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Miles and John Hadfield

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Miles and John Hadfield : The twelve days of Christmas before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The twelve days of Christmas:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. AN INTERESTING SURVEY OF TRADITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TWELVE DAYS AFTER CHRISTMASBy Steven H ProppThe authors state in their Introduction to this 1961 book: "If one considers that ... the Christmas period immediately succeeds the winter solstice... it is not surprising that within these twelve days, even in a largely materialistic world, there still remains a profound significance. The spiritual element of Christmas still inspires, and is enhanced by, all branches of the Christian faith. The more mundane element is still expressed by the simple traditions of good friendship, good feeding, and good drinking... we have sought to assemble in this book a sort of literary museum of the traditions and observances relating to the significant days which the Christian church took over from the pagans... Our main aim has been to give a short historical survey of the customs and traditions of each of the important days among the twelve, illustrated from contemporary sources.. We have ... taken Christmas as we find it today, and discussed or illustrated those traditions or observances which seem recognizably connected with it." (Pg. 5-6)They suggest, "More probably the choice of 25 December had some connexion with the feast of the Sun God on the day of the winter solstice---25 December in the Julian calendar. With the Sun god was identified Mithras, that most powerful of Persian gods, who in the centuries immediately following the birth of Christ was adopted officially by the Romans, and whose cult came near to eclipsing Christianity. It seems that the early Christians fought a battle for possession of his day---and won." (Pg. 15)About the Christmas tree, they note, "the use of the fir ... seems to have originated at the winter solstice celebrations of the pagan German tribes in the Black Forest; it was well and widely established by Martin Luther's time. Probably not until the

end of the seventeenth century did it carry lights. The custom was essentially a German one, spreading through the fir-clad Scandinavian countries and reaching America when Hessian soldiers were engaged in the Revolution... It may come as a surprise ... to know that the cult of the Christmas tree was familiar in the United States before it was known in much of Europe... The custom was, in fact, known and described in England before the occasion that made it, almost overnight, a major part of the British Christmas celebrations---the marriage of pretty little Queen Victoria to Prince Albert... in 1840." (Pg. 33-35) They observe, "Today, all that remains of the traditional celebrations of the eve of Christmas is the hanging up of the children's stockings (or putting out their shoes), the decoration of the Christmas tree, and the strategic suspension of holly and mistletoe... There is just one observance of Christmas Eve which, in country places in England at least, may possibly be gaining rather than losing ground. That is the ringing of church bells as summons to the midnight service..." (Pg. 59) They point out, "some of the practices of the Roman Kalends have become attached to Christmas... The connexion between Rome and this day is a close one... The Church had no scruples in making use of these pagan traditions as symbols of the New Year, and they are sometimes to be found represented in medieval church carvings." (Pg. 146) Though an older book, this book still has value to lovers of Christmas history and lore (particular of the English side of things). 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a magnificently illustrated holiday book By Charles G. Atkins And - Colly birds was inserted as the original publication - the Americans misunderstood and substituted 'calling'. Colly means sooty - or black birds. Finally!