

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 17, 1928

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WHEN WINTER WAS A DREADED SEASON

At this time of the year, when the days are growing shorter and there are occasional hints of frost in the air, we cherish pleasant anticipations of the coming winter; a season that civilization has made the gayest of the four.

In winter the unkindly intentions of nature are frustrated by furnace heat, electric light and weather-proof houses. It is the season of feasting and social activity. There are winter sports by day and a variety of amusement by night.

With quite different feelings our ancestors of a few centuries ago saw winter approaching. Only meager means of mitigating its hardships were available, and it caused suffering among people of all classes, though chiefly, of course, among the poor, who were a vastly greater majority then than they are now.

"The whole ancient and mediaeval world," writes Prof. L. O. Kuhns, "seemed to have an inborn dread of winter, and the only mention we find of it is one of complaint, or as an antithesis to spring and summer. We must remember that to the Middle Ages it was a period of cold and discomfort; both castle and hut were poorly protected against the inclemency of the weather, and outdoor life was disagreeable. In some respects night was regarded in the Middle Ages with the same antipathetic feelings as winter. Hence the long nights of winter were an additional cause of dislike. Spring came to the mediaeval world as a deliverance from the bondage of winter and its advent was hailed with universal joy."

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