A PRINTER'S BILL IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

THE industry and foresight of a London bookseller have preserved to us copies of nearly all the books and pamphlets printed in this country during the Civil War and Commonwealth. But very little light has yet been thrown on such points as the cost of printing or the number of copies that formed an edition. In many cases we do not even know the names of the printers of the books which Thomason preserved, owing to the lack of documentary evidence. Most of the records of the London printing houses of the seventeenth century perished in the Fire of London, and it is therefore a matter for congratulation when any thing comes to light which will help us to realize the conditions under which the art of printing was carried on in those troublous times.

The documents to which I am about to call attention were discovered at the Record Office amongst the Chancery Proceedings. They relate to a suit brought, to recover a sum of money due to him for printing, by Thomas Brudnell or Brudenell, a London printer, against the executors of John Partridge, a London bookseller, who died in 1649. The documents are five in number:

1. The bill of complaint of Thomas Brudnell or Brudenell, stationer, *i.e.* printer, against Phile-

mon Stephens, and Luke Fawne, stationers, *i.e.* booksellers, executors to the will of John Partridge, stationer, with whom was joined Susan Partridge, daughter of the deceased, a minor. This bill is dated the 19th Feby. 1650 *i.e.* 165 $\frac{0}{1}$.

2. A schedule of the account put in by Thomas Brudnell for printing books for John Partridge, between the years 1644 and 1648.
3. The reply of the defendants.
4. A copy of the inventory of the goods of John Partridge, taken at his death, and lodged in the Court of Orphans by his executors according to the ancient custom of the city of London.
5. A further reply by the defendants, no doubt in answer to a 'replication' by the plaintiff, which is not in the series.

There was also a cross suit commenced by Stephens and Fawne, against Brudnell, to which he put in a reply as defendant.

Before dealing with these documents, a word may be said as to the *dramatis personae*. Not very much is known about the chief personage, Thomas Brudnell or Brudenell. When Sir John Lambe was ferreting out information for his list of the master printers to be appointed under the Act of 1637, he learned that Brudnell had been taken into partnership by John Beale in 1621, and had afterwards set up in Newgate Market, taking as a partner Robert White. In addition to the work mentioned in the bill under dispute, they were joint printers of a duodecimo edition of the Bible issued in 1647.

John Partridge had been in business as a bookseller since the year 1623, his earliest address being the Sun in St. Paul's Churchyard, from whence he moved to the Cock in Ludgate Street, and later to a shop in Blackfriars, at the entrance of Carter Lane. At the outbreak of the Civil War he added a trade in astrological books to his other branches of bookselling, and in company with Humphrey Blunden of the Castle in Cornhill, became the publisher of most of the writings of John Booker and William Lilly, the astrologers. Another of the same name, perhaps a son, was renowned for his astrological predictions, and furnished Dean Swift with a subject for satire.

Philemon Stephens was one of the large capitalist booksellers of that time, while Luke Fawne took an active part in the political unrest, being joint author with several other booksellers in publishing a remarkable pamphlet called 'A Beacon set on Fire,' in which attention was drawn to so-called Popish literature. Both men lived at that time in St. Paul's Churchyard, Stephens at the sign of the Golden Lion, and Fawne at the sign of the Parrot in the new rents.

So much for the men, now for the dispute. Brudnell's bill of complaint set out that for four years past he had been printing books for John Partridge, who at the time of his death was Brudnell's debtor in a sum of £362 18s. for work done, particulars of which were set out in a schedule attached to the bill. He had made frequent application to the executors for payment, but could not get his money, and prayed relief.

Then follows the schedule, the most important document of the series, which is given below:

A true scedule of all such bookes as were printed by mee Thomas Brudnell for the use of John Partridge w^h the particular names quantityes & prices, as followeth.

1644.	Imprimis of the Collections of Prophetes 4 sheetes printed att 3 severall tymes 4500 of each sheete, whereof Mr Bishop did one of the sheets in the last impression beinge 1000 w ^{ch} is to bee deducted soe then the remayninge is 34 Reame w ^{ch} att 5s per Reame is	08.	10.	0.
	Of the Sarry [<i>i.e.</i> Starry] Messinger two sheetes printed 2000 of twoe impressions att 5s per Reame comes to	2.	00.	0.
	Of Englands recouerye 42 sheetes & the 1500 printed of each sheete at 12s the sheete comes to	26.	2.	0.
1646.	Anglicus, 6 sheetes printed 13500. beinge 162 Reames att vjs viij ^d p reame comes to	54.	0.	0.
1646.	Booker's Bloudy Irish Almanack 4 sheetes & $\frac{1}{2}$ printed 3000 beinge 27 Reames att 4s p reame comes to	5.	8.	0.
1647.	Anglicus. 6 sheetes printed 17.000 beinge 204 reames att 6s 8 ^d p reame comes to .	68.	0.	0.
	A sheete of newes printed 5 reames att 5s p Reame is	1.	5.	0.
	Introducon to astrologye 110 sheetes printed 1750 of a sheete, beinge 385 reames att 5s p reame comes to	96.	5.	0.
1648.	Anglicus 6 sheetes printed 18,500 beinge 198 reames att vjs viij ^d p reame comes to	74.	0.	0.
	Military Discipline 16 sheetes, 1500 printed being 18 ream att 4s p reame comes to .	3.	12.	0.
1648.	Astrologicall predicions 10 sheetes 3000 printed, then of 6 sheetes 2000 more, againe of 6 sheetes 2000, the 4th tyme printed 7 sheetes 1500 of each sheete w ^{ch} comes to	25.	16.	0.
Sum total is		362.	18.	0.

No English document of this kind, of so early a date, has ever before been printed, and it serves as a basis of comparison between old and new methods and prices in the printing trade, as well as furnishing the bibliographer with some valuable information both as to the customs of the printing trade and the history of the books mentioned in the list. Of the eleven works which it contains, seven came from the pen of William Lilly the astrologer, and one from that of John Booker. Taking them in the order in which they occur, and studying the printed copies by the aid of the information this bill affords, many interesting points are brought out.

The work, briefly mentioned as the Collection of Prophecies, bore the title, 'A Collection of Ancient and Modern Prophecies, Concerning these present Times, with modest Observations thereon,' and was published on the 14th November, 1645, without any printer's name in the imprint. It was a quarto of eight sheets, A-H in fours, so that Brudnell only printed a part of it, unless it is assumed that he had already rendered an account and been paid for the remaining portion, which seems unlikely. For the moment the question as to which of the eight sheets came from his press may be put aside. It will be more easily answered after an examination of some of the other works. Clearly there were three editions of the book. The first was perhaps an edition of two thousand copies, which was speedily sold out, and a second edition of fifteen hundred copies, not being sufficient to satisfy the public demand, a third impression of

one thousand copies was put in hand; and Brudnell's press being apparently busy with other work, he entrusted one of the four sheets allotted to him to a brother printer, Richard Bishop, to work off for him. So that this last edition came from three different presses.

'The Sarry Messenger' was of course a mistake for 'The Starry Messenger,' published by William Lilly on 14th June, 1645. This was a quarto of seven sheets, A-G in fours, and the printer's name was omitted from the imprint, but Brudnell's portion of the work only consisted of two sheets. Copies of both the impressions are in the British Museum, and they are easily distinguished by the typographical variations.

The third work mentioned in this list, as 'Of England's Recovery,' is by far the most important and the most interesting of any in the series, being none other than Joshua Sprigge's 'Anglia Rediviva.' Its presence in this bill under the date of 1644 is altogether misleading, as the book did not appear until 1647. The work was a folio, and the full title and collation are here given in order that the reader may understand what follows:

Anglia Rediviva; | Englands Recovery: | Being the |
History | Of the Motions, Actions, and Suc | cesses of
the Army under the Immediate | Conduet of His Excel-
lency | S^r Thomas Fairfax, K^t. | Captain-General | Of all
the Parliaments Forces | in England. | Compiled for the
Publique good | By Ioshua Sprigge. M.A. | [Quotⁿ] |
London, | Printed by R. W. for Iohn Partridge, and are
to be sold at the Parot in Paul's Church-yard, and the
Cock in Ludgate-streete, 1647.

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Collation: A 4 leaves. B 4 leaves, *b* one leaf. B 2 one leaf, followed by two leaves unsigned; B 2 one leaf, B 2. one leaf, followed by two leaves unsigned; C—Y in fours. Z two leaves. Aa—V v in fours. X x 2 leaves.

It will be seen that there is no hint of Thomas Brudnell's connection with the printing in the imprint, but the R. W. unquestionably stands for his partner, Robert White, and an examination of the book proves that it was the joint production of both of them, the portion from sigs. Aa to Xx 2 being Brudnell's presswork. The work being a folio made up in double sheets, this would account for forty-one sheets. How the other part was made up is not quite clear.

White's portion of the work was printed in good founts of roman and italic, well and regularly cast, the italic especially being a clear and artistic letter. Brudnell's type can be easily distinguished, being more irregular and somewhat thicker in face, while the compositor's work is noticeable for its slovenly appearance; but in his portion of the book, from pages 313 to 320, occur two particularly fine founts of great primer, roman and italic, amongst the best I have ever seen in any books of that time. That 'Anglia Rediviva' was received favourably is clear from the fact that nearly the whole impression of fifteen hundred copies was sold out at the time of Partridge's death.

The work described as 'Anglicus' was an astrological almanac, the title of which in subsequent years became 'Merlinus Anglicus Ephemeris.' It was entirely printed by Brudnell, and has the printer's initials 'T. B.' in the imprint. It was an

octavo of six sheets (A⁴, B-F⁸, G⁴). The first point that becomes clear on examining this book is that Brudnell possessed a stock of astrological signs. It is important to remember this, because there were few printers in London at that time who stocked these signs; in fact, Lilly himself tells us, while apologizing for the 'Errata' in his 'Christian Astrology,' that 'things of this nature are seldom printed with us, and the printers are unacquainted with this kind of learning.' That the work was of a difficult nature may be inferred from the increased price which Brudnell charged for it, 6s. 8d. per ream instead of 5s. This book also shows that the printer possessed several good founts of roman and italic as well as a few large initial letters of a diaper pattern. These latter, however, seem to have been common, many other printers of that time using letters of the same kind.

Booker's 'Bloudy Irish Almanac' was the work of John Booker, another of the charlatans who had curried favour with the Roundheads by professing to foretell great victories for them. It appeared in March, 164 $\frac{5}{8}$, and consisted of eight and a half quarto sheets signed A-H⁴, I². The imprint ran, 'Printed at London for John Partridge 1646.' But Brudnell only printed four and a half sheets, and in this case there is little or no difficulty in identifying his part of the work as sigs. E to H and the half sheet I. The division at this point is clearly marked. In the first place the type used in the first part is a better one than that in the second. Again, the pagination which begins on sig. B is correct to pages 24, the verso of the last leaf of

sig. D, but the first page of sig. E is numbered 21 instead of 25, and the compositor was at fault all through the sheet. But the best and most conclusive proof of Brudnell's connection with this second half of Booker's 'Almanac' is the use of astronomical signs in sigs. E and F.

The largest work mentioned in this bill of Brudnell's is that called the 'Introduction to Astrology,' which was the sub-title of Lilly's 'Christian Astrology' published in 1647. The only copy of the work in the British Museum is badly cropped and imperfect, and appears to consist of 108 sheets, whereas Brudnell describes it as consisting of 110 sheets, and taking his figures as correct, it is evident that he printed the whole book. In this case his name appears in full in the imprint, and consequently the work is useful as a help to the identification of his printing material. There are, for example, two metal blocks used in it, the one measuring 95×35 mm., having as the design the rose, thistle, and fleur-de-lys crowned; the other, measuring 98×29 mm., being chiefly distinguished by the occurrence in it of two squirrels. But of this squirrel block there were at least two forms, one seen in the 'Collection of Prophecies' and 'Christian Astrology,' and the other in the 'Starry Messenger.' One of these is much narrower than the other, and differs in details, and it would be rash to say that both belonged to Brudnell without further evidence, but the probability is that they did.

One more book in this list remains to be noticed, and it appears to have been popular, going through no less than four editions in one year—one of

3,000 copies, two of 2,000, and one of 1,500. This was Lilly's 'Astrologically Predictions of the Occurrences in England. Part of the years 1648, 1649, 1650,' a quarto bearing the imprint, 'Printed by T. B. for John Partridge and Humfrey Blunden. 1648.' This, again, was entirely printed by Brudnell and the two metal blocks alluded to above are found in it. Two copies of the ten-sheet edition of the 'Predictions' are in the British Museum, and as both show many typographical variations, it looks as if the printer had more than one press. Thomason dated his copy Sept. 4th and Lilly's epistle to 'To the Reader' was dated August 22nd. At present none of the smaller editions have been traced.

Having now examined most of the books in Brudnell's schedule, we may return to the first two, 'The Collection of Prophecies' and the 'Starry Messenger.' Of the first he printed four sheets out of eight, and, after careful examination, we are inclined to assign to him sigs. A, B, G and H, the first two showing his block with the squirrels; and the second two, because of the occurrence of astrological signs in them. But his share in the 'Starry Messenger' remains a mystery. It is in this that the variation of his squirrel block occurs on A2; but on the whole it seems more likely that the two sheets referred to in Brudnell's bill were the last two containing a reprint of a pamphlet by Geo. Wharton and Lilly's 'Postscript,' which were issued with it.

One thing at least becomes clear, from a study of this printer's bill, and that is, that it was a

common practice in the printing trade, during the first half of the seventeenth century, to entrust the printing of books and pamphlets to several printers instead of one only; and that the commonly accepted belief that the absence of the printer's name from the imprint was due either to fear of the censor or the growing importance of the publisher is no longer tenable. The real reason was that no single printer could claim the printing. Nor is it any longer safe to assume that where a printer's name appears in the imprint, that he was the printer of the whole work, as has been shown in the case of '*Anglia Rediviva*,' the work was actually done by two.

The figures of the various editions printed by Brudnell are interesting as showing how many copies were needed to meet the demand for work appealing to the masses of the seventeenth century. The master printers, by the rules of the Company of Stationers, were forbidden to keep any formes standing, except for a few classes of works such as Primers, Grammars, Almanacs and the A B C, and even those had to be distributed once a year. Books printed in brevier or nonpareil were limited to 3,000 and 5,000 copies, and all other books to 1,500 or 2,000. (See Arber's '*Transcript*,' II. 23, 883; III. 22-26.) The steady growth in popularity of the astrological almanacs is shown in the rise of '*Anglicus*' from 13,500 in 1646 to 18,500 in 1648.

As regards Brudnell's prices I am indebted to Mr. C. T. Jacobi, of the Chiswick Press, for the following opinion:

I assume that type-setting is not included in the charges made by Brudenell—nor paper—but that the prices were for actual presswork only. A ream is 500 sheets, but printed both sides means 1,000 impressions or pulls to each ream. The old wooden presses, with two men to each, could only turn out about 1,000 a day, so the prices, allowing for the value of money in those days, is certainly cheap, for 5*s.* per ream means two men's labour for one day, apart from ink, management, wear and tear of presses, or profit on the job. I think myself the prices certainly are very low, and interesting to us moderns.

John Booker, and the publisher of the book called 'Military Discipline,' obtained an even better price, paying only 4*s.* per ream; and the work done on 'Anglia Rediviva,' at 12*s.* a sheet for 1,500 copies (3 reams) was at the same price.

The reply of the defendants, Stephens and Fawne, to Brudenell's bill of complaint was a total denial that John Partridge at the time of his death owed Brudenell anything like the sum mentioned; and that the plaintiff had admitted that he did not keep any regular accounts. Furthermore, they declared that they had fully administered the estate of the deceased and there was nothing left. In support of their statement they put in a copy of the inventory of John Partridge's goods and chattels at the time of his death, which in accordance with the ancient custom of the city of London, they had lodged in the Court of Orphans.

In one respect this is a valuable document, being anterior to any inventories possessed by the City of London at the present day. The record is headed:

An Inventorie Indented bearinge date the xxvijth day of Ianuary, Anno Dñi One Thousand six hundred fortie nine, of all and singular the goods chattells, rights & credits, w^{ch} late belonged to Iohn Partridge, late cittizen and stationer of London deceased, seene valued and appraised by George Greene, Edward Blackmore, and Iohn Macocke stationers, and Tho. Cranford joyner cittizens of London, sworne for the true valuation and appraisement thereof, before the right Worth. Robert Tichborne Esq. Alderman of faringdon ward within London, wherein the Testator did inhabite at his decease, the particulars whereof doe hereafter ensue.

The inventory took account of household goods, wearing apparel, stock in trade and property. It also showed the other side of the account, *i.e.*, the sums paid out by the executors. The only part of the document of any interest is that headed 'Bookes,' which I have transcribed:

Item 91 bibles bound plaine and guilt att	vj ^{li} v ^s vj ^d
It. 2335 bibles in quires with Psalmes all att	lxxxij ^{li} xv ^s
It. 302 bookes of Lyllies Astrology	xlv ^{li}
It. 440 bookes of Robdolagia in 12 ^o	xx ^s
It. 320 bookes of the history of the lord Ffarfex	xvj ^{li}
It. 525 bookes of Lillie's Catastrophe in 4 ^o	xl ^s
It. 148 bookes of Propheticall Merlyn.	xl ^s
It. 602 bookes of Starry Messenger.	xxi ^s
It. a parcell af old bookes in 4 ^o 8 ^o & 12 ^o at	xx ^s
It. 30 Reames of waste paper.	xlv ^s
It. 5 Copp[er] peeces engraven.	xij ^s
It. 8 old mappes, att	ij ^s viij ^d
It. a parcell of old bookes at	l ^s

Suma Clxxij^{li} xj^s ij
Chan. Proc. Mitford, 10th.

The first two items show us what an immense trade was done in Bibles by the booksellers of the seventeenth century, when one is found with a stock of over 3,000. Some of these, doubtless, were the remainder of the duodecimo edition, printed for Partridge in 1647, by Robert White and Thomas Brudnell. The book referred to as the 'history of Lord farfex' was, I infer, the remains of Sprigge's 'Anglia Rediviva'; but on what basis this inventory was made is altogether puzzling. If Sprigge's book be the one referred to in this entry, the remainder was valued at exactly one shilling per volume, whereas Lilly's 'Astrology,' which was only a quarto, was put down at three shillings a volume, which must have been very nearly its wholesale publishing price. But yet more astonishing is the slump that had taken place in the 'Starry Messenger.' Of the second impression of 1,000 copies, over 600 were on the publisher's hands at the time of his death, and they were not worth a halfpenny each. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

H. R. PLOMER.