

THE AMERICAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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ON MAGAZINES.

It is now upwards of a century since the reading world began to experience the benefits of periodical literature. Under this term we do not include newspapers, the origin of which is dated more than two centuries back, during that memorable period of Elizabeth's reign, when the immense preparations of Spain to invade England, induced the government to communicate to the people, frequent intelligence of what was going forward. The avidity with which these fleeting records of public transactions were received, rendered them an object of profit to publishers; and, except at certain times, when the despotic mandates of the Stuart government prohibited their circulation, they have continued ever since to carry political information to the fire-sides of the British people. It is but just, therefore, to consider them one of the chief causes of the great superiority of political intelligence manifested by the English, during the period under consideration, over the other nations of Europe. In every other species of intellectual improvement, they were, at least, equalled by the French. In the fine arts, in classical taste, and in general philology, the latter were indisputably their superiors; and, if we except that inspired species of literature given to us by Shakespeare and Milton, the ability to produce which depends less on the cultivation, than on the original structure of the mind, in political science alone, did the people of Britain surpass their neighbours, and they did so chiefly be-

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FOR THE AMERICAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

ODE TO THE NEW YEAR.

Chant ye a lofty strain,
 To the smiling new-born year,
 Shout, for with smiles, again
 I see his chariot here,
 With icy diadem, and vest
 Of purest hoar and snow-flake, drest.

Chant ye a joyous song,
 To the long-wished welcome year,
 We have watched for his white car long,
 He cometh to announce good cheer,
 And the festal cup, and the friendly token:—
 For the old year's tiresome reign is broken.

Swell to a louder peal,
 Let the harp-string gaily sound,
 Though he rolls on a frozen wheel,
 And a storm-cloud decks him round;
 Yet the fireside calm, and the smiles of home,
 And the feast of soul, in his rich train come.

His issuing forth, is rude,
 With the music of the north,
 But his path shall soon be strewed
 With the young flowers peeping forth;
 And the wint'ry robe shall be torn away,
 And vernal winds in his locks shall play.

The months, with varied tune,
 Bring up the misty dance;
 Soft May and laughing June,
 With clasped hands advance;
 And among their robes that loosely flow,
 Zephyr and storm alternate blow.

Strange wonders, mystic year!
 Thou art coming to disclose,
 And my trembling heart doth fear
 Lest thou bearest heavy woes.
 For grisly death, among thy suite,
 Comes gliding in with steady feet.

And the star-decked sky,
 That curtains us around,
 Shall not meet my closed eye,
 When sunk beneath the ground;
 But, the mourning yew, shall sadly wave
 Above my rude unhonoured grave.

CYPRIAN.

Princeton, N. J. December 13, 1823.