of the Julian calendar by omitting the bissextile day from the end-of-the-century years, unless the date of the year is divisible by 400. This omits three leap year days in each 400 years and brings the civil calendar so closely to a correct adjustment with the solar year that additional corrections will not be necessary in over 48,000 years.

How Easter's Date Is Fixed.

But Pope Gregory did not correct the whole error of 13 days. He changed only 10 days, being influenced to that action by reasons of state. The first quarrel between the eastern and the western church came as early as A. D. 173, about the date of Easter. The Asiatic churches, under the lead of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, a disciple of St. John, celebrated the fourteenth day of the Hebrew month Nisan. The western church, under the lead of Victor, bishop of Rome, celebrated a day fixed according to the method still in use. The quarrel continued for many years, and was finally settled at the famous council of Nice, held in Asia Minor in the year 325.

That council agreed that Easter should be the first Sunday after the full moon that falls upon or next following the vernal equinox; and that March 21 be accounted the vernal equinox. As the true vernal equinox should have been March 24, the three days' error in the Julian calendar was not corrected at Nice. Pope Gregory did not wish to undo the work of the council of Nice, so in correcting the calendar he dropped but 10 days of the 13 in error and made the vernal equinox to fall on March 21. By the time Protestant England adopted the Gregorian calendar, which was in 1752, the error had increased to 11 days. It is now 12 days, and if Russia would make its calendar agree with that in use in the rest of the world, it must drop 12 days and have a short year of 353 days.

The observations of the ancient astronomers on the plains of Chaldea, the wisdom of the ancient Aztecs, the work of Numa and Caesar and Gregory —all these go to make up the well-nigh perfect calendar of this modern age. And in the United States there are business men spending $18,000,000 a year that every household may have its calendar without money and without price.

CHARGE DENIED BY CLUBWOMEN

Did Not Work Against Mrs. Roberts in Milwaukie School Election.

Milwaukie, Or., Nov. 14.—To the Editor of The Journal—In a recent issue of the Telegram an article no doubt intended as an authentic report of the special election of director of school district No. 1, Milwaukie, has caused much indignation among the women taxpayers. The article was headed "Milwaukie Fair Sex Downs Woman," made the assertion that the Milwaukie Woman's club, no doubt meaning the Mothers' and Teachers' club "had jumped into the campaign" and accomplished the defeat of one of their own members and had for their slogan "Elect any one but a woman."

Furthermore the article stated that Mrs. Roberts, the defeated candidate relied upon the solid support of the sisters in the Woman's club, but in this she was mistaken as some of them even took the floor declaring that school directors must have great business qualifications.

Further assertions were that the women as a unit voted for Berkemeir, there being three women to one man present. But the very reverse was the case. The same is true of the statement that some women took the floor, speaking against a director. This is entirely false in every particular as the only woman who spoke during the election seconded, in very favorable terms, the nomination of Mrs. Roberts. This can be proven by every one present at the meeting.

This false and entirely uncalled for report is a manifest injustice to the members of the Mothers' and Teachers' club inasmuch as they took absolutely no part as a body in the election nor was any member asked to sign the petition requesting Mrs. Roberts to become a candidate.

This report is evidently the work of one either ignorant of the facts in the case, or desirous of gaining cheap notoriety by working such an anonymous article. It is quite evident that the writer did not wish his identity known.

The Mothers' and Teachers' club at a largely attended meeting held Friday afternoon, declared the article in unmistakable terms as false and malicious. Believing that the report places the club in a false light before the public, and desiring to express their appreciation of the work Mrs. Roberts has done as President of the club. A committee was appointed to bring the matter before the people by asking the press to publish this article.

The sole purpose of the Mothers' club is to be unitedly helpful to the children of our district, to aid when help is needed, and in an unostentatious way to bring the home and the school in closer relation to each other.

The members of the club regret exceedingly the accusation as set forth in the above named article and trust that we as a club may not be forced into such uncalled for publicity.

Committee on Publications, Mothers' and Teachers' Club.

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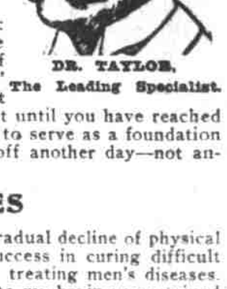

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