

Seminole from Florida, on their way to explore the country west of Arkansas, for a residence near the emigrant Creeks.

SCHEDIASMA.

NIRAMICHI.

TUESDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 25, 1832.

In appearing before our readers on the morning of the Anniversary of the greatest festival of the Christian Church, and the commencement of a season which is—and we trust will long continue to be—set apart for rational and innocent amusements, we beg to tender them the compliments of the season, and sincerely hope they will participate largely in all the comforts and enjoyments of this life, and that the approaching New-Year may have in store for them

“Many beautiful days sleeping in its bosom.”

We are indebted to a friend for the following communication, illustrative of many of the ceremonies observed at the present season.

CHRISTMAS CEREMONIES.

Amongst the rising generation, considerable curiosity is excited at this season of the year, as to the meaning of ceremonies generally observed at Christmas. In England these are known by the popular name of *Christmas Candle*; the *Christmas Block*; or *Yule Clog*; and by the practice of adorning Churches and houses with *Evergreens*; the latter ceremony has been adopted in some places of religious worship in these Provinces. If the following statement be considered sufficiently interesting, as explanatory of these customs, it is at your disposal.

LIGHTS AT CHRISTMAS.

The origin of ‘*The Yule Clog*,’ according to some learned men, is Saxon; and the venerable Bede, whose Biblical labours have so greatly benefitted society, tells us, that this season was celebrated by the heathen Saxons, previous to the introduction of Christianity into England, at the commencement of a New-Year. Of the certainty of this, some have doubted, and others have speculated upon the probability of its name being Persian, Arabic, Greek, &c. as best suited their respective views.

Of *illumination*, I think we may speak more confidently: allusions to a ‘light’ are not uncommon in the sacred writings. Jeremiah makes the taking away the light of a candle, and a total desolation the same thing. Job describes the destruction of a family among the Arabs, and the rendering one of their habitations desolate, after the same manner: ‘How oft is the candle of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their destruction upon them.’ And on the other hand, when David is promised a *lamp* always to remain in Jerusalem, it implies that his house should never become desolate. Were it necessary, scriptural references might be multiplied, particularly to Exodus 25, 26 chapters.

Lighted-lamps were used in religious ceremonies, both by the Greeks and Romans. This, it is probable, the Gentiles derived from the Hebrews. The Athenians lighted lamps, chiefly on the feasts of Minerva, Vulcan, and Prometheus. Lamps were introduced into Sepulchres some of which are said to have burned perpetually, and hence the fictions of their having been found burning after the lapse of several ages. This practice was imitated by some of the early Christians.

The Saviour of sinful men, whose entrance into our world, we at this season commemorate, is frequently spoken of under the emblem of *light*. In the prophecy of Malachi, He is called ‘*the sun of righteousness*’ in the gospel of St. Luke, ‘*the day spring from on high*.’ John the Baptist says, ‘*I am not that light, but am come to bear witness of that light*.’ The Shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night in the plains of Bethlehem, at the time of the Saviour’s birth, saw the *glory of the Lord shining round about them*. The name Epiphany, which is given in reference to this season by the framers of the formularies of the Established Church, is answerable to ‘*God manifest in the flesh*.’ One of the Fathers tells us of an ancient custom in the church of lighting up candles at mid-day, during the reading of the gospel, not that such artificial light was necessary, but to express the joy they experienced at the hearing of these glad tidings.

It is therefore probable, that the burning of *Candles* and the *Yule Clog*, were adopted as customs to be emblematical of the light of lights, the Saviour of the world.

EVERGREENS.

Tradition says, that the first Christian church in Britain was built of boughs, and that the disciples adopted the plan as more likely to attract the notice of the people, because the monks built their temples in that manner, probably to imitate the temples of Saturn,

which were always under the oak. The great feast of Saturn was always held in December; and as the oaks were then without leaves, the monks obliged the people to bring in boughs and sprigs of evergreens, and Christians, on the 25th of the same month, did the like, from whence originated the present custom.

But if it can be proved that the practice existed before the introduction of Christianity into Britain this hypothesis cannot be correct. At the birth of a child the Romans generally adorned their gates with green branches, flowers, and lamps. Ovid tells us that, by a decree of the Senate, before the gate of Augustus were set up branches of laurel, to intimate that he was a perpetual conqueror of his enemies. From Pliny we learn that a crown of green oak was suspended at the top of his house, as being the preserver of his citizens. Seneca informs us that the Jews, in Rome, on the Sabbath day set up branches of laurel before their windows. In the abominable *Dionysia*, (feasts given in honour of Bacchus, amongst the Greeks,) the worshippers were crowned with garlands of ivy, vine, &c. The singularity of the rewards distributed to the victors at the Grecian games, should also be remarked. Beautiful allusion is sometimes made to these in the writings of the apostles. In the Olympic games, sacred to Jupiter, the reward was a crown composed of wild olive; in the Pythian, sacred to Apollo, it was of laurel; in the Isthmian, of pines; and in the Næmian, of parsley.

Notwithstanding this, however, I am disposed to believe, that the Greeks and Romans had the custom originally from the Jews, for amongst them the practice was of Divine institution, and stands first connected with the *feast of tabernacles*, appointed to commemorate the dwelling of the Jews in tents in the wilderness. The Divine command is in Levit. XXIII, 40: “and ye shall take you on the first day, the boughs of goodly trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.” Whilst employed in carrying in their hands branches of palm-trees, olives, citrons, myrtles, and willows, they sang, “Hosanna, save we beseech thee.” They walked in procession round the altar, with these branches, amid the sound of trumpets, singing, Hosanna; and on the last or seventh day of the feast, they compassed the altar seven times. When the Saviour was conducted into Jerusalem by the believing Jews, who considered him to be the Messiah, they expressed their joy by cutting down branches from the trees, and strewing them in the way: such proceedings amongst them were emblematical of victory and success. They hereby expressed their boundless joy at finding in him the accomplishment of those petitions which they had so often offered for his coming at the feast of tabernacles.

We cannot, then, be at a loss to account for the origin of this custom, and must consider it not only as expressive of joy, but an emblem of that “*peace and good-will toward men*,” and that victory over all our enemies which are the immediate fruits of the incarnation of the appointed Saviour.

By an arrival at Halifax from St. John, Newfoundland, we have the following paragraph on the affairs of Portugal and Spain, under date of Lisbon, Oct. 25.

“Since the attack on Oporto, 29th ult. little has occurred there. It is now supposed a general attack will be made to-morrow (Don Miguel’s birthday.) He may be present, as he has been a few days at Coimbra to inspect the army in that vicinity and Oporto. In Spain there is a complete change—a Regency named by Ferdinand, who places all under care of the Queen. She has called all liberal Ministers and Generals into service, opened the Universities, and granted a general amnesty to all. This is a severe shock to the party there. All are anxious for the result of to-morrow, as the time the attempt is to be made to take Oporto.”

LADIES BOARDING SCHOOL, NEWCASTLE. On Thursday the 20th inst. the Young Ladies attending Mrs Maxwell’s Seminary, Newcastle, were examined in presence of The Rev. James Souter, and a respectable assemblage of Ladies and Gentlemen, on the various branches of a *Polite Female Education*, and acquitted themselves in a manner highly satisfactory to the visitors, and evinced manifest proofs of the fidelity and zeal with which Mrs M. discharges the important trust committed to her care.

We are still without the English November Mail, and have no later intelligence from Britain than our last week’s No. contained.

RISTOCUCHE, 29th November, 1832.

SIR

A report being industriously circulated in this County (Bonaventure, District of Gaspé,) that I have signed an apology for presiding at a Public Meeting of Freeholders and Inhabitants of this place, held at M’Kelau’s Inn, in August last. I think proper to contradict it.

In the Resolutions passed on that occasion I cordially concurred, and see no reason for changing my opinion. It is true that

some time in October last, a Mr Joseph Bert, a Frenchman (the only one residing on this River, and settled here since the last two years,) called at my house, by desire, as he said, of Mr Malo, Indian Missionary Priest, and Mr Thibendeau, one of the Representatives of this County, threatening me with the displeasure of the Assembly, and punishment by it, pursuant to one of Mr Neilson’s Gazettes he held in his hand; and sent him, as he said, by Mr Malo, unless I signed a recantation and apology to that house for presiding at the meeting.

The report alluded to I can only ascribe to this strange visit, and still stranger intimation brought me by Mr Bert, who, however, retired without receiving the satisfaction he required in the name of those Gentlemen.

I am Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
THOMAS BUSTEED

During the first four days of last week, it snowed with very little intermission every day, and it is supposed a greater quantity of snow is now on the ground than has been known for many years past, at this early period of the season. The weather during the above time was unusually mild, but Sunday and yesterday the cold was intense. A number of sleighs from Westmorland, and other places, have arrived with provisions, &c., which has abundantly stocked the market with the necessaries and luxuries of life, which are selling at reasonable prices, placing them within the reach of all classes of the community. There has also been a large quantity of Bass brought from the North West Branch. This is the first time, we believe, that this species of fish has been caught in our river during winter, and we trust early measures will be resorted to for the protection of the same.

DIED—In Chatham, on Thursday morning last, at the residence of Francis Peabody, Esquire, after a long and severe illness, Miss LYDIA JONES.

SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE.

PORT OF ST. JOHN.

Arrd. Dec. 10—ship Orion, Liverpool. Cleared—ships Ant, Port Glasgow; Louisa, London. Loyalist, Southampton; Caledonia, Liverpool.

PORT OF ST. ANDREWS.

Arrd. Dec. 7—barques Bellona, Dublin; Caledonia, Liverpool. Cleared—barques Pilot, Bristol; New Prospect, London.

PORT OF HALIFAX.

Cleared, Dec. 18—ship Janet, Liverpool; barque Lunenburg, Liverpool.

PRINCE ED. ISLAND, December 4—The schooner Marmion, of this port, Sutherland, master, belonging to Mr Le Page, from St. Pierre’s, was driven on shore in a gale of wind, about 2 A. M. on Sunday last, on Graham’s Point, at the entrance of the harbour of Three Rivers. Hopes were entertained of saving the cargo, consisting chiefly of dry and pickled fish. The crew and passengers got all safe on shore.

One of the passengers by the Marmion informs us, that the Victory, Terrio, hence for Halifax, with produce was lost, with all the crew, at the entrance of Arichat, about a fortnight ago.

QUEBEC, December 7—Messrs Brocklesby, Finch, and Bell, who went down to survey the *Sir Edward Codrington*, at Malbay, returned last evening. They were unable to board the other vessels ice-bound in the river, as none of the canoe men would risk the strength of the current and the present state of the ice is not considered sufficiently strong to admit of its being passed over in safety. Similar difficulties will prevent for some time the crews of the vessels from landing. The *Sir Edward* has been condemned.

The ship *Rebecca*, wrecked below, was sold on Monday for the benefit of the concerned. Her Hull, standing rigging, anchors and chains, brought £400; the sails, materials, and stores £200.

Dec. 10—Extract of a Letter from Rimonski, of the 3d instant, received this morning:—

“I am sorry to say that Capt. Noble, of the *Miriam & Jane*, is with us here. That vessel was driven in by ice at the north end of Barnaby Island. Captain N. passed over the ice to this yesterday evening, and while on shore the wind came strong from the south, dispersed the ice and drove the ship into the current. I went with Captain Noble to Barnaby Island, but we could see nothing of his vessel. The probability is that the mate has proceeded homewards, as the river appears tolerably clear of drift ice. Captain N. has gone down to Father Point to look for her; his carpenter and a boy who came ashore with him remain here.”

The brig *James Laughton* is completely inclosed by ice inside off the anchorage at Barnaby—she grounds with the ebb tide, but is not damaged. There is no probability of her getting out. The ship *Mountaineer*, and *Emerald*, were outside of Barnaby yesterday.

P S (6th instant)—Captain Noble has returned—he saw a vessel off the Point, and intends trying to overtake her in a pilot boat.