The beginning of the year is altogether an arbitrary arrangement, if either of the equinoxes or solstices had been chosen there would have been some argument for so doing, but it was mere convention when it was fixed on the 1st of January, and this custom is almost of recent date for up to 1752 the year in England began on annunciation day 25th March, this however strange only refers to the civil year, the historical year having all along been reckoned from the 1st January. The point from which our series of years date, is as with all Christian nations from the birth of Christ, and in the ordinary computation we are in 1867, but according to the best chronologers that era has erroneously fixed, that being done in the sixth century and by an abbot of Rome, and we are told the true date is 4 or 5 years earlier than thus fixed. The Jews among themselves reckon from the creation. The ancient Jews reckoned variously, sometimes from the creation, the flood, the exodus, the building of the temple, and from the Babylonian captivity. All the Mohammedan nations date from the Hegira, or the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina on the 16th July, 622, but as they reckon by years of twelve lunar synodical months they are always getting in advance, as to the number of years they count by their system. The Greeks reckoned by Olympiads or periods of four years each, the date of the first olympiad being 776 B.C. The Romans reckoned from the date usually assigned to the foundation of Rome, namely 753 B.C.

The Planets being called morning and evening stars, is simply when the planet is to the west of the sun and rises before it; and when the planet is to the east and sets after it, in the case of Venus it is alternately about 290 days a morning and evening star; Venus never moves more than 48° from the Sun, when between its inferior conjunction and greatest elongation it appears brightest, its want of size being more than compensated by its being so much nearer the earth, the Sun is equal to 20,610,000 Mercurys; to 1,520,000 Venuses; to 1,328,400 Earths; to 9,394,000 Mars; 973 Jupiters; 1,399 Saturns; Saturn's ring is double and the nearest is three times as broad as the other, the one being 20,000 miles and the second 7,200 miles; the space between them is 2,839 miles; the inner ring is said to rotate in 11 hours and 16 minutes, and the outer part in 17 hours and 10 minutes. Mercury never moves above 28° from the sun and is seldom seen. When the Moon is in Apogee it is 252,600 miles distant, and in Perigee only 222,400 miles; owing to the Moon's libration in latitude we sometimes see one pole, and then the other, the harvest moon arises from the varied angle of the ecliptic, so that the moon for several days near the autumnal equinox rises nearly at sunset, and about the same time by the clock, this irregularity is nothing at the equator, increasing as we proceed north. As the ecliptic limits of the sun are 30° there must be two eclipses of the sun; every year, but, as the ecliptic limits of the moon are about 23° there may be no eclipse of the moon within the year. There will be considerable eclipses of the sun February 23, 1868, December 22, 1870; August 19, 1887; and August 9, 1896; during a total eclipse of the sun light is derived by reflection from parts of the atmosphere where it is not total.

According to the theory of the celebrated Astronomer Olber, the periodic showers of Shooting Stars attains a maximum in 34 years, if this is correct, and from previous coincidence it is confirmed, a display of astonishing brilliancy may be looked for about the 11-13 November, 1867.