



SNOW BOUND.—Whitney.

FEBRUARY.

February was introduced in the Roman Calendar by Numa, when he extended the year from 10 to 12 months. Its name is derived from the circumstance that during the early part of this month occurred the Roman religious festival of Expiation and Purification, as also from the fact that during this period took place the celebrated worship, with lustrations of Februs, the old Latin divinity, whose ceremonies were believed to have the effect of producing fertility in man. It is in February that the intercalary day every fourth year is inserted.

CANDLEMAS, 2nd February. Purification of the Virgin, a ceremony probably engrafted on the Pagan-Rome one. The popular name is derived from the ceremony of the Church of Rome, blessing candles by the clergy, and their distribution among the people, by whom they were afterwards carried lighted in solemn procession. In some countries it was customary on this day for school children to present small sums of money to their teacher. It is a holiday in the Church of England.

SHROVE TUESDAY, 21st February. So named from the ancient practice in the Church of Rome of confessing sins and being *shrived*, that is, obtaining absolution. The old English custom of eating pan cakes was observed on this day; thus the popular name, "Pancake Tuesday."

ASH WEDNESDAY, 22nd February. The first in Lent, so called from the ancient practice in the Church of Rome, of sprinkling the worshippers with ashes as a reminder that they were but dust and ashes.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, 14th February. A ceremony of ancient Rome, held in connection with the Lupercalia feasts, when the names of young women were put in a box and drawn by the men as chance directed, the mated ones being valentines for the year.