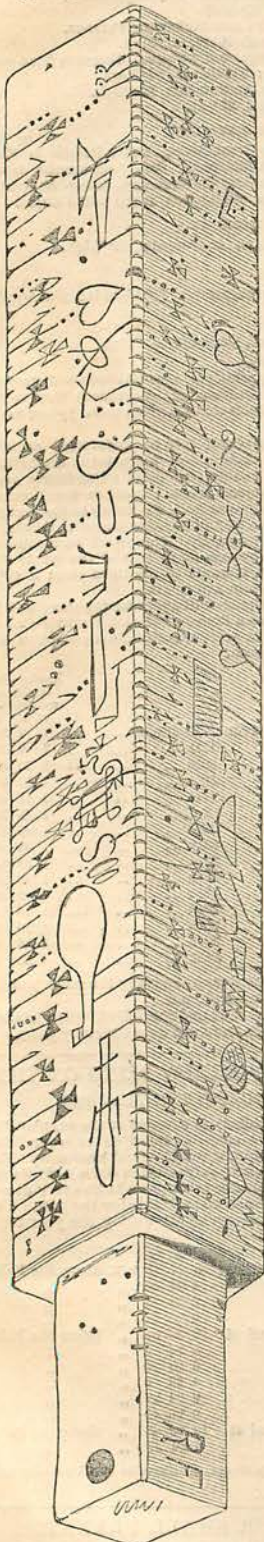


CLOG ALMANACK

PRESERVED IN THE CHETHAM LIBRARY, MANCHESTER.

WHETHER the "Clog," of which we here give an Engraving, was originally left to the Library by the founder, or was presented subsequently by some other person, we have not been able to ascertain.



Though unquestionably formed after an ancient Runic type, it is certainly not of great antiquity; and probably not of an earlier date than the time of Humphrey Chetham, who lived in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., and founded the library which bears his name, in 1665. About forty years ago, when a boy belonging to the school usually acted as guide to visitors to the Library, he never failed to draw their attention to the "Clog," as one of the principal curiosities. "This," exclaimed the juvenile Cicero, "is a Clog Almanack, such as were in use in this country before the invention of printing."

Almanacks, or more properly Calendars, of this kind, were used by the Danes, Norwegians, and other people of northern race, at a very early period; and a full account of their various kinds and different names—Rim-stocks, Rune-stocks, Primstaves, Seipiones Runic, and Bæuli Annales—are to be found in the "FASTI DANICI" of Olaus Wormius, printed at Copenhagen, 1643. One of those Calendars, in the form of a walking-stick, was exhibited by Sampson Hodgkinson, Esq., at the meeting of the Archaeological Institute, at Lincoln, in 1848; and an engraving of it is given in the ILLUSTRATED LONDON ALMANACK for 1849.

Verstegan, in his "Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities," 1605, thus speaks of those calendars in his third chapter, "Of the Ancient Manner of Living of our Saxon Ancestors:—" "They used to engrave upon certain squared sticks, about a foot in length, or shorter or longer as they pleased, the courses of the moones of the whole yeare, whereby they could always certainly tell when the new moones, full moones, and changes should happen, as also their festial days; and such a carved stick they called an *Al-mon-acht*—that is to say, *Al-moon-heed*: to wit, the regard or observation of all the moones; and here-hence is derived the name of Almanack."

That we may not be supposed to concur in this derivation of Almanack, we merely remark, that "our Saxon ancestors" had no such name for their calendars as "*Al-mon-acht*;" and that Verstegan's etymology may, with better reason, be termed "*All-moon-shina*."

Dr. Robert Plot, in his "Natural History of Staffordshire," printed at Oxford, 1686, gives a full account of Clog Almanacks of the kind represented in our Engraving; and speaks of them as being still in use "among the meaner sort of people" in that county. He, however, says that it is "a sort of antiquity so little known, that it hath scarce been heard of in the southern parts of England, and understood now but by few of the gentry in the northern." With respect to the term "*Clog*," he thus runs his head against it, while pretending that it was something difficult to be found:—"As to the divers names of them, they are here called *Cloggs*, for what reason I could not learn, nor, indeed, imagine, unless from the English *logg* (a term we usually give to any piece of wood), or from the likeness of some of the greater sorts of them to the cloggs wherewith we usually restrain the wild, extravagant, mischievous motions of some of our dogs."

In Staffordshire, in his time, some few were of brass; but most of wood, chiefly box: others were of fir and of oak, though not so frequent. Those of larger size, such as are represented in our Engraving, were commonly hung at the end of the mantel-tree, by the chimney-nook; others of smaller size were carried in the pocket.

Each of the four faces contained a period of three months, commencing with the 1st of January. The days were represented by the notches on the edges, every seventh notch being somewhat wider than the others; and the first day of each month was distinguished by a longer stroke. In those clogs there was no indication of the Dominical Letter.

The Golden Number, when under five, was represented by a cross with a crook at the top; the number five was signified by a line with an angular crook at the top; and the numbers between five and ten, by the addition of points or dots. The sign of ten was a cross; and the intermediate numbers to fourteen were signified by

the addition of dots. Fifteen was represented by a cross with a crook at the top; the intermediate numbers to eighteen being represented by the addition of dots. Nineteen, the highest number in the cycle, was represented by a double cross.

The principal festivals were symbolically represented. For instance—the Epiphany, 6th January, by a star; Valentine's Day, 14th February, a true-lovers' knot; the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, and other festivals of the Virgin, by a Heart; St. David, 1st March, a Harp; St. Barnabas, 11th June, a Rake—Haymaking; St. Peter, 29th June, Keys; St. Lawrence, 10th August, a Gridiron; St. Crispin, 25th October, a pair of Shoes; St. Katherine, 25th November, a Wheel.

Our Engraving is from a drawing by Mr. Travis, of the firm of Travis and Mangnall, architects, Manchester.

WHITSUN ALE JUG.

This representation of a Whitsun Ale Jug is taken from an excellent specimen in the interesting Museum collected by T. Crofton Croker, Esq. The jug is of white earthenware, and the word WHIT, and the date 1649, and the characteristic flourish underneath it, are painted blue.

Whitsun Ales were festivals formerly common at Whitsuntide, in which ale formed the predominant liquor, and hence arose the metonymy; although there has been a vast amount of pains employed to trace the name to other sources. As the money requisite for the feasts was collected by the churchwardens of the parish, Whitsun Ales have also been called Church Ales. They were kept on Sundays, notwithstanding their low and profane revelry; and entries often occur in church books of disbursements in these unholly pastimes, with which, however, are oddly mixed up charges for repairs of the church, maintaining of orphans, &c.



WHITSUN ALE JUG.

Mr. Douce has left us the following details of the Whitsun Ale:—"Two persons are chosen, previously to the meeting, to be lord and lady of the ale, who dress as suitably as they can to the characters they assume. A large empty barn, or some such building, is provided for the lord's hall, and fitted up with seats to accommodate the company. Here they assemble to dance and regale in the best manner their circumstances and the place will afford; and each young fellow treats his girl with a ribbon or favour. The lord and lady honour the hall with their presence, attended by the steward, sword-bearer, purse-bearer, and mace-bearer, with their several badges or ensigns of office. They have likewise a train-bearer or page, and a fool or jester, dressed in a party-coloured jacket, whose ribaldry and gesticulation contribute not a little to the entertainment of some part of the company. The lord's music, consisting of a pipe and tabor, is employed to conduct the dance. Some people think this custom is a commemoration of the ancient *Drink-lean*, a day of festivity formerly observed by the tenants and vassals of the lord of the fee within his manor; the memory of which, on account of the jollity of those meetings, the people have thus preserved ever since. The glossaries inform us that this *Drink-lean* was a contribution of tenants towards a potation, or ale, provided to entertain the lord or his steward."

TOKENS OF THUNDER.

The following curious notices of the tokens of thunder in each month of the year, are from an illuminated almanack of very early date:—

- "In the monethe Januarie if ther be thundir it bitokeneth grete wyndis, haboundaunce of fruytis, and batell to come in that year.
- "In the monethe of Februarie, if ther be thundir it bitokeneth deeth of many men, and most of riche men by soris.
- "In the monethe of Marcus, if thundir sowne, it bitokeneth grete wyndis, plenté of fruytis and strues in the peple.
- "In Aprilis thundir if it lowrie it shewith myry yeeryng and fructuous, but it bitokeneth deeth of wickid men.
- "In Mayus thundir if it come it bitoketh nedre of fruytis and hungir in that year.
- "In Juny if it thundir it bitokeneth that wadis shal be...of...of wyndis and ther shal be grete weondres of houns and of wolves.
- "In the monethe of Juli if thundir in that year shal be good corn yeeryng but the birthe of beestis shal peresche.
- "August thundir it bitokeneth prosperité in the commune and mané man shal be sub....
- "In September if it thundre it bitokeneth aboundance of fruytis.
- "In October if it thundir it bitokeneth a right greet wynd and geod harvest and scarces of fruytis.
- "In the monethe of November if it thundir it bitokeneth aboundaunce of fruytis and myrthe among folk.
- "In December if thundir it bitokeneth aboundaunce of cornes and pees and accord in the peple."