

CHRISTMAS-TIME.

Characters and Customs—The Christmas—Evergreen—Gifts—Feasting and Merry-Making.

The festival of Christmas is regarded as the greatest celebration throughout the year, and though at the present day it is somewhat shorn of its ancient glories, and devoid of the boisterous jollity which characterized it in the time of "good Queen Bess," when the logs flamed and roared and mirth reigned supreme, it is still the holiday in which all classes most participate.

In Bohemia the fruit trees for the same reason are violently shaken during the time of midnight mass.

In other localities a corn cake and some hot cider is offered to the largest apple tree, as the king of the orchard, while those who take part in the ceremony join in singing:

"Dear good apples and pears enough—Barns full, bags full, sacks full! Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

Yule-log and yule-candle belong to the same order. The mistletoe was regarded by the Druids as sacred, and its berries, as a symbol of purity, were associated with the rites of marriage.

The Christmas tree is doubtless of German origin. They conceived of the world as a great tree whose roots were hidden deep under the earth, but whose top flourished in Walhalla, the old German paradise.

In England Christmas is scarcely the shadow of its former merry self, when all classes of society indulged in the most unrestrained joviality and merriment.

On Christmas day in Suabia, maidens inquisitive as to their prospective lovers draw a stick of wood out of a heap to see whether he will be long or short, crooked or straight.

The day is observed in Spain very much as it is in Italy, the Christmas dinner playing a very conspicuous part.

In Lapland and Norway a cake is set out in the snow as an offering, which was probably intended, originally, to propitiate some pagan divinity, as it dates back to the time of Thor.

In Sweden Yule-time is the gayest season of the year. It begins on Christmas and continues till Epiphany, and is given up to dancing, feasting and merry-making.

away with him the yule-joy. The family leaves a light burning all night, and should it accidentally go out, it is believed some one in the house will surely die during the coming year.

The American Christmas is a modification of the English. In large towns it is universally kept, but in some villages but few shops are closed, and only one or two of the half-dozen churches are open for service.

Coin is presumed to be from the Latin *caesus*, a die or stamp, and itself really is a piece of metal converted into money by a legal stamp.

Coins are among the most certain evidences of history. In the latter part of the Greek series they illustrate the chronology of reigns.

Another word belonging to this class comes from the Roman coin issued by Servius Tullius, and bore the image of a sheep (*pecunia*), and was thence called *pecunia*, the term subsequently applied to money in general.

The French *franc* took its name from the first syllable of the inscription *francorum rex*, king of the French.

The guinea derived its name from the coast of Guinea, in Africa, from which was brought the gold from which it was coined, first in the year 1664.

The American cent began to make its appearance from the mint in 1792, and was prepared by Robert Morris, the great financier of the Revolution.

A simple test is to cork up a small bottle nearly full of it, in which a piece of lump sugar has been put.

To ascertain if water contains iron, take a glass of water and add to it a few drops of the infusion of nutgalls, or suspend a nutgall in it by means of a thread for twenty-four hours.

To ascertain if water contains magnesia, take a quantity of the water, and boil down to a twentieth part of its bulk; then drop a few grains of carbonate of ammonia into a small glass of water.

No man knows what a ministering angel his wife is until he comes home one day, suffering with a dreadful cold, and she happens to have a bottle of Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup in the house.

CALENDAR FOR 1883.

Calendar for 1883 showing months from Jan to Dec with days of the week and dates.

Eclipses for the Year 1883. There will be two eclipses of the sun, both of the annular kind.

Morning Stars. Venus until February 20, after December 10, after December 10, after December 10.

Evening Stars. Mars until February 20, after December 10, after December 10, after December 10.

The Four Seasons. Winter begins December 21, 1882, and lasts 89 days, 8 hours and 46 minutes.

Church Days and Cycles of Time. Septuagesima Sunday... February 23, Sexagesima Sunday... February 24.

Variations in a Man's Height. A contributor to the German *Militar-Wochenblatt* who has been lately employed in mustering and examining the recruits drafted this year into the German army.

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