

A BAD YEAR COMING.

Direful Predictions for 1881.

The world to an end shall come in eighteen hundred and eighty-one. -Mother Shipton's Prophecy. It would be difficult to describe all the sinister predictions that have, as by common consent been concentrated upon the coming year.

Timid persons first began to look forward with some alarm to the year that is about to open, when several years ago, the key to the so-called prophetic symbolism of the great pyramid of Egypt was made public, backed by the name and reputation of the British astronomer, Piazza Smyth.

Mother Shipton's so-called prophecy fixes upon the same date for the end of the world. The ominous jingle of her rhymes has probably done at least as much to disturb the equanimity of credulous persons as the more elaborate vaticinations of the pyramid interpreters.

As if the evil eye of Mother Shipton and the mystical menace of the great pyramid were not enough for one poor twelvemonth to bear, the "horrors of the perihelia" have been denounced upon the coming year. About two years ago certain pamphlets were circulated about the country purporting to be written by men of science, and predicting that awful consequences to mankind would result from all the great planets reaching their perihelia, or nearest points to the sun, together.

So much alarm was caused by this horridness of pretended science and prophecy that some real men of science - Mr. Proctor among others - were at the pains to show that, so far as these predictions professed to rest upon scientific facts, they were baseless.

It is true that several of the chief planets will reach their perihelia within a few years, and that it is rare for them to be grouped so close together as they will be one time next year. It is also true that remarkable coincidences have been observed between the existence of great storms on the sun that produce electrical disturbances and possibly meteorological changes upon the earth, and the presence of Jupiter near his perihelion.

Still the astrological almanacs for next year are repeating substantially the same predictions of evil things to begin, if not to culminate in 1881. Because as they say, the ravages of the black death in the Middle Ages followed the nearly coincident perihelia of four great planets, they predict similar consequences from the configuration of these planets now.

In truth, however, the astrologers, not less than the astronomers and all star-gazers, will have plenty of phenomena in the heavens to occupy their attention for the next twelve months. The sky will not present such brilliant pageants again this century. There will be a remarkable series of conjunctions and double and triple conjunctions.

Venus will reach her greatestness in the spring, and will be so brilliant as to be visible at noonday. Her delicate crescent will be a favored object in the amateur astronomer's telescope. Saturn will open still wider its wonderful rings, and will be one of the chief attractions of the evening sky for several months.

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