BRITISH POPULAR CUSTOMS
PRESENT AND PAST

T. F. THISELTON DYER, M.A.



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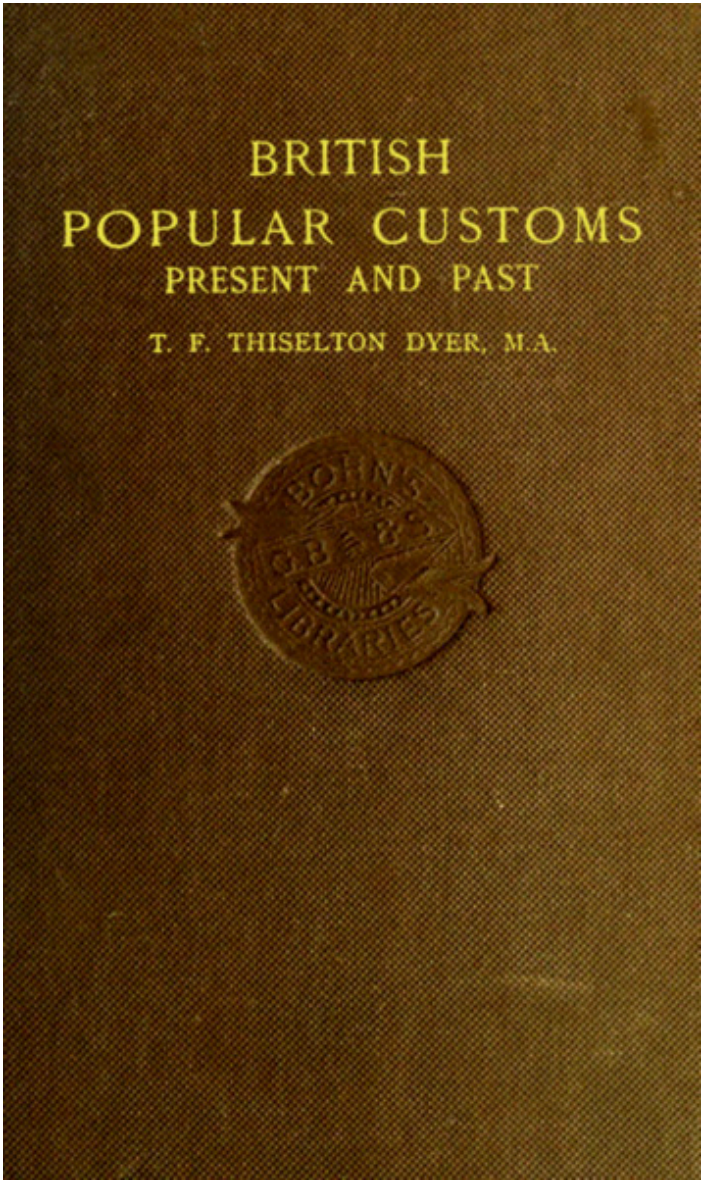
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BRITISH POPULAR CUSTOMS

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BRITISH

POPULAR CUSTOMS

PRESENT AND PAST

ILLUSTRATING THE SOCIAL AND

DOMESTIC

MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE

ARRANGED
ACCORDING TO THE CALENDAR OF
THE YEAR

BY THE REV.
T. F. THISELTON DYER, M.A.
PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXON.

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PREFACE.

In presenting the following pages to the Public I do not lay claim to any originality, my object simply having been to collect together, into a readable and condensed form, from various sources within my reach, accounts of Customs which, if not already obsolete, are quickly becoming so.

With regard to the general plan of the book, it

speaks for itself. It should, however, be stated that the movable feasts are placed under the earliest days on which they can fall.

In conclusion, I would only add that I am much indebted to Mr. James Britten, of the British Museum, for the valuable help and suggestions which he has given me whilst passing the proof-sheets through the Press.

T. F. THISELTON DYER.

September 15th, 1875.

POPULAR CUSTOMS.

JAN. 1.] NEW YEAR'S DAY.

New Year's Day has always been a time of general rejoicing and festivity, its observance being characterised by many a curious custom and superstitious practice. History tells us how on this day the Druids were accustomed, with much pomp

and ceremony, to distribute branches of the sacred mistletoe amongst the people; those precious gifts having the night before been cut from the oak-tree in a forest dedicated to the gods. Among the Saxons of the northern nations the new year was ushered in by friendly gifts, and celebrated with such extraordinary festivity that people actually used to reckon their age by the numbers of annual merry-makings in which they had participated. Fosbroke, in his *Encyclopædia of Antiquities*, notices the continuation of the Roman practice of interchanging gifts during the middle and later ages; a custom which prevailed especially amongst our kings, queens, and the nobility. According to Matthew Paris, Henry III., following the discreditable example of some of the Roman emperors, even extorted them from his subjects.

In Rymer's *Fœdera* (vol. x. p. 387) a list is given of the gifts received by Henry VI. between Christmas Day and February 4th, 1428, consisting of sums of 40*s.*, 20*s.*, 13*s.* 4*d.*, 10*s.*, 6*s.* 8*d.*, and 3*s.* 4*d.*

In the reign of Henry VII. the reception of the New Year's gifts presented by the king and queen to each other and by their household and courtiers, was reduced to a solemn formula.

Agnes Strickland, in her *Lives of the Queens of England* (1864, vol. ii. p. 83), quotes the following extract from a MS. of Henry VII.'s Norroy herald, in possession of Peter Le Neve, Esq.: "On the day of the New Year, when the king came to his foot-sheet, his usher of his chamber-door said to him, 'Sire, here is a New Year's gift coming from the queen;' then the king replied, 'Let it come in.' Then the king's usher let the queen's messenger come within the *yate*" (meaning the gate of the railing which surrounded the royal bed, instances of which are familiar to the public in the state bedrooms at Hampton Court to

this day, and it is probable that the scene was very similar), "Henry VII. sitting at the foot of the bed in his dressing-gown, the officers of his bed-chamber having turned the top sheet smoothly down to the foot of the bed when the royal personage rose. The queen,[1]
in like manner, sat at her foot-sheet, and received the king's New Year's gift within the gate of her bed-railing. When this formal exchange of presents had taken place between the king and his consort, they received, seated in the same manner, the New Year's gifts of their nobles. 'And,' adds the herald, assuming the first person, 'I shall report to the queen's grace and them that be about her, what rewards are to be given to them that bring her grace New Year's gifts, for I trow they are not so good as those of the king.'"

[1] Elizabeth of York.

There is in the possession of the Marquis of Bath, Longleat, a manuscript, which contains a list of moneys given to King Henry VIII. in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, as New Year's gifts. They are from archbishops, bishops, noblemen, doctors, gentlemen, &c. The amount which the king's grace complacently pocketed on this occasion was 792*l.* 10*s.* 10*d.*—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. xi. p. 8.

Honest old Latimer, however, says Hone (*Every Day Book*, 1836, vol. i. p. 7), instead of presenting Henry VIII. with a purse of gold, put into the king's hand a New Testament, with a leaf conspicuously doubled down at Hebrews xiii. 4, which, on reference, will be found to have been worthy of all *acceptation*, though not, perhaps, well accepted.

A manuscript roll of the public revenue of the fifth year of Edward VI. has an entry of rewards given on New Year's Day to the king, officers, and servants, amounting to 155*l.* 5*s.*, and also of sums given to the

servants of those who presented New Year's gifts to the king.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the custom of presenting New Year's gifts to the sovereign was carried to an extravagant height. Indeed, Dr. Drake is of opinion that the wardrobe and jewelry of Queen Elizabeth were principally supported by these annual contributions on New Year's Day. He cites lists of New Year's gifts presented to her from the original rolls published in her "progresses" by Mr. Nichols; and from these it appears that the presents were made by the great officers of state, peers and peeresses, bishops, knights and their ladies, gentlemen and gentlewomen, physicians and apothecaries, and others of lower grade, down to her Majesty's dustman. The presents consisted of sums of money, costly articles of ornament for the queen's person or apartments, caskets studded with precious stones, valuable necklaces, bracelets, gowns, embroidered mantles, smocks, petticoats, looking-glasses, fans, silk stockings, and a great variety of other articles. The largest sum given by any of the temporal lords was 20*l.*; but the Archbishop of Canterbury gave 40*l.*, the Archbishop of York 30*l.*, and the other spiritual lords, 20*l.* and 10*l.* Dr. Drake says, that although Elizabeth made returns to the New Year's gifts, in plate and other articles, yet she nevertheless took sufficient care that the balance should be in her own favour.

In the reign of James I. the money gifts seem to have been continued for some time, but the ornamental articles presented seem to have been few and of small value. No rolls, nor, indeed, any notices of New Year's gifts presented to Charles I. seem to have been preserved, though probably there were such. The custom, no doubt, ceased entirely during

the Commonwealth, and was never afterwards revived, at least, to any extent worthy of notice. Mr. Nichols mentions that the last remains of the custom at court consisted in placing a crown-piece under the plate of each of the chaplains in waiting on New Year's Day, and that this custom had ceased early in the nineteenth century.

The New Year's gifts, says Chambers (*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 31), presented by individuals to each other were suited to sex, rank, situation, and circumstances. From Bishop Hall's *Satires* (1598), it appears that the usual gift of tenantry in the country to their landlords was a capon; and Cowley, addressing the same class of society says:

> "Ye used in the former days to fall
> Prostrate to your landlord in his hall,
> When with low legs, and in an humble guise,
> Ye offer'd up a capon sacrifice
> Unto his worship, at a New Year's tide."

Ben Jonson, in his *Christmas Masque*, among other characters introduces "New Year's gift in a blue coat, serving-man like, with an orange, and a sprig of rosemary on his head, his hat full of brooches, with a collar of gingerbread, his torch-bearer carrying a marchpane, with a bottle of wine on either arm." An orange stuck with cloves was a common present, and is explained by Lupton, who says that the flavour of the wine is improved, and the wine itself preserved from mouldiness, by an orange or lemon stuck with cloves being hung within the vessel, so as not to touch the liquor.

When pins were first invented, and brought into use about the beginning of the sixteenth century, they were a New Year's gift very acceptable to ladies, instead of the wooden skewers which they had

hitherto used. Sometimes, however, in lieu of pins, they received a composition in money, called *pin money*, an expression which has been extended to a sum of money secured by a husband on his marriage for the private expenses of his wife.

Gloves, too, were customary New Year's gifts. They were far more expensive than nowadays, and occasionally a sum of money was given instead, which was called *glove money*.

A hundred years ago, the Poet Laureate not only wrote a New Year's ode, by way of salutation to the sovereign and royal family, but those illustrious personages sat in state at St. James's, and heard it, as it was sung by celebrated vocalists, for whom it had been composed by some expert in music. Now that the Laureate's song would be worth the listening to, we have none written especially for the New Year. This musical festival has ceased to be.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. xi. p. 8.

Latterly, New Year's Day has been celebrated with but little public festivity, the only open joyous demonstration being the sound of merry peals from the church bells, as they ring out the Old and ring in the New Year.

Many persons make a point of wearing new clothes on this day, and consider any omission of the kind unlucky. At court it is one of the twelve *Offering Days*.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* Hampson, 1841, vol. i. p 33.

In the North of England it is considered unlucky for any inmate to go out of the house until some one from without has entered it; and the first foot across the threshold is watched with great anxiety, the good or bad luck of the house during the year, depending on the first comer being a man or a woman.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. xi. p. 244.

Opening the Bible on this day is a superstitious practice observed in some parts of the country, and much credit is attached to it. It is usually set about with some little ceremony on the morning, before breakfast, as it must be performed fasting. The Bible is laid on the table unopened, and the parties who wish to consult it are then to open it in succession. They are not at liberty to choose any particular part of the book, but must open it at random. Wherever this may happen to be, the inquirer is to place his finger on any chapter contained in the two open pages, but without any previous perusal or examination. It is believed that the good or ill fortune, the happiness or the misery, of the consulting party, during the ensuing year, will be in some way or other described and foreshown by the contents of the chapter. The custom is called *dipping*. —*Pop. Antiq.* Brand, 1849, vol. i. p. 20; *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. xii. p. 303.

It is customary in some places for persons to carry about decorated apples, and present them to their friends. The apples have three skewers of wood stuck into them, so as to form a tripod foundation; and their sides are ornamented with oat grains, while various evergreens and berries adorn the top. A raisin is occasionally fastened on each oat grain, but this is probably an innovation.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. i. p. 214.

In some parts of the county of Nottingham, on the first day of the New Year, troops of little children might be seen a few years ago, each bearing an orange, an apple, or a nutmeg, sometimes gilded, and stuck with cloves or rosemary, which they were carrying to their friends to ask their blessing; the present thus given was generally carefully reserved. —*Jour. of the Archæological Association*, 1853, vol.

viii. p. 231.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

It appears from a MS. in the British Museum (*Status Scholæ Etonensis*, A.D. 1560, MS. Brit. Mus. Donat. 4843, fol. 423), that the boys of Eton School used, on the day of the Circumcision, to play for little New Year's gifts before and after supper; and that boys had a custom on that day, for good luck's sake, of making verses, and sending them to the provost, masters, &c., as also of presenting them to each other.

CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORELAND.

Early in the morning the common people assemble together, carrying stangs and baskets. Any inhabitant, stranger, or whoever joins not this ruffian tribe in sacrificing to their favourite saint-day, if unfortunate enough to be met by any of the band, is immediately mounted across the stang (if a woman, she is basketed), and carried shoulder high to the nearest public house, where the payment of sixpence immediately liberates the prisoner. None, though ever so industriously inclined, are permitted to follow their respective avocations on that day.—*Gent. Mag.* 1791, vol. lxi. p. 1169.

ESSEX.

Formerly the bailiffs of Maldon sent on the first day of the year, to the king's vice-admiral of Essex a present of oysters and wild fowl. Sir John Bramston notices the arrival of the gift on New Year's Day (March 26), 1688, in his *Autobiography*, printed for

the Camden Society in 1845.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

At Bromyard and its neighbourhood, as twelve o'clock on the 31st of December draws near, and the last of the Christmas carols are heard without doors, and a pleasurable excitement is playing on the faces of the family around the last Christmas log within, a rush is made to the nearest spring of water, and whoever is fortunate enough to first bring in the "cream of the well," as it is termed, and those who first taste of it, have "prospect of good luck through the forthcoming year." Also, in the early hours of the New Year, after a funeral service has been said over "Old Tom" as the old year is called, at the public-houses and ale and cider stores, the streets are filled with boys and men, singing in the loudest tones possible:

"I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year,
A pocket full of money,
And a cellar full of beer,
And a good fat pig
To serve you all the year.
Ladies and gentlemen
Sat (*sic*) by the fire,
Pity we poor boys
Out in the mire."

The Antiquary, 1873, vol. iii. p. 7.

In the neighbourhood of Ross, it is deemed most unfortunate for a woman to enter the house first, and therefore an inquiry is generally made whether a male has previously been there. It is customary for the peasantry to send about on this day a small

pyramid, made of leaves, apples, nuts, &c.—Fosbroke, *Sketches of Ross*, 1822, p. 58.

LANCASHIRE.

Should a female, or a light-haired male, be the first to enter a house on the morning of New Year's Day, it is supposed to bring bad luck for the whole of the year then commencing. Various precautions are taken to prevent this misfortune: hence many male persons with black or dark hair are in the habit of going from house to house, on that day, to take the New Year in; for which they are treated with liquor, and presented with a small gratuity. So far is the apprehension carried, that some families will not open the door to any one until satisfied by the voice that he is likely to bring the house a year's good luck by entering it.

The most kindly and charitable woman in a neighbourhood will strongly refuse to give any one a light on the morning of New Year's Day, as most unlucky to the one who gives it away.—Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk-Lore*, 1867, p. 214.

ISLE OF MAN.

On this day an old custom, says Train in his *History of the Isle of Man* (1845, vol. ii. p. 115), is observed called the *quaaltagh*. In almost every parish throughout the island, a party of young men go from house to house singing the following rhyme:

"Again we assemble, a merry New Year
To wish to each one of the family here,
Whether man, woman, or girl, or boy,
That long life, and happiness, all may enjoy,
May they of potatoes and herrings have plenty,

With butter and cheese, and each other dainty;
And may their sleep never, by night or day,
Disturbed be by even the tooth of a flea;
Until at the Quaaltagh again we appear,
To wish you, as now, all a happy New Year."

When these lines are repeated at the door, the whole party are invited into the house to partake of the best the family can afford. On these occasions a person of dark complexion always enters first, as a light-haired male or female is deemed unlucky to be the first-foot or *quaaltagh* on New Year's morning. The actors of the *quaaltagh* do not assume fantastic habiliments like the mummers of England, or the guisards of Scotland, nor do they, like these rude performers of the Ancient Mysteries, appear ever to have been attended by minstrels playing on different kinds of musical instruments.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The following extract, relating to Newcastle-on-Tyne, is taken from the *North of England Advertiser* of January 4th, 1873:

The children on New Year's morn are busy begging their New Year's gifts, saying, "Old Year out, New Year in; please give us my New Year's gift;" or "A merry Christmas and a happy New Year;" followed by the usual appeal for a present. The first-foot is an important personage. If he should be a dark man, it is a sign of good luck; if a light one not so lucky; but alas! if a woman, the worst luck will befall the household. Similar to the first hearing of the cuckoo, it is of the greatest importance whether or not you have money in your pocket and your cupboard full on New Year's Day.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

In this county it is considered unlucky to remove anything from a house until something has been brought in, and therefore, early in the morning, each member of the family carries some trifling thing in. In the neighbourhood of Newark, this rhyme is sung:

"Take out, and take in,
Bad luck is sure to begin;
But take in and take out.
Good luck will come about."

Jour. of Arch. Assoc. 1853, vol. viii. p. 231.

Brand, in his *Pop. Antiq.* (1849, vol. i. p. 15), alludes to this custom as existing in Lincoln and its neighbourhood. The rhyme he quotes is slightly different from the above:

"Take out, then take in,
Bad luck will begin;
Take in, then take out,
Good luck comes in."

OXFORDSHIRE.

Pointer, in his *Oxoniensis Academia* (1749, p. 71), alludes to a custom, observed at Brasenose College, Oxford, of the Bachelors of Arts and Undergraduates belonging to the college going in a body on New Year's Day to their Principal, and each presenting him with an epistle by way of a New Year's gift, wishing him a happy New Year.

We learn from the same writer, that it was formerly the practice at Queen's College to give a needle and thread to the Fellows, being a rebus on their founder's name, Eglesfield, *aiguille* in French

signifying a needle, and *fil* a thread (p. 38).

STAFFORDSHIRE.

A grotesque manorial custom is described as being kept up in the reign of Charles II., in connection with Hilton. There existed in that house a hollow brass image, about a foot high, representing a man kneeling in an indecorous position. It was known all over the country as Jack of Hilton. There were two apertures; one very small at the mouth, another about two-thirds of an inch in diameter at the back, and the interior would hold rather more than four pints of water, which, says Plot (*History of Staffordshire*, 1686, p. 433), 'when set to a strong fire, evaporates in the same manner as in an Æolopile, and vents itself at the mouth in a constant blast, blowing the fire so strongly that it is very audible, and makes a sensible impression in that part of the fire where the blast lights.'

The custom was this. An obligation lay upon the lord of the adjacent manor of Essington, every New Year's Day, to bring a goose to Hilton, and drive it three times round the hall-fire, which Jack of Hilton was all the time blowing by the discharge of his steam. He was then to carry the bird into the kitchen and deliver it to the cook; and when it was dressed he was to carry it in a dish to the table of his lord paramount, the lord of Hilton, receiving in return a dish of meat for his own mess.

An annual payment, called Moseley's Dole, was formerly made by the corporation, consisting of a penny a piece to all the inhabitants of Walsall, and of the adjoining parish of Rushall, which is supposed to have anciently formed part of that of Walsall.

Three persons were employed to make the

distribution, who began on New Year's Day, and went through the parishes, giving a penny to each inmate of every house, whether permanently or accidentally abiding there.

It is stated by Plot (*History of Staffordshire*), that the earliest mention of this dole is in the 36th Henry VIII., when 7*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.* discharged it. The first trace of it, however, that is found in the documents of the corporation is in 1632, when its amount was 14*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.* The amount increased gradually till 1799, when it was 60*l.*, and until the time of its cessation in 1825, it remained yearly about the same.

There are many traditions respecting the origin of this dole, but they all concur in attributing it to one Thomas Moseley, from whom an estate at Bascott in Warwickshire was derived. The donor, in granting this estate to the Corporation, charged it with the annual payment of nine marks to the Abbot of Hales Owen, "who should keep one mark for his labours in distributing the remaining eight marks, at the *obit* of the said Thomas Moseley at Walsall, for the souls of the said Thomas and Margary his wife, and others; and this by the oversight of the Vicar of Walsall, and of all the chaplains of the Guild of St. John the Baptist, of the church of Walsall."

The eight marks above named were no doubt the origin of the dole, and would, before the Reformation, be amply sufficient to supply a penny a piece to all the parishioners, or at least to all who repaired to the church on the obit day, to pray for the donor and his wife—a superstitious custom which caused the estate to be seized by Henry VIII., when he suppressed the monasteries.—*History of Staffordshire*, White, 1857, p. 645; *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 55.

SUSSEX.

At Hastings, apples, nuts, oranges, &c., as well as money, are thrown out of the windows to be scrambled for by the fisher-boys and men. The custom is not kept up with the spirit of former days.

WARWICKSHIRE.

In the city of Coventry a sort of cake known by the name of *God-cakes* is sent. They are used by all classes, and vary in price from a halfpenny to one pound. They are invariably made in a triangular shape, an inch thick, and filled with a kind of mincemeat. So general is the use of them on the first day of the New Year, that the cheaper sorts are hawked about the streets as hot cross buns are on Good Friday in London. This custom seems peculiar to Coventry.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ii. p. 229.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

A belief exists in this county, that if the carol singer who first comes to the door on New Year's morning be admitted at the front door, conducted through the house, and let out at the back the inmates will have good luck during the year.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. iii. p. 313.

YORKSHIRE.

The following quaint account of a whimsical custom formerly observed on New Year's Day is taken from Blount's *Fragmenta Antiquitatis*, 1815, p. 555:

Near Hutton Conyers there is a large common,

called Hutton Conyers Moor, whereof William Aislabie, Esq., of Studley Royal (lord of the Manor of Hutton Conyers), is lord of the soil, and on which there is a large coney-warren belonging to the lord. The occupiers of messuages and cottages within the several towns of Hutton Conyers, Baldersby, Rainton, Dishforth, and Hewick, have right of estray for their sheep to certain limited boundaries on the common, and each township has a shepherd.

The lord's shepherd has a pre-eminence of tending his sheep on every part of the common; and wherever he herds the lord's sheep, the several other shepherds are to give way to him, and give up their *hoofing-place* so long as he pleases to depasture the lord's sheep thereon. The lord holds his court the first day in the year, to entitle those several townships to such right of estray; the shepherd of each township attends the court, and does fealty, by bringing to the court a large apple-pie, and a twopenny sweetcake (except the shepherd of Hewick, who compounds by paying sixteen-pence for all, which is drunk as after mentioned,) and a wooden spoon; each pie is cut in two, and divided by the bailiff, one half between the steward, bailiff, and the tenant of the coney-warren before mentioned, and the other half into six parts, and divided amongst the six shepherds of the above mentioned six townships. In the pie brought by the shepherd of Rainton an inner one is made, filled with prunes. The cakes are divided in the same manner. The bailiff of the manor provides furmenty and mustard, and delivers to each shepherd a slice of cheese and a penny roll. The furmenty, well mixed with mustard, is put into an earthen pot, and placed in a hole in the ground, in a garth belonging to the bailiff's house; to which place the steward of the court, with the bailiff,

tenant of the warren, and six shepherds, adjourn with their respective wooden spoons. The bailiff provides spoons for the stewards, the tenant of the warren, and himself. The steward first pays respect to the furmenty, by taking a large spoonful; the bailiff has the next honour, the tenant of the warren next, then the shepherd of Hutton Conyers, and afterwards the other shepherds by regular turns; then each person is served with a glass of ale (paid for by the sixteen-pence brought by the Hewick shepherd), and the health of the lord of the manor is drank; then they adjourn back to the bailiff's house, and the further business of the court is proceeded with.

Each pie contains about a peck of flour, is about sixteen or eighteen inches diameter, and as large as will go into the mouth of an ordinary oven. The bailiff of the manor measures them with a rule, and takes the diameter; and if they are not of a sufficient capacity, he threatens to return them, and fine the town. If they are large enough, he divides them with a rule and compasses into four equal parts; of which the steward claims one, the warrener another, and the remainder is divided amongst the shepherds. In respect to the furmenty, the top of the dish in which it is put is placed level with the surface of the ground; all persons present are entitled to eat of it, and those who do not, are not deemed loyal to the lord. Every shepherd is obliged to eat of it, and for that purpose is to take a spoon in his pocket to the court; for if any of them neglect to carry a spoon with him he is to lay him down upon his belly, and sup the furmenty, with his face to the pot or dish; at which time it is usual, by way of sport, for some of the bystanders to dip his face into the furmenty; and sometimes a shepherd, for the sake of diversion, will purposely leave his spoon at home.

In the North Riding of Yorkshire, those who have not the common materials for making a fire, generally sit without one on New Year's Day; for none of their neighbours, although hospitable at other times, will suffer them to light a candle at their fires. If they do, it is believed that one of the family will die within the year.—*Gent. Mag.* 1811, vol. lxxxi. p. 424.

Subjoined is all that appears to have survived of the Yorkshire *Hagmena song*:[2]

"To-night it is the New Year's night, to-morrow is the day,
And we are come for our right and for our ray,
As we used to do in old King Henry's day
Sing fellows, sing, hag man, ha!

If you go to the bacon-flick, cut me a good bit;
Cut, cut, and low, beware of your maw;
Cut, cut, and round, beware of your thumb,
That me and my merry men may have some.
Sing fellows, sing, hag-man, ha!

If you go to the black ark, bring me ten marks;
Ten marks, ten pound, throw it down upon the ground,
That me and my merry men may have some.
Sing fellows, sing, hag-man, ha!"

Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1870, vol. i. p. 11.

[2] See 'New Year's Eve.'

SCOTLAND.

In the Memoirs of Lord Langdale by Sir T. D. Hardy, 1852, vol. i. p. 55, occurs the following:

"Being in Scotland, I ought to tell you of Scotch

customs; and really they have a charming one on this occasion (i.e. New Year's Day). Whether it is meant as a farewell ceremony to the old one, or an introduction to the New Year, I can't tell; but on the 31st of December, almost everybody has a party, either to dine or sup. The company, almost entirely consisting of young people, wait together till twelve o'clock strikes, at which time every one begins to move, and they all fall to work. At what? why, kissing. Each male is successively locked in pure Platonic embrace with each female; and after this grand ceremony, which of course creates infinite fun, they separate and go home. This matter is not at all confined to these, but wherever man meets woman it is the particular privilege of this hour. The common people think it necessary to drink what they call *hot-pint*, which consists of strong beer, whisky, eggs, &c.; a most horrid composition; as bad, or worse than that infamous mixture called
fig-one,[3]
which the English people drink on Good Friday."

[3] Doubtless a misprint for *fig-sue*. See under Good Friday.

The letter from which this is an extract is signed Henry Beckersteth, and dated Edinburgh, January 1st, 1802.

Till very few years ago, in Scotland (says a correspondent of Chambers' *Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 28), the custom of *first-footing* was practised on New Year's morning.

On the approach of twelve o'clock of the last night of the old year, a
hot-pint[4]
was prepared—that is, a kettle or flagon full of warm, spiced, and sweetened ale, with an infusion of spirits. When the clock had struck the knell of the

departed year, each member of the family drank of this mixture, “and good health, and a happy New Year, and many of them, to all the rest,” with a general hand-shaking, and perhaps a dance round the table, with the addition of a song to the tune of Hey tuttie taitie:

“Weel may we a’ be,
Ill may we never see.
Here’s to the king
And the gude companie!” &c.

[4] Called also a *het-pint*. *Time’s Telescope*, 1824, p. 3.

The elders of the family would then most probably sally out with the hot kettle, and bearing also a competent provision of buns and short-bread, or bread-and-cheese, with the design of visiting their neighbours, and interchanging with them the same cordial greetings. If they met by the way another party similarly bent whom they knew, they would stop, and give and take sips from their respective kettles. Reaching the friend’s house, they would enter with vociferous good wishes, and soon send the kettle circulating. If they were the first to enter the house since twelve o’clock they were deemed as the *first-foot*; and as such it was most important for luck to the family in the coming year, that they should make this entry not empty-handed, but with their hands full of cakes, and bread-and-cheese; of which, on the other hand, civility demanded that each individual in the house should partake.

To such an extent did this custom prevail in Edinburgh, in the recollection of persons still living, that according to their account, the principal streets were more thronged between twelve and one in the morning than they usually were at mid-day. Much

innocent mirth prevailed, and mutual good feelings were largely promoted. An unlucky circumstance which took place on the 1st January, 1812, proved the means of nearly extinguishing the custom. A small party of reckless boys formed the design of turning the innocent festivities of *first-footing* to account for purposes of plunder. They kept their counsel well. No sooner had the people come abroad on the principal thoroughfares of the Old Town than these youths sallied out in small bands, and commenced the business which they had undertaken. Their previous agreement was *to look out for the white neckcloths*, such being the best mark by which they could distinguish in the dark individuals likely to carry any property worthy of being taken. A great number of gentlemen were thus spoiled of their watches and other valuables. The least resistance was resented by the most brutal maltreatment. A policeman and a young man of the rank of a clerk in Leith died of the injuries they had received. An affair so singular, so uncharacteristic of the people among whom it happened, produced a widespread and lasting feeling of surprise. The outrage was expiated by the execution of three of the youthful rioters on the chief scene of their wickedness; but from that time it was observed that the old custom of going about with the *hot pint*—the ancient wassail—fell off.

There was in Scotland also a *first-footing* independent of the *hot-pint*. It was a time for some youthful friend of the family to steal to the door, in the hope of meeting there the young maiden of his fancy, and obtaining the privilege of a kiss as her *first-foot*. Great was the disappointment on his part, and great the joking among the family, if, through accident or plan, some half-withered aunt or ancient grand-dame came to receive him instead of the

blooming Jenny.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 29.

In the south of Scotland, as soon as the clock has struck the midnight hour, one of a family goes to the well as quickly as possible, and carefully skims it; this they call getting the scum or ream (cream) of the well:

> "Twall struck—twa neebour hizzies raise,
> An' liltin gaed a sad gate;
> The flower o' the well to our house gaes
> An' I'll the bonniest lad get."

The *flower of the well* signifies the first pail of water, and the girl who is so fortunate as to obtain the prize is supposed to have more than a double chance of obtaining the most accomplished young man in the parish.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 129.

As soon as the last night of the year sets in, it is the signal with the Strathdown Highlander for the suspension of his usual employment, and he directs his attention to more agreeable callings. The men form into bands, with tethers and axes, and shaping their course to the juniper bushes, they return home laden with mighty loads, which are arranged round the fire to dry until morning. A certain discreet person is despatched to the *dead and living ford* to draw a pitcher of water in profound silence, without the vessel touching the ground, lest its virtue should be destroyed, and on his return all retire to rest. Early on New Year's morning the *usque-cashrichd*, or water from the *dead and living ford*, is drunk, as a potent charm until next New Year's Day, against the spells of witchcraft, the malignity of evil eyes, and the activity of all infernal agency. The qualified Highlander then takes a large brush, with which he profusely asperses the occupants of all beds; from whom it is not unusual for him to receive ungrateful

remonstrances against ablution. This ended, and the doors and windows being thoroughly closed, and all crevices stopped, he kindles piles of the collected juniper in the different apartments, till the vapour from the burning branches condenses into opaque clouds, and coughing, sneezing, wheezing, gasping, and other demonstrations of suffocation ensue. The operator, aware that the more intense the "smuchdan" the more propitious the solemnity, disregards these indications, and continues, with streaming eyes and averted head, to increase the fumigation, until in his own defence he admits the air to recover the exhausted household and himself. He then treats the horses, cattle, and other bestial stock in the town with the same smothering, to keep them from harm throughout the year. When the gude wife gets up, and having ceased from coughing, has gained sufficient strength to reach the bottle *dhu*, she administers its comfort to the relief of the sufferers; laughter takes the place of complaint, all the family get up, wash their faces, and receive the visits of their neighbours, who arrive full of congratulations peculiar to the day. *Mu nase choil orst*, "My Candlemas bond upon you," is the customary salutation, and means, in plain words, "You owe me a New Year's gift." A point of great emulation is, who shall salute the other first, because the one who does so is entitled to a gift from the person saluted. Breakfast, consisting of all procurable luxuries, is then served, the neighbours not engaged are invited to partake, and the day ends in festivity.—*Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, Stewart, 1851.

Pennant, in his *Tour in Scotland* (1790, vol. i. p. 206), says that on New Year's Day the Highlanders burn juniper before their cattle.

FORFARSHIRE.

At the commencement of the New Year[5] the opulent burghers of Montrose begin to feast with their friends, and to go a round of visits, which takes up the space of many weeks. Upon such occasions, the gravest is expected to be merry, and to join in a cheerful song.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, Sinclair, 1793, vol. v. p. 48.

[5] Also at Christmas.

ORKNEY ISLES.

At Lady, companies of men go to the houses of the rich, and awake the family by singing the New Year's song, in full chorus. When the song is concluded, the family entertain the musicians with ale and bread, and give them a smoked goose or a piece of beef.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1845, vol. xv. p. 142.

At the parishes of Cross, Burness, &c., New Year's gifts, under the title of "Christmas presents," are given to maid-servants by their masters.—*Stat. Account of Scotland*, Sinclair, 1793, vol. vii. p. 488.

HANDSEL MONDAY.

SCOTLAND.

The first Monday of the year is a great holiday among the peasantry of Scotland and children generally, as being the day peculiarly devoted in that country to the giving and receiving of presents. It is

on this account called *Handsel Monday*, handsel being in Scotland the equivalent of a Christmas-box, but more especially implying a gift at the commencement of a season or the induing of some new garment. The young people visit their seniors in expectation of *tips* (the *word*, but not the *action*, unknown in the north). Postmen, scavengers, and deliverers of newspapers look for their little annual guerdons. Among the rural population, *Auld Handsel Monday*, i.e. Handsel Monday old style, or the first Monday after the twelfth of the month, is the day usually held. The farmers used to treat the whole of their servants on that morning to a liberal breakfast of roast and boiled, with ale, whisky, and cake, to their utmost contentment, after which the guests went about seeing their friends for the remainder of the day. It was also the day on which any disposed for change gave up their places, and when new servants were engaged. Even now, when most old fashions are much decayed, *Auld Handsel Monday* continues to be the holiday of the year to the class of farm-labourers in Scotland.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 52.

Co. of Edinburgh.

At Currie the annual fair and Old Handsel Monday are the only periodical holidays for the working classes; on which latter occasion the servants enjoy the pleasure of returning to the bosom of their families, and spending the close of the day with their friends. The early part is generally observed in the less innocent amusement of raffles, and shooting with fire-arms, which, being often old and rusty, as well as wielded by inexperienced hands, have occasioned some disagreeable accidents.—*Stat. Acc.*

of Scotland 1845, vol. i. p. 550.

JAN. 5.]
EVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

Formerly itinerant minstrels used to bear a bowl of spiced wine to the houses of the gentry and others, from whom they expected a hospitable reception, and calling their bowl a wassail-bowl, they drank wassail to their entertainers.

In ancient kalendars is an observation on the 5th day of January, the Vigil of the Epiphany, "Kings created by beans," and the sixth day is called "Festival of Kings," with another remark, that "the ceremony of electing kings was continued with feasting for many days."—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 134.

DEVONSHIRE.

At Kingsbridge and Salcombe it was formerly customary for the ciderist, attended by his workmen with a large can or pitcher of cider, guns charged with powder, &c., to repair to the orchard, and there at the foot of one of the best-bearing apple-trees, drink the following toast three times repeated, discharging the fire-arms in conclusion:

"Here's to thee, old apple tree,
Whence thou may'st bud,
And whence thou may'st blow!
And whence thou may'st bear apples enow!
Hats full! caps full!
Bushel—bushel-sacks full!

And my pockets full too! Huzza!”

The pitcher being emptied, they returned to the house, the doors of which they were certain to find bolted by the females; who, however bad the weather might be, were inexorable to all entreaties to open them, till some one had divined what was on the spit. This was generally not easily thought of, and if edible was the reward of him who first named it. The party were then admitted.—*Kingsbridge and Salcombe Historically Depicted*, 1819, p. 71. Vide *Gent. Mag.* 1791, vol. lxi. p. 403.

Brand, on the authority of a Cornishman, relates it also as a custom with the Devonshire people to go after supper into the orchard with a large milk-pan full of cider, having roasted apples pressed into it. Out of this each person in company takes what is called a *clome*—i.e. earthenware—cup, full of liquor, and standing under each of the more fruitful apple-trees, passing by those that are not good bearers, he addresses them in the following words:

“Health to thee, good apple tree,
Well to bear pocket-fulls, hat-fulls,
Peck-fulls, bushel bag-fulls;”

and then drinking up part of the contents, he throws the rest, with the fragments of the roasted apples, at the tree. At each cup, the company set up a shout.—*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 29.

Herrick thus alludes to this custom and the superstition attached to it:

“Wassail the trees, that they may bear
You many a plum and many a pear;
For more or less fruit they will bring,
As you do give them wassailing.”

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

In the parish of Pauntley, and the surrounding neighbourhood, the servants of each farmer formerly assembled together in one of the fields that had been sown with wheat. At the end of twelve lands, they made twelve fires in a row with straw, around one of which, much larger than the rest, they drank a cheerful glass of cider to their master's health, and success to the future harvest; then, returning home, they feasted on cakes soaked in cider, which they claimed as a reward for their past labours in sowing the grain.—Fosbrooke, *Hist. of Gloucestershire*, 1807, vol. ii. p. 232.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

At the approach of the evening, the farmers with their friends and servants meet together, and about six o'clock walk out to a field where wheat is growing. In the highest part of the ground, twelve small fires and one large one, are lighted up.[6]

The attendants, headed by the master of the family, pledge the company in old cider, which circulates freely on these occasions. A circle is formed round the large fire, when a general shout and hallooing takes place, which you hear answered from all the adjacent villages and fields. Sometimes fifty or sixty of these fires may be seen all at once. This being finished, the company return home, where the good housewife and her maids are preparing a good supper. A large cake is always provided, with a hole in the middle. After supper, the company all attend the bailiff (or head of the oxen) to the wain-house, where the following particulars are observed: The

master, at the head of his friends, fills the cup (generally with strong ale), and stands opposite the first or finest of the oxen. He then pledges him in a curious toast, the company follow his example with all the other oxen, addressing each by his name. This being finished, the large cake is produced, and, with much ceremony put on the horn of the first ox, through the hole above mentioned.

[6] These fires represented our Lord and the twelve Apostles.

The ox is then tickled, to make him toss his head; if he throw the cake behind, it is the mistress's perquisite; if before (in what is termed the boosy) the bailiff himself claims the prize. The company then return to the house, the doors of which they find locked, nor will they be opened until some joyous songs are sung. On their gaining admittance a scene of mirth ensues, which lasts the greater part of the night.—*Gent. Mag.* 1791, vol. lxi. p. 116.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

According to Blount the inhabitants of this county at one time made a fire on the eve of the Epiphany, in memory of the blazing star that conducted the three Magi to the manger at Bethlehem.

YORKSHIRE.

In the neighbourhood of Leeds, families formerly invited their relations, friends, and neighbours to their houses, for the purpose of playing at cards, and partaking of a supper of which mince pies were an indispensable ingredient. After supper was over the wassail-cup or wassail-bowl was brought in, of which

every one partook, by taking with a spoon out of the ale a roasted apple and eating it, and then drinking the healths of the company out of the bowl, wishing them a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year. The festival of Christmas used in this part of the country to be held for twenty days, and some persons extended it even to Candlemas.

The ingredients put into the bowl, viz., ale, sugar, nutmeg, and roasted apples, were usually called *lambs' wool*, and the night on which it was drunk was commonly called *Wassail Eve*.—*Gent. Mag.* 1784, vol. liv. p. 98.

IRELAND.

In Ireland "on Twelve Eve in Christmas, they use to set up as high as they can a sieve of oats, and in it a dozen of candles set round, and in the centre one larger, all lighted. This in memory of our Saviour and his Apostles, light of the world."—Sir Henry Piers' *Description of the County of Westmeath*, 1682, in Vallancey's *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, vol. i. No. 1, p. 124.



JAN. 6.]

TWELFTH DAY.

THE EPIPHANY.

In its character as a popular festival, Twelfth Day stands only inferior to Christmas. The leading object held in view is to do honour to "the three wise men," or, as they are more generally denominated, "the three kings." It is a Christian custom, ancient past

memory, and probably suggested by a paean custom, to indulge in a pleasantry called the *Election of kings by beans*. Some, however, maintain it to have been derived from the custom observed by the Roman children, who, at the end of their saturnalia, drew lots with beans, to see who would be king.

In England in later times, a large cake was made, with a bean or silver penny inserted, and this was called *Twelfth-cake*. The family and friends being assembled, the cake was divided by lot, and whoever got the piece containing the bean was accepted as the king for the day, and called King of the Bean. It appears also that there was always a queen as well as a king on Twelfth-Night. A writer, speaking of the celebration in the South of England in 1774, says: "After tea a cake is produced with two bowls containing the fortunate chances for the different sexes. The host fills up the tickets, and the whole company, except the king and queen, are to be ministers of state, maids of honour, or ladies of the bed-chamber. Often the host and hostess, more by design than accident, become king and queen. According to Twelfth Day law, each party is to support his character till midnight."

In the sixteenth century it would appear that some peculiar ceremonies followed the election of the king and queen. Barnaby Googe, in his paraphrase of the curious poem of Naogeorgus, *The Popish Kingdom*, 1570, states that the king, on being elected, was raised up with great cries to the ceiling, where with chalk he inscribed crosses on the rafters to protect the house against evil spirits.—*Book of Days*, 1863, vol. i. p. 62. See also *Every Day Book*, 1827, vol. i. p. 51.

Herrick, the poet of our festivals, has several allusions to the celebration of this day of our

ancestors, as may be seen in the subjoined poem:

"TWELFE-NIGHT, OR KING AND QUEENE.

"Now, now the mirth comes
With the cake full of plums,
Where beane's the king of the sport here;
Besides, we must know,
The pea also
Must revell, as queene, in the court here.

Begin then to chuse
(This night as ye use)
Who shall for the present delight here,
Be a king be the lot,
And who shall not
Be Twelfe-day queene for the night here.

Which knowne, let us make
Joy-sops with the cake;
And let not a man then be seene here.
Who unurg'd will not drinke,
To the base from the brink,
A health to the king and queene here.

Next crowne the bowle full
With gentle lamb's-wooll;
Adde sugar, nutmeg, and ginger,
With store of ale too;
And thus ye must doe
To make the wassaile a swinger.

Give them to the king
And queene wassailing;
And though with ale ye be whet here;
Yet part ye from hence,
As free from offence,
As when ye innocent met here."

In the last century *Twelfth Night Cards* represented ministers, maids of honour, and other attendants of a

court, and the characters were to be supported through the night. John Britton, in his *Autobiography* tells us “he suggested and wrote a series of Twelfth Night characters, to be printed on cards, placed in a bag, and drawn out at parties on the memorable and merry evening of that ancient festival. They were sold in small packets to pastrycooks, and led the way to a custom which annually grew to an extensive trade. For the second year my pen-and-ink characters were accompanied by prints of the different personages by Cruikshank (father of the inimitable George), all of a comic or ludicrous kind.” Such characters are still printed.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 64.

Formerly the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, and the Guilds of London, used to go to St. Paul’s on Twelfth Day to hear a sermon. This is mentioned as an old custom in the early part of Queen Elizabeth’s reign.

Twelfth Day and its customs appear to have been observed by royalty almost from time immemorial. At the English court in the eighth year of the reign of Edward III., the majestic title of *King of the Bean* was conferred upon one of the king’s minstrels, as appears by a *Compotus* of that date, which states that sixty shillings were given by the king on the day of the Epiphany to Regan, the trumpeter, and his associates, the court minstrels, in the name of the king of the bean.—Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes*, 1801, p. 255.

The grand state of the sovereign on Twelfth Day, and the manner of keeping festival at court, in the reign of King Henry VII., are set forth in Le Neve’s MS., called *The Royalle Book*, to the following effect:

As for Twelfth Day, the king must go crowned in his royal robes, kirtle, surcoat, his furred hood about his neck, his mantle with a long train, and his cutlas

before him; his armills upon his arms, of gold set full of rich stones; and no temporal man to touch it but the king himself; and the squire for the body must bring it to the king in a fair kerchief, and the king must put them on himself; and he must have his sceptre in his right hand, and the ball with the cross in the left hand, and the crown upon his head. And he must offer that day gold, myrrh, and sense; then must the dean of the chapel send unto the Archbishop of Canterbury by clerk or priest the king's offering that day; and then must the Archbishop give the next benefice that falleth in his gift to the same messenger. And then the king must change his mantle when he goeth to meat, and take off his hood and lay it about his neck, and clasp it before with a great rich ouche; and this must be of the same colour that he offered in. And the queen in the same form when she is crowned.

The same day that he goeth crowned he ought to go to matins; to which array belongeth his kirtle, surcoat, tabard, and his furred hood slyved over his head, and rolled about his neck; and on his head his cap of estate, and his sword before him.

At even-song he must go in his kirtle and surcoat, and hood laid about his shoulders, and clasp the tippet and hood together before his breast with a great rich ouche, and his hat of estate upon his head.

As for the *void* on the Twelfth Night, the king and the queen ought to have it in the hall. And as for the wassail, the steward, the treasurer, and the controller, shall come for it with their staves in their hands; the king's sewer and the queen's having fair towels about their necks, and dishes in their hands, such as the king and queen shall eat of; the king's carvers and the queen's shall come after with chargers or dishes, such as the king or the queen

shall eat of, and with towels about their necks. And no man shall bear anything unless sworn for three months. And the steward, treasurer, comptroller, and marshall of the hall shall ordain for all the hall. And, if it be in the great chamber, then shall the chamberlain and ushers ordain, after the above form; and if there be a bishop, his own squire, or else the king's, such as the officers choose to assign, shall serve him; and so of all the other estates, if they be dukes or earls; and so of duchesses and countesses. And then there must come in the ushers of the chamber, with the pile of cups, the king's cups and the queen's, and the bishop's with the butlers and wine to the cupboard, and then a squire for the body to bear the cup, and another for the queen's cup, such as is sworn for hire.

The singers [of the chapel] may stand at the one side of the hall, and when the steward cometh in at the hall-door, with the wassail, he must cry thrice "Wassaile," &c., and then shall the chapel answer it anon with a good song, and thus in likewise, if it please the king to keep the great chamber. And then when the king and queen have done, they will go into the chamber. And there belongeth for the king, two lights with the void, and two lights with the cup; and for the queen as many.—*Antiq. Rep.* 1807, vol. i. p. 328.

On Twelfth Day, 1563, Mary Queen of Scots celebrated the French pastime of the King of the Bean at Holyrood, but with a queen instead of a king, as more appropriate, in consideration of herself being a female sovereign. The lot fell to the real queen's attendant, Mary Fleming, and the mistress good-naturedly arrayed the servant in her own robes and jewels, that she might duly sustain the mimic dignity in the festivities of the night. The English

resident, Randolph, who was in love with Mary Beton, another of the queen's maids of honour, wrote in excited terms about this festival to the Earl of Leicester. "Happy was it," says he, "unto this realm, that her reign endured no longer. Two such sights, in one state, in so good accord, I believe was never seen, as to behold two worthy queens possess, without envy, one kingdom, both upon a day. I leave the rest to your lordship to be judged of. My pen staggereth, my hand faileth, further to write.——The Queen of the Bean was that day in a gown of cloth of silver; her head, her neck, her shoulders, the rest of her whole body, so beset with stones, that more in our whole jewel-house were not to be found. The cheer was great. I never found myself so happy, nor so well treated, until that it came to the point that the old Queen (Mary) herself, to show her mighty power, contrary unto the assurance granted me by the younger Queen (Mary Fleming), drew me into the dance; which part of the play I could with good will have spared unto your lordship as much fitter for the purpose."—*Lives of the Queens of Scotland*, Strickland, vol. iv. p. 20.

Down to the time of the Civil Wars, the feast of the Epiphany was observed with great splendour, not only at court, but at the Inns of Court, and the Universities (where it was an old custom to choose the king by the bean in a cake), as well as in private mansions and smaller households. We read, too, of our nobility keeping Twelfth Night by the diversion of blowing up pasteboard castles; letting claret flow like blood out of a stag made of paste; the castle bombarded from a pasteboard ship, with cannon, in the midst of which the company pelted each other with egg-shells filled with rose-water; and large pies were made, filled with live frogs, which hopped and

flew out upon some curious person lifting up the lid. Twelfth Night grew to be a court festival, in which gaming was a costly feature. Evelyn tells us that on Twelfth Night, 1662, according to custom, His Majesty (Charles II.) opened the revels of that night by throwing the dice himself in the privy chamber, where was a table set on purpose, and lost his 100*l.* —*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 63.

CUMBERLAND.

In Cumberland, and other northern parts of England, on Twelfth Night, which finishes the Christmas holidays, the rustics meet together in a large room. They begin dancing at seven o'clock, and finish at twelve, when they sit down to *lobscouse* and *ponsondie*; the former is made of beef, potatoes, and onions, fried together; and in ponsondie we recognise the wassail or waes-hael of ale, boiled with sugar and nutmeg, into which are put roasted apples; the anciently admired lambs'-wool. The feast is paid for by subscription; two women are chosen, who with two wooden bowls placed one within the other, so as to leave an opening and a space between them, go round to the female part of the society in succession, and what one puts into the uppermost bowl the attendant collectress slips into the bowl beneath it. All are expected to contribute something, but not more than a shilling, and they are best esteemed who give most. The men choose two from themselves and follow the same custom, except that as the gentlemen are not supposed to be so fair in their dealings as the ladies, one of the collectors is furnished with pen, ink, and paper, to set down the subscription as soon as received.—*Time's Telescope*, 1825, p. 13.

In many of the small towns they partake of scalded field-peas, and a hare or some other kind of game. The peas are brought to table with the hare, and are scalded in water with the husks on, after which a lump of butter is put in the middle, and they are picked out as they are eaten. The supper concludes with a *tharve-cake*, a large, flat, oaten cake, baked on a girdle, sometimes with plums in it. Dancing and drinking then occupy the remainder of the evening. Tar barrels are common at all their festivals, and scarcely a town is without them.—*Ibid.* 1829, p. 11.

DERBYSHIRE.

The morris-dancers who go about from village to village about Twelfth Day, have their fool, their Maid Marian (generally a man dressed in woman's clothes, and called "the fool's wife,") and sometimes the hobby-horse; they are dressed up in ribbons and tinsel, but the bells are usually discarded.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 201.

DORSETSHIRE.

The rector of Piddle Hinton gives away on Old Christmas Day a pound of bread, a pint of ale, and a mince pie, to every poor person in the parish. This distribution is regularly made by the rector to upwards of three hundred persons.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 6.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

Anciently the Mowbrays had great possessions in and about the Isle of Axholme, and a seat, at which they principally resided, and were considered the

greatest folks in that part of the country. It so happened that on Old Christmas Day, while a young lady (the daughter of the then Mowbray) was riding over the Meeres to the church by an old road (at that time the principal one across the village) a gale of wind blew off her hood. Twelve farming men who were working in the fields saw the occurrence, and ran to gather up the hood, and in such earnest were they that the lady took so much amusement at the scene she forbade her own attendants joining in the pursuit. The hood being captured, and replaced on the lady's head, she expressed her obligation to the men, giving them each some money, and promised a piece of land (to be vested in certain persons in trust) to throw up a hood annually on Old Christmas Day.[7]

She also ordered that the twelve men engaged to contest the race for the hood should be clothed (*pro temp.*) in scarlet jerkins and velvet caps: the hood to be thrown in the same place as the one where she lost hers. The custom is yet followed; and though the Meeres on which she was riding has long ago been brought into a state of cultivation, and the road through been diverted, yet an old mill stands in the field where the road passed through, and is pointed out as the place where the original scene took place, and the hood is usually thrown up from this mill. There is generally a great concourse of people from the neighbouring villages who also take part in the proceedings; and when the hood is thrown up by the chief of the *boggons*, or by the officials, it becomes the object of the villagers to get the hood to their own village, by throwing or kicking it, similar to the foot-ball. The other eleven men, called *boggons*, being stationed at the comers and sides of the field to prevent, if possible, its being thrown out of the field;

and should it chance to fall into any of their hands it is “boggoned,” and forthwith returned to the chief, who again throws it up from the mill as before. Whoever is fortunate enough to get it out of the field, tries to get it to his village, and usually takes it to the public house he is accustomed to frequent, and the landlord regales him with hot ale and rum.

[7] The quantity of land given by Lady Mowbray was forty acres, known by the name of the Hoodlands.

The game usually continues until dusk, and is frequently attended by broken shins and bruised heads. The next day is occupied by the boggons going round the villages, singing as waits, who are regaled with hot furmenty; from some they get coppers given them, and from others a small measure of wheat, according to the means of the donor. The day after that they assume the character of plough bullocks, and at a certain part of West Woodside they “smoke the fool;” that is, straw is collected by those who like, and piled on a heap, a rope being tied or slung over the branches of the tree next the pile of straw; the other end of the rope is fastened round the waist of the “fool,” and he is drawn up, and fire is put to the straw, the “fool” being swung to and fro through the smoke, until he is well nigh choked; after which he goes round with his cap, and collects whatever the spectator thinks proper to give. The performance is then at an end until the following year. See *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. v. p. 94. Peek’s *History of Axholme*, 1815, vol. i. p. 277.

In the *History of Lincolnshire* (vol. ii. p. 214) is the following account of this custom, differing but little from the notice already given. At Haxey, Old Twelfth Day is devoted to *throwing the hood*, an amusement, which according to tradition, was instituted by one

of the Mowbrays. A roll of canvas, tightly corded together, from four to six pounds in weight, is taken to an open field, and contended for by the rustics. An individual appointed casts it from him, and the first person who can convey it into the cellars of any public house receives the reward of one shilling, paid by the plough-bullocks or *boggins*. A new hood being furnished when the others are carried off, the contest usually continues till dark. The next day the plough-bullocks or boggins go round the town collecting alms, and crying "Largess." They are dressed like morris-dancers, and are yoked to and drag a small plough. They have their farmer, and a fool called Billy Buck, dressed like a harlequin, with whom the boys make sport. The day is concluded by the bullocks running with the plough round the cross on the green; and the man that can throw the other down, and convey the plough into the cellar of a public house, receives one shilling for his agility.—See *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. ix. p. 158.

MIDDLESEX.

In London on Twelfth Night, in former days, boys assembled round the inviting shops of the pastrycooks, and dexterously nailed the coat-tails of spectators who ventured near enough to the bottoms of the window frames, or pinned them strongly together by their clothes. Sometimes eight or ten persons found themselves thus connected. The dexterity and force of the nail-driving was so quick and sure that a single blow seldom failed of doing the business effectually.—Withdrawal of the nail without a proper instrument was out of the question, and consequently, the person nailed was forced either to leave part of his coat as a cognisance of his

attachment, or quit the spot with a hole in it. At every nailing and pinning shouts of laughter arose from the perpetrators, yet it often happened to one who turned and smiled at the duress of another, that he also found himself nailed. Efforts at extrication increased mirth; nor was the presence of a constable, who was usually employed to attend and preserve free "ingress, egress, and regress," sufficiently awful to deter the offender.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 50.

A curious custom of mediæval origin is observed at the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, on the festival of the Epiphany. After the reading of the sentence at the offertory, "Let your light so shine before men," &c., while the organ plays, two members of her Majesty's household, wearing the royal livery, descend from the royal pew and advance to the altar rails, preceded by the usher, where they present to one of the two officiating clergymen a red bag, edged with gold lace or braid, which is received in an offertory basin, and then reverently placed on the altar. This bag or purse is understood to contain the Queen's offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, in commemoration of the gifts of the Magi to the infant Saviour.—*Echo*, Jan. 7th, 1869.

In the *Lady's Mag.* for 1760, is the following:

Sunday Jan. 6th, being Twelfth Day, and a collar and offering day at St. James', his Majesty, preceded by the heralds, pursuivants, &c., and the knights of the Garter, Thistle, and Bath, in the collars of their respective orders, went to the Royal Chapel at St. James', and offered gold, myrrh, and frankincense, in imitation of the Eastern Magi offering to our Saviour.

Isle of Man.

In this island there is not a barn unoccupied on the

whole twelve days after Christmas, every parish hiring fiddlers at the public charge. On Twelfth Day the fiddler lays his head in the lap of some one of the wenches, and the *mainstyr fiddler* asks who such a maid, or such a maid, naming all the girls one after another, shall marry, to which he answers according to his own whim, or agreeable to the intimacies he has taken notice of during the time of merriment, and whatever he says is absolutely depended on as an oracle; and if he happen to couple two people who have an aversion to each other, tears and vexation succeed the mirth; this they call "cutting off the fiddler's head," for after this he is dead for a whole year.—Waldron's *Description of the Isle of Man*, 1859, p. 156.

SOMERSETSHIRE.

A friend of mine, says Mr. C. W. Bingham in *N. & Q.* (*3rd S.* vol. ix. p. 33), met a girl on Old Christmas Day, in a village of North Somerset, who told him that she was going to see the Christmas thorn in blossom. He accompanied her to an orchard, where he found a tree, propagated from the celebrated Glastonbury thorn, and gathered from it several sprigs in blossom. Afterwards the girl's mother informed him that it had been formerly the custom for the youth of both sexes to assemble under the tree at midnight on Christmas Eve, in order to hear the bursting of the buds into flower, and she added, "As they comed out, you could hear 'um *haffer*."

Jennings, and after him Halliwell, give this word *haffer* for to crackle, to patter, to make repeated loud noises.

Staffordshire.

At Paget's Bromley a curious custom went out in the seventeenth century. A man came along the village with a mock horse fastened to him, with which he danced, at the same time making a snapping noise with a bow and arrow. He was attended by half a dozen fellow-villagers, wearing mock deers' heads, and displaying the arms of the several landlords of the town. This party danced *the Hays*, and other country dances, to music, amidst the sympathy and applause of the multitude. There was also a huge pot of ale with cakes, by general contribution of the village, out of the very surplus of which "they not only repaired their church, but kept their poor too; which charges," quoth Dr. Plot, "are not now, perhaps, so cheerfully borne."—Plot's *Nat. Hist. of Staffordshire*, 1680, p. 434.

Westmoreland.

Twelfth Night, or Holly Night, was formerly celebrated at Brough, by carrying through the town a holly-tree with torches attached to its branches. The procession set out at 8 o'clock in the evening preceded by music, and stopped at the town-bridge, and again at the cross, where it was greeted each time with shouts of applause. Many of the inhabitants carried lighted branches as flambeaux; and rockets, squibs, &c., were discharged on the joyful occasion. After the tree had been carried about, and the torches were sufficiently burnt, it was placed in the middle of the town, when it was again cheered by the surrounding crowd, and then was thrown among them. The spectators at once divided into two parties, one of which endeavoured to take

the tree to one of the inns, and the other to a rival inn. The innkeeper whose party triumphed was expected to treat his partisans liberally.—Hone's *Table Book*, 1838, p. 26; *Handbook for the Lakes*, Murray, 1866, p. 113.

WALES.

In some parts of Pembrokeshire, the following practice is observed. A wren is secured in a small house made of wood, with door and windows, the latter glazed. Pieces of ribbon of various colours are fixed to the ridge of the roof outside. Sometimes several wrens are brought in the same cage, and oftentimes a stable-lantern, decorated as above mentioned, serves for the wren's-house. The proprietors of this establishment go round to the principal houses in their neighbourhood: where, accompanying themselves with some musical instrument, they announce their arrival by singing the 'Song of the Wren.' The wren's visit is a source of much amusement to children and servants, and the wren's men, or lads, are usually invited to have a draught from the cellar, and receive a present in money. The 'Song of the Wren' is generally *encored*, and the proprietors very commonly commence high life below stairs, dancing with the maid-servants, and saluting them under the kissing bush, where there is one. The following is the 'Song of the Wren:'

"Joy, health, love, and peace,
Be to you in this place.
By your leave we will sing,
Concerning our king:
Our king is well drest;
In silks of the best;
With his ribbons so rare,

No king can compare.
In his coach he does ride,
With a great deal of pride;
And with four footmen
To wait upon him.
We were four at watch,
And all nigh of a match;
And with powder and ball
We fired at his hall.
We have travell'd many miles,
Over hedges and stiles,
To find you this king,
Which we now to you bring.
Now Christmas is past,
Twelfth Day is the last.
Th' Old Year bids adieu;
Great joy to the New."

It would appear from the ninth line of the song that the wren at one time used to occupy a coach, or that her house was placed upon wheels.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. v. p. 109.

JAN. 7.]
ST. DISTAFF'S DAY.—ROCK DAY.

The day after Twelfth Day was called Rock Day[8] and St. Distaff's Day, because on that day women resumed their spinning, which had been interrupted by the sports of Christmas; for our ancestors, it seems, returned to their work in a very leisurely manner. From Herrick's *Hesperides* (p. 374) we learn that the men, in boisterous merriment, burned the women's flax, and that they in retaliation dashed

pails of water upon the men:

"Partly work, and partly play
Ye must on St. Distaff's Day:
From the plough soone free your teame,
Then home and fother them;
If the maides a spinning goe,
Burn the flax and fire the tow.

****

Bring in pails of water, then
Let the maides bewash the men;
Give St. Distaff all the night,
Then bid Christmas sport good night;
Then next morning, every one
To his own vocation."

Med. Ævi Kalend. vol. i. p. 138.

[8] See 'Things not generally known,' by John Timbs, 1859, pp. 1-6.

PLOUGH MONDAY.

This was the name of a rustic festival, held the first Monday after Twelfth Day, formerly of great account in England, bearing in its first aspect, like St. Distaff's Day, reference to the resumption of labour after the Christmas holidays. In Catholic times, the ploughmen kept lights burning before certain images in churches to obtain a blessing on their work; and they were accustomed on this day to go about in procession, gathering money for the support of these *plough lights*, as they were called. The Reformation put out

the lights, but it could not extinguish the festival. The peasantry contrived to go about in procession, collecting money, though only to be spent in conviviality in the public-house. It was at no remote date a very gay and rather pleasant-looking affair. A plough was dressed up with ribbons and other decorations—the *Fool plough*. Thirty or forty stalwart swains, with their shirts over their jackets, and their shoulders and hats flaming with ribbons, dragged it along from house to house, preceded by one in the dress of an old woman, but much bedizened, bearing the name of *Bessy*. There was also a fool, in fantastic attire. In some parts of the country morris-dancers attended the procession; occasionally, too, some reproduction of the ancient Scandinavian sword-dance added to the means of persuading money out of the pockets of the lieges.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 94.

In Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Husbandry*, under the account of the Ploughman's Feast Days, are the following lines:

> "Plough Munday, next after that twelf-tide is past,
> Bids out with the plough: the worst husband is last.
> If plowman get hatchet or whip to the skrene,
> Maids loseth their cocke, if no water be seen."

Which are thus explained in *Tusser Redivivus* (1744, p. 79): "After Christmas (which formerly, during the twelve days, was a time of very little work), every gentleman feasted the farmers, and every farmer their servants and task-men. *Plough Monday* puts them in mind of their business. In the morning, the men and the maid-servants strive who shall show their diligence in rising earliest. If the ploughman can get his whip, his ploughstaff, hatchet, or anything that he wants in the field, by

the fireside, before the maid hath got her kettle on, then the maid loseth her shrove-tide cock, and it wholly belongs to the men. Thus did our forefathers strive to allure youth to their duty, and provided them with innocent mirth as well as labour. On this Plough Monday they have a good supper and some strong drink." See also *Every Day Book*, 1826, vol. i. p. 71.

In the *British Apollo* (fol. 1710, ii. 92), to an inquiry why the first Monday after Twelfth Day is called *Plough Monday*, answer is given: "Plough Monday is a country phrase, and only used by peasants, because they generally used to meet together at some neighbourhood over a cup of ale, and feast themselves, as well as wish themselves a plentiful harvest from the great corn sown (as they call wheat and rye), as also to wish a God-speed to the plough as soon as they begin to break the ground, to sow barley, and other corn, which they at that time make a holiday to themselves as a finishing stroke after Christmas, which is their master's holiday time, as 'prentices in many places make it the same, appropriated by consent to revel among themselves."

Formerly the following custom prevailed in the northern counties of England on Plough Monday. If a ploughman came to the kitchen-hatch, and could cry, "Cock in the pot," before the maid could cry "Cock on the dunghill," he was entitled to a cock for Shrove Tuesday.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. i. p. 386.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Plough Monday is observed at Cambridge by parties going about the town variously dressed in ribbons, etc.; some with a female among them, some

with a man in women's clothes, some with a plough: they dance and collect money which is afterwards spent in a feast.—*Time's Telescope*, 1816, p. 3.

DERBYSHIRE.

On Plough Monday the "Plough bullocks" are occasionally seen; they consist of a number of young men from various farmhouses, who are dressed up in ribbons, their shirts (for they wear no coats or waistcoats) literally covered with rosettes of various colours and their hats bound with ribbons, and decorated with every kind of ornament that comes in their way; these young men yoke themselves to a plough, which they draw about, preceded by a band of music, from house to house, collecting money. They are accompanied by the Fool and Bessy; the Fool being dressed in the skin of a calf, with the tail hanging down behind, and Bessy generally a young man in female attire. The Fool carries an inflated bladder tied to the end of a long stick, by way of whip, which he does not fail to apply pretty soundly to the heads and shoulders of his team. When anything is given a cry of "Largess!" is raised, and a dance performed round the plough. If a refusal to their application for money is made they not unfrequently plough up the pathway, door-stone, or any other portion of the premises they happen to be near.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc. 1852*, vol. vii. p. 202.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

Plough Monday is observed in this county. The mummers are called "Plough-Witchers," and their ceremony, "Plough-Witching."—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ix. p. 381.

LEICESTERSHIRE.

Macaulay (*History of Claybrook*, 1791, p. 128,) says: On *Plough Monday* I have taken notice of an annual display of morris-dancers at Claybrook, who come from the neighbouring villages of Sapcote and Sharnford.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

A correspondent of the *Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 94, giving the following interesting account as to how Plough Monday was, in days gone by, celebrated in the county, says:—Rude though it was, the Plough procession threw a life into the dreary scenery of winter, as it came winding along the quiet rutted lanes, on its way from one village to another; for the ploughmen from many a surrounding hamlet and lonely farmhouse united in the celebration of Plough Monday. It was nothing unusual for at least a score of the "sons of the soil" to yoke themselves with ropes to the plough, having put on clean smock frocks in honour of the day. There was no limit to the number who joined in the morris-dance, and were partners with "Bessy," who carried the money-box; and all these had ribbons in their hats, and pinned about them wherever there was room to display a bunch. Many a hardworking country Molly lent a helping hand in decorating out her Johnny for Plough Monday, and finished him with an admiring exclamation of "Lawks, John! thou does look smart, surely." Some also wore small bunches of corn in their hats, from which the wheat was soon shaken out by the ungainly jumping which they called dancing. Occasionally, if the winter was severe, the procession was joined by threshers carrying their

flails, reapers bearing their sickles, and carters with their long whips, which they were cracking to add to the noise, while even the smith and the miller were among the number, for the one sharpened the ploughshares and the other ground the corn; and Bessy rattled his box, and danced so high that he showed his worsted stockings and corduroy breeches; and very often, if there was a thaw, tucked up his gown skirts under his waistcoat, and shook the bonnet off his head, and disarranged the long ringlets that ought to have concealed his whiskers. For Bessy is to the procession of Plough Monday what the leading *figurante* is to an opera or ballet, and dances about as gracefully as the hippopotami described by Dr. Livingstone. But their rough antics were the cause of much laughter, and rarely do we ever remember hearing any coarse jest that would call up the angry blush to a modest cheek.

No doubt they were called "plough-bullocks," through drawing the plough, as bullocks were formerly used, and are still yoked to the plough in some parts of the country. The rubbishing verses they recited are not worth preserving, beyond the line, which graces many a public-house sign, "God speed the plough." At the large farmhouse, besides money they obtained refreshment, and through the quantity of ale they thus drank during the day managed to get what they called "their load by night." Even the poorest cottagers dropped a few pence into Bessy's box.

But the great event of the day was when they came before some house which bore signs that the owner was well-to-do in the world, and nothing was given to them. Bessy rattled his box, and the ploughmen danced, while the country lads blew the bullocks' horns, or shouted with all their might; but if there

was still no sign, no coming forth of either bread-and-cheese or ale, then the word was given, the ploughshare driven into the ground before the door or window, the whole twenty men yoked pulling like one, and in a minute or two the ground before the house was as brown, barren, and ridgy as a newly-ploughed field. But this was rarely done, for everybody gave something, and were it but little the men never murmured, though they might talk about the stinginess of the giver afterwards amongst themselves, more especially if the party was what they called "well off in the world." We are not aware that the ploughmen were ever summoned to answer for such a breach of the law, for they believe, to use their own expressive language, "they can stand by it, and no law in the world can touch 'em, 'cause it's an old charter;" and we are sure it would spoil their "folly to be wise."

One of the mummers generally wears a fox's skin in the form of a hood; but beyond the laughter the tail that hangs down his back awakens by its motion as he dances, we are at a loss to find a meaning. Bessy formerly wore a bullock's tail behind, under his gown, and which he held in his hand while dancing, but that appendage has not been worn of late.

Norfolk.

Hone's *Year Book*, p. 29, gives a quotation from a *Briefe Relation*, &c., 1646, wherein the writer says, that the Monday after Twelfth Day is called "Plowlick Monday" by the husbandmen in Norfolk, "because on that day they doe first begin to plough."

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

In the northern and eastern parts of the county Plough Monday is more noticed than in the neighbourhood of Northampton. The pageant varies in different places; sometimes five persons precede the plough, which is drawn by a number of boys with their faces blackened and reddled. Formerly, when the pageant was of a more important character than now, the plough was drawn by oxen decorated with ribbons. The one who walks first in the procession is styled the Master, and is grotesquely attired, having on a large wig; two are gaily bedizened in women's clothes; and two others have large hunches on their backs, on which is sewed the knave of hearts. These two are called Red Jacks, or fools. Each of the five carries a besom, and one of them a box, which he rattles assiduously among the spectators to obtain their donations, which are spent at night in conviviality and jollification. In some instances they plough up the soil in front of the houses of such persons as refuse their contributions. Before the inclosure of open fields, there was another custom in connection with the day. When the ploughman returned from his labours in the evening, the servant-maid used to meet him with a jug of toast and ale; and if he could succeed in throwing his plough-hatchet into the house before she reached the door, he was entitled to a cock to throw at Shrovetide; but if she was able to present him with the toast and ale first, then she gained the cock. (See page 38.)—Baker's *Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, 1854, ii. 1257.

YORKSHIRE.

On the Monday after Twelfth Day, says Clarkson (*Hist. of Richmond*, 1821, p. 293), a number of young men from the country, yoked to a plough, drag it about the streets, begging money, in allusion to the labours of the plough having ceased in that severe weather. In like manner the watermen in London, when the Thames is covered with ice in hard frosts, haul a boat about the streets, to show that they are deprived of the means of earning their livelihood.

JAN. 10.]

OXFORDSHIRE.

Pointer, in his *Oxoniensis Academia* (1749, p. 96), alludes to a practice observed at St. John's and Corpus Christi Colleges, Oxford, of having a speech spoken on this day, *in laudem Laudi Archiepiscopi.*

JAN. 12.]

SCOTLAND.

This day is observed by the people of Halkirk, as New Year's Day, a time when servants are too apt to spend their hard-earned penny in drink and other equally useless purposes.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1845, vol. xv. p. 75.

JAN. 13.]

ST. HILARY'S DAY.

St. Hilary is memorable in the annals of Richmond, in the county of York, as on the anniversary of his festival the mayor is chosen for the ensuing year, which causes it to be observed as a jubilee-day among the friends, and those concerned in corporation matters.

St. Hilary likewise gives name to one of the four seasons of the year when the courts of justice are opened.—Clarkson's *Hist. of Richmond*, 1821, p. 293.

JAN. 14.]
MALLARD NIGHT.

OXFORDSHIRE.

This day was formerly celebrated in All Souls College, Oxford, in commemoration of the discovery of a very large mallard or drake in a drain, when digging for the foundation of the college; and though this observance no longer exists, yet on one of the college "gaudies" there is sung in memory of the occurrence a very old song called "The swapping, swapping mallard."

"THE MERRY OLD SONG OF THE ALL SOULS MALLARD.

"Griffin, bustard, turkey, capon,
Let other hungry mortals gape on;
And on the bones their stomach fall hard,
But let All Souls' men have their Mallard.

Oh! by the blood of King
Edward,[9]

Oh! by the blood of King Edward,
It was a swapping, swapping Mallard.

The Romans once admired a gander
More than they did their chief commander;
Because he saved, if some don't fool us,
The place that's called th' '*head of Tolus*.'

Oh! by the blood of King Edward, &c.

The poets feign Jove turned a swan,
But let them prove it if they can;
As for our proof, 'tis not at all hard,
For it was a swapping, swapping Mallard.

Oh! by the blood of King Edward, &c.

Therefore let us sing and dance a galliard,
To the remembrance of the Mallard;
And as the Mallard dives in pool,
Let us dabble, dive, and duck in bowl.

Oh! by the blood of King Edward,
Oh! by the blood of King Edward,
It was a swapping, swapping Mallard."

[9] The allusion to King Edward is surely an anachronism, as King Henry VI. was reigning at the time of the foundation of the college.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 114.

When Pointer wrote his *Oxoniensis Academia* (1749), he committed a grave offence by insinuating that this immortalised mallard was no other than a *goose*. The insinuation produced a reply from Dr. Buckler, replete with irresistible irony; but Pointer met a partisan in Mr. Bilson, chaplain of All Souls, who issued a folio sheet entitled 'Proposals for

printing by subscription the History of the Mallardians,' with the figure of a cat prefixed, said to have been found starved in the college library.—*Hist. of Co. of Oxford*, 1852, p. 144.

JAN. 17.]

SEPTUAGESIMA.

Septuagesima occurs between this day and February the 22nd, according as the Paschal full moon falls. It was formerly distinguished by a strange ceremony, denominated the *Funeral of Alleluia*. On the Saturday of Septuagesima, at nones, the choristers assembled in the great vestiary of the cathedral, and there arranged the ceremony. Having finished the last *benedicamus*, they advanced with crosses, torches, holy waters, and incense, carrying a turf in the manner of a coffin, passed through the choir, and went howling to the cloister as far as the place of interment; and then having sprinkled the water and censed the place, returned by the same road.—Fosbroke's *British Monachism*, 1843, p. 56.

JAN. 20.]

ST. AGNES' EVE.

This night was formerly much venerated by young maidens who wished to know when and whom they should marry. It was required that on this day they should not eat, which was called "fasting St. Agnes' fast." Keats has made this custom the subject of one

of his poems. The following are a few stanzas from it:

"St. Agnes's Eve! Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.

***** *

They told me how, upon St. Agnes's Eve
Young virgins might have visions of delight;
And soft adorings from their loves receive,
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lilywhite;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven, with upward eyes, for all that they
desire.

***** *

Her vespers done,
Of all its wretched pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasp'd her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled."

SCOTLAND.

Formerly on the eve of St. Agnes' Day the following custom was, and perchance still is observed in the northern parts of Scotland by the mountain peasantry. A number of young lads and lasses meeting together on the eve of St. Agnes, at the hour of twelve, went one by one to a certain

cornfield, and threw in some grain, after which they pronounced the following rhyme:

"Agnes sweet and Agnes fair,
Hither, hither, now repair;
Bonny Agnes, let me see
The lad who is to marry me."

The prayer was granted by their favourite saint, and the shadow of the destined bride or bridegroom was seen in a mirror on this very night.—*Time's Telescope*, 1832, p. 15.

JAN. 21.]

ST. AGNES' DAY.

Since the Reformation, St. Agnes has by degrees lost her consequence in this country as superstition has subsided; though our rural virgins in the north are yet said to practise some singular rites, in keeping "what they call St. Agnes' Fast, for the purpose of discovering their future husbands."—*Clavis Calendaria*, Brady, 1815, vol. i. p. 170. See Mother Bunch's *Closet Newly Broke Open*, 1825 (?). *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Burton, 1660, p. 538.

JAN. 24.]

ST. PAUL'S EVE.

CORNWALL.

The first red-letter day in the Tinner's Calendar is St. Paul's Pitcher-day, or the Eve of Paul's Tide. It is marked by a very curious and inexplicable custom, not only among tin-streamers, but also in the mixed mining and agricultural town and neighbourhood of Bodmin, and among the seafaring population of Padstow. The tinner's mode of observing it is as follows:—On the day before the Feast of St. Paul, a water-pitcher is set up at a convenient distance, and pelted with stones until entirely demolished. The men then leave their work, and adjourn to a neighbouring ale-house, where a new pitcher bought to replace the old one is successively filled and emptied, and the evening is given up to merriment and misrule.

On inquiry whether some dim notion of the origin and meaning of this custom remained among those who still keep it up, it was found to be generally held as an ancient festival intended to celebrate the day when tin was first turned into metal—in fact, the discovery of smelting. It is the occasion of a revel, in which, as an old streamer observes, there is an open rebellion against the water-drinking system which is enforced upon them whilst at work.

The custom of observing *Paul's Pitcher Night* is probably half-forgotten even in Cornwall at the present time, where many of the ancient provincial usages have been suffered to die out. It was, however, in full vigour so recently as 1859. The boys of Bodmin parade the town with broken pitchers, and other earthenware vessels, and into every house, where the door can be opened, or has been inadvertently left so, they hurl a "Paul's pitcher," exclaiming,

"Paul's Eve,
And here's a heave."

According to custom, the first “heave” cannot be objected to; but upon its repetition the offender, if caught, may be punished.—Brand’s *Pop. Antiq.* 1870, vol. i. p. 23; *N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. iii. p. 239; *2nd S.* vol. viii. p. 312.

JAN. 25.]
ST. PAUL’S DAY.

Strype, in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. part i. p. 331), says: On the 25th of January (1554), being St. Paul’s Day, was a general procession of St. Paul by every parish, both priests and clerks, in copes, to the number of an hundred and sixty, singing *Salve festa dies*, with ninety crosses borne. The procession was through Cheap unto Leadenhall. And before went two schools; that is, first, all the children of the Gray Friars, and then those of St. Paul’s school. There were eight bishops, and the Bishop of London, mitred, bearing the Sacrament, with many torches burning, and a canopy borne over. And so about the churchyard, and in at the West door, with the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, and all the Companies in their best liveries. And within a while after, the King came, and the Lord Cardinal, and the Prince of Piemont, and divers lords and knights. At the foot of the steps to the choir, as the King went up, kneeled the gentlemen lately pardoned, offering him their service. After mass, they returned to the court to dinner. And at night bonfires, and great ringing of bells in every church. And all this joy was for the conversion of the realm.

It was on this day that the husbandmen of old used

to make prognostics of the weather, and of other matters for the whole year, a custom which Bourne (*Antiquitates Vulgares*, chap. xviii. p. 159) has tried to unravel.—*New Curiosities of Literature*, Soane, 1847, p. 42.

St. Paul's Cathedral.

—One of the strangest of the old ceremonies in which the clergy of St. Paul's Cathedral used to figure was that which was performed twice a year, namely, on the day of the Conversion, and on that of the Commemoration of St. Paul. On the former of these festivals a fat buck, and on the latter a fat doe, was presented to the church by the family of Baud, in consideration of some lands which they held of the Dean and Chapter at West Lee in Essex. The original agreement made with Sir William Le Baud, in 1274, was that he himself should attend in person with the animals; but some years afterwards it was arranged that the presentation should be made by a servant, accompanied by a deputation of part of the family. The priests, however, continued to perform their part in the show. On the aforesaid days, the buck and doe were brought by one or more servants at the hour of the procession, and through the midst thereof, and offered at the high altar of St. Paul's Cathedral; after which the persons that brought the buck received of the Dean and Chapter, by the hands of their chamberlain, twelvepence for their entertainment; but nothing when they brought the doe. The buck being brought to the steps of the altar, the Dean and Chapter, apparelled in copes and proper vestments, with garlands of roses on their heads, sent the body of the buck to be baked, and had the head and horns fixed on a pole before the cross in their procession round about the church, till they issued at the West door, where the keeper that

brought it blowed the death of the buck, and then the horns that were about the city answered him in like manner; for which they had each of the Dean and Chapter three and fourpence in money, and their dinner; and the keeper, during his stay, meat, drink, and lodging, and five shillings in money at his going away; together with a loaf of bread, having on it the picture of St. Paul. This custom was continued till the reign of Elizabeth.—*Beauties of England*, Brayley and Britton, 1803, vol. v. p. 486.

JAN. 31.]
EXECUTION OF CHARLES I.

The anniversary of the execution of King Charles I. was formerly celebrated, and a special form of prayer made use of, which was removed from the Prayer Book by an Act of Parliament (22 Vict. c. 2, March 25, 1859).

The following extract is taken from the *Courier*, of the 30th of January, 1826:

"This being the anniversary of King Charles' Martyrdom (in 1649), the Royal Exchange gates were shut till twelve o'clock, when they were opened for public business."

There is a story told regarding a Miss Russell, great granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell, who was waiting-woman to the Princess Amelia, daughter of George II., to the effect that, while engaged in her duty one 30th of January, the Prince of Wales came into the room, and sportively said, "For shame, Miss Russell! why have you not been at church, humbling yourself with weepings and wailings for the sins on this day

committed by your ancestor?" To which Miss Russell answered, "Sir, for a descendant of the great Oliver Cromwell, it is humiliation sufficient to be employed, as I am, in pinning up the tail of your sister!"—Rede's *Anecdotes*, 1799, quoted in *Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 192.

JAN. 31.]

ISLE OF MAN.

On the eve of the 1st of February a festival was formerly kept, called in the Manks language *Laa'l Breeshey*, in honour of the Irish lady who went over to the Isle of Man to receive the veil from St. Maughold. The custom was to gather a bundle of green rushes, and standing with them in the hand on the threshold of the door, to invite the holy Saint Bridget to come and lodge with them that night. In the Manks language, the invitation ran thus:—"Brede, Brede, tar gys my thie, tar dyn thie ayms noght. Foshil jee yn dorrys da Brede, as lhig da Brede e heet staigh." In English, "Bridget, Bridget, come to my house, come to my house to-night—open the door for Bridget, and let Bridget come in." After these words were repeated, the rushes were strewn on the floor by way of a carpet or bed for St. Bridget. —Train's *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 116.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

The following extract from the *Newark Advertiser* of Feb. 2nd. 1870, describes a custom that existed for

a long time at Newark:

"For many years past the last day in January has been observed in Newark as a raffling day for oranges in the market-place. On Monday last application was made to Mr. Superintendent Riddell, at the Post Office, as to whether the practice would be allowed this year as usual. He advised them to apply to the sitting magistrates, and upon doing so Mr. Wallis (deputy clerk) read to them the Act of Parliament, which stated that they would be liable to three months' hard labour if they raffled. The applicants said they believed there was some old charter which gave them the privilege in Newark for raffling on that day, but they were told the Act of Parliament made no exceptions, and the magistrates said they could not give them permission to break the law. On Monday, therefore, no raffling took place, and we may regard the practice as finally put an end to, which will be a matter of great satisfaction to many.—See, *Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 161.

OXFORDSHIRE.

By the common people, the Saturday preceding Shrove Tuesday is called Egg Saturday. This name is employed as a date by Anthony à Wood: "One hundred and ninety-two bachelors to determine this Lent, but twenty-three or thereabouts were not presented on Egg Saturday."—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 158. *Lives of Leland, Hearne, and Wood*, 1772, vol. ii. p. 297.

FEB. 1.]

CANDLEMAS EVE.

On Candlemas Eve was kindled the *yule-brand*, which was allowed to burn till sunset, when it was quenched and carefully laid by to *teend* (i.e. light) the Christmas clog or log at the next return of the season. Thus Herrick, *Hesperides*, p. 337, says:

"Kindle the *Christmas Brand*, and then
Till sunne-set let it burne;
Which quencht, then lay it up agen
Till Christmas next returne.

Part must be kept wherewith to teend
The *Christmas Log* next yeare;
And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischiefe there."

The rosemary, the bay, the ivy, the holly, and the mistletoe, the Christmas decorations of hall and cottage, were now pulled down, when, according to the popular superstition, not a branch, nor even a leaf, should be allowed to remain.

"Down with the *Rosemary* and so
Down with the *Baies* and the *Misleto*:
Down with the *Holly, Ivie, all*
Wherewith ye dress the Christmas Hall:
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind:
For look, *how many leaves* there be
Neglected there (maids trust to me),
So many goblins you shall see."

Herrick (*Hesperides*, p. 361).

In the place, however, of the Christmas decorations, the "greener box was upraised," and Christmas now was positively at an end. Some indeed, considered this to have been the case on Twelfth Night, and old Tusser, in his *Five Hundred Points of good Husbandry*, strongly contends for it; but then his head was more full of the cart and plough than of regard for old customs; and like any other master, he was naturally anxious that the holidays should be ended, and the labourers should get to work again as soon as possible; and merry-making, however agreeable it may be, will not help to dig the land or sow the grain. But in spite of these wise saws, the truth of which nobody would contest, human feelings are stronger than human reason, and customs, when they tend to pleasure, will maintain their ground till they are superseded, not by privations, but by other forms of amusement.—*New Curiosities of Literature*, Soane, 1847, vol. i. p. 52.

The following is from Herrick's *Hesperides*, p. 337.

"Down with the Rosemary and Bayes,
Down with the Misleto;
Instead of Holly, now up-raise
The greener Box for show.

The Holly hitherto did sway,
Let Box now domineere,
Until the dancing Easter Day,
Or Easter's Eve appeare.

Then youthful Box, which now hath grace
Your houses to renew,
Grown old, surrender must his place
Unto the crisped Yew.

When Yew is out, then Birch comes in,

And many flowers beside;
Both of a fresh and fragrant kinne
To honour Whitsontide.

Green Rushes then, and sweetest Bents,
With cooler Oaken boughs,
Come in for comely ornaments
To re-adorn the house.

Thus times do shift; each thing his turne does hold;
New things succeed, as former things grow old."

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

It was at one time customary, in the villages bordering on the Trent, to decorate not only churches but houses with branches of box, and to light up a number of candles in the evening, as being the last day of Christmas rejoicings. "On Candlemas Day throw candles away" is a popular proverb for the following day.—*Jour. Arch. Assoc.* 1853, vol. viii. p. 231.

FEB. 2.]

CANDLEMAS DAY.

This day, the festival of the "Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary," is sometimes called *Christ's Presentation*, the *Holiday of St. Simeon*, and *The Wives' Feast*. The ceremony of candle-bearing (which continued in England till it was repealed for its Popish tendency by an order in council in the second year of King Edward VI.) is generally considered to refer to what Simeon said when he took the infant Jesus in his arms, and declared that he was *a light to*

lighten the Gentiles.

Pope Innocent, in a sermon on this festival quoted in *Pagano Papismus*, in reply to the question "Why do we (the Catholics) in this feast carry candles?" says, "Because the Gentiles dedicated the month of February to the infernal gods; and as at the beginning of it Pluto stole Proserpine, and her mother, Ceres, sought her in the night with lighted candles, so they in the beginning of this month, walked about the city with lighted candles. Because the holy fathers could not utterly extirpate this custom, they ordained that Christians should carry about candles in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary; and thus what was done before to the honour of Ceres is now done to the honour of the Virgin."

From whatever cause, however, the ceremony originated, it acquired many additional rites in the process of time, according to the manners and habits of those who adopted it. We are told in Dunstan's *Concord of Monastic Rules* that "the monks went in surplices to the church for candles, which were to be consecrated, sprinkled with holy water, and incensed by the abbot. Every monk took a candle from the sacrist and lighted it. A procession was made, thirds and mass were celebrated, and the candles, after the offering, were presented to the priest. The monks' candles signified the use of them in the parable of the wise virgins."

According to some authorities, there was on this day a general consecration of all the candles to be burnt in the Catholic churches throughout the whole year; and it should also be mentioned that from Candlemas the use of tapers at vespers and litanies, which had continued through the whole winter, ceased until the ensuing *All Hallow Mass*, which will serve to explain the old English proverb in Ray's

collection:

"On Candlemas Day,
Throw candle and candlestick away."

New Curiosities of Literature, vol. i. p. 25.

DORSETSHIRE.

Formerly at Lyme Regis the wood-ashes of the family being sold throughout the year as they were made, the person who purchased them annually sent a present on this day of a large candle. When night came, this candle was lighted, and, assisted by its illumination, the inmates regaled themselves with cheering draughts of ale, and sippings of punch, or some other animating beverage, until the candle had burnt out. The coming of the Candlemas Candle was looked forward to by the young ones as an event of some importance; for of usage they had a sort of right to sit up that night, and partake of the refreshment, till all retired to rest, the signal for which was the self-extinction of the Candlemas Candle.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 206.

YORKSHIRE.

Formerly at Ripon, on the Sunday before Candlemas Day, the collegiate church was illuminated with candles.—*Gent. Mag.* 1790, vol. lx. p. 719.

SCOTLAND.

At grammar schools it is, or was, an universal custom for the children attending schools to make

small presents of money to their teachers. The master sits at his desk or table, exchanging for the moment his usual authoritative look for one of bland civility, and each child goes up in turn and lays his offering down before him, the sum being generally proportioned to the abilities of the parent. Sixpence and a shilling are the usual sums in most schools, but some give half, and whole crowns, and even more. The boy and girl who give most are respectively styled king and queen. The children being then dismissed for a holiday proceed along the streets in a confused procession, carrying the king and queen in state, exalted upon that seat, formed of crossed hands, which, probably from this circumstance, is called "the king's chair." In some schools it used to be customary for the teacher, on the conclusion of the offerings, to make a bowl of punch, and regale each boy with a glass to drink the king and queen's health, and a biscuit. The latter part of the day was usually devoted to what was called the *Candlemass bleeze* or blaze, namely, the conflagration of any piece of furze which might exist in their neighbourhood, or, were that wanting, of an artificial bonfire.

According to Sinclair the king's power lasted for six weeks, and during his reign he was not only entitled to demand an afternoon's play for the scholars once a week, but had also the royal privilege of remitting punishments.—*Book of Days*, vol i. p. 214. *Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, Sinclair, 1794, vol. xiii. p. 211.

It was formerly customary in Scotland to hold a football match, the east end of a town against the west, the unmarried men against the married, or one parish against another. The "Candlemas ba'," as it was called, brought the whole community out in a

state of high excitement. On one occasion when the sport took place in Jedburgh, the contending parties, after a struggle of two hours in the streets, transferred the contention to the bed of the river Jed, and there fought it out amidst a scene of fearful splash and dabblement, to the infinite amusement of a multitude looking on from the bridge.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 214.

Western Isles of Scotland.

As Candlemas Day comes round, the mistress and servants of each family taking a sheaf of oats, dress it up in woman's apparel, and after putting it in a large basket, beside which a wooden club is placed, they cry three times, "Briid is come! Briid is welcome!" This they do just before going to bed, and as soon as they rise in the morning, they look among the ashes, expecting to see the impression of Briid's club there, which if they do, they reckon it a true presage of a good crop and prosperous year, and the contrary they take as an ill-omen.—*Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, Martin, 1703, p. 119.

COLLOP MONDAY.

The Monday before Shrove Tuesday is so called because it was the last day of flesh-eating before Lent, and our ancestors cut their fresh meat into collops or steaks, for salting or hanging up until Lent was over; and hence in many places it is customary to have eggs and collops, or slices of bacon at dinner

on this day.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 241.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

At Eton it was the custom for the scholars to write verses either in praise or dispraise of Father Bacchus, poets being considered as immediately under his protection. He was therefore sung on this occasion in all kinds of metres, and the verses of the boys of the seventh and sixth, and some of the fifth forms, were affixed to the inner doors of the college. Verses are still written and put up on this day, but the young poets are not confined to the subject of writing eulogiums on the God of Wine. It retains, however, the name of Bacchus.—Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, vol. i. p. 62. *Status Scholæ Etonensis*, A.D. 1560, fol. 423.

CORNWALL.

On the day termed Hall' Monday, which precedes Shrove Tuesday, about the dusk of the evening it is the custom for boys, and in some cases for those who are above the age of boys, to prowl about the streets with short clubs, and to knock loudly at every door, running off to escape detection on the slightest sign of a motion within. If, however, no attention be excited, and especially if any article be discovered negligently exposed, or carelessly guarded, then the things are carried away; and on the following morning are discovered displayed in some conspicuous place, to expose the disgraceful want of vigilance supposed to characterise the owner. The time when this is practised is called "Nickanan night;" and the individuals concerned are supposed to represent some imps of darkness, who seize on and expose unguarded moments.

On the following eve (Shrove Tuesday), the clubs are again in requisition; but on this occasion the blows on the door keep time to the following chant:

"Nicka, nicka nan;
Give me some pancake, and then I'll be gone.
But if you give me none,
I'll throw a great stone,
And down your doors shall come."

Report of the Royal Institution of Cornwall for 1842; *N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. xii. p. 297.

DEVONSHIRE.

In the neighbourhood of Bridestow, Okehampton, the children go round to the different houses in the parish on the Monday before Shrove Tuesday, generally by twos and threes, and chant the following verses, by way of extracting from the inmates sundry contributions of eggs, flour, butter, halfpence, &c., to furnish out the Tuesday's feast:

"Lent Crock, give a pancake,
Or a fritter, for my labour,
Or a dish of flour, or a piece of bread,
Or what you please to render.
I see, by the latch,
There's something to catch;
I see, by the string,
There's a good dame within.
Trap, trapping throw,
Give me my mumps, and I'll be go" (gone).

The above is the most popular version, and the one indigenous to the place; but there is another set, which was introduced some years ago by a late schoolmistress, who was a native of another part of

the country, where her version was customary:

"Shrovetide is nigh at hand,
And we are come a-shroving;
Pray, Dame, give something,
An apple, or a dumpling,
Or a piece of crumple cheese,
Of your own making,
Or a piece of pancake.
Trip, trapping throw;
Give me my mumps, and I'll be go."

This custom existed also in the neighbourhood of Salisbury.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. v. p. 77. *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 62.

FEB. 3.]

ST. BLAIZE'S DAY.

St. Blasius was Bishop of Sebaste, a city of Cappadocia, in the Lesser Asia, and is said to have suffered martyrdom in the persecution of Licinus in 316. The fact of iron combs having been used in tearing the flesh of the martyr appears to be the reason for his having been adopted by the wool-combers as their patron saint. The large flourishing communities engaged in this business in Bradford, and other English towns, are accustomed to hold a septennial jubilee on the 3rd of February, in honour of Jason of the Golden Fleece and St. Blaize; and not many years ago the fête was conducted with considerable state and ceremony.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 219.

In 1825 the procession was drawn up in the following order:

Herald bearing a flag.

Woolstaplers on horseback, each horse caparisoned with a fleece.

Worsted Spinners and manufacturers on horseback, in white stuff waistcoats, with each a sliver over the shoulder, and a white stuff sash; the horses' necks covered with nets made of thick yarn.

Merchants on horseback, with coloured sashes.

Three guards. Masters' Colours. Three guards.

Apprentices and Masters' Sons, on horseback, with ornamented caps, scarlet stuff coats, white stuff waistcoats, and blue pantaloons.

Bradford and *Keighley Bands*.

Mace-bearer, on foot.

Six guards. King. Queen. Six guards.

Guards. Jason. Princess Medea. Guards.

Bishop's Chaplain.

Bishop Blase.

Shepherd and Shepherdess.

Shepherd Swains.

Woolsorters, on horseback, with ornamented caps, and various coloured slivers.

Comb Makers.

Charcoal Burners.

Combers' Colours.

Band.

Woolcombers, with wool wigs, &c.

Band.

Dyers, with red cockades, blue aprons, and crossed slivers of red and blue.

Before the procession started it was addressed by Richard Fawcett, Esq., in the following lines:

Hail to the day, whose kind auspicious rays

Deign'd first to smile on famous Bishop Blase!
To the great author of our Combing trade,
This day's devoted, and due honour's paid
To him whose fame thro' Britain's isle resounds,
To him whose goodness to the poor abounds.
Long shall his name in British annals shine,
And grateful ages offer at his shrine!
By this our trade are thousands daily fed,
By it supplied with means to earn their bread.
In various forms our trade its work imparts,
In different methods, and by different arts:
Preserves from starving indigents distress'd,
As Combers, Spinners, Weavers, and the rest.
We boast no gems, or costly garments vain,
Borrow'd from India or the coast of Spain;
Our native soil with wool our trade supplies,
While foreign countries envy us the prize.
No foreign broil our common good annoys,
Our country's product all our art employs;
Our fleecy flocks abound in every vale,
Our bleating lambs proclaim the joyful tale.
So let not Spain with us attempt to vie,
Nor India's wealth pretend to soar so high;
Nor Jason pride him in his Colchian spoil,
By hardships gain'd, and enterprising toil;
Since Britons all with ease attain the prize,
And every hill resounds with golden cries,
To celebrate our founder's great renown.
Our shepherd and our shepherdess we crown.
For England's commerce and for George's sway
Each loyal subject give a loud Huzza.
Huzza!

Every Day Book, vol. i. p. 209. See also *Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, ii. p. 416.

Minshen, in his *Ductor in Linguas*, (1617, p. 236), under the word Hock-tide speaks of S. Blase his day, about Candlemas, when countrywomen goe about

and make good cheere; and if they finde any of their neighbour women a spinning that day, they burne and make a blaze of fire of the distaffe, and thereof called S. Blaze his day.

Dr. Percy, in his *Notes to the Northumberland Household Book* (1825, pp. 333-435), tells us that the anniversary of St. Blasius is the 3rd of February, when it is customary in many parts of England to light fires on the hills on St. Blayse night: a custom anciently taken up, perhaps, for no better reason than the jingling resemblance of his name to the word "blaze."

Candles offered to St. Blaze.
—In honour of St. Blaze there formerly were offered to him candles, which after receiving benediction were considered holy, and became highly serviceable to all pious uses.

Clavis Calendaria, Brady, 1812. vol. i. p. 299. *Beauties of England and Wales*, Brayley and Britton, 1809, vol. ii. p. 418.

SHROVE TUESDAY.

Shrove Tuesday derives its distinctive epithet in English, from the custom of the people in applying to the priest to *shrive* them, or hear their confessions, before entering on the great fast of Lent the following day. Its Latin and Continental names have all a reference to the last time of eating flesh. After the people had made the confession required by the ancient discipline of the Church, they were permitted to indulge in festive amusements, though restricted

from partaking of any repasts beyond the usual substitutes for flesh; hence the name *carnaval*, etymologically signifying, *Flesh, fare thee well*. From this cause originated the custom of eating pancakes at Shrovetide, which began on the Sunday before the first in Lent.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 158.

That none, however, might plead forgetfulness of the ceremony of confessing and being *shriven*, the great bell was rung at an early hour in every parish, and in after times this ringing was still kept up in some places, though the cause of it ceased with the introduction of Protestantism; it then got the name of the *Pancake Bell*.

Taylor, the water poet (in his *Jacke-a-Lent Workes*, 1630, vol. i. p. 115), gives the following curious account as to the way in which Shrove Tuesday was celebrated in olden times:

"Always before Lent there comes waddling a fat, grosse groome, called *Shrove Tuesday*, one whose manners show he is better fed than taught, and indeed he is the only monster for feeding amongst all the dayes of the yeere, for he devoures more flesh in fourteene houres than this old kingdom doth (or at least should doe) in sixe weekes after. Such boyling and broyling, such roasting and toasting, such stewing and brewing, such baking, frying, mincing, cutting, carving, devouring, and gorbellied gurmondizing, that a man would thinke people did take in two months' provision at once. Moreover it is a goodly sight to see how the cookes in great men's kitchins doe frye in their master's suet, that if ever a cooke be worth the eating, it is when Shrove Tuesday is in towne, for he is so stued and larded, basted, and almost over-roasted, that a man may eate every bit of him and never take a surfet. In a word, they are that day extreme cholerike, and too hot for any man to

meddle with, being monarchs of the marrow-bones, marquesses of the mutton, lords high regents of the spit and kettle, barons of the gridiron and sole commanders of the frying-pan. And all this hurly burly is for no other purpose than to stop the mouth of the land-wheale, *Shrove-Tuesday*, at whose entrance in the morning all the whole kingdome is in quiet, but by the time the clocke strikes eleven—which by the help of a knavish sexton is commonly before nine,—then there is a bell rung called the *Pancake-Bell*, the sound whereof makes thousands of people distracted and forgetful either of manner or humanitie. Then there is a thing cal'd wheat'n flowre, which the sulphory, necromanticke cookes doe mingle with water, eggs, spice, and other tragicall, magicall inchantments, and then they put it little by little into a frying-pan of boyling suet, where it makes a confused dismal hissing—like the Lernean snakes in the reeds of Acheron, Stix, or Phlegeton—until at last by the skill of the cooke it is transformed into the forme of a *flap-jack*, which in our translation is call'd a *pancake*, which ominous incantation the ignorant people doe devoure very greedily—having for the most part well dined before—but they have no sooner swallowed that sweet candied baite, but straight their wits forsake them, and they runne starke mad, assembling in routs and throngs numberlesse of ungovernable numbers, with uncivill civil commotions.

"Then Tim Tatters—a most valiant villaine—with an ensign made of a piece of a baker's maukin fixed upon a broomstaffe, he displaies his dreadful colours, and calling the ragged regiment together, makes an illiterate oration, stuft with most plentiful want of discretion, the conclusion whereof is that somewhat they will doe, but what they know not; until at last

comes marching up another troupe of tatterdemalions, proclayming wars against no matter who, so they may be doing. Then these youths arm'd with cudgels, stones, hammers, rules, trowels, and handsawse, put play-houses to the sacke, and * * * to the spoyle, in the quarrel breaking a thousand *quarrels*—of glasse, I mean—making ambitious brickbats breake their neckes, tumbling from the tops of lofty chimnies, terribly untyling houses, ripping up the bowels of feather beds, to the inriching of upholsters, the profit of plaisterers and dirt-dawbers, the gaine of glasiers, joyners, carpenters, tylers and bricklayers; and, what is worse, to the contempt of justice; for what avails it for a constable with an army of reverend rusty bill-men to command peace to these beastes? for they with their pockets, instead of pistols, well charged with stone-shot, discharge against the image of authority whole volleys as thicke as hayle, which robustious repulse puts the better sort to the worst part, making the band of unscowered halberdiers retyre faster than ever they come on, and show exceeding discretion in proving tall men of their heels. So much for *Shrove Tuesday*, Jacke-a-Lent's gentleman usher; these have been his humours in former times, but I have some better hope of reformation in him hereafter, and indeed I wrote this before his coming this yeere, 1617, not knowing how hee would behave himselfe; but tottering betwixt despaire and hope I leave him."

In connection with the custom of eating pancakes on this day, Fosbroke in his *Encyclopædia of Antiquities* (vol. ii. p. 572) says that "Pancakes, the Norman *Crispellæ*, are taken from the Fornacalia, on Feb. 18th, in memory of the practice in use before the goddess Fornax invented ovens."

The Saxons called February "Solmonath," which

Dr. F. Sayers, in his *Disquisitions*, says is explained by Bede's "Mensis Placentarum," and rendered by Spelman, in an inedited MS., "Pancake month," because in the course of it cakes were offered by the Pagan Saxons to the Sun.

Our most usual name of this Tuesday, says Hampson (*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 158), is originally Swedish: *pankaka*, an omelette; but, it has been absurdly derived from the Greek παν and κακοι, *all bad*, in reference to the penitents at confession.

At one time Shrove Tuesday was the great holiday of the apprentices. Why it should have been so, says Hone (*Every Day Book*, 1826, vol. i. p. 258), is easy to imagine, on recollecting the sports that boys were allowed on that day at school. The indulgences of the ancient city apprentices were great, and their licentious disturbances stand recorded in the annals of many a fray. The old plays make us aware of a licence which they took on Shrove Tuesday to assail houses of dubious repute, and cart the unfortunate inmates through the city.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 239; See Dekker's *Seven Deadly Sinnes*, 1606, p. 35.

Cock-Fighting.

—Cock-fighting was a very general amusement up to the end of the last century. It entered into the occupations of the old and young. Schools had their cockfights. Travellers agreed with coachmen that they were to wait a night if there was a cock-fight in any town through which they passed. A battle between two cocks had five guineas staked upon it. Fifty guineas, about the year 1760, depended upon the main or odd battle. This made the decision of a "long-main" at cock-fighting an important matter. The church bells at times announced the winning of a "long-main." Matches were sometimes so arranged

as to last the week. When country gentlemen had sat long at table, and the conversation had turned upon the relative merits of their several birds, a cock-fight often resulted, as the birds in question were brought for the purpose into the dining-room.—Roberts, *Social History of S. Counties of England*, 1856, p. 421.

Formerly cock-fighting was practised on Shrove Tuesday to a very great extent; and in the time of King Henry VII. this diversion seems to have been practised within the precincts of the court. In a royal household account, occurs the following:—"March 2, 7 Hen. VII. Item, to Master Bray for rewards to them that brought Cokkes at Shrovetide, at Westm^{r}. xx^{s}."

The earliest mention of cock-fighting in England is by FitzStephens, who died in 1191. He mentions it as one of the amusements of the Londoners, together with the game of foot-ball. He says; "Yearly at Shrove-tide the boys of every school bring fighting-cocks to their masters, and all the forenoon is spent at school, to see these cocks fight together. After dinner all the youth of the city goeth to play at the ball in the fields; the scholars of every study have their balls; the practisers also of the trades have everyone their ball in their hands. The ancienter sort, the fathers, and the wealthy citizens, come on horseback to see these youngsters contending at their sport, with whom, in a manner, they participate by motion; stirring their own natural heat in the view of the active youth, with whose mirth and liberty they seem to communicate." Cock-fighting is now happily by law a misdemeanour, and punishable by penalty.

Throwing at Cocks.

—In days not very long gone by, the inhuman sport of throwing at cocks was practised at Shrovetide, and nowhere was it more certain to be seen than at the grammar-schools. The poor animal was tied to a

stake by a short cord, and the unthinking men and boys who were to throw at it took their station at the distance of about twenty yards. Where the cock belonged to some one disposed to make it a matter of business, twopence was paid for three *shies* at it, the missile used being a broomstick. The sport was continued till the poor creature was killed outright by the blows. Such outrage and tumult attended this inhuman sport a century ago that it was sometimes dangerous to be near the place where it was practised.—*Book of Days*, 1863, vol. i. p. 238.

The following extract is taken from the *Daily London Advertiser*, Wednesday, March 7th, 1759:—Yesterday, being Shrove Tuesday, the orders of the justices in the City and Liberty of Westminster were so well observed that few cocks were seen to be thrown at, so that it is hoped this barbarous custom will be left off.

In *Men-Miracles* (by M. Lluellin, student of Christ Church, Oxon, 1679, p. 48), quoted by Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 78, is the following ironical song on cock-throwing:

"Cocke a doodle doe, 'tis the bravest game,
Take a cock from his dame,
And bind him to a stake:
How he struts, how he throwes,
How he staggers, how he crowes,
As if the day newly brake.

"How his mistress cackles,
Thus to find him in shackles.
And tied to a packe-thread garter.
Oh, the beares and the bulls
Are but corpulent gulls
To the valiant Shrove-tide martyr."

Shying at Leaden Cocks.

—This was probably in imitation of the barbarous custom already described of “shying” or throwing at the living animal. The “cock” was a representation of a bird or beast, a man, a horse, or some device, with a stand projecting on all sides, but principally behind the figure. These were made of lead cast in moulds. They were shyed at with dumps from a small distance agreed upon by the parties, generally regulated by the size or weight of the dump, and the value of the cock. If the thrower overset or knocked down the cock, he won it; if he failed, he lost his dump.

Shy for Shy.

—This was played at by two boys, each having a cock placed at a certain distance, generally at about four or five feet asunder, the players standing behind their cocks, and throwing alternately; a bit of stone or wood was generally used to throw with; the cock was won by him who knocked it down.

Corks and dumps were exposed for sale on the butchers’ shambles on a small board and were the perquisites of the apprentices who made them; and many a pewter plate, and many an ale-house pot, were melted at this season for shying at cocks, which was as soon as fires were lighted in the autumn.

These games, and all others among the boys of London, had their particular times or seasons; and when any game was out, as it was termed, it was lawful to steal the thing played with; this was called *smugging*, and it was expressed by the boys in a doggrel air.

> “Tops are in, spin ’em agin.
> Tops are out, smugging about.”

or,

"Tops are in, spin 'em agin.
Dumps are out, &c."

The fair cock was not allowed to have his stand extended behind more than his height and half as much more, nor much thicker than himself, and he was not to extend in width more than his height, nor to project over the stand; but fraudulent cocks were made extending laterally over the side, so as to prevent his lying down sideways, and with a long stand behind; the body of the cock was made thinner, and the stand thicker, by which means the cock bent upon being struck, and it was impossible to knock him over.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 253.

Threshing the Hen

was a custom formerly practised on this day. The following account taken from *Tusser Redivivus*, 1710 (8vo. June, p. 15), is curious. "The hen," says the writer, "is hung at a fellow's back, who also has some horse-bells about him, the rest of the fellows are blinded, and have boughs in their hands, with which they chase this fellow and his hen about some large court or small enclosure. The fellow with his hen and bells shifting as well as he can, they follow the sound, and sometimes hit him and his hen; other times, if he can get behind one of them, they thresh one another well favouredly; but the jest is, the maids are to blind the fellows, which they do with their aprons, and the cunning baggages will endear their sweethearts with a peeping-hole, whilst the others look out as sharp to hinder it. After this the hen is boiled with bacon, and store of pancakes and fritters are made."

The same writer adds that after the hen-threshing, "she that is noted for lying a-bed long, or any other miscarriage, hath the first pancake presented to her, which most commonly falls to the dogs' share at last,

for no one will own it their due."

With regard to the origin of this custom, it has been conjectured that as the fowl was a delicacy to the labourer, it was therefore given to him on Shrove Tuesday for sport and food.—Tusser, in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (1620), has the following lines:

> "At Shrovetide to shroving, go thresh the fat hen,
> If blindfold can kill her, then give it thy men.
> Maids, fritters, and pancakes enough see you make,
> Let Slut have one pancake, for company sake."

In some places, if flowers are to be procured so early in the season, the younger children carry a small garland, for the sake of collecting a few pence, saying:

> "Flowers, flowers, high do!
> Shreeny, greeny, rino!
> Sheeny greeny, sheeny greeny,
> Rum tum fra!"

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 68.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

At Eaton, on Shrove Tuesday, as soon as ever the clock strikes nine, all the boys in the school cry ΤΩ ΒΑΚΧΩ, ΤΩ ΒΑΚΧΩ, ΤΩ ΒΑΚΧΩ, as loud they can yell, and stamp and knock with their sticks; and then they doe all runne out of the schoole.—*Aubrey MS.*, A.D. 1686, Brit. Mus.

A MS. in the British Museum already alluded to (*Status Scholæ Etonensis*, A.D. 1560, MS. Brit. Mus. Donat. 4843 fol. 423) mentions a custom of the boys of Eton school being allowed to play from eight o'clock for the whole day; and of the cook's coming

in and fastening a pancake to a crow, which the young crows are calling upon, near it, at the school door.

CHESHIRE.

Pennant, in his *Journey from Chester to London*, tells us of a place at Chester without the walls, called the Rood-Eye, where the lusty youth in former days exercised themselves in manly sports of the age: in archery, running, leaping, and wrestling, in mock fights and gallant romantic triumphs. A standard was the prize of emulation.

In a pamphlet also, entitled, *Certayne Collection of Anchiante Times, concerninge the Anchiante and Famous Cittie of Chester*, published in Lysons' *Magna Britannia* (1810, vol. ii. p. 585), is the following:

"That whereas the Companye and Corporation of Shoemakers within the cittie of Chester did yearely, time out of memory of man, upon Tewsday, commonly called Shrove Tuesday, or otherwise Goteddesse day afternoon, at the Cross upon the Roode-Dee, before the Mayor of the said cittie, offer unto the Company of Drapers of the same cittie a ball of leather, called a foote-ball, of the value of 3*s.* 4*d.* or thereabouts: and by reason of the greate strife which did arise among the younge persons of the same cittie (while diverse parties were taken with force and strong handes to bring the said ball to one of these three houses, that is to say, to the Mayor's house, or any one of the two Sheriffs' houses of the time being), much harme was done, some in the great thronge fallinge into a trance, some having their bodies brused and crushed; some their arms, heades, or legges broken, and some otherwise maimed, or in perill of life: to avoid the said

inconveniences, and also to torne and converte the said homage to a better use, it was thought good by the Mayor of the saide cittie and the rest of the Common-Council to exchange of the said foote-ball as followeth: that in place thereof, there be offered by the Shoemakers to the Drapers, six
gleaves[10]
of silver, the which gleaves they appoynted to be rewards unto such men as would come, and the same day and place, passe and overcome on foot all others: and the said gleaves were presently delivered according to the runninge of every one; and this exchange was made in the time when Henry Gee was Mayor of
Chester,[11]
A.D. 1539, and in the thirty-firste yeare of Kinge Henry the Eighth.

[10] An obsolete word for a hand-dart.

[11] The following is a copy of the order for the above-mentioned change, extracted from "the Orders and Acts of Assembly, of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of Chester," in the Town Clerk's Office:

"*Jan 10* 3 *Hen.* viii. HENRY GEE, MAYOR."—After reciting the ancient use of archery and shooting in the long bow, for the honour and defence of the realm, and that the same is much decayed, and other unlawful games much in use: "Ordered by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, with the consent of the whole occupation of drapers, sadlers, and shoemakers, that the said occupation of shoemakers (which always have, time out of mind, given and delivered yearly, on Shrove Tuesday in the afternoon, unto the drapers, before the Mayor at the Cross on the Roodee, one ball of leather, called a foot-ball, of the value of 3*s.* 4*d.*, or above, to play at from thence to the common-hall of the said city, and

further at the pleasure of the evil-disposed persons; whereof hath arisen great inconveniences) shall give and deliver yearly to the said drapers, before the Mayor at the said time and place: six silver gleaves, each of the value of 27*d.* or above, to be disposed of at the pleasure of the said Mayor and drapers, to him that shall win a foot-race before them, that or any other day; and that the sadlers (who have time out of mind given, and delivered yearly, at the same time and place, every master of them, unto the drapers, before the Mayor, one painted ball of wood, with flowers and arms, upon the point of a spear, being goodly arrayed upon horseback accordingly) shall henceforth give and deliver to the said drapers, before the Mayor, at the same time and place upon horseback, a bell of silver, to the value of 3*s.* 4*d.*, to be disposed of at the discretion of the Mayor and drapers, to him that shall get the horse races on that day; and that every man that hath been married in the said city, since Shrove Tuesday, then last past, shall then and there also deliver to the said drapers before the Mayor, an arrow of silver, to the value of 5*s.* or above, instead of such ball of silk and velvet, which such married men ought then to have given and delivered by the ancient custom of the said city (used time out of mind), which silver arrow shall be disposed of by the Mayor and drapers, for the preferment of the said feat and exercise of shooting in the long-bow, for avoiding the said inconveniences, any use or prescription to the contrary notwithstanding; and also, the said drapers and their successors, shall keep yearly their recreation and drinking, as they used to do, time out of mind, and that the shoemakers and sadlers, and persons hereafter to be married, shall observe this order upon pain of 10*l.* for every offence, *toties quoties*, to be forfeited to the drapers according to ancient

custom."

"Alsoe, whereas the Companye and occupation of the Sadlers within the Cittie of Chester did yearely by custome, time out of memorie of man, the same day, hour, and place, before the Mayor, offer upon a truncheon, staffe or speare, a certaine homage to the Drapers of the cittie of Chester, called the Sadler's ball, profitable for few uses or purposes, as it was, beinge a ball of silk of the bigness of a bowle, was torned into a silver bell; weighing about two ozs., as is supposed, of silver: the which saide silver bell was ordayned to be the rewarde for that horse, which with speedy runninge, then should rune before all others, and there presently should be given the daye and place. This alteration was made the same time, and by the same mayor, like as the Shoemakers' foote-ball was before exchanged into six silver gleaves.

"Also, whereas of an anchant custom whereof man's memorie nowe livinge cannot remember the original and beginninge, the same daye, hower and place, before the mayor for the time beinge, every person which is married within the liberties of the saide cittie, dwelling wheresoever without, and all those that dwelle within the saide cittie, for one yeare before, and marye elswhere, did offer likewise a homage to the said Companye of Drapers before the Mayor, a ball of silke, of the like bignesse of a bowle; the same mayor torned the same balls into silver arrowes, the which arrowes they tooke order should be given to those which did shoote the longest shoote, with divers kind of arrowes: this exchange was made as before is mentioned of the Shoemakers' foote-ball and the Sadlers' ball. In which exchange there appeared greate wisdom, anchent and sage senators, whoe had great studye

and regarde to torne the foresaid thinges unto soe profitable uses and exercises; so that there is three of the most commendable exercises and practices of war-like feates, as running of men on foot, runninge of horses, and shootinge of the broad arrowe, the flighte and the butt-shafte, in the long-bowe, are yearely there used; which is done in a very few (if in any) citties of England, soe far as I understand."

CORNWALL.

It was customary at one time to tie fowls to stakes, and set them as marks for boys to kill with bats.—Hitchins, *History of Cornwall*, 1824, vol. i. p. 723.

CUMBERLAND.

Formerly the scholars of the free school of Bromfield, about the beginning of Lent, or, in the more expressive phraseology of the country, at Fasting's Even, used to *bar out the master*, i.e., to depose and exclude him from his school, and keep him out for three days. During the period of this expulsion, the doors of the citadel, the school, were strongly barricaded within; and the boys, who defended it like a besieged city, were armed in general with *bore-tree* or elder pop-guns. The master meantime made various efforts, both by force and stratagem, to regain his lost authority. If he succeeded, heavy tasks were imposed, and the business of the school was resumed and submitted to, but it more commonly happened that he was repulsed and defeated. After three days' siege, terms of capitulation were proposed by the master, and accepted by the boys. These terms were summed up in an old formula of Latin Leonine verses, stipulating

what hours and times should for the year ensuing be allotted to study, and what to relaxation and play. Securities were provided by each side for the due performance of these stipulations, and the paper was then solemnly signed by both master and pupils.

One of these articles, always stipulated for and granted, was the privilege of immediately celebrating certain games of long standing: viz. a foot-ball match and a cock-fight. Captains, as they were called, were then chosen to manage and preside over these games: one from that part of the parish, which lay to the westward of the school; the other from the east. Cocks and foot-ball players were sought for with great diligence. The party whose cocks won the most battles was victorious in the cock-pit; and the prize, a small silver bell, suspended to the button of the victor's hat, and worn for three successive Sundays. After the cock-fight was ended, the foot-ball was thrown down in the churchyard; and the point then to be contested was, which party could carry it to the house of his respective captain, to Dundraw, perhaps, or West Newton, a distance of two or three miles, every inch of which ground was keenly disputed. All the honour accruing to the conqueror at foot-ball was that of possessing the ball.[12]

—Hutchinson's *Hist. of Cumberland*, vol. ii. p. 322.

[12] Addison is described by his biographers as having been the leader of a barring out at the Grammar School of Lichfield.

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* (1849, vol. i. p. 441), says, that the custom of *barring-out* was practised in other places towards Christmas time, e. g., at the school of Houghton-le-Spring, in the county of Durham.

Among the statutes of the grammar-school founded at Kilkenny, in Ireland, March 18, 1684, in

Vallancey's *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, vol. ii. p. 512, is the following:

"In the number of stubborn and refractory lads, who shall refuse to submit to the orders and correction of the said school, who are to be forthwith dismissed, and not re-admitted without due submission to exemplary punishment, and on the second offence to be discharged and expelled for ever," are reckoned, "such as shall offer to shut out the master or usher, but the master shall give them leave to break up eight days before Christmas, and three days before Easter and Whitsuntide."

DERBYSHIRE.

Formerly the inhabitants of Derby had a foot-ball match between the parishes of All Saints and St. Peter's; the conflicting parties being strengthened by volunteers from the other parishes, and from the surrounding country. The bells of the different churches rang their merry peals on the morning, and gave rise to the following jingle on the five parishes of All Saints', St. Peter's, St. Werburgh's, St. Alkmund's, and St. Michael's:

"Pancakes and fritters,
Say All Saints' and St. Peter's;
When will the *ball* come,
Say the bells of St. Alkmum;
At *two* they will throw,
Says Saint Werabo';
O! very well,
Says little Michel."

The goal of All Saints' was the water-wheel of the nun's mill, and that of St. Peter's, on the opposite side of the town, at the gallow's balk, on the

Normanton Road; the ball, which was of a very large size, was made of leather, and stuffed quite hard with shavings, and about noon was thrown into the market-place, from the Town Hall, into the midst of an assembly of many thousand people, so closely wedged together, as scarcely to admit of locomotion. The moment the ball was thrown, the “war cries” of the rival parishes began, and thousands of arms were uplifted in the hope of catching it during its descent. The opposing parties endeavoured by every possible means, and by the exertion of their utmost strength, to carry the ball in the direction of their respective goals, and by this means the town was traversed and retraversed many times in the course of the day; indeed, to such an extent has the contest been carried, that some years ago the fortunate holder of the ball, having made his way into the river Derwent, was followed by the whole body, who took to the water in the most gallant style, and kept up the chase to near the village of Duffield, a distance of five miles, the whole course being against the rapid stream, and one or two weirs having to be passed; on another occasion, the possessor of the ball is said to have quietly dropped himself into the culvert or sewer which passes under the town, and to have been followed by several others of both parties, and, after fighting his way the whole distance under the town, to have come out victorious at the other side where, a considerable party having collected, the contest was renewed in the river.

On the conclusion of the day’s sport the man who had the honour of “goaling” the ball was the champion of the year; the bells of the victorious parish announced the conquest, and the victor was chaired through the town. So universal has been the feeling with regard to this game, that it is said a

gentleman from Derby having met with a person in the backwoods of America, whom from his style and conversation he suspected to be from the Midland Counties of England, cried out when he saw him, "*All Saints' for ever*;" to this the stranger instantly retorted, "*Peter's for ever*;" and this satisfied them that they were fellow-townsmen. A foot-ball match is also played at Ashborne nearly in the same manner as at Derby.—*Jour. Arch. Assoc.*, 1852, vol. vii. p. 203.

A custom prevailed, too, in some parts of Derbyshire which gave licence to the young men and boys to kiss any young women or girls whom they chose. This, together with the general holiday observed in the afternoon of that day, and the customary sports then indulged in, is of course a remnant of the mediæval carnival.

DEVONSHIRE.

In the south-eastern part of Devon the children at this season of the year visit people's houses, singing:

"Tippetty, tippetty to,
Give me a pancake and I'll be go."

N. & Q. 1st S. vol. xi. p. 244.

At Tavistock, the following lines are sung by the children at the houses of the principal inhabitants:

"Lancrock (?) a pancake,
A fritter for my labour;
I see by the string
The good dame's in.
Tippy tappy, toe,
Nippy, nappy, no;
If you'll give something.

I'll be ago (i.e., gone)."

N. & Q. 4th S. vol. v. p. 380.

Dorsetshire and Wiltshire.

In these, if not in other counties, a practice called *Lent Crocking* is observed. The boys go about in small parties visiting the various houses, headed by a leader, who goes up and knocks at the door, leaving his followers behind him, armed with a good stock of potsherds—the collected relics of the washing-pans, jugs, dishes, and plates, that have become the victims of concussion in the hands of unlucky or careless housewives for the past year. When the door is opened, the hero—who is, perhaps, a farmer's boy, with a pair of black eyes sparkling under the tattered brim of his brown milking-hat—hangs down his head, and, with one corner of his mouth turned up into an irrepressible smile pronounces the following lines:

"A-shrovin, a-shrovin,
I be come a-shrovin;
A piece of bread, a piece of cheese,
A bit of your fat bacon;
Or a dish of dough nuts,
All of your own makin!

"A-shrovin, a-shrovin,
I be come a-shrovin,
Nice meat in a pie,
My mouth is very dry!
I wish a wuz zoo well-a-wet,
I'de zing the louder for a nut!
Chorus.—A shrovin, a-shrovin,
We be come a shrovin!"

Sometimes he gets a bit of bread and cheese, and

at some houses he is told to be gone; in which latter case he calls up his followers to send their missiles in a rattling broadside against the door.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 239.

The late Dr. Husenbeth in *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. ix. p. 135, gives another version of the above rhyme:

"I'm come a shroveing,
For a piece of pancake,
Or a piece of bacon,
Or a little truckle cheese,
Of your own making.
Give me some, or give me none,
Or else your door shall have a stone."

HAMPSHIRE.

At Basingstoke, and in some other parts of this county, the boys and girls go to the houses of the well-to-do classes in little companies, and, knocking at the door, repeat the following rhyme:

"Knick a knock upon the block;
Flour and lard is very dear,
Please we come a shroving here.
Your pan's hot, and my pan's cold,
(Hunger makes us shrovers bold)
Please to give poor shrovers something here."

They then knock again, and repeat both knocks and verses until they receive something. The line in brackets is not said in Basingstoke and several other places.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. xii. p. 100.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

At Baldock, Shrove Tuesday is long anticipated by the children, who designate it Dough-Nut-Day; it

being usual to make a good store of small cakes fried in hog's lard, placed over the fire in a brass skillet, called dough-nuts, with which the young people are plentifully regaled.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 83.

At Hoddesdon, in the same county, the old curfew-bell, which was anciently rung in that town for the extinction and relighting of "all fire and candle-light," still exists, and has from time immemorial been regularly rang on the morning of Shrove Tuesday at four o'clock, after which hour the inhabitants are at liberty to make and eat pancakes until the bell rings again at eight o'clock at night. So closely is this custom observed, that after that hour not a pancake remains in the town.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 242.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

Formerly there prevailed in this county a custom called *cock-running*, which, though not quite so cruel as *cock-throwing*, was not much inferior to it. A cock was procured, and its wings were cut: the *runners* paid so much a head, and with their hands tied behind them ran after it, and the person who caught it in his mouth, and carried it to a certain place or goal, had the right of claiming the bird as his own. In this race there was much excitement, and not a little squabbling, and the one who was lucky enough to secure the bird frequently had his face and eyes very much pecked.—*Time's Telescope*, 1823, p. 40.

KENT.

At All Saints', Maidstone, the ancient custom of ringing a bell at mid-day on Shrove Tuesday is

observed, and is known as the "Fritter-Bell."—*Gent. Mag.* 1868, *4th S.* vol. v. p. 761.

LANCASHIRE.

Part of the income of the head-master and usher of the grammar-school at Lancaster arises from a gratuity called a cock-penny, paid at Shrovetide by the scholars, who are sons of freemen; of this money the head-master has seven-twelfths, the usher five-twelfths. It is also paid at the schools at Hawkshead and Clithero, in Lancashire; and formerly was paid, also at Burnley, and at Whiteham and Millom, in Cumberland, near Bootle.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 72.

The tossing of pancakes (and in some places fritters) on this day was a source of harmless mirth, and is still practised in the rural parts of Lancashire and Cheshire, with its ancient accompaniments:

> "It is the day whereon both rich and poor,
> Are chiefly feasted on the self-same dish;
> When every paunch, till it can hold no more,
> Is fritter fill'd, as well as heart can wish;
> And every man and maide doe take their turne,
> And tosse their pancakes up for feare they burne
> And all the kitchen doth with laughter sound,
> To see the pancakes fall upon the ground."
>
> Pasquil's *Palinodia*. Harland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk Lore*, 1867, p. 218.

LEICESTERSHIRE.

In the Newark, says Throsby (*History of Leicester* 1791, p. 356), on Shrove Tuesday is held the annual fair, chiefly for the amusement of the young.

Formerly, there was practised in its full extent the barbarous custom of throwing at cocks, but now the amusement is confined to the purchase of oranges, ginger-bread, &c., and to a custom known by the name of "*Whipping-Toms*;" a practice no doubt instituted by the dwellers in the Newark to drive away the rabble, after a certain hour, from the fair. Two, three, or more men, armed with cart-whips, and with a handkerchief tied over one eye, are let loose upon the people to flog them, who are generally guarded with boots on their legs and sticks in their hands. These whip-men, called "*Whipping-Toms*," are preceded by a bell-man, whose shake of his hand-bell gives a token or authority for the whipping the legs of those who dare to remain in the Newark. Many arts and devices are practised by the Whipping-Toms to take the people by surprise; but quarrels sometimes ensue.

At Claybrook, in the same county, a bell rings at noon, which is meant as a signal for people to commence frying their pancakes.—Macaulay, *History of Claybrook*, 1791.

Isle of Man.

On this occasion it was formerly customary for the Manks to have *Sollaghyn* or *Crowdy* for dinner, instead of for breakfast, as at other times; and for supper, flesh meat, with a large pudding and pancakes; hence the Manks proverb:

"Ee shibber oie innid vees olty volg lane,
My jig laa caisht yon traaste son shen."

"On Shrove Tuesday night, though thy supper be fat,
Before Easter Day thou may'st fast for that."

Train, *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 117.

MIDDLESEX.

At Westminster School, London, the following is observed to this day. At 11 o'clock A.M. a verger of the Abbey, in his gown, bearing a silver bâton, emerges from the college kitchen, followed by the cook of the school, in his white apron, jacket, and cap, and carrying a pancake. On arriving at the school-room door, he announces himself, 'The Cook;' and having entered the school-room, he advances to the bar which separates the upper school from the lower one, twirls the pancake in the pan, and then tosses it over the bar into the upper school, among a crowd of boys, who scramble for the pancake; and he who gets it unbroken, and carries it to the deanery, demands the honorarium of a guinea (sometimes two guineas) from the Abbey funds, though the custom is not mentioned in the Abbey Statutes: the cook also receives two guineas for his performance.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 237.

NORFOLK.

It is customary at Norwich to eat a small bun called cocque'els—cook-eels—coquilles (the name being spelt indifferently), which is continued throughout the season of Lent. Forby, in his *Vocabulary of East Anglia*, calls this production "a sort of cross-bun," but no cross is placed upon it, though its composition is not dissimilar. He derives the word from *coquille* in allusion to their being fashioned like an escallop, in which sense he is borne out by Cotgrave, who has "*pain coquillé*, a fashion of an

hard-crusted loafe, somewhat like our stillyard bunne." A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* says that he has always taken the word to be "coquerells," from the vending of such buns at the barbarous sport of "throwing at the cock" (which is still called a cockerell in E. Anglia) on Shrove Tuesday.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. i. pp. 293 and 412.

Formerly there used to be held at Norwich on Shrove Tuesday a most curious festivity, to which Blomefield in his *History of Norfolk* (1806, vol. iii. p. 155) incidentally alludes. In 1442, he says, there was a great insurrection at Norwich, for which the citizens were indicted, who among other things pleaded in their excuse:

"That John Gladman, of Norwich, who ever was, and at thys our is, a man of sad disposition, and trewe and feythfull to God and to the Kyng, of disporte, as hath been acustomed in ony cite or burgh thorowe alle this reame, on Tuesday in the last ende of Crestemesse, viz. *Fastyngonge Tuesday*, made a disport with his neighbours, havyng his hors trappyd with tynnsoyle, and other nyse disgisy things, corouned as Kyng of Crestemesse, in tokyn that seson should ende with the twelve monethes of the yere: aforn hym [went] yche moneth, disguysed after the seson requiryd, and *Lenton* clad in whyte and red heryngs skinns, and his hors trappyd with oystyr-shells after him, in token that sadnesse should folowe, and an holy tyme; and so rode in diverse stretis of the cite, with other people with hym disguyssd, and makyng myrth, disportes, and plays."

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

In many parts of this county the church bell is rung about noon, as the signal for preparing

pancakes. At Daventry the bell which is rung on this occasion is muffled on one side with leather, or *buffed*, as it is termed, and obtains the name of *Pan-burn-bell*. Jingling rhymes in connection with this day are repeated by the peasantry, varying in different districts. The following are the most current:

"Pancakes and fritters,
Says the bells of St. Peter's.
Where must we fry 'em?
Says the bells of Cold Higham.
In yonder land thurrow [furrow],
Says the bells of Wellingborough.
You owe me a shilling,
Says the bells of Great Billing.
When will you pay me?
Says the bells at Middleton Cheney.
When I am able,
Says the bells at Dunstable.
That will never be,
Says the bells at Coventry.
Oh, yes it will,
Says Northampton Great Bell.
White bread and sop,
Says the bells at Kingsthrop.
Trundle a lantern,
Says the bells at Northampton."

That the bells of the churches of Northampton used also to be rung on this day may be inferred from the following similar doggerel:

"Roast beef and marsh-mallows,
Says the bells of All Hallow's,
Pancakes and fritters.
Says the bells of St. Peter's.
Roast beef and boil'd,
Says the bells of St. Giles'.
Poker and tongs,
Says the bells of St.

John's.[13]

Shovel, tongs, and poker,
Says the bells of St.
Pulchre's.[14]"

Baker, *Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, vol. ii. p. 92.

[13] St. John's Hospital.

[14] The church of St. Sepulchre is often called "Pulchre's" in Northampton.

At Earls Barton the custom of making "leek pasties" is observed. A party of shoemakers, after procuring a chaff-cutter and a quantity of leeks, proceed to the green, where they publicly chop the vegetable to the amusement of the spectators.—See *Gent. Mag.*, 1867, *4th S.* vol. iv. p. 219.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Formerly at Alnwick the waits belonging to the town used to come playing to the Castle every year on Shrove Tuesday at two o'clock P.M., when a foot-ball was thrown over the Castle walls to the populace.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol i. p. 92.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

At Aspley Old Hall, in days gone by, butter and lard, fire and frying-pans were provided for all the poor families of Wollaston, Trowell, and Cossall, who chose to come and eat their pancakes at this mansion. The only conditions attached to the feast were, that no quarrelling should take place, and that each wife and mother should fry for her own family,

and that when the cake needed turning in the pan, the act should be performed by tossing it in the air and catching it again in the pan with the uncooked side downwards. And many were the roars of laughter which took place among the merry groups in the kitchen, at the mishaps which occurred in the performance of this feast, in which his Honour and Madam joined.

In addition to the pancakes, each man was allowed a quart of good ale, women a pint, and children a gill.—Sutton, *Nottingham Date Book*, 1852, p. 75.

There is a curious tradition existing in Mansfield, Woodhouse, Bulwell, and several other villages near Sherwood Forest, as to the origin of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. The inhabitants of any of the villages will inform the questioner that when the Danes got to Linby all the Saxon men of the neighbouring villages ran off into the forest, and the Danes took the Saxon women to keep house for them. This happened just before Lent, and the Saxon women, encouraged by their fugitive lords, resolved to massacre their Danish masters on Ash Wednesday. Every woman who agreed to do this was to bake pancakes for this meal on Shrove Tuesday as a kind of pledge to fulfil her vow. This was done, and that the massacre of the Danes did take place on Ash Wednesday is a well-known historical fact.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. vii. p. 450.

OXFORDSHIRE.

In this county children go about singing the following rhyme, begging at the same time for half-pence:

"Knick, knock, the pan's hot,

And we be come a shroving:
A bit of bread, a bit of cheese,
A bit of barley dompling,
That's better than nothing.
Open the door and let us in,
For we be come a pancaking."

At Islip in the same county this version is used:

"Pit a pat; the pan is hot,
We are come a shroving;
A little bit of bread and cheese
Is better than nothing.
The pan is hot, the pan is cold;
Is the fat in the pan nine days old?"

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 88.

Islands of Scilly.

The boys celebrate the evening of this day by throwing stones against the doors of the dwellers' houses: a privilege which they claim from time immemorial. The terms demanded by them are pancakes or money to capitulate. Some of the older sort, exceeding the bounds of this whimsical practice, in the dusk of the evening, set a bolted door or window-shutter at liberty, by battering in a breach with large pieces of rock stones, which sometimes causes work for the surgeon, as well as for the smith, glazier, and carpenter. The way of making reprisal, in such cases, is by a rope drawn across the road of the mischievous, by means of which their flight is suddenly interrupted, and themselves ignominiously hurled to the ground with the loss of their artillery. —Heath, *Account of Islands of Scilly*, 1750, p. 127.

SHROPSHIRE.

In *The History and Antiquities of Ludlow*, 1822 (pp. 188-189), occurs the following account of a custom formerly observed on this day: "The corporation provide a rope, three inches in thickness, and in length thirty-six yards, which is given out at one of the windows of the Market-House as the clock strikes four, when a large body of the inhabitants divided into two parties—one contending for Castle Street and Broad Street wards, and the other for Old Street and Corve Street wards—commence an arduous struggle, and as soon as either party gains the victory by pulling the rope beyond the prescribed limits, the pulling ceases, which is, however, renewed by a second, and sometimes by a third contest; the rope being purchased by subscription from the victorious party, and given out again. Without doubt this singular custom is symbolical of some remarkable event, and a remnant of that ancient language of visible signs, which, says a celebrated writer, "imperfectly supplies the want of letters, to perpetuate the remembrance of public or private transactions." The sign, in this instance, has survived the remembrance of the occurrence it was designed to represent, and remains a profound mystery. It has been insinuated that the real occasion of this custom is known to the corporation, but that for some reason or other, they are tenacious of the secret. An obscure tradition attributes this custom to circumstances arising out of the siege of Ludlow by Henry VI., when two parties arose within the town, one supporting the pretensions of the Duke of York, and the other wishing to give admittance to the king; one of the bailiffs is said to have headed the latter party. History relates that, in this contest, many lives were lost, and that the bailiff, heading his party in an

attempt to open Dinham Gate, fell a victim there."

SOMERSETSHIRE.

An odd practice seems to prevail in some parts of Somersetshire, and also in Devonshire and Dorsetshire on Shrove Tuesday, which is locally nicknamed *Sharp Tuesday*. The youngsters go about after dusk, and throw stones against people's doors, by what is considered by them an indefeasible right. They at the same time sing in chorus:

"I be come a shrovin
Vor a little pankiak;
A bit o' bread o' your baikin,
Or a little truckle cheese o' your maikin,
If you'll gi' me a little, I'll ax no more,
If you don't gi' me nothin, I'll *rottle* your door."

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* (Ed. Hazlitt), 1870, vol. i. p. 48.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

In this county Shrove Tuesday goes by the name of Goodish Tuesday.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. v. p. 209.

SUFFOLK.

At Bury St. Edmund's on Shrove Tuesday, Easter Monday, and the Whitsuntide festivals, twelve old women side off for a game at trap-and-ball, which is kept up with the greatest spirit and vigour until sunset. Afterwards they retire to their homes, where

"Voice, fiddle, or flute,
No longer is mute,"

and close the day with apportioned mirth and merriment.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 430.

SURREY.

The following is taken from the *Times* of March 7th, 1862:

"Shrove Tuesday was observed, as in days of yore, at
Dorking,[15]
first by a perambulation of the streets by the foot-ball retinue, composed of grotesquely-dressed persons, to the sounds of music, and in the afternoon by the kicking of the ball up and down the principal thoroughfares of the town. The usual number of men and boys joined in the sport, and played, especially towards the end of the game, with a roughness extremely dangerous to the limbs of the competitors. As 6 o'clock drew near the struggle for victory became more vehement; the palm, however, was obtained, for the fifth year, by the players from the west end of the town. The old custom of tolling the 'pancake bell' during the morning was, on this occasion, as during the last two or three years, dispensed with."—*West Surrey Times.*

[15] This custom prevails at Epsom. *N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. i. p. 439. It seems to have been observed also at Twickenham, Bushy, Teddington, Kingston. See *Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 245.

ISLE OF WIGHT.

At Brighstone parties of young boys, girls, and very small children parade the village, singing the following words:

"Shroving, shroving, I am come to shroving.
White bread and apple pie,
My mouth is very dry;
I wish I were well a-wet,
As I could sing for a nut.

Shroving, shroving, I am come to shroving.
A piece of bread, a piece of cheese,
A piece of your fat bacon,
Dough nuts and pancakes,
All of your own making.
Shroving, shroving, I am come to
shroving."[16]

N. & Q. 1st S. vol. xi. p. 239.

[16] For a more detailed account of the Isle of Wight Shrovers, see Halliwell's *Popular Rhymes*, 1849, p. 246.

YORKSHIRE.

A correspondent of *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. v. p. 391, says that all the apprentices in the town of Hedon whose indentures terminate before the return of the day assemble in the belfry of the church at eleven o'clock, and in turn toll the tenor bell for an hour, at the sound of which all the housewives in the parish commence frying pancakes. The sexton, who is present receives a small fee from each lad.

At Scarborough on the morning of Shrove Tuesday hawkers parade the streets with barrows loaded with party-coloured balls, which are purchased by all ranks of the inhabitants. With these, and armed with sticks, men, women, and children repair to the sands below the old town, and indiscriminately commence a contest, one party trying to drive the ball into the

sea, and another equally zealous in their attempts to rescue it.

WALES.

Formerly it was customary to take such hens as had not laid eggs before Shrove Tuesday, and to thrash them to death, as being no longer of any use. The same custom also prevailed in some parts of Cornwall.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 81; *Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 238.

At Harding, in Flintshire, the lord of the manor, attended by his bailiff, formerly provided a foot-ball, and after throwing it down in a field near the church (called thence *foot-ball field*) the young and old assembled together to play at foot-ball.—Kennett MS. British Museum.

At Tenby Shrove Tuesday was formerly a general holiday, when the time was divided between foot-ball-kicking and pancake-eating. The shutters remained upon the shop-windows, while the windows of the private houses were barricaded with wood, or blinded with laths, bags, and sacking.—Mason, *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, pp. 17, 18.

SCOTLAND.

Fastren's E'en is celebrated annually, after the Border fashion, in the month of February, the day being fixed by the following antiquated couplet:

> "First comes Candlemas, syne the New Moon;
> The next Tuesday after is Fastren's E'en."

Crowdie
is mentioned by Sir F. M. Eden (*State of the Poor*,

1797, vol. i. p. 498) as a never-failing dinner on Shrove Tuesday, with all ranks of people in Scotland, as pancakes are in England; and that a ring is put into the basin or porringer of the unmarried folks, to the finder of which by fair means it was an omen of marriage before the rest of the eaters.

THE HIGHLANDS.

In the Highlands the most substantial entertainment peculiar to the evening of Shrove Tuesday is the matrimonial *brose* (pottage), a savoury dish, generally made of the *bree* (broth) of a good fat piece of beef or mutton, which being sometimes a good while *in retentum*, renders the addition of salt to the meal unnecessary. Before the bree is put in the bicker or plate, a ring is mixed with the meal, which it will be the aim of every partaker to get. The first bicker being discussed, the ring is put into two other bickers successively; and should any of the candidates for matrimony find the ring more than once, he may rest assured of his marrying before the next anniversary.

The brose, and plenty of other good cheer, being dispatched, the guests betake themselves to another part of the night's entertainment. Soon as the evening circle convenes, the *Bannich Junit*, or "sauty bannocks," are resorted to. The component ingredients of those dainties are eggs and meal, and a sufficient quantity of salt to sustain their ancient and appropriate appellation of "sauty." These ingredients, well mixed together, are baked or roasted on the gridiron, and are regarded by old and young as a most delicious treat; and, as may be expected, they have a charm attached to them which enables the happy Highlander to discover the object

of all his spells—his connubial bedfellow. A sufficient number of those designed for the palate being prepared, the great or matrimonial bannock is made, of which all the young people in the house partake. Into the ingredients of it there is some article intermixed, which, in the distribution, will fall to the lot of some happy person, who may be sure, if not already married, to be so before the next anniversary.

Last of all are made the *Bannich Bruader*, or dreaming bannocks, to the ingredients composing which is added a little of that substance which chimney-sweeps call soot, and which contains some charm. In baking these last bannocks the baker must be as mute as a stone—one word would destroy the charm of the whole concern. One is given to each individual, who slips off with it quietly to bed, and, reposing his head on his bannock, he will be gratified by the sight of his beloved in the course of his midnight slumbers.—Stewart, *Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 1851, p. 178.

County of Mid-Lothian.

On Shrove Tuesday, in the parish of Inverness, there is a standing match at football between the married and unmarried women, in which the former are always victorious.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, Sinclair, 1795, vol. xvi. p. 19.

Perthshire.

Formerly, on this day, the bachelors and married men drew themselves up at the Cross of Scone, on opposite sides. A ball was then thrown up, and they played from two o'clock till sunset. The game was

this: He who at any time got the ball into his hands, ran with it till overtaken by one of the opposite party, and then, if he could escape from those of the opposite side who seized him, he ran on; if not, he threw the ball away, unless it was wrested from him by the other party; but no person was allowed to kick it. The object of the married men was to *hang it*, i.e., to put it three times into a small hole in the moor, the *goal* or limit, on the one hand; that of the bachelors was to drown it, i.e., to dip it three times into a deep place in the river, the limit of the other. The party who could effect either of these objects won the game. But, if neither party won, the ball was cut into equal parts at sunset. In the course of the play, one might always see some scene of violence between the parties; but, as the proverb of that part of the country expresses it, "All was fair at the Ball of Scone." This custom is supposed to have had its origin in the days of chivalry.

An Italian, it is said, came into that part of the country, challenging all the parishes, under a certain penalty in case of declining his challenge. All the parishes declined the challenge except Scone, which beat the foreigner, and in commemoration of this gallant action the game was instituted. Whilst the custom continued, every man in the parish, the gentry not excepted, was obliged to turn out and support the side to which he belonged; and the person who neglected to do his part on that occasion was fined.—Sinclair, *Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1796, vol. xviii. p. 88.

ROXBURGHSHIRE.

On this occasion the town of Melrose presents a most singular appearance, from the windows of the

shops and dwellings in the main streets being barricaded. This precaution is necessary to prevent breakage, as football-playing on a most indiscriminate and unlimited scale is the order of the day. The ball is thrown up at the cross at one o'clock, when the young men of the town and neighbourhood, with a sprinkling of the married athletes, assemble in considerable numbers. The foot-balls used are previously supplied by a general public subscription, and from one o'clock the sport is kept up with great spirit until darkness sets in and puts a stop to the game. Business throughout the town is almost entirely suspended during the day.—Wade, *History of Melrose Abbey*, 1861, p. 144.

IRELAND.

At Kilrush in the county of Clare, this is the greatest day in the year for weddings, and consequently the Roman Catholic priests are generally occupied in the celebration of matrimony from sunrise till midnight. The general fee on this occasion is two guineas and a half; and many thoughtless couples, under the age of sixteen, pay it with cheerfulness when they have not another penny in their possession. Those who do not marry on this day must wait until Easter Monday on account of the intervening Lent.—Mason, *Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1814, vol. ii. p. 458.

FEB. 4.]

ASH WEDNESDAY.

Among the Anglo-Saxons Ash Wednesday had its ceremonial of strewing ashes upon not merely the public penitent, but all; and thereby spoke its awful teachings and warnings unto all—unto the young and old—the guiltless and the guilty. As soon as none-song was over, that is, about mid-afternoon, the ashes were hallowed and then put upon each one's forehead. From their own parish church the people then went in procession to some other church, and on coming back heard mass. Then, and only then, did such as were bound and able to fast take any kind of food.—D. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, 1849-53, vol. iii. part ii. p. 63.

Formerly, on this day, boys used to go about *clacking* at doors, to get eggs or bits of bacon wherewith to make up a feast among themselves; and, when refused, would stop the keyhole up with dirt, and depart with a rhymed denunciation.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 240. We learn also from Fosbroke's *British Monachism* (1843) that in days gone by boys used on the evening of Ash Wednesday to run about with firebrands and torches.

In former times during the season of Lent, an officer denominated "The King's Cock-Crower" crowed the hour every night within the precincts of the palace, instead of proclaiming it in the ordinary manner. On the first Ash Wednesday after the accession of the House of Hanover, as the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II., was sitting down to supper, this officer suddenly entered the apartment, before the chaplain said grace, and crowed "past ten o'clock." The astonished Prince, not understanding English, and mistaking the tremulation of the crow for mockery, concluded that this ceremony was intended as an insult, and instantly rose to resent it; when, with some difficulty, he was made to

understand the nature of the custom, and that it was intended as a compliment, and according to court etiquette. From that period the custom was discontinued.

The intention of crowing the hour of the night was no doubt intended to remind waking sinners of the august effect the third crowing of the cock had on the guilty Apostle St. Peter; and the limitation of the custom to the season of Lent was judiciously adopted; as, had the practice continued throughout the year, the impenitent would become as habituated and as indifferent to the crow of the mimic cock as they are to that of the real one, or to the cry of the watchmen. The adaptation to the precincts of the Court seems also to have had a view, as if the institutor (probably the Royal Confessor) had considered that the greater and more obdurate sinners resided within the purlieus of the palace.—*Gent. Mag.* 1785, vol. lv. p. 341.

The beginning of Lent was at one time marked by a custom now fallen into disuse. A figure, made up of straw and cast-off clothes, was drawn or carried through the streets amid much noise and merriment; after which it was either burnt, shot at, or thrown down a chimney. This image was called "Jack o'Lent," and was, according to some, intended to represent Judas Iscariot. Elderton, in a ballad, called *Lenton Stuff*, in a MS. in the Ashmolean Museum, thus concludes his account of Lent:

"Then Jake a' Lent comes justlynge in,
With the hedpecce of a herynge,
And saythe, repent yowe of yower syn,
For shame, syrs, leve yower swerynge:
And to Palme Sonday doethe he ryde,
With sprots and herryngs by hys syde,
And makes an end of Lenton tyde!"

N. & Q. 1st S. vol. xii. p. 297.

In Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*, occurs the following:

—"On an Ash Wednesday,
When thou didst stand six weeks the Jack o' Lent,
For boys to hurl three throws a penny at thee."

Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 101.

It was once customary for persons to wear black cloth during Lent. Roberts in his *Cambrian Pop. Antiq.* (1815, 112), says this usage was entirely laid aside in his time; but of late years it has been somewhat revived.

It is observed by Mr. Fosbroke that ladies wore friars' girdles during this season, and quoting from *Camden's Remains* he tells us how Sir Thomas More, finding his lady scolding her servants during Lent, endeavoured to restrain her. "Tush, tush, my lord," said she, "look, here is one step to heavenward," showing him a friar's girdle. "I fear me," said he, "that one step will not bring you one step higher."

In a curious tract written about 1174 by FitzStephen, a monk of Canterbury, and entitled *Descriptio Nobilissimæ Civitatis Londoniæ*, there is an interesting account of the metropolis and its customs in Henry II.'s time. Speaking of the season of Lent the writer says, "Every Friday afternoon a company of young men ride out on horses fit for war and racing, and trained to the course. Then the citizens' sons flock through the gates in troops, armed with lances and shields, and practise feats of arms; but the lances of the more youthful are not headed with iron. When the king lieth near, many courtiers, and young striplings from the families of the great, who have not yet attained the warlike girdle, resort to these exercises. The hope of victory inflames every one.

Even the neighing and fierce horses shake their joints, chew their bridles, and cannot endure to stand still. At length they begin their race; afterwards the young men divide their troops and contend for mastery."

ESSEX.

At Felstead the churchwardens distribute, as the gift of Lord Rich, seven barrels of white herrings and three barrels and a half of red on Ash Wednesday, and the six following Sundays, to ninety-two poor householders of the parish, selected by the churchwardens, in shares of eight white herrings and four red a piece. A list is kept of the persons receiving this donation, and they continue to receive it during their lives, unless they misconduct themselves or enter the workhouse.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 9.

NORFOLK.

P. Le Neve Foster, Esq., who in 1835 held the rectorial tithes of the parish of Great Witchingham, under a lease from the warden and fellows of New College, Oxford, was bound by a covenant contained therein, to provide and distribute to and amongst the poor inhabitants and parishioners, two seams of peas, containing in all sixteen bushels. The practice has been to give to every person who happens to be in the parish on Ash Wednesday, whether rich or poor, one quart of peas each.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 34.

SCAMBLING DAYS.

The days so called were Mondays and Saturdays in Lent, when no regular meals were provided, and the members of our great families scambled. In the old household-book of the fifth Earl of Northumberland there is a particular section appointing the order of service for these days, and so regulating the licentious contentions of them. Shakespeare, in his play of Henry V. (act v. scene 2), makes King Henry say: "If ever thou be'st mine, Kate, I get thee with *scambling*, and thou must therefore needs prove a good soldier-breeder."

The word *scambling* is conjectured to be derived from the Greek σκαμβος, oblique, indirect, &c.

"The scambling and unquiet time."

Shak. *Henry V.* act i. sc. 1.

—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. ii. p. 350. *Antiq. Repert.* 1809, vol. iv. pp. 87, 91, 305.

FEB. 5.]

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

In Smith's MS. *Lives of the Lords of Berkeley*, in the possession of the Earl of Berkeley (p. 49), we read that on the anniversary of the founder of St. Augustine's, Bristol, i.e., Sir Robert Fitzharding, on the 5th of February, "at that monastery there shall be one hundred poore men refreshed in a dole made unto them in this forme: Every man of them hath a chanon's loaf of bread, called a myche (a kind of

bread), and three hearings therewith. There shall be doaled also amongst them two bushells of peys."—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol., i. p. 116.

YORKSHIRE.

In Leeds and the neighbourhood they eat a sort of pancake on the Thursday following Shrove Tuesday, which in that part they call Fruttors (Fritters) Thursday. The Leeds fritter, it is said in the *Dialect of Leeds*, 1862, p. 307, is about one-fourth the size of a pancake, thicker, and has an abundance of currants in it.

FEB. 8.]

CHALK SUNDAY.

IRELAND.

In the west of Ireland nine-tenths of the marriages that take place among the peasantry are celebrated the week before Lent, and particularly on Shrove Tuesday, on which day the Roman Catholic priests have hard work to get through all their duties. On the first Sunday in Lent it is usual for the girls slyly to chalk the coats of those young men who have allowed the preceding festival to pass without having made their choice of a partner; and "illigible" young men strut about with affected unconsciousness of the numerous stripes which decorate their backs, while boys just arrived at manhood hold their heads higher, and show tokens of great satisfaction, if any good-natured lass affixes the coveted mark.—*N. & Q.*

2nd S. vol. iii. p. 207.

FEB. 10.] ST. SCHOLASTICA'S DAY.

OXFORDSHIRE.

This festival was formerly observed at Oxford. The following extract is taken from *The Lives of Leland, Hearne, and Wood* (1772. vol. ii. p. 312): Friday, the burghers or citizens of Oxford appeared in their full number on St. Scholastica's Day at St. Mary's. Alderman Wright, their oracle, told them that if they did not appear there might be some hole picked in their charter, as there was now endeavouring to be done in that of the city of London; he told them moreover that, though it was a popish matter, yet policy ought to take place in this juncture of time.[17]

[17] See ibid. p. 295.

The origin of this custom was a furious contest between the citizens of Oxford and the students. Some of the latter being at a tavern, on the 10th of February, 1354, broke the landlord's head with a vessel in which he had served them with bad wine. The man immediately collected together a number of his neighbours and fellow-citizens, who, having for a long time waited for such an opportunity, fell upon the students, and in spite of the mandates of the Chancellor, and even the King himself, who was then at Woodstock, continued their outrages for several days, not only killing or wounding the scholars, but,

in contempt of the sacerdotal order, destroying all the religious crosses of the town. For this offence the King deprived the city of many valuable privileges, and bestowed them on the University, and the Bishop of Lincoln forbade the administration of the sacraments to the citizens. In the following year they petitioned for a mitigation of this sentence, but without success; but in 1357 a total abrogation of it was granted upon condition that the city should annually celebrate on St. Scholastica's day, the 10th of February, a number of masses for the souls of the scholars killed in the conflict; the mayor and bailiffs with sixty of the chief burgesses being bound also to swear at St. Mary's Church observance of the customary rights of the University, under the penalty of 100 marks in case of omission of this ceremony. It was further ordered, that the said citizens should afterwards offer up singly at the high altar one penny, of which sum forty pence were to be distributed to poor scholars, and the remainder given to the curate of St. Mary's. This offering being omitted upon the pretence that masses were abolished, the University in Queen Elizabeth's reign sued them for the sum of 1,500 marks due for such neglect during fifteen years; when it was decreed that instead of mass there should be a sermon and a communion at St. Mary's (which at length came only to public prayers), and that the said offering should be made. The traditional story that the mayor was obliged to attend with a halter round his neck, which was afterwards, to lessen the disgrace, changed into a silken string, has no real foundation.—*Ibid.*, p. 296.

FEB. 13.]
ST. VALENTINE'S EVE.

Misson, in his *Travels in England* (translated by Ozell, p. 330), describes the amusing practices of his time connected with this day. He tells us that on the eve of the 14th February, St. Valentine's day, the young folks in England and Scotland, by a very ancient custom, celebrate a little festival. An equal number of maids and bachelors get together, and each writes their true or some feigned name upon separate billets, which they roll up, and draw by way of lots, the maids taking the men's billets, and the men the maids'; so that each of the young men lights upon a girl that he calls his Valentine, and each of the girls upon a young man which she calls hers. By this means each has two Valentines; but the man sticks faster to the Valentine that is fallen to him, than the Valentine to whom he is fallen. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the Valentines give balls and treats to their mistresses, wear their billets several days upon their bosoms or sleeves, and this little sport often ends in love. There is another kind of Valentine, which is the first young man or woman that chance throws in your way in the street, or elsewhere, on that day.

In some places, says Hone (*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 226), at this time, and more particularly in London, the lad's Valentine is the first lass he sees in the morning, who is not an inmate of the house; the lass's Valentine is the first youth she sees.

Gay mentions this usage on St. Valentine's Day; he makes a rustic housewife remind her good man—

> "I early rose just at the break of day,
> Before the sun had chas'd the stars away;

A-field I went, amid the morning dew
To milk my kine (for so should house-wives do);
Thee first I spied, and the first swain we see,
In spite of Fortune shall our true-love be."

Shakespeare bears witness to the custom of looking for your Valentine, or desiring to be one, through poor Ophelia's singing:

"Good morrow! 'tis St. Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine!"

DERBYSHIRE.

At Ashborne the following custom is observed on Valentine's Eve. When a young woman wishes to divine who her future husband is to be, she goes into the churchyard at midnight, and as the clock strikes twelve commences running round the church, repeating without intermission:

"I sow hempseed, hempseed I sow,
He that loves me best
Come and after me mow."

Having thus performed the circuit of the church twelve times without stopping, the figure of her lover is supposed to appear and follow her.—*Jour. Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 209.

DEVONSHIRE.

The peasants and others believe that if they go to the porch of a church, waiting there till half-past twelve o'clock on the Eve of St. Valentine's day, with some hempseed in his or her hand, and at the time

above-named, then proceed homewards, scattering the seed on either side, repeating these lines:

> "Hempseed I sow, hempseed I mow,
> She (or he) that will my true-love be,
> Come rake this hempseed after me,"

his or her true love will be seen behind raking up the seed just sown, in a winding-sheet.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. v. p. 55.

NORFOLK.

As soon as it is dark, packages may be seen being carried about in a most mysterious way; and as soon as the coast seems clear, the parcel is laid on the doorstep, the bell rung, and the bearer runs away. Inside the house is all on the *qui vive*, and the moment the bell is heard, all the little folks (and the old ones too, sometimes) rush to the door, and seize the parcel and scrutinize the direction most anxiously, and see whether it is for papa or mamma, or one of the youngsters. The parcels contain presents of all descriptions, from the most magnificent books or desks, to little unhappy squeaking dolls. These presents are always sent anonymously, and nearly always contain a few verses, ending with the distich:

> "If you'll be mine, I'll be thine,
> And so good morrow, Valentine."

The last three words are for the most part written on the wrapper also, with the address, thus:

MISS MARY ISABELLA KING,
St. Giles,'

Norwich.

Good Morrow, Valentine.

N. & Q. 1st S. vol. x. p. 5; *4th S.* vol. xi. p. 173.

At Swaffham, also, Valentines are sent on this evening. Watching for a convenient opportunity, the door is slyly opened, and the Valentine attached to an apple or an orange, is thrown in; a loud rap at the door immediately follows, and the offender taking to his heels, is off instantly. Those in the house, generally knowing for what purpose the amusing rap was made, commence a search for the juvenile billet-doux: in this manner numbers are disposed of by each youth. By way of teasing the person who attends the door, a white oblong square the size of a letter is usually chalked on the step of the door, and should an attempt be made to pick it up, great amusement is thus afforded to some of the urchins, who are generally watching.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 222.

FEB. 14.]
ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

This is a festival which lovers have observed and poets have honoured from time immemorial. The observance is much more than sixteen hundred years old, when the Christian Valentine was beaten by clubs and beheaded, at the time of the great heathen festival of love and purification. A few years ago the observance was dying out; but it has lately revived, especially in London.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. xi. p. 129.

In that curious record of domestic life in England

in the reign of Charles II., *Pepys' Diary*, we find some notable illustrations of the customs connected with this day.

It appears that married and single were then alike liable to be chosen as a Valentine; and that lady Valentines were honoured not by anonymous verses, but by substantial gifts. Four days after Pepys had chosen Martha Batten for his Valentine, he took her to the Exchange, and there, "upon a pair of embroidered, and six pair of plain white gloves, I laid out 40*s.*" The question of expense troubled the diarist. When, in 1667, he took his wife for (honorary) Valentine, he wrote down the fact that it would cost him 5*l.*; but he consoled himself by another fact, that he must have laid out as much "if we had not been Valentines." The outlay at the hands of princes and courtiers was enormous. When the Duke of York was Miss Stewart's Valentine, he gave her a jewel of about 800*l.* in value; and in 1667, Lord Mandeville, being that lady's Valentine, presented her with a ring worth 300*l.* The gifts of Pepys to his wife look small by the side of presents made by lovers to ladies. Pepys came to an agreement with Mrs. Pepys to be her Valentine (which did not preclude others from being so) every year, "and this year," he remarks, in 1668, "it is likely to cost 4*l.* or 5*l.* in a ring for her, which she desires." In 1669, he bought more useful things for his cousin Turner, who told him she had drawn him for her Valentine. Straightway he went to the New Exchange, and bought her a pair of fashionable "green silk stockings, and garters, and shoe-strings, and two pairs of jessimy gloves, all coming to about 28*s.*" London shops do not now exhibit green silk stockings, but they tempt buyers with gallant intentions; and "Valentine gifts" are in windows or

on counters at prices to suit a few and terrify many.

Other old customs have not been revived, but we may learn some of these from old makers of Notes, and specially from Pepys, as to the old methods of choosing, or avoiding to choose, Valentines. When he went early on Valentine's Day to Sir W. Batten's, he says he would not go in "till I asked whether they that opened the doors was a man or a woman; and Mingo who was there, answered, a woman, which, with his tone, made me laugh; so up I went, and took Mrs. Martha for my Valentine (which I do only for complacency); and Sir W. Batten, he go in the same manner to my wife, and so we were very merry." On the following anniversary the diarist tells us that Will Bowyer came to be his wife's Valentine, "she having (at which I made good sport to myself) held her hands all the morning, that she might not see the painters that were at work gilding my chimney-piece and pictures in my dining-room." It would seem, moreover, that a man was not free from the pleasing pains of Valentineship when the festival day was over. On Shrove Tuesday, March 3rd, 1663, after dinner, says Pepys, "Mrs. The. showed me my name upon her breast as her Valentine, which," he added, "will cost me 30*s.*" Again, in 1667, a fortnight after the actual day Pepys was with his wife at the Exchange, "and there bought things for Mrs. Pierce's little daughter, my Valentine (which," he says, "I was not sorry for, it easing me of something more than I must have given to others), and so to her house, where we find Knipp, who also challenged me for her Valentine;" of course, Pepys had to pay the usual homage in acknowledgment of such choice. Then, as Pepys had a little girl for Valentine, so boys were welcomed to early gallantry by the ladies. A thoroughly domestic scene is revealed to us on

Valentine's Day, 1665:

"This morning comes betimes Dickie Pen, to be my wife's Valentine, and came to our bedside. By the same token, I had been brought to my bedside thinking to have made him kiss me; but he perceived me, and would not, so went to his Valentine—a notable, stout, witty boy."

When a lady drew a Valentine, a gentleman so drawn would have been deemed shabby if he did not accept the honour and responsibility. On the 14th February, 1667, we have the following:

"This morning called up by Mr. Hill, who, my wife thought, had come to be her Valentine—she, it seems, having drawn him; but it proved not. However, calling him up to our bedside, my wife challenged him."

Where men could thus intrude, boys like Dickie Pen could boldly go. Thus in 1667:

"This morning came up to my wife's bedside little Will Mercer, to be her Valentine; and brought her name writ upon blue paper, in gold letters, done by himself very pretty; and we were both well pleased with it."

The drawing of names and name-inscriptions were remnants of old customs before the Christian era. Alban Butler, under the head of "St. Valentine, Priest and Martyr," says:

"To abolish the heathens' lewd, superstitious custom of boys drawing the names of girls in honour of their goddess, Februata Juno, on the 15th of the month (the drawing being on the eve of the 14th), several zealous pastors substituted the names of saints in billets given on this day." This does not, however, seem to have taken place till the time of St. Francis de Sales, who, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, as we are told in his Life,

"severely forbade the custom of Valentines, or giving boys in writing the names of girls to be admired or attended on by them; and to abolish it, he changed it into giving billets with the names of certain saints for them to honour and imitate in a particular manner."

To the drawing of names—those of the saints gave way to living objects of adoration—was first added, in 1667, a custom out of which has sprung the modern epistolary Valentine. In the February of that year Pepys writes:

"I do first observe the fashion of drawing of mottoes as well as names; so that Pierce, who drew my wife's, did draw also a motto, 'most courteous and most fair;' which, as it may be used, or an anagram made upon each name, might be very pretty."

The Valentines of chance were those who drew names; the Valentines by choice were made by those who could not open their eyes on Valentine's morn till the one he or she most desired to see was near. The one by chance sometimes proved to be the one by choice also, and such were true Valentines. *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. xi. p. 129, 130.

Pennant, in his *Tour in Scotland*, tells us that in February young persons draw Valentines, and from thence collect their future fortune in the nuptial state; and Goldsmith, in his *Vicar of Wakefield*, describing the manners of some parties, tells us they sent true-love knots on Valentine morning.

St. Valentine's Day is alluded to by Shakspeare and by Chaucer, and also by the poet Lydgate, the monk of Bury (who died in 1440). One of the earliest known writers of Valentines was Charles, Duke of Orleans, who was taken at the Battle of Agincourt. See *Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 215.

A singular custom prevailed many years ago in the

west of England. Three single young men went out together before daylight on St. Valentine's Day, with a clap-net to catch an old owl and two sparrows in a neighbouring barn. If they were successful and could bring the birds without injury to the inn before the females of the house had risen, they were rewarded by the hostess with three pots of purl in honour of St. Valentine, and enjoyed the privilege of demanding at any house in the neighbourhood a similar boon. This was done as an emblem that the owl, being the bird of wisdom, could influence the feathered race to enter the net of love as mates on that day, whereon both single lads and maidens should be reminded that happiness could alone be secured by an early union.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 227.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

In the village of Duxford and other adjoining parishes the custom of "valentining" is still in feeble existence. The children go in a body round to the parsonage and the farm-houses, singing:

"Curl your looks as I do mine,
Two before and three behind,
So good morning, Valentine.
Hurra! Hurra! Hurra!"

They start about 9 A.M. on their expedition, which must be finished by noon; otherwise their singing is not acknowledged in any way. In some few cases the donor gives each child a halfpenny, others throw from their doors the coppers they feel disposed to part with amongst the little band of choristers, which are eagerly scrambled after.—*The Antiquary*, 1873, vol. iii. p. 103.

DERBYSHIRE.

The following customs, which have nearly died out, were very prevalent about fifty or sixty years ago:

Valentine Dealing.

—Each young woman in the house would procure several slips of paper, and write upon them the names of the young men she knew, or those she had a preference for. The slips when ready were put into a boot or shoe (a man's), or else into a hat, and shaken up. Each lassie then put in her hand and drew a slip, which she read and retained until every one had drawn. The slips were then put back and the drawing done over again, which ceremony was performed three times. If a girl drew the same slip thrice, she was sure to be married in a short time, and to a person of the same name as that which was written upon the thrice drawn slip.

Looking through the Keyhole.

—On the early morn of St. Valentine, young women would look through the keyhole of the house door. If

they saw only a single object or person they would remain unmarried all that year. If they saw, however, two or more objects or persons, they would be sure to have a sweetheart, and that in no distant time; but if fortune so favoured them that by chance they saw a cock and a hen, they might be quite certain of being married before the year was out.

Sweeping the girls

was another real old Derbyshire custom. If a girl did not have a kiss, or if her sweetheart did not come to see her early on this morning, it was because she was *dusty*, and therefore it was needful that she should be well swept with a broom, and then afterwards equally well kissed by the young men of the house, and those living near, who used to go round to their intimate friends' houses to perform this custom.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. ix. p. 135.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

In many parts the poor and middling classes of children assemble together in some part of the town or village where they live, and proceed in a body to the house of the chief personage of the place, who, on their arrival, throws them wreaths and true lovers' knots from the window, with which they adorn themselves. Two or three of the girls then select one of the youngest among them (generally a boy), whom they deck out more gaily than the rest, and placing him at their head, march forward, singing as they go along:

"Good morrow to you, Valentine;
Curl your locks as I do mine,
Two before and three behind.
Good morrow to you, Valentine."

This they repeat under the windows of all the houses they pass, and the inhabitant is seldom known to refuse a mite towards the merry solicitings of these juvenile serenaders.—Hone's *Year Book*, 1838, p. 201.

KENT.

The following extract is taken from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1779, vol. xlix. p. 137: "Being on a visit in a little obscure village in Kent, I found an odd kind of sport going forward: the girls, from eighteen to five or six years old, were assembled in a crowd, and burning an uncouth effigy, which they called an *holly-boy*, and which it seems they had stolen from the boys, and in another part of the village the boys were assembled together, and burning what they called an *ivy-girl*, which they had stolen from the girls; all this ceremony was accompanied with loud huzzas, noise, and acclamation."

NORFOLK.

Independent of the homage paid to St. Valentine on this day at Lynn, it is in other respects a red-letter day amongst all classes of its inhabitants, being the commencement of its great annual mart. This mart was granted by a charter of Henry VIII. in the twenty-seventh year of his reign, "to begin on the day next after the feast of the purification of the blessed Virgin Mary, and to continue six days next following." Since the alteration of the style, in 1752, it has been proclaimed on Valentine's Day. About noon, the Mayor and Corporation, preceded by a band of music, and attended by twelve decrepit old men, called from their dress "Red Coats," walk in

procession to proclaim the mart, concluding by opening the antiquated and almost obsolete court of "Piepowder." Like most establishments of this nature, it is no longer attended for the purpose it was first granted, business having yielded to pleasure and amusement. Formerly Lynn mart and Stourbridge (Stirbitch) fair, were the only places where small traders in this and the adjoining counties supplied themselves with their respective goods. No transactions of this nature now take place, and the only remains to be perceived are the "mart prices," still issued by the grocers. Here the thrifty housewives, for twenty miles round, laid in their annual store of soap, starch, &c., and the booth of Green, from Limehouse, was for three generations the emporium of such articles; but these no longer attend. A great deal of money is however spent, as immense numbers of persons assemble from all parts. Neither is there any lack of incitements to unburthen the pockets: animals of every description, tame and wild, giants and dwarfs, tumblers, jugglers, peep-shows, &c., all unite their attractive powers, in sounds more discordant than those which annoyed the ears of Hogarth's "enraged musician."

In the early part of the last century, an old building, which, before the Reformation, had been a hall belonging to the guild of St. George, after being applied to various uses, was fitted up as a theatre (and, by a curious coincidence, where formerly had doubtless been exhibited, as was customary at the guild feasts, religious mysteries and pageants of the Catholic age, again were exhibited the mysteries and pageants of the Protestant age) during the mart and a few weeks afterwards, but apparently with no great success.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 223.

In the parish of Ryburgh it is customary for the

children to go round to the houses in the village for contributions, saying:

"God bless the baker;
If you will be the giver,
I will be the taker."

N. & Q. 4th S. vol. v. p. 595.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

In this county children go from house to house, on the morning of St. Valentine's Day, soliciting small gratuities. The children of the villages go in parties, sometimes in considerable numbers, repeating at each house the following salutations, which vary in different districts:[18]

"Good morrow, Valentine!
First it's yours, and then it's mine,
So please give me a Valentine."

"Morrow, morrow, Valentine!
First 'tis yours, and then 'tis mine,
So please to give me a Valentine.
Holly and ivy tickle my toe,
Give me red apples and let me go."

"Good morrow, Valentine!
Parsley grows by savoury,
Savoury grows by thyme,
A new pair of gloves on Easter day.
Good morrow, Valentine!"

[18] See *History and Antiquities of Weston Favell* (1827, p. 6). Brand in his *Pop. Antiq.* mentions this custom as existing in Oxfordshire.—1849, vol. i. p. 60.

It was formerly customary for young people to *catch* their parents and each other on their first meeting on St. Valentine's morning. *Catching* was no more than the exclamation, "Good morrow, *Valentine*!" and they who could repeat this before they were spoken to, were entitled to a small present from their parents or the elderly persons of the family; consequently there was great eagerness to rise early, and much good-natured strife and merriment on the occasion.[19]

[19] The custom was observed at Norfolk.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 60.

In Peterborough and in some of the villages in the northern part of the county sweet plum buns were formerly given, and I believe are still made, called Valentine buns; and these buns, I am told, are in some villages given by godfathers and godmothers to their godchildren on the Sunday preceding and the Sunday following St. Valentine's Day.—Baker, *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, 1854, vol. ii. p. 373.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

Drawing lots or billets for Valentines is a custom observed in the neighbourhood of Mansfield, where a few young men and maidens meet together, and having put each their own name on a slip of paper, they are all placed together in a hat or basket, and drawn in regular rotation. Should a young man draw a girl's name, and she his, it is considered ominous, and not unfrequently ends in real love and a wedding.—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1853, vol. viii. p. 231.

OXFORDSHIRE.

In this county the following rhymes were used:

"Good morrow, Valentine!
I be thine, and thou be'st mine,
So please give me a Valentine!"

Also

"Good morrow, Valentine!
God bless you ever!
If you'll be true to me,
I'll be the like to thee.
Old England for ever!"

Also

"Good morrow, Valentine,
First 'tis yours, then 'tis mine,
So please give me a Valentine."

The Antiquary, 1873, vol. iii. p. 107; Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 60.

YORKSHIRE.

"On Valentine's Day," says Clarkson (*Hist. of Richmond*, 1821, p. 293), "the ceremony of drawing lots called Valentines is seldom omitted. The names of a select number of one sex with an equal number of the other are put into a vessel, and every one draws a name, which is called their Valentine; and which is looked upon as a good omen of their being afterwards united."

MARCH. 1.]
ST. DAVID'S DAY.

Various attempts have been made to account for the custom of wearing the leek. Owen, in his *Cambrian Biography* (1803), considers it to have originated from the custom of *cymhortha*, or the neighbourly aid practised among farmers. He says that it was once customary in some districts of South Wales for all the neighbours of a small farmer without means to appoint a day, when they all met together for the purpose of ploughing his land, or rendering him any service in their power. On such an occasion each individual carried with him his portion of leeks to be used in making the pottage for the company. Some also are of opinion that the practice took its rise in consequence of a victory obtained by Cadwallo over the Saxons on the 1st of March, 640, when the Welsh, to distinguish themselves, wore leeks in their hats. Shakespeare introduces the custom into his play of Henry V., act iv. sc. 7. Fluellin addressing the monarch says:

"Your grandfather of famous memory, an't please your majesty, and your great uncle Edward the plack prince of Wales, as I have read in the chronicles, fought a most prave pattle here in France.

"*K. Hen.* They did, Fluellin.

"*Flu.* Your majesty says very true: if your majesty is remembered of it, the Welshmen did goot service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps; which, your majesty knows, to this hour is an honourable padge of the service; and I do believe your majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek upon Saint Tavy's day."

This allusion by Fluellin to the Welsh having worn the leek in a battle under the Black Prince, is not, as

some writers suppose, wholly decisive of its having originated in the fields of Cressy or Poictiers, but shows that when Shakespeare wrote Welshmen wore leeks. In the same play the well-remembered Fluellin's enforcement of Pistol to eat the leek he had ridiculed, further establishes the wearing as a usage. —*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 318.

A contributor to a periodical work, entitled *Gazette of Fashion* (March 9th, 1822), rejects the notion that wearing leeks on St. David's Day originated at the battle between the Saxons and the Welsh in the sixth century; and considers it more probable that leeks were a Druidic symbol employed in honour of the British *Ceudven*, or Ceres. In which hypothesis he thinks there is nothing strained in presuming that the Druids were a branch of the Phœnician priesthood. Both were addicted to oak worship; and during the funereal rites of Adonis at Byblos, leeks and onions were exhibited in "pots with other vegetables, and called the gardens of that deity."

In the fifteenth century, the celebration of St. David's Day was honoured with the patronage of royalty; and numerous entries of payments, such as the following, are recorded in the "Privy Purse Expenses of Henry the Seventh," a monarch whose liberality is not proverbial:

"March 1 (1492). Walshemen on Saint David Day, £2." "March 6 (1494). To the Walshemen towardes their feste, £2."—*Med. Ævi Kalend.*, vol. i. p. 168.

From *Poor Robin's Almanack* for 1757 it appears that, in former times in England, a Welshman was burnt in effigy on this anniversary:

"But it would make a stranger laugh
To see th' English hang poor Taff:
A pair of breeches, and a coat,
Hat, shoes, and stockings, and what not,

All stuffed with hay to represent
The Cambrian hero thereby meant:
With sword sometimes three inches broad,
And other armour made of wood,
They drag hur to some publick tree,
And hang hur up in effigy."

To this custom Pepys probably alludes in his Diary for 1667 (Bohn's Edition, 1858, vol. iii. p. 761):

"In Mark Lane I do observe (it being St. David's Day) the picture of a man dressed like a Welshman, hanging by the neck upon one of the poles that stand out at the top of the merchant's houses, in full proportion; and very handsomely done, which is one of the oddest sights I have seen a good while."

Brand, in his *Pop. Antiq.* (1849, vol. i. p. 105), thinks that from this custom arose the practice, at one time in vogue amongst pastrycooks, of hanging or skewering *taffies* or Welshmen of gingerbread for sale on St. David's Day.

The goat has by time-honoured custom been attached to the regiment of the Royal Welsh (23rd) Fusiliers, and the following extract, taken from the *Graphic* (No. 171, March, 8th, 1873), shows how St. David's Day is observed by the officers and men of this regiment:

The drum-major, as well as every man in the regiment, wears a leek in his busby; the goat is dressed with rosettes and ribbons of red and blue. The officers have a party, and the drum-major, accompanied by the goat, marches round the table after dinner, carrying a plate of leeks, of which he offers one to each officer or guest who has never eaten one before, and who is bound to eat it up, standing on his chair, with one foot on the table, while a drummer beats a roll behind his chair. All the toasts given are coupled with the name of St.

David, nor is the memory of Toby Purcell forgotten. This worthy was gazetted major of the regiment when it was first raised, and was killed in the Battle of the Boyne.

MIDDLESEX.

St. David's Day is observed in London, says Hampson (*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 168), by the Charitable Society of Ancient Britons, who were established in 1714, in behalf of the Welsh Charity School in Gray's Inn Road. On this occasion each man wears an artificial leek in his hat.

OXFORDSHIRE.

On St. David's Day at Jesus College, Oxford, an immense silver gilt bowl, containing ten gallons, which was presented to the College by Sir Watkin Williams Wynne in 1732, is filled with "swig," and handed round to those who are invited to sit at the festive and hospitable board.—Hone's *Year Book*, 1838, p. 265.

WALES.

At Tenby one of the benefit clubs marched through the town bearing the leek in their hats. In the evening a ball took place, at which artificial leeks were worn by both sexes.—Mason, *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 19.

MARCH 1.]

SIMNEL SUNDAY.

Simnel Sunday is better known as Mid-Lent or Mothering Sunday, and was so called because large cakes called Simnels were made on this day.

Bailey in his *Dictionary* (fol. 1764, by Scott,) says, *Simnel* is probably derived from the Latin *Simila*, fine flour, and means a sort of cake, or bun, made of fine flour, spice, &c.

Frequent mention is made of the Simnel in the household allowances of Henry the First.

"Cancellarius v solidos in die et i Siminellum dominicum, et ii salum, et i sextarium de vino claro, et i sext. de vino expensabili, et unum grossum cereum, et xl frusta Candell."—*Libr. Nigr. Scaccarii*, p. 341.

The "Siminellum Dominicum," Hearne thinks, was a better kind of bread[20] and that "Siminellum Salum," from sal, cibus, victus, was the ordinary bread; if it be not the Latin *Salis* (Siminellum Salinum), in which case it denotes that more salt is contained in it than in the other. If the derivation from Simnel be not satisfactory, perhaps the Anglo-Saxon symbel, a feast or banquet, whence simbel, dæg, a festival day, may suffice.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 177.

[20] Alderman Wilkinson of Burnley, a well known able Lancashire antiquary, some time since stated that it "originally meant the *very finest* bread. *Pain demain* is another term for it, on account of its having been used as Sunday bread."

In Wright's *Vocabularies* it appears thus:—'*Hic artæcopus, a symnylle*.' This form was in use during the fifteenth century.

In the *Dictionarius* of John de Garlande, compiled at Paris in the thirteenth century, it appears thus:

—"*Simeneus* = placentæ = simnels." Such cakes were signed with the figure of Christ, or of the Virgin.

At Bury, in Lancashire, from time beyond memory, thousands of persons come from all parts, and eat "simnels" on Simnel Sunday. Formerly, nearly every shop was open, quite in defiance of the law respecting the closing during "service," but of late, through the improved state of public opinion, the disorderly scenes to which the custom gave rise have been partially amended. Efforts have been repeatedly made to put a stop to the practice altogether, but in vain. The clergy, headed by the rector, and the ministers of all denominations (save the Romanists) have drawn up protests and printed appeals against this desecration, but, as just stated, with scarcely any visible effect.

It is not a little singular that the practice of assembling in one town, upon one day—the middle Sunday in Lent, to eat simnel cake, is a practice confined to Bury. Much labour has been expended to trace the origin of this custom, but without success. —*Gent. Mag.* (New Series) 1866, vol. i. p. 535; Baines, *History of Lancashire*, 1836, vol. ii. p. 776.

Herrick in his *Hesperides* has the following:

"TO DIANEME.

"A CEREMONIE IN GLOCESTER.

"I'll to thee a Simnell bring,
'Gainst thou go'st a *mothering*;
So that, when she blesseth thee,
Half that blessing thou'lt give me."

1, p. 2787.

Again, the bread called "simnel bread" is

mentioned by Jehoshaphat Aspin, in his *Pictures of Manners, &c., of England*, p. 126, who quotes from a statute of 51st of Henry III.:—*A farthing symnel* (a sort of small cake, twice baked, and also called a *cracknel*) should weigh two ounces less than the *wastel* (a kind of cake made with honey, or with meal and oil).

Curious are some of the tales which have arisen to explain the meaning of the name *simnel*. Some pretend that the father of Lambert Simnel, the well-known pretender in the reign of Henry VII., was a baker, and the first maker of simnels, and that, in consequence of the celebrity he gained by the acts of his son, his cakes have retained his name. There is a story current in Shropshire, which is more picturesque. Long ago there lived an honest old couple, boasting the names of Simon and Nelly, but their surnames are not known. It was their custom at Easter to gather their children about them, and thus meet together once a year under the old homestead. The fasting season of Lent was just ending, but they had still left some of the unleavened dough which had been from time to time converted into bread during the forty days. Nelly was a careful woman, and it grieved her to waste anything, so she suggested that they should use the remains of the lenten dough, for the basis of a cake to regale the assembled family. Simon readily agreed to the proposal, and further reminded his partner that there were still some remains of their Christmas plum-pudding hoarded up in the cupboard, and that this might form the interior, and be an agreeable surprise to the young people when they had made their way through the less tasty crust. So far all things went on harmoniously; but when the cake was made, a subject of violent discord arose, Sim insisting that it

should be boiled, while Nell no less obstinately contended that it should be baked. The dispute ran from words to blows, for Nell not choosing to let her province in the household be thus interfered with, jumped up, and threw the stool she was sitting on at Sim, who, on his part, seized a besom, and applied it with right good will to the head and shoulders of his spouse. She now seized the broom, and the battle became so warm, that it might have had a very serious result, had not Nell proposed as a compromise that the cake should be boiled first and afterwards baked. This Sim acceded to, for he had no wish for further acquaintance with the heavy end of the broom. Accordingly, the big pot was set on the fire, and the stool broken up and thrown on to boil it, whilst the besom and broom furnished fuel for the oven. Some eggs, which had been broken in the scuffle, were used to coat the outside of the pudding when boiled, which gave it the shining gloss it possesses as a cake. This new and remarkable production in the art of confectionery became known by the name of the cake of Simon and Nelly, but soon only the first half of each name was alone preserved and joined together, and it has ever since been known as the cake of Sim-Nel or Simnel.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 337.

Mothering Sunday.—In many parts of England it was formerly customary for servants, apprentices, and others to carry presents to their parents on this day. This practice was called Going a-Mothering, and originated in the offerings made on this day at the mother-church.

In the *Gent. Mag.* (vol. liv. p. 98) a correspondent tells us that whilst he was an apprentice the custom was to visit his mother on Mid-Lent Sunday (thence

called Mothering Sunday) for a regale of excellent furmety.[21]

[21] Furmenty, Furmity, or Frumity; still a favourite dish in the north, consisting of hulled wheat boiled in milk and seasoned. It was especially a Christmas dish. In the *True Gentlewoman's Delight*, 1676, p. 17, the following receipt is given for making furmity:

Take a quart of sweet cream, two or three sprigs of mace, and a nutmeg cut in half, put it into your cream, so let it boil; then take your French barley or rice, being first washed clean in fair water three times and picked clean, then boil it in sweet milk till it be tender, then put it into your cream, and boil it well, and when it hath boiled a good while, take the yoke of six or seven eggs, beat them very well to thicken on a soft fire, boil it, and stir it, for it will quickly burn; when you think it is boiled enough sweeten it to your taste, and so serve it in with rosewater and musk-sugar, in the same manner you make it with wheat.—Nares' *Glossary* (Halliwell and Wright), 1859, vol. i. p. 340.

Another correspondent of the same journal for May (vol. liv. p. 343) says, "I happened to reside last year near Chepstow, in Monmouthshire; and there, for the first time, heard of *Mothering Sunday*. My inquiries into the origin and meaning of it were fruitless; but the practice thereabouts was for servants and apprentices on Mid-Lent Sunday to *visit their parents*, and *make them a present of money*, *a trinket*, or *some nice eatable*; and they are anxious not to fail in this custom."

A mothering-cake is alluded to in Collins's *Miscellanies*, 1762, p. 114:

"Why, rot thee, Dick! see Dundry's Peak
Lucks like a shuggard motherin'-cake."

A sort of spiced ale called Braggot, Bragget, or Braggat, was used in many parts of Lancashire on these visits of relations, whence the day was called *Braggot Sunday*.

In Nares' *Glossary* (Halliwell and Wright, 1859, vol. i. p. 102) the following receipt for making *bragget* is given from the *Haven of Health*, chap. 239, p. 268:

Take three or four galons of good ale, or more as you please, two dayes or three after it is densed, and put it into a pot by itselfe; then draw forth a pottle thereof, and put to it a quart of good English honey, and set them over the fire in a vessell, and let them boyle faire and softly, and alwayes as any froth ariseth skumme it away, and so clarifie it, and when it is well clarified, take it off the fire and let it coole, and put thereto of pepper a pennyworth, cloves, mace, ginger, nutmegs, cinamon, of each two pennyworth, beaten to powder, stir them well together, and set them over the fire to boyle againe awhile, then bring milke warme, put it to the reste, and stirre alltogether, and let it stand two or three daies, and put barme upon it, and drink it at your pleasure.

Minshen in his *Ductor in Linguas* (1617, p. 50) tells us that Braggot is composed of two Welsh words, *Bräg*, malt, and *Gots*, honeycombs.

In Ben Jonson's masque of the *Metamorphosed Gipsies* is the following reference to this word:

> "And we have serv'd there, armed all in ale,
> With the brown bowl, and charg'd in *braggat* stale."

On this day also boys went about in ancient times into the villages with a figure of death made of straw, from whence they were generally driven by the country people, who disliked it as an ominous

appearance, while some gave them money to get the mawkin carried off. Its precise meaning under that form is doubtful, though it seems likely to have purported the death of winter, and to have been only a part of another ceremony conducted by a larger number of boys, from whom the death carriers were a detachment, and who consisted of a large assemblage carrying two figures to represent Spring and Winter. These two figures they bore about, and fought; in the fight, Summer or Spring got the victory over Winter, and thus was allegorized the departure or burial of the death of the year, and its commencement or revival as Spring.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 358.

In the north of England, and also in the Midland Counties, the following names are given to the Sundays of Lent, the first of which however is anonymous:

> "Tid, Mid, Misera,
> Carling, Palm, Paste Egg-day."

Another version of this couplet is given in the *Gent. Mag.*, 1788, vol. lviii. p. 288.

> "Tid, and Mid, and Misera,
> Carling, Palm, and Good-Pas-Day."

The first three names are no doubt corruptions of some part of the ancient Latin service or psalms used on each.—Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 116; see the *Festa Anglo-Romana*, 1678.

In the *Gent. Mag.* (1785, p. 779) an advertisement for the regulation of Newark fair is quoted, which mentions that "*Careing Fair* will be held on Friday before Careing Sunday;" and Nichols remarks on this passage that he had heard the following old Nottinghamshire couplet:

"Care Sunday, Care away,
Palm Sunday and Easter Day."

—*Ibid.* p. 113.

LANCASHIRE.

Fig-pies, or, as they are called in this country, "fag-pies," are, or were, eaten on a Sunday in Lent, thence known as Fag-pie Sunday.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. i. p. 322.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

Fig-pie Wake is kept in the parish of Draycot-in-the-Moors and in the neighbouring villages on Mid-Lent Sunday. The fig-pies are made of dry figs, sugar, treacle, spice, etc.; they are rather too luscious for those who are not "to the manner born." But yet on this Sunday, the friends of the parishioners come to visit them, and to eat their fig-pies.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol, i. p. 227.

FIRST MONDAY IN MARCH.

BERKSHIRE AND HAMPSHIRE.

The first Monday in March being the time when shoemakers in the country cease from working by candle-light, it used to be customary for them to meet together in the evening for the purpose of *wetting the block*. On these occasions the master either provided a supper for his men, or made them a

present of money or drink; the rest of the expense was defrayed by subscriptions among themselves, and sometimes by donations from customers. After the supper was ended, the block candlestick was placed in the midst, the shop candle was lighted, and all the glasses being filled, the oldest hand in the shop poured the contents of his glass over the candle to extinguish it; the rest then drank the contents of theirs standing, and gave three cheers. The meeting was usually kept to a late hour.[22]

—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 470.

[22] In some places this custom took place on Easter Monday.

FRIDAY IN LIDE.

CORNWALL.

The first Friday in March is so called from *lide*, Anglo-Saxon for March. This day is marked by a serio-comic custom of sending a young lad on the highest mound or hillock of the work, and allowing him to sleep there as long as he can; the length of his *siesta* being the measure of the afternoon nap for the tinners throughout the ensuing twelve months. The weather which usually characterizes Friday in Lide is, it need scarcely be said, not very conducive to prolonged sleep. In Saxon times labourers were generally allowed their mid-day sleep; and it has been observed that it is even now permitted to

husbandmen in some parts of East Cornwall during a stated portion of the year. Browne appears to allude to this practice in Devonshire, when he says in the third song of his first book, in reference to the song-birds in the woodland:

> "Whose pleasing noates the tyred swaine have made
> To steale a nap at noontide in the shade."

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1870, vol. i. p. 64.

MARCH 3.]

SCOTLAND.

Sinclair, in his *Statistical Account of Scotland* (1795, vol. xvi. p. 460), says, "At Sandwick the people do no work on the third day of March, in commemoration of the day on which the church of Sandwick was consecrated; and, as the church was dedicated to St. Peter, they also abstain from working for themselves on St. Peter's day (29th June), but they will work for another person who employs them."

MARCH 5.]

ST. PIRAN'S DAY.

CORNWALL.

The tinners observe this day, says Hitchins in his *History of Cornwall* (1844, vol. i. p. 725), as a holiday, which they call St. Piran's Day. This, by a

custom established from time immemorial, sanctions a suspension from all labour, because St. Piran is supposed to have communicated some important information relative to the tin manufacture.

MARCH 8.]

CARE SUNDAY.

This day, the ancient *Passion Sunday*, is the fifth Sunday after Shrove Tuesday. The word *Care*, which is also applied to Christmas Cakes, has been a stumbling-block to etymologists. The following remarks respecting its derivation are taken from Hampson's *Med. Ævi Kalend.* (1841, vol. i. p. 178):—T. Mareschall observes that the day on which Christ suffered, is called in German both *Gute Freytag* and *Karr Freytag*, and that *Karr* signified a satisfaction for a fine or penalty. Adelung speaking of *Charfreytag* (*Care* or *Carr* Friday) and *Charwoche* (*Care* or *Carr-week*), observes that the first syllable is supposed to be the old *Cara*, preparation (*Zubereitung*), and that this week, conformably to the usage of the Jews, was called *Preparation Week* (*Zubereitungswoche*) because the sixth day was *Preparation day* (*Zubereitungstag*), when the Jews prepared themselves for Easter. Hence the Greeks called Carfriday, *Dies Parasceves*, of which the Gothic *Gartag*, or *Garfreytag* is a translation.

Tatian (Cap. 58) names the Friday before Easter "Garotag fora Ostrum," and renders the phrase, "My heart is prepared," "Karo ist mein herza." Schiller's opinion, however, that *Char*, *Kar*, signifies mourning, complaint, sorrow, has equal probability; for it

appears from ancient manuscripts that *Car* formerly bore the signification of *Care* or grief, and in Sweden, where the fifth Sunday in Lent is denominated *Kaersunnutag*, the verb *Kœra* is actually to lament, to complain.

Dr. Jameson, adopting the opinion of Mareschall, observes, "This name may have been imposed in reference to the satisfaction made by our Saviour. Some, however, understand it, as referring to the accusations brought against him on this day, from the Sueo-Gothic *Kœra*, to complain."—*Etymol. Dict.*, Art. *Care Sunday*.

On this day, in the northern counties, and in Scotland, a custom obtains of eating *Carlings*, which are grey peas, steeped all night in water, and fried the next day with butter:

> "There'll be all the lads and lassies
> Set down in the midst of the ha',
> With sybows, and ryfarts, and *carlings*
> That are bath sodden and raw."
>
> Ritson's *Scottish Songs*, vol. i. p. 211.

As to the origin of this custom, Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 114) offers the following explanation:—"In the Roman Calendar, I find it observed on this day, that a dole is made of *soft beans*. I can hardly entertain a doubt but that our custom is derived from hence. It was usual among the Romanists to give away beans in the doles at funerals; it was also a rite in the funeral ceremonies of heathen Rome. Why we have substituted peas I know not, unless it was because they are a pulse somewhat fitter to be eaten at this season of the year." Having observed from Erasmus that Plutarch held pulse (*legumina*) to be of the highest efficacy in invocation of the *Manes*, he

adds: “Ridiculous and absurd as these superstitions may appear, it is quite certain that *Carlings* deduce their origin from thence.” This explanation, however, is by no means regarded as satisfactory.

Hone (*Every Day Book*, 1826, vol. i. p. 379) says, How is it that *Care Sunday* is also called *Carl* and *Carling* Sunday; and that the peas, or beans of the day are called *Carlings*? *Carle*, which means a *Churle*, or rude boorish fellow, was anciently the term for a working countryman or labourer; and it is only altered in the spelling, without the slightest deviation in sense, from the old Saxon word Ceorl, the name for a husbandman. The older denomination of the day, then, may not have been *Care*, but *Carl Sunday*, from the benefactions to the *Carles* or *Carlen*. A correspondent of *Notes & Queries* (*1st S.* vol. iii. 449) tells us that on the north-east coast of England, where the custom of frying dry peas on this day is attended with much augury, some ascribe its origin to the loss of a ship freighted with peas on the coast of Northumberland. Carling is the foundation beam of a ship, or the beam on the keel.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

In several villages in the vicinity of Wisbeach, in the Isle of Ely, the fifth Sunday in Lent has been, time immemorial, commemorated by the name of *Whirlin Sunday*, when cakes are made by almost every family, and are called, from the day, *Whirlin Cakes*.—*Gent. Mag.* 1789, vol. lix. p. 491.

YORKSHIRE.

The rustics go to the public-house of the village, and spend each their *Carling-groat*, i.e., that sum in

drink, for the Carlings are provided for them gratis; and a popular notion prevails that those who do not do this will be unsuccessful in their pursuits for the following year.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 114.

MARCH 10.]

OXFORDSHIRE.

William Handy, by will dated the 10th of March, 1622, bequeathed to the parish of St. Giles', Oxford, £40, upon condition that, upon the 10th of March for ever, in the morning, about 5 o'clock, they should ring one peal with all the bells, and about 8 or 9 o'clock should go to service, and read all the service, with the Litany and the Communion, as it is commanded to be read in the cathedral church, and after that to have a sermon, and in it to give God thanks for His great blessings in delivering and bringing the giver from Papistry and idolatry to the light and truth of the blessed Gospel; and he desired that the preacher might have 10*s.* for his sermon, and the minister 5*s.* for leading service, and the poor to have given them in bread or money 10*s.*

This sum, with other money, was laid out in 1633, in purchasing a tenement, garden, and one acre of pasture ground, situated in Corn Street, Witney, to the uses of the donor's will; of the rent, 15*s.* a year was accordingly commanded to be paid to the minister for reading prayers and preaching a sermon on the 10th of March, 5*s.* to the clerk, 5*s.* to the ringer, and 15*s.* to be distributed at the church, with other money in small sums to the

poor.[23]
—*Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 249.

[23] There was a similar gift of the same donor to the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, Oxford; but since 1800 nothing has been paid in respect of this charity.

March 11.]

Nottinghamshire.

Formerly, there lived at Newark one Hercules Clay, a tradesman of considerable eminence, and an alderman of the borough of Newark. During the siege, in the night of the 11th of March 1643, he dreamed three times that his house was on fire; on the third warning he arose much alarmed, awoke the whole of his family, and caused them to quit the premises, though at that time all appeared to be in perfect safety. Soon afterwards, however, a bomb from a battery of the Parliamentarian army on Beacon Hill, an eminence near the town, fell upon the roof of the house, and penetrated all the floors, and happily did little other execution. The bomb was intended to destroy the house of the governor of the town, which was in Stadman Street, exactly opposite Clay's house. In commemoration of this extraordinary deliverance, Mr. Clay, by his will, gave £200 to the Corporation in trust to pay the interest of £100 to the Vicar of Newark, for a sermon to be preached every 11th of March. The interest of the other £100 he directed to be given in bread to the poor. Penny loaves were, accordingly, given to every one who applied, and the day on which they were distributed, was called "Penny Loaf Day."—Hone's

Year Book, 1838, p. 301.

MARCH 12.]
ST. GREGORY'S DAY.

IRELAND.

The feast of St. Gregory the Great, 12th of March, was formerly observed as a holiday, and one of festivity in all the rural schools in the baronies of Forth and Baigy (the Strongbonian Colony), in the county of Wexford. The manner was this: the children, for some days previous, brought contributions, according to the means and liberality of their parents, consisting of money, bread, butter, cream, &c., and delivered them to the teacher. On the morning of the joyous day, the children repaired to the school-house in holiday dress, where the teacher had everything prepared for the festivity, the simple temple of learning decorated with the richest flowers within his means of obtaining, and the presence of two or more kind-hearted females to do the honours and duties of the tea-table to the happy juveniles. A "king" and a "queen" were nominated, who, of course, took the seat of honour, and the proud and busy teacher was everywhere all attention to his little pupils. The day passed off in hilarity and innocent enjoyment, and the competitive system of free offerings left, generally, something pleasing to tell for some days in the pockets and humble cupboard of the teacher. This custom prevailed until after the commencement of the present century.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. vii. p. 392.

MARCH 14.]
PALM SATURDAY.

SCOTLAND.

On the Saturday before Palm Sunday the boys belonging to the grammar-school at Lanark, according to ancient usage, used to parade the streets with a palm, or its substitute, a large tree of the willow kind, (*Salix caprea*), in blossom, ornamented with daffodils, mezereon, and box-tree. This day was called Palm Saturday, and supposed to be a popish relic of very ancient standing.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, Sinclair, 1795, vol. xv. p. 45.

MARCH 15.]
PALM SUNDAY.

Palm Sunday receives its English and the greater part of its foreign names from the custom of bearing palm branches, in commemoration of those which were strewn in the path of Christ on his entry into Jerusalem. “It is a custom among churchmen,” says the author of a Normano-Saxon homily in the reign of Henry II., or Richard I., “to go in procession on this day. The custom has its origin in the holy procession which our Saviour made to the place where he chose to suffer death.”

The ceremony of bearing palms on Palm Sunday was retained in England after some others were dropped, and was one of those which Henry VIII. in 1536 declared were not to be discontinued. In a proclamation in the library of the Society of

Antiquaries, dated the 26th February, 1539, "Concernyng rites and ceremonies to be used in due fourme in the Churche of Englande," occurs the following clause: "On Palme Sonday it shall be declared that bearing of palmes renueth the memorie of the receivinge of Christe in lyke maner into Jerusalem before his deathe." Again, in Fuller's *Church History* (1655, p. 222), we read that "bearing of palms on Palm Sunday is in memory of the receiving of Christ into Jerusalem a little before his death, and that we may have the same desire to receive him into our hearts."

In Howe's edition of *Stow's Chronicle* (1615, fol. p. 595), it is stated, under the year 1548, that "this yeere the ceremony of bearing of palmes on Palme Sunday was left off, and not used as before."—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 181; Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 124.

It is still customary with our boys, both in the south and north of England, to go out and gather slips with the willow-flowers or buds at this time. These seem to have been selected as substitutes for the real palm, because they are generally the only things which can be easily obtained at this season. This practice is still observed in the neighbourhood of London. The young people go *a-palming*; and the sallow is sold in London streets for the whole week preceding Palm Sunday. In the north it is called going a-palmsoning or palmsning.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 127.

Stow in his *Survey of London* (1603, p. 98) says that "in the weeke before Easter had ye great shewes made for the fetching in of a *twisted tree or with*, as they termed it, out of the woodes into the kinge's house, and the like into every man's house of honor or worship." Probably this was a substitute for the

palm.

An instance of the great antiquity of this practice in England is afforded by the Domesday Survey, under Shropshire, vol. i. p. 252, where a tenant is stated to have rendered in payment a bundle of box twigs on Palm Sunday, "Terra dimid. car unus reddit inde *fascem buxi in die Palmarum*."

By an Act of Common Council, 1 and 2 Phil. and Mary, for retrenching expenses, it was ordered, "that from henceforth *there shall be no wyth fetcht home at the Maior's or Sheriff's Houses*. Neither shall they keep any lord of misrule in any of their houses."—Strype's *Stow*, 1720, book i. p 246.

It was formerly the custom in some of the northern parts of England for the young men and maids who received the sacrament to walk after dinner into the corn-fields, and to bless the corn and fruits of the earth.—Kennett, MS. Brit. Mus.

CORNWALL.

In former days persons resorted to "Our Lady of Nantswell" with a palm cross in one hand and an offering in the other. The offering fell to the priest's share: the cross was thrown into the well, and if it swam was regarded as an omen that the person who threw it would outlive the year; if however it sank, a short ensuing death was foreboded.—Carew, *Survey of Cornwall*, 1811.

DERBYSHIRE.

On Palm Sunday morning, the boys go into the fields and gather branches of the willow; these are carried about during the day, and in some churches it is customary to use them for decoration.—*Jour. of*

Arch. Assoc., 1852, vol. vii. p. 204.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

The return of Palm Sunday has, from time immemorial, been observed at Hentland Church in a peculiar manner. The minister and congregation receive from the churchwardens a cake or bun, and, in former times, a cup of beer also. This is consumed within the church, and is supposed to imply a desire on the part of those who partake of it to forgive and forget all animosities, and thus prepare themselves for the festival of Easter.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. vii. p. 275.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

Hone, in his *Year Book* (1838, p. 1593), states that at Kempton it has long been a custom for the inhabitants to eat figs on this day, there termed *Fig Sunday*, where it is also usual for them to keep wassel, and make merry with their friends.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

A curious and quaint custom existed for very many years at Caistor Church, in Lincolnshire, on Palm Sunday, connected with a tenure of property; and in the particulars of sale, circulated in 1845, is the following account of it:

"This estate is held subject to the performance, on Palm Sunday in every year, of the ceremony of cracking a whip in Caistor Church, in the said county of Lincoln, which has been regularly and duly performed on Palm Sunday, from time immemorial, in the following manner:

"The whip is taken every Palm Sunday by a man from Broughton to the parish of Caistor, who, while the minister is reading the first lesson, cracks it three distinct times in the church porch, then folds it neatly up, and retires to a seat. At the commencement of the second lesson, he approaches the minister, and kneeling opposite to him with the whip in his hand, and the purse at the end of it, held perpendicularly over his head, waves it thrice, and continues in a steadfast position throughout the whole of the chapter. The ceremony is then concluded. The whip has a leathern purse tied at the end of it, which ought to contain thirty pieces of silver, said to represent, according to Scripture, "the price of blood." Four pieces of weechelm[24] tree, of different lengths, are affixed to the stock, denoting the different Gospels of the holy Evangelists; the three distinct cracks are typical of St. Peter's denial of his Lord and Master three times; and the waving it over the minister's head as an intended homage to the Blessed Trinity."

[24] Properly Wych elm (*Ulmus montana*).

In an article on this subject in the *Archæological Journal* (1849, vol. vi. p. 239), the writer says: "I have not been able to trace this custom to its source. It would appear to have prevailed in very primitive times, and yet the circumstance of the custom requiring the more essential part of the ceremony to be performed during the reading of the *second lesson* is scarcely reconcilable with this idea; but I am induced to think that the custom prevailed long before our present ritual existed, and that it has in this respect been accommodated to the changes which time has effected in the services of the Church. Unfortunately, the title-deeds do not contain

the slightest reference to the custom. I have no means of tracing the title beyond 1675. The parish of Broughton is a very large one, and anterior to 1675 belonged, with small exceptions, to the Anderson family; but whether Stephen Anderson, the then owner of the manor, and the 2200 acres of land sold in 1845, was owner of the other part of Broughton, which has long been in the possession of Lord Yarborough's ancestors, I cannot say. A partition of the property appears to have been made between the co-heiresses, and the manor and 2200 acres being settled in 1772 by Sir Stephen Anderson, of Eyeworth, on his niece, Frances Elizabeth Stephens, and her issue; upon her death it became the property of her son, Ellys Anderson Stephens, who died in 1844, leaving four daughters and co-heiresses, and who, in 1845, sold the property to a client of mine, Mr. John Coupland, and who afterwards sold the manor and about 600 acres to Lord Yarborough, 982 acres to myself, and other portions to different purchasers, reserving to himself about 200 acres. I cannot make out when this partition (above alluded to) took place. The deed or will by which it was effected would probably refer to the custom and provide for the performance of it, but there is no document with the title deeds tending to show whether the custom was due only in respect of the manor, and 2200 acres, or in respect of Lord Yarborough's portion of the parish as well. The fact of a partition having taken place, rests rather upon tradition than evidence; but supposing it, as I do, to be a fact, it seems strange that the title-deeds should be silent as to the obligation imposed upon the owner of the manor to perform the service by which the whole property was held. The manor and estate sold in 1845, were of the tenure of ancient demesne;

a tenure which is very rare at this time of day, at least in this part of the world. Probably a reference to Lord Yarborough's title-deeds would clear up the mystery, or Sir Charles Anderson may have the means of doing so.

"I may also refer to Sir Culling Eardley as possibly in a position to throw some light on the subject; for it was to him and his ancestors, as lords of the manor of Hundon, in Caistor, to whom this service was due, and for whose use the whip was deposited after the service in the pew of Caistor Church, belonging to the lord of the manor of Hundon. All the versions that I have seen of the custom favour the opinion that it had some reference to the subject of the second lesson for Palm Sunday, which is the 26th chapter of St. Matthew, and if so, it would seem likely to follow, that the principal part of the ceremony took place at the reading of that chapter; but in that case it has clearly undergone some change, because, until the last revision of the Book of Common Prayer, there was no proper second lesson for the morning of Palm Sunday; but the 26th chapter of St. Matthew was part of the Gospel for that day, and had been so from Anglo-Saxon times.

Perhaps the better opinion is, that this custom, recently discontinued, had been so varied from time to time as to have borne at last little resemblance to what originally took place. I do not suppose at its commencement it was regarded as at all irreverent, or was intended to be otherwise than most decorous, according to the idea of a semi-barbarous age; what it really was at first it is now impossible to conjecture or discover. The explanation suggested in the particulars of sale appears too much in accordance with modern notions to be altogether correct. Some allege a tradition that it was a self-

inflicted penance by a former owner of the Broughton estate for killing a boy with such a whip."

In May, 1836, the following petition was presented to the House of Lords by the lord of the manor against the annual observance of this custom; but without effect:

"*To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled.*

"The petition of the undersigned Sir Culling Eardley Smith, of Bedwell Park, in the county of Hertford, sheweth, that your petitioner is lord of the manor of Hundon, near Caistor, in the county of Lincoln.

"That the lord of the manor of Broughton, near Brigg, in the same county, yearly, on Palm Sunday, employs a person to perform the following ceremony in the parish church at Caistor, etc.; that the performance of this superstitious ceremony is utterly inconsistent with a place of Christian worship.

"That it is generally supposed that it is a penance for murder, and that, in the event of the performance being neglected, the lord of the manor of Broughton would be liable to the penalty to the lord of the manor of Hundon.

"That your petitioner being extremely anxious for the discontinuance of this indecent and absurd practice, applied to the lord of the manor of Broughton for the purpose, who declined entering into any negotiation until the deed should be produced under which the ceremony was instituted, which deed (if it has ever existed) your petitioner is unable to produce.

"That your petitioner subsequently applied to the Bishop of Lincoln to use his influence to prevent the repetition of the ceremony, and offered to guarantee the churchwardens against any loss in consequence

of their refusal to permit it.

"That your petitioner believes there are no trustees of a dissenting chapel who would permit the minister or officers of their chapel to sanction such a desecration.

"That the ceremony took place, as usual, on Palm Sunday, in this year.

"Your petitioner therefore prays that your Lordships will be pleased to ascertain from the bishop of the diocese why the ceremony took place; that, if the existing law enables any ecclesiastical persons to prevent it, the law may be hereafter enforced; and that, if the present law is insufficient, a law may be passed enabling the bishop to interfere for the purpose of saving the national Church from scandal.

"And your petitioner will ever pray."

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

It is the universal custom, with both rich and poor, to eat figs on this day. On the Saturday previous, the market at Northampton is abundantly supplied with figs, and there are more purchased at this time than throughout the rest of the year; even the charity children, in some places, are regaled with them.

No conjecture is offered as to the origin or purpose of this singular custom. May it not have some reference to Christ's desiring to eat figs the day after his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem?—Baker, *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, 1854, i. p. 232.

OXFORDSHIRE.

In some parts of this country figs are eaten on

Palm Sunday, which is in consequence called Fig Sunday.[25]
—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. i. p. 227.

[25] See Mid-Lent Sunday.

SURREY.

From time immemorial a fair, or wake, has been held in the churchyard of Crowhurst on Palm Sunday. Formerly, excesses were frequently committed on the occasion through the sale of liquors; but of late years the fair has been conducted with great decorum.—Brayley, *Topographical History of Surrey*, 1841, iv. p. 132.

WILTSHIRE.

On St. Martin's Hill, near Marlborough, at which there is an ancient camp more than thirty acres in extent, Palm Sunday is kept; and persons in great numbers used to assemble there, each carrying a hazel-nut bough with the catkins hanging from it.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* v. p. 447.

YORKSHIRE.

In Yorkshire and the northern counties Palm Sunday is a day of great diversion, young and old amusing themselves with sprigs of willow, or in manufacturing palm-crosses, which are stuck up or suspended in houses. In the afternoon and evening a number of impudent girls and young men sally forth and assault all unprotected females whom they meet out of doors, seizing their shoes, and compelling them to redeem them with money. These disgraceful

scenes are continued until Monday morning, when the girls extort money from the men by the same means; these depredations were formerly prolonged till Tuesday noon.—*Time's Telescope*, 1822, p. 68.

At Filey figs are also eaten on this day.—Cole, *History of Filey*, 1826, p. 135.

WALES.

In South Wales Palm Sunday goes by the name of Flowering Sunday, from the custom of persons assembling in the churchyards, and spreading fresh flowers upon the graves of friends and relatives.—TIMES, 13th April, 1868, p. 7.

MARCH 16.]

LANCASHIRE.

A rural celebration used to be held at Poulton-in-the-Fylds on the Monday before Good Friday, by young men, under the name of "Jolly Lads," who visited such houses as were likely to afford good entertainments, and excited mirth by their grotesque habits and discordant noises. This was evidently borrowed from the practice of the *pace* or *pask eggers*, of other parts of the county, merely preceding instead of following Easter.—Baines, *Hist. of Lancashire*, 1836, vol. iv. p. 436.

OXFORDSHIRE.

Aubrey, in MS. Lansd., 231, gives the following: It is the custom for the boys and girls in country

schools in several parts of Oxfordshire, at their breaking up in the week before Easter, to go in a gang from house to house, with little clacks of wood, and when they come to any door, there they fall a-beating their clacks, and singing this song:

"Herrings, herrings, white and red,
Ten a penny, Lent's dead;
Rise, dame, and give an egg,
Or else a piece of bacon.
One for Peter, two for Paul,
Three for Jack a Lent's all.
Away, Lent, away!"

They expect from every house some eggs, or a piece of bacon, which they carry baskets to receive, and feast upon at the week's end. At first coming to the door, they all strike up very loud, "Herrings, herrings," &c., often repeated. As soon as they receive any largess, they begin the chorus—

"Here sits a good wife,
Pray God save her life;
Set her upon a hod,
And drive her to God."

But if they lose their expectation and must goe away empty, then, with a full cry,—

"Here sits a bad wife,
The devil take her life;
Set her upon a swivell,
And send her to the devil."

And, in further indignation, they commonly cut the latch of the door, or stop the key-hole with dirt, or leave some more nasty token of displeasure.—

Thom's *Anecdotes and Traditions*, 1839, p. 113.

MARCH 17.] ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

In the metropolis, says Stow in his *Sports, Pastimes, and Customs of London* (1847, p. 241), this anniversary is generally observed at court as a high festival, and the nobility crowd and pay their compliments in honour of the tutelary saint of Ireland. It is usually selected, also, for soliciting aid to a great national object—the promotion of education.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

In the *Illustrated London News* of 22nd March, 1862, p. 285, is the following paragraph:

"Lord Langford, as the highest Irish nobleman in Eton School, presented, on St. Patrick's Day, the beautifully-embroidered badges, in silver, of St. Patrick, to the head master, the Rev. E. Balston, and the lower master, the Rev. W. Carter, which were worn by the reverend gentlemen during the day. About twenty-four of the Irish noblemen and gentlemen in the school were invited to a grand breakfast with the head master, as is customary on these occasions."

IRELAND.

The shamrock is worn in all parts of Ireland on this day. Old women, with plenteous supplies of trefoil,

may be heard in every direction, crying “Buy my shamrock, green shamrocks;” and children have “Patrick’s crosses” pinned to their sleeves. This custom is supposed to have taken its origin from the fact that when St. Patrick was preaching the doctrine of the Trinity he made use of this plant, bearing three leaves upon one stem, as a symbol of the great mystery.[26]

[26] Mr. Jones in his *Historical Account of the Welsh Bards* (1794, p. 13) says: When St. Patrick landed near Wicklow the inhabitants were ready to stone him for attempting an innovation in the religion of their ancestors. He requested to be heard, and explained unto them, that God is an omnipotent, sacred Spirit, who created heaven and earth, and that the Trinity is contained in the Unity; but they were reluctant to give credit to his words. St. Patrick, therefore, plucked a trefoil from the ground, and expostulated with the Hibernians: “Is it not as possible for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as for these three leaves to grow upon a single stalk?” Then the Irish were immediately convinced of their error, and were solemnly baptized by St. Patrick.

In *Contributions towards a Cybele Hibernica* (D. Moore and A. G. More, 1866, p. 73) is the following note: “*Trifolium repens*, Dutch clover, Shamrock.—This is the plant still worn as shamrock on St. Patrick’s Day, though *Medicago lupulina* is also sold in Dublin as the shamrock. Edward Lhwyd, the celebrated antiquary, writing in December 1699 to Tancred Robinson, says, after a recent visit to Ireland: ‘Their shamrug is our common clover’ (*Phil. Trans.*, No. 335). Threkeld, the earliest writer on the wild plants of Ireland, gives *Seamar-oge* (young trefoil) as the Gaelic name for *Trifolium pratense album*, and says expressly that this is the plant worn

by the people in their hats on St. Patrick's Day. Wade also gives *Seamrog* as equivalent to *Trifolium repens*, while the Gaelic name given for *Oxalis* by Threkeld is *Sealgan*."

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*4th S.* vol. iii. p. 235) says the *Trifolium filiforme* is generally worn in Cork. It grows in thick clusters on the tops of walls and ditches, and is to be found in abundance in old limestone quarries in the south of Ireland. The *Trifolium minus* is also worn.

The following whimsical song descriptive of St. Patrick is given on Hone's authority as one often sung by the Irish:

St. Patrick was a gentleman, and he came from
decent people,
In Dublin town he built a church, and on it put a
steeple;
His father was a Wollaghan, his mother an O'Grady,
His aunt she was a Kinaghan, and his wife a widow
Brady.

Tooralloo, tooralloo, what a glorious
man our saint was!
Tooralloo, tooralloo, O whack fal de lal,
de lal, etc.

Och! Antrim hills are mighty high, and so's the hill of
Howth too;
But we all do know a mountain that is higher than
them both too;
'Twas on the top of that high mount St. Patrick
preach'd a sermon.
He drove the frogs into the bogs, and banished all
the vermin.

Tooralloo, tooralloo,
etc.

No wonder that we Irish lads, then, are so blythe and

frisky;
St. Patrick was the very man that taught us to drink
whisky;
Och! to be sure he had the knack, and understood
distilling,
For his mother kept a sheebeen shop near the town
of Enniskillen.

Tooralloo, tooralloo,
etc.—

Every Day Book, vol. ii. p. 387.

It is customary early in February for wealthy farmers and landowners in Ireland to brew ale to be kept till the 17th of March, St. Patrick's Day; and there is a delicious cake made this day, to be eaten with pickled salmon.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. ix. p. 367.

Some years ago this day was welcomed, in the smaller towns or hamlets, by every possible manifestation of gladness and delight. The inn, if there was one, was thrown open to all comers, who received a certain allowance of oaten bread and fish. This was a benevolence from the host, and to it was added a "Patrick's pot," or quantum of beer; but of late years whisky is the beverage most esteemed. The majority of those who sought entertainment at the village inn were young men who had no families, whilst those who had children, and especially whose families were large, made themselves as snug as possible by the turf fire in their own cabins. Where the village or hamlet could not boast of an inn, the largest cabin was sought out, and poles were extended horizontally from one end of the apartment to the other; on these poles, doors purposely unhinged, and brought from the surrounding cabins, were placed, so that a table of considerable dimensions was formed, round which all seated

themselves, each one providing his own oaten bread and fish. At the conclusion of the repast they sat for the remainder of the evening over a "Patrick's pot," and finally separated quietly.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 386.

The following description of St. Patrick's Day in Ireland is taken from the *Time's Telescope* (1827, p. 66): Every one is expected, says the writer, to wear a sprig of shamrock in honour of the saint and his country, and a few pence will supply a family with plenty of this commodity. In the morning upon the breakfast table of the "master" and "the mistress" is placed a plateful of this herb for a memento that it is Patrick's Day, and they must "drown the shamrock," a figurative expression for what the servants themselves do at night in glasses of punch, if the heads of the family are so kind as to send down the plate of shamrock crowned with a bottle of whisky, under which is also expected to be found a trifle towards a treat. While the lower circles are, on this blessed of all Irish days, thus enjoying themselves in the evening, the higher are crowding into that room of the castle entitled St. Patrick's Hall, which is only opened two nights in the year—this, and the birth-night (the 23rd of April); it is a grand ball, to which none can be admitted who have not been presented and attended the Viceroy's drawing-rooms; and of course every one must appear in court dress, or full uniforms, except that, in charity to the ladies, trains are for that night dispensed with on account of the dancing. A few presentations sometimes take place, after which the ball commences, always with a country dance to the air of "Patrick's Day," and after this quadrilles, etc., take their turn.

MARCH 18.]
SHEELAH'S DAY.

IRELAND.

The day after St. Patrick's Day is "Sheelah's Day," or the festival in honour of Sheelah. Its observers are not so anxious to determine who "Sheelah" was as they are earnest in her celebration. Some say she was "Patrick's wife," others that she was "Patrick's mother," while all agree that her immortal memory is to be maintained by potations of whisky. The shamrock worn on St. Patrick's Day should be worn also on Sheelah's Day, and on the latter night be drowned in the last glass. Yet it frequently happens that the shamrock is flooded in the last glass of St. Patrick's Day, and another last glass or two, or more, on the same night deluges the over-soddened trefoil. This is not "quite correct," but it is endeavoured to be remedied the next morning by the display of a fresh shamrock, which is steeped at night in honour of "Sheelah" with equal devotedness.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 387.

MARCH 19.]
MAUNDY, OR CHARE THURSDAY.

The day before Good Friday is termed Maundy Thursday, because, says the *British Apollo* (1709, ii. 7), on this day our Saviour washed his disciples' feet, to teach them the great duty of being humble; and therefore he gave them a command to do as he had done, to imitate their Master in all proper instances

of condescension and humility. The origin, consequently, of this custom is of very great antiquity, and, unlike many other ceremonies connected with the Church before the Reformation, remains in existence in a modified form up to the present day. The original number of poor persons whose feet were washed by the king or queen was thirteen, but this number was afterwards extended so as to correspond with the age of the reigning sovereign.

Matthew Paris mentions Maundy money, and the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert at Rouen, a manuscript of the 10th century, cap. xxix., contains a "Benedictio ad mandatum ipso die" (*Archæologia*, vol. xxiv. p. 119), and Wlnothus, Abbot of St. Alban's, ordained a daily performance of the mandate. In other houses it was customary to wash the feet of as many poor people as there were monks in the convent, on Holy Thursday, and on Saturday before Palm Sunday: the day of the latter ablution received the name of *mandatum pauperum*, to distinguish it from the *Mandati Dies*. During the ceremony the whole choir chanted the words of Christ, "Mandatum novum do vobis" ("A new commandment I give unto you"). Du Cange quotes from the life of St. Brigida by Chilienus:

> "Proxima cœna fuit Domini, qua sancta solebat
> Mandatum Christi calido complere lavacro."
>
> (Du Cange, *Gloss.*, tom. iv., col. 399.)

Archdeacon Nares, however, apparently following Spelman and Skinner whose opinion is adopted by Junius, in opposition to Minsheu, says that this day is so named from the *maunds*, in which the gifts were contained, and he maintains that *maund* is a

corruption of the Saxon *mand*, a basket.

The glossographer on Matthew Paris explains the word *mandatum*, to be alms, from the Saxon *Mandye*, charity. Somner has no such word in his Dictionary; and it seems more probable that Maunday Thursday has originally been Mandate Thursday; *Mandati Dies* being the name where the Saxon *mands* were totally unknown.

Ælfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, having employed the Latin name of this day, Cœna Domini, gives these directions to the Saxon priests: "On Thursday you shall wash the altars before you celebrate mass, otherwise you must not. After vespers you must uncover the altars and let them remain bare until Saturday, washing them in the interior. You shall then fast until nones. *Imple mandata Domini in cœna ipsius.* 'Do on Thursday as our Lord commands you;' wash the feet of the poor, feed and clothe them; and, with humility, wash your feet among yourselves as Christ himself did, and commanded us so to do." On the whole there seems to be no reason to doubt that the name *maundy* is derived from the mandate obeyed on this day.

The bread given to the poor on Maundy Thursday was named mandate bread, *mandati panes*, in the monasteries; as the coin given was called mandate money.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* i. 183-185.

One of the earliest instances on record of a monarch observing this custom, and which is the more curious as it shows that the practice of regulating the amount of the dole given on Maundy Thursday by the age of the king was then in existence, is preserved in the "*Rotulus Misæ*, or role of the wardrobe expenses of the 14th year of King John," in which there appears an item of "fourteen shillings and one penny, for alms to thirteen poor

persons, every one of whom received thirteen pence at Rochester, on Thursday, in Cœna Domini" (Holy Thursday), John having then reigned thirteen complete years.

In the wardrobe expenses of Edward I. we find money given on Easter eve to thirteen poor people whose feet the Queen had washed; which latter custom is said to have been performed by the sovereign so late as the reign of James II.—Thoms, *Book of the Court*, 1844, p. 311.

Henry VII. gave, when thirty-eight years old, thirty-eight coins and thirty-eight small purses to as many poor people:

"*March 25.* To thirty-eight poor men in almes, £6 0*s.* 4*d.* For thirty-eight small purses, 1*s.* 8*d.*

There are several entries for the Maundy in the "Privy Purse expenses" of this sovereign, as in 1496:

"April 10. For bote hire for the Maundy and the kinges robe, payed by John Flee, 4*s.*"

The order of the Maundy, as practised by Queen Elizabeth in 1579 is here given—(from No. 6183, Add. MSS. in the British Museum):

"*Order of the Maunday made, at Greenwich, 19th March 1579, 14 Elizabeth.*"

"First.—The hall was prepared with a long table on each side, and formes set by them; on the edges of which tables, and under those formes were lay'd carpets and cushions for her Majestie to kneel when she should wash them. There was also another table set across the upper end of the hall somewhat above the foot pace, for the chappelan to stand at. A little beneath the midst whereof, and beneath the said foot-pace, a stoole and cushion of estate was pitched for her Majestie to kneel at during the service time.

This done the holy water, basons, alms, and other things being brought into the hall, and the chappelan and poor folks having taken the said places, the laundresse, armed with a faire towell, and taking a silver-bason filled with warm water and sweet flowers, washed their feet all after one another and wiped the same with his towell, and soe making a crosse a little above the toes kissed them. After hym, within a little while, followed the sub-almoner, doing likewise, and after him the almoner himself also. Then, lastly, her Majestie came into the hall, and after some singing and prayers made, and the gospel of Christ's washing of his disciples' feet read, 39 ladyes and gentlewomen (for soe many were the poor folks, according to the number of the yeares complete of her Majesties age), addressed themselves with aprons and towels to waite upon her Majestie; and she, kneeling down upon the cushions and carpets under the feete of the poore women, first washed one foote of every one of them in soe many several basons of warm water and sweete flowers, brought to her severally by the said ladies and gentlewomen; then wiped, crossed, and kissed them, as the almoner and others had done before. When her Majestie had thus gone through the whole number of 39 (of which 20 sat on the one side of the hall, and 19 on the other), she resorted to the first again, and gave to each one certain yardes of broad clothe to make a gowne, so passing to them all. Thirdly; she began at the first, and gave to each of them a pair of gloves. Fourthly; to each of them a wooden platter, wherein was half a side of salmon, as much ling, six red herrings and lofes of cheat bread. Fifthly; she began with the first again, and gave to each of them a white wooden dish with claret wine. Sixthly; she received of each waiting-

lady and gentlewoman their towel and apron, and gave to each poor woman one of the same, and after this the ladies and gentlewomen waited no longer, nor served as they had done throughout the courses before. But then the treasurer of the chamber, Mr. Hennage, came to her Majestie with thirty-nine small white purses, wherein were also thirty-nine pence (as they saye) after the number of yeares to her Majestie's saide age, and of him she received and distributed them severally. Which done she received of him soe many leather purses alsoe, each containing 20*sh.* for the redemption of her Majestie's gown, which (as men saye) by ancient order she sought to give some of them at her pleasure but she to avoid the trouble of suite, which accustomablie was made for that preferment, had changed that reward into money, to be equally divided amongst them all, namely, 20*sh.* a piece, and she also delivered particularly to the whole company. And so taking her ease upon the cushion of estate and hearing the quire a little while, her Majestie withdrew herself and the companye departed, for it was by that time the sun was setting."

Charles II. observed this custom, as we find in a letter preserved in the *Rawdon Letters*, p. 175:

"On Thursday last his Majesty washed poor men's feet in the Banquetting House, an act of humility used by his predecessors on Maundy Thursday to as many poor men as he had lived years. To each poor man he gave two yards of cloth for a coat, three ells of linen for a shirt, shoes, stockings, two purses, the one with thirty-three pence, the other with twenty pence, one jole of ling, one jole of salmon, a quantity of red and white herrings, one barrel with beer, and another with wine, with which they drank his Majesty's health. The queen did pay the same

observance to several women about one of the clock at St. James."

After these illustrations of the ceremonies formerly observed in the distribution of the royal alms on Maundy Thursday, it becomes interesting to witness those which obtain at the present time.

The following is taken from the *Times* newspaper (April 6th, 1871):

"Those ancient and royal charities designated the Queen's Maundy were distributed yesterday in Whitehall Chapel during Divine service with the customary formalities, to fifty-two aged men and fifty-two aged women, the number of each one corresponding with the age of her most gracious Majesty.

At three o'clock a procession, consisting of a detachment of the yeomen of the guard under the command of a sergeant-major (one of the yeomen carrying the royal alms on a gold salver), the Rev. Dr. Jelf, D.D., Sub-Almoner, Mr. Joseph Hanby, Secretary and Yeoman of the Royal Almonry, and his Assistant, Mr. John Hanby, accompanied by senior children from the National Schools in the parish of St. John the Evangelist and St. Margaret, Westminster, who had been selected to participate in this privilege for their good conduct, proceeded from the Almonry office, in Scotland Yard, to the Chapel Royal, Whitehall.

The arrival of the procession having been signified to the Hon. and Very Rev. the Dean of Windsor, Lord High Almoner, and to the Sub-Dean of the Chapels Royal, they, preceded by Mr. Chapman, Sergeant of the Vestry, met it at the entrance, and took their places immediately after the yeoman of the guard bearing the salver with the royal alms.

The whole procession then advanced in the

following order:

Boys of the Chapel Royal,
Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal,
Priests of the Chapel Royal,
Sergeant-Major of the Yeoman of the Guard,
The Yeoman with the Salver of Alms,
The Sergeant of the Vestry,
The Lord High Almoner,
The Sub-Almoner and Sub-Dean,
The Children of the National Schools,
The Yeoman of the Almonry and his Assistant,
And the Yeomen of the Guard.

The procession having passed up the centre aisle to the steps of the altar, the Lord Almoner, the Sub-Almoner, and the Sub-Dean, and those forming the procession having taken their assigned places on either side of the chapel, the royal alms being deposited in front of the royal closet, the afternoon service (a special service for the occasion) was read by the Rev. Dr. Vivian, senior priest in waiting, commencing with the Exhortation, Confession, Absolution, &c. Then followed the

41ST PSALM (THE GRAND CHANT).

FIRST LESSON, ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. XXV. 14-31.

First Anthem (Psalm xxxiv.)—"O taste and see how gracious the Lord is."

Goss.

£1. 15*s.* distributed to each woman. To each man, shoes and stockings.

Second Anthem.—"O Saviour of the world."

Goss.

Woollen and linen clothes distributed to each man.

Third Anthem.-—"I waited for the Lord."

Mendelssohn.

Money purses distributed to each man and woman.

SECOND LESSON, ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. xxv. v. 31, to the end.

Fourth Anthem (Psalm xxi.)—"The king shall rejoice in thy strength."

Greene.

Then were read two prayers composed for the occasion, after which followed the prayer for the Queen, and so on to the end."

The minor bounty and royal gate alms, &c., were, in accordance with ancient usage, distributed at the Almonry Office, in Scotland Yard, on Friday and Saturday in the past week, and on Monday and Tuesday during the current week, to aged, disabled, and meritorious persons who had been previously recommended by the clergy of the various parishes in and round London.

There were over four thousand persons relieved.

The selections were made by the Lord High Almoner, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Jelf, D.D. The payments were conducted by Mr. Joseph Hanby, secretary and yeoman of Her Majesty's Almonry in ordinary, who has officiated on these occasions since Easter, 1812, inclusive.—See also the *True Briton*, 1801.

In Nares' *Glossary* (1859, vol. i. p. 151) occurs the following article:

"*Chare Thursday.*—The Thursday in Passion week, corrupted, according to the following ancient explanation, from *Shear Thursday*, being the day for shearing, or shaving, preparatory to Easter. Called also Maundy Thursday:

"'Upon *Chare Thursday* Christ brake bread unto his disciples, and bade them eat it, saying it was his flesh and blood.'—Shepherd's *Kalendar*.

"'If a man asks why *Shere Thursday* is called so, ye may say that in holy Chirche it is called *Cena Domini*, our Lordes Super day. It is also in Englyshe called *Sher Thursday*, for in old faders dayes the people wolde that day shere theyr hedes, and clippe theyr berdes, and poll theyr hedes, and so make them honest agenst Ester day. For on Good Fryday they doo theyr bodyes none ease, but suffre penaunce in mynde of him that that day suffred his passyon for all mankynde. On Ester even it is time to here theyr service, and after service to make holy daye.

"'Then, as Johan Bellet sayth, on *Sher Thursday* a man sholde so poll his here, and clype his berde, and a preest sholde shave his crowne, so that there sholde nothynge be between God and hym.'"—Festival, quoted by Dr. Wordsworth, in *Eccles. Biog.* vol. i. p. 297.

In Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* (revised by Sir Henry Ellis), London, 1841, in the chapter headed "Shere Thursday, also Maundy Thursday," the same derivation is given; and in one of the notes, a passage is quoted from the *Gent. Mag.* (July 1779, p. 349), in which the writer says:

"Maundy Thursday, called by Collier *Shier Thursday*, Cotgrave calls by a word of the same sound and import, *Sheere Thursday*. Perhaps—for I can only go upon conjecture—as *shear* means *purus*, *mundus*, it may allude to the washing of the disciples' feet (John xiii. 5., *et seq.*), and be tantamount to clean. See 10th verse, and Lye's *Saxon Dictionary v. Scip*. If this does not please, the Saxon *scipan* signifies *dividere*, and the name may come from the distribution of alms upon that day, for which see

Archæol. Soc. Antiq., vol. i. p. 7, *seq.*; Spelman, *Gloss. v.* Mandatum; and Du Fresne, vol. iv. p. 400. Please to observe, too, that on that day *they also washed the altars*, so that the term in question may allude to that business.—See Collier's *Eccles. History*, vol. ii. p. 157."

Chare Thursday, however, says Dr. Hahn (*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. viii. p. 389), is the correct expression, and has nothing whatever to do with *shearing* or *sheer*, or *scipan*. *Shere* is only a corruption of chare = char, care, or carr.

In Germany Passion Week is called *Charwoche*, and Good Friday *Charfreitag*. But in former times *Char* was prefixed to every day of Passion Week, and we find *Charmontag* (Chare Monday), *Chardienstag* (Chare Tuesday), &c. The origin of Chare Thursday is therefore evident. *Char* is an old German word signifying *luctus*, *solicitudo*; Goth. *kar*, *kara*; Old Saxon *cara*; O.-H.-G. *chara*; Anglo-Saxon *cearu*, *caru*, allied to Latin *cura*, &c.[27]

[27] See Care Sunday, p. 121.

The original signification *chare* having become obsolete, a word of similar sound was substituted in its place, and hence *Shere Thursday*.

MIDDLESEX.

Robert Halliday, by his will, dated 6th May, 1491, gave estates in the parish of St. Leonard, Eastcheap, London, the rents to be applied to various purposes, and, amongst others, five shillings to the churchwardens yearly, either to make an entertainment among such persons of the said parish of St. Clement, who should be at variance with each

other, in the week preceding Easter, to induce such persons to beget brotherly love amongst them; or if none should be found in the said parish, then to make an entertainment with the said five shillings, at the tavern, amongst the honest parishioners of the said parish on the day of our Lord's Supper, commonly called Shere Thursday, that they might pray more fervently for the souls of certain persons named in his will.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 146.

By indenture, bearing date 11th April, 1691, John Hall, granted a messuage, in the parish of St. Martin Ongar, to Francis Kenton and another, in trust to pay out of the rents thereof, amongst other sums, ten shillings a year, to the churchwardens of the parish of St. Clement, Eastcheap, London, on the Thursday next before Easter, to provide two turkeys for the parishioners, to be eaten at their annual feast, called the reconciling or love feast, usually made on that day. The house is in the possession of the Weavers' Company, who make the payment for the turkeys annually.—*Ibid.* p. 60.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The Thursday before Easter is called Bloody Thursday by some of the inhabitants of this and the neighbouring county of Yorkshire.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. x. p. 87; *4th S.* vol. v. p. 595.

MARCH 20.]
GOOD FRIDAY.

The term Good Friday is erroneously said to be peculiar to the English Church; but it is certainly an adoption of the old German *Gute Freytag*, which may have been a corruption of *Gottes Freytag*, God's Friday, so called on the same principle that Easter Day in England was at one period denominated God's Day.

In a manuscript homily, entitled *Exortacio in die Pasche*, written about the reign of Edward IV., we are told that the Paschal Day "in some place is callede Esterne Day, and in sum place Goddes Day."—Harl. MSS. Cod. id. fol. 94.

Another MS. quoted by Strutt (*Horda Angel-Cynna*, vol. iii. p. 175) says it is called Good Friday, because on this day good men were reconciled to God. The length of the services in ancient times on this day, occasioned it to be called Long Friday, the Lang Frigdæg of the Anglo-Saxons, which they probably received from the Danes, by whom at the present time the day is denominated *Lang Freday*.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* 1841, vol. i. p. 186.

The old ceremony of Creeping to the Cross on Good Friday is given from an ancient book of the ceremonial of the Kings of England, in the *Notes to the Northumberland Household Book*. The usher was to lay a carpet for the king to "creepe to the Crosse upon." The Queen and her ladies were also to creepe to the Crosse.

In an original Proclamation, black letter, dated 26th February, 30th Henry VIII., in the first volume of a *Collection of Proclamations* in the archives of the Society of Antiquaries of London (p. 138), we read:

"On Good Friday it shall be declared howe creepyng of the Crosse signifyeth an humblynge of ourselfe to Christe before the Crosse, and the kyssynge of it a memorie of our redemption made

upon the Crosse."

Anciently it was a custom with the kings of England on Good Friday to hallow, with great ceremony, certain rings, the wearing of which was believed to prevent the falling sickness. The custom originated from a ring, long preserved with great veneration in Westminster Abbey, which was reported to have been brought to King Edward by some persons coming from Jerusalem, and which he himself had long before given privately to a poor person, who had asked alms of him for the love he bare to St. John the Evangelist. The rings consecrated by the sovereign were called "Cramp-rings," and there was a special service for their consecration.

Andrew Boorde, in his *Breviary of Health*, 1557, speaking of the cramp, says, "The Kynge's Majestie hath a great helpe in this matter in halowyng crampe-ringes, and so geven without money or petition."

Good Friday has now almost ceased to be considered a fast by a great number of people. By many indeed its solemn significance is by no means neglected; but while these attend the churches others make high holiday. On this day excursion trains begin running, foot-races are advertised, donkeys and gipsy drivers make their first appearance for the season on heaths and commons, and Cornish and Devonshire wrestlers struggle for muscular triumphs in the presence of excited multitudes.—*N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. i. p. 261.

In many parts a small loaf of bread is baked on the morning of Good Friday, and then put by till the same anniversary in the ensuing year. This bread is not intended to be eaten, but to be used as a medicine, and the mode of administering it is by grating a small portion of it into water and forming a

sort of panada. It is believed to be good for many disorders, but particularly for diarrhœa, for which it is considered a sovereign remedy. Some years ago, a cottager lamented that her poor neighbour must certainly die of this complaint, because she had already given her two doses of Good Friday bread without any benefit.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 155; see *N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. iii. pp. 262, 263; see also p. 157.

In London, and all over England (not, however, in Scotland), the morning of Good Friday is ushered in with a universal cry of *Hot cross buns!* A parcel of them appears on every breakfast-table. It is rather a small bun, more than usually spiced, and having its brown sugary surface marked with a cross. The ear of every person who has ever dwelt in England is familar with the cry of the street bun-vendors:

> "One a penny, buns,
> Two a penny, buns,
> One a penny, two a penny,
> Hot Cross buns!"
>
> *Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 418.

The following lines are taken from *Poor Robin's Almanac* for 1733:

> "Good Friday comes this month, the old woman runs
> With one or two a penny *hot cross buns*,
> Whose virtue is, if you believe what's said,
> They'll not grow mouldy like the common bread."

It seems more than probable that the cross upon the Good Friday bun is intended to remind the devout of a Saviour's sufferings. The following extract in illustration of the ancient name and use of the bun is from Bryant's *Analysis of Ancient*

Mythology, 1807, vol. i. pp. 371-373: "The offerings which people in ancient times used to present to the gods were generally purchased at the entrance of the Temple, especially every species of consecrated bread, which was denominated accordingly. One species of sacred bread which used to be offered to the gods was of great antiquity, and called *Boun*. Hesychius speaks of the *Boun*, and describes it as a 'kind of cake with a representation of two horns.'" Julius Pollux mentions it after the same manner, "a sort of cake with horns." It must be observed, however, as Dr. Jamieson remarks, that the term occurs in Hesychius in the form of βους, and that for the support of the etymon Bryant finds it necessary to state that "the Greeks, who changed the nu final into a sigma, expressed it in the nominative βους, but in the accusative more truly βουν." Winckelman relates this remarkable fact, that at Herculaneum were found two entire loaves of the same size, a palm and a half, or five inches in diameter; they were marked by a *cross*, within which were four other lines, and so the bread of the Greeks was marked from the earliest period.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 187.

The Romans divided their sacred cakes with lines intersecting each other in the centre at right angles, and called the quarters *Quadra*.

> "Et violare manu malisque audacibus orbem
> Fatalis crusti, patulis nec parcere quadris."
>
> Virg. *Æn.* lib. vii. 114, 115.
>
> "Nec te liba juvant, nec sectæ quadra placentæ."
>
> Mart. lib. iii. *Epig.* 77.

In the North of England a herb-pudding, in which

the leaves of the *passion-dock* (*Polygonum Bistorta*) are a principal ingredient, is an indispensable dish on this day. The custom is of ancient date, and it is not improbable that this plant, and the pudding chiefly composed of it, were intended to excite a grateful reminiscence of the Passion, with a suitable acknowledgment of the inestimable blessings of the Redemption.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 150.

BEDFORDSHIRE.

A yearly contribution is made of one quarter of wheat, one quarter of barley, and one quarter of beans, by the proprietor of the great tithes of the parish of Eaton Bray, to be distributed among the poor of the parish on Good Friday. The great tithes of Eaton Bray are vested in the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, by whose lessee the quantity of grain above specified is regularly supplied; the whole of which is distributed on Good Friday by the churchwardens and overseers, among poor persons selected by them, in proportion to their several wants and necessities.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 33.

BERKSHIRE.

John Blagrave, by will dated 30th June, 1611, devised to Joseph Blagrave and his heirs a mansion-house in Swallowfield, and all his lands and messuages in Swallowfield, Eversley, and Reading, on condition that they should yearly, for ever, upon Good Friday, between the hours of six and nine in the morning, pay 10*l.*, in a new purse of leather, to the mayor and burgesses, to the intent that they should provide that the same should yearly be

bestowed in the forenoon of the same day in the following manner, viz., twenty nobles to one poor maiden servant who should have served, dwelt, and continued in any one service within any of the three parishes of Reading, in good name and fame, five years at the least, for her preferment in marriage; and to avoid partiality in the choice, he ordered that there should be every Good Friday three such maidens in election, to cast and try by lot whose the fortune should be, and that of those three one should be taken out of each parish, if it could be, and that every fifth year one of the three should be chosen from Southcote, if any there should have lived so long; and that there should be special choice of such maids as had served longest in any one place, and whose friends were of least ability to help them. That ten shillings should be given on the same day to the preacher of St. Laurence for a sermon; and that afterwards there should be twenty shillings given to threescore of the poorest householders of the same parish who should accompany the maiden to whom the lot had fallen home to her dwelling-place, and there leave her with her purse of twenty nobles. That the ringer should have three shillings and fourpence to ring a peal till the same maiden reached home.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 147.

DEVONSHIRE—DORSETSHIRE.

In some parishes in these counties the clerk carries round to every house a few white cakes as an Easter offering; these cakes, which are about the eighth of an inch thick, and of two sizes—the larger being seven or eight inches, the smaller about five in diameter—have a mingled bitter and sweet taste. In return for these cakes, which are always distributed

after Divine service on Good Friday, the clerk receives a gratuity according to the circumstances or generosity of the householder.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 426.

ESSEX.

In the centre of Waltham Church, and suspended from the ceiling, there formerly was a large and handsome brass chandelier, which had thirty-six candles, and used to be lighted up only on the evening of Good Friday, when the church was thronged with persons from the surrounding parishes for miles, who were chiefly attracted by the singing of the parish choir, at that time deservedly in repute. The chandelier was removed in effecting the restoration of the church.—Maynard, *History of Waltham Abbey*, 1865, p. 40.

LANCASHIRE.

The practice of eating fig-sue is prevalent in North Lancashire on Good Friday. It is a mixture consisting of ale, sliced figs, bread, and nutmeg for seasoning, boiled together, and eaten hot like soup.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. p. 221.

If an unlucky fellow is caught with his lady-love on this day in Lancashire, he is followed home by a band of musicians playing on pokers, tongs, pan-lids, etc., unless he can get rid of his tormentors by giving them money to drink with.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. ii. p. 516.

In some places in this county, Good Friday is termed “Cracklin Friday,” as on that day it is customary for children to go with a small basket to different houses, to beg small wheaten cakes, which

are something like the Jews' Passover bread, but made shorter or richer, by having butter or lard mixed with the flour. "Take with thee loaves and cracknels" (1 Kings, xiv. 3).—Harland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk-Lore*, 1867, p. 227.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

In Glentham Church there is a tomb with a figure known as *Molly Grime*. Formerly this figure was regularly washed every Good Friday by seven old maids of Glentham, with water brought from Newell Well, each receiving a shilling for her trouble, in consequence of an old bequest connected with some property in that district. About 1832 the custom was discontinued.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 100.

ISLE OF MAN.

Good Friday is in some instances superstitiously regarded in the Isle of Man. No iron of any kind must be put into the fire on that day, and even the tongs are laid aside, lest any person should unfortunately forget this custom and stir the fire with them; by way of a substitute a stick of the rowan tree is used. To avoid also the necessity of hanging the griddle over the fire, lest the iron of it should come in contact with a spark of flame, a large hammock or *soddog* is made, with three corners, and baked on the hearth. —Train, *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. 2, p. 117.

MIDDLESEX.

It was for a considerable period customary on

Good Friday for a sermon to be preached in the afternoon at St. Paul's Cross,[28] London, the subject generally being Christ's Passion. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen usually attended.

[28] Respecting the age of St. Paul's Cross, Stow declares himself ignorant. Dugdale, however, records, on the authority of Ingulphus, that its prototype, a cross of stone, was erected on the same spot, A.D. 870, to induce the passers-by to offer prayers for certain monks slain by the Danes. St. Paul's Cross consisted of some steps, on which was formed a wooden pulpit, covered with lead, whence sermons were preached to the people every Sunday morning. It was not, however, specially reserved for this purpose; since from this place, at times, the anathema of the Pope was thundered forth, or the ordinances of the reigning king were published, heresies were recanted, and sins atoned for by penance.

So early as 1256, we find John Mancell calling a meeting at *Powly's Crosse*, and showing the people that it was the king's desire that they should be "rulyd with justyce, and that the libertyes of the cytie shulde be maynteyned in every poynt." In 1299 the Dean of St. Paul's proclaimed from the Cross that all persons who searched for treasure in the church of St. Martin-le-Grand, or consented to the searching, were accursed; and it was here that Jane Shore, with a taper in one hand, and arrayed in her 'kyrtell onelye,' was exposed to open penance. After 1633, sermons were no longer preached at the Cross, but within the cathedral; and in 1643 it was altogether taken down.—Godwin and Britton, *Churches of London*, 1839; Pennant, *Account of London*, 1793; Brayley, *Londiniana*, 1829.

At the church of All Hallows, Lombard Street, a

sermon is preached every Good Friday in accordance with the directions of the will of Peter Symonds, dated 1587. Gifts, also, are distributed, consisting of a new penny and a packet of raisins, to a certain number of the younger scholars of Christ's Hospital. —*City Press*, April 12th, 1873.[29]

[29] Under the same will the children of Langbourn Ward Schools who help in the choir, and the children of the Sunday School, receive each a bun, and various sums of new money, ranging from 1*d.* to 1*s.*, besides the poor of the parish, on whom it bestowed 1*s.* each and a loaf. The money used to be given away over the tomb of the donor, until the railway in Liverpool Street effaced the spot.—*City Press*, April 12, 1873.

Just outside the church of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, Smithfield, the rector places twenty-one sixpences on a gravestone, which the same number of poor widows pick up. The custom is nearly as old as the church, and originated in the will of a lady, who left a sum of money to pay for the sermon, and to yield these sixpences to be distributed over her grave. As however, her will is lost, and her tomb gone, the traditionary spot of her interment is chosen for the distribution, a strange part of the tradition being that any one being too stiff in the joints to pick up the money is not to receive it.—*Ibid.*

On Good Friday the Portuguese and South American vessels in the London Docks observe their annual custom of flogging Judas Iscariot. The following extract is taken from the *Times* (April 5th, 1874):—"At daybreak a block of wood, roughly carved to imitate the Betrayer, and clothed in an ordinary sailor's suit, with a red worsted cap on its head, was hoisted by a rope round its neck into the fore-rigging; the crews of the various vessels then went to chapel, and on their return, about 11 a.m., the figure was lowered from the rigging, and cast into the dock, and ducked three times. It was then hoisted on board, and after being kicked round the deck was lashed to the capstan. The crew, who had worked themselves into a state of frantic excitement,

then with knotted ropes lashed the effigy till every vestige of clothing had been cut to tatters. During this process the ship's bell kept up an incessant clang, and the captains of the ships served out grog to the men. Those not engaged in the flogging kept up a sort of rude chant intermixed with denunciations of the Betrayer. The ceremony ended with the burning of the effigy amid the jeers of the crowd."

There is an indorsement on one of the indentures of gift to the parish of Hampstead stating that £40 had been given by a maid, deceased, to the intent that the churchwardens for the time being should provide and give to every one—rich and poor, great and small, young and old persons—inhabiting the parish, upon every Good Friday yearly for ever, one halfpenny loaf of wheaten bread.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 16.

OXFORDSHIRE.

Formerly, at Brazen-nose College, Oxford, the scholars had almonds, raisins, and figs for dinner on Good Friday, as appears by a receipt of thirty shillings, paid by the butler of the College, for "eleven pounds of almonds, thirty-five pounds of raisins, and thirteen pounds of figs, serv'd into Brazen-nose College, March 28th, 1662."—Pointer's *Oxoniensis Academia*, 1749, p. 71.

SURREY.

A custom, the origin of which is lost in the obscurity of time, prevails in the neighbourhood of Guildford of making a pilgrimage to St. Martha's (or Martyr's) Hill on Good Friday. Thither from all the

country side youths and maidens, old folks and children, betake themselves, and gathered together on one of the most beautiful spots in Surrey, in full sight of an old Norman Church which crowns the green summit of the hill, beguile the time with music and dancing. Whatever the origin of this pilgrimage to St. Martha's, it is apparently one that commends itself to the taste of the present generation, and is not likely to die out with the lapse of years, but to increase in popular estimation as long as the green hill lasts to attract the worshippers of natural beauty, or to furnish the mere votaries of pleasure with the excuse and the opportunity for a pleasant holiday.—*Times*, April 18th, 1870.

SUSSEX.

At Brighton, on this day, the children in the back streets bring up ropes from the beach. One stands on the pavement on one side, and one on the other, while one skips in the middle of the street. Sometimes a pair (a boy and a girl) skip together, and sometimes a great fat bathing-woman will take her place, and skip as merrily as the grandsire danced in Goldsmith's *Traveller*. They call the day "Long Rope Day." This was done as lately as 1863.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. iii. p. 444.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

The parish church at Leigh is decked on this day with "funereal yew." The same custom exists also at Belbroughton in the same county.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. i. p. 267.

YORKSHIRE.

In East Yorkshire it was customary to keep a hot-cross-bun from one Good Friday to the next, as it was reputed not to turn mouldy, and to protect the house from fire. Presents of eggs and buns are made on this day.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. v. p. 595.

WALES.

At Tenby, as late as the end of the last century, the old people were in the habit of walking barefooted to the church—a custom continued from times prior to the Reformation. Returning home from church they regaled themselves with hot-cross-buns, and having tied a certain number in a bag, they hung them up in the kitchen, where they remained till the next Good Friday for medicinal purposes, the belief being that persons labouring under any disease had only to eat of a bun to be cured.

About this time many young persons would meet together to "make Christ's bed." This was done by gathering a quantity of long reed-leaves from the river, and weaving them into the shape of a man; they then laid the figure on a wooden cross in a retired part of a field or garden, where they left it. This custom is perhaps derived from an old popular popish custom of burying an image of Christ on Good Friday, which is described in Barnabe Googe's translation of *Nao-Georgus*:

> "Another image do they get, like one but newly deade,
> With legges stretcht out at length, and hands upon his body spreade:
> And him with pomp and sacred song they beare unto his grave."

—Mason, *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 19.

IRELAND.

In the midland districts of Ireland, viz., the province of Connaught, on Good Friday, it is a common practice with the lower orders of Irish Catholics to prevent their children having any sustenance, even to those at the breast, from twelve o'clock on the previous night to the same hour on Friday, and the fathers and mothers will only take a small piece of dry bread and a draught of water during the day. It is a common sight to see along the roads between the different market towns, numbers of women with their hair dishevelled, barefooted, and in their worst garments: all this is in imitation of Christ's Passion.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 411.

MARCH 21.]

EASTER EVE.

On Easter Eve it was customary in our own country to light in the churches what was called the Paschal Taper. In Coates's *History of Reading* (1802, p. 131) is the following extract from the Churchwarden's accounts: "Paid for makynge of the Paschall and the Funte Taper, 5*s.* 8*d.*" A note on this observes, "The Pascal taper was usually very large. In 1557 the Pascal taper for the Abbey Church of Westminster was 300 pounds weight."—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 158.

On the eves of Easter and Whitsunday *Font-hallowing* was one of the very many ceremonies in

early times. The writer of a MS. volume of Homilies in the Harleian Library, No. 2371, says, “in the begynning of holy chirch, all the children weren kept to be chrystened on thys even, at the font-hallowyng; but now, for enchesone that in so long abydynge they might dye without chrystendome, therefore holi chirch ordeyneth to chrysten in all tymes of the yeare, save eyght dayes before these evenys the chylde shalle abyde till the font-hallowing, if it may safely for perill of death, and ells not.”

CUMBERLAND, ETC.

In Cumberland and Westmoreland, and other parts of the north of England, boys beg, on Easter Eve, eggs to play with, and beggars ask for them to eat. These eggs are hardened by boiling, and tinged with the juice of herbs, broom-flowers, &c. The eggs being thus prepared, the boys go out and play with them in the fields; rolling them up and down like bowls upon the ground, or throwing them up like balls into the air.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 172.

DORSETSHIRE.

During the last century it was customary in this county, on Easter Eve, for the boys to form a procession bearing rough torches, and a small black flag, chanting the following lines:

> “We fasted in the light,
> For this is the night.”

This custom was no doubt a relic of the Popish ceremony formerly in vogue at this season.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 160.

MIDDLESEX.

Brayley in his *Londiniana* (1829, vol. ii. p. 207) mentions a custom of the sheriffs, attended by the Lord Mayor, going through the streets on Easter Eve, to collect charity for the prisoners in the city prisons.

YORKSHIRE.

In East Yorkshire young folks go to the nearest market-town to buy some small article of dress or personal ornament, to wear for the first time on Easter Sunday, as otherwise they believe that birds—notably rooks or "crakes"—will spoil their clothes.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. v. p. 595.

In allusion to the custom of wearing new clothes on Easter Day Poor Robin says:

> "At Easter let your clothes be new,
> Or else be sure you will it rue."

IRELAND.

The day before Easter Day is in some parts called "Holy Saturday." On the evening of this day, in the middle parts of Ireland, great preparations are made for the finishing of Lent. Many a fat hen and dainty piece of bacon is put into the pot, by the cotter's wife, about eight or nine o'clock, and woe be to the person who should taste it before the cock crows. At twelve is heard the clapping of hands, and the joyous laugh, mixed with an Irish phrase which signifies "out with the Lent." All is merriment for a few hours, when they retire, and rise about four o'clock to see the sun dance in honour of the Resurrection. This ignorant custom is not confined to the humble labourer and his family, but is scrupulously observed

by many highly respectable and wealthy families.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 161.

MARCH 22.]

EASTER DAY.

Easter, the anniversary of our Lord's Resurrection from the dead, is one of the three great festivals of the Christian year—the other two being Christmas and Whitsuntide. From the earliest period of Christianity down to the present day, it has always been celebrated by believers with the greatest joy, and accounted the queen of festivals. In primitive times it was usual for Christians to salute each other on the morning of this day by exclaiming, 'Christ is risen;' to which the person saluted replied, 'Christ is risen indeed,' or else, 'And hath appeared unto Simon'—a custom still retained in the Greek Church.

The term *Easter* is derived, as some suppose, from *Eostre*,[30] the name of a Saxon deity, whose feast was celebrated every year in the spring, about the same time as the Christian festival—the name being retained when the character of the feast was changed, or, as others suppose, from *Oster*, which signifies rising. If the latter supposition be correct, Easter is in name, as well as reality, the feast of the Resurrection.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 423; *see Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. ii. p. 100.

[30] *Eostre* is perhaps a corruption of Astarte, the name under which the Assyrians, Babylonians, Phœnicians, and the most ancient nations of the east worshipped the moon, in like manner as they adored the sun, under the name of Baal.

In former times it was customary to make presents of gloves at Easter. In Bishop Hall's *Virgidemarium*, 1598, iv. 5, allusion is made to this custom.

> "For Easter gloves, or for a Shrovetide hen,
> Which bought to give, he takes to sell again."

It was an old custom for the barbers to come and shave the parishioners in the churchyard on Sundays and high festivals (at Easter, etc.,) before matins, which liberty was retained by a particular inhibition of Richard Flemmyng, Bishop of Lincoln, A.D. 1422.—*Time's Telescope*, 1826, p. 73.

Allusion is made by Mr. Fosbroke (*British Monachism*, 1843, p. 56) to a custom in the thirteenth century of seizing all ecclesiastics who walked abroad between Easter and Pentecost, because the Apostles were seized by the Jews after Christ's Passion, and making them purchase their liberty by money.

The custom of eating a "*gammon at Easter*," says Aubrey (which is still kept up in many parts of England), was founded on this, viz., to show their abhorrence of Judaism at that solemn commemoration of our Lord's Resurrection. Of late years the practice of decorating churches with flowers on this festival has been much revived.

CORNWALL.

A very singular custom prevailed at Lostwithiel on Easter Sunday. The freeholders of the town and manor having assembled together, either in person or by their deputies, one among them, each in his turn, gaily attired and gallantly mounted, with a sceptre in his hand, a crown on his head, and a sword borne before him, and respectfully attended

by all the rest on horseback, rode through the principal street in solemn state to the church. At the churchyard stile the curate, or other minister, approached to meet him in reverential pomp, and then conducted him to church to hear divine service. On leaving the church he repaired, with the same pomp and retinue, to a house previously prepared for his reception. Here a feast, suited to the dignity he had assumed, awaited him and his suite, and being placed at the head of the table, he was served, kneeling, with all the rites and ceremonies that a real prince might expect. The ceremony ended with a dinner; the prince being voluntarily disrobed, and descending from his momentary exaltation to mix with common mortals. On the origin of this custom but one opinion can be reasonably entertained, though it may be difficult to trace the precise period of its commencement. It seems to have originated in the actual appearance of the prince, who resided at Restormel Castle in former ages; but on the removal of royalty this mimic grandeur stepped forth as its shadowy representative, and continued for many generations as a memorial to posterity of the princely magnificence with which Lostwithiel had formerly been honoured.—Hitchins, *History of Cornwall*, 1824, vol. i. p. 717.

CUMBERLAND.

At one time it was customary to send reciprocal presents of eggs at Easter to the children of families respectively betwixt whom any intimacy existed. For some weeks preceding Good Friday the price of eggs advanced considerably, from the great demand occasioned by this custom.

The principal modes adopted to prepare the eggs

for presentation were the following:—The eggs being immersed in hot water for a few moments, the end of a common tallow-candle was made use of to inscribe the names of individuals, dates of particular events, &c. The warmth of the eggs rendered this a very easy process. Thus inscribed, the egg was placed in a pan of hot water, saturated with cochineal, or other dye-woods; the part over which the tallow had been passed was impervious to the operation of the dye; and, consequently, when the egg was removed from the pan, there appeared no discoloration of the egg where the inscription had been traced, but the egg presented a white inscription on a coloured ground. The colour of course depended upon the taste of the person who prepared the egg; but usually much variety of colour was made use of.

Another method of ornamenting "pace eggs" was, however, much neater, although more laborious than that with the tallow candle. The egg being dyed, it was decorated, by means of a penknife, with which the dye was scraped off, leaving the design white on a coloured ground. An egg was frequently divided into compartments, which were filled up according to the taste and skill of the designer. Generally, one compartment contained the name and also the age of the party for whom the egg was intended. In another there was perhaps a landscape, and sometimes a cupid was found lurking in a third; so that these "pace eggs" became very useful auxiliaries to the missives of St. Valentine.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 426.

The words pays, *pas*, *pace*, *pase*, *pasce*, *pask*, *pasch*, *passhe*, formerly used in this county, and still used in the north, are clearly derived from the Hebrew through the Greek πασχα. The Danish *Paaske-egg*, and the Swedish *Paskegg*, both likewise signify

coloured eggs. Brand considers this custom a relic of ancient Catholicism, the egg being emblematic of the Resurrection; but it is not improbable that it is in its origin like many other ancient popular customs, totally unconnected with any form of Christianity, and that it had its commencement in the time of heathenism.

The egg was a symbol of the world, and ancient temples in consequence sometimes received an oval form. This typification is found in almost every oriental cosmogony. The sacred symbol is still used in the rites of the Beltein, which are, unquestionably of heathen origin, and eggs are presented about the period of Easter in many countries. “Easter,” says a recent tourist, “is another season for the interchange of civilities when, instead of the coloured egg in other parts of Germany, and which is there merely a toy for children, the Vienna Easter egg is composed of silver, mother-of-pearl, bronze, or some other expensive material, and filled with jewels, trinkets, or ducats.—(*Sketches of Germany and the Germans in 1834, 1835, and 1836*, vol. ii. p. 162; *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 202.) This latter custom has lately become very popular in London.

John Troutbeck, by will, October 27th, 1787, gave to the poor of Dacre, the place of his nativity, 200*l.* the interest thereof to be distributed every Easter Sunday on the family tombstone in Dacre churchyard, provided the day should be fine, by the hands and at the discretion of a Troutbeck of Blencowe, if there should be any living, those next in descent having prior right of distribution; and if none should be living that would distribute the same, then by a Troutbeck, as long as one could be found that would take the trouble of it; otherwise by the ministers and churchwardens of the parish for the

time being; that not less than five shillings should be given to any individual, and that none should be considered entitled to it that received alms, or any support from the parish.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 115.

DERBYSHIRE.

On Easter Sunday the old custom of sugar-cupping at the dripping-torr, near Tideswell, is observed; when the young people assemble at the torr, each provided with a cup and a small quantity of sugar or honey, and having caught the required quantity of water, and mixed the sugar with it, drink it, repeating a doggerel verse.[31]

—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 204.

[31] It is also a general belief in this county that unless a person puts on some new article of dress he will be injured by the birds, and have no good fortune that year—*Ibid.* p. 205; see also p. 160.

KENT.

Hasted, in his *History of Kent* (1798, vol. vii. p. 138), states that, in the parish of Biddenden there is an endowment of old but unknown date for making a distribution of cakes among the poor every Easter Day in the afternoon. The source of the benefaction consists in twenty acres of land, in five parcels, commonly called the Bread and Cheese Lands. Practically, in Mr. Hasted's time, six hundred cakes were thus disposed of, being given to persons who attended service, while two hundred and seventy loaves of three and a half pounds weight each, with a pound and a half of cheese, were given in addition to

such as were parishioners.

The cakes distributed on this occasion were impressed with the figures of two females side by side, and close together.[32]

Amongst the country people it was believed that these figures represented two maidens named Preston, who had left the endowments; and they further alleged that the ladies were twins, who were born in bodily union, that is, joined side to side, as represented on the cakes; who lived nearly thirty years in this connection, when at length one of them died, necessarily causing the death of the other in a few hours. It is thought by the Biddenden people that the figures on the cakes are meant as a memorial of this natural prodigy, as well as of the charitable disposition of the two ladies. Mr. Hasted, however, ascertained that the cakes had only been printed in this manner within the preceding fifty years, and concluded more rationally that the figures were meant to represent two widows, "as the general objects of a charitable benefaction."

[32] An engraving of one of these cakes will be found in the *Every Day Book*, 1827, vol. ii. p. 443.

If Mr. Hasted's account of the Biddenden cakes be the true one, the story of the conjoined twins—though not inferring a thing impossible or unexampled—must be set down as one of those cases, of which we find so many in the legends of the common people, where a tale is invented to account for certain appearances, after the real meaning of the appearance was lost.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 427; see Britton and Brayley, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1803, vol. viii. p. 208; *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 60.

MIDDLESEX.

According to Lysons' *Environs of London* (1795, vol. iii. p. 603) there was an ancient custom at Twickenham of dividing two great cakes in the Church upon Easter Day, among the young people; but it being looked upon as a superstitious relic, it was ordered by Parliament, 1645, that the parishioners should forbear this custom, and, instead thereof, buy loaves of bread for the poor of the parish with the money that should have bought the cakes. It appears that the sum of £1 *per annum* is still charged upon the vicarage for the purpose of buying penny loaves for poor children on the Thursday before Easter. Within the memory of man they were thrown from the church-steeple to be scrambled for; a custom which prevailed also at Paddington.

NORFOLK.

In this county it is customary to eat baked custards at Easter, and cheesecakes at Whitsuntide.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. i. p. 248.

OXFORDSHIRE.

At University College, Oxford, on this day, the representation of a tree, dressed with evergreens and flowers, is placed on a turf close to the buttery, and every member there resident, as he leaves the Hall after dinner, chops at the tree with a cleaver. The College cook stands by holding a plate, in which the Master deposits half a guinea, each Fellow five shillings and sixpence. This custom is called "chopping at the tree."—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. ix. p. 468.

On Easter Day the rector of Ducklington for the

time being, as long as can be remembered, has paid £10 per annum, which was formerly given away in the church amongst the parishioners, in veal or apple pies: of late years it has been given away in bread. All the parishioners of Ducklington and Hardwick who apply, whether rich or poor, without any distinction, partake of it according to the size of their families. Many of the farmers take the bread as they say, for the sake of keeping up their right. It is stated that there is no document or record relating to this payment, nor any tradition respecting its origin.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 14.

The rector of Swerford supplies a small loaf for every house in the parish on Easter Sunday, which is given after evening service. It is understood that this is given on account of a bushel of wheat, which is payable out of a field called Mill Close, part of the glebe. Each house, whether inhabited by rich or poor, receives a loaf.—*Ibid.* p. 18.

YORKSHIRE.

It was customary in this country, for the young men in the villages to take off the young girls' buckles, and, on the Easter Monday, the young men's shoes and buckles were taken off by the young women. On the Wednesday they were redeemed by little pecuniary forfeits, out of which an entertainment called a *Tansey Cake*, was provided, and the jollity concluded with dancing. At Ripon, where this custom also prevailed, it is reported that no traveller could pass the town without being stopped, and, if a horseman, having his spurs taken away, unless redeemed by a little money, which was the only means to get them returned. This seems to bear an affinity to the custom of hocking.

Cole in his *Hist. of Filey* (1828, p. 136) mentions a similar custom as practised in that place. He says, the young men seize the shoes of the females, collecting as many as they can, and, on the following day, the girls retaliate by getting the men's hats, which are to be redeemed on a subsequent evening, when both parties assemble at one of the inns, and partake of a rural repast.—*Gent. Mag.* 1790, vol. lx. p. 719.

Two farms lying in the township of Swinton, and which belong to Earl Fitzwilliam, every year change their parish. For one year, from Easter Day at twelve at noon till next Easter Day at the same hour, they lie in the parish of Mexbrough, and then till Easter Day following at the same hour, they are in the parish of Wath-upon-Dearne, and so alternately.—Blount's *Ancient Tenures of Land*.

WALES.

Easter Day is generally kept in Wales as the Sunday, that is, with much and becoming respect to the sacredness of the day. It is also marked by somewhat better cheer, as a festival, of which lamb is considered as a proper constitutional part. In some places, however, after morning prayer, vestiges of the sundry sports and pastimes remain. It is thought necessary to put on some new portion of dress at Easter and unlucky to omit doing so, were it but a new pair of gloves or a ribbon. This idea is evidently derived from the custom of former times, of baptizing at Easter, when the new dress was in some degree symbolical of the new character assumed by baptism.

IRELAND.

The solemnity of Easter (says Bishop Kennett) was anciently observed in Ireland with so great superstition that they thought it lawful to steal all the year, to hoard up provisions against this festival time.—Kennett *MS*.

In some parts of Ireland at Easter a cake, with a garland of meadow flowers, is elevated upon a circular board upon a pike, apples being stuck upon pegs around the garland. Men and women then dance round, and they who hold out longest win the prize.[33]

—*Time's Telescope*, 1826, p. 37.

[33] Plutarch mentions a trial for dancing: a cake the prize.

March 23.]
EASTER MONDAY.

Buckinghamshire.

In the Parliamentary Returns of 1786 a donor of the name of Randell is stated to have given by deed, in 1597, five quarters of wheat and money to the poor of Edlesborough. Forty-nine bushels of wheat were yearly sent by Lady Bridgewater to the mill to be ground in respect of this charity. They were ground, and the flour baked at her expense; the bread was made up in four-pound loaves, which were given away by the parish officers on Easter Monday to all the poor of the parish, in shares varying according to the size of the families, a loaf being given to each individual.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 18.

CHESHIRE.

Pasch eggs are begged at the farmhouses; the children sing a short song, asking for—

> "Eggs, bacon, apples, or cheese,
> Bread or corn, if you please,
> Or any good thing that will make us merry."

These eggs are in some parts of the county boiled in vinegar, and otherwise ornamented, and hung up in the houses until another year. In some cottages as many as a score may be seen hanging. The custom of lifting is also observed.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.*, 1850, vol. v. p. 253.

In a pamphlet entitled *Certayne Collections of Anchiante Times, concerning the Anchiante and Famous Cittie of Chester*, already referred to and published in Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, is the following account of a curious practice once observed at Chester, "There is an anchant custome in this cittie of Chester: the memory of man now livinge not knowing the original, that upon Monday in Easter weeke, yearely, commonly called Black Mondaye, the two sheriffes of the cittie do shoote for a breakfaste of calves-heades and bacon, commonly called the Sheriffes' Breakfaste, the maner being thus: the day before, the drum soundeth through the cittie, with a proclamation for all gentlemen, yeomen, and good fellowes, that will come with their bowes and arrowes to take part with one sheriff or the other, and upon Monday morning, on the Rode-dee, the Mayor, shreeves, aldermen, and any other gentlemen that be there, the one sherife chosing one, and the other sherife chosing another, and soe of the archers; the one sherife shoteth, and the other sherife he

shoteth to *shode* him, beinge at length some twelve score, soe all the archers on one side to shote till it be *shode*, and so till three shutes be wonne, and then all the winners' side goe up together, first with arrowes in their hands, and all the loosers with bowes in their hands together, to the common hall of the cittie, where the maior, aldermen, and the reste, take parte together of the saide breakfaste in loveing manner. This is yearely done, it beinge a commendable exercise, a good recreation, and a lovinge assemblye."

In the year 1640 the sheriffs gave a piece of plate to be run for, instead of the calves'-head breakfast. In 1674, a resolution was entered in the Corporation journals that the calves'-head feast was held by ancient custom and usage, and was not to be at the pleasure of the sheriffs and leave-brokers. In the month of March, 1676-7, the sheriffs and leave-brokers were fined £10, for not keeping the calves'-head feast. For this feast an annual dinner was afterwards substituted, usually given by the sheriffs at their own houses on any day most suitable to their convenience.

DERBYSHIRE.

During a visit to the little village of Castleton, says a correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*4th S.* vol. v. p. 595), I noticed every child without exception had a bottle of *elecampane*—the younger ones having one tied round their necks—all sucking away at this curious compound of Spanish juice, sugar, and water with great assiduity. I was informed by a very old man that the custom had always obtained at Castleton on this day as long as he could remember.

The custom of lifting was practised in some of the

northern parts of this county.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.*, 1852, vol. vii. p. 205.

ESSEX.

Easter Monday was formerly appropriated to the grand "Epping Hunt." So far back as the year 1226, King Henry III. confirmed to the citizens of London *free-warren*, or liberty to hunt a circuit about their city, in the warren of Staines, &c.; and in ancient times, the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and corporation, attended by a due number of the constituents, are said to have availed themselves of this right of chase "in solemn guise." But years ago, the "Epping Hunt" lost the Lord Mayor and his brethren in their corporate capacity; the annual sport subsequently dwindled into a mere burlesque and farcical show amongst the mob, and even that has died away, and is now numbered "amongst the things that were."—*Sports, Pastimes and Customs of London*, 1847, p. 27.

The following extract illustrative of this ancient custom is taken from the *Chelmsford Chronicle* (April 15th, 1805): "On Monday last Epping Forest was enlivened with the celebrated stag-hunt. The road from Whitechapel to the Bald-faced Stag, on the forest, was covered with cockney sportsmen, chiefly dressed in the costume of the chase, in scarlet-frock, black jockey cap, new boots, and buckskin breeches. By ten o'clock the assemblage of civil hunters, mounted on all sorts and shapes, could not fall short of 1,200. There were numberless Dianas, also of the chase, from Rotherhithe, the Minories, &c., some in riding-habits, mounted on titups, and others by the side of their mothers, in gigs, tax-carts, and other vehicles appropriate to the sports of the field. The Saffron Walden stag-hounds made their joyful

appearance about half after ten, but without any of the Melishes or Bosanquets, who were more knowing sportsmen, than to risk either themselves, or their horses, in so desperate a burst. The huntsmen having capped their half crowns, the horn blew just before twelve, as a signal for the old fat one-eyed-stag (kept for the day) being enlarged from the cart. He made a bound of several yards, over the heads of some pedestrians, at first starting, when such a clatter commenced as the days of Nimrod never knew. Some of the scarlet-jackets were sprawling in the high road a few minutes after starting—so that a lamentable return of the maimed, missing, thrown, and thrown out, may naturally be supposed.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 460; see *Long Ago*, 1873, vol. i. pp. 19, 44, 83, 146; also *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. x. pp. 373, 399, 460, 478; xi. p. 26.

Herefordshire.

At this season, in the neighbourhood of Ross, the rustics have a custom called *corn-showing*. Parties are made to pick out cockle from the wheat. Before they set out they take with them, cake, cider, and *a yard* of toasted cheese. The first person who picks the cockle from the wheat has the first kiss of the maid and the first slice of the cake. This custom, doubtless, takes its origin from the Roman as appears from the following line of Ovid (*Fasti*, i.
691):—

> "Et careant loliis oculos vitiantibus agri."
>
> "Let the fields be stripped of eye-diseasing cockle."
>
> —Fosbroke, *Ariconensia or Archæological Sketches of Ross and Archenfield*, 1822.

KENT.

At this season young people go out holiday-making in public-houses, to eat *pudding-pies*, and this practice is called going a *pudding-pieing*. The pudding-pies are from the size of a teacup to that of a small tea-saucer. They are flat, like pastrycooks' cheesecakes, made with a raised crust to hold a small quantity of custard, with currants lightly sprinkled on the surface. Pudding-pies and cherry-beer usually go together at these feasts.—Hone's *Year Book*, 1838, p. 361.

LANCASHIRE.

In Lancashire, and in Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, and perhaps in other counties, the ridiculous custom of 'lifting' or 'heaving' is practised. On Easter Monday the men lift the women, and on Easter Tuesday the women lift or heave the men. The process is performed by two lusty men or women joining their hands across each other's wrists, then, making the person to be heaved sit down on their arms, they lift him up aloft two or three times, and often carry him several yards along a street. A grave clergyman who happened to be passing through a town in Lancashire on an Easter Tuesday, and having to stay an hour or two at an inn, was astonished by three or four lusty women rushing into his room, exclaiming they had "come to lift him!" "To lift him!" repeated the amazed divine; "what can you mean?" "Why, your reverence, we've come to lift you, 'cause it's Easter Tuesday." "Lift me because it's Easter Tuesday! I don't understand you—is there any such custom here?" "Yes to be sure; why, don't you know? All us women was lifted yesterday, and us

lifts the men to-day in turn. And, in course, it's our reights and duties to lift 'em." After a little further parley the reverend traveller compromised with his fair visitors for half-a-crown, and thus escaped the dreaded compliment.—*Book of Days*, vol. i., p. 425.

Agnes Strickland in her *Lives of the Queens of England* (1864, vol. i. p. 303), narrates how on the Easter Monday of 1290 seven of Queen Eleanora's ladies unceremoniously invaded the chamber of King Edward (I.), and seizing their majestic master, proceeded to "heave him" in his chair, till he was glad to pay a fine of fourteen pounds to enjoy his own peace and be set at liberty.

The following extract is taken from the *Public Advertiser*, April 13th, 1787:—The custom of rolling down Greenwich-hill at Easter is a relique of old city manners, but peculiar to the metropolis. Old as the custom has been, the counties of Shropshire, Cheshire and Lancashire boast of one of equal antiquity, which they call heaving, and perform with the following ceremonies, on the Monday and Tuesday in the Easter week. On the first day, a party of men go with a chair into every house into which they can get admission, force every female to be seated in their vehicle, and lift them up three times with loud huzzas. For this they claim the reward of a chaste salute, which those who are too coy to submit to may get exempted from by a fine of one shilling, and receive a written testimony which secures them from a repetition of the ceremony for that day. On the Tuesday the women claim the same privilege, and pursue their business in the same manner, with this addition—that they guard every avenue to the town, and stop every passenger, pedestrian, equestrian or vehicular."

A correspondent of the *Gent. Mag.*, 1784, vol. xcvi.

p. 96, says that *lifting* was originally designed to represent our Saviour's Resurrection.

MIDDLESEX.—LONDON.

In the Easter holidays the young men, says Fitzstephen (in his tract entitled '*Descriptio Nobilissimæ Civitatis Londoniæ*,' *circa* 1174), counterfeit a fight on the water: a pole is set up in the midst of the river, with a target strongly fastened to it, and a young man standing in the fore part of a boat, which is prepared to be carried on by the flowing of the tide, endeavours to strike the target in his passage.

If he succeeds so as to break his lance, and yet preserve his footing, his aim is accomplished; but if he fail, he tumbles into the water, and his boat passes away with the stream. On each side, however, of the target, ride two vessels, wherein are stationed several young men ready to snatch him from the water, as soon as he appears again above the surface.

Formerly the Lord Mayors and the sheriffs were accustomed to, separately, ask each of their friends as were aldermen or governors of the hospitals, whom they saw at church, to dine with them at their own houses. But, in process of time, however, it was agreed that the Lord Mayor should invite all that were at church on the first day; and the two sheriffs, in their turn, on the next succeeding days. Hence, by degrees, they began to invite other of the friends, and the aldermen bringing their ladies, other ladies were also invited, so that the private houses not being large enough, they began to entertain at their respective halls.—Brayley, *Londiniana*, 1829, vol. ii. p. 28.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Formerly, at Easter and Whitsuntide, the mayor, aldermen, and sheriff of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, with a great number of the burgesses, went yearly to the Forth, or Little Mall of the town, with the mace, sword, and cap of maintenance carried before them, and patronised the playing at hand-ball, dancing, and other amusements, and sometimes joined in the ball-play, and at others joined hands with the ladies. —*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 430.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

Deering, in his *Historical Account of Nottingham* (1751, p. 125), says:—By a custom time beyond memory, the mayor and aldermen of Nottingham and their wives have been used on Monday in Easter week, morning prayer ended, to march from the town to St. Anne's Well, having the town waits to play before them, and attended by all the clothing, i.e., such as have been sheriffs, and ever after wear scarlet gowns, together with the officers of the town, and many other burgesses and gentlemen, such as wish well to the woodward—this meeting being first instituted, and since continued for his benefit.

WARWICKSHIRE.

Easter Monday and Tuesday, says a correspondent of Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* (1849, vol. i. p. 183), were known by the name of *heaving-days*, because, on the former day, it was customary for the men to heave and kiss the women, and on the latter for the women to retaliate upon the men. The women's heaving-day was the most amusing. Many a time have I passed

along the streets inhabited by the lower orders of people, and seen parties of jolly matrons assembled round tables on which stood a foaming tankard of ale. There they sat in all the pride of absolute sovereignty, and woe to the luckless man that dared to invade their prerogatives! As sure as he was seen he was pursued; as sure as he was pursued he was taken; and, as sure as he was taken, he was heaved and kissed, and compelled to pay sixpence for "leave and licence" to depart.

At one time a custom was observed at Birmingham, on the Easter Monday, called "Clipping the Church." This ceremony was performed amid crowds of people and shouts of joy, by the children of the different charity schools, who at a certain hour flocked together for the purpose. The first comers placed themselves hand in hand with their backs against the Church, and were joined by their companions, who gradually increased in number, till at last the chain was of sufficient length completely to surround the sacred edifice. As soon as the hand of the last of the train had grasped that of the first, the party broke up, and walked in procession to the other Church (for in those days Birmingham boasted but of two), where the ceremony was repeated.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 431.

They have an ancient custom at Coleshill, says Blount, (*Jocular Tenures*, Beckwith's Edition, p. 286), that if the young men of the town can catch a hare, and bring it to the parson of the parish before ten o'clock on Easter Monday, the parson is bound to give them a calf's-head, and a hundred eggs for breakfast, and a groat in money.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

At sunset upon Easter Monday, and at no other period throughout the year, a game is played by the children of Evesham called “thread-my-needle.” From the season of this observance, as well as the cry of the players while elevating their arms arch-wise, which *now* is:

> “Open the gates as high as the sky,
> And let Victoria’s troops pass by,”

it is probable, says May in his *Hist. of Evesham* (1845, p. 319), that the custom originally had reference to the great festival of the church and the triumphant language of the Psalmist, applied to the event commemorated at this period—Psalm xxiv. 9: ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” The accuracy of this supposition, however, may be fairly doubted.

WALES.

In North Wales, says Pennant, the custom of heaving upon Monday and Tuesday in Easter week is preserved; and on Monday the young men go about the town and country, from house to house, with a fiddle playing before them, to heave the women. On the Tuesday the women heave the men.

At Tenby Easter Monday was always devoted to merry-making; the neighbouring villages (Gumfreston especially) were visited, when some amused themselves with the barbarous sport of cock-fighting, while others frequented the two tea-parties held annually at Tenby and Gumfreston, and known as the “Parish Clerks’ Meeting.”—Mason’s *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 21.

SCOTLAND.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED.

It is pleasurable, says Fuller in his *History of Berwick-upon-Tweed* (1799, p. 445), to see what a great number of lovely and finely-dressed children make their appearance on Easter Monday, which is known in this neighbourhood as the Children's Day. Being attended by a multitude of servants, they parade and run about for many hours, amusing themselves in a variety of ways. This charming group is joined more or less by the parents of the children, who, together with such as are attracted by curiosity, form, on such occasions, a company of a great many hundreds. They assemble in greatest numbers behind the barracks, where the rampart is broadest. The fruiterers attend in full display, as well as many itinerants in various pursuits. The whole company may be called a *sportive fair*.

IRELAND.

In the County of Antrim this day is observed by several thousands of the working classes of the town and vicinity of Belfast resorting to the Cave-hill, about three miles distant, where the day is spent in dancing, jumping, running, climbing the rugged rocks, and drinking. Here many a rude brawl takes place, many return home with black eyes, and in some cases with broken bones. Indeed it is with them the greatest holiday of the year, and to not a few it furnishes laughable treats to talk about till the return of the following spring. On this evening a kind of dramatic piece is usually brought forward at the Belfast Theatre, called *The Humours of the Cave-hill.*—

The Table Book, p. 507.

Co. Clare.

On Easter Monday multitudes go to Scattery Island for the purpose of performing penance on their bare knees, round the stony beach and holy well there. Tents are generally erected on this occasion, and often times more whisky is taken by the pilgrims than is found convenient on their return in crowded boats.—Mason, *Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1814, vol. ii. p. 459.

Co. Down.

At Holywood the trundling of eggs, as it is called, is an amusement common at Easter. For this purpose the eggs are boiled hard, and dyed of different colours, and, when they are thus prepared, the sport consists in throwing or trundling them along the ground, especially down a declivity, and gathering up the broken fragments to eat them. Formerly it was usual with the women and children to collect in large bodies for this purpose, though nothing can be, to all appearance, more unmeaning than this amusement. They yet pursue it in the vicinity of Belfast. It is a curious circumstance that this sport is practised only by the Presbyterians.—Mason, *Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1819, vol. iii. p. 207.

On Easter Monday several hundreds of young persons of the town and neighbourhood of Portaferry resort, dressed in their best, to a pleasant walk near that town, called “The Walter.” The avowed object of each person is to see the fun, which consists in the men kissing the females, without reserve, whether married or single. This mode of salutation is quite a

matter of course; it is never taken amiss, nor with much show of coyness; the female must be very ordinary indeed, who returns home without having received at least a dozen hearty kisses. Tradition is silent as to the origin of this custom, which of late years is on the decline, especially in the respectability of the attendants.—*The Table Book*, p. 506.



MARCH 24.]
EASTER TUESDAY.

MIDDLESEX.

Every Easter Tuesday, in pursuance of an ancient custom, the boys of Christ's Hospital, London, pay a visit to the Mansion House, and receive from the Lord Mayor the customary Easter gifts. On reaching the Mansion House, they march into the Egyptian Hall, and on passing the Lord Mayor, receive a gratuity in coins fresh from the mint. To the fifteen Grecians a guinea each is given; nine probationers, half-a-guinea; forty-eight monitors, half-a-crown; and the ordinary scholars, one shilling each. Each boy also before leaving receives a glass of wine and two buns. The boys wear linen badges on their coats, on which the words "He is risen" are inscribed. After this ceremony, the Lord Mayor and the rest of the civic authorities go in the customary state to Christ Church, Newgate Street, where the second Spital sermon is preached. At this service the whole of the Christ's Hospital boys attend.—See *Daily News*, April 12th, 1871, and April 3rd, 1872.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Holly-bussing, says a writer in the *Newcastle Express* (April 16th, 1857), is a vernacular expression for a very ancient custom celebrated at Netherwitton, the origin of which is unknown. On Easter Tuesday the lads and lasses of the village and vicinity meet, and, accompanied by the parish clerk, who plays an excellent fiddle, the inspiring strains of which put mirth and mettle in their heels, proceed to the wood to get holly; with which some decorate a stone cross that stands in the village while others are "bobbing around" to "Speed the Plough" or "Birnie Bouzle."

MARCH 25.]

LADY DAY.

The *Festival of the Annunciation* commemorates in the Christian world the message of the Angel to the Virgin Mary: hence it was anciently called St. Mary's Day in Lent, to distinguish it from other festivals in her honour:

"Seinte Marie Daye in Leynte, among
All other dayes gode,
Is ryt for to holde heghe
He so [whoso] bein vnderstode."

Harl. MS. Codex 2277, fol. i.

All the festivals of the Virgin are properly Lady Days, but this falling in Lent, and being the first quarter day for rents and other payments, readily became Lady Day *par excellence*. Otherwise considered, it is simply an abridgment of "Our Lady

Day the Annunciation," as we find it written in the reign of Henry the Sixth. Some old customs on paying quarterly rents are noticed in Gascoigne's *Flowers of Poesie*, 4to, 1575:

> And when the tenantes come to paie their quarter's rent,
> They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent,
> At Christmasse a capon, at Michaelmasse a goose,
> And somewhat else at New Yeare's tide for feare their lease flie loose."

—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 206; Forster, *Perenn. Calend.* 1841, p. 515.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

At St. Alban's certain buns called "Pope Ladies" are sold on Lady Day, their origin being attributed by some to the following story:—A noble lady and her attendants were travelling on the road to St. Alban's (the great North road passes through this town), when they were benighted and lost their way. Lights in the clock-tower at the top of the hill enabled them at length to reach the monastery in safety, and the lady in gratitude gave a sum of money to provide an annual distribution on Lady Day of cakes, in the shape of ladies, to the poor of the neighbourhood. As this bounty was distributed by the monks, the "Pope Ladies" probably thus acquired their name.—See *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. x. p. 412. Another correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*4th S.* vol. x. 341) says these buns are sold on the first day of each year, and that there is a tradition that they have some relation to the myth of Pope Joan.—See also the *Gent. Mag.* 1820, vol. xc. p. 15.

LANCASHIRE.

The gyst-ale, or guising-feast, was an annual festival of the town of Ashton-under-Lyne. It appears from the rental of Sir John de Assheton, compiled A.D. 1422, that twenty shillings were paid to him as lord of the manor for the privilege of holding this feast by its then conductors. The persons named in the roll as having paid 3*s.* 4*d.* each are:—"Margret, that was the wife of Hobbe the Kynges (of misrule); Hobbe Adamson; Roger the Baxter; Robert Somayster; Jenkyn of the Wode; and Thomas of Curtual." The meaning of the term *gyst-ale* is involved in some obscurity—most probably the payments above were for the *gyst*, or hire, for the privilege of selling ale and other refreshments during the festivals held on the payment of the rents of the manor. These *guisings* were frequently held in the spring, most probably about Lady Day, when manorial rents were usually paid; and, as the fields were manured with *marl* about the same period, the term *marlings* has been supposed to indicate the rough play or *marlocking* which was then practised. This, however, must be a mistake, since the term relates to merry pranks, or pleasure gambols only, and has no connection with marl as a manure.

These gyst-ales, or guisings, once ranked amongst the principal festivals of Lancashire, and large sums of money were subscribed by all ranks of society in order that they might be celebrated with becoming splendour. The lord of the manor, the vicar of the parish, the farmer, and the operative, severally announced the sums they intended to give, and when the treasurer exclaimed "A largesse," the crowd demanded "from whom?" and then due proclamation was made of the sum subscribed. The real amount, however, was seldom named, but it was announced

that "Lord Johnson," or some other equally distinguished person had contributed "a portion of ten thousand pounds" towards the expenses of the feast.

After the subscription lists were closed an immense garland was prepared, which contained abundance of every flower in season, interspersed with a profusion of evergreens and ribbons of every shade and pattern. The framework of this garland was made of wood, to which hooks were affixed, and on these were suspended a large collection of watches, jewels, and silver articles borrowed from the richer residents in the town. On the day of the gyst this garland was borne through the principal streets and thoroughfares, attended by crowds of townspeople dressed in their best attire. These were formed into a procession by a master of the ceremonies, locally termed the king. Another principal attendant was the Fool, dressed in a grotesque cap, a hideous grinning mask, a long tail hanging behind him, and a bell with which he commanded attention when announcements were to be made. In an early period of these guisings the fool was usually mounted on a hobby-horse, and indulged in grotesque pranks as he passed along—hence we obtained the term "hob-riding," and more recently the proverbial expression of "riding one's hobby to death."—Harland and Wilkinson, *Legends and Traditions of Lancashire*, 1873, p. 86.

NORFOLK.

On a table of benefactions in the Church at Oxburgh it is stated that Sir Henry Bedingfield paid at Lady Day annually £2 for lands belonging to the township of Oxburgh; that this was called *walk*

money, and was given to the poor.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 124.

Isle of Thanet.

Evelyn in his *Diary*, under the date of March 25th, 1672 (Bohn's Edition, 1859, vol. ii. p. 78), says: "Observing almost every tall tree to have a weather-cock on the top bough, and some trees half-a-dozen, I learned that on a certain holiday the farmers feast their servants, at which solemnity they set up these cocks as a kind of triumph."

IRELAND.

At Kilmacteige, Co. of Sligo, the Lady Days are observed with most scrupulous attention, that is to say, so far as abstaining from all kind of daily labour, or following any trade or calling, although their sanctity does not operate on their minds so as to induce them to refrain from sports and pastimes, cursing or swearing, or frequenting tippling-houses and drinking to excess.—Mason, *Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1814-19, vol ii. p. 864.

March 29.]

LOW SUNDAY.

The Octave or first Sunday after Easter.

The author of *Christian Sodality*, a collection of discourses, 1652, says:—This day is called White or Low Sunday because in the Primitive Church those neophytes that on Easter Eve were baptized and clad

in white garments did to-day put them off, with this admonition, that they were to keep within them a perpetual candour of spirit, signified by the *Agnus Dei* hung about their necks, which, falling down upon their breasts, put them in mind what innocent lambs they must be, now that of sinful, high, and haughty men they were by baptism made low, and little children of Almighty God, such as ought to retain in their manners and lives the Paschal feasts which they had accomplished.

Seymour in his *Survey of London* (1734, B. iv. p. 100) tells us that the aldermen used to meet the Lord Mayor and sheriffs at St. Paul's in their scarlet gowns, furred, without their cloaks, to hear the sermon.

WALES.

Fenton in his *Tour through Pembrokeshire* (1811, p. 495) alludes to the game of *Knappan* as being played at Pwlldu, in the parish of Penbedw, on low Easter-day. He says the knappan was a ball of some hard wood, of such a size as a man might hold in his hand, and was boiled in tallow to make it slippery. The players at this game were very numerous, frequently amounting to a thousand or fifteen hundred people, parish against parish, hundred against hundred, and sometimes county against county. When the company assembled, about one or two o'clock in the afternoon, entirely naked, with the exception of a light pair of breeches, a great shout was given as the signal to begin, and the ball was hurled bolt upright into the air by one of the parties and at its fall he that caught it hurled it towards the county or goal he played for. The players consisted of horse and foot, who in the purest times of the

game never mixed, being governed by certain rules and regulations that were never violated; but long before this game was disused various abuses and disorders had crept into it, so that it served to inflame every bad passion, engender revenge, foment private quarrels, and stimulate even to bloodshed and murder.



APRIL 1.]

ALL FOOLS' DAY.

On this day a custom prevails not only in Britain, but on the Continent, of imposing upon and ridiculing people in a variety of ways. It is very doubtful what is the precise origin of this absurd custom. In France the person imposed upon on All Fools' Day is called *Poisson d'Avril*, an April Fish, which Bellingen, in his *Etymology of French Proverbs*, published in 1656, thus explains. The word *Poisson*, he contends, is corrupted through the ignorance of the people from *Passion*, and length of time has almost totally defaced the original intention, which was as follows: that as the Passion of our Saviour took place about this time of the year, and as the Jews sent Christ backwards and forwards to mock and torment him, that is, from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, this ridiculous custom took its rise from thence, by which we send about from one place to another such persons as we think proper objects of our ridicule. A writer in the *Gent. Mag.*, 1783, vol. liii. p. 578, also conjectures that this custom may have an allusion to the

mockery of the Saviour of the world by the Jews. Another attempt to explain it has been made by referring to the fact that the year formerly began in Britain on the 25th of March, which was supposed to be the Incarnation of our Lord, and the commencement of a new year was always, both among the ancient heathens and among modern Christians, held as a great festival. It is to be noted then that the 1st of April is the octave of the 25th of March, and the close consequently of that feast which was both the festival of the Annunciation and of the New Year. Hence it may have become a day of extraordinary mirth and festivity.

Alluding to this custom, Charles Dickens, jun. (*Gent. Mag.* 1869, New Series, vol. ii. p. 543), says: A prince of the house of Lorraine, confined in one of Louis XIII.'s prisons, made his escape on the 1st of April by swimming across the moat, and is accordingly commemorated as a *poisson d'Avril* to this day. Why this should be so is not very clear, inasmuch as the gaolers and not the prince would have been the April fools on the occasion. A later version of the same story would appear to be the correct one. Here the prince and his wife, escaping in the disguise of peasants on the 1st of April, were recognised by a servant-maid as they were passing out of the castle-gates. She immediately made for the guard-room, giving the alarm to a sentinel by the way, but, unfortunately for her, yet happily for the fugitives, although she may have forgotten that it was All Fool's Day, the soldiers on guard had not. The information was treated with the utmost contempt, the soldiers declining to be made game of, and while the royal prison-breakers got clear off, it is said that the luckless informer was soundly buffetted by the guard for her ill-timed jocularity. This version

of the story, however, goes to prove nothing beyond the fact that the custom of making April fools was well known in the time of Louis XIII., but in nowise accounts for the curious expression *poisson d'Avril*; while the swimming story explains the fish, but leads one to believe that the incident was the origin of the dedication of the 1st of April to fools.

Another curious explanation of this peculiar custom, giving it a Jewish origin, has also been suggested. It is said to have begun from the mistake of Noah sending the dove out of the Ark before the water had abated on the first day of the Hebrew month, answering to our month of April, and to perpetuate the memory of this deliverance it was thought proper, whoever forgot so remarkable a circumstance, to punish them by sending them upon some sleeveless errand similar to that ineffectual message upon which the bird was sent by the patriarch.—*Public Advertiser*, April 13th, 1769.

Maurice, in his *Indian Antiquities* (vi. 71), says that the custom prevailing both in England and India had its origin in the ancient practice of celebrating with festival rites the period of the vernal equinox, or the day when the new year of Persia anciently began.

Addison, in the *Spectator*, referring to the year 1711, remarks that "a custom prevails everywhere among us on the 1st of April, when everybody takes it in his head to make as many fools as he can. A neighbour of mine—a very shallow, conceited fellow, makes his boast that for these ten years successively he has not made less than a hundred April fools. My landlady had a falling-out with him, about a fortnight ago, for sending every one of her children upon some "sleeveless errand," as she terms it. Her eldest son went to buy a halfpenny-worth of inkle at a shoemaker's; the eldest daughter was dispatched

half a mile to see a monster; and, in short, the whole family of innocent children were made April fools. Nay, my landlady herself did not escape him. The empty fellow has laughed upon these conceits ever since."

In the north of England persons imposed upon on this day are called "April Gouks." A gouk, or gowk, is properly a cuckoo, and is used here, metaphorically, in vulgar language, for a fool. The cuckoo is, indeed, everywhere a name of contempt.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 139.

HAMPSHIRE.

In this county the following rhyme is said after twelve
o'clock:—

"April fool's gone past,
You're the biggest fool at last;
When April fool comes again
You'll be the biggest fool then."

N. & Q. 1st S. vol. xii. p. 100.

MIDDLESEX.

In connection with the ancient custom of making "April fools" on the 1st of April, the following hoax was practised on the London public on the 1st April, 1860. Some days previous thousands of persons received a neatly printed and official-looking card, with a seal marked by an inverted sixpence at one of the angles. It was to this effect:—"Tower of London. Admit the Bearer and Friend to view the Annual Ceremony of washing the White Lions on Sunday April 1st, 1860. Admitted at the White Gate. It is

particularly requested that no gratuity be given to the Warders or their Assistants." The hoax succeeded remarkably well, and consequently several thousand persons were taken in. For many hours cabs might have been seen wending their way towards Tower Hill on that Sunday morning; the drivers asking every one they met "How they should get to the White Gate." At last this piece of deception was found out, and the many thousands who had been thus imposed upon returned home highly disgusted.

SCOTLAND.

The Scotch have a custom of Hunting the Gowk, as it is termed. This is done by sending silly people upon fools' errands from place to place by means of a letter, in which is
written:—

"On the first day of April
Hunt the Gowk another mile."

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 140.

APRIL 3.]
ST. RICHARD'S DAY.

Aubrey, in *MS. Lansd.* 231, says: "This custome is yearly observed at Droitwich, in Worcestershire, where, on the day of St. Richard, they keep holyday, and dresse the well with green boughs and flowers. One yeare in the Presbyterian time it was discontinued in the civil warres, and after that the springe shranke up or dried up for some time; so

afterwards they revived their annual custom, notwithstanding the power of the parliament and soldiers, and the salt water returned again and still continues. This St. Richard was a person of great estate in these parts, and a briske young fellow that would ride over hedge and ditch, and at length became a very devout man, and after his decease was canonized for a saint."

APRIL 7.]

HOCK, OR *HOKE* DAY.

A popular holiday mentioned by Matthew Paris and other ancient writers. It was usually kept on the Tuesday following the second Sunday after Easter Day, and distinguished by various sportive pastimes, which consisted, according to Spelman, in the men and women binding each other, and especially the women the men, and so was called "Binding Tuesday." Jacob (*Law Dictionary*, 1797) says that "Hokeday, or Hock Tuesday (*Dies Martis, quem quindenam Paschæ vocant*), was a day so remarkable that rents were reserved and payable thereon; and in the accounts of Magdalen College, Oxford, there is a yearly allowance *pro mulieribus hockantibus*, in some manors of theirs in Hants, where the men hock the women on Monday, and the contrary on Tuesday; the meaning of it is, that on that day the women in merriment stop the way with ropes, and pull passengers to them, desiring something to be laid out in pious uses. The following remarks are taken from *Book of Days*, vol. i. p.
499:—

The meaning of the word *hoke* or *hock* seems to be totally unknown, and none of the derivations yet proposed seem to be deserving of our consideration.[34]

The custom may be traced, by its name at least, as far back as the thirteenth century, and appears to have prevailed in all parts of England, but it became obsolete early in the last century. At Coventry, which was a great place for pageantry, there was a play or pageant attached to the ceremony, which, under the title of "The old Coventry play of Hock Tuesday," was performed before Queen Elizabeth during her visit to Kenilworth, in July 1575. It represented a series of combats between the English and Danish forces, in which twice the Danes had the better, but at last, by the arrival of the Saxon women to assist their countrymen, the Danes were overcome, and many of them were led captive in triumph by the women. Queen Elizabeth laughed well at this play, and is said to have been so much pleased with it that she gave the actors two bucks and five marks in money. The usual performance of this play had been suppressed in Coventry soon after the Reformation, on account of the scenes of riot which it occasioned.

[34] Some have supposed that the term hock-day is equivalent to "*dies irrisionis*," or *irrisiorius*, a day of scorn and triumph, or, as we now say, "a day of hoaxing"—*Med. Ævi Kalend.*, 1841, vol. ii. p. 198. Verstegan derives Hoc-tide from *Heughtyde*, which, he says, in the Netherlands means a festival season.

Denne conjectures the name of this festivity to have been derived from *Hockzeit*, the German word for a wedding. Skinner mentions a derivation from the Dutch *hocken*, *desidere*, and adds, "mallem igitur deducere ab A.S. *Heah-tid*." Kennett (*Paroch. Antiq.* p. 495) suggests the Saxon

headœg, which answers to the French *haut-jour*.—See Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. pp. 184-191.

It will be seen that this Coventry play was founded on the statement which had found a place in some of our chronicles as far back as the fourteenth century, that these games of hock-tide were intended to commemorate the massacre of the Danes on St. Brice's Day, 1002; while others, alleging the fact that St. Brice's Day is the 13th of November, suppose it to commemorate the rejoicings which followed the death of Hardicanute, and the accession of Edward the Confessor, when the country was delivered from Danish tyranny. Others, however, and probably with more reason, think that these are both erroneous explanations; and this opinion is strongly supported by the fact that Hock Tuesday is not a fixed day, but a movable festival, and dependent on the great Anglo-Saxon pagan festival of Easter, like the similar ceremony of heaving, still practised on the borders of Wales on Easter Monday and Tuesday. Such old pagan ceremonies were preserved among the Anglo-Saxons long after they became Christians, but their real meaning was gradually forgotten, and stories and legends, like this of the Danes, afterwards invented to explain them. It may also be regarded as a confirmation of the belief that this festival is the representation of some feast connected with the pagan superstitions of our Saxon forefathers, that the money which was collected was given to the church, and was usually applied to the reparation of the church buildings. We can hardly understand why a collection of money should be thus made in commemoration of the overthrow of the Danish influence, but we can easily imagine how, when the festival was continued by the Saxons as Christians, what had been an offering to some one of the pagan

gods might be turned into an offering to the church. The entries on this subject in the old churchwardens' registers of many of our parishes not only show how generally the custom prevailed, but to what an extent the middle classes of society took part in it.

In Reading these entries go back to a rather remote date, and mention collections by men as well as women, while they seem to show that there the women "hocked," as the phrase was, on the Monday, and the men on the Tuesday.

In the registers of the parish of St. Laurence, under the year 1499, we have:

> "Item, received of Hock money gaderyd of women, xx$^{s.}$
> Item, received of Hock money gaderyd of men, iiij$^{s.}$"

In the parish of St. Giles, under the date 1535:

> "Hoc money gatheryd by the wyves (women), xiij$^{s.}$ ix$^{d.}$"

In St. Mary's parish, under the year 1559:

> "Hoctyde money, the mens gatheryng, iiij$^{s.}$
> The womens, xij$^{s.}$"

In the "Privy Purse Expenses" of Henry VIII. for the year 1505, is the following
entry:—

> "May 2.—To Lendesay for the wiffs at Grenewiche upon Hock Monday, 3*s.* 4*d.*"

Higgins, in his *Short View of English History*, says that, "At Hoctide the people go about beating brass instruments, and singing old rhymes in praise of their cruel ancestors." Dr. Plot says that one of the uses of the money collected at *Hoketyde* was the reparation of the several parish churches where it was gathered. This is confirmed by extracts from the

Lambeth Book.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 189.

BERKSHIRE.

Some singular Hocktide customs observed at Hungerford are thus described in the *Standard* of April 14th, 1874:—These customs are connected with the Charter for holding by the Commons the rights of fishing, shooting, and pasturage of cattle on the lands and property bequeathed to the town by John O'Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. The proceedings commenced on Friday evening with a supper, at which the fare was macaroni, Welsh rare-bits, watercress, salad, and punch. To-day—John O'Gaunt's Day—known in the town as "Tuth" Day, the more important business of the season is transacted at the Town Hall, from the window of which the town-crier blows the famous old horn, which has done service on these occasions for many long years. The tything or "tuth" men thereupon proceed to the high constable's residence, to receive their "tuth" poles, which are usually decorated with ribbons and flowers. The first business of these officials, who are generally tradesmen of the borough, is to visit the various schools and ask a holiday for the children; then to call at each house and demand a toll from the gentlemen, and a kiss from the ladies, and distribute oranges *ad libitum* throughout the day, in expectation of which a troop of children follow them through the streets, which are for several hours kept alive by the joyous shouts and huzzas. The high constable is elected at the annual court held to-day, and one of the curious customs is the sending out by that officer's wife of a bountiful supply of cheesecakes among the ladies of

the place.

APRIL 20.]

WORCESTERSHIRE.

The 20th of April is the great fair-day of Tenbury, and there is a belief in the county that the cuckoo is never heard till Tenbury fair-day, or after Pershore fair-day, which is the 26th of June.[35]

—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. i. p. 429.

[35] Formerly there prevailed a singular custom peculiar to the county of Shropshire, called the "cuckoo-ale," which was celebrated in the month of May, and sometimes near the latter end of April. As soon as the first cuckoo had been heard all the labouring classes left off work, even if in the middle of the day, and the time was devoted to mirth and jollity over what was called the cuckoo-ale.—*Morning Post*, May 17th, 1821.

APRIL 23.]

ST. GEORGE'S DAY.

St. George's Day, though now passed over without notice, was formerly celebrated by feasts of cities and corporations, as we learn from Johan Bale, who, speaking of the neglect of public libraries, has the following curious apostrophe:

"O cyties of Englande, whose glory standeth more in bellye chere then in the serche of wysdome

godlye. How cometh it that neyther you, nor your ydell masmongers, have regarded thys most worthy commodyte of your countrey? I mean the conservacyon of your antiquytees, and of the worthy labours of your lerned men. I thynke the renowne of suche a notable acte wolde have muche longar endured than of all your belly bankettes and table tryumphes, eyther yet of your newly purchased hawles to kepe St. Georges feast in."—Preface to the *Laboryeuse Journey and Serche of John Lyelande for Englande's Antiquitees* in *Lives of Leland, Hearne, and Wood*, vol. i., sign C.

Among courtiers and people of fashion blue coats were worn on this day. Captain Face, a character in the *Ram Alley*, alludes to the custom among the knights:—

> "Do you bandy tropes? By Dis I will be knight,
> Wear a blue coat on great St. George's Day,
> And with my fellows drive you all from Paul's."
>
> Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. v. p. 486.

In Epigram 33 of *The Seconde Bowle*, by Thomas Freeman, 4to, 1614, quoted also in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. xii. p. 398, its this distich:

> "With's eorum nomine keeping greater sway,
> Than a Court blew coat on St. George's Day."

Dr. Forster, in his *Perennial Calendar* (1824, p. 185), mentioning an allusion to this dress in Reed's *Old Plays* (vol. xii.), observes that it was probably because blue was the fashionable colour of Britain, over which St. George presides, and not in imitation of the clothing of the fields in blue, by the flowering of the blue-bells, as many have supposed.

The king's spurs became the fee of the choristers at

Windsor on installations and feasts on St. George's Day. In the "Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VII." is an entry under the year 1495:

"Oct. 1. At Windesor. To the children for the spoures."

A similar disbursement occurs thrice in the Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII. in 1530.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 214.

Strype, in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 3), says, "April 23rd [1557], being St. George's Day, the King's grace went a procession at Whitehall, through the hall, and round about the court hard by the gate, certain of the Knights of the Garter accompanying him, viz., the Lord Mountagu, the Lord Admiral St. Anthony St. Leger, the Lord Cobham, the Lord Dacre, Sir Thomas Cheyne, the Lord Paget, the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Arundel, the Lord Treasurer, and Secretary Petre, in a robe of crimson velvet, with the garter embroidered on his shoulder (as Chancellor of the Garter). One bare a rod of black, and a doctor the book of records. Then went all the heralds, and then the Lord Talbot bare the sword, and after him the sergeant-at-arms. And then came the king, the Queen's grace looking out of a window beside the court on the garden side. And the bishop of Winchester did execute the mass, wearing his mitre. The same afternoon were chosen three Knights of the Garter, viz., the Lord Fitz-Water, the deputy of Ireland; Lord Grey of Wilton, deputy of Guynes; and Sir Robert Rochester, comptroller of the Queen's house. After, the duke of Muscovia (as that ambassador was usually termed) came through the hall and the guard stood on a row, in their rich coats, with halberts; and so passed up to the Queen's chamber, with divers aldermen and merchants. And

after came down again to the chapel to evensong, to see the ceremonies. And immediately came the king, (the Lord Strange bearing the sword), and the Knights of the Garter, to evensong, which done, they went all up to the chamber of presence. After came the ambassador, and took his barge to London.[36]

[36] See also Machyn's *Diary*, 1848, p. 195.

BERKSHIRE.

The following is a curious account of the expenses for decorating a figure of St. George on this day, taken from Coates's *History of Reading*, p. 221:

"*Charge of Saynt George.*

"First payd for iij caffes-skynes, and ij horse-skynnes, iij$^{s.}$ vj$^{d.}$
"Payd for makeying the loft that Saynt George standeth upon, vj$^{d.}$
"Payd for ij plonks for the same loft, viij$^{d.}$
"Payd for iiij pesses of clowt lether, ij$^{s.}$ ij$^{d.}$
"Payd for makeyng the yron that the hors resteth upon, vj$^{d.}$
"Payd for makeyng of Saynt George's cote, viij$^{d.}$
"Payd to John Paynter for his labour, xlv$^{s.}$
"Payd for roses, bells, gyrdle, sword, and dager, iij$^{s.}$ iiij$^{d.}$
"Payd for settyng on the bells and roses, iij$^{d.}$
"Payd for naylls necessarye thereto, x$^{d.}$ ob."

CHESHIRE.

In a pamphlet entitled *Certayne Collections of Anchiante Times, concerninge the Anchante and Famous*

Cittie of Chester (already alluded to) and published in Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, 1810, vol. ii. pt. ii. pp. 588-590, is the following account of races at one time annually held at Chester on St. George's Day: In A.D. 1609, Mr. William Lester, mercer, being mayor of Chester, one Mr. Robert Amerye, ironmonger, sometime sherife of Chester (A.D. 1608), he, with the assent of the mayor and cittie, at his own coste chiefly, as I conceive, caused three silver cuppes of good value to be made, the whiche saide silver cuppes were, upon St. George's Daye, for ever to be thus disposed. All gentlemen that would bringe their horses to the Rood-dee that daye, and there rune, that horse which with spede did over-rune the rest, should have the beste cuppe there presently delivered, and that horse which came seconde, nexte the firste, before the rest, had the seconde cuppe there also delivered, and for the third cuppe it was to be rune for at the ringe, by any gentleman that would rune for the same upon the said Rood-dee, and upon St. George's Daye, being thus decreed, that every horse putt in soe much money as made the value of the cupps or bells, and had the money, which horses did winne the same, and the use of the cupps, till that day twelve month, being in bond to deliver in the cupps that daye, soe also for the cuppe for the ringe, which was yearly continued accordingly untill the yeare of our Lord 1623; John Brereton, inn-holder, being mayor of Chester, he altered the same after this manner and caused the three cupps to be sould, and caused more money to be gathered and added, soe that the intereste thereof woulde make one faire silver cuppe, of the value of £8, as I suppose, it may be more worth, and the race to be altered, viz., from beyonde the New-tower a great distance, and soe to rune five times from that

place rownd about the Rood-dee, and he that overcame all the rest the last course, to have the cup freely for ever, then and there delivered, which is continued to this daye. But here I must not omitt the charge, and the solemnitie made, the first St. George's daye; he had a poet, one Mr. Davies, who made speeches and poeticale verses, which were delivered at the high crosse before the mayor and aldermen, with shewes of his
invention,[37]
which booke was imprinted and presented to that famous Prince Henry, eldest sonne to the blessed King James, of famous memorie. Alsoe, he caused a man to go upon the spire of St. Peter's steeple in Chester, and by the fane, at the same time he sounded a drum, and displayed a baner upon the top of the same spire. And this was the original of St. George's race, with the change thereof.

[37] The following description of this show, written as it appears by Mr. Amorye himself, is copied from some Cheshire collections, among the Harleian MSS. No. 2150, f. 356. It appears that instead of three cups, as stated by Mr. Rogers, the prizes that year were two bells and one cup:

"The manner of the showe, that is, if God spare life and health, shall be seene by all the behoulders upon St. George's Day next, being the 23rd April, 1610, and the same with more addytions to continue, being for the kyng's crowne and dignitie, and the homage to the Kyng and Prynce, with that noble victor St. George, to be continued for ever.—God save the Kyng.

"Item.—Two men in greene liveries set with worke upon their other habit, with blacke heare, and blacke beards, very ougly to behoulde, and garlands upon their heads, with firworks to scatter abroad, to maintaine way for the rest of

the showe.

"It. One on horseback, with the buckler and head-peece of St. George, and three men to guide him, with a drum before him, for the honor of Englande.

"It. One on horsebacke, called Fame, with a trumpet in his hand, and three men to guide him, and he to make an oration, with his habit in pompe.

"It. One called Mercury to descend from above in a cloude, his wings and all other matters, in pompe, and heavenly musicke with him; and after his oration spoken, to ryde on horsebacke, with his musicke before hym.

"It. One on horsebacke, with the Kynge's arms upon a shield, in pompe.

"It. One called Chester, with an oration, and drums before him, his habit in pompe.

"It. One on horsebacke, conteening the Kynge's crowne and dignity, with an oration in pompe.

"It. One on horsebacke with a bell, dedicated to the kynge, being double-gilt with the kynge's armes upon it, carried upon a septer in pompe, and before him a noise of trumpets, in pompe.

"It. One on horsebacke, with an oration for the Prynce, in pompe.

"It. One on horsebacke, with a bell, dedicated to the Prynce, his armes upon it, in pompe, and to be carried on a septer, and before the bell, a noyse of trumpets.

"It. One on horsebacke, with a cup for St. George, carried upon a septer, in pompe.

"It. One on horsebacke, with an oration for St. George, in pompe.

"It. St. George himself on horseback, in complete armor, with his stag and buckler, in pompe, and before him a noyse of drums.

"It. One on horsebacke, called Peace, with an

oration, in pompe.

"It. One on horsebacke, called Plentye, with an oration, in pompe.

"It. One on horsebacke, called Envy, with an oration, whom Love will comfort, in pompe.

"It. One on horseback, called Love, with an oration to maintaine all, in pompe.

"It. The Maior and his bretheren, at the pentes of this citye, with ther best apparell, and in scarlet; and all the orations to be made before him, and seene at the high crosse, as they passe to the Roodye, wher by Gent shall be runne for by thirr horses, for the two bells on a double staffe and the cup to be runne for at the rynge in some place by Gent and with a greater mater of the showe by armes, and shott, and with more than I can recyte, with a banket after in the Pentis to make welcome the Gent; and when all is done, then judge what you have seen, and so speak on your mynd, as you fynd the—

"Actor for the presente
"Robert Amorye."

"Amor is love, and Amorye is his name,
That did begin this pomp and princelye game;
The charge is great to him that all begun,
Who now is satisfied to see all so well done."

Notwithstanding Mr. Amorye had entertained the citizens so well in 1610, it was ordered in 1612 "that the sports and recreations used on St. George's Day should in future be done by the direction of the Mayor and citizens, and not of any private person."—*Corporation Records.*

LEICESTERSHIRE.

At Leicester, the "Riding of the George" was one of the principal solemnities of the town. The inhabitants were bound to attend the Mayor, or to

"ride against the king," as it is expressed, or for "riding the George" or for any other thing to the pleasure of the Mayor and worship of the town.

St. George's horse, harnessed, used to stand at the end of St. George's Chapel, in St. Martin's Church, Leicester.—Fosbroke, *Dict. of Antiq.*

IRELAND.

St. George's Day was at one time celebrated at Dublin with high veneration. In the Chain-book of the city of Dublin are several entries to that purpose:

"Item 1. It was ordered in maintenance of the pageant of St. George, that the Mayor of the foregoing year should find the Emperor and Empress with their train and followers well apparelled and accoutered, that is to say, the Emperor attended with two doctors, and the Empress with two knights, and two maidens richly apparelled to bear up the train of her gown.

"Item 2. The Mayor for the time being was to find St. George a horse, and the wardens to pay 3*s.* 4*d.* for his wages that day. The bailiffs for the time being were to find four horses, with men mounted on them, well apparelled, to bear the pole-axe, the standard, and the several swords of the Emperor and St. George.

"Item 3. The elder master of the guild was to find a maiden well attired to lead the dragon, and the clerk of the market was to find a golden line for the dragon.

"Item 4. The elder warden was to find for St. George four trumpets; but St. George himself was to pay their wages.

"Item 5. The younger warden was obliged to find the King of Dele and the Queen of Dele, as also two

knights, to lead the Queen of Dele, and two maidens to bear the train of her gown, all being entirely clad in black apparel. Moreover, he was to cause St. George's Chapel to be well hung in black, and completely apparelled to every purpose, and was to provide it with cushions, rushes, and other necessaries for the festivity of that day."—Harris, *History of Dublin*, 1766, p. 146.

APRIL 24.]

ST. MARK'S EVE.

In *Poor Robin's Almanac* for 1770 is the following:—

"On St. Mark's Eve, at twelve o'clock,
The fair maid will watch her smock,
To find her husband in the dark,
By praying unto good St. Mark."

Ass-ridlin

is another superstition practised in the northern counties. The ashes being riddled or sifted on the hearth, if any of the family be to die within the year the mark of the shoe, it is supposed, will be impressed on the ashes; and many a mischievous wight has made some of the credulous family miserable by slyly coming down stairs, after the rest have retired to bed, and marking the ashes with the shoe of one of the members.—Jamieson, *Etymol. Dict.*

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

On St. Mark's Eve it is customary in this county for

young maidens to make the *dumb-cake*, a mystical ceremony which has lost its origin. The number of the party never exceeds three; they meet in silence to make the cake, and as soon as the clock strikes twelve, they each break a portion off to eat, and when done they walk up to bed backwards without speaking a word, for if one speaks the spell is broken. Those that are to be married see the likeness of their sweethearts hurrying after them, as if wishing to catch them before they get into bed; but the maids being apprised of this beforehand (by the cautions of old women who have tried it), take care to unpin their clothes before they start, and are ready to slip into bed before they are caught by the pursuing shadow. If nothing is seen, the desired token may be a knocking at the doors, or a rustling in the house, as soon as they have retired. To be convinced that it comes from nothing else but the desired cause, they are always particular in turning out the cats and dogs before the ceremony begins. Those that are to die unmarried neither see nor hear anything; but they have terrible dreams, which are sure to be of newly-made graves, winding-sheets, and churchyards, and of rings that will fit no finger, or which, if they do, crumble into dust as soon as put on. There is another dumb ceremony, of eating the yolk of an egg in silence and then filling the shell with salt, when the sweetheart is sure to make his visit in some way or other before morning.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 523.

YORKSHIRE.

In Yorkshire it is usual for the common people to sit and watch in the church-porch from eleven o'clock at night until one in the morning. In the third

year, for this must be done thrice, it is supposed that they will see the ghosts of all those who are to die the next year pass into the church. When any one sickens, who is thought to have been seen in this manner, it is presently whispered about that he will not recover, for that such a one who has watched St. Mark's Eve, says so. The superstition is in such force that, if the patients themselves hear of it, they almost despair of recovery, and many are actually said to have died by the influence of their imaginations on this occasion.

"'"Tis now,' replied the village belle,
'St. Mark's mysterious Eve;
And all that old traditions tell
I tremblingly believe.

'How, when the midnight signal tolls,
Along the churchyard green
A mournful train of sentenced souls
In winding-sheets are seen!

'The ghosts of all whom Death shall doom
Within the coming year,
In pale procession walk the gloom
Amid the silence drear.'"

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1819, vol. i. p. 192; J. Montgomery, *Vigil of St. Mark*.

APRIL 25.]
ST. MARK'S DAY.

This day is distinguished in old kalendars by a second appellation, *Litania Major*, which had reference to the prayers, and solemn processions of

covered crosses on this day. It was frequently confounded with the processions of the Rogations, which depended upon the movable feast of the Ascension, and were also called Litanies, though it does not appear that the processions of St. Mark were ever called Rogations. A mistake of this kind was committed by the author of a Saxon homily on the Litania Major, by applying to it the term Gang Days, the Saxon name of the three days preceding Holy Thursday.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 219.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

St. Mark's Day is observed at Alnwick by a ridiculous custom in connection with the admission of freemen of the common, alleged to have reference to a visit paid by King John to Alnwick. It is said that this monarch, when attempting to ride across Alnwick Moor, then called the Forest of Aidon, fell with his horse into a bog or morass where he stuck so fast that he was with great difficulty pulled out by some of his attendants. Incensed against the inhabitants of that town for not keeping the roads over the moor in better repair, or at least for not placing some post or mark pointing out the particular spots which were impassable, he inserted in their charter, both by way of memento and punishment, that for the future all new created freemen should on St. Mark's Day pass on foot through that morass, called the Freemen's Well. In obedience to this clause of their charter, when any new freeman is to be made, a small rill of water which passes through the morass is kept dammed up for a day or two previous to that on which this ceremonial is to be exhibited, by which means the bog becomes so thoroughly liquified that a middle

sized man is chin deep in mud and water in passing over it. Besides which, not unfrequently, holes and trenches are dug; in these, filled up and rendered invisible by the liquid mud, several freemen have fallen down and been in great danger of suffocation. In later times, in proportion as the new-made freemen are more or less popular the passage is rendered more or less difficult.

Early in the morning of St. Mark's Day the houses of the new freemen are distinguished by a holly-tree planted before each door, as the signal for their friends to assemble and make merry with them. About eight o'clock the candidates for the franchise, being mounted on horseback and armed with swords, assemble in the market place, where they are joined by the chamberlain and bailiff of the Duke of Northumberland, attended by two men armed with halberds. The young freemen arranged in order, with music playing before them and accompanied by a numerous cavalcade, march to the west end of the town, where they deliver their swords. They then proceed under the guidance of the moorgrieves through a part of their extensive domain, till they reach the ceremonial well. The sons of the oldest freemen have the honour of taking the first leap. On the signal being given they pass through the bog, each being allowed to use the method and pace which to him shall seem best, some running, some going slow, and some attempting to jump over suspected places, but all in their turns tumbling and wallowing like porpoises at sea, to the great amusement of the populace, who usually assemble in vast numbers on this occasion. After this aquatic excursion, they remount their horses and proceed to perambulate the remainder of their large common, of which they are to become free by their achievement.

In passing the open part of the common the young freemen are obliged to alight at intervals, and place a stone on a cairn as a mark of their boundary, till they come near a high hill called the Twinlaw or Tounlaw Cairns, when they set off at full speed, and contest the honour of arriving first on the hill, where the names of the freemen of Alnwick are called over. When arrived about two miles from the town they generally arrange themselves in order and, to prove their equestrian abilities, set off with great speed and spirit over bogs, ditches, rocks, and rugged declivities till they arrive at Rottenrow Tower on the confines of the town, the foremost claiming the honour of what is termed "winning the boundaries," and of being entitled to the temporary triumphs of the day. Having completed the circuits the young freemen, with sword in hand, enter the town in triumph,[38]
preceded by music, and accompanied by a large concourse of people in carriages, &c. Having paraded the streets, the new freemen and the other equestrians enter the Castle, where they are liberally regaled, and drink the health of the lord and lady of the manor. The newly-created burgesses then proceed in a body to their respective houses, and around the holly-tree drink a friendly glass with each other. After this they proceed to the market-place, where they close the ceremony over an enlivening bowl of punch.—*Antiquarian Repertory*, 1809, vol. iv. p. 387; *History of Alnwick*, 1822, pp. 304-309; *Gent. Mag.*, 1756, vol. xxvi. p. 73.

[38] It appears by a traditionary account that at one time they were met by women dressed up with ribbons, bells, and garlands of gumflowers, who welcomed them with dancing and singing; they were called *timber-waits*, probably a corruption of

timbrel-waits, players on timbrels, waits being an old appellation for those who play on musical instruments in the street.

In the *Lonsdale Magazine* (1828, vol. iii. p. 312) occurs the following: On Wednesday (St. Mark's Day) twelve persons were made free of the Borough of Alnwick, by scrambling through a muddy pool, and perambulating the boundaries of the moor.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

At the fairs held in Wednesbury on the 25th of April and 23rd of July (old style) a custom prevailed for many years called "Walking the Fair." The ceremonies connected with it were conducted in the following manner: On the morning of the fair the beadle appeared in the market-place dressed for the occasion, and wearing as badges of his office a bell, a long pike, &c. To him assembled a number of the principal inhabitants of the parish, often with a band of music. They then marched in procession, headed by the beadle, through different parts of the town; called at the Elephant and Castle, in the High Bullen, drank two tankards of ale, and then returned into the market-place where they quenched their thirst again with the same kind of beverage. After this they dined together at one of the public-houses. The expenses incurred in this "Walking the Fair" were defrayed by the parish funds.—*Hist. of Wednesbury*, 1854, p. 153.

APRIL 26.]
ROGATION SUNDAY.

Rogation Sunday received and retains its title from the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday immediately following it, which are called *Rogation Days*, derived from the Latin *rogare*, to beseech; the earliest Christians having appropriated extraordinary prayers and supplications for those three days, as a preparation for the devout observance of our Saviour's Ascension on the day next succeeding to them, denominated Holy Thursday, or Ascension Day.

So early as the year 550, Claudius Mamertus, bishop of Vienne in France, extended the object of Rogation Days, before then solely applied to a preparation for the ensuing festival of the Ascension, by joining to that service other solemnities, in humble supplication for a blessing on the fruits of the earth at this season blossoming forth. Whether, as is asserted by some authors, Mamertus had cause to apprehend that any calamity might befall them by blight or otherwise at this particular period, or merely adapted a new Christian rite on the Roman *terminalia*, is a matter of dispute. Sidonius, bishop of Clermont, soon followed the example, and the first Council of Orleans, held in the sixth century, confirmed its observance throughout the Church. The whole week in which these days happen is styled Rogation Week; and in some parts it is still known by the other names of Cross Week, Grass Week, and Gang or Procession Week: Rogation, in token of the extraordinary praying; Cross, because anciently that symbol was borne by the priest who officiated at the ceremonies of this season; Grass, from the peculiar abstinence observed, such as salads, green-sauce, &c., then substituted for flesh; and Gang, or Procession, from the accustomed perambulations. Supplications and abstinence are yet enjoined by the Reformed

Church, and also such part of the ceremony of the processions as relates to the perambulating of the circuit of parishes, conformably to the regulation made in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. One of our church homilies of the day is composed particularly for this occasion. "The people shall once a year, at the time accustomed," says the injunction of that Sovereign, "with the curate and substantial men of the parish, walk about the parishes as they were accustomed, and at their return to church make their common prayers; provided that the curate in the said common perambulations, as heretofore in the days of Rogations, at certain convenient places, shall admonish the people to give thanks to God, in the beholding of God's benefits, for the increase and abundance of his fruits upon the face of the earth, with the saying of Psalm civ., *Benedic, anima mea*, &c.: at which time also the same minister shall inculcate this and such like sentences, "Cursed be he which translateth the bounds and dales of his neighbour," or such other words of prayer as shall be hereafter appointed." The bearing of willow wands makes part of this ceremony.

Before the Reformation, the processions in this week were observed with every external mark of devotion; the Cross was borne about in solemn pomp, to which the people bowed the ready knee; with other rites considered of too superstitious a nature to warrant their continuance.—Brady, *Clavis Calendaria*, 1815, vol. i. p. 348.

Bedfordshire.

A certain estate in Husborne Crawley has to pay 4*l.* on Rogation Day, once in seven years, to defray the expenses of perambulating, and keeping up the

boundaries of the parish.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 116.

DORSETSHIRE.

On Monday in Rogation week was formerly held in the town of Shaftesbury or Shaston a festival called the Bezant, a festival so ancient that no authentic record of its origin exists.

The borough of Shaftesbury stands upon the brow of a lofty hill, and until lately, owing to its situation, was so deficient in water that its inhabitants were indebted for a supply of this necessary article of life to the little hamlet of Enmore Green, which lies in the valley below. From two or three wells or tanks, situate in the village, the water with which the town was provided was carried up the then precipitous road, on the backs of horses and donkeys, and sold from door to door.

The Bezant was an acknowledgment on the part of the mayor, aldermen and burgesses of the borough to the lord of the manor of Mitcombe, of which Enmore Green forms a part, for the permission to use this privilege; no charter or deed, however, exists among their archives, as to the commencement of the custom, neither are there any records of interest connected with its observances beyond the details of the expenses incurred from year to year. On the morning of Rogation Monday, the mayor and aldermen accompanied by a lord and lady appointed for the occasion, and by their mace-bearers carrying *the Bezant*, went in procession to Enmore Green. The lord and lady performed at intervals, as they passed along a traditional kind of dance to the sound of violins; the steward of the manor meeting them at the green, the mayor offered for his acceptance, as

the representative of his lord, *the Bezant*,—a calf's head, uncooked,—a gallon of ale, and two penny loaves, with a pair of gloves edged with gold lace, and gave permission to use the wells, as of old, for another year. The steward, having accepted the gifts, retaining all for his own use, except the Bezant, which he graciously gave back, accorded the privilege, and the ceremony ended.

The Bezant, which gives its name to the festival is somewhat difficult to describe.[39] It consisted of a sort of trophy, constructed of ribbons, flowers, and peacock's feathers, fastened to a frame, about four feet high, round which were hung jewels, coins, medals, and other things of more or less value, lent for the purpose by persons interested in the matter;[40] and many traditions prevailed of the exceeding value to which in earlier times it sometimes reached, and of the active part which persons of the highest rank in the neighbourhood took in its annual celebration.

[39] Bezant being the name of an ancient gold coin, the ceremony probably took its name from such a piece of money being originally tendered to the lord of the manor.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 585.

[40] Hutchins says this *beson* or *byzant* was so richly adorned with plate and jewels, borrowed from the neighbouring gentry, as to be worth no less than 1500*l*.—*History of Dorset*, 1803, vol. ii. p. 425.

Latterly, however, the festival sadly degenerated, and in the year 1830, the town and the manor passing into the hands of the same proprietor, it ceased altogether, and is now one of those many observances which are numbered with the past. If

this had not happened, however, the necessity for it no longer exists. The ancient borough is no longer indebted to the lord of the manor for its water, for, through the liberality of the Marquis of Westminster, its present owner, the town is bountifully supplied with the purest water from an artesian well sunk at his expense.—*The Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 585; Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, 1803, vol. ii. p. 425.

KENT.

In Rogation week, about Keston and Wickham, a number of young men meet together and with a most hideous noise run into the orchards, and, encircling each tree, pronounce these words:

> "Stand fast, root; bear well top;
> God send us a youling sop!
> Every twig, apple big;
> Every bough, apple enow."

For this incantation the confused rabble expect a gratuity in money, or drink, which is no less welcome; but if they are disappointed of both, they with great solemnity anathematize the owners and trees with altogether as insignificant a curse. It seems highly probable that this custom has arisen from the ancient one of perambulation among the heathen, when they made prayers to the gods for the use and blessing of the fruits coming up, with thanksgiving for those of the preceding year; and as the heathens supplicated Æolus, god of the winds, for his favourable blasts, so in this custom they still retained his name with a very small variation: this ceremony is called *youling*, and the word is often used in their invocations.—Hasted, *History of Kent*, vol. i. p. 109.

OXFORDSHIRE.

At Stanlake, says Plot, the minister of the parish, in his procession in Rogation Week, reads the Gospel at a barrel's head, in the cellar of the Chequer Inn, in that town, where, according to some, there was formerly a hermitage, according to others a cross, at which they read a Gospel in former times; over which the house, and particularly the cellar, being built, they are forced to continue the custom.—*History of Oxfordshire*, 1705, p. 207.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

Among the local customs which formerly prevailed at Wolverhampton may be noticed that which was popularly called "Processioning." Many of the older inhabitants can well remember when the sacrist, resident prebendaries, and members of the choir assembled at morning prayers on Monday and Tuesday in Rogation Week, with the charity children bearing long poles clothed with all kinds of flowers then in season, and which were afterwards carried through the streets of the town with much solemnity, the clergy, singing-men and boys, dressed in their sacred vestments, closing the procession, and chanting, in a grave and appropriate melody, the Canticle, *Benedicite, omnia opera*, &c. This ceremony, innocent at least, and not illaudable in itself, was of high antiquity, taking probably its origin in the Roman offerings of the Primitiæ, from which (after being rendered conformable to our purer worship) it was adapted by the first Christians, and handed down, through a succession of ages, to modern times. The idea was, no doubt, that of returning thanks to God, by whose goodness the face of nature was

renovated, and fresh means provided for the sustenance and comfort of his creatures. It was discontinued about 1765.

The boundaries of the township and parish of Wolverhampton are in many points marked out by what are called *Gospel trees*, from the custom of having the Gospel read under or near them by the clergyman attending the parochial perambulations. Those near the town were visited for the same purpose by the *processioners* before mentioned, and are still preserved with the strictest care and attention.—Shaw, *History of Staffordshire*, vol. ii. part i. p. 165.

Thus Herrick in his *Hesperides* says:—

"Dearest, bury me
Under that Holy-Oke, or Gospel-Tree,
Where (though thou seest not) thou may'st think
upon
Me, when thou yerely go'st procession."

APRIL 29.]
ASCENSION EVE.

YORKSHIRE.

The following extract is taken from the *Whitby Gazette* of May 28th
1870:—

THE PENNY HEDGE.—The formality of planting the penny hedge in the bed of the River Esk, on Ascension Eve, was performed on Wednesday last by Mr. Isaac Herbert, who has for fifty years discharged this *onerous* duty. The "nine stakes," "the nine stroutstowers," and the "nine gedders" have all been once more duly "planted." The ceremony was witnessed by a number of ladies and gentlemen, and that highly important functionary, the bailiff of the lord of the manor, Mr. George Welburn, of Fylingdales, was present, and blew the usual malediction, "Out on you! Out on you! Out on you!" through the same identical horn which seventeen centuries ago roused with its lugubrious notes, on Ascension Eve, our ancestors from their peaceful slumbers. Whether the wood was cut at the "stray head," and with a "knife of a penny price," we are not able to say, but a good hedge was planted; and although each stake may not

be quite "a yard from another," the hedge will doubtless be of such strength as to withstand the effect of the prescribed number of tides.—See Young's *History of Whitby*.

Some time in the spring, says a writer in the *Gent. Mag.* (1790, vol. lx. p. 719), I think the day before Holy Thursday, all the Clergy, attended by the singing men and boys of the choir, perambulate the town (Ripon) in their canonicals, singing hymns, and the blue-coat charity-boys follow singing, with green boughs in their hands.

APRIL 30.]

ASCENSION DAY.

In England Ascension Day has been known as "Bounds Thursday," from beating the bounds of the parish, transferred by a corruption of Rogation processions to this day.—*Kalendar of English Church*, 1865, p. 72.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

In the parish of Edgcott there was about an acre of land, let at 3*l.* a year, called "Gang Monday land," which was left to the parish officers to provide cakes and beer for those who took part in the annual perambulation of the parish.

At Clifton Reynes, in the same county, a bequest of land for a similar purpose directs that one small loaf, a piece of cheese, and a pint of ale should be given to every married person, and half a pint of ale to every unmarried person resident in Clifton, when they

walked the parish boundaries in Rogation Week.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, pp. 120, 122.

CHESHIRE.

Pennant, in his *Tour from Chester to London* (1811, p. 40), tells us that on Ascension Day the old inhabitants of Nantwich piously sang a hymn of thanksgiving for the blessing of the Brine. A very ancient pit, called the Old Brine, was also held in great veneration, and till within these few years was annually on this festival decked with flowers and garlands, and was encircled by a jovial band of young people, celebrating the day with song and dance. Aubrey (in *MS. Lansd.* 231) says, in Cheshire, when they went in perambulation, they did blesse the springs, i.e. they did read a gospel at them, and did believe the water was the better.

Formerly there existed at Frodsham the following custom:—In the walking of the boundaries of the parish the "men of Frodsham" passed, across the brook dividing it from Helsby (then in the adjoining parish of Durham), the Frodsham banner to the "men of Helsby," who in their turn passed over the Helsby banner.

DERBYSHIRE.

One of the prettiest customs of the county of Derby is that of well-dressing on Holy Thursday or Ascension Day at Tissington, near Dovedale. In the village are five springs or wells, and these are decorated with flowers, arranged in the most beautiful devices. Boards are cut into arches, pediments, pinnacles, and other ornamental forms, and are covered with moist clay to the thickness of

about half-an-inch; the flowers are cut off their stems and impressed into the clay as closely together as possible, forming mottoes, borders, and other devices; these are then placed over the wells, and it is impossible to conceive a more beautiful appearance than they present, the water gurgling from beneath them, and overhung by the fine foliage of the numerous evergreens and forest trees by which they are surrounded. There is one particular variety of the double daisy known to gardeners as the Tissington daisy, which appears almost peculiar to the place, and is in much repute for forming the letters of the texts and mottoes, with which the wells are adorned. The day is observed as a complete holiday, and the festival attracts a considerable number of visitors from all the neighbouring towns and villages. Divine Service is performed in the Church, and on its conclusion the minister and congregation join in procession and visit each well. A portion of Scripture is read at each, and a psalm or appropriate hymn is sung. The whole of the wells being visited, and a prayer offered up, the company separate and, from the absence of public-houses in the village, spend the rest of the day in temperate enjoyment. The same custom was observed at Brewood and Bilbrook, in the County of Stafford.—*Gent. Mag.* 1794, lxiv. pp. 115, 226; *Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii p. 205; vide *Times*, May 19th, 1874.

DEVONSHIRE.

A correspondent of the *Gent. Mag.* (1787, vol. lvii, p. 718), says: It is the custom in many villages in the neighbourhood of Exeter “to hail the Lamb,” upon Ascension morn. That the figure of a lamb actually

appears in the east upon this morning is the popular persuasion; and so deeply is it rooted, that it has frequently resisted (even in intelligent minds) the force of the strongest argument.

At Exeter, says Heath in his *Account of the Islands of Scilly* (1750, p. 128), the boys have a custom of throwing water, that is, of damming up the channel in the streets, at going the bounds of the several parishes in the city, and of splashing the water upon the people passing by. Neighbours as well as strangers, are forced to compound hostilities by giving the boys of each parish money to pass without ducking; each parish asserting its own prerogative in this respect.

ESSEX.

The *Oyster Fishery* has always formed a valuable part of the privileges and trading property of the town of Colchester. Richard I. granted to the burgesses the fishery of the River Colne, from the North Bridge as far as Westnesse; and this grant was confirmed to them by subsequent charters, especially that of Edward IV. This fishery includes not merely the plain course of the Colne, but all the creeks, &c., with which it communicates: that is to say, the entire *Colne Water*, as it is commonly called. It is, moreover, proved by records that the burgesses of Colchester are legally entitled to the sole right of fishing in this water, to the exclusion of all others not licensed and authorized by them; “and have, and ever had, the full, sole, and absolute power to have, take, and dispose of to their own use, all oysters and other fish within the said river or water.” There are some parishes adjoining the water whose inhabitants are admitted, upon licence from the mayor, to fish

and dredge oysters therein, these parishes being Brightlingsea, Wivenhoe, and East Doniland. For the better preservation of this privilege Courts of Admiralty or Conservancy have been customarily held on Colne Water; at which all offences committed within the limits of the aquatic royalty are presented by a jury, and fines exacted on the offenders. In March or April yearly, proclamation is made by the legal authorities on the water near Mersea Stone, "that the River Colne is shut, and that all persons are forbidden to dredge, or take any oysters out of the said river or the creeks thereto appertaining before the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, the 22nd of July." This is called *Setting* (i.e. Shutting) the Colne.—Cromwell, *History of Colchester*, 1825, pp. 289-294.

LANCASHIRE.

Under the name of Richardson's Charity, a distribution takes place at Ince on the feast of the Ascension, of five loads of oatmeal, each load weighing two hundred and forty pounds. Three loads are given to the poor of the township of Ince, one to the poor of Abram, and the other to the poor of Hindley.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 36.

MIDDLESEX.

In St. Magnus and other city churches in London, the clergy are presented with ribbons, cakes, and silk staylaces.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. ix. p. 9.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

It is customary to go in triennial processions on

Holy Thursday, to perambulate the parishes and beat the boundaries, for the purpose of marking and retaining *possession*; hence the ceremony is called *possessioning*. The parochial authorities are accompanied by other inhabitants and a number of boys, to whom it is customary to distribute buns, &c., in order to impress it upon their memory should the boundaries at any future period be disputed.—Baker, *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, vol. ii. p. 131.

In the town of Northampton the ceremony of beating the bounds is termed "beating the cross."

NORTHUMBERLAND.

On Ascension Day, says Mackenzie in his *History of Newcastle* (1827, vol. ii. p. 744), every year the mayor and burgesses of Newcastle survey the boundaries of the River Tyne. This annual festive expedition starts at the Mansion-House Quay, and proceeds to or near the place in the sea called Sparhawk, and returns up the river to the utmost limits of the Corporation at Hedivin Streams. They are accompanied by the brethren of the Trinity House and the River Jury in their barges.

Brockett mentions the *smock-race* on Ascension Day, a race run by females for a smock. These races were frequent among the young country wenches in the north. The prize, a fine Holland chemise, was usually decorated with ribbons. The sport is practised at Newburn, near Newcastle.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 210.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

In Rogation week the bounds of many of the

parishes are still beaten with as much pomp by the beadle as ever; and it is believed that if an egg which is laid on Ascension Day be placed in the roof of a house, the building will be preserved from fire and other calamities.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.*, 1853, vol. viii. p. 233.

OXFORDSHIRE.

At Oxford the little crosses cut in the stones of buildings to denote the division of the parishes are whitened with chalk. Great numbers of boys, with peeled willow rods in their hands, accompany the minister in the procession.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 200.

Aubrey, in his *Remains of Gentilism and Judaism*, says: "The fellows of New College have, time out of mind, every Holy Thursday, betwixt the hours of eight and nine, goune to the hospital called Bart'lemews neer Oxford, when they retire into the chapell, and certaine prayers are read, and an antheme sung, from thence they goe to the upper end of the grove adjoining to the chapell (the way being before them strewed with flowers by the poor people of the hospitall), they place themselves round about the spring there, where they warble forth melodiously a song of three, four, or five parts; which being performed they refresh themselves with a morning's draught there, and retire to Oxford before sermon."

STAFFORDSHIRE.

Formerly, at Lichfield, the clergyman of the parish, accompanied by the churchwardens and sidesmen and followed by a concourse of children bearing

green boughs, repaired to different reservoirs of water and there read the gospel for the day, after which they were regaled with cakes and ale; during the ceremony the door of every house was decorated with an elm bough. This custom was founded on one of the early institutions of Christianity, that of blessing the springs and wells.—*Account of Lichfield*, 1818-19, p. 133.

SUFFOLK.

By his will, proved in December 1527, John Cole of Thelnetham, directed that a certain farm-rent should be applied yearly to the purpose of providing "a bushell and halffe of malte to be browne, and a bushell of whete to be baked to *fynde a drinkinge upon Ascension Even everlastinge for ye parishe of Thelnetham to drinke at the Cross of Trappetes*."

WORCESTERSHIRE.

At Evesham it is customary for the master-gardeners to give their work-people a treat of baked peas, both white and grey (and pork), every year on Holy Thursday.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 208.

MAY EVE.

An old Roman kalendar, cited by Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 216), says that on the 30th of April boys go to seek the May-trees (Maii arbores a

pueris exquiruntur), and in Dryden's time this early observance of May seems to have been customary; one of his heroines

> "Wak'd, as her custom was, before the day,
> To do th' observaunce due to sprightly May;
> For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
> The vigils of her night, and breaks their rugged
> sleep."—

Med. Ævi Kalend. vol. i. p. 229.

CORNWALL.

At Penzance a number of young men and women assemble together at a public-house, and sit up till the clock strikes twelve, when they go round the town with violins, drums, and other instruments, and by sound of music call upon others to join them. As soon as the party is formed, they proceed to different farm-houses within four or five miles of the neighbourhood, where they are expected as regularly as May morning comes; and they there partake of a beverage called junket, made of raw milk and rennet, or running, as it is called, sweetened with sugar, and a little cream added. After this they take tea, and "heavy country cake," composed of flour, cream, sugar, and currants, then partake of rum and milk, and conclude with a dance. After thus regaling themselves they gather the May. While some are breaking down the boughs, others sit and make the "May-music." This is done by cutting a circle through the bark at a certain distance from the bottom of the May branches; then, by gently and regularly tapping the bark all round from the cut circle to the end, the bark becomes loosened, and slips away whole from the wood, and a hole being cut in the pipe, it is

easily formed to emit a sound when blown through and becomes a whistle. The gathering and the "May-music" being finished, they then "bring home the May" by five or six o'clock in the morning, with the band playing and their whistles blowing. After dancing throughout the town they go to their respective employments. Although May-day should fall on a Sunday, they observe the same practice in all respects, with the omission of dancing in the town.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 561.

DEVONSHIRE.

On the last day of April, the proprietor of every flower-garden in the neighbourhood of Torquay receives visits from a great number of girls, who solicit "some flowers for the May-dolls." This is usually complied with, and at no great cost, as flowers are commonly very abundant. Soon after nine o'clock on May-day, or the day following when that falls on Sunday, the same young folk call at every house, and stop everyone they meet, to show their May-dolls, collecting, at the same time, such small gratuities as may be offered.—*Once a Week*, Sept. 24th, 1870.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

At Great Gransden on the evening or night preceding May-day, the young men (farmers' servants) go and cut the May or hawthorn boughs, which they bring home in bundles, and leave some at almost every house, according to the numbers of young persons in it, singing what they call *The Night Song*. On the evening of May-day, and the following evenings, they go round to every house where they

left a bough, and sing the *May Song*. One is dressed with a shirt over his other clothes, and decorated with ribbons, and is called the *May Lord*, another in girls' clothes, is called the *May Lady*, or *Mary*. One has a handkerchief on a pole or stick as a flag, whose business is to keep off the crowd. The rest have ribbons in their hats. The money collected is spent in a feast of plum cake, bread and cheese, and tea.

LANCASHIRE.

The evening before May-day is termed "Mischief Night" by the young people of Burnley and the surrounding district, when all kinds of mischief are perpetrated. Formerly shop-keepers' sign-boards were exchanged: "John Smith, Grocer," finding his name and vocation changed, by the sign over his door, to "Thomas Jones, Tailor," and *vice versâ*; but the police have put an end to these practical jokes. Young men and women, however, still continue to play each other tricks by placing branches of trees, shrubs, or flowers under each others' windows, or before their doors. All these have a symbolical meaning, as significant, if not always as complimentary, as "the Language of Flowers." Thus "a thorn" implies "scorn;" "wicken" (the mountain ash), "my dear chicken;" "a bramble," for one who likes to ramble, &c. Much ill-feeling is at times engendered by this custom.—Harland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk Lore*, 1867, p. 239; see *N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. v. p. 580; *4th S.* vol. vii. p. 525.

While reading one evening towards the close of April 1861, says a writer in the *Book of Days* (vol. i. p. 546), I was on a sudden aware of a party of waits or carollers who had taken their stand on the lawn in my

garden,[41]
and were serenading the family with a song. There were four singers, accompanied by a flute and a clarionet, and together they discoursed most simple and rustic music. I was at a loss to divine the occasion of this loyal custom, seeing the time was not within any of the great festivals, Easter, May-day, or Whitsuntide. Inquiry resulted in my obtaining from an old "Mayer" the words of two songs, called by the singers themselves "May Songs," though the rule and custom are that they *must* be sung before the 1st of May. My chief informant, an elderly man named Job Knight, tells me that he went out a May-singing for about fourteen years, but has now left it off. He says that the Mayers usually commence their singing-rounds about the middle of April, though some parties start as early as the beginning of that month. The singing invariably ceases on the evening of the 30th of April. Job says he can remember the custom for about thirty years, and he never heard any other than the two songs which follow. These are usually sung, he says, by five or six men, with a fiddle or flute and clarionet accompaniment. The songs are verbally as recited by Job Knight, the first of which leaves marks of some antiquity, both in construction and phraseology. There is its double refrain—the second and fourth lines in every stanza —which both musically and poetically are far superior to the others. Its quaint picture of manners, the worshipful master of the house in his chain of gold, the mistress with gold along her breast, &c., the phrases "house and harbour," "riches and store,"—all seem to point to earlier times. The last line of this song appears to convey its object and to indicate a simple superstition that these songs were charms to draw or drive "these cold winters away." There are

several lines in both songs, in which the sense, no less than the rhythm, seems to have been marred from the songs having been handed down by oral tradition alone, but I have not ventured on any alteration.

[41] In the hamlet of Swinton, township of Worsley, parish of Eccles.

In the second, and more modern, song, the refrain in the fourth line of each stanza is again the most poetical and musical of the whole.

OLD MAY SONG.

All in this pleasant evening, together comers (? come are) we,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay;
We'll tell you of a blossom and buds on every tree,
Drawing near to the merry month of May.

Rise up, the master of this house, put on your chain of gold,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay;
We hope you're not offended, (with) your house we make so bold,
Drawing near to the merry month of May.

Rise up, the mistress of this house, with gold along your breast,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay;
And if your body be asleep, we hope your soul's at rest,
Drawing near to the merry month of May.

Rise up, the children of this house, all in your rich attire,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay;
For every hair upon your head(s) shines like the silver wire,
Drawing near to the merry month of May.

God bless this house and harbour, your riches and
your store,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay;
We hope the Lord will prosper you, both now and
evermore,
Drawing near to the merry month of May.

So now we're going to leave you, in peace and plenty
here,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay;
We shall not sing you May again until another year,
For to draw you these cold winters away.

NEW MAY SONG.

Come listen awhile to what we shall say,
Concerning the season, the month we call May;
For the flowers they are springing, and the birds they
do sing,
And the
baziers[42]
are sweet in the morning of May.

When the trees are in bloom, and the meadows are
green,

The sweet-smelling cowslips are plain to be seen;
The sweet ties of nature, which we plainly do see,
For the baziers are sweet in the morning of May.

All creatures are deem'd, in their station below,
Such comforts of love on each other bestow;
Our flocks they're all folded, and young lambs
sweetly do play,
And the baziers are sweet in the morning of May.

So now to conclude with much freedom and love,
The sweetest of blessings proceeds from above;
Let us join in our song that right happy may we be,
For we'll bless with contentment in the morning of

May."[43]

[42] The *bazier* is the name given in this part of Lancashire to the auricula, which is usually in full bloom in April.

[43] The Cheshire May-song is very similar to this.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

Oliver in his *Monumental Antiquities of Great Grimsby* (1825, p. 39), speaking of Holm Hill and Abbey Hill, two of the seven hills on which the British town of Grym-by was situated, says they were united by an artificial bank, called the *Ket Bank*, in connection with which he relates the following curious
ceremony:—

The great female divinity of the British Druids was Ket, or Ceridwen; a personification of the Ark of Noah; the famous Keto of Antiquity, or, in other words Ceres, the patroness of the ancient mysteries. To enter into a full explanation of these mysteries is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that the aspirant, at the conclusion of the ceremony of initiation, was placed in a small boat, to represent the confinement of Noah in the Ark;—which boat was a symbol of the helio-arkite deity,—and committed to the waves with directions to gain a proposed point of land, which was to him a shore, not only of safety, but of triumph. On this shore he was received by the hierophant and his attendants, who had placed themselves there for the express purpose, and pronounced a favourite of Ket, by whom he was now said to be purified with water, and consequently regenerated and purged from all his former defilements. The Abbey Hill was the place where

these sacred mysteries were celebrated, and the designation of this bank fully corroborates the conjecture, for whoever will attentively consider the situation of these two hills, connected by an extended embankment even at the present day, will be convinced that a more convenient spot could not be found for the performance of the above ceremony. The sacred rites were solemnized within the stone circle, which doubtless existed on the Abbey Hill, and the candidate at the highest time of the tide was committed to the mercy of the waves from the point now known by the name of Wellow Mill, and he had to struggle against the declining tide, until he was cast at the foot of Holm Hill, upon the bank of Ket, the presiding deity, under whose special protection he was ever after placed.

This ceremony always took place on May Eve, for at no other season was the final degree of perfection conferred, and as soon as the fortunate aspirants had succeeded in gaining the safe landing-place of Ket, which led by an easy gradation to the summit of the hill, fires were lighted on the apex of this and all the neighbouring hills, and the most extravagant joy was visible throughout the district.

Isle of Man.

On May Eve, the juvenile branches of nearly every family in the Isle of Man, used to gather primroses, and strew them before the doors of their dwellings, in order to prevent the entrance of fairies on that night. It was quite a novel sight to a stranger to the custom to see this delicate flower plentifully arranged at the door of every house he might pass, particularly in the towns on the night in question or early on the following morning. This custom is now

abandoned: indeed, it was continued to a late date more through the habit and amusement of children than from superstition. Persons more advanced in life congregated on the mountains on May Eve, and to scare fairies and witches, supposed to be roaming abroad on that particular night in numbers greater than ordinary, set fire to the gorse or *Koinney*, and blew horns. Many of them remained on the hills till sunrise, endeavouring to pry into futurity by observing particular omens. If a bright light was observed to issue, seemingly, from any house in the surrounding village, it was considered a certain indication that some member of the family would soon be married; but if a dim light were seen moving slowly in the direction of the parish church, it was then deemed equally certain that a funeral would soon pass that way to the churchyard.—Train, *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 118.

OXFORDSHIRE.

"At Woodstock," says Aubrey, "they every May Eve goe into the parke and fetch away a number of hawthorne trees, which they set about their dores: 'tis pity that they make such a destruction of so fine a tree."

WALES.

At Tenby the inhabitants went out in troops, bearing in their hands boughs of thorn in full blossom, which were bedecked with other flowers, and then stuck outside the windows of the houses. Maypoles were reared up in different parts of the town, decorated with flowers, coloured papers, and bunches of variegated ribbon.—Mason's *Tales and*

Traditions of Ireland, 1858, p. 21.

IRELAND.

The following custom of the Irish is described in a MS. of the sixteenth century, and seems to have been of Pagan origin: "Upon Maie Eve they will drive their cattell upon their neighbour's corne, to eate the same up; they were wont to begin from the vast, and this principally upon the English churl. Unlesse they do so upon Maie daie, the witch hath power upon their cattell all the yere following."—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. vii. p. 81.

Sir Henry Piers, in his *Account of Westmeath*, 1682, says:—"On May Eve, every family sets up before their door a green bush, strewed over with yellow flowers, which the meadows yield plentifully. In counties where timber is plentiful, they erect tall slender trees, which stand high, and they continue almost the whole year; so that a stranger would go nigh to imagine that they were all signs of ale-sellers, and that all houses were ale-houses."

MAY 1.]

MAY DAY.

The festival of May Day has existed in this country, though its form has often changed, from the earliest times, and we find abundant traces of it both in our poets and old chroniclers. Tollet imagines that it originally came from our Gothic ancestors; and certainly, if this is to be taken for a proof, the Swedes and Goths welcomed the first of May with songs and

dance, and many rustic sports; but there is only a general, not a particular, likeness between our May-day festivities and those of our Gothic ancestors. Others again have sought for the origin of our customs in the *Floralia*, or rather the *Maiuma*, of the Romans, which were established at a later period under the Emperor Claudius, and differed perhaps but little from the former, except in being more decent. But though it may at first seem probable that our May-games may have come immediately from the *Floralia* or *Maiuma* of the Romans, there can be little question that their final origin must be sought in other countries, and far remoter periods. Maurice says (*Indian Antiquities*, vol i. p. 87) that our May-day festival is but a repetition of the phallic festivals of India and Egypt, which in those countries took place upon the sun entering Taurus, to celebrate Nature's renewed fertility. Φαλλος (*phallos*) in Greek signifies *a pole*, in addition to its more important meaning, of which this is the type; and in the precession of the Equinoxes and the changes of the calendar we shall find an easy solution of any apparent inconsistencies arising from the difference of seasons.

That the May-festival has come down to us from the Druids, who themselves had it from India, is proved by many striking facts and coincidences, and by none more than the vestiges of the god *Bel*, the Apollo, or Orus, of other nations. The Druids celebrated his worship on the first of May, by lighting immense fires in honour of him upon the various carns, and hence the day is called by the aboriginal Irish and the Scotch Highlanders—both remnants of the Celtic stock—la Bealtine, Bealtaine or Beltine, that is, the *day of Belen's fire*, for, in the Cornish, which is a Celtic dialect, we find that *tan* is fire, and *to tine* signifies to light the fire.

The Irish still retain the Phœnician custom of lighting fires at short distances, and making the cattle pass between them. Fathers, too, taking their children in their arms, jump or run through them, thus passing the latter as it were through the flames —the very practice so expressly condemned in Scripture. But even this custom appears to have been only a substitute for the atrocious sacrifice of children as practised by the elder Phœnicians. The god Saturn, that is, Moloch, was represented by a statue bent slightly forward, and so placed that the least weight was sufficient to alter its position. Into the arms of this idol the priest gave the child to be sacrificed, when, its balance being thus destroyed, it flung or rather dropt, the victim into a fiery furnace that blazed below. If other proofs were wanting of Eastern origin, we might find them in the fact that Britain was called by the earlier inhabitants the Island of Beli, and that Bel had also the name of Hu, a word which we see again occurring in the *Huli* festival of India.—*New Curiosities of Literature*, vol. i. p. 229. See Higgins' *Celtic Druids*, chap. v. sect. 23, p. 181; *Household Words*, 1859, vol. xix. p. 557; Tolan's *History of the Druids*, 8vo, p. 115; *Celtic Researches*, 1806, 8vo, p. 191; Vossius, *On the Origin of Idolatries*: *Essai sur le Culte des Divinités Génératrices*.

Going a-Maying.

—Bourne (*Antiquitates Vulgares*, chap. xxv.) describes this custom as it existed in his time:—On the calends, or first of May, commonly called May-day, the juvenile part of both sexes are wont to rise a little after midnight and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and blowing of horns, where they break down branches from the trees, and adorn themselves with nosegays and crowns of flowers; when this is done they return with their

booty homewards, about the rising of the sun, and make their doors and windows to triumph with their flowery spoils.

In Chaucer's *Court of Love* we read that early on May-day "Fourth goth al the court, both most and lest, to fetche the flowris fresh and blome."

In the old romance, too, *La Morte d'Arthur*, translated by Sir Thomas Maleor, or Mellor, in the reign of Edward IV., is a passage descriptive of the customs of the times. "Now it befell in the moneth of lusty May, that Queene Guenever called unto her the knyghtes of the Round Table, and gave them warning that early in the morning she should ride on maying into the woods and fields beside Westminster." The rural clergy, who seem to have mingled themselves with their flock on all occasions, whether of sorrow, devotion, or amusement, were reproved by Grostete, or Greathead, Bishop of Lincoln, for going a-maying.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 233.

Shakespeare likewise, alluding to this custom, says (*Henry VIII.* Act v. sc. 3), it was impossible to make the people sleep on May-morning, and (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act i. sc. 1) that they rose up early to observe May day.

> "If thou lovest me then,
> Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
> And in the wood, a league without the town,
> Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
> To do observance to a morn of May,
> There will I stay for thee."

And again:

> "No doubt they rise up early to observe
> The rite of May."—Act. iv. sc. 1.

May-dew.

—This was held of singular virtue in former times, and thus in the *Morning Post* of 2nd May, 1791, we are told that the day before, being the First of May, according to annual and superstitious custom, a number of persons went into the fields and bathed their faces with the dew on the grass, under the idea that it would render them beautiful. Pepys on a certain day in May makes this entry in his *Diary*: "My wife away, down with Jane and W. Hewer to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre and to lie there to-night, and so to gather May-dew to-morrow morning, which Mrs. Turner hath taught her is the only thing in the world to wash her face with."

May-games.

—When Christianity, says Soane (*Curiosities of Literature*, p. 230), found its way into Britain, the same mode would seem to have been adopted in regard to the May-games by the wise liberality of the first missionaries that we see them employing in so many other cases. Conceding to the prejudices of the people, they did not attempt to root out long established characters, but invested them with another character as bees close in with wax the noxious substance they are unable to remove. Thus in course of time the festival was not only diverted from its original intention, but even the meaning of its various symbols was forgotten. It degenerated into a mere holiday, and as such long continued to be the delight of all ages and of all classes, from king and queen upon the throne to the peasant in his cottage. Thus, for example, Henry VIII. appears to have been particularly attached to the exercise of archery and the observance of May. "Some short time after his coronation," says Hall (*Vit. Henry VIII.*, fol. vi. 6), "he came to Westminster with the Queen

and all their train. And on a time being there, his Grace, the Earls of Essex, Wiltshire, and other noblemen, to the number of twelve, came suddenly into the Queen's chamber, all apparelled in short coats of Kentish Kendal, with hoods on their heads, and hosen of the same, every one of them his bow and arrows, and a sword and buckler, like outlaws or Robin Hood's men; whereof the Queen, the ladies, and all others there, were abashed, as well for the strange sight, as also for their sudden coming; and after certain dances and pastimes made, they departed."

Stow, too, in his *Survey of London* (1603, 4to, p. 99) has the following:—"In the moneth of May, namely on May-day in the morning, every man, except impediment, would walke into the sweete meadows and greene woods, there to rejoyce their spirites with the beauty and savour of sweete flowers, and with the harmony of birds praysing God in their kind; and for example hereof Edward Hall hath noted that K. Henry the Eighth, as in the 3 of his reigne and divers other years, so namely on the seventh of his reigne on May day in the morning, with Qween Katheren his wife, accompanied with many lords and ladies, rode a-maying from Greenwitch to the high ground of Shooter's hill, where as they passed by the way they espied a company of tall yeomen clothed all in greene, with greene whoodes and with bowes and arrowes, to the number of 100. One being their chieftaine was called Robin Hoode, who required the king and his companie to stay and see his men shoote, whereunto the king graunting, Robin Hoode whistled, and all the 200 archers shot off, losing all at once, and when he whistled againe, they likewise shot againe; their arrowes whistled by craft of the head, so that the

noyse was strange and loude, which greatly delighted the king, queene, and their companie."

It may seem strange, remarks Soane, that Robin Hood should be so prominent a figure in a festival which originated long before he was born, since we first find mention of him and his forest companions in the reign of King John, while the floral games of England, as we have seen, had their rise with the Druids. The sports of Robin Hood were most probably first instituted for the encouragement of archery, and it is not surprising if a recreation so especially connected with summer and the forest, was celebrated at the opening of the year—the opening, that is, so far as it related to rural sports and pleasures. By degrees it would become blended with the festival already existing, and in a short time, from its superior attraction, it would become the principal feature of it.

Douce, in his *Illustrations of Shakespeare* (vol. ii. p. 454), says the introduction of Robin Hood into the celebration of May probably suggested the addition of a king or lord of May. Soane, however, takes a very different view, being of opinion that the custom of electing a Lord and Lady of the May in the popular sports existed at a far earlier period—long indeed before the time of Robin Hood's introduction—at the same time supporting his statement from a command given in the synod at Worcester, A. D. 1240, Canon 38, "Ne intersint ludis inhonestis, nec sustineant ludos fieri de rege et regina." For an interesting account of the Robin Hood games see Strutt's novel, *Queen Hoo Hall* (quoted in *Book of Days*, vol. i. p 580). Consult also Ritson's *Collection of Poems* relating to Robin Hood (1853), and Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. pp. 247-272.

Morris-dance.

—It is supposed to be of Moorish origin, and to be derived to us from Spain. Hence its name. The principal characters of it generally were Robin Hood, Maid Marian, Scarlet, Stokesley, Little John, the Hobby Horse, the Bavian or Fool, Tom the Piper with his pipe and tabor, the Dragon, of which we have no mention before 1585. The number of characters varied much at different times and places. See Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. pp. 247-270, and *Book of Days*, vol i. pp. 630-633.

Maypoles.

—The earliest representation of an English maypole is that published in the *Variorum* Shakespeare, and depicted on a window at Betley in Staffordshire, then the property of Mr. Tollet, and which he was disposed to think as old as the time of Henry VIII. The pole is planted in a mound of earth, and has affixed to it St. George's red-cross banner, and a white pennon or streamer with a forked end. The shaft of the pole is painted in a diagonal line of black colour upon a yellow ground, a characteristic decoration of all these ancient maypoles, as alluded to by Shakespeare in his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where it gives point to Hermia's allusion to her rival Helena as, "a painted maypole."—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 575.—See Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, pp. 234-247.

It was, says Hone (*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 556), a great object with some of the more rigid reformers to suppress amusements, especially maypoles; and these idols of the people were taken down as zeal grew fierce, and put up as it grew cool, till, after various ups and downs, the favourites of the populace were by the Parliament, on the 6th April, 1644, thus provided against: "The Lords and Commons do further order and ordain that, all and singular

maypoles that are or shall be erected, shall be taken down and removed by the constables, bossholders, tithing-men, petty constables, and churchwardens of the parishes where the same be, and that no maypole be hereafter set up, erected, or suffered to be set up within this kingdom of England or dominion of Wales; the said officers to be fined five shillings weekly till the said maypole be taken down." Accordingly down went all the maypoles that were left. The restoration of Charles II. however was the signal for their revival. On the very 1st of May afterwards, in 1661, the maypole in the Strand was reared with great ceremony and rejoicing. A contemporary writer (in *Cities Loyalty Displayed*, 1661, 4to) speaking of it, says, "This tree was a most choice and remarkable piece; 'twas made below Bridge, and brought in two parts up to Scotland Yard, near the King's Palace, and from thence it was conveyed, April 14th, to the Strand to be erected [nearly opposite Somerset House]. It was brought with a streamer flourishing before it, drums beating all the way, and other sorts of musick; it was supposed to be so long that landsmen (as carpenters) could not possibly raise it; (Prince James, the Duke of York, Lord High Admiral of England, commanded twelve seamen off aboord to come and officiate the business, whereupon they came and brought their cables, pullies, and other tacklins, with six great anchors); after this was brought three crowns borne by three men bare-headed, and a streamer displaying all the way before them, drums beating, and other musick playing; numerous multitudes of people thronging the streets with great shouts and acclamations all day long. The maypole then being joyned together, the crown and cane with the King's arms richly gilded was placed on the head of it. This

being done, the trumpets did sound, and in four hours space it was advanced upright, after which being established fast in the ground, six drums did beat, and the trumpets did sound; again great shouts and acclamations the people give that it did ring throughout all the Strand. After that came a morris-dance finely deckt, with purple scarfs in their half-shirts with a tabor, and pipe, the ancient musick, and danced round about the maypole, and after that danced the rounds of their liberty. Upon the top of this famous standard is likewise set up a royal purple streamer, about the middle of it is placed four crowns more, with the King's arms likewise; there is also a garland set upon it of various colours of delicate rich favours, under which is to be placed three great lanthorns, to remain for three honours; that is, one for Prince James, Duke of York, Lord High Admiral of England; the other for the Vice-Admiral; and the third for the rear-Admiral: these are to give light in dark nights, and to continue so long as the pole stands, which will be a perpetual honour for seamen."—See *The Town*, Leigh Hunt (1859, p. 161).

The author of a pamphlet entitled *The Way to Things by Words, and Words by Things*, considers the maypole in a curious light. We gather from him, says Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 245), that our ancestors held an anniversary assembly on May-day, and that the column of May (whence our maypole) was the great standard of justice in the Ey-commons, or fields of May. Here it was the people, if they saw cause, deposed or punished their governors, their barons, and their kings. The judge's bough or wand (now discontinued, and only faintly represented by a trifling nosegay), and the staff or rod of authority in the civil and in the military (for it was the mace of

civil power, and the truncheon of the field-officers), are both derived from hence.

A mayor, he says, received his name from this May, in the sense of lawful power; the crown—a mark of dignity and symbol of power, like the mace and sceptre—was also taken from the May, being representative of the garland or crown, which when hung on the top of the May or pole, was the great signal for convening the people; the arches of it, which spring from the circlet and meet together at the mound or round bell, being necessarily so formed, to suspend it to the top of the pole. The word maypole, he observes, is a pleonasm; in French it is called singly *Mai*.

In front of the spot now occupied by St. Mary-le-Strand anciently stood a cross, at which, says Stow, "In the year 1294 and other times, the justices itinerant sat without London."

In the *British Apollo* (1708, vol. i.) a writer says: It was a custom among the ancient Britons, before converted to Christianity, to erect these maypoles, adorned with flowers, in honour of the goddess Flora.

Keysler, says Mr. Borlase, thinks that the custom of the maypole took its origin from the earnest desire of the people to see their king, who, seldom appearing at other times, made his procession at this time of year to the great assembly of the states held in the open air.—*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 246.

Chimney-sweepers.

—How or when the chimney-sweepers contrived to intrude their sooty persons into the company of the gay and graceful Flora upon her high festival does not appear. It is certain, however, that in London they have long observed the early days of May as an established holiday, on which occasion they parade

the streets in parties, fantastically tricked out in tawdry finery, enriched with strips of gilt and various coloured papers, &c. With their faces chalked, and their shovels and brushes in hand, they caper the "Chimney-sweeper's Dance" to a well-known tune, considered by amateurs as more noisy than musical. Some of the larger parties are accompanied by a fiddle, a "Jack-in-the-Green," and a "Lord and lady of the May." The "Jack-in-the-Green" is a man concealed within a frame of wickerwork covered with leaves, flowers, &c.—Soane, *New Curiosities of Literature*, p. 261; *Sports, Pastimes, and Customs of London*, 1847, p. 34; See *Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 583, vol. ii. p. 619.

Milkmaid's Dance.

—On the first day of May, says a writer in the *Spectator* (vol. v.), "the ruddy milkmaid exerts herself in a most sprightly manner under a pyramid of silver tankards, and, like the virgin Tarpeia, oppressed by the costly ornaments which her benefactors lay upon her." These decorations of silver cups, tankards, and salvers were borrowed for the purpose, and hung round the milk-pails, with the addition of flowers and ribbons, which the maidens carried upon their heads when they went to the houses of their customers, and danced in order to obtain a small gratuity from each of them. Of late years the plate, with the other decorations, was placed in a pyramidical form, and carried by two chairmen upon a wooden horse. The maidens walked before it, and performed the dance without any incumbrance. Sometimes in place of the silver tankards and salvers they substituted a cow. The animal had her horns gilt, and was nearly covered with ribbons of various colours, formed into bows and roses, and interspersed with green oaken leaves and bunches of

flowers.—Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes*, 1801, b. iv. p. 266.[44]

[44] At Baslow, in the county of Derby, the festival of kit-dressing is, occasionally, observed. The kits or milk pails are fancifully and tastefully decorated with ribbons, and hung with festoons of flowers and ornaments of muslin and silk, and with gold and silver thread. The kits are carried on the heads of the young women of the village, who, attended by the young men and preceded by a band of music, parade the streets, and end the day's proceedings by a dance. *Jour. of Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 208.

Pepys in his *Diary*, May 1st, 1667, says, "To Westminster; on the way meeting many milkmaids, with their garlands upon their pails, dancing with a fiddler before them, and saw pretty Nelly [Nell Gwynne] standing at her lodgings' door in Drury Lane in her smock sleeves and bodice, looking upon one; she seemed a mighty pretty creature."

In a set of prints called the *Tempest Cryes of London*, one is called the Merry Milkmaid, whose proper name was Kate Smith. She is dancing with her milk-pail on her head, decorated with silver cups, tankards, and salvers borrowed for the purpose, and tied together with ribbons, and ornamented with flowers. Misson, too, in his *Observations on his Travels in England*, alludes to this custom. He says: On the 1st of May, and the five and six days following, all the pretty young country girls that serve the town with milk dress themselves up very neatly, and borrow abundance of silver plate, whereof they make a pyramid, which they adorn with ribbons and flowers, and carry upon their heads instead of their common milk-pails. In this equipage, accompanied by some of their fellow milkmaids and a bag-pipe or fiddle, they go from door to door, dancing before the

houses of their customers, in the midst of boys and girls that follow them in troops, and everybody gives them something.—Ozell's *Translation*, 8vo, 1719, p. 307.

In Read's *Weekly Times*, May 5th, 1733, occurs the following:—On May-day the milk-maids who serve the Court danced minuets and rigadoons before the Royal family, at St. James's House, with great applause.

The following lines descriptive of the milkmaid's garland are taken from *Every Day Book*, vol. i. pp. 569,
570:—

"In London thirty years ago,
When pretty milkmaids went about,
It was a goodly sight to see
Their May-day pageant all drawn out.

Themselves in comely colours drest,
Their shining garland in the middle,
A pipe and tabor on before,
Or else the foot-inspiring fiddle.

They stopt at houses where it was
Their custom to cry 'milk below!'
And, while the music play'd, with smiles
Join'd hands and pointed toe to toe.

Thus they tripp'd on, till—from door to door
The hop'd-for annual present sent—
A signal came, to courtsey low,
And at that door cease merriment.

Such scenes and sounds once blest my eyes
And charm'd my ears; but all have vanish'd.
On May-day now no garlands go,
For milkmaids and their dance are banish'd.

See Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*,

1855-9; also *Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 1562.

May-gosling.
—A writer in the *Gent. Mag.* (1791, vol. lxi. p. 327) says a May-gosling, on the 1st of May, is made with as much eagerness in the north of England as an April noddy (noodle) or fool on the 1st of April.

"U. P. K. spells May-goslings" is an expression used by boys at play as an insult to the losing party. U. P. K. is *up-pick*, that is, up with your pin or peg, the mark of the goal. An additional punishment was thus: the winner made a hole in the ground with his heel, into which a peg about three inches long was driven, its top being below the surface; the loser, with his hands tied behind him, was to pull it up with his teeth, the boys buffeting with their hats, and calling out, "Up-pick! you May gosling!" or "U. P. K., gosling in
May."[45]

[45] See p. 265.

BERKSHIRE.

At Abingdon the children and young people formerly went about in groups on May morning, singing the following
carol:—

"We've been a-rambling all the night,
And sometime of this day;
And now returning back again,
We bring a garland gay.
Why don't you do as we have done
On this first day of May?
And from our parents we have come,
And would no longer stay.

A garland gay we bring you here,

And at your door we stand;
It is a sprout well budded out,
The work of our Lord's hand.
Why don't you do, &c.

So dear, so dear as Christ loved us,
And for our sins was slain;
Christ bids us turn from wickedness
Back to the Lord again.
Why don't you do," &c.—

N. & Q. 4th S. vol. iii. p. 401.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

In a MS. in the British Museum entitled *Status Scholæ Etonensis*, A.D. 1560, it is stated that on the day of St. Philip and St. James, if it be fair weather, and the master grants leave, those boys who choose it may rise at four o'clock, to gather May-branches, if they can do it without wetting their feet; and that on that day they adorn the windows of the bed-chambers with green leaves, and the houses are perfumed with fragrant herbs.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Some derive May from Maia, the mother of Mercury, to whom they offered sacrifices on the first day of it; and this seems to explain the custom which prevails on this day at Cambridge of children having a figure dressed in a grotesque manner, called a *May-lady*, before which they set a table having on it wine, &c. They also beg money of passengers, which is considered as an offering to the *Maulkin*; for their plea to obtain it is "Pray remember the poor May-lady." Perhaps the garlands, for which they also beg,

originally adorned the head of the goddess. The bush of hawthorn, or, as it is called, May, placed at the doors on this day, may point out the firstfruits of the spring, as this is one of the earliest trees which blossoms.—Audley, *Companion to the Almanack*, 1816, p. 71.

CHESHIRE.

In this county the young men formerly celebrated May-day by placing large bidden boughs over the doors of the houses where the young women resided to whom they paid their addresses; and an alder bough was often placed over the door of a scold.—Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, 1810, vol. ii. pt. ii. p. 462.

Maypoles are also erected, and danced round in some villages with as much avidity as ever.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.*, 1850, vol. v. p. 254. Washington Irving in his *Sketch Book* says, I shall never forget the delight I felt on first seeing a Maypole. It was on the banks of the Dee, close by the picturesque old bridge that stretches across the river from the quaint little city of Chester. I had already been carried back into former days by the antiquities of that venerable place, the examination of which is equal to turning over the pages of a black-letter volume, or gazing on the pictures in Froissart. The Maypole on the margin of that poetic stream completed the illusion. My fancy adorned it with wreaths of flowers, and peopled the green bank with all the dancing revelry of May-day.

CORNWALL.

In Cornwall this day is hailed by the juveniles as "dipping-day." On May-morning the children go out

into the country and fetch home the flowering branches of the white-thorn, or boughs of the narrow-leaved elm, which has just put forth its leaves, both of which are called “May.” At a later hour all the boys of the village sally forth with their bucket, can, and syringe, or other instrument, and avail themselves of a licence which the season confers “to dip” or well nigh drown, without regard to person or circumstances, the passenger who has not the protection of a piece of “May” in his hat or button-hole. The sprig of the hawthorn or elm is probably held to be proof that the bearer has not failed to rise early “to do observance to a morn of May.”—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. xii. p. 297. Borlase, in his *Natural History of Cornwall*, tells us that an ancient custom still retained by the Cornish is that of decking their doors and porches on the 1st of May with green sycamore and hawthorn boughs, and of planting trees, or rather stumps of trees, before their houses.

Bond, in his *History of East and West Looe* (1823, p. 38), says:—On May-day the boys dress their hats with flowers and hawthorn, and furnish themselves with bullocks’ horns, in which sticks of about two feet long are fixed, and with these instruments filled with water they parade the streets all day, and dip all persons who pass them if they have not what is called May in their hats, that is, a sprig of hawthorn.

A writer also in *Once a Week* (Sept. 24th, 1870), speaking of certain Cornish customs, tells us that dipping was admitted by the boys of Looe to be very great fun, and a May-day without any would have been voted an utter failure; nevertheless the coppers of commutation were very acceptable, as the great two-day fair of the town was held towards the close of the week, when cash was generally in demand. Hence when any one flung pence among them, they

were wont to chant during the scramble—

> "The First of May is dipping-day,
> The Sixth of May is Looe's fair day."

On the 1st of May a species of festivity, Hitchins tells us, was observed in his time at Padstow: called the *Hobby-horse*, from the figure of a horse being carried through the streets. Men, women, and children flocked round it, when they proceeded to a place called Traitor Pool, about a quarter of a mile distant, in which the hobby-horse was always supposed to drink. The head after being dipped into the water, was instantly taken out, and the mud and water were sprinkled on the spectators, to the no small diversion of all. On returning home a particular song was sung, which was supposed to commemorate the event that gave the hobby-horse birth. According to tradition the French once upon a time effected a landing at a small cove in the vicinity, but seeing at a distance a number of women dressed in red cloaks, whom they mistook for soldiers, they fled to their ships and put to sea. The day generally ended in riot and dissipation.—Hitchins, *History of Cornwall*, 1824, vol. i. p. 720.

On the first Sunday after May-day it is a custom with families at Penzance to visit Rose-hill, Poltier, and other adjacent villages, by way of recreation. These pleasure-parties generally consist of two or three families together. They carry flour and other materials with them to make the "heavy cake"[46] at the farm-dairies, which are always open for their reception. Nor do they forget to take tea, sugar, rum, and other comfortable things for their refreshment, which, by paying a trifle for baking and for the

niceties awaiting their consumption, content the farmers for the house-room and pleasure they afford their welcome visitants.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p 561.

[46] See May-eve, Penzance, p. 216.

DERBYSHIRE.

Maypoles are to be seen in some of the village-greens still standing, and adorned with garlands on May-day. On this morning, too, the young village women go out about sunrise for the purpose of washing their faces in the May-dew, and return in the full hope of having their complexions improved by the process.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.*, 1852, vol. vii. p. 206.

DEVONSHIRE.

At the village of Holne, situated on one of the spurs of Dartmoor, is a field of about two acres, the property of the parish, and called the Ploy (play) Field. In the centre of this stands a granite pillar (Menhir) six or seven feet high. On May-morning before daybreak the young men of the village used to assemble there, and then proceed to the moor, where they selected a ram lamb (doubtless with the consent of the owner), and after running it down, brought it in triumph to the Ploy Field, fastened it to the pillar, cut its throat, and then roasted it whole, skin, wool, &c. At midday a struggle took place, at the risk of cut hands, for a slice, it being supposed to confer luck for the ensuing year on the fortunate devourer. As an act of gallantry the young men sometimes fought their way through the crowd to get a slice for the

chosen amongst the young women, all of whom, in their best dresses, attended the Ram Feast, as it was called. Dancing, wrestling, and other games, assisted by copious libations of cider during the afternoon, prolonged the festivity till midnight.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. vii. p. 353.

In some places it is customary for the children to carry about from house to house two dolls, a large and a small one—beautifully dressed and decorated with flowers. This custom has existed at Torquay from time immemorial.

ESSEX.

At Saffron-Walden, and in the village of Debden, an old May-day song (almost identical with that given under BERKSHIRE, which see) is sung by the little girls, who go about in parties, carrying garlands from door to door.

The garlands which the girls carry are sometimes large and handsome, and a doll is usually placed in the middle, dressed in white, according to certain traditional regulations.—*Illustrated London News*, June 6th, 1857, p. 553.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

In the village of Randwick, hard by the Stroud cloth-mills, at the appointed daybreak, three cheeses were carried upon a litter, festooned and garlanded with blossoms, down to the churchyard, and rolled thrice mystically round the sacred building; being subsequently carried back in the same way upon the litter in triumphal procession, to be cut up on the village-green and distributed piecemeal among the bystanders.—*Household Words*, 1859, vol. xix. p. 515.

In this county the children sing the following song as they dance round the Maypole:

"Round the Maypole, trit-trit-trot!
See what a Maypole we have got;
Fine and gay.
Trip away,
Happy is our new May-day."—

Aunt Judy's Magazine, 1874, No. xcvii. p. 436.

HAMPSHIRE.

In the village of Burley, one of the most beautiful villages of the New Forest, a maypole is erected, a fête is given to the school-children, and a May-queen is chosen by lot; a floral crown surmounts the pole, and garlands of flowers hang about the shaft.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

At Baldock, in former times, the peasantry were accustomed to make a "my-lord-and-my-lady" in effigy on the first of May. These figures were constructed of rags, pasteboard, old masks, canvas, straw, &c., and were dressed up in the holiday habiliments of their fabricators—"my lady" in the best gown'd, apron, kerchief, and mob cap of the dame, and "my lord" in the Sunday gear of her master. The tiring finished, "the pair" were seated on chairs or joint-stools, placed outside the cottage-door or in the porch, their bosoms ornamented with large bouquets of May flowers. They supported a hat, into which the contributions of the lookers-on were put. Before them, on a table were arranged a mug of ale, a drinking-horn, a pipe, a pair of spectacles, and sometimes a newspaper.

The observance of this usage was exclusively confined to the wives of the labouring poor resident in the town, who were amply compensated for their pains-taking by the contributions, which generally amounted to something considerable. But these were not the only solicitors on May-day; the juveniles of Baldock constructed a garland of hoops transversed, decorated with flowers, ribbons, &c., affixed to the extremity of a staff, by which it was borne, similar to those at Northampton and Lynn.—Hone, *The Year Book*, 1838, p. 1593.

The following amusing account of the manner in which May-day was formerly observed at Hitchin is given by a correspondent of *Every Day Book*, 1826, vol. i. p. 565:

Soon after three o'clock in the morning a large party of the townspeople, and neighbouring labourers parade the town, singing the *Mayer's Song*. They carry in their hands large branches of May, and they affix a branch either upon or at the side of the doors of nearly every respectable house in the town. Where there are knockers they place their branches within the handles. The larger the branch is that is placed at the door the more honourable to the house, or rather to the servants of the house. If in the course of the year a servant has given offence to any of the mayers, then, instead of a branch of May, a branch of elder, with a bunch of nettles, is affixed to her door: this is considered a great disgrace, and the unfortunate subject of it is exposed to the jeers of her rivals. On May-morning, therefore, the girls look with some anxiety for their May-branch, and rise very early to ascertain their good or ill-fortune. The houses are all thus decorated by four o'clock in the morning. Throughout the day parties of these mayers are seen dancing and frolicking in various parts of

the town. The group that I saw to-day, which remained in Bancroft for more than an hour, was composed as follows:—First came two men with their faces blacked, one of them with a birch broom in his hand, and a large artificial hump on his back; the other dressed as a woman, all in rags and tatters, with a large straw bonnet on, and carrying a ladle; these are called “Mad Moll and her husband;” next came two men, one most fantastically dressed with ribbons, and a great variety of gaudy-coloured silk handkerchiefs tied round his arms, from the shoulders to the wrists, and down his thighs and legs to the ancles; he carried a drawn sword in his hand; leaning upon his arm was a youth dressed as a fine lady in white muslin, and profusely bedecked from top to toe with gay ribbons—these were called the “Lord and Lady” of the company; after these followed six or seven couples more, attired much in the same style as the lord and lady, only the men were without the swords. When this group received a satisfactory contribution at any house the music struck up from a violin, clarionet, and fife, accompanied by the long drum, and they began the merry dance. While the dancers were merrily footing it the principal amusement to the populace was caused by the grimaces and clownish tricks of Mad Moll and her husband. When the circle of spectators became so contracted as to interrupt the dancers, then Mad Moll’s husband went to work with his broom, and swept the road-dust, all round the circle, into the faces of the crowd, and when any pretended affronts were offered to his wife, he pursued the offenders, broom in hand; if he could not overtake them, whether they were males or females, he flung his broom at them. These flights and pursuits caused an abundance of merriment.

The *Mayer's Song* is a composition, or rather a medley of great antiquity, and is as follows:—

"Remember us poor mayers all.
And thus do we begin
To lead our lives in righteousness,
Or else we die in sin.

We have been rambling all this night,
And almost all this day,
And now returned back again
We have brought you a branch of May.

A branch of May we have brought you,
And at your door it stands,
It is but a sprout, but it's well budded out
By the work of our Lord's hands.

The hedges and trees they are so green,
As green as any leek,
Our Heavenly Father, he watered them
With his heavenly dew so sweet.

The heavenly gates are open wide,
Our paths are beaten plain,
And if a man be not too far gone,
He may return again.

The life of man is but a span,
It flourishes like a flower;
We are here to day, and gone to-morrow,
And are dead in an hour.

The moon shines bright, and the stars give a light
A little before it is day.
So God bless you all, both great and small,
And send you a joyful May."

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

In the village of Glatton, May-day is observed by the election of Queen of the May, and the making of the garland.

The garland is of a pyramidal shape, and in this respect resembles the old milk-maid's garland; it is composed of crown-imperials, tulips, anemones, cowslips, kingcups, daffodils, meadow-orchis, wallflowers, primroses, lilacs, laburnums, and as many roses and bright flowers as the season may have produced. These, with the addition of green boughs, are made into a huge pyramidal nosegay, from the front of which a gaily-dressed doll stares vacantly at her admirers. This doll is intended to represent Flora. From the base of the nosegay hang ribbons, handkerchiefs, pieces of silk, and any other gay-coloured fabric that can be borrowed for the occasion. The garland is carried by the two maids of honour to the May queen who place their hands beneath the nosegay, and allow the gay-coloured streamers to fall towards the ground. The garland is thus some six feet high.

The following song was sung by "the Mayers" on May-day, 1865, in the village of Denton and Chaldecote, when they went round with their "garland":—

"Here comes us poor Mayers all,
And thus do we begin
To lead our lives in righteousness,
For fear we should die in sin.

To die in sin is a dreadful thing,
To die in sin for nought;
It would have been better for us poor souls
If we had never been born.

Good morning, lords and ladies,
It is the first of May;

I hope you'll view the garland,
For it looks so very gay.

The cuckoo sings in April,
The cuckoo sings in May,
The cuckoo sings in June,
In July she flies away.

Now take a Bible in your hand,
And read a chapter through;
And when the day of judgment comes
The Lord will think of you."—

N. & Q. 3rd S. vol. vii. p. 373.

It is the custom at Warboys for certain of the poor of the parish to be allowed to go into Warboys Wood on May-day morning for the purpose of gathering and taking away bundles of sticks. It may possibly be a relic of the old custom of going to a wood in the early morning of May-day for the purpose of gathering May-dew.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. xii. p. 42.

KENT.

Sir Dudley Diggs, by his will, dated 1638, left the yearly sum of £20 to be paid to two young men and two maids, who on May 19th yearly should run a tye at Old Wives Lees in Chilham and prevail; the money to be paid out of the profits of the land of this part of the manor of Selgrave, which escheated to him after the death of Lady Clive. These lands, being in three pieces, lie in the parishes of Preston and Faversham, and contain about forty acres, all commonly called the *Running Lands*. Two young men and two young maids run at Old Wives Lees in Chilham yearly on May 1st, and the same number at Sheldwich Lees on the Monday following, by way of trial; and the two

who prevail at each of those places run for the £10 at *Old Wives Lees* as above mentioned on May 19th.—Hasted, *History of Kent*, vol ii. p. 787.

At Sevenoaks the children carry their tasteful boughs and garlands from door to door. The boughs consist of a bunch of greenery and wild flowers tied at the end of a stick, which is carried perpendicularly. The garlands are formed of two hoops interlaced cross-wise, and covered with blue and yellow flowers from the woods and hedges. Sometimes the garlands are fastened at the end of a stick carried perpendicularly, and sometimes hanging from the centre of a stick borne horizontally by two children. Either way the effect is pleasing, and fully worth the few pence which the appeal of "May-day, garland-day! please to remember the May-bough!" makes one contribute.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. iii. p. 424.

LANCASHIRE.

In most places it is customary for each driver of a team to decorate his horses with gaudy ribbons on May-day. In Liverpool and Birkenhead, however, where some thousands of men are employed as carters, this May-day dressing has grown into a most imposing institution. Every driver of a team in and around the docks appears to enter into rivalry with his neighbours, and the consequence is that most of the horses are gaily dressed and expensively decorated. The drivers put on their new suits, covered with white linen slops, and sport new whips in honour of the occasion. Some of the embellishments for the horses are of a most costly character; not a few are disposed in most admirable taste; and in several instances they amount to actual art-exhibitions, since the carts are filled with the

articles in which their owners deal. Real and artificial flowers are disposed in wreaths and other forms upon different parts of the harness, and brilliant velvet cloths, worked in silver and gold, are thrown over the loins of the horses; and if their owners are of sufficient standing to bear coats-of-arms, these are emblazoned upon the cloths, surrounded with many curious and artistic devices. Not only are the men interested in these displays, but wives and daughters, mistresses and servants, vie with each other as to who shall produce the most gorgeous exhibition. A few years ago the Corporation of Liverpool exhibited no fewer than one hundred and sixty-six horses in the procession, the first cart containing all the implements used by the scavenging department, most artistically arranged. The railway companies, the brewers, the spirit-merchants, and all the principal dock-carriers, &c., send their teams with samples of produce to swell the procession. After parading the principal streets, headed by bands of music and banners, the horses are taken home to their respective stables, and public drinks are given to the carters by the Corporation, the railway companies, and other extensive firms. The Mayor and other members of the Corporation attend these annual feasts, and after the repasts are ended the carters are usually addressed by some popular speaker, and much good advice is frequently given them.—Harland and Wilkinson, *Legends and Traditions of Lancashire*, 1873, p. 96.

In the *Life of Mrs. Pilkington* (*Gent. Mag.* 1754, vol. xxiv. p. 354) allusion seems made to this custom. The writer says, They took places in the waggon, and quitted London early on May-morning; and it being the custom in this month for the passengers to give the waggoner at every inn a ribbon to adorn his

team, she soon discovered the origin of the proverb, "as fine as a horse;" for before they got to the end of their journey the poor beasts were almost blinded by the tawdry party-coloured flowing honours of their heads.

In connection with this custom may be mentioned one practised at Gilmerton, in the parish of Liberton, county of Edinburgh. The carters have friendly societies for the purpose of supporting each other in old age or during ill-health, and with the view partly of securing a day's recreation, and partly of recruiting their numbers and funds, they have an annual procession. Every man decorates his cart, horse, and ribbons, and a regular procession is made, accompanied by a band of music. To crown all there is an uncouth uproarious race with cart-horses on the public road, which draws forth a crowd of Edinburgh idlers, and all ends in a dinner, for which a fixed sum is paid.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1845, vol. i. p. 12.

The maypole of Lostock, a village near Bolton, in Lancashire, is probably the most ancient on record. It is mentioned in a charter by which the town of West Halton was granted to the Abbey of Cockersand, about the reign of King John. The pole, it appears, superseded a cross, and formed one of the landmarks which defined the boundaries, and must therefore have been a permanent and not an annual erection. The words of the charter are, "De Lostockmepull, ubi crux sita fuit recta linea in austro, usque ad crucem-super-le-Tunge."—Dugd., *Monast. Anglic.* 1830, vol. vi. p. ii. n. ii. p. 906; *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 238.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

Formerly it was customary in some parts of this county to change servants on May-day.—*Time's*

Telescope, 1823, p. 118.

A peculiar rustic ceremony used annually to be observed at Horncastle towards the close of the last century. On the morning of May-day, when the young people of the neighbourhood assembled to partake in the amusements which ushered in the festival of the month, a train of youths collected themselves at a place called the *May-bank*. From thence with wands enwreathed with cowslips, they walked in procession to the maypole, situated to the west end of the town, and adorned on that morning with every variety in the gifts of Flora. Here, uniting in the wild joy of young enthusiasm, they struck together their wands, and, scattering around the cowslips, testified their thankfulness for that bounty which, widely diffusing its riches, enabled them to return home rejoicing at the promises of the opening year.—Weir, *Sketches of Horncastle*.

Dr. Stukeley, in his *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1724, p. 29), alluding to this custom, says there is a maypole hill near Horncastle, where probably stood an Hermes in Roman times. The boys annually keep up the festival of the *Floralia* on May-day, making a procession to this hill with May-gads (as they call them) in their hands. This is a white willow wand, the bark peeled off, tied round with cowslips. At night they have a bonfire, and other merriment, which is really a sacrifice or religious festival.

Isle of Man.

May Day is ushered in with blowing of horns on the mountains, and with a ceremony which, says Waldron, has something in the design of it pretty enough. In almost all the great parishes they choose from among the daughters of the most wealthy

farmers a young maid for the *Queen of May*. She is dressed in the gayest and best manner they can, and is attended by about twenty others, who are called maids of honour. She has also a young man, who is her captain, and has under his command a good number of inferior officers. In opposition to her is the Queen of Winter, who is a man dressed in woman's clothes, with woollen hood, fur-tippets, and loaded with the warmest and heaviest habits one upon another. In the same manner are those, who represent her attendants, drest; nor is she without a captain and troop for her defence. Both being equipt as proper emblems of the Beauty of the Spring and the Deformity of the Winter, they set forth from their respective quarters, the one preceded by violins and flutes, the other with the rough music of the tongs and the cleavers. Both parties march till they meet on a common, and then their trains engage in a mock battle. If the Queen of the Winter's forces get the better, so as to take the Queen of May prisoner, she is ransomed for as much as pays the expenses of the day. After this ceremony Winter and her company retire, and divert themselves in a barn, and the others remain on the green, where, having danced a considerable time, they conclude the evening with a feast, the queen at one table with her maids, the captain with his troop at another. There are seldom less than fifty or sixty at each board.

For the seizure of her Majesty's person that of one of her slippers was substituted more recently, which was in like manner ransomed to defray the expenses of the pageant. The procession of the *Summer*—which was subsequently composed of little girls, and called the

Maceboard[47]

—outlived that of its rival, the *Winter*, some years,

and now, like many other remnants of antiquity, has fallen into disuse.—Train, *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 118; Waldron, *Description of the Isle of Man*, p. 154.

[47] The *maceboard* (probably a corruption of May sports) went from door to door inquiring if the inmates would buy the queen's favour, which was composed of a small piece of ribbon.

MIDDLESEX.

London boasted several maypoles before the days of Puritanism. Many parishes vied with each other in the height and adornment of their own. One famed pole stood in Basing Lane, near St. Paul's Cathedral, and was in the time of Stow kept in the hostelry called Gerard's Hall. "In the high-roofed hall of this house," says he, "sometime stood a large fir pole, which reached to the roof thereof—a pole of forty feet long and fifteen inches about, fabled to be the justing staff of Gerard the Giant." A carved wooden figure of this giant, pole in hand, stood over the gate of this old inn until March 1852, when the whole building was demolished for city improvements.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 576. See *Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 612.

A maypole was annually erected on May-day morning in Leadenhall Street, then called Cornhill, before the south door of the church known as that of St. Andrew the Apostle; and, in order to distinguish this church from others dedicated to the same saint, it was termed in consequence St. Andrew's-Under-Shaft.[48]

On the 1st May, 1517 (9th of Henry VIII.), a violent tumult occurred in the city, and this pole was not raised

afterwards.[49]
The inhabitants had long regarded with much jealousy the numerous foreigners who about that time took up their abode in
London[50]
and practised various trades, to the great injury, as was then thought, of the citizens, and on the 28th of April a quarrel took place between some of the London apprentices—at that time a powerful body—and two or three foreigners whom they met in the street, when blows were exchanged. This disturbance, however, was quickly quelled, but a rumour suddenly became general, although none knew on what grounds, that on the ensuing May-day, taking advantage of the sports and pastimes which were expected, all foreigners then in the city would be slain. In consequence of this various precautions were adopted by the authorities with a view to prevent if possible any contemplated outrage, and all men were commanded to stay in their houses. Notwithstanding this injunction, on the evening before May-day two striplings were found in Cheapside "playing at the bucklers," and having been commanded to desist, the cry of "'Prentices, 'prentices, bats and clubs!" the usual gathering words at that period, was heard through the streets, and many hundreds of persons, armed with clubs and other weapons, assembled from all quarters, broke open the prisons, destroyed many houses occupied by foreigners, and committed other excesses. After some exertions on the part of the city
authorities,[51]
nearly three hundred of the rioters were captured. A commission was appointed to inquire into the insurrection, and a great number of the prisoners were condemned to die, but with the exception of

one John Lincolne, who was hung, they were all ultimately pardoned. After this circumstance, which acquired for the day on which it happened the title of “Evil May-day,” and induced those in power to discountenance sports which led to large congregations, the Cornhill shaft was hung on a range of hooks under the
“pentises[52]
” of a neighbouring row of houses, where it remained till 1549. In that year, one Sir Stephen, curate of St. Catherine Cree, in a sermon which he preached at Paul’s Cross, persuaded the people that this pole had been made into an idol by naming the church of St. Andrew with the addition of Under that Shaft; and so worked upon them, that in the afternoon of the same day, “after they had dined,” the inhabitants with great labour raised the pole off the hooks on which it had rested thirty-two years, and each man sawing off for himself a piece equal to the length of his house, it was quickly demolished and burned.—Godwin and Britton, *Churches of London*, 1839; Brayley, *Londiniana*, 1829, vol. iii. p. 223; Hall’s *Chronicle*, 1517.

[48] This pole, when it was fixed in the ground, was higher than the church steeple; and it is to this that Chaucer the poet refers when he says, speaking of a vain boaster, that he bears his head “as he would bear the great shaft of Cornhill.”—Stow’s *Survey*, B. ii. p. 65; Godwin and Britton, *Churches of London*, 1839.

[49] Pennant, *London* (5th edition, p. 587), says this shaft gave rise to the insurrection. Godwin and Britton deny this was the case.

[50] Hall, in his *Chronicle*, says these foreigners “compassed the citie rounde aboute, in Southwarke, in Westminster, Temple Barre, Holborne, Sayncte Martynes, Sayncte John’s

Strete, Algate, Toure Hyll, and Sainct Katherines."

[51] Cholmondeley, constable of the Tower, discharged some guns into the streets, while the Earls of Shrewsbury and Surrey, collecting the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, restrained the violence of the populace.—Lyttleton, *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 167.

[52] Of the pent-house, or shelving roof projecting from the main wall, by which the shops at that period were ordinarily protected, many examples, Godwin and Britton say, existed in their time.

Brayley in his *Londiniana* (vol. iv. p. 318) says, nearly opposite to Craven Buildings is a low public-house, bearing the sign of the *Cock and Pye* (a contraction for the Cock and Magpye), which two centuries ago was almost the only dwelling in the eastern part of Drury Lane, except the mansion of the Drewries. Hither the youths and maidens of the metropolis, who, in social revelry on May-day threaded the jocund dance around the maypole in the Strand, were accustomed to resort for cakes and ale and other refreshments.

May Fair.

—This saturnalia was held by a grant of the Abbot of Westminster, "with revelry for fourteen days." It took place annually, commencing on the first of May. The locality was anciently called Brook Field, the site of which is now covered with Curzon Street, Hertford Street, and Chesterfield House. Frequent allusions to the fair are found in plays and pamphlets of Charles II.'s time, and hand-bills and advertisements of the reign of James II. and his successors are in existence.

May Fair was granted by James II., in the fourth year of his reign, to Sir John Coell and his heirs for ever, in trust for Henry Lord Dover, and his heirs for

ever. Before 1704 the ground became much built upon, as we learn from the old rate-books, and in November 1708 the gentlemen of the grand jury for the county of Middlesex and the city of Westminster made presentment of the fair, in terms of abhorrence, as a "vile and riotous assembly." The Queen listened to a petition from the bench of justices for Middlesex, and a royal proclamation, dated April 28th, 1709, prohibiting the fair (at least as far as the amusements were concerned), was the result. It was, however, soon revived "as of old," and, we are told, was much patronised "by the nobility and gentry." It had also its attractions for the ruder class of holiday-makers, as we learn from the following copy of a hand-bill formerly in the Upcott Collection, dated 1748:

"*May Fair.*—At the Ducking Pond on Monday next, the 27th inst., Mr. Hooton's dog Nero (ten years old, with hardly a tooth in his head to hold a duck, but well known for his goodness to all that have seen him hunt), hunts six ducks for a guinea against the bitch called the Flying Spaniel, from the Ducking Pond on the other side of the water, which has beat all she has hunted against, excepting Mr. Hooton's Good Blood. To begin at two o'clock.

"Mr. Hooton begs his customers won't take it amiss to pay twopence admittance at the gate, and take a ticket, which will be allowed as cash in their reckoning; no person admitted without a ticket, that such as are not liked may be kept out.

"*Note*—Right Lincoln ale."

Mr. Morley, in his *History of Bartholomew Fair* (1859, p. 103), after noticing the presentment of the grand jury in 1708 and the prohibition of May Fair, tells us that the fair was revived, and "finally abolished in the reign of George II. after a peace-

officer had been killed in the attempt to quell a riot." The statement, however, of the fair having been finally abolished in the reign of George II. is perfectly gratuitous on the part of the historian of "Bartlemy," as it existed until near the end of another reign. Carter the antiquary wrote an account of it in 1816, and he says that a few years previously it was much in the same state as it had been for fifty years. This description, full of curious interest, was communicated to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1816 (vol. lxxxvi. p. 228). It has been reprinted in Hone's *Every Day Book*, 1826, vol. i. p. 572; See Soane's *New Curiosities of Literature*, 1867, vol i. p. 250, &c.; *N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. x. p. 358.

Northamptonshire.

On the morning of May-day the girls from the neighbouring villages of Kingsthorpe, &c., bring into Northampton their garlands, which they exhibit from house to house (to show, as the inhabitants say, what flowers are in season), and usually receive a trifle from each house.

The skeleton of the garland is formed of two hoops of osier or hazel crossing each other at right angles, affixed to a staff about five feet long, by which it is carried; the hoops are twined with flowers and ribbons so that no part of them is visible. In the centre is placed one, two, or three dolls, according to the size of the garland and the means of the youthful exhibitors. Great emulation is excited amongst them, and they vie with each other in collecting the choicest flowers, and adorning the dolls in the gayest attire; ribbon streamers of the varied colours of the rainbow, the lacemakers adding their spangled bobbins, decorate the whole. The garlands are

carried from house to house concealed from view by a large pocket-handkerchief, and in some villages it is customary to inquire if the inmates would like to see the Queen of the May.

Wherever the young people receive a satisfactory contribution they chant their simple ditties, which conclude with wishing the inhabitants of the house "a joyful May," or "a merry month of May." The verses sung by the Dallington children are entirely different from those of any other village, and are here
subjoined:—

"The flowers are blooming everywhere,
O'er every hill and dale;
And oh! how beautiful they are,
How sweetly do they smell!

Go forth, my child, and laugh and play,
And let your cheerful voice,
With birds, and brooks, and merry May,
Cry out, Rejoice! rejoice!"

When the Mayers have collected all the money they can obtain, they return to their homes, and regale themselves, concluding the day with a merry dance round the garland.—*Every Day Book*, 1826, vol. ii. p. 615; *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, 1854, vol. ii. p. 421.

Clare, "the Peasant Poet" of Northampton, in one of his MS. ballads, describes the manner in which May-day is observed in his native village, Helpstone, near Peterborough, and the neighbourhood. His delightful ballad is printed by Miss Baker in her work already quoted (vol. ii. p. 423).

"How beautiful May and its morning comes in!
The songs of the maidens, you hear them begin

To sing the old ballads while cowslips they pull,
While the dew of the morning fills many pipes full.

The closes are spangled with cowslips like gold,
Girls cram in their aprons what baskets can't hold;
And still gather on to the heat of the day,
Till force often throws the last handful away.

Then beneath an old hawthorn they sit, one and all,
And make the May-garlands, and round *cuck* a ball
Of cowslips and blossoms so showy and sweet,
And laugh when they think of the swains they shall
meet.

Then to finish the garland they trudge away home,
And beg from each garden the flowers then in bloom;
Then beneath the old eldern, beside the old wall,
They set out to make it, maid, misses and all.

The ribbons the ploughmen bought maids at the fair
Are sure to be seen in a garland so fair;
And dolls from the children they dress up and take,
While children laugh loud at the show they will
make.

Then they take round the garland to show at each
door,
With kerchief to hide the fine flowers cover'd o'er;
At cottages also, when willing to pay,
The maidens their much-admired garland display.

Then at
duck-under-water[53]
adown the long road
They run with their dresses all flying abroad;
And ribbons all colours, how sweet they appear!
May seems to begin the life of the year.

Then the garland on ropes is hung high over all,
One end to a tree, and one hooked to a wall;
When they *cuck* the ball over till day is nigh gone,

And then tea and cakes and the dancing comes on.

And then, lawk! what laughing and dancing is there,
While the fiddler makes faces within the arm-chair;
And then comes the
cushion,[54]
the girls they all shriek,
And fly to the door from the old fiddler's squeak.

But the doors they are fastened, so all must kneel down,
And take the rude kiss from the unmannerly clown.
Thus the May games are ended, to their houses they roam,
With the sweetheart she chooses each maiden goes home."

[53] Duck-under-the-water. A game in which the players run, two and two, in rapid succession, under a handkerchief held up aloft by two persons standing apart with extended arms. Formerly in this northern part of Northamptonshire even married women on May-day played at this game under the garland, which was extended from chimney to chimney across the village street.—*Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, 1854, vol. i. p. 204.

[54] The cushion dance appears to be of some antiquity: it is thus mentioned by Selden in his *Table Talk*, under "King of England":—"The court of England is much altered. At a solemn dancing, first you have the great measures, then the Corrantoes and the Galliards, and this is kept up with ceremony; at length to French-more [Frenchmore] and the cushion dance, and then all the company dance—lord and groom, lady and kitchen maid, no distinction. So in our court in Queen Elizabeth's time gravity and state were kept up. In King James' time things were very pretty well. But in King Charles' time there was nothing but Frenchmore and the cushion-dance,

omnium gatherum, tolly polly, hoite come toite." In Playford's *Dancing Master* (1698, p. 7) it is described as follows:—"This dance is begun by a single person (either man or woman), who, taking a cushion in hand, dances about the room, and at the end of the tune stops and sings, 'This dance it will no further go;' the musician answers, 'I pray you, good sir, why say you so?' *Man.* 'Because Jean Sanderson will not come to.' *Musician.* 'She must come to, and she shall come to, and she must whether she will or no.' Then he lays down the cushion before a woman, on which she kneels, and he kisses her, singing, 'Welcome, Joan Sanderson, welcome, welcome.' Then she rises, takes up the cushion, and both dance, singing, 'Prinkum prankum is a fine dance, and shall we go dance it once again?' Then making a stop, the woman sings as before, 'This dance it will no further go.' *Musician.* 'I pray you, madam, why say you so?' *Woman.* 'Because John Sanderson will not come to.' *Musician.* 'He must come to,' &c. (as before). And so she lays down the cushion before a man, who, kneeling upon it, salutes her, she singing 'Welcome, John Sanderson,' &c. Then he taking up the cushion, they dance round, singing as before, and thus they do till the whole company are taken into the ring. Then the cushion is laid before the first man, the woman singing 'This dance,' &c. (as before), only instead of 'not come to,' they sing, 'go fro;' and instead of 'Welcome, John Sanderson,' 'Farewell, farewell;' and so they go out one by one as they came in."

This dance was well known in Holland in the early part of the seventeenth century, and an interesting engraving of it may be seen in the 'Emblems of John de Brunnes,' Amst. 1624.—Nares' *Glossary* (Halliwell and Wright), 1859, vol. i. p. 219.

A native of Fotheringhay, Mr. W. C. Peach, relates

that he was formerly accustomed to go into the fields over-night and very early on May-day to gather cowslips, primroses, wood-anemones, blue bells, &c., to make the garlands. The garland, if possible, was hung in the centre of the street on a rope stretched from house to house. Then was made the trial of skill in tossing balls (small white leather ones) through the framework of the garland, to effect which was a triumph. Speaking of the May-bush (a large tree selected for being tall, straight, full of branches, and if possible flowers), Mr. W. C. Peach says, "I have been looking out for a pretty bush days before the time, and if hawthorn and in blossom, then it was glorious. I have seen them ten or twelve feet high, and many in circumference, and they required a stalwart arm to carry and put them into a hole in the ground before the front door, where they were wedged on each side so as to appear growing. Flowers were then thrown over the bush and around it, and strewn as well before the door. Pretty little branches of whitethorn, adorned with the best flowers procurable, were occasionally put up, unperceived by others if possible, against the bed-room of the favourite lass, to show the esteem in which she was held, and the girls accordingly were early on the alert to witness the respective favours allotted them. Elder, crab-tree, nettles, thistles, sloes, &c., marked the different degrees of respect in which some of them were held."—*Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, vol. ii. p. 427.

At Nassington they carry garlands about, and beg for money; in the evening they tie them across the street from chimney to chimney, and dance under them. Formerly married women used to amuse themselves by playing under them at the game of Duck-under-the-water.[55]

—*Ibid.* p. 428.

[55] See note on page 252.

At Nassington a curious pasture custom also takes place on May-day. There is a large tract of meadow-land lying on the side of the river Nen, which the inhabitants of the village have the right of pasturing cows upon.[56]

The pasture season commences on May-day, and on the evening preceding a rail is put across the entrance to the pasture, which the cows must leap to get into. Much rivalry takes place on this occasion. The lads watch through the night and the dawning of May-day, the lasses with their cows being ready at the proper moment to see which cow shall leap the rail first into the meadow, and the cow which does this is led round the village in the afternoon, her horns decorated with ribbons, &c. Degradation only awaits the hindmost cow, she has to carry elder, nettles, and thistles as her badge, and the lass who milks her has to bear the gibes and jeers of the villagers.—*Glossary, &c.*, p. 428.

[56] *Vide* Bridge's *Hist. of Co. of Northampton*, 1791, vol. ii. p. 468.

At Morton-Pinkeney the following song is sung by the children on May-morning:—

"I have a little purse in my pocket,
All fixed with a silver pin;
And all that it wants is a more little silver
To line it well within.
The clock strikes one, I must be gone,
Or else it will be day;
Good morning to you, my pretty fair maid,
I wish you the merriment of May."—

Ibid. p. 426.

At Polebrook, on the last few days of April, the Queen of May and her attendants gather what flowers they can from the surrounding meadows, and call at the houses of the principal inhabitants to beg flowers, the gift or the loan of ribbons, handkerchiefs, dolls, &c., with which to form their garland. This being arranged on hoops, the young maidens assemble on May-morning, and carry it round the village, preceded by a fiddler; and the following quaint song—very similar to the one used at Hitchin, and thought from its phraseology to have been written in the time of the Puritans—is sung by the Queen and her company at the different houses, and a gratuity is solicited.

"Remember us poor mayers all,
For now we do begin
To lead our lives in righteousness,
For fear we die in sin.

To die in sin is a serious thing,
To go where sinners mourn;
'Twould have been better for our poor souls
If we had ne'er been born.

Now we've been travelling all the night,
And best part of this day;
And now we're returning back again,
And have brought you a branch of May.

A branch of May, which looks so gay,
Before your door to stand;
'Tis but a sprout, but 'tis well spread out,
The work of our Lord's hand.

Arise, arise, you pretty fair maid,
Out of your drowsy dream,
And step into your dairy-house

For a sup of your sweet cream.

O, for a sup of your sweet cream,
Or a jug of your own beer;
And if we tarry in the town,
We'll call another year.

Now take the Bible in your hand,
And read a chapter through,
And when the day of judgment comes,
The Lord will think of you.

Repent, repent, ye wicked men,
Repent before you die;
There's no repentance in the grave,
When in the ground you lie.

But now my song is almost done,
I've got no more to say;
God bless you all, both great and small,
I wish you a joyful May."

The garland is afterwards suspended by ropes from the school-house to an opposite tree, and the mayers and other children amuse themselves by throwing balls over it. With the money collected tea and cakes are provided for the joyous party. The Queen of the May takes her seat at the head of the tea-table, under a bower composed of branches of may and blackthorn; a wreath of flowers is placed on her head, and she is hailed "Lady of the May." The attendants wait round her, the party of mayers seat themselves at a long table below, and the evening concludes with mirth and merriment.—*Glossary, &c.*, p. 424.

Northumberland

The young people of both sexes go out early in the

morning to gather the flowering thorn and the dew off the grass, which they bring home with music and acclamations; and having dressed a pole on the town-green with garlands, dance around it. A syllabub is also prepared for the May-feast, which is made of warm milk from the cow, sweet cakes, and wine; and a kind of divination is practised by fishing with a ladle for a wedding-ring which is dropped into it for the purpose of prognosticating who shall be first married.—Hutchinson, *Hist. of Northumberland*, 1778, vol. ii., Appendix, p. 14.

At Newcastle-upon-Tyne it was formerly usual on May-mornings for the young girls to sing these lines in the streets, at the same time gathering flowers:—

"Rise up, maidens, fie for shame!
For I've been four long miles from hame,
I've been gathering my garlands gay,
Rise up, fair maids, and take in your May!"—

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 219.

Nottinghamshire.

The May-day customs observed in this county are in many respects similar to those of other counties, but Nottinghamshire has the honour of being the parent of most of the happy sports which characterise this joyous period of the year, from the fact of most of the May-day games having had their origin in the world famous Robin Hood, whose existence and renown are so intimately connected with this district. His connection with "Merry Sherwood" and the Sheriff of Nottingham have been universal themes for centuries; and these and the "Miller of Mansfield" and the "Wise Men of Gotham"

have done more towards making this county famous than all the rest of the ballads and popular literature put together. Maypoles and morris-dances were formerly very general, and the characters of Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck, Maid Marian, and the Hobby-horse were well sustained. The maypoles were sometimes very elegantly ornamented, and surmounted by flags and streamers of various colours. One was not many years ago remaining by Hucknall Folkard, and at the top were portions of the ironwork and decorations still in being. The morris-dance was unquestionably one of the most popular of the many games incident to this season, and was very generally prevalent throughout this county, and many are the ballads dedicated to its observance. The following is of
1614:—

> "It was my hap of late by chance
> To meet a country morris-dance,
> When, chiefest of them all the foole
> Plaid with a ladle and a toole;
> When every younker shak't his hels,
> And fine Maid Marian with her smoile,
> Showed how a rascal plaid the voile,
> And when the hobby horse did wihy,
> Then all the wenches gave a tihy," &c.

May-day, although a day of general holiday and rejoicing, is nevertheless considered, as is the whole of the month, unlucky for marriage, and few are celebrated on this day; more weddings being hastened, so as to be over before this day, than postponed until June. This does not apply to divinations for future partners, for in some parts of the county it is usual to prepare a sweet mixture on the first of May, composed of new milk, cakes, wine, and spice, and for the assembled company to fish

with a ladle for a ring and a sixpence, which have been dropped into the bowl; the young man who gains the ring and the young woman the sixpence being supposed to be intended for each other.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.* 1853, vol. viii. p. 234.

OXFORDSHIRE.

Previous to the Reformation a requiem mass is said to have been performed every May-morning at an early hour on the top of Magdalen tower, Oxford, for the repose of the soul of Henry VII., who had honoured that college with a visit in 1486-7. The choristers continue to execute in the same place, at five o'clock in the morning of the same day, certain pieces of choir-music, for which service the rectory of Slimbridge in Gloucestershire pays the yearly sum of £10. The ceremony has encouraged the notion that Henry contributed to the erection of the tower, but his only recorded act of favour to the college is the confirmation of its claim to the rectory charged with the annual payment.

The following hymn is sung on the occasion of this ceremony:

"Te Deum Patrem colimus,
Te laudibus prosequimur,
Qui corpus cibo reficis
Cœlesti mentem gratia.

Te adoramus, O Jesu!
Te, Fili unigenite!
Te, qui non dedignatus es
Subire claustra Virginis.

Actus in crucem factus es,
Irato Deo victima;
Per te, Salvator unice,

Vitæ spes nobis rediit.

Tibi, æterne Spiritus,
Cujus afflatu peperit
Infantem Deum Maria,
Æternum benedicimus!

Triune Deus, hominum
Salutis Auctor optime,
Immensum hoc mysterium
Ovanti lingua canimus."

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*2nd S.* vii. p. 446) thinks this hymn was composed by Dr. Thomas Smith, a very learned fellow of Magdalen College, soon after the Restoration, and that it was not sung till about the middle of the last century.[57]

—Akerman, *History of Oxford*, vol. i. p. 251; Wade, *Walks in Oxford*, 1817, vol. i. p. 132.

[57] Whilst making some researches in the library of Christchurch, Oxford, Dr. Rimbault discovered what appeared to him to be the first draft of the hymn in question. It has the following note: —"This hymn is sung every day in Magdalen College Hall, Oxon, dinner and supper, throughout the year for the after-grace, by the chaplain, clerks, and choristers there. Composed by Dr. Benjamin Rogers, Doctor of Musicke, of the University of Oxon, 1685." It has been popularly supposed, says Dr. Rimbault, to be the Hymnus Eucharisticus, written by Dr. Nathaniel Ingelo, and sung at the civic feast at Guildhall on the 5th of July, 1660, while the King and the other exalted personages were at dinner; but this is a mistake, for the words of Ingelo's hymn, very different from the Magdalen hymn, still exist, and are to be found in Wood's Collection in the Ashmolean Museum.

Dr. Rimbault, in a communication to the *Illustrated London News* (May 17th, 1856), speaking of this custom, says:—In the year of our Lord God 1501, the "most Christian" King Henry VII. gave to St. Mary Magdalen College the advowsons of the churches of Slimbridge, county of Gloucester, and Fyndon, county of Sussex, together with one acre of land in each parish. In gratitude for this benefaction, the college was accustomed, during the lifetime of their royal benefactor, to celebrate a service in honour of the Holy Trinity, with the collect still used on Trinity Sunday, and the prayer, "Almighty and everlasting God, we are taught by Thy Holy Word that the hearts of kings," &c.; and after the death of the king to commemorate him in the usual manner. The commemoration service ordered in the time of Queen Elizabeth is still performed on the 1st of May, and the Latin hymn in honour of the Holy Trinity, which continues to be sung on the tower at sun-rising, has evidently reference to the original service. The produce of the two acres above mentioned used to be distributed on the same day between the President and Fellows; it has however for many years been given up to supply the choristers with a festal entertainment in the college-hall.

It was also the custom at Oxford a generation ago for little boys to blow horns about the streets early on May-day, which they did for the purpose of "calling up the old maids." "I asked an aged inhabitant," says a correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*4th S.* vol. vii. p. 430), "how long the horn-blowing had ceased, and he replied, ever since the Reform Bill came in; but that he remembered the time when the workhouse children were let out for May-day early in the morning with their horns and garlands, and a worthy alderman whom he named always kept open

house on that day, and gave them a good dinner." "Calling up the old maids" no doubt refers to the practice of calling up the maids, whether old or young, to go a-maying. Hearne, in his preface to Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, alluding to the custom (p. 18) says:—"'Tis no wonder, therefore, that upon the jollities on the first day of May formerly the custom of blowing with, and drinking in, horns so much prevailed, which, though it be now generally disused, yet the custom of blowing them prevails at this season, even to this day at Oxford, to remind people of the pleasantness of that part of the year, which ought to create mirth and gayety."

Aubrey has this memorandum in his *Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme* (MS. Lansd. 266, p. 5):—At Oxford the boys do blow cows' horns and hollow canes all night; and on May-day the young maids of every parish carry about garlands of flowers, which afterwards they hang up in their churches.

At Combe, in the same county, troops of little girls dressed up fantastically parade the village, carrying sticks, to the top of which are tied bunches of flowers, and singing the following
song:—

"Gentlemen and ladies,
We wish you a happy May;
We've come to show our garlands,
Because it is May-day."

The same verse, substantially, is the May-day song at Wootton, an adjoining parish. The last two of the four lines are sometimes as follow:—

"Come, kiss my face, and smell my mace,
And give the lord and lady something."

N. & Q. 3rd S. vol. vii. p. 425.

At Headington, about two miles from Oxford, the children gather garlands from house to house. Each garland is formed of a hoop for a rim, with two half hoops attached to it and crossed above, much in the shape of a crown; each member is adorned with flowers, and the top surmounted by a crown imperial or other showy bunch of flowers. Each garland is attended by four children, two girls dressed in all their best, who carry the garland, supported betwixt them by a stick passed through it between the arches. These are followed by the "lord and lady," a boy and girl, who go from house to house and sing the same song as is sung at Combe. In the village are upwards of a dozen of these garlands, with their "lords and ladies," which give to the place the most gay and animated appearance.—*Literary Gazette*, May 1847.

At Islip the children, carrying May-garlands, go about in little groups, singing the following carol:—

"Good morning, mi-sus and master,
I wish you a happy day;

Please to smell my garland,
Because it is the first of May."

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 219.

SHROPSHIRE.

It has been usual for the people in this neighbourhood to assemble on the Wrekin hill on the Sunday after May-day, and the three successive Sundays, to drink a health "to all friends round the Wrekin;" but as on this annual festival various scenes of drunkenness and licentiousness were frequently exhibited, its celebration has of late been very properly discouraged by the magistracy, and is going deservedly to decay.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 599.

SOMERSETSHIRE.

At Minehead May-day is observed by the celebration of a custom called "Hobby-horsing." A number of young men, mostly fishermen and sailors, having previously made some grotesque figures of light stuff, rudely resembling men and horses with long tails, sufficiently large to cover and disguise the persons who are to carry them, assemble together and perambulate the town and neighbourhood, performing a variety of antics, to the great amusement of the children and young persons. They never fail to pay a visit to Dunster Castle, where, after having been hospitably regaled with strong beer and victuals, they always receive a present in money. Many other persons, inhabitants of the places they visit, give them small sums, and such persons as they meet are also asked to contribute a trifle; if they are refused, the person of the refuser is subjected to

the ceremony of booting or pursuing. This is done by some of the attendants holding his person while one of the figures inflicts ten slight blows on him with the top of a boot, he is then liberated, and all parties give three huzzas. The most trifling sum buys off this ceremony, and it is seldom or never performed but on those who purposely throw themselves in their way, and join the party, or obstruct them in their vagaries. This custom probably owes its origin to some ancient practice of perambulating the boundaries of the parish.—Savage, *History of Carthampton*, p. 583.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

At Uttoxeter groups of children carry garlands of flowers about the town. The garlands consist of two hoops, one passing through the other, which give the appearance of four half circles, and they are decorated with flowers and evergreens and surmounted with a bunch of flowers as a sort of crown, and in the centre of the hoops is a pendent orange and flowers. Mostly one or more of the children carry a little pole or stick, with a collection of flowers tied together at one end, and carried vertically, and the children themselves are adorned with ribbons and flowers. Thus they go from house to house, which they are encouraged to do by the pence they obtain.—Redfern, *History of Uttoxeter*, 1865, p. 262.

SUFFOLK.

Formerly in this county it was the custom in most farm-houses for any servant who could bring in a branch of hawthorn in full blossom to receive a dish

of cream for breakfast. To this practice the following rhyme apparently
alludes:—

"This is the day,
And here is our May,
The finest ever seen,
It is fit for the queen;
So pray, ma'am, give us a cup of your cream"—

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 229.

SURREY.

In the parish of St. Thomas, Southwark, says Allen (*History of Surrey and Sussex*, 1829, vol. i. p. 261), there was an ancient custom for the principal inhabitants to meet and dine together annually on the first of May. This was called the "May-feast." The gentleman who presided on the occasion was called the steward. At the meeting in 1698, Mr. John Panther, being in that office, proposed to make a collection for binding out as apprentices the children of poor persons having a legal settlement. This was readily acceded to, and it was resolved that the minister of the parish, and such gentlemen as had served the office of steward, and should afterwards serve it, should be governors. This excellent plan has been followed ever since: the members for the borough are always invited to the feast, and a liberal collection is made. By means of donations and good management on the part of the governors a considerable sum has been invested in the public funds. These boys are apprenticed annually, and if so many are not found in St Thomas's parish, the stewards in rotation may each appoint one from any other parish.—Brayley, *History of Surrey*, 1841, vol.

v. p. 399.

SUSSEX.

In very early times May-day was celebrated with great spirit in the town of Rye; young people going out at sunrise and returning with large boughs and branches of trees, with which they adorned the fronts of the houses. About three hundred years ago the Corporation possessed certain woodlands, called the common woods, whither the people used to go and cut the boughs, until at length they did so much damage that the practice was prohibited. A few years ago here and there a solitary may-bough graced a house, but they have now ceased to appear altogether. A garland or two carried by little children, and the chimney-sweepers in their ivy-leaves, representing "Jack of May," are the only relics of these May-day sports, so characteristic of merry England in former times.—Holloway, *Hist. of Rye*, 1847, p. 608.

WESTMORELAND.

At a village called Temple Sowerby it is customary for a number of persons to assemble together on the green, and there propose a certain number as candidates for contesting the various prizes then produced, which consist of a grindstone as the head prize; a hone, or whetstone for a razor, as the second; and whetstones of an inferior description for those who can only reach a state of mediocrity in "the noble art of lying!" The people are the judges. Each candidate in rotation commences a story such as his fertile genius at the moment prompts, and the more marvellous and improbable his story happens

to be, so much the greater chance is there of his success. After being amused in this manner for a considerable length of time, and awarding the prizes to the most deserving, the host of candidates, judges, and other attendants adjourn to the inns, where the sports of the day very often end in a few splendid battles.—*Every Day Book*, vol ii. p. 599.

In this county it is the practice, every May-morning, to make folks May-goslings,[58] a practice similar to that on the first of April. This custom prevails till twelve o'clock at noon, after which time none carry on the sport. On this day, too, ploughmen and others decorate themselves with garlands and flowers, and parade through different towns for their annual collection, which they spend in the evening with their sweethearts at the maypole. —*Time's Telescope*, 1829, p. 176.

[58] See page 233.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

The dance round the Maypole is kept up, says Cuthbert Bede (*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. x. p. 92), at the village of Clent, near Hagley.

WALES.

About a fortnight previous to May-day the question among the lads and lasses is, "Who will turn out to dance in the summer this year?" From that time the names of the performers are buzzed in the village, and rumour proclaims them throughout the surrounding neighbourhood. Nor is it asked with less interest, "Who will carry the garland?" and "Who will be the Cadi?" About nine days or a week

previous to the festival a collection is made of the gayest ribbons that can be procured. During this time, too, the chosen garland-bearer is busily employed. Accompanied by one from among the intended dancers who is best known among the farmers for good conduct, they go from house to house throughout their parish, begging the loan of watches, silver spoons, and other utensils of this metal, and those who are satisfied with the parties, and have a regard for the celebration of this ancient day, comply with their solicitation. When May-day morn arrives the group of dancers assemble at the village tavern. From thence (when permission can be obtained from the clergyman of the parish) the procession sets forth, accompanied by the ringing of bells. The arrangement and march are settled by the Cadi, who is always the most active person in the company, and is, by virtue of his office, the chief marshal, orator, buffoon, and money-collector. He is always arrayed in comic attire, generally in a partial dress of both sexes, a coat and waistcoat being used for the upper part of the body, and for the lower petticoats somewhat resembling Moll Flagon, in the "Lord of the Manor." His countenance is also distinguished by a hideous mask, or is blackened entirely over, and then the lips, cheeks, and orbits of the eyes are sometimes painted red. The number of the rest of the party, including the garland-bearer, is generally thirteen, and with the exception of the varied taste in the decoration of their shirts with ribbons, their costume is similar. It consists of clothing entirely new, made of a light texture for dancing. White decorated shirts, are worn over the rest of their clothing; the remainder of the dress is black velveteen breeches, with knee-ties depending halfway down to the ancles, in contrast with yarn

hose of a light grey. The ornaments of the hats are large rosettes of varied colours, with streamers depending from them; wreaths of ribbon encircle the crown, and each of the dancers carries in his right hand a white pocket-handkerchief. The garland consists of a long staff or pole, to which is affixed a triangular or square frame, covered with strong white linen, on which the silver ornaments are fixed, and displayed with great taste. Silver spoons, &c. are placed in the shape of stars, squares, and circles. Between these are rows of watches, and at the top of the frame, opposite to the pole in its centre, the whole collection is crowned with the largest and most costly of the ornaments, generally a large silver cup or tankard. This garland, when completed on the eve of May-day, is left for the night at that farm-house from whence the dancers have received the most liberal loan of silver and plate for its decoration, or with that farmer who is distinguished in his neighbourhood as a good master, and liberal to the poor. Its deposit is a token of respect, and it is called for early on the following morning. The whole party being assembled, they march, headed by the Cadi. After him follows the garland-bearer, and then the fiddler, while the bells of the village merrily ring the signal of their departure. As the procession moves slowly along the Cadi varies his station, hovers about his party, brandishes a ladle, and assails every passenger for a customary and expected donation. When they arrive at a farm-house they take up their ground on the best station for dancing. In the meantime the buffoonery of the Cadi is exhibited without intermission. He assails the inmates of the house for money, and when this is obtained the procession moves off to the next farm-house. They do not confine the ramble of the day to

their own parish, but go from one to another, and to any county town in the vicinity. When they return to their resident village in the evening, the bells, ringing merrily, announce their arrival. The money collected during the day's excursion is appropriated to defray whatever expenses may have been incurred in the necessary preparations, and the remainder is spent in jovial festivity.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 562.

At Tenby, says Mason (*Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 22), it was customary for the possessors of a maypole to try and pull down those set up in other places. A watch was therefore set up round each.

SCOTLAND.

In some parts of Scotland, says Pennant, there is a rural sacrifice on May-day. A cross is cut on some sticks, each of which is dipped in pottage, and the Thursday before Easter one of these is placed over the sheep-cote, the stable, or the cow-house. On the first of May they are carried to the hill, where the rites are celebrated, all decked with wild flowers, and after the feast is over replaced over the spots they were taken from. This was originally styled *Clonau-Beltein*, or the split branch of the fir of the rock.—*Tour in Scotland*, 1790, vol. i. p. 206.

COUNTY OF EDINBURGH.

At Edinburgh about four o'clock in the morning there is an unusual stir; and a hurrying of gay throngs through the King's Park to Arthur's Seat to collect the May-dew. In the course of half an hour the entire hill is a moving mass of all sorts of people.

At the summit may be seen a company of bakers and other craftsmen, dressed in kilts, dancing round a maypole. On the more level part is usually an itinerant vendor of whisky, or mountain (not May) dew. These proceedings commence with the daybreak. About six o'clock the appearance of the gentry, toiling up the ascent, becomes the signal for servants to march home; for they know that they must have the house clean and everything in order earlier than usual on May-morning. About eight o'clock the fun is all over; and by nine or ten, were it not for the drunkards who are staggering towards the "gude town," no one would know that anything particular had taken place.—See *Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 609.

Fergusson the Scottish poet thus describes this custom:—

"On May-day in a fairy ring
We've seen them, round St. Anthon's spring,
Frae grass the caller dew-drops wring,
To wet their ein,
And water clear as crystal spring,
To synd them clean."

Formerly the magistrates of Canongate, Edinburgh, used to walk in procession to church upon the first Sunday after Beltane, carrying large nosegays. This observance was evidently a modified relic of the ancient festival of the sun; and the original meaning of the custom must have been an expression of gratitude to that luminary, deified under the name of Baal, for the first-fruits of his genial influence.—*Household Words*, 1859, vol. xix. p. 558.

THE HIGHLANDS.

On the first of May the herdsmen of every village hold their Beltein, a rural sacrifice. They cut a square trench on the ground, leaving the turf in the middle; on that they make a fire of wood, on which they dress a large caudle of eggs, butter, oatmeal, and milk; and bring, besides the ingredients of the caudle, plenty of beer and whisky, for each of the company must contribute something. The rites begin with spilling some of the caudle on the ground, by way of libation; on that every one takes a cake of oatmeal, upon which are raised nine square knobs, each dedicated to some particular being, the supposed preserver of their flocks and herds, or to some particular animal, the real destroyer of them: each person then turns his face to the fire, breaks off a knob, and flinging it over his shoulder, says, This I give to thee, preserve thou my horses; this to thee, preserve thou my sheep; and so on. After that they use the same ceremony to the noxious animals. This I give to thee, O fox! spare thou my lambs; this to thee, O hooded-crow! and this to thee, O eagle!

When the ceremony is over they dine on the caudle, and, after the feast is finished, what is left is hid by two persons deputed for that purpose; but on the next Sunday they re-assemble, and finish the reliques of the first entertainment.—Pennant's *Tour in Scotland*, 1790, vol. i. p. 112.

PERTHSHIRE.

In Sinclair's *Stat. Acc. of Scotland* (1794, vol. xi. p. 620) the Minister of Callander says:—Upon the first day of May all the boys in a township or hamlet meet on the moors. They cut a table in the green sod of a round figure, by casting a trench in the ground of such circumference as to hold the whole company.

They kindle a fire, and dress a repast of eggs and milk of the consistence of a custard. They knead a cake of oatmeal, which is toasted at the embers against a stone. After the custard is eaten up, they divide the cake into so many portions, as similar as possible to one another in size and shape, as there are persons in the company. They daub one of these portions all over with charcoal until it is perfectly black. They put the pieces of the cake into a bonnet. Every one blindfold draws out a portion; he who holds the bonnet is entitled to the last piece. Whoever draws the black piece is the devoted person who is to be sacrificed to Baal, whose favour they mean to implore in rendering the year productive of the sustenance of man and beasts. There is little doubt of these inhuman sacrifices having been once offered in this country as well as in the East, although they now omit the act of sacrificing, and only compel the *devoted* person to leap three times through the flames: with which the ceremonies of this festival are closed.—See *N. & Q. 1st. S.*, vol. viii. p. 281.

At Logierait the 1st of May, old style, is chiefly celebrated by the cowherds, who assemble by scores in the fields to dress a dinner for themselves of boiled milk and eggs. These dishes they eat with a sort of cakes baked for the occasion, and having small lumps raised all over the surface.—*Ibid.* vol. v. p. 84.

Western Isles of Scotland.

Martin, in his *Account of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1703, p. 7), speaking of the Isle of Lewis, says that the natives in the village Barvas retain an ancient custom of sending a man very early to cross

Barvas river every first day of May, to prevent any females crossing it first; for that they say would hinder the salmon from coming into the river all the year round. They pretend to have learned this from a foreign sailor, who was shipwrecked upon that coast a long time ago.

IRELAND.

In the south-eastern parts of Ireland (and no doubt all over the island) a custom used to prevail—perhaps so still—on May-day, when the young people of both sexes, and many old people too, collected in districts and localities, and selected the handsomest girl, of from eighteen to twenty-one years of age, as queen of the district for twelve months. She was then crowned with wild flowers; and feasting, dancing, and rural sports were closed by a grand procession in the evening. The duties of her majesty were by no means heavy, as she had only to preside over rural assemblies of young folks at dances and merrymakings, and had the utmost obedience paid to her by all classes of her subjects. If she got married before the next May-day her authority was at an end, but still she held office until that day, when her successor to the throne was chosen. If not married during her reign of twelve months, she was capable of being re-elected; but that seldom happened, as there was always found some candidate put forward by the young men of the district to dispute the crown the next year.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. iv. p. 229.

In Ireland, says Mr. Crofton Croker, May-day is called *La na Beal tina*, and May-eve *neen na Baal tina*, that is, the day and eve of Baal's fire, from its having been in ancient times consecrated to the god Beal, or

Belus; whence also the month of May is termed in Irish *Mi na Beal tine*. May-day is the favourite festival of the mummers. They consist of a number, varying according to circumstances, of the girls and young men of the village or neighborhood, usually selected for their good looks, or their proficiency—the females in the dance, the youths in hurling and other athletic exercises. They march in procession, two abreast, and in three divisions: the young men in the van and the rear, dressed in white or other gay-coloured jackets or vests, and decorated with ribbons on their hats and sleeves. The young women are dressed also in light-coloured garments, and two of them bear each a holly-bush, on which are hung several new hurling balls, the May-day present of the girls to the youths of the village. The bush is decorated with a profusion of long ribbons, or paper cut in imitation, which adds greatly to the gay and joyous, yet strictly rural, appearance of the whole. The procession is always preceded by music, sometimes of the bagpipe, but more commonly of a military fife, with the addition of a drum or tambourine. A clown is of course in attendance: he wears a frightful mask, and bears a long pole, with shreds of cloth nailed to the end of it, like a mop, which ever and anon he dips in a pool of water or puddle, and besprinkles such of the crowd as press upon his companions, much to the delight of the younger spectators. The mummers during the day parade the neighbouring villages, or go from one gentleman's seat to another, dancing before the mansion house, and receiving money. The evening of course terminates with drinking.—*Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825.

County Down.

On the first of May from time immemorial, until the year 1798, a large pole was planted in the market-place at Maghera, and a procession of May boys, leaded by a mock king and queen, paraded the neighbourhood, dressed in shirts over their clothes, and ornamented with ribbons of various colours. This practice was revived in 1813, and the May-boys collected about £17 at the different places where they called: this defrayed the expense of a public dinner next day. Circumstances, however, occurred soon after which induced one of the neighbouring magistrates to come into the town and cut down the pole, which had been planted in the market-place.—Mason, *Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1814, vol. i. p. 593.

County Dublin.

On the first day of May in Dublin and its vicinity it is customary for young men and boys to go a few miles out of town in the morning, for the purpose of cutting a *May-bush*. This is generally a white-thorn, of about four or five feet high, and they carry it to the street or place of their residence, in the centre of which they dig a hole, and having planted the bush, they go round to every house and collect money. They then buy a pound or more of candles, and fasten them to various parts of the tree or bush in such a manner as to avoid burning it. Another portion of "the collection" is expended in the purchase of a heap of turf sufficient for a large fire, and, if the funds will allow, an old tar-barrel. Formerly it was not considered complete without having a horse's skull and other bones to burn in the fire. The depôts for these bones were the tanners' yards in a part of the suburbs, called Kilmainham; and on May morning groups of boys drag loads of

bones to their several destinations. This practice gave rise to a threat, yet made use of—"I will drag you like a horse's head to the bone-fire." About dusk, when no more money can be collected, the bush is trimmed, the turf and bones are made ready to set on fire, the candles are all lighted, the bush fully illuminated, and the boys, giving three huzzas, begin to dance and jump round it. After an hour or so the heap of turf and bones is set fire to, and when the candles are burnt out the bush is taken up and thrown into the flames. They continue playing about until the fire is burnt out, each then returns to his home, and so ends their May-day.

About two or three miles from Dublin on the great Northern road is a village called Finglass. A high pole is decorated with garlands, and visitors come in from different parts of the country, and dance round it to whatever music chance may have conducted there. The best male and female dancers are chosen king and queen, and placed on chairs. When the dancing is over they are carried by some of the party to an adjacent public-house, where they regale themselves with ham, beef, whisky-punch, ale, cakes, and porter, after which they generally have a dance indoors, and then disperse. There is an old song relating to the above custom, beginning

"Ye lads and lasses all, to-day,
To Finglass let us haste away,
With hearts so light and dresses gay,
To dance around the maypole."—

Every Day Book, vol. ii. p. 595.

On May-day also, or on the preceding night, women put a stocking filled with yarrow under their pillow, and recite the following

lines:—

"Good morrow, good yarrow, good morrow to thee;
I hope 'gain [by] the morrow my lover to see,
And that he may be married to me;
The colour of his hair, and the clothes he does wear;
And if he be for me may his face be turned to me;
And if he be not, dark and surly he may be,
And his back be turned to me."—

N. & Q. 4th S. vol. iv. p. 505.

MAY 2.]
ST. HELEN'S DAY—ROWAN-TREE DAY.

YORKSHIRE.

From the following passage in Atkinson's *Cleveland Glossary* (p. 417), it would appear that this is known in that district as St. Helen's Day; although the feast, properly so called, is held on August 18th (which see). The transfer seems to have originated in the fact that the Invention (or Discovery) of the Cross was due to St. Helen, who was thus connected with the feast kept on May 3rd under that title.

At Cleveland, Yorkshire, the 2nd of May, St. Helen's Day, is Rowan-tree day, or Rowan-tree Witch-day, and on that day even yet with some the method of proceeding is for some member of the household or family to go the first thing in the morning, with no thought of any particular rowan-tree—rather, I believe, it might be said, till some rowan-tree is fallen in with of which no previous knowledge had been possessed by the seeker. From

this tree a supply of branches is taken, and (a different path homewards having been taken, by the strict observers, from that by which they went) on reaching home twigs are stuck over every door of every house in the homestead, and scrupulously left there until they fall out of themselves. A piece is also always borne about by many in their pockets or purses, as a prophylactic against witching. Not so very long since either the farmers used to have whipstocks of rowan-tree wood—rowan-tree-gads they were called,—and it was held that, thus supplied, they were safe against having their draught fixed, or their horses made restive by a witch. If ever a draught came to a standstill—there being in such cases no rowan-tree-gad in the driver's hands, of course—then the nearest witchwood-tree was resorted to, and a stick cut to flog the horses on with, to the discomfiture of the malevolent witch who had caused the stoppage.

SCOTLAND.

On May 2nd, the eve of the Invention of the Holy Cross, it is customary in Aberdeenshire to form crosses of twigs of the rowan-tree and to place them over the doors and windows as a protection against evil spirits.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. ii. p. 483.

MAY 3.]

THE HIGHLANDS.

Pennant, in his *Tour in Scotland* (1790, vol. i. p. 111) says that a Highlander never begins anything of

consequence on the day of the week on which the 3rd of May falls, which he styles *La Sheachanna na bleanagh*, or the dismal day.

MAY 8.]
APPARITION OF ST. MICHAEL.

CORNWALL.

The most remarkable observance of antiquity remaining in this county is the "Furry festival" which has been celebrated from time immemorial on the 8th of May. At Helston the day used to be ushered in very early in the morning by the music of drums and kettles, and other pleasant sounds, the accompaniments of a song:—

"Robin Hood and Little John,
They both are gone to the fair, O;
And we will to the merry greenwood,
To see what they do there, O.
And for to chase, O,
To chase the buck and doe
With Hal-an-tow,
Jolly rumble, O.

And we were up as soon as any day, O
And for to fetch the summer home,
The summer and the may, O,
For the summer is a come, O,
And winter is a go, O.
Where are those Spaniards
That make so great a boast, O?
They shall eat the grey goose-feather,

And we will eat the roast, O.
In every land, O,
The land that ere we go,
With Hal-an-tow, &c.,
And we were up, &c.

As for St. George, O,
St. George he was a knight, O,
Of all the kings in Christendom,
King George is the right, O.
In every land, O,
The land that ere we go
With Hal-an-tow, &c.

God bless Aunt Mary Moses,
With all her power and might, O;
And send us peace in merry England,
Both day and night, O."

It was a general holiday: so strict, indeed, used the observance of this jubilee to be held that if any person chanced to be found at work, he was instantly seized, set astride on a pole, and hurried on men's shoulders to the river, where he was sentenced to leap over a wide space, which if he failed in attempting he of course fell into the water. There was always, however, a ready compromise of compounding for a leap. About nine o'clock the revellers appeared before the grammar-school, and demanded a holiday for the school-boys, after which they collected money from house to house. They then used to *fadé* into the country (*fadé* being an old English word for to go), and about the middle of the day returned with flowers and oak-branches in their hats and caps, and spent the rest of the day until dusk in dancing through the streets to the sound of the fiddle, playing a particular tune; and threaded the houses as they chose—claiming a right to go through any person's house, in at one door and out

of the other. In the afternoon the ladies and gentlemen visited some farmhouse in the neighbourhood; whence, after regaling themselves with syllabubs, they returned, after the fashion of the vulgar, to the town, dancing as briskly the *fadé-dance*, and entering the houses as unceremoniously. In later times a select party only made their progress through the streets very late in the evening, and having quickly vanished from the scene, reappeared in the ballroom. Here meeting their friends, they went through the usual routine of dancing till supper; after which they all *faddéd* it out of the room, breaking off by degrees to their respective houses. At present this custom is fast falling into disuse, and the day is only celebrated by a few of the lower classes.

Murray, in his *Handbook for Cornwall*, 1865, p. 301, says that the furry festival is in commemoration of the following curious legend:—A block of granite, which for many years had lain in the yard of the Angel Inn, was in the year 1783 broken up and used as a part of the building materials for the assembly-room. This stone, says the legend, was originally placed at the mouth of hell, from which it was one day carried away by the devil as he issued forth in a frolicsome mood on an excursion into Cornwall. Here he traversed the country, playing with his pebble; but it chanced that St. Michael (who figures conspicuously in the town arms and is the patron saint of the town) crossed his path; a combat immediately ensued, and the devil, being worsted, dropped the *Hell's stone* in his flight; hence the name of the town.

There have been many opinions regarding the meaning and derivation of the word *furry*. Polwhele says (*History of Cornwall*, 1826, vol. ii. p. 41) that

furry is derived from *fer*, a fair: a derivation which seems probable from the expression in the *furry-song*. "*They both are gone to the fair, O*." Some think that the word in question is derived from the Greek φερω, to bear. The rites of the *furry* correspond most intimately with the ανθες φορεα, a Sicilian festival, so named απο τε φερειν ανθεα, or from *carrying flowers*, in commemoration of the rape of Proserpine, whom Pluto stole as she was gathering flowers —"herself a fairer flower!" Others derive the word *furry* from the Cornish *furrier*, a thief, from the green spoils they brought home from the woods.—See Potter's *Antiquities*, vol. i., and *Gent. Mag.* vol. lx. pp. 520, 873, 1100.

MAY 10.]

WHITSUNDAY.

In the Catholic times of England it was usual to dramatise the descent of the Holy Ghost, which this festival commemorates,—a custom we find alluded to in Barnaby Googe's translation of *Naogeorgus*:

> "On Whit-sunday whyte pigeons tame in strings from heaven flie,
> And one that framed is of wood still hangeth in the skie.
> Thou seest how they with idols play, and teach the people too;
> None otherwise than little gyrls with puppets used to do."

In an old *Computus*, anno 1509, of St. Patrick's, Dublin, we find iv$^{s.}$ vii$^{d.}$ paid to those playing with the great and little angel and the dragon; iii$^{s.}$ paid for

little cords employed about the Holy Ghost; iv$^{s.}$ vi$^{d.}$ for making the angel (*thurificantis*) censing, and ii$^{s.}$ ii$^{d.}$ for cords of it—all on the feast of Pentecost.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 685.

Whitsunday is observed as a *Scarlet Day* in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.—*Kalendar of the English Church*, 1865, p. 73.

The origin of the term Whitsunday has been warmly contested by various writers, and still seems to be an undecided question. For an interesting article on this subject, see *N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. i. pp. 401-403. Consult also *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ii. p. 154; *3rd S.* vol. vii. p. 479; *4th S.* vol. xi. p. 437. Dr. Neale's *Church Festivals and their Household Words.*—*The Prayer Book Interleaved* (Champion and Beaumont).

Whitsun Ale.

—Ale was so prevalent a drink amongst us in old times, as to become a part of the name of various festal meetings, as Leet-ale, Lamb-ale, Bride-ale (bridal), and, as we see, Whitsun-ale. It was the custom of our ancestors to have parochial meetings every Whitsuntide, usually in some barn near the church, consisting of a kind of picnic, as each parishioner brought what victuals he could spare. The ale, which had been brewed pretty strong for the occasion, was sold by the churchwardens, and from its profits a fund arose for the repair of the church.—See *Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 637; also Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. pp. 276, 283.

CORNWALL.

Whitsuntide is observed at Polperro by a custom of the young people going in droves into the country to partake of milk and cream.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. xii. p.

298.

Carew in his *Survey of Cornwall* (p. 68), speaking of the church ale, says that "two young men of the parish are yerely chosen by their last foregoers to be wardens, who, dividing the task, make collection among the parishioners of whatsoever provision it pleaseth them voluntarily to bestow. This they employ in brewing, baking, and other acates [provisions] against Whitsuntide; upon which holy-days the neighbours meet at the church-house, and there merrily feed on their owne victuals, contributing some petty portion to the stock, which, by many smalls, groweth to a meetly greatness; for there is entertayned a kind of emulation between these wardens, who, by his graciousness in gathering and good husbandry in expending, can best advance the churche's profit. Besides, the neighbour parishes at those times lovingly visit each one another and this way frankly spend their money together. The afternoones are consumed in such exercises as olde and yong folke (having leisure) doe accustomably weare out the time withall. When the feast is ended, the wardens yeeld in their account to the parishioners, and such money as exceedeth the disbursement is layd up in store, to defray any extraordinary charges arising in the parish or imposed on them for the good of the country or the prince's service, neither of which commonly gripe so much but that somewhat still remayneth to cover the purse's bottom." This custom is falling into desuetude, if it be not already discontinued.—See *N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. xii. 298.

CUMBERLAND.

At this season, and also at Martinmas, are held

hirings for farmers' servants. Those who offer their services stand in a body in the market-place, and to distinguish themselves hold a bit of straw or green branch in their mouths. When the market is over the girls begin to file off, and gently pace the streets with a view of gaining admirers, while the young men, with similar designs, follow them, and, having eyed the lasses, each picks up a sweetheart, whom they conduct to a dancing-room, and treat with punch and cake. Here they spend their afternoon, and part of their half-year's wages, in drinking and dancing, unless, as it frequently happens, a girl becomes the subject of contention, when the harmony of the meeting is interrupted, and the candidates for her affection settle the dispute by blows without further ceremony. Whoever wins the victory secures the maid for the present, but she is sometimes finally won by the vanquished pugilist. When the diversions of the day are concluded, the servants generally return to their homes, where they pass about a week before they enter on their respective services.—Britton and Brayley, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1803, vol. iii. p. 243.

ESSEX.

Heybridge Church, near Maldon, was formerly strewn with rushes, and round the pews, in holes made apparently for the purpose, were placed small twigs just budding.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. i. p. 471.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

At St. Briavels, after divine service, formerly, pieces of bread and cheese were distributed to the congregation at church. To defray the expenses,

every householder in the parish paid a penny to the churchwardens, and this was said to be for the liberty of cutting and taking the wood in Hudnalls. According to tradition, the privilege was obtained of some Earl of Hereford, then lord of the Forest of Dean, at the instance of his lady, upon the same hard terms that Lady Godiva obtained the privileges for the citizens of Coventry.—Rudder, *History of Gloucestershire*, 1779, p. 307. See *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. x. p. 184.

A remnant of the old customs of Whitsuntide is retained at the noble old church of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, which is annually strewn with rushes in accordance with ancient practice.—See Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, pp. 216, 217.

A custom existed at Wickham for the lord of the manor to give a certain quantity of malt to brew ale to be given away at Whitsuntide, and a certain quantity of flour to make cakes. Every one who kept a cow sent curd; others, plums, sugar and flour. A contribution of sixpence from each person was levied for furnishing an entertainment, to which every poor person of the parish who came was presented with a quart of ale, a cake, a piece of cheese, and a cheesecake.—Rudder, *History of Gloucestershire*, 1779, p. 817.

HAMPSHIRE.

At Monk Sherborne, near Basingstoke, both the Priory and parish churches were decorated with birch on Whitsunday.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. ii. p. 190.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

On Whitsunday, says a correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*4th S.* vol. i. p. 551), I was in the church of King's Pion, near Hereford, and was struck with what seemed to me a novel style of church decoration. Every pew corner and "point of vantage" was ornamented with a sprig of birch, the light green leaves of which contrasted well with the sombreness of the woodwork. No other flower or foliage was to be seen in the church.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Miss Baker (*Glossary of Northamptonshire Words*, 1854, vol. ii. p. 433) describes the celebration of a Whitsun-ale early in the present century in a barn at King's Sutton, fitted up for the entertainment, in which the lord, as the principal, carried a mace made of silk, finely plaited with ribbons, and filled with spices and perfumes for such of the company to smell as desired it; six morris dancers were among the performers.

In a Whitsun-ale, last kept at Greatworth in 1785, the fool, in a motley garb, with a gridiron painted, or worked with a needle, on his back, carried a stick with a bladder, and a calf's tail. Majordomo and his lady as Queen of May, and my lord's morris (six in number) were in this procession. They danced round a garlanded maypole. A banquet was served in a barn, and all those who misconducted themselves were obliged to ride a wooden horse, and if still more unruly were put into the stocks, which was termed being my lord's organist.—*Glossary, &c.*, p. 434.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

An unchartered Whitsun Tryste Fair is still held annually on Whitsunbank Hill, near Wooler.—*N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. i. p. 402.

OXFORDSHIRE.

A custom formerly prevailed amongst the people of Burford to hunt deer in Wychwood Forest. An original letter, in the possession of the corporation, dated 1593, directs the inhabitants to forbear the hunting for that year, on account of the plague that was then raging, and states an order that should be given to the keepers of the forest, to deliver to the bailiffs two bucks in lieu of the hunting; which privilege, was not, however, to be prejudiced in future by its remittance on that occasion.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 284.

SOMERSETSHIRE.

Collinson, in his *History of Somersetshire* (vol. iii. p. 620), speaking of Yatton, says that, "John Lane of this parish, gentleman, left half an acre of ground, called the Groves, to the poor for ever, reserving a quantity of the grass for the strewing church on Whitsunday."

IRELAND.

The Irish kept the feast of Whitsuntide with milk food, as among the Hebrews; and a breakfast composed of cake, bread, and a liquor made by hot water poured on wheaten bran.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 685.

At Holy Island, as regularly as the season of Whitsuntide comes, a concourse of people is

assembled to perform penance. They make two hundred and eighty rounds, the circumference of some being a mile, others half a mile, till they are gradually diminished to a circuit of the church of St. Mary. A detailed and probably much exaggerated account of the scene upon this occasion will be found in Hardy's *Holy Wells of Ireland*, 1836, p. 29.

MAY 11.]
WHITSUN MONDAY.

CHESHIRE.

The Whitsun Mysteries were acted at Chester, seven or eight on each day during the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Whitsun week. The drapers, for instance, exhibited the "Creation;" the tanners took the "Fall of Lucifer;" the water-carriers of the Dee reproduced the "Deluge;" the cooks had the "Harrowing of Hell." The performers were carried from one station to another by means of a movable scaffold, a huge and ponderous machine mounted on wheels, gaily decorated with flags, and divided into two compartments, the upper of which formed the stage, and the lower, defended from vulgar curiosity by coarse canvas draperies, answered the purposes of the green-room. The performers began at the Abbey gates, where they were witnessed by the high dignitaries of the Church; they then proceeded to the High Cross, where the Mayor and the civic magnates were assembled; and so on, through the city, until their motley history of God and His dealings with man had been played out.

The production of these pageants was costly; each mystery has been set down at fifteen or twenty pounds, present money. The dresses were obtained from the churches, until, this practice being denounced as scandalous, the guilds had then to provide the costume and other properties.—See *Edinburgh Essays*, 1856; also *Book of Days*, vol. i. pp. 633-637.

DERBYSHIRE.

Derby having for many centuries been celebrated for its ale, which Camden says was made here in such perfection, that wine must be very good to deserve a preference, and Fuller remarks, "Never was the wine of Falernum better known to the Romans than the canary of Derby is to the English," it is not a matter of surprise to find some remnants of the Whitsun-ales in the neighbourhood. In a manuscript in the Bodleian Library is a record of the Whitsun-ales at Elvaston and Ockbrook, from which it appears that they were formerly required to brew four ales of a quarter of malt each. Every inhabitant of Ockbrook was obliged to be present at each ale; every husband and his wife to pay twopence, and every cottager one penny; the inhabitants of Elvaston, Thurlaston, and Ambaston to receive all the profits and advantages arising from the ales to the use and behalf of the church at Elvaston. The inhabitants of Elvaston, Thurlaston, and Ambaston to brew eight ales, each inhabitant to be present as before, or to send their money.—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 206.

HAMPSHIRE.

At St. Mary's College, Winchester, the *Dulce Domum* is sung on the evening preceding the Whitsun holidays; the masters, scholars, and choristers, attended by a band of music, walk in procession round the courts of the College, singing it. —Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 452. See *Gent. Mag.*, 1811, vol. lxxxi. p. 503.

LANCASHIRE.

A correspondent of the *Gent. Mag.* (1783, vol. liii. p. 578) says there seems to be a trace of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the heads of the Apostles in what passes at Whitsuntide Fair, in some parts of Lancashire, where one person holds a stick over the head of another, whilst a third, unperceived, strikes the stick, and thus gives a smart blow to the first.

LEICESTERSHIRE.

A fair used to be held on Whitsun Monday at Hinckley, when the millers from various parts of the country walked in procession dressed in ribbons, with what they called the *King of the Millers* at their head.

A writer (in 1787) describing one of these fairs says: To the old ceremony of riding millers, many improvements were made upon a more extensive and significant plan: several personages introduced that bore allusions to the manufacture, and were connected with the place. Old Hugo Baron de Grentemaisnel, who made his first appearance in 1786, armed in light and easy pasteboard armour, was this second time armed cap-a-pie in heavy sinker plate, with pike and shield, on the latter the arms of the town. The representative baron of Hinckley had

the satisfaction of being accompanied by his lady, the Baroness Adeliza, habited in the true antique style, with steeple hat, ruff-points, mantle, &c., all in suitable colours; each riding on nimble white steeds properly caparisoned; they were preceded by the town banner, and two red streamers embroidered with their respective names. Several bands of music gave cheerful spirit to the pageant, but more particularly the militia band from Leicester. The frame-work knitters, wool-combers, butchers, carpenters, &c., had each their plays, and rode in companies bearing devices or allusions to their different trades. Two characters, well supported, were Bishop Blaise and his chaplain, who figured at the head of the wool-combers. In their train, appeared a pretty innocent young pair, a gentle shepherd and shepherdess: the latter carrying a lamb, the emblem of her little self more than of the trade. Some other little folks, well dressed, were mounted on ponies, holding instruments, the marks of their fathers' businesses, and ornamented with ribbons of all colours waving in the air.—See Nichols, *History of Hinckley*, 1813, p. 678.

Throsby, in his *History of Leicester* (1791, vol. iii. p. 85), gives the following account of a custom observed in his time at Ratby. He says:—There shall be two persons chosen annually, by a majority, to be called caterers, which shall on every Whit Monday go to Leicester, to what inn they shall think proper, where a calf's head shall be provided for their breakfast; and when the bones are picked clean, they are to be put into a dish and served up with the dinner. Likewise, the innkeeper is to provide two large rich pies, for the caterers to take home, that their families may partake of some of their festivity. Likewise, there shall be provided for every person a

short silk lace, tagged at both ends with silver, which, when so equipped, they shall all proceed to Enderby, and sell the grass of the Wether (a meadow so called) to the best bidder; from thence they shall go to the meadow, and all dismount, and each person shall take a small piece of grass from the before-mentioned Wether, and tie it round with their tagged lace, and wear it in their hats, and ride in procession to the High Cross in Leicester, and there throw them among the populace; from thence proceed to their inn, and go in procession to St. Mary's Church, where a sermon shall be preached for the benefit of the hospital founded by Henry, Earl of Leicester. When service is over, a deed shall be read over by the clergyman, concerning the gift of the above Wether, and the church shall be stuck with flowers. When the ceremony is over, they are to return to their inn to dinner, and close the day with mirth and festivity.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

At Corby near Rockingham, every twentieth year, the inhabitants assemble at an early hour, and stop up all roads and bye-ways in the parish, and demand a certain toll of every person, gentle or simple, who may have occasion to pass through the village on that day. In case of non-compliance a stout pole is produced, and the nonconformist is placed thereon, in a riding attitude, carried through the village, and taken to the parish stocks and imprisoned until the authorities choose to grant a dismissal. It appears that Queen Elizabeth granted to the inhabitants of Corby a charter to free them from town toll throughout England, Wales, and Scotland; and also to exempt them from serving on juries at

Northampton, and to free the knights of the shire from the militia law. This custom of taking toll has been observed every twenty years in commemoration of the granting of the charter.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. i. p. 424.

OXFORDSHIRE.

Until within the last century, a custom prevailed in the parish of Ensham, by which the towns-people were allowed on Whitsun Monday to cut down and carry away as much timber as could be drawn by men's hands into the Abbey yard, the churchwardens previously marking out such timber by giving the first chop; so much as they could carry out again, notwithstanding the opposition of the servants of the Abbey to prevent it, they were to keep for the reparation of the church. By this service they held their right of commonage at Lammas and Michaelmas, but about the beginning of last century this practice was laid aside by mutual consent.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 669.

SHROPSHIRE.

An old custom, called the "Boy's Bailiff," formerly prevailed at Wenlock, in Whitsun week. It consisted of a man who wore a hair-cloth gown, and was called the bailiff, a recorder, justices, and other municipal officers. There were a large retinue of men and boys mounted on horseback, begirt with wooden swords, which they carried on their right sides, so that they were obliged to draw their swords out with their left hands. They used to call at the gentlemen's houses in the franchise, where they were regaled with refreshment; and they afterwards assembled at

the Guildhall, where the town clerk read some sort of rigmarole which they called their charter, one part of which
was—

> "We go from Bickbury, and Badger, to Stoke on the Clee,
> To Monkhopton, Round Acton, and so return we."

The first three named places are the extreme points of the franchise, and the other two are on the return to Much Wenlock. This custom is supposed to have originated in going a bannering.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 284.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

The Court of Array, or view of men and arms, was held on Whitsun Monday in the vicinity of Lichfield, called Greenhill, where every householder failing to answer his name when called from the dozeners' list was fined a penny. The origin of this singular ceremony is unknown; it existed long before the charters of incorporation, and may perhaps be the remains of the commissions of array issued in the time of Henry V., who ordered every man to keep in his possession arms and armour, according to his goods and station in life, whence the enrolment of a regular armour took place. These statutes of array were repealed. Something, however, like the old custom was continued, and a booth erected for this purpose, in which the magistrates received all the inhabitants who chose to visit them, and partake of a collation provided for that purpose.

The business of the day commenced about eight o'clock in the morning, when the constables, attended by armed men wearing their colours of

distinction, with drums beating, preceded by morris dancers, with the Maid Marian, tabor and pipe, &c., conducted the bailiffs and sheriff, and other city officers, to the bower, where they were received with a salute from the men at arms. The constable then returned to collect the dozeners with their standards or posies, who, with the inhabitants of each separate ward, were with like ceremonies conducted to the bower. The posies were probably originally images of saints: they afterwards became emblems of trades, or in many instances mere puppets or garlands borne upon the heads of their ancient halberds; these were in every ward received with a volley from the men at arms, who also fired over every separate house, for which they received money and liquor from the inhabitants. Greenhill was on these occasions crowned with shows, booths, and stalls, and the day was regarded as a festival for the city and neighbourhood. About nine o'clock in the evening, the whole of the posies being collected, a procession was formed to conduct them to what was called the christening, and was in the following order:—

Tabor and pipe decorated with ribands.

Tom fool and Maid Marian.

Morrice dancers, dancing sarabands, clashing their staves.

Two captains of the armed men.

Twenty-four armed men with drums.

Twenty-one dozeners with standards or posies.

Two constables.

Gaoler.

Sheriff.

Serjeants at Mace and Town Crier.

Bailiffs, and Town Clerk.

Citizens, inhabitants, &c.

On arriving at the door of St. Mary's Church, after passing up Boar Street, and down Sadler Street, an address was made by the town clerk, recommending a peaceable demeanour, and watchful attendance to their duty; and a volley being fired over the posies the business of the day ended. At one time the images were deposited in the belfry of the adjoining church, from which it may be concluded that the origin of this procession was religious. This custom was abolished by the magistrates in 1805, at which time the expense was annually about £70; but was afterwards in some degree continued by private subscription.—*Account of Lichfield*, 1818, 1819, p. 87.

Southey, in his *Common Place Book* (1849, 2nd S. p. 336), gives the following extract from Mrs. Fienne's
MSS:—

"At Lichfield they have a custom at Whitsuntide, ye Monday and Tuesday, called the Green Bower Feast, by which they hold their charter. The bailiff and sheriff assist at the ceremony of dressing up babies with garlands of flowers and greens, and carry them in procession through all the streets, and then assemble themselves at the market-place, and so go in a solemn procession through the great street to a hill beyond the town, where is a large green bower made, in which they have their feast. Many smaller bowers are made around for company, and for booths to sell fruit, sweetmeats, ginger-bread," &c.

WALES.

At Tenby a women's benefit club walked in procession to church with band and banners before

them and bunches of flowers in their hands. After the service they dined, and wound up the evening by dancing.—Mason's *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 23.

MAY 12.]
WHITSUN TUESDAY.

BEDFORDSHIRE.

At Biddenham there is an ancient customary donation of a quantity of malt, made at Whitsuntide by the proprietor of Kempston Mill, near the parish. The malt is always delivered to the overseers of the poor for the time being, and brewed by them into ale, which is distributed among all the poor inhabitants of Biddenham on Whit Tuesday.—*Old English Customs and Charities,* 1842, p. 65.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

The Eton Montem was a long celebrated and time-honoured ceremony peculiar to Eton, and said to have been coeval with the foundation of the college, and was observed biennially but latterly triennially down to the year 1844, when it was totally abolished. It was a procession of the scholars dressed either in military or fancy costume, to a small mount on the south side of the Bath Road (supposed to be a British or Saxon barrow), where they exacted money for salt, as the phrase was, from all persons present, and from travellers passing. The ceremony was called the *Montem*. The procession of boys, accompanied by

bands of music, and carrying standards, was usually followed by many old Etonians, and even by members of the royal family—in some cases by the king and queen. Arrived at Salt-hill, the boys ascended the "mons," or mount, the "captain" unfolded the grand standard, and delivered a speech in Latin, and the "salt" was collected. The principal "salt-bearers" were superbly dressed, and carried embroidered bags for the money. The donation of the king and queen was called the "royal salt," and tickets were given to those who had paid their salt.[59]

Immense numbers of people used to assemble to witness the procession, and the money collected frequently exceeded £1000. After deducting the necessary expenses, the remainder was given to the senior scholar, who was elected to Cambridge, for his support at that University.

[59] The mottoes on the tickets varied in different years. In 1773, the words were "Ad Montem;" in 1781 and 1787 "Mos pro lege est;" in 1790, 1796, 1808, 1812, "Pro more et monte;" and in 1799 and 1805, "Mos pro lege."—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 436.

The origin of this custom, notwithstanding much antiquarian research, is unknown. Some, however, are of opinion that it was identical with the *bairn* or *boy*-bishop. It originally took place on the 6th of December, the festival of St. Nicholas (the patron of children; being the day on which it was customary at Salisbury, and in other places where the ceremony was observed, to elect the *boy*-bishop, from among the children belonging to the cathedral), but afterwards it was held on Whitsun Tuesday.—Sheahan, *History of Buckinghamshire*, 1862, p. 862; Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, 1813, vol. i. pt. ii. p. 558;

Gent. Mag., 1820, vol. xc. p. 55; See *N. & Q. 1st S.*, vol i. pp. 110, 322; *2nd S.* vol. ii. p. 146.

CUMBERLAND.

The ten principal estates in the parish of Hesket were formerly called *Red Spears*, from the titles of the owners, obtained from the curious tenure of riding through the town of Penrith on every Whitsun Tuesday, brandishing their spears. These *Red-Spear Knights* seem to have been regarded as sureties to the sheriff for the peaceable behaviour of the inhabitants.—Britton and Brayley, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1802, vol. iii. p. 171.

MIDDLESEX.

On the evening of Whitsun Tuesday, a sermon is annually preached in the ancient church of St. James, Mitre Court, Aldgate, London, from a text having special reference to flowers. This is popularly called the "Flower sermon."—*Kalendar of the English Church*, 1865, p. 74.

On this day is delivered in St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, a "Botanical sermon"—the Fairchild Lecture,—for which purpose funds were left by Thomas Fairchild, who died in 1729. It was formerly the custom of the President and several Fellows of the Royal Society to hear this sermon preached.—Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 80.

SCOTLAND.

The custom of "riding the marches" existed at Lanark, and took place annually on the day after Whitsun Fair, by the magistrates and burgesses,

known by the name of the Langemark or Landsmark Day, from the Saxon
langemark.[60]
—Sinclair's *Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1795, vol. xv. p. 45.

[60] See *Riding the Marches*, p. 307.

MAY 14.]
COTESWOLD GAMES.

The vicinity of Chipping Campden was the theatre of the Coteswold Games, which, in the reign of James I. and his unfortunate successor, were celebrated in this part of England. They were instituted by a public-spirited attorney of Burton-on-the-Heath, in Warwickshire, named Robert Dover, and like the Olympic games of the ancients, consisted of most kinds of manly exercises. The victors were rewarded by prizes, distributed by the institutor, who, arrayed in a discarded habit of James', superintended the games in person for many years. The meetings were annually held on Whitsun Thursday, and were frequently attended by an immense number of people.

Ben Jonson, Drayton, and other
poets[61]
of that age, wrote verses on this festivity, which, in 1636, were collected into one volume, and published under the title of *Annalia Dubrensia*.

[61] Thomas Randolph, Thomas Heywood, Owen Feltham, and Shackerly Marmyon.

These diversities were at length terminated by the breaking out of the civil wars, but were revived at

the Restoration; and the memory of their founder is still preserved in the name Dover's Hill, applied to an eminence of the Cotswold range, about a mile from the village of Campden.—Britton and Brayley, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1803, vol. v. p. 655; see *Book of Days*, vol. i. 712.

MAY 16.]

NORFOLK.

In the parish of Rockland, annually on the 16th of May, a sort of country fair is held, called by the villagers the "Guild," and which is evidently a relic of the Guild of St. John the Baptist, held here in St. Peter's Church before the Reformation. On this occasion a mayor of the Guild is elected, and he is chaired about the three parishes of Rockland, and gathers largess, which is afterwards spent in a frolic. There is another antique custom connected with the guild which yet obtains: the inhabitants of certain houses in the "Street" have the privilege of hanging oaken-boughs outside their doors (and their houses are thence called "bough houses"), and on the day of the guild they draw home-brewed ale for all customers, and are not interfered with for so doing, either by the village licensed publican or the excise authorities.—*N. &. Q. 2nd S.* vol. vii. p. 450.

EEL FAIR.

SURREY.

About the middle of May there is an annual migration of young eels up the Thames at Kingston. They appear in shoals, giving to the margin of the river an appearance not altogether agreeable; but their origin and destination are alike matter of conjecture. It is reasonably supposed that these swarms migrate from the lakes in Richmond Park, where immense numbers are annually bred, and that they descend the rivers, stocking the creeks and streams for some miles above the town. There is generally a crowd of eager men, women, and children, provided with every possible vessel wherein to catch the slippery prey on the first intimation of their approach; and the animated scene has caused the occasion to be called Eel Fair.—Biden, *History of Kingston-upon-Thames*, 1852, p. 128.

MAY 17.]

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Its observance is said to have first been established by Archbishop Becket, soon after his consecration. "Hic post consecrationem suam instituit festivitatem principalem S. Trinitatis annis singulis in perpetuam celebrandam, quo die primam missam suam celebravit."—Wharton, H., *Anglia Sacra*, 1691, fol. pt. i. p. 8.

It is still customary for the judges and great law-officers of the Crown, together with the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, to attend Divine Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, and hear a sermon.

On Trinity Sunday, formerly, processions of

children, with garlands of flowers and ribbons, were common.—Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 83.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

The parish of Clee possesses a right of cutting rushes from a piece of land, called "Bescars," for the purpose of strewing the floor of the church every Trinity Sunday. A small quantity of grass is annually cut to preserve this right.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 217.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The following extract is taken from the Newcastle *Daily Journal* of June 17th, 1867:—

Yesterday being Trinity Sunday, in pursuance of a time-honoured custom, the Master, Deputy-Master, and Brethren of the Ancient and Honourable Corporation of the Trinity House attended officially in All Saints' Parish Church, Newcastle. A noteworthy relic of the past in connection with the service was the performance on the organ (on the entrance and exit of the Master and Brethren) of the national air, 'Rule Britannia.' The rendering of a secular air—even as an evidence of respect—has been objected to; but the organist cites the custom of half a century.

WILTSHIRE.

Aubrey, in his *Miscellanies* (1714, p. 49), speaking of Newnton, says: "Upon every Trinity Sunday, the parishioners being come to the door of the hayward's

house, the door was struck thrice in honour of the Holy Trinity; they then entered. The bell was rung; after which, silence being ordered, they read their prayers aforesaid. Then was a ghirland of flowers (about the year 1660 one was killed striving to take away the ghirland) made upon an hoop, brought forth by a maid of the town upon her neck, and a young man (a bachelor) of another parish first saluted her three times in honour of the Trinity, in respect of God the Father. Then she puts the ghirland upon his neck and kisses him three times in honour of the Trinity, particularly God the Son. Then he puts the ghirland on her neck again, and kisses her three times in honour of the Holy Trinity and particularly the Holy Ghost. Then he takes the ghirland from her neck, and, by the custom, must give her a penny at least, which, as fancy leads, is now exceeded, as 2*s.* 6*d.*, &c. The method of giving this ghirland is from house to house annually, till it comes round. In the evening, every commoner sends his supper to this house, which is called the *Eale-house*; and having before laid in there equally a stock of malt, which was brewed in the house, they sup together, and what was left was given to the poor."

WALES.

A very ancient custom is observed on Trinity Sunday in Carnarvonshire: the offerings of calves and lambs which happen to be born with the *Nod Beuno*, or mark of St. Beuno—a certain natural mark in the ear,—have not yet entirely ceased. They are brought to church (but formerly to the monastery[62]) of Clynnok Vaur on Trinity Sunday, and delivered to the churchwardens, who sell and account for

them, depositing the money in a great chest, called *Cyff St. Beuno*, made of one oak, and secured with three locks. From this, the Welsh have a proverb for attempting any very difficult thing. “You may as well try to break open St. Beuno’s chest.” The little money resulting from the sacred beasts, or casual offerings, is applied either to the relief of the poor or in aid of repairs.— Pennant, *Tour through North Wales*, 1781, vol. ii. p. 210.

[62] This monastery was founded A.D. 616, by Guithin of Gwydaint. It was afterwards turned into a monastery of white monks, but these seem soon to have been suppressed, for, at the time of Pope Nicholas IV.’s taxation it was a collegiate church, consisting of five Portionists or Prebendaries, and continued so to the time of the dissolution.—Leland, *Itin.* vol. v. p. 15; Dugdale, *Monast. Anglic.* 1825, vol. v. p. 631.

MAY 18.]

TRINITY MONDAY.

HAMPSHIRE.

An annual fair is held on Trinity Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at Southampton. It is opened by the Mayor and bailiffs, with much ceremony, on the preceding Saturday afternoon. The Mayor erects a pole with a large glove fixed to the top of it, near the miller’s house; and the bailiff then takes possession of the fair, as chief magistrate in its precinct during the fair, and invites the Mayor and his suite to a collation in his tent. He appoints a guard of

halberdiers who keep the peace by day, and watch the fair by night. During the fair no person can be arrested for debt within its precincts. On the Wednesday at noon, the Mayor dissolves the fair, by taking down the pole and glove, or rather ordering it to be taken down; which at one time was done by the young men of the town, who fired at it with single balls, till it was destroyed, or they were tired of the sport.—Englefield, *Walk through Southampton*, 1805, p. 75.

KENT.

Deptford Fair originated in trifling pastimes for persons who assembled to see the Master and Brethren of the Trinity House, on their annual visit to the Trinity House, at Deptford. First there were juggling matches; then came a booth or two; afterwards a few shows.—*Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 724.

OXFORDSHIRE.

At Kidlington, says Blount (*Jocular Tenures*, Beckwith's edition, p. 281), the custom is that on Monday after Whitsun week there is a fat live lamb provided; and the maids of the town, having their thumbs tied behind them, run after it, and she that with her mouth takes and holds the lamb, is declared *Lady of the Lamb*, which being dressed, with the skin hanging on, is carried on a long pole before the lady and her companions to the green, attended with music, and a Morisco dance of men, and another of women, where the rest of the day is spent in dancing, mirth, and merry glee. The next day the lamb is part baked, boiled, and roasted, for the lady's feast, where

she sits majestically at the upper end of the table, and her companions with her, with music and other attendants, which ends the solemnity.

MAY 20.]
CORPUS CHRISTI EVE.

In North Wales, at Llanasaph, there is a custom of strewing green herbs and flowers at the doors of houses on Corpus Christi Eve.—Pennant's *Manuscript* quoted by Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 297.

At Caerwis on Thursday after Trinity Sunday, which they call *Dudd Son Duw*, or *Dydd Gwyl Duw*, on the Eve before, they strew a sort of fern before their doors, called *red yn mair*—Pennant's MS.

MAY 21.]
CORPUS CHRISTI DAY.

Corpus Christi Day is held on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, to celebrate, as the name indicates, the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and was instituted in the year 1264 by Pope Urban IV.

In olden times the Skinners' fraternity of Corpus Christi made their procession on this day, having "borne before them more than two hundred torches of wax, costly garnished, burning bright" (or painted and gilded with various devices); and "above two hundred clerks and priests, in surplices and copes, singing," after which came the officers; "the mayor and aldermen in scarlet, and then the skinners in

their best liveries." A temporary revival of these imposing shows took place in Mary's days previously to their discontinuance.—Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 84.

NORFOLK.

At one time on Corpus Christi Day the crafts or companies of Norwich walked in procession from the common hall, by Cutter Row, and round the market to the hall again. Each company had its banner, on which was painted its patron or guardian saint.—See *History of Norwich*, 1768, vol. i. p. 175.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

The earliest mention of the religious ceremony of Corpus Christi play and procession in Newcastle-upon-Tyne occurs in the Ordinary of the Coopers' Company, dated January 20th, 1426; though the great popularity of these exhibitions at York and other places must have induced the clergy, merchants, and incorporated traders of that town, to adopt them long before this time. There can be but little doubt that the several trades strove to outvie each other in the splendour of their exhibitions. The Company of Merchant Adventurers were concerned in the representation of five plays. The hoastmen, drapers, mercers, and boothmen had probably each one.

"Hoggmaygowyk" was the title of one of their plays, the representing of which, in 1554, cost 4*l.* 2*s.* This Company, in 1480, made an act for settling the order of their procession on Corpus Christi Day. In 1586 the offering of Abraham and Isaac was exhibited by the slaters.

By the Ordinary of the goldsmiths, plumbers, glaziers, pewterers, and painters, dated 1436, they were commanded to play at their feast the three Kings of Coleyn. In the books of the fullers and dyers, one of the charges for the play of 1564 is: "Item, for 3 yards of lyn cloth for God's coat, 3*s.* 2*d.* ob." About the year 1578, the Corpus Christi plays seem to have been on the decline; for the Ordinary of the millers, dated that year, says, "Whensoever the general plaies of the town shall be commanded by the mayor, &c.," they are to play, "the Antient playe of, &c." Similar expressions are used in the Ordinary of the house carpenters in 1579, in that of the masons in 1581, and also in that of the joiners in 1589. Weaver, in his *Funeral Monuments*, says that these plays were finally suppressed in all towns of the kingdom, about the beginning of the reign of James I. The only vestige that remains of the Newcastle Mysteries was preserved by Bourne. It is entitled "Noah's Ark; or, the Shipwright's Ancient Play or Dirge," wherein God, an Angel, Noah and his wife, and the Devil are the characters. Mackenzie, *History of Newcastle*, 1827, vol. ii. p. 708; Hone's *Ancient Mysteries Described*, 1823, p. 213.

YORKSHIRE.

The play of Corpus Christi was acted in the City of York till the twenty-sixth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, 1584.

It consisted of a solemn procession, in remembrance of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ; the symbolic representation being borne in a shrine. Every trade in the city was obliged to furnish a pageant at its own expense, and join the procession, and each individual had to personify some particular

passage in the Old or New Testament, and to repeat some poetry on the occasion. The whole was preceded by a great number of lighted torches, and a multitude of priests in their proper habits; after which followed the mayor and citizens, surrounded by an immense concourse of spectators. Commencing at the great gate of the priory of the Holy Trinity, they proceeded to the Cathedral Church and thence to St. Leonard's Hospital, where they left the sacrament. There are several public orders yet remaining in the old register of the city relative to the regulation of this ceremony; and indulgences were granted from the Pope to those who contributed to the relief of the fraternity, or who observed the annual ceremony in the most devout manner, particularly if they personally attended from the country.—Drake's *Eboracum*, 1736; Hargrove, *History of York*, 1818, vol. ii. p. 494.

IRELAND.

Corpus Christi Day was formerly celebrated at Dublin with high veneration. In the Chain-book of the City of Dublin are several entries to that purpose. We are told that there was a grand procession, in which the glovers were to represent Adam and Eve, with an angel bearing a sword before them.

The corrisees (perhaps curriers) were to represent Cain and Abel, with an altar and their offering.

Mariners and vintners, Noah and the persons in his Ark, apparelled in the habit of carpenters and salmon-takers.

The weavers personated Abraham and Isaac, with their offering and altar.

The smiths represented Pharaoh, with his host.

The skinners, the camell with the children of

Israel, &c.—See Harris, *History of Dublin*, 1766, p. 147.

MAY 22.]

COVENTRY SHOW FAIR.

This celebrated fair, says Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 286), commences upon Friday in Trinity week, and lasts for eight days. The charter for it was granted by Henry III. in 1218, at the instigation of Randle, Earl of Chester. For many years it was one of the chief marts in the kingdom, and was celebrated for the show designated the Procession of Lady Godiva, of which Brand has given a long account.

MAY 25.]

THE SHREWSBURY SHOW.

In the *Book of Days* (vol. i. pp. 704-708) will be found an interesting and amusing account of the Shrewsbury Show, which appears, from the records of the reign of Henry VI., to have been held time out of mind on the second Monday after Trinity Sunday.

FLITTING DAY.

SCOTLAND.

The 25th of May, as the Whitsunday term (old style), is a great day in Scotland, being that on which, for the most part, people change their residences. The Scotch generally lease their houses by the year, and are thus at every twelve-month's end able to shift their place of abode. Accordingly, every Candlemas a Scotch family gets an opportunity of considering whether it will, in the language of the country, sit or flit. The landlord or his agent calls to learn the decision on this point; and if "flit" is the resolution, he takes measures by advertising to obtain a new tenant. The two or three days following upon the Purification, therefore, become distinguished by a feathering of the streets with boards projected from the windows, intimating "A House to Let."—See *Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 679.

MAY 29.]
RESTORATION OR ROYAL OAK DAY.

In the *Diary* of John Evelyn (1859, vol. i. p. 373), under the date of May 29th, 1665, is the following statement:—

This was the first anniversary appointed by Act of Parliament to be observed as a day of General Thanksgiving for the miraculous restoration of His Majesty: our vicar preaching on Psalm cxviii., 24, requiring us to be thankful and rejoice, as indeed we had
cause.[63]

[63] The special form of prayer in commemoration of the Restoration of Charles II., was removed

from the Prayer Book by Act of Parliament (22 Vict. c. 2. March 25, 1859).

On this day the chaplain of the House of Commons preached in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, before "the House," usually represented by the Speaker, the Sergeant-at-arms, the clerks, and other officers, and some half-dozen members. This observance has been discontinued since 1858.—Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 74.

It is customary, especially in the North of England, for the common people to wear in their hats the leaves of the oak, which are sometimes covered with gold leaf.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 273.

CORNWALL.

At Looe, as well as in other districts of East Cornwall, the usage of wearing an oaken leaf on the 29th of May was enforced by spitting at, or "cobbing," the offender.—*Once a Week*, September 24th, 1870.

DERBYSHIRE.

On the 29th of May branches of young oak are gathered and put up over the doors of many houses, and a small sprig of the same tree is commonly worn in the button-hole.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.*, 1852, vol. viii. p. 206.

DEVONSHIRE.

In the vicinity of Starcross the children celebrate this anniversary by carrying about what they call May babies, i.e., little dolls, carefully and neatly

dressed, decked with flowers, and laid in boxes somewhat resembling coffins, though such resemblance is not, apparently, the intention of the artists.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ii. p. 405.

In the *Every Day Book* (1826, vol. i. p. 718) occurs the
following:—

At Tiverton, on the 29th of May, it is customary for a number of young men, dressed in the style of the seventeenth century, and armed with swords, to parade the streets, and gather contributions from the inhabitants. At the head of the procession walks a man called "Oliver," dressed in black, with his face and hands smeared over with soot and grease, and his body bound by a strong cord, the end of which is held by one of the men to prevent his running too far. After these come another troop, dressed in the same style, each man bearing a large branch of oak; four others, carrying a kind of throne made of oaken boughs, on which a child is seated, bring up the rear. A great deal of merriment is excited among the boys at the pranks of "Master Oliver," who capers about in a most ludicrous manner. Some of them amuse themselves by casting dirt, whilst others, more mischievously inclined, throw stones at him: but woe betide the young urchin who is caught; his face assumes a most awful appearance from the soot and grease with which "Oliver" begrimes it, whilst his companions, who have been lucky enough to escape his clutches, testify their pleasure by loud shouts. In the evening the whole party have a feast, the expenses of which are defrayed by the collection made in the morning.

DURHAM.

Mr. Cuthbert Carlton, of Durham, gives in the *Durham Chronicle*, of November 29th, 1872, the following account of a curious custom called "Push Penny." He says: "This custom, which has been discontinued nearly a quarter of a century, is thus referred to in the *Derbyshire Times* of Saturday last: —'There is a custom which has been upheld from time immemorial by the Dean and Chapter of Durham on three days in the year—30th of January, 29th of May, and 5th of November, the anniversary of King Charles' Martyrdom, Royal Oak Day, and Gunpowder Plot, which is known among Durham lads as "push-penny." On these days the Chapter causes twenty shillings in copper to be scrambled for in the college yard by the juveniles, who never fail to be present.' The practice observed every 29th of May, and 5th of November, was to throw away within the college thirty shillings in penny pieces. Whether the custom dates from time immemorial, it is difficult to say, but the two last dates would seem only to point to the origin of the custom at the end of the seventeenth, or beginning of the eighteenth centuries, to testify the loyalty of the Dean and Chapter to the Throne, and their appreciation of the happy restoration of the 'Merry Monarch,' and the escape of the King and his Parliament on the 5th of November. There was some such custom, however, during the monastic period, when pennies were thrown away to the citizens who were wont to assemble in the vicinity of the Prior's mansion. At Bishop Auckland the bishop was accustomed to throw away silver pennies at certain times of the year, and it is even said that so much as a peck of copper was in earlier times scattered broad-cast among the people. The Reformation, however, swept these and many other old customs away, but after

the Restoration of Charles II., the Dean and Chapter no doubt considered the 29th of May and the 5th of November ought to be kept as days of rejoicing, and as one means of doing so caused one of their officials to throw a bag full of pennies to the people who met in the college. The duty was entrusted to the senior verger of the cathedral. For many years it was the practice for the children of the Blue Coat Schools to attend Divine service in the cathedral, who were drawn up in rank and file in the nave, for the inspection of the prebends, who minutely examined the new scholastic garments of the Blue Coat scholars. This being done they were ushered into the choir, and at the end of the service a regular pell-mell rush was made for the cloister doors, in order to be present at 'push-penny.' The scenes on these occasions were almost beyond description. For a few years the custom thus continued, the attendants at 'push-penny' gradually diminishing; for twenty-five years, however, it has been discontinued, nor is it likely to be revived."

At Durham also on the 29th of May, the choir ascend the large tower of the cathedral, and sing anthems from the three sides of it. This is done in remembrance of the monks chanting masses from it in behalf of Queen Philippa, when engaged in the sanguinary battle of Redhills with the Scotch King, David I., 1346. The battle is commonly called the battle of Neville's Cross, from the beautiful cross erected on the field of victory by the powerful Baron of that name, a fragment of which still remains. The reason given why anthems are only sung from three sides of the tower, not from the fourth, is that a chorister once overbalanced himself, and falling from it was killed.—*Times*, May 6th, 1875.

HAMPSHIRE.

The working men of Basingstoke and other towns in Hampshire arise early on the 29th of May to gather slips of oak with the galls on; these they put in their hats or anywhere about their persons. They also hang pieces to the knockers, latches, or other parts of the house-doors of the wealthy, who take them in to place in their halls, &c. After breakfast these men go round to such houses for beer, &c. Should they not receive anything the following verses should be said:

> "Shig-shag, penny a rag
> [Bang his head in Croommell's bag],
> All up in a bundle."—

but fear often prevents them. However, the lads have no fear, and use it freely to any one without an oak-apple or oak leaf on some part of his person, and visible—ill-treating him for his want of loyalty. After noon the loyalty ceases and then if any one be charged with having *shig-shag*, the following verses are said:

> "Shig-shag's gone past,
> You're the biggest fool at last;
> When shig-shag comes again,
> You'll be the biggest fool then."

And the one who charges the other with the oak-leaf receives the ill-treatment.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. xii. p. 100.

MIDDLESEX.

It was the custom, some years ago, to decorate the monument of Richard Penderell (in the churchyard

of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, London), on the 29th of May, with oak branches; but in proportion to the decay of popularity in kings, this practice has declined.—Canfield, *Portraits, Memoirs, and Characters of Remarkable Persons*, 1794, p. 186.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Formerly all the principal families in the town of Northampton placed a large branch of oak over the door of their houses, or in their balconies, in remembrance of the restoration of Charles II. The oak-boughs are gradually disappearing, but the corporate body still goes in procession to All Saints Church, accompanied by the boys and girls of the different charity schools, each of them having a sprig of oak, with a gilt *oak-apple* placed in the front of their dress; and should the season be unpropitious, and oak-apples be scarce, small gilded potatoes are substituted. The commemoration of this day has probably been more generally and loyally observed in this town than in many other places, from a feeling of gratitude to that monarch, who munificently contributed 1000 tons of timber out of Whittlewood Forest and remitted the duty of chimney-money in Northampton for seven years, towards the rebuilding of the town after the destructive fire of 1675. The statue of the king, which is placed in the centre of the balustrade on the portico of All Saints' Church, is always enveloped in oak-boughs on this day.—*Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, vol. ii. p. 68.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

At one time the boys at Newcastle-upon-Tyne had

a taunting rhyme, with which they used to insult such persons as they met on this day who had not oak-leaves in their hats:

"Royal oak,
The Whigs to provoke."

There was a retort courteous by others, who contemptuously wore plane-tree leaves:

"Plane-tree leaves;
The Church folk are thieves."

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 274.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

On Royal Oak Day branches of that tree are carried in procession, and decorate many of the signs of public houses in Nottingham and elsewhere.—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.*, 1853, vol. viii. p. 234.

On this day the Notts juveniles not only wear the usual piece of oak-twig, but each young loyalist is armed with a nettle, with which instrument of torture are coerced those unfortunates who are unprovided with "royal oak," as it is called. Some who are unable to procure it endeavour to avoid the penalty by wearing "dog oak" (maple), but the punishment is always more severe on discovery of the imposition.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. viii. p. 490.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

In some parts of this county a garland, similar to the May-day one, is taken about on the 29th of May. —*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. x. p. 92.

At Upton-upon-Severn oak-apple day is anxiously

looked forward to by old and young. Early in the morning ropes are stretched across the street, upon which are hung garlands, composed of all such flowers as are in bloom. The garlands are also ornamented with coloured ribbons and handkerchiefs, and all the tea-spoons which can be collected are hung in the middle. Maypoles, though less common, and large boughs of oak are pressed into service. Many are the penn'orths of gold leaf sold the day before, with which to gild the oak-apple for the button-hole. A benefit club meets on this day, and walks in procession with band and flags to church, after which they make a progress through the town, with music playing and colours flying, finishing up with a dinner.—*Illustrated London News*, May 30th, 1857, p. 515.

SCOTLAND.

Riding the Marches.

—The practice of Riding the Marches, says a writer in the *Stat. Acc. of Scotland* (1845, vol. iii. p. 399), is observed in the parish of Hawick, Roxburghshire. This ancient ceremonial takes place on the last Friday of May (old style), and is considered one of the most important days of the year. The honour of carrying the standard of the town devolves upon the cornet, a young man previously elected for the purpose; and he and the magistrates of the town on horseback, and a large body of the inhabitants and the burgesses, set out in procession for the purpose of riding round the property of the town, and making formal demonstration of their legal rights.

The following are a few stanzas from an ancient song, which is sung by the cornet and his attendants from the roof of an old tenement belonging to the

town, and loudly joined in by the surrounding multitudes:—

"We'll a' hie to the muir a riding,
Drumlanrig gave it for providing
Our ancestors of martial order
To drive the English off our border.

At Flodden field our fathers fought it,
And honour gained, though dear they bought it;
By Teviot side they took this colour,
A dear memorial of their valour.

Though twice of old our town was burned,
Yet twice the foemen back we turned,
And ever should our rights be trod on,
We'll face the foe to
Tirioden.[64]

Up wi' Hawick its rights and common!
Up wi' a' the border bowmen!
Tiribus and Tirioden.
We are up to guard the common."

[64] The slogan or war-cry of the burgh was "Tiribus and Tirioden," a phrase probably derived from the Saxons or Danes. The first word may be understood as making tolerably good Anglo-Saxon. Tyr hœbbe us; May Tyr have us in his keeping. Whilst the other conjoins the names of Tyr and Odin, whose united aid is supposed to be invoked.

Mr. Wilson, author of *Annals and Old Memories of Hawick*, thinks that the meaning of the phrase, in our sense, is, "Gods of thunder and war, protect us;" in another sense, "To battle, sons of the gods."

The ancient feudal system of "the Riding of the Marches" by the burgesses still exists also at

Inveresk, once within the fifty years. They appear mounted on horseback, and armed with swords. The seven incorporated trades, each headed by its captain, follow in the train of the magistrates and town-council, the whole cavalcade being preceded by the town officers, with their ancient Brabant spears, and a champion armed cap-a-pie. A gratuity is also allowed to a minstrel, who attends at the succeeding feast, and recites in verse the glories of the pageantry.[65]

—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1845, vol. i. p. 268.

[65] Until about the year 1830, on the annual payment of their rent to the agent of the Duke of Buccleuch, an entertainment was given by the magistrates, under the title of "the Hen Feast." It derived this title from the consideration that "the kain fowls" due by the lessees of the burgh mills were served up on this occasion.—*Ibid.*, p. 269.

JUNE.]

PAIGNTON FAIR.

DEVONSHIRE.

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*1st S.* vol. viii. p. 66) quotes from an old newspaper (June 7th, 1809) the following account of Paignton Fair, held at Exeter. At this fair, says the writer, the ancient custom of drawing through the town a plum-pudding of immense size, and afterwards of distributing it to the populace, was revived on Tuesday last. The ingredients which composed this enormous pudding were—four hundred pounds of flour, one hundred and seventy pounds of beef suet, one hundred and forty pounds of raisins, and two hundred and forty

eggs. It was kept constantly boiling in a brewer's copper from Saturday morning to the Tuesday following, when it was placed on a car, decorated with ribbons, evergreens, &c., and drawn along the streets by eight oxen.

SCOTLAND.

A solemn festival in the Scotch Metropolis is ordained by the *Statutes* of George Heriot's Hospital (cap. ii.) in the following words: "But especially upon the first Monday in June, every year, shall be kept a solemn commemoration and thanksgiving unto God, in this form which followeth: In the morning, about eight of the clock of that day, the lord provost, all the ministers, magistrates, and ordinary Council of the city of Edinburgh, shall assemble themselves in the Committee-chamber of the said hospital; from thence, all the scholars and officers of the said hospital going before them two-by-two, they shall go, with all the solemnity that may be, to the Grey-Friars' Church of the said city, where they shall hear a sermon preached by one of the said ministers, every one yearly in their courses, according to the antiquity of their ministry in the said city." On this occasion the statue of the founder is fancifully decorated with flowers. Each of the boys receives a new suit of clothes; their relations and friends assemble, and the citizens, old and young, being admitted to view the hospital, the gaiety of the scene is highly gratifying.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 747.

JUNE 1.]

WILTSHIRE.

Lord Viscount Palmerston, in 1734, by deed, gave for thrashers of Charlton about an acre of land in Rushall Field, the rent whereof was to be applied annually to give them a dinner wherewith to commemorate Stephen Duck the poet, who was originally a thrasher of Charlton. The parish of Rushall was afterwards inclosed, and by the award date, 12th January, 1804, a piece of arable land, measuring one acre and fifteen poles, was awarded in a different part of Rushall Field. The land is now called Duck's Acre, and let at a rent of £2 9*s.* 9*d.* per annum. The land tax, amounting to 3*s.* per annum, was reduced by a subscription raised in the parish.

The rent is paid for a dinner, which is annually given on the 1st June, to the thrashers of this parish. —*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 169.

JUNE 9.]

IRELAND.

CLONMANY, CO. DONEGAL.

The titular saint of this parish is Columbkill. The 9th of June is his festival day, and formerly on this day many of the inhabitants drove down their cattle to the beach, and swam them in that part of the sea into which runs the water of St. Columb's Well— *Mason's Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1814, vol. i. p. 185.

JUNE 11.]
ST. BARNABAS' DAY.

On the feast of St. Barnabas it seems to have been usual to decorate some churches with garlands of flowers. Brand (1849, vol. i. 293) quotes the following disbursements from the Churchwardens', Accounts of St. Mary-at-Hill, London, in the reigns of Edward IV. and Henry VII.:—

"For Rose garlondis and Woodrove garlondis on St Barnabe's Daye, xj$^{d.}$

"Item, for two doss' (dozen?) di bocse (box) garlands for prestes and clerkes on St. Barnabe Daye, j$^{s.}$ x$^{d.}$"

CUMBERLAND.

Hesket, an extensive parish in this county, is noted for the singular circumstance of the Court of Inglewood Forest (in the precincts of which it is wholly included) being held in it annually, on St. Barnabas' Day, in the open air. The suitors assemble by the highway-side, at a place only marked by an ancient thorn, where the annual dues to the lord of the forest, compositions for improvements, &c., are paid; and a jury for the whole jurisdiction chosen from among the inhabitants of twenty mesne manors who attended on this spot.—Britton and Brayley, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1802, vol. iii. p. 171.

JUNE 15.]
ST. VITUS' DAY.

On St. Vitus' Day, says Hazlitt (Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1870, vol. i. p. 166), the Skinners' Company, accompanied by girls strewing herbs in their path, and by Bluecoat boys placed by their patronage on the foundation of Christ's Hospital, march in procession from Dowgate Hill, where their hall is, to St. Antholin's Church, in Watling Street, to hear service.[66]

The sermon, says Hampson (in his *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 296), for which the chaplain (who is usually a member of the company, educated at Christ's Hospital or Tunbridge) receives two guineas, has probably arisen out of a pious bequest for the purpose.

[66] In Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, this custom is said to take place on Corpus Christi Day.

JUNE 23.]
MIDSUMMER EVE—ST. JOHN'S EVE.

On this eve people were in former times accustomed to go into the woods, and break down branches of the trees, which they brought to their homes, and planted over their doors, amidst great demonstrations of joy, to make good the scripture prophecy respecting the Baptist, that many should rejoice in his birth. This custom was at one time universal in England.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 815.

It was a popular superstition that if any unmarried woman fasted on Midsummer Eve, and at midnight laid a clean cloth with bread, cheese, and ale, and then sat down as if going to eat, the street door being left open, the person whom she was afterwards to

marry would come into the room and drink to her by bowing; and after filling the glass would leave it on the table, and, making another bow, retire.—*Grose.*

The same writer also tells us that any person fasting on Midsummer Eve, and sitting in the church porch, will at midnight see the spirits of the persons of that parish who will die that year come and knock at the church door, in the order and succession in which they will die.

The *fern* was a most important object of popular superstition at this season. It was supposed at one time to have neither flower nor seed, the seed which lay on the back of the leaf being so small as to escape the sight of the hasty observer. Hence, probably, proceeding on the fantastic doctrine of signatures, our ancestors derived the notion that those who could obtain and wear this invisible seed would be themselves invisible, a belief of which innumerable instances may be found in our old dramatists.—Soane's *Book of the Months*.—See Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 314.

People also gathered on this night the rose, St. John's wort, vervain, trefoil, and rue, all of which were thought to have magical properties. They set the orpine in clay upon pieces of slate or potsherd in their houses, calling it a Midsummer-man. As the stalk was found next morning to incline to the right or left, the anxious maiden knew whether her lover would prove true to her or not. Young men sought also for pieces of coal, but in reality certain hard, black, dead roots, often found under the living mugwort, designing to place these under their pillows, that they might dream of themselves.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 816.

In addition to the superstitious customs already mentioned there was the Dumb

Cake:[67]

Two make it,
Two bake it,
Two break it;

and the third must put it under each of their pillows, but not a word must be spoken all the time. This being done, the diviners are sure to dream of the man they love. There was the divination by hemp-seed,[68]
which consisted of a person sowing hemp-seed, saying at the same time,

Hemp-seed I sow,
Hemp-seed I hoe.
And he that is my true love,
Come after me and mow.

The lover was sure then to make his appearance.—Soane's *Book of the Months*.

[67] See page 199.

[68] See page 100.

Towards night, materials for a fire were collected in a public place and kindled. To this the name of bonfire was given, a term of which the most rational explanation seems to be that it was composed of contributions collected as *boons* or gifts of social and charitable feeling. Around this fire the people danced with almost frantic mirth, the men and boys occasionally jumping through it, not to show their agility, but as a compliance with ancient
custom.[69]
—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 86.

[69] Fuller (*Mixt Contemplations in Better Times*, 1858, p. 25) says he has met with "two etymologies of bone-fires. Some deduce it from fires made of bones, relating it to the burning of

> martyrs, first made fashionable in England in the reign of King Henry the Fourth; but others derive the word from *boon*, that is, good, and fires." The more probable explanation seems to be that of Dr. Hickes, and which has been adopted by Lye in the *Etymologicon of Junius*, namely, that it was derived from the Anglo-Saxon *bælfyr*, a burning pile, by the change of a single letter only, baal in the Islandic signifying a conflagration.

In the reign of Henry VII. these fires were patronised by the Court, and numerous entries appear in the "Privy purse Expenses" of that monarch, by which he either defrayed the charges, or rewarded the firemen. A few are subjoined, as examples of the whole:

"June 23 (1493). To making of the bonefuyr on Midsomer Eve, 10s.

"June 28 (1495). For making the king's bonefuyr, 10s.

"June 24 (1497). Midsomer Day, for making of the bone-fuyr, 10s.

"June 30 (1498). The making of the bone-fuyr, £2."

Med. Ævi Kalend., 1841, vol. i. p. 303.

In the months of June and July, says Stow, on the vigils of festival days, and on the same festival days in the evening after the sun setting, there were usually made bonfires in the streets, every man bestowing wood or labour towards them; the wealthier sort also, before their doors near to the said bonfires, would set out tables on the vigils, furnished with sweet bread and good drink, and on the festival days with meats and drinks plentifully, whereunto they would invite their neighbours and passengers also to sit and be merry with them in great familiarity, praising God for His benefit bestowed on them. On these occasions it appears that it was customary to bind an old wheel round about with straw and tow, to take it to the top of some hill

at night, to set fire to the combustibles, and then roll it down the declivity.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

The *Status Scholæ Etonensis*, A.D. 1560 (MS. Addit. Brit. Mus. 4843), says:—"In hac vigilia moris erat (quamdiu stetit) pueris, ornare lectos variis rerum variarum picturis, et carmina de vita rebusque gestis Joannis Baptistæ et præcursoris componere: et pulchre exscripta affigere clinopodiis lectorum, eruditis legenda."

CHESHIRE.

The annual setting of the watch on St. John's Eve, in the city of Chester, was an affair of great moment. By an ordinance of the mayor, aldermen, and common councilmen, of that corporation, dated in the year 1564, and preserved among the *Harleian* MSS. in the British Museum, a pageant which is expressly said to be "according to ancient custom," is ordained to consist of four giants, one unicorn, one dromedary, one camel, one luce, one dragon, and six hobby-horses, with other figures. By another MS. in the same library, it is said that Henry Hardware, Esq., the mayor in 1599, caused the giants in the Midsummer show to be broken, "and not to goe the devil in his feathers;" and it appears that he caused a man in complete armour to go in their stead; but in the year 1601, John Ratclyffe, being mayor, set out the giants and Midsummer show as of old it was wont to be kept. In the time of the Commonwealth the show was discontinued, and the giants with the beasts were destroyed. At the Restoration of Charles II. the citizens of Chester replaced their pageant, and

caused all things to be made new, because the old models were broken.—See *Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 834.

CORNWALL.

In Cornwall the festival fires, called bonfires, are kindled on the eve of St. John the Baptist and St. Peter's Day; and Midsummer is thence in the Cornish tongue called "Goluan," which signifies both light and rejoicing. At these fires the Cornish attend with lighted torches, tarred and pitched at the end, and make their perambulations round their fires, and go from village to village, carrying their torches before them; and this is certainly the remains of the Druid superstition, for "faces præferre," to carry lighted torches, was reckoned a kind of Gentilism and as such particularly prohibited by the Gallick Councils: they were in the eye of the law "accensores facularum," and thought to sacrifice to the devil, and to deserve capital punishment.—Borlase, *Antiquities of Cornwall*, 1754, p. 130.

On Whiteborough (a large tumulus with a fosse round it), on St. Stephen's Down, near Launceston, there was formerly a great bonfire on Midsummer Eve: a large summer pole was fixed in the centre, round which the fuel was heaped. It had a large bush on the top of it.[70]

Round this were parties of wrestlers contending for small prizes.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 318.

[70] The boundary of each tin-mine in Cornwall is marked by a long pole with a bush at the top of it. These on St. John's Day are crowned with flowers.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 318.

CUMBERLAND.

Hutchinson (*Hist. of Cumberland*, vol. i. p. 177), speaking of the parish of Cumwhitton, says: They hold the wake on the Eve of St. John, with lighting fires, dancing, &c.

LANCASHIRE.

The custom of making large fires on the Eve of St. John's Day is annually observed by numbers of the Irish people in Liverpool. Contributions in either fuel or money to purchase it with are collected from house to house. The fuel consists of coal, wood, or in fact anything that will burn: the fire-places are then built up and lighted after dark.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. xii. p. 42.

ISLE OF MAN.

Formerly the inhabitants lighted fires to the windward side of every field, so that the smoke might pass over the corn; they folded their cattle and carried blazing furze or gorse around them several times; they gathered *bawan fealoin* or mugwort as a preventive against the influence of witchcraft; and it was on this occasion they bore green meadow grass up to the top of Barule in payment of rent to Mannan-beg-mac-y-heir.—Train, *History of Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 120.

MIDDLESEX.

The date of the first establishment of a regular watch or guard for the City of London is uncertain. Stow assures us it has been instituted "time out of

mind;" and we have, as early as the 39th Henry VI., the following entries:

"Payde to iiij men to wacche wt the Mayre and to goo wt him a nyghtes, xvjd."

"Payde in expenses for goyng about wt the Mayre in the town in the wacche, iiijd."

The watch for the ensuing year was always appointed with much pomp and ceremony on the vigil of St. John, or Midsummer's Eve; hence the appellation of the Midsummer Watch. On this night, as we learn from Stow, the standing watches in every ward and street of the city and suburbs were habited in bright harness. There was also a marching watch consisting of as many as 2000 persons, most of them old soldiers, who appeared in appropriate habits, armed, and many of them, especially the musicians and standard-bearers, rode on horseback. The watch was attended by men bearing cresset-lights,[71] which were provided partly by the companies, and partly by the City Chamber. Every cresset-bearer was presented with a "strawen hat and a painted badge, beside the donation of his breakfast next morning." The constables, one half of whom went out on the Eve of St. John, and the other half on the Eve of St. Peter, were dressed in "bright harnesse, some over gilt, and every one had a jornett of scarlet thereupon, and a chain of gold, his henchman following him, and his minstrels before him, and his cresset light at his side. The Mayor himself came after them, well mounted, with his sword-bearer before him, in fair armour on horseback, preceded by the waits, or city minstrels, and the Mayor's officers in liveries of woosted, or sea-jackets party-coloured. The sheriff's watches came one after the other in like order, but not so numerous; for the Mayor had, beside his giant,

three pageants; whereas the sheriff had only two besides their giants, each with their morris-dancer and one henchman."

[71] *Cresset-light.*—A kind of fire-basket let into an iron frame at the end of a long pole, and so contrived that the basket remained in a horizontal position, whichever way the pole was carried. These poles were usually borne on men's shoulders. Cresset-lights were also used as beacons and served instead of lighthouses for signals along the coast. The badge of the Admiralty was anciently a cresset.—Shakspeare makes Glendower say, in "Henry IV." (Act iii. s. 1):

> "At my nativity,
> The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
> Of burning cressets."

Douce, in his *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, imagines the word to have been derived from the French word *croiset*—a cruet, or earthen pot.

Stow says that King Henry VIII., in the first year of his reign, came privately into Westcheap to view the setting of this watch, "being clothed in one of the coates of his guard," and at the next muster, which was on St. Peter's night, "the king and queene came roially riding to the signe of the King's Head in Cheape, and there beheld the watche of the citie, which watche was set out with divers goodly shewes, as had been accustomed." In the 31st year of this reign (1539), however, the Midsummer Watch was discontinued; but it was revived, for one year only, by Sir Thomas Gresham, then Lord Mayor, in the second year of Edward the Sixth's reign.—Stow's *Survey of London*; Jupp, *History of the Carpenter's Company*, 1848, pp. 40-44.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

In the ordinary of the Company of Cooks at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1575, quoted by Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 318), is the following clause: —"And alsoe that the said fellowship of Cookes, shall yearelie of theire owne cost and charge mainteigne and keep the bonefires, according to the auntient custome of the said towne on the Sand-hill; that is to say, one bone-fire on the even of the Feast of the Nativitie of St. John Baptist, commonly called Midsomer Even, and the other on the even of the Feast of St. Peter the Apostle, if it shall please the Maior and Aldermen of the said towne for the time being to have the same bone-fires."

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

Deering, in his *Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova* (1751, p. 123), quoting from an old authority, gives the following curious account of the watch once held at Nottingham. He says: "Every inhabitant of any ability sets forth a man, as well voluntaries as those who are charged with arms, with such munition as they have; some pikes, some muskets, calivers, or other guns; some partisans, or halberts; and such as have armour send their servants in their armour. The number of these are yearly about two hundred, who at sun-setting meet on the Row, the most open part of the town, where the Mayor's serjeant-at-mace gives them an oath, the tenor wherof followeth in these words: 'You shall well and truly keep this town till to-morrow at the sun-rising; you shall come into no house without license or cause reasonable. Of all manner of casualties, of fire, of crying of children, you shall due warning make to the parties, as the

case shall require. You shall due search make of all manner of affrays, bloudsheds, outcrys, and all other things that be suspected,' &c. Which done, they all march in orderly array through the principal streets of the town, and then they are sorted into several companies, and designed to several parts of the town, where they are to keep the watch until the sun dismisses them in the morning. In this business the fashion is for every watchman to wear a garland, made in the fashion of a crown imperial, bedecked with flowers of various kinds, some natural, some artificial, bought and kept for that purpose, as also ribbands, jewels; and for the better garnishing whereof, the townsmen use the day before to ransack the gardens of all the gentlemen within six or seven miles round Nottingham, besides what the town itself affords them: their greatest ambition being to outdo one another in the bravery of their garlands." This custom was kept up till the reign of Charles I.

OXFORDSHIRE.

About the year 750, says Plott, a battle was fought near Burford, perhaps on the place still called Battle-Edge, west of the town, towards Upton, between Cuthred or Cuthbert, a tributary king of the West Saxons, and Ethelbald, king of Mercia, whose insupportable exactions the former king not being able to endure, he came into the field against Ethelbald, met and overthrew him there, winning his banner, whereon was depicted a golden dragon; in memory of which victory, the custom of making a dragon yearly, and carrying it up and down the town in great jollity on Midsummer Eve, to which they added the picture of a giant, was in all likelihood first instituted.—Plott, *Natural History of Oxfordshire*,

1705, p. 356.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

A very curious practice is observed on Midsummer Eve at Kidderminster, arising from the testamentary dispositions of two individuals once resident there. A farthing loaf is given to every person born in Church Street, Kidderminster, who chooses to claim it. The bequest is of very ancient standing, and the farthing loaf, at the time of its date, was far different to what it is now-a-days. The day is called Farthing Loaf Day, and the bakers' shops are amply provided with these diminutives, as it is the practice of the inhabitants throughout the town to purchase them. Superadded to this bequest is another. About the year 1788 an old bachelor left a sum for the purchase of a twopenny cake for every unmarried resident in Church Street, to be given on Farthing Loaf Day, and also the sum of two guineas to be paid to a household in the said street, as remuneration for providing a supper of bread and cheese and ale, to which every householder in the street should be invited. The householders each take their turn in being host, but with a promise, that none except the occupiers of front houses should enjoy this dignity. The toast directed to be drunk after supper is, "Peace and good neighbourhood." The money required arises from a sum which is lent at interest, annually, to any competent inhabitant of this favoured street, upon his producing two good sureties for the repayment at the end of the year.—Hone's *Year Book*, 1838, p. 745; *Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 241.

YORKSHIRE.

On Midsummer Eve, at Ripon, in former days, every housekeeper, who in the course of the year had changed his residence into a new neighbourhood, spread a table before his door in the street with bread, cheese, and ale for those who chose to resort to it. The guests, after staying awhile, if the master was liberally disposed, were invited to supper, and the evening was concluded with mirth and good humour.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 866.

WALES.

Bingley, in his *Tour Round North Wales* (1800, vol. ii. p. 237), says: On the Eve of St. John the Baptist they fix sprigs of the plant called St. John's-wort over their doors, and sometimes over their windows, in order to purify their houses, and by that means drive away all fiends and evil spirits.

SCOTLAND.

The Eve of St. John is a great day among the mason-lodges of Scotland. What happens with them at Melrose may be considered as a fair example of the whole.

Immediately after the election of office-bearers for the year ensuing, the brethren walk in procession three times round the Cross, and afterwards dine together under the presidency of the newly-elected grand master. About six in the evening the members again turn out, and form into line two abreast, each bearing a lighted flambeau, and decorated with their peculiar emblems and insignia. Headed by the heraldic banners of the lodge, the procession follows

the same route, three times round the Cross, and then proceeds to the abbey. On these occasions the crowded streets present a scene of the most animated description. The joyous strains of a well-conducted band, the waving torches, and incessant showers of fire-works make the scene a carnival. But at this time the venerable abbey is the chief point of attraction and resort, and as the torch-bearers thread their way through its mouldering aisles, and round its massive pillars, the outlines of its gorgeous ruins become singularly illuminated, and brought into bold and striking relief. The whole extent of the abbey is, with "measured step and slow," gone three times round. But when near the *finale*, the whole masonic body gather to the chancel, and forming one grand semicircle around it, where the heart of King Robert Bruce lies deposited near the high altar, the band strikes up the patriotic air, "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," and the effect thus produced is overpowering. Midst showers of rockets and the glare of blue lights the scene closes.—Wade's *History of Melrose Abbey*, 1861, p. 146.

IRELAND.

The following extract is taken from the *Liverpool Mercury*, June 29th,
1867:—

The old pagan fire-worship still survives in Ireland, though nominally in honour of St. John. On Sunday night bonfires were observed throughout nearly every county in the province of Leinster. In Kilkenny, fires blazed on every hillside at intervals of about a mile. There were very many in the Queen's county, also in Kildare and Wexford. The effect in the rich sunset appeared to travellers very grand. The people

assemble, and dance round the fires, the children jump through the flames, and in former times live coals were carried into the corn fields to prevent blight: of course, people are not conscious that this Midsummer celebration is a remnant of the worship of Baal. It is believed by many that the round towers were intended for signal fires in connection with this worship.—See *Gent. Mag.* 1795, vol. lxv. pt. ii. p. 124; see Sir Henry Piers's *Description of Westmeath*, 1682; and *The Comical Pilgrim's Pilgrimage into Ireland*, 1723 p. 92.

Croker, in his *Researches in the South of Ireland* (1824, p. 233), mentions a custom observed on the eve of St. John's Day, and some other festivals, of dressing up a broomstick as a figure, and carrying it about in the twilight from one cabin to the other, and suddenly pushing it in at the door. The alarm or surprise occasioned by this feat produced some mirth. The figure thus dressed up was called a *Bredogue*.

At Stoole, near Downpatrick, there is a ceremony commencing at twelve o'clock at night on Midsummer Eve. Its sacred mount is consecrated to St. Patrick; the plain contains three wells, to which the most extraordinary virtues are attributed. Here and there are heaps of stones, around some of which appear great numbers of people, running with as much speed as possible; around others crowds of worshippers kneel with bare legs and feet as an indispensable part of the penance. The men, without coats, with handkerchiefs on their heads instead of hats, having gone seven times round each heap, kiss the ground, cross themselves, and proceed to the hill; here they ascend, on their bare knees, by a path so steep and rugged that it would be difficult to walk up. Many hold their hands clasped at the back of

their necks, and several carry large stones on their heads. Having repeated this ceremony seven times, they go to what is called St. Patrick's Chair, which are two great flat stones fixed upright in the hill; here they cross and bless themselves as they step in between these stones, and, while repeating prayers, an old man, seated for the purpose, turns them round on their feet three times, for which he is paid; the devotee then goes to conclude his penance at a pile of stones, named the Altar. While this busy scene is continued by the multitude, the wells and streams issuing from them are thronged by crowds of halt, maimed, and blind, pressing to wash away their infirmities with water consecrated by their patron saint, and so powerful is the impression of its efficacy on their minds, that many of those who go to be healed, and who are not totally blind, or altogether crippled, really believe for a time that they are by means of its miraculous virtues perfectly restored.—*Hibernian Magazine*, July 1817.

JUNE 24.]

MIDSUMMER DAY— ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DAY.

The general customs connected with this season commenced on the preceding evening.—*See* Midsummer Eve.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

The *Status Scholæ Etonensis*, A.D. 1560 (MS. Addit. Brit. Mus. 4813), says: "*Mense Junii*, in Festo Natalis

D. Johannis post matutinas preces, dum consuetudo floruit accedebant omnes scholastici ad rogum extructum in orientali regione templi, ubi reverenter a symphoniacis cantatis tribus Antiphonis, et pueris in ordine stantibus venitur ad merendam."

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

On a common called Midsummer Green, in the parish of Barnwell, an annual fair is held, commencing on Midsummer Day, and continuing for a fortnight. This fair is supposed to have originated with the assemblages of children at this place on the eve of St. John the Baptist's Day, whose yearly gatherings being attended by a considerable concourse of people, attracted the notice of some pedlars, who began to dispose of their merchandise on this spot as early as the reign of Henry I. The articles brought for sale are chiefly earthen-wares, whence the festival has attained the name of *Pot fair*. The fair is proclaimed on the eve of Midsummer Day by the heads of the University, first in the middle of the village, and afterwards on the green where it is celebrated. It appears to have assumed its legal form in the reign of Henry III.—Brayley and Britton, *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1809, vol. ii. p. 110.

CHESHIRE.

In former times there was a privilege of licensing the minstrels, peculiar to the ancient family of Dutton. The original grant came from Earl Randal Blundeville to Roger Lacy, constable of Chester; and his son, John Lacy, assigned the privilege to the family of Dutton. The anniversary of this solemnity was constantly celebrated on the festival of St. John

the Baptist by a regular procession of all the minstrels to the church of this tutelary saint in the city of Chester. But after having been constantly observed for at least 550 years, it seems to have been discontinued in 1758; and, as an instance how sacred these exclusive privileges were esteemed by legislative wisdom, the Act of the 29th of Elizabeth, which declares all *itinerant minstrels* to be vagabonds, particularly excepts the minstrel-jurisdiction of John Dutton, of Dutton in Cheshire, Esq.—Gower, *Materials for a History of Cheshire*, 1771, p. 67.

CORNWALL.

Hitchins, in his *History of Cornwall* (1824, vol. i. p. 717), says: Midsummer Day is considered as a high holiday, on which either a pole is erected, decorated with garlands, or some flags displayed, to denote the sanctity of the time. This custom has prevailed from time immemorial, of which it is scarcely possible to trace the origin.

DEVONSHIRE.

Lynton revel begins on the first Sunday after Midsummer Day. It formerly lasted a week. As in the days before the Reformation, revels until lately began on a Sunday in Lynton and Lynmouth, a barrel of beer having been placed near the church gate in readiness for the people coming out of church, who partook of a glass and a cake, called revel cake, made with dark flour, currants, and carraway seeds. Wrestling formed a chief feature in the amusements, and large sums were raised by subscription to purchase prizes. However odd it may appear, it is not more than twenty years since the silver spoons,

bought as prizes to be wrestled for, were exhibited hung in front of the gallery in Countisbury Church during divine service on Revel Sunday. Of late years, however, owing to the prevalence of drunkenness, especially on the Sunday afternoon, the respectable inhabitants have set their faces against these revels, which have now dwindled into insignificance. The collusion which sprang up among the wrestlers to share the prizes, without their being won by a real trial of skill and strength, hastened also greatly to abate the enthusiasm of the subscribers, so that of late the prizes have not been beyond a few shillings collected from the people on the ground. This of itself has given a death-blow to the revel.—Cooper, *Guide to Lynton and Lynmouth*, 1853, p. 38.

Isle of Man.

On this day a tent is erected on the summit of the Tynwald Hill (called also Cronk-y-Keeillown, i.e., St. John's Church Hill, a mound said to have been originally brought from each of the seventeen parishes of the island), and preparations are made for the reception of the officers of state, according to ancient custom. Early in the morning the Governor proceeds from Castletown under a military escort to St. John's Chapel, situated a few hundred yards to the eastward of the Tynwald Hill. Here he is received by the Bishop, the Council, the clergy, and the keys, and all attend Divine service in the chapel, the Government chaplain officiating. This ended, they march in a procession from the chapel to the mount, the military formed in line on each side of the green turf walk. The clergy take the lead, next comes the Vicar-General, and the two Deemsters, then the bearer of the sword of state in front of the Governor,

who is succeeded by the Clerk of the Rolls, the twenty-four keys, and the captains of the different parishes.

The ceremony of the Tynwald Hill is thus stated in the *Lex Scripta* of the Isle of Man, as given for law to Sir John Stanley, in 1417:

"This is the constitution of old time, how yee should be governed on the Tinwald day. First you shall come thither in your royal array, as a king ought to do by the prerogatives and royalties of the land of Mann, and upon the hill of Tinwald sitt in a chair covered with a royal cloath and quishions, and your visage in the east, and your sword before you, holden with the point upward. Your Barrons in the third degree sitting beside you, and your beneficed men and your Deemsters before you sitting, and your clarke, your knight, esquires, and yeomen about you in the third degree, and the worthiest men in your land to be called in before your Deemsters, if you will ask anything of them, and to hear the government of your land and your will; and the Commons to stand without the circle of the hill, with three clearkes in their surplices, and your Deemsters shall call the coroner of Glanfaba, and he shall call in all the coroners of Man, and their yardes in their hands, with their weapons upon them, either sword or axe; and the moares, that is to witt of every sheading; then the chief coroner, that is, the coroner of Glanfaba, shall make affence upon pain of life or lyme, that no man make a disturbance or stirr in the time Tinwald, or any murmur, or rising in the King's presence, upon pain of hanging and drawing; and then to proceed in your matters whatsoever you have to doe, in felonie or treason, or other matters that touch the government of your land of Manne."—Cumming's *History of the Isle of Man*, 1848, pp. 185,

186.

MIDDLESEX.

"There is this solemn and charitable custom in ye Ch. of St. Mary-Hill, London. On the next Sunday after Midsummer Day, every year, the fellowship of the Porters of ye City of London, time out of mind, come to this church in ye morning, and whilst the Psalms are reading, they group two and two towards the rails of ye Communion table, where are set two basons; and there they make their offering, and so return to the body of ye Church again. After then the inhabitants of ye parish and their wives, and others also then at church, make their offering likewise; and the money so offered is given to the poor decrepit Porters of the said fellowship for their better subsistence."—Newcomb's *MS. Collect.*, cited by Bishop Kennett.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

It was the custom to strew the church of Middleton Chenduit, in summer, with hay gathered from six or seven swaths in Ash Meadow, which were given for this purpose. In the winter the rector found straw.—Bridges's *History of Northamptonshire*, 1791, vol. i. p. 187.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

It is customary on this day to dress out stools with a cushion of flowers. A layer of clay is placed on the stool, and therein is stuck, with great regularity, an arrangement of all kinds of flowers, so close as to form a beautiful cushion. These are exhibited at the

doors of houses in the villages, and at the ends of streets and cross lanes of larger towns, where the attendants beg money from passengers to enable them to have an evening *fête* and dancing.

This custom is evidently derived from the "Ludi Compitalii" of the Romans; this appellation was taken from the *compita*, or cross lanes, where they were instituted and celebrated by the multitude assembled before the building of Rome. It was the feast of the *lares*, or household gods, who presided as well over houses as streets.—Hutchinson's *History of Northumberland*.

OXFORDSHIRE.

The following notice of a curious custom, formerly observed at Magdalen College, Oxford, is taken from the *Life of Bishop Horne*, by the Rev. William Jones (Works, vol. xii. p. 131):—"A letter of July the 25th, 1755, informed me that Mr. Horne, according to an established custom at Magdalen College, in Oxford, had begun to preach before the University, on the day of St. John the Baptist. For the preaching of this annual sermon, a permanent pulpit of stone is inserted into a corner of the first quadrangle; and so long as the stone pulpit was in use (of which I have been a witness), the quadrangle was furnished round the sides with a large fence of green boughs, that the preaching might more nearly resemble that of John the Baptist in the wilderness; and a pleasant sight it was: but for many years the custom has been discontinued, and the assembly have thought it safer to take shelter under the roof of the chapel."

At the mowing of *Revel-mede*, a meadow between Bicester and Wendlebury, most of the different kinds of rural sports were usually practised; and in such

repute was the holiday, that booths and stalls were erected as if it had been a fair. The origin of the custom is unknown; but as the amusements took place at the time when the meadow became subject to commonage, some have supposed it originated in the rejoicings of the villagers on that account. These sports entirely ceased on the enclosure of Chesterton field.—Dunkin, *History of Bicester*, 1816, p. 269.

SOMERSETSHIRE.

Collinson, in his *History of the County of Somerset* (1791, vol. iii. p. 586), gives an account of a custom that was celebrated on the Saturday before old Midsummer Day in the parishes of Congresbury and Puxton, at two large pieces of common land, called East and West Dolemoors. These, he says, were divided into single acres, each bearing a peculiar and different mark cut on the turf, such as a horn, four oxen and a mare, two oxen and a mare, pole-axe, cross, dung-fork, oven, duck's nest, hand reel, and hare's tail. On the Saturday before old Midsummer Day, several proprietors of estates in the parishes of Congresbury, Puxton, and Week St. Lawrence, or their tenants, assembled on the commons. A number of apples were previously prepared, marked in the same manner with the before-mentioned acres, which were distributed by a young lad to each of the commoners from a bag or hat. At the close of the distribution, each person repaired to his allotment as his apple directed him, and took possession for the ensuing year. An adjournment then took place to the house of the overseer of Dolemoors (an officer annually elected from the tenants), where four acres, reserved for the purpose of paying expenses, were let by inch of candle, and the remainder of the day was

spent in sociability and hearty mirth.

WILTSHIRE.

At Chiltern there is a sport widely practised by the boys, which they call "egg-hopping." At the commencement of summer the lads forage the woods in quest of birds' eggs. These, when found, they place on the road at distances apart in proportion to the rarity or abundance of the species of egg. The hopper is then blindfolded, and he endeavours to break as many as he can in a certain number of jumps. The universality of the game, and the existence of various superstitions, combined with their refusal to part with the eggs for money, would warrant a supposition that some superstition is connected with it.—*N. & Q. 3rd. S.* vol. iv. p. 492.

YORKSHIRE.

Old Midsummer Day, says Cole (*History of Scalby*, 1829, p. 44), is, at Scalby, a kind of gala time, when the sports, as they are termed, take place, consisting of the most rustic description of amusements, such as donkey-racing, &c., and when booths are erected for the accommodation of the several visitors, and the village presents a motley fair-like appearance.

IRELAND.

CO. CORK.

A pilgrimage to the source of the River Lee is one frequently performed by two very different classes of persons—the superstitious and the curious; the first

led by a traditional sanctity attached to the place, the latter by the reputed sublimity of its scenery, and a desire of witnessing the religious assemblies and ceremonies of the peasantry. The scenery of Gougaun lake is bold and rugged, surrounded by rocky and barren mountains; in its centre is a small and solitary island, connected with the shore by a narrow artificial causeway, constructed to facilitate the rites of religious devotees, who annually flock thither on the 24th June (St. John's Day), and the celebration of a pious festival. The principal building on the island is a rudely formed circular wall of considerable solidity, in the thickness of which are nine arched recesses or cells, called chapels, severally dedicated to particular saints, with a plain flag-stone set up in each as an altar.

On the celebration of the religious meeting these cells are filled with men and women in various acts of devotion, almost all of them on their knees. Croker, in his *Researches in the South of Ireland* (1824, p. 275), describing one of these pilgrimages, says: To a piece of rusty iron considerable importance seems to have been attached; it passed from one devotee to another with much ceremony. The form consisted in placing it three times, with a short
prayer[72]
across the head of the nearest person to whom it was then handed, and who went through the same ceremony with the next to him, and thus it circulated from one to the other. The banks of the lake were the scenes of merry-making. Almost every tent had its piper, two or three young men and women dancing the jig.

[72] "Copy of the prayer to be said at the well of St. John.—'O Almighty God, as I have undertaken this journey by way of pilgrimage in and through

a penitential spirit, in the first place I hope to render myself worthy of the favour I mean to ask, to avoid drunkenness and licentiousness, and hope to find favour in thy sight; I therefore pay this tribute and fulfil the promise I have made; I ask you therefore, through the intercession of St. John, to grant me the following favour (here mention your ailment, the particular favour you stand in need of). I know how unworthy I am of being heard, but I resolve, with thy gracious assistance, henceforward to render myself worthy of your favour. I implore this gift through the intercession of St. John, and the sufferings of Christ our Lord. Amen.'

"N.B. You must be careful to avoid all excess in drinking, dancing in tents, for it is impossible characters can find favour in the sight of God, such as these. Fasting going there had formerly been the custom."

Co. Limerick.

At one time, the tradesmen of Limerick marched, on Midsummer Day, arranged under their respective leaders, decorated with sashes, ribbons, and flowers, and accompanied with a band of musicians, and the shouts of the delighted populace, through the principal streets of the city, while their merry-men played a thousand antic tricks, and the day generally ended in a terrible fight between the Garryowen and Thomond-gate boys (the tradesmen of the north and south suburbs).—Fitzgerald and Macgregor's *History of Limerick*, 1827, p. 540.

JUNE 25.]

YORKSHIRE.

In the village of Micklefield, about ten miles east of Leeds, it is the custom on the second day of the feast, (June 25th) for about twelve of the villagers,[73] dressed, in their best garb, and wearing a white apron *à l'épicier*, to carry a large basket (generally a clothes-basket) to each farm-house in the village, the occupier of which seems to consider it his bounden duty to give them a good supply of confectionery of some kind to take away with them, and ale *ad libitum* to drink in his house.—*N. &. Q. 3rd S.* vol. iii. p. 263.

[73] These villagers call themselves "*Joss Weddingers*." (?)

JUNE 29.]

ST. PETER'S DAY.

On this day many of the rites peculiar to the festival of St. John the Baptist were repeated.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

It appears from the *Status Scholæ Etonensis* (A.D. 1560) that the Eton boys had a great bonfire annually on the east side of the church on St. Peter's Day, as well as on that of St. John Baptist.

KENT.

The stranger who chances to attend Divine service

in Farnborough parish church on the Sunday next after the feast of St. Peter, has his attention arrested by the floor of the porch being strewed with reeds. By an abstract of the will of George Dalton, Gent., of Farnborough, dated December 3rd, 1556, set forth on a mural tablet in the interior of the church, he learns that this gentleman settled a perpetual annuity of 13*s.* 4*d.* chargeable upon his lands at Tuppendence: 10*s.* to the preacher of a sermon on the Sunday next after the feast of St. Peter, and 3*s.* 4*d.* to the poor. Local traditional lore affirms that Mr. Dalton was saved from drowning by reeds, and that the annual sermon and odd manner of decorating the porch are commemorative of the event. This day is called by the inhabitants of the village, Reed Day or Flag Day. —*Maidstone Gazette*, 1859.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Cole, in his *History of Weston Favell* (1829, p. 58), says:—The feast follows St. Peter's Day. The amusements and sports of the week consist of dinner and tea parties formed from the adjacent towns, which meetings are frequently concluded with a ball, indeed a dance at the inns on the few first days of the feast is indispensable. Games at bowls and quoits are pursued with great dexterity and interest by the more athletic visitants, and in the evening the place presents a motley, fair-like appearance; but this continues for no longer period than the second or third day in the feast week.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Formerly, says Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 337), on the evening of St. Peter's Day, the

inhabitants of this county carried firebrands about the fields of their respective parishes. They made encroachments on these occasions upon the bonfires of the neighbouring towns, of which they took away some of the ashes by force; this they called "carrying off the flower (probably the flour) of the wake."

YORKSHIRE.

In an old account of Gisborough, in Cleveland, and the adjoining coast, printed in the *Antiquarian Repertory* (1808, vol. iii. p. 304) from an ancient MS. in the Cotton Library (marked Julius F. C., fol. 455), speaking of the fishermen, it is stated that "Upon St. Peter's Daye they invite their friends and kinsfolk to a festyvall kept after their fashion with a free hearte, and noe shew of niggardnesse; that daye their boates are dressed curiously for the shewe, their mastes are painted, and certain rytes observed amongst them, with sprinkling their prowes with good liquor, sold with them at a groate the quarte, which custom or superstition, suckt from their auncestors, even contynueth down unto this present tyme."

The feast day of Nun-Monkton is kept on St. Peter's Day, and is followed by the "Little Feast Day," and a merry time extending over a week. On the Saturday evening preceding the 29th a company of the villagers, headed by all the fiddlers and players on other instruments that could be mustered at one time went in procession across the great common to "May-pole Hill," where there is an old sycamore (the pole being near it) for the purpose of "rising Peter," who had been buried under the tree. This effigy of St. Peter, a rude one of wood, carved—no one professed to know when—and in these later times clothed in a ridiculous fashion, was removed in its

box-coffin to the neighbourhood of the public-house, there to be exposed to view, and, with as little delay as possible, conveyed to some out-building, where it was stowed away and thought no more about till the first Saturday after the feast day (or the second if the 29th had occurred at the back end of a week), when it was taken back in procession again, and re-interred with all honour which concluding ceremony was called "Buryin' Peter." In this way did St. Peter preside over his own feast. On the evening of the first day of the feast, two young men went round the village with large baskets for the purpose of collecting tarts, cheese-cakes, and eggs for mulled ale —all being consumed after the two ceremonies above indicated. This last good custom is not done away with yet, suppers and, afterwards, dancing in a barn being the order while the feast lasts.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. i. p. 361.

SCOTLAND.

In Sinclair's *Stat. Acc. of Scotland* (1792, vol. iii. p. 105) we are told that at Loudoun, in Ayrshire, the custom still retains among the herds and young people to kindle fires in the high grounds, in honour of Beltan. Beltan was anciently the time of this solemnity. It is kept on St. Peter's day.



JULY.]

COMMENCEMENT DAY.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

In the University of Cambridge, the first Tuesday in July is usually the Commencement Day. The Commencement Sunday is the Sunday immediately before the Commencement Day. It is a commemoration day.

On Commencement Sunday, the Vice-Chancellor invites to dinner all noblemen, the three Regius Professors, and their sons and the public orator.—Adam Wall, *Ceremonies observed in the Senate House of the University of Cambridge*, 1798, p. 76.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

At Old Weston a piece of green sward belongs by custom to the parish clerk for the time being, subject to the condition of the land being mown immediately before Weston feast, which occurs in July, and the cutting thereof being strewed on the church floor previously to Divine service on the feast Sunday, and continuing there during Divine service.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 220.

LANCASHIRE.

At Altcar the parish church is dedicated to St. Michael, and, in accordance with a very old custom, a rush-bearing takes place in July.—See *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 341.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

In the *History of Alnwick* (1822, pp. 241-244) the following account is given of an ancient custom celebrated on the proclamation of the fair held in July. On the Sunday evening preceding the fair, the representatives of the adjacent townships that owe

suit and service to his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, and the constables of Alnwick, with several of the freeholders and tradesmen, attend at the castle, where they are freely regaled. The steward of the Court, and the bailiff with their attendants, then proceed from the castle to the cross in the market-place, where the bailiff proclaims the fair in the name of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, and calls over the names of the various townships that owe suit and service; viz. the townships of Chatton and Chillingham, four men, Coldmarton and Fowbury, four men; Hetton and Hezebrigge, four men; Fawdon and Clinch, four men; Alnham and Alnham Moor, two men; Tughall and Swinhoe, two men; Longhoughton and Denwick, four men; Lesbury and Bilton, two men; Lyham and Lyham-hall, one man; with the principal inhabitants of the borough of Alnwick. The representatives who attend for the several townships in service are obliged to keep watch at different parts of the town the night before the fair, which has been a custom from time immemorial. On the fair-day the tenants of the Duke within the barony of Alnwick attend at the castle, when the steward and bailiff proceed from thence to the market, and proclaim the fair as before. They then go to Clayport Street, where the fair is again proclaimed, and from thence to the castle. The above townships, by their attendance, are exempt from paying toll in the borough for twelve months, but if they do not attend, they must pay the same till the next year.

SCOTLAND.

County of Edinburgh.

The Leith Races take place either in the month of July or August. As they were under the patronage of the magistrates of Edinburgh, it was usual for one of the city officers to walk in procession every morning during the week from the Council Chamber down to Leith, bearing aloft a silk purse, gaily decorated with ribbons, styled the City Purse, on the end of a pole, accompanied by the town-guard drummer, who, being stationed in the rear of this dignitary, continued beating a tattoo at his heels all the way to the race-ground.

The procession which at the onset consisted only of the officer and the drummer, and sometimes a file or two of the town-guard, gathered strength as it moved along the line of march, from a constant accession of boys, who were every morning on the look out for this procession, and who preferred, according to their own phrase, “gaun down wi’ the purse,” to any other way. Such a dense mass of these finally surrounded the officer and his attendant drummer that, long before the procession reached Leith, both had wholly disappeared. Nothing of the former remained visible but the purse, and the top of the pole on which it was borne. These, however, projecting above the heads of the crowd, still pointed out the spot where he might be found: of the drummer, no vestige remained; but he was known to exist by the faint and intermittent sounds of his drum. The town-guard also came in for a share of the honours and the business of this festive week. These were marched down to Leith every day in full costume. Having arrived upon the sands, the greater part, along with the drummer, took their station at the starting-point, where the remainder surrounded the heights. The march of these veterans to Leith is thus humorously described by

Ferguson:—

"Come, hafe a care (the captain cries),
On guns your bagnets thraw:
Now mind your manual exercise,
And march down row by row.
And as they march he'll glour about,
Tent a' ther cuts an' scars;
Mang these full many a gausy snout
Has gusht in birth-day wars
Wi' blude that day."

Campbell, *History of Leith*, 1827, p. 187.

RENFREWSHIRE.

A very curious custom existed at Greenock, and in the neighbouring town of Port Glasgow, at the fair held on the first Monday in July, and the fourth Tuesday in November. The whole trades of the town, in the dresses of their guilds, with flags and music, each man armed, made a grand rendezvous at the place where the fair was to be held, and with drawn swords and array of guns and pistols, surrounded the booths, and greeted the baillie's announcement by tuck of drum, "that Greenock Fair was open," by a tremendous shout, and a struggling fire from every serviceable barrel in the crowd.—*N. &. Q. 1st S.*, vol. ix. p. 242.

ROXBURGHSHIRE.

Haig, in his *History of Kelso* (1825, p. 107), tells us that in his time the Society of Gardeners, on the second Tuesday in July, the day of their annual general meeting, paraded the streets, accompanied by a band of music, and carrying an elegant device

composed of the most beautiful flowers, which, on the company reaching the inn where they dined, was thrown from the window to the crowd, who soon demolished it in a scramble for the flowers.

Fuller, too, in his *History of Berwick-upon-Tweed* (1799, p. 447), says the association of gardeners, which took place in 1796, had in his time a procession through the streets yearly. It was accompanied with music; and, in the middle of the procession, a number of men carried a large wreath of flowers. The different officers belonging to this institution wore their respective insignia, and the whole society dined together.

JULY 1.]

IRELAND.

Mason, in his *Stat. Acc. of Ireland* (1814, vol. ii. p. 528), says that the great holiday in Seagoe is on the first of July (Old Style), being the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne. A procession takes place, the whole population wear orange lilies, and the day is spent in festivity.

JULY 5.]

LEICESTERSHIRE.

At Glenfield, the parish clerk, in accordance with an old custom, strews the church with new hay on the first Sunday after the 5th of July.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 219.

JULY 7.] ST. THOMAS À BECKET'S DAY.

CORNWALL.

The festival called Bodmin Riding was kept on Sunday and Monday after St. Thomas à Becket's Day (July 7th). A puncheon of beer having been brewed in the preceding October, and bottled in anticipation of the time, two or more young men who were entrusted with the chief management of the affair, and who represented the "wardens," went round the town attended by a band of drums and fifes, or other instruments. The crier saluted each house with, "To the people of this house a prosperous morning, long life, and a merry riding!" The musicians then struck up the riding tune, and the householder was solicited to taste the riding ale, which was carried round in baskets. A bottle was usually taken in, and it was acknowledged by such a sum as the means or humour of the townsman permitted, to be spent on the public festivities of the season. Next morning a procession was formed: all who could afford to ride mounted on horse or ass, which proceeded first to the Priory, to receive two large garlands of flowers fixed on staves, and then through the principal streets to the Town End, where the games were formally opened. The sports, which lasted two days, consisted of wrestling, foot-racing, jumping in sacks, &c. It should be remarked that a second or inferior brewing, from the same wort, was drunk at a minor merry-making at Whitsuntide. In an order, dated

November 15th, 1583, regulating the business of the shoemakers, a class of tradesmen which seems for ages to have been more than usually numerous in Bodmin, it is directed by the mayor and the masters of the occupation, "that at the *Rydyng* every master and journeyman shall give their attendance to the steward, and likewise bring him to church, upon pain of 12*d.* for every master, and 6*d.* for every journeyman, for every such default, to the discretion of the master of the occupation."

At this festival there was held a curious kind of mock trial. A Lord of Misrule was appointed, before whom any unpopular person, so unlucky as to be captured, was dragged to answer a charge of felony; the imputed crime being such as his appearance might suggest, a negligence in his attire, or a breach of manners. With ludicrous gravity a mock trial was then commenced, and judgment was gravely pronounced, when the culprit was hurried off to receive his punishment. In this his apparel was generally a greater sufferer than his person, as it commonly terminated in his being thrown into the water or the
mire.[74]

"Take him before the mayor of Halgaver;" "Present him in Halgaver Court," are old Cornish proverbs.—*Parochial History of Cornwall*, 1868, vol i. p. 104. Murray, *Handbook for Cornwall*, 1865, p. 244.

[74] Carew, in his *Survey of Cornwall* (1811, p. 296), speaking of this custom, says: "The youthlier sort of Bodmin townsmen use sometimes to sport themselves by playing the box with strangers whom they summon to Halgaver. The name signifieth the goat's moor, and such a place it is, lying a little without the town, and very full of quagmires. When these mates with any raw serving man, or other young master, who may

> serve and deserve to make pastime, they cause him to be solemnly arrested, for his appearance before the mayor of Halgaver, where he is charged with wearing one spur, in going untrussed or wanting a girdle, or some such like felony; and after he hath been arraigned and tried, with all requisite circumstances, judgment is given in formal terms, and executed in some ungracious prank or other, more to the scorn than hurt of the party condemned. Now and then they extend their merriment with the largest, to the prejudice of over-credulous people, persuading them to fight with a dragon lurking in Halgaver, or to see some strange matter there; which concludeth at least with a training them into the mire."

KENT.

Becket's Fair, says Hasted in his *History of Canterbury* (1801, vol. i. p. 104), was held on the feast of St. Thomas à Becket, and was so called from this day being the anniversary of the Archbishop's translation from his tomb to his shrine, and as such was fixed for this purpose, as a means of gathering together a greater multitude for the celebration of this solemn day.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

In some parts of this county the Sunday after St. Thomas à Becket's Day goes by the name of Relic Sunday.—*Time's Telescope*, 1822, p. 192.

JULY 9.]

STAFFORDSHIRE.

There existed at one time, at Wolverhampton, an annual procession, on July 9th (the eve of the great fair), of men in antique armour, preceded by musicians playing the "fair tune," and followed by the steward of the Deanery Manor, the peace-officers, and many of the principal inhabitants. Tradition says the ceremony originated at the time when Wolverhampton was a great emporium of wool, and resorted to by merchants of the staple from all parts of England. The necessity of an annual force to keep peace and order during the fair (which is said to have lasted fourteen days, but the charter says only eight) is not improbable. It was finally discontinued by Sir William Pulteney, who was the lessee of the Deanery Manor, to the great dissatisfaction of the people of Wolverhampton. These processions were the remains of the Corpus Christi pageantry, which were always celebrated at the annual fairs, and attended by men armed and equipped as if for war.—Shaw, *History of Staffordshire*, 1798-1801, p. 165; Oliver, *Historical Account of the Collegiate Church of Wolverhampton*, 1836, p. 44.

JULY 12.]

IRELAND.

At Maghera, County Down, on the 12th of July, the anniversary of the battle of Aughrim, the Orangemen assemble, walk in their insignia, and

dine together.—Mason, *Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1844, vol. i. p. 594.

JULY 15.]
ST. SWITHIN'S DAY.

St. Swithin was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the time of King Ethelbert, and the great patron saint of the cathedral and city of Winchester. In some church-books there are entries of gatherings of "Saint Swithine's farthyngs" on this day. There is an old proverb which says:

"St. Swithin's Day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days it will remain:
St. Swithin's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days 'twill rain na mair."

There is also a quaint saying, that when it rains on St. Swithin's Day, it is the saint christening the apples.—See Timbs' *Things not Generally Known*, 1856, p. 153.

SURREY.

In the Churchwardens' accounts of the parish of Horley, under the years 1505-6, is the following entry, which implies a gathering on this saint's day:—

"Itm. Saintt Swithine farthyngs the said 2 yeres, 30*s.* 8*d.*"

YORKSHIRE.

Sports were at one time annually celebrated at Cloughton on Saturday evening after the 15th July. —Cole, *Historical Sketches of Scalby, Burniston, and Cloughton*, 1829, p. 63.

JULY 17.]
ST. KENELM'S DAY.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

At Clent, in the parish of Hales Owen, a fair was formerly held in a field in which St. Kenelm's Chapel is situated. It is, says Brand, of very ancient date, and probably arose from the gathering together of persons to visit the shrine of St. Kenelm on the feast of the saint, 17th of July. On the Sunday after this fair, St. Kenelm's wake was held, at which a curious custom was practised, called "Crabbing the Parson," the origin of which is said to have arisen on this wise:—"Long, long ago, an incumbent of Frankley, to which St. Kenelm's is attached, was accustomed, through horrid, deep-rutted, miry roads, occasionally to wend his way to the sequestered depository of the remains of the murdered saint-king, to perform Divine service. It was his wont to carry some provisions with him, with which he refreshed himself at a farm-house near the scene of his pastoral duties. On one occasion, however, having eaten up his store of provisions, he was tempted (after he had donned his sacerdotal habit, and in the absence of the good dame) to pry into the secrets of a huge pot, in which was simmering the savoury dish the lady had provided for her household; among the rest

dumplings formed no inconsiderable portion of the contents. The story runs that the parson poached sundry of them, hissing hot, from the cauldron, and, hearing the footsteps of his hostess, he, with great dexterity, deposited them in the sleeves of his surplice. She, however, was conscious of her loss, and, closely following the parson to the church, by her presence prevented him from disposing of them, and, to avoid her accusation, he forthwith entered the reading-desk, and began to read the service, the clerk beneath making the responses. Erelong, a dumpling slipped out of the parson's sleeve, and fell on the clerk's head; he looked up with astonishment, but taking the matter in good part, proceeded with the service. Presently, however, another dumpling fell on his head, at which he, with upturned eyes and ready tongue, responded, "Two can play at that, master," and, suiting the action to the word, he immediately began pelting the parson with crabs, a store of which he had gathered, intending to take them home in his pocket to foment the sprained leg of his horse, and so well did he play his part, that the parson soon decamped, amid the jeers of the old dame, and the laughter of the few persons who were in attendance."—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 344.

JULY 20.]
ST. MARGARET'S DAY.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

On the feast of St. Margaret in 1511, the Miracle

Play of the Holy Martyr St. George was acted on a stage in an open field at Bassingborne in Cambridgeshire, at which there were a minstrel and three waits hired from Cambridge, with a property-man and a painter. The following extract from an old churchwarden's book belonging to the parish of Bassingborne, gives the various subscriptions and expenses connected with
it:—

Memorandum:—Received at the play held on St. Margaret's day, A.D. MDXI., in Basingborn of the holy martyr St. George.

Received of the Township of Royston xii^{s}. Tharfield vi^{s} viii^{d}, Melton v^{s} iiii^{d}, Lillington x^{s} vi^{d}, Whaddon iv^{s} iiii^{d}, Steeplemenden iiii^{s}, Barly iv^{s} i^{d}, Ashwell iiii^{s}, Abingdon iii^{s} iv^{d}, Orwell iii^{s}, Wendy ii^{s} ix^{d}, Wimpole ii^{s} vii^{d}, Meldreth ii^{s} iv^{d}, Arrington ii^{s} iv^{d}, Shepreth ii^{s} iv^{d}, Kelsey ii^{s} v^{d}, Willington i^{s} x^{d}, Fulmer i^{s} viii^{d}, Gilden Morden i^{s}, Tadlow i^{s}, Croydon i^{s} i^{d}, Hattey x^{d}, Wratlingworth ix^{d}, Hastingfield ix^{d}, Barkney viii^{d}, Foxten iv^{d}, Kneesnorth vi^{d}.

Item received of the town of Bassingborn on the Monday and Friday after the play, together with other comers on the Monday, xiv^{s} v^{d}.

Item received on the Wednesday after the play, with a pot of ale at Kneesnorth, all costs deducted, i^{s} vii^{d}.

Expenses of the said Play.

First paid to the garnement man for garnements and propyrts and playbooks, xx^{s}.

To a minstrel and three waits of Cambridge for the Wednesday, Saturday, and Monday. Two of them the first day, and three the other days, v^{s} xi^{d}.

Item in expences on the Players, when the play was shewed, in bread and ale and for other vittails at Royston for those players, iii^{s} ii^{d}.

Item in expences on the play day for the bodies of vi. sheep, xxiid each, ixs iid.

Item for three calves and half a lamb, viiis iid.

Item paid five days board of one Pyke Propyrte, making for himself and his servant one day, and for his horses pasture vi. days, is ivd.

Item paid to turners of spits and for salt, ixd.

Item for iv chickens for the gentlemen, ivd.

Item for fish and bread and setting up the stages, ivd.

Item to John Beecher for painting of three Fanchoms and four Tormentors.

Item to Giles Ashwell for easement of his croft to play in, is.

Item to John Hobarde, Brotherhood Priest, for the play book, iis viiid.

Antiquarian Repertory, 1808, vol. iii. p. 320.

NORFOLK.

To the west of Wereham Church, Norfolk, a well, called St. Margaret's, was much frequented in the times of Popery. Here, on St. Margaret's Day, the people regaled themselves with ale and cakes, music and dancing. Alms were given, and offerings and vows made, at sainted wells of this kind.—*Excursions in the County of Norfolk*, 1829, vol. ii. p. 145.

JULY 22.]

ST. BRIDGET'S EVE.

IRELAND.

On St. Bridget's Eve every farmer's wife in Ireland makes a cake, called *Bairinbreac*; the neighbours are invited, the madder of ale and the pipe go round, and the evening concludes with mirth and festivity. —Col. Vallancey, *Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language*, 1772, p. 21; see Fosbroke's *Encyclopædia of Antiquities*, 1840, p. 657.

JULY 25.]
ST. JAMES'S DAY.

It is customary in London to begin eating oysters on St. James's Day, and in the course of the few days following upon their introduction, the children of the humbler class employ themselves diligently in collecting the shells which have been cast out from taverns and fish-shops, and of these they make piles in various rude forms. By the time that old St. James's Day (August 5th) has come about, they have these little fabrics in nice order, with a candle stuck in the top, to be lighted at night. As the stranger occasionally comes in contact with these structures, he is suddenly surrounded by a group of boys, exclaiming, "Pray, remember the grotto!" by which is meant a demand for a penny wherewith professedly to keep up the candle. Mr. Thoms considers that in the grotto thus made, we have a memorial of the world-renowned shrine of St. James at Compostella, which may have been formerly erected on the anniversary of St. James by poor persons, as an invitation to the pious, who could not visit Compostella to show their reverence to the saint by alms giving to their needy brethren.—*Book of Days*,

vol. ii. p. 122; *N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. i. p. 6.

KENT.

The rector of Cliff distributes at his parsonage-house, on St. James's day, annually, a mutton pie and a loaf to as many as choose to demand it; the expense amounts to about £15 per annum.

LANCASHIRE.

It was customary at one time for the Corporation of Liverpool to give an annual public dinner, in the Exchange, to two or three hundred of the principal inhabitants, on the 25th July and 11th November, the days of the commencement of the Liverpool fairs, which were considered as days of festivity by all ranks of the community. On these days the mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses, in their gowns, went in procession with a band of music, from the Exchange to the middle of Dale Street, where they passed round a large stone, whitewashed for the occasion, and thence proceeded to another stone in the centre of Castle Street, and back to the Exchange, where they dined. This ancient custom was discontinued about the year 1760.—Corry, *History of Liverpool*, 1810, p. 94.

JULY 26.]
MACE MONDAY.

BERKSHIRE.

The first Monday after St. Anne's Day, July 26th, a feast is held at Newbury, the principal dishes being bacon and beans. In the course of the day a procession takes place; a cabbage is stuck on a pole, and carried instead of a mace, accompanied by similar substitutes for other emblems of civic dignity. —*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 1045.

JULY 29.]

ST. OLAVE'S DAY.

Strype in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 11), says: "On the 29th July, 1557, being St. Olave's Day, was the church holiday in Silver Street, the parish church whereof was dedicated to that saint. And at eight of the clock at night began a stage play of a goodly matter (relating, it is like, to that saint), that continued unto twelve at midnight, and then they made an end with good song."

AUGUST.]

SWAN-UPPING.

Formerly the members of the Corporation of London, in gaily-decorated barges, went up the Thames annually in August, for the purpose of *nicking* or marking, and counting their swans. They used to land off Barnes Elms, and partake of a collation. This yearly progress was commonly but incorrectly called "swan-hopping:" the correct designation is shown by the ancient statutes to be

"swan-upping," the swans being taken up and nicked, or marked. A "swan-with-two-nicks" indicated, by his second nick, that he had been taken up twice.[75]

[75] Among the Loseley MSS. is an original roll of swan-marks, showing the beaks of the swans to have been notched with stars, chevrons, crosses, the initials of the owners' names, or other devices.—See *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. x. p. 393.

In the accounts of the Vintner's Company (Egerton MS. 1143, fol. 2,) is the following entry:—

"Money payd for expense for uppyng of Swanes

Item.—Payd in the grete ffroste to James the under swanyerd for upping of the Maister Swannes iiij*s.*

It—For bote hyr at the same tyme iiij*d.*

AUGUST 1.]

LAMMAS DAY.

Gule of August, or Lammas Day, is variously explained. *Gule*, from the Celtic or British *Wyl* or *Gule*, signifies a festival or holiday, and explains Gule of August to mean the holiday of St. Peter *ad vincula* in this month, when the people of England, in Roman Catholic times, paid their Peter-pence. *Lammas* is, by some, derived from lamb-masse, because on that day the tenants who held lands of the cathedral church in York, which is dedicated to

St. Peter *ad vincula*, were bound by their tenure to bring a live lamb into the church at high mass. Others derive it from the Saxon word Hlafmaesse, signifying *loaf-mass* or *bread-mass*, because on this day our forefathers made an offering of bread from new wheat. Blount says, "Lammas Day, the 1st of August, otherwise called the *Gule* or *Yule* of August, which may be a corruption of the British word *Gwul Awst*, signifying the 1st of August." Blount further says, "that Lammas is called *Alaf-Mass*, that is, loaf or bread mass, which signifies a feast of thanksgiving for the first fruits of the corn. It was observed with bread of new wheat; and in some places tenants were bound to bring new wheat to their lord on or before the 1st of August. New wheat is called Lammas wheat." Vallancey further affirms that this day was dedicated to the fruits of the soil; that *Laeith* was the day of the obligation of grain, particularly of wheat, and that *Mas* signifies fruits of all kinds, especially the acorn, whence the word "mast."

Lammas is one of the four cross-quarter days of the year, as they are now denominated. Whitsuntide was formerly the first, Lammas the second, Martinmas the third, and Candlemas the last. Some rents are yet payable at these ancient quarter-days in England, and they continue general in Scotland.—Timbs, *Things not Generally Known*, 1856, p. 154; see Soane's *New Curiosities of Literature*, vol ii. p. 123; Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 347.

It was once customary in England to give money to servants on Lammas Day, to buy gloves; hence the term *glove-silver*. It is mentioned among the ancient customs of the Abbey of St. Edmund, in which the clerk of the cellarer had 2*d.*, the cellarer's squire, 11*d.*, the granger, 11*d.*, and the cowherd a penny.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 334.

DEVONSHIRE.

The charter for Exeter Lammas Fair is perpetuated by a glove of immense size, stuffed and carried through the city on a very long pole, decorated with ribbons, flowers, &c., and attended with music, parish beadles, and the nobility. It is afterwards placed on the top of the Guildhall, and then the fair commences; on the taking down of the glove the fair terminates.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 1059.

ISLE OF MAN.

The first Sunday in August is called, by the Manks peasantry, *yn chied doonaght a ouyr*. On that day they crowd in great numbers to the tops of the highest hills, in the north to the summit of Snafeld, and in the south to the top of Barule. Others visit the sanative wells of the island, which are held in the highest estimation. The veneration with which the Pagan deities were regarded having been transferred along with their fanes and fountains to Christian saints, sanctified and sanative wells became the resort of the pious pilgrim, and by the credulous invalid libations and devotions were, according to ancient practice, performed at these holy springs, which were believed to be guarded by presiding powers to whom offerings were left by the visitants. Many a wonderful cure is said to have been effected by the waters of St. Catherine's Well at Port Erin; by the Chibbyr Parick, or well of St. Patrick, on the west end of the hill of *Lhargey-graue*; by Lord Henry's Well on the south beach of Laxey, and by the well at Peel, also dedicated to St. Patrick, which, says the tradition, just sprang forth where St. Patrick was prompted by Divine instinct to impress the sign of

the cross on the ground. Many extraordinary properties were ascribed to the Nunnery Well, but the most celebrated in modern times for its medicinal virtues is the fine spring which issues from the rocks of the bold promontory called Maughold Head, and which is dedicated to the saint of the name, who, it appears, had blessed the well and endowed it with certain healing virtues. On this account it is yet resorted to, as was the pool of Siloam of old, by every invalid who believes in its efficacy.

On the first Sunday in August the natives, according to ancient custom, still make a pilgrimage to drink its waters; and it is held to be of the greatest importance to certain females to enjoy the beverage when seated in a place called the *saint's chair*, which the saint, for the accommodation of succeeding generations, obligingly placed immediately contiguous.—Bennet, *Sketches of the Isle of Man*, 1829, p. 65; Waldron, *Description of Isle of Man*, p. 151; Train, *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 121.

MIDDLESEX.

Lammas Day is noted in London for an annual rowing match on the Thames, instituted by Thomas Doggett,[76]
an actor of celebrity, in honour of the accession of George I. to the throne of England. Doggett was so warmly attached to the Brunswick family that Sir Richard Steele termed him "a Whig up to the head and ears." In the year after George I. came to the throne, Doggett gave a waterman's coat and silver badge, to be rowed for by six watermen on the 1st of August. This he not only continued till his death, but he bequeathed a certain sum of money, the interest

of which was to be appropriated annually, for ever, to the purchase of a like coat and badge, by six young watermen, whose apprenticeships had expired the year before. This ceremony is performed every year, the competitors setting out, at a signal given, at that time of the tide when the current is strongest against them, and rowing from the old Swan, near London Bridge, to the White Swan at Chelsea.—*Sports, Pastimes, and Customs of London*, 1847, p. 35.

[76] He first appeared on the Dublin stage, and afterwards, with Colley Cibber and Robert Wilkes, became joint manager of Drury Lane Theatre. He died in 1721.—Faulkner, *History of Chelsea*, 1829, p. 188.

In the parish of St. Luke, Chelsea, were formerly "The Lotts," Lammas land, for ages appurtenant to the manor of Chelsea. The lord of the manor possessed the right of letting the land on lease for the spring and summer quarters, beginning with March and ending in August, and the inhabitants at large enjoyed the privilege of turning in their cattle from August till February, being the autumn and winter quarters. This state of appropriation continued till the year 1825 or 1826, when the directors of the Kensington Canal Company took possession of them for their own use immediately upon the completion of the canal; they have detained them ever since, and have let them successively to several persons, and received rent for the same. The Chelsea Lammas lands had hitherto been opened on the 12th of August, being the first of the month according to the old style. The graziers, butchers, and others with their cattle, used formerly to assemble in the lane leading to "The Lotts," on the eve of Lammas, and when the clock had struck twelve they entered the meadow.—Timbs, *Things not Generally Known*, 1856,

p. 154.

SUSSEX.

The following curious custom once existed at Eastbourne. On the three first Sundays in August a public breakfast, says Royer (*History of Eastbourne*, 1787, p. 126), is given at the parsonage-house by the tenants of the great tythes to the farmers and their servants, each farmer being entitled to send two servants for every waggon that he keeps. So that if a farmer have five waggons to do his necessary business he may send ten servants, and so on in proportion for a less or greater number. The farmers are entertained in the parlour with a sirloin of hot roast beef, cold ham, Sussex cheese, strong ale, and Geneva; the men are entertained in the barn with everything the same as their masters except the beef. It is presumed that this custom had its origin from the time the tythes were first taken in kind in this parish, in order to keep all parties in good humour.

A petition to Parliament for the abolition of this custom was presented as far back as 1640, and, in 1649, an ordinance was enacted that 20*l.* per annum should be paid for the relief of the poor in lieu of the feast. In 1687 the custom was revived; more recently an annual payment of 20*l.* for the education of poor children was substituted, and this amount now figures year by year in the accounts of St. Mary's schools as paid by the Duke of Devonshire.—Chambers' *Handbook of Eastbourne*, 1872, p. 35.

ST. WILFRID'S FEAST.

YORKSHIRE.

Hutton in his *Trip to Coatham* (1810, p. 63), says the great annual feast at Coatham in his time was celebrated on the first Sunday after Lammas Day, old style, and called St. Wilfrid's Feast, kept in commemoration of the prelate's return from exile. On the evening before the feast commenced, the effigy of this favourite of the people, having been previously conveyed some miles out of the town, made his public entry as returning after a long absence, being met by crowds of people, who, with shouts and acclamations, welcomed the return of the prelate and patron. The same custom seems also to have been observed at Ripon.—See *Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 1059.

SCOTLAND.

What appears as a relic of the ancient Pagan festival of the Gule of August, was practised in Lothian till about the middle of the eighteenth century. The herdsmen within a certain district, towards the beginning of summer, associated themselves into bands, sometimes to the number of a hundred or more. Each of these communities agreed to build a tower in some conspicuous place, near the centre of their district, which was to serve as the place of their rendezvous on Lammas Day. This tower was usually built of sods, for the most part square, about four feet in diameter at the bottom and tapering to a point at the top, which was seldom above seven or eight feet from the ground. In building it, a hole was left in the centre for a flagstaff, on which to display their colours.

From the moment the foundation of the tower was

laid, it became an object of care and attention to the whole community; for it was reckoned a disgrace to suffer it to be defaced; so that they resisted, with all their power, any attempts that should be made to demolish it, either by force or fraud; and, as the honour that was acquired by the demolition of a tower, if effected by those belonging to another, was in proportion to the disgrace of suffering it to be demolished, each party endeavoured to circumvent the other as much as possible, and laid plans to steal upon the tower unperceived, in the night time, and level it with the ground. Great was the honour that such a successful exploit conveyed to the undertakers; and, though the tower was easily rebuilt, yet the news was quickly spread by the successful adventurers, through the whole district, which filled it with shouts of joy and exultation, while their unfortunate neighbours were covered with shame. To ward off this disgrace, a constant nightly guard was kept at each tower, which was made stronger and stronger, as the tower advanced; so that frequent nightly skirmishes ensued at these attacks, but were seldom of much consequence, as the assailants seldom came in force to make an attack in this way, but merely to succeed by surprise; as soon, therefore, as they saw they were discovered, they made off in the best manner they could.

To give the alarm on these and other occasions, every person was armed with a “tooting horn,” that is, a horn perforated in the small end, through which wind can be forcibly blown from the mouth, so as to occasion a loud noise; and as every one wished to acquire as great dexterity as possible in the use of the “tooting horn,” they practised upon it during the summer while keeping their beasts; and towards Lammas they were so incessantly employed at this

business, answering to, and vieing with each other, that the whole country rang continually with the sounds.

As Lammas Day approached each community chose one from among themselves for their captain, and they prepared a stand of colours to be ready to be then displayed. For this purpose they borrowed a fine table-napkin of the largest size from one of the farmers' wives within the district, and ornamented it with ribbons. Things being thus prepared, they marched forth early in the morning on Lammas Day, dressed in their best apparel, each armed with a stout cudgel, and, repairing to their tower, there displayed their colours in triumph, blowing horns, and making merry in the best manner they could: about nine o'clock they sat down upon the green and had their breakfast.

In the meantime scouts were sent out towards every quarter to bring them notice if any hostile party approached, for it frequently happened, that, on that day, the herdsman of one district went to attack those of another district, and to bring them under subjection to them by main force. If news were brought that a hostile party approached, the horns sounded to arms, and they immediately arranged themselves in the best order they could devise; the stoutest and boldest in front, and those of inferior prowess behind. Seldom did they await the approach of the enemy, but usually went forth to meet them with a bold countenance, the captain of each company carrying the colours, and leading the van. When they met they mutually desired each other to lower their colours in sign of subjection. If there appeared to be a great disproportion in the strength of the parties, the weakest usually submitted to this ceremony without much difficulty, thinking their

honour was saved by the evident disproportion of the match; but, if they were nearly equal in strength, neither of them would yield, and it ended in blows, and sometimes bloodshed. It is related that, in a battle of this kind, four were actually killed, and many disabled from work for weeks. If no opponent appeared, or if they themselves had no intention of making an attack, at about mid-day they took down their colours, and marched, with horns sounding, towards the most considerable village in their district; where the lasses and all the people came out to meet them, and partake of their diversions. Boundaries were immediately appointed, and a proclamation made, that all who intended to compete in the race should appear. A bonnet ornamented with ribbons was displayed upon a pole as a prize to the victor; and sometimes five or six started for it, and ran with as great eagerness as if they had been to gain a kingdom; the prize of the second race was a pair of garters, and the third a knife. They then amused themselves for some time with such rural sports as suited their taste, and dispersed quietly to their respective homes before sunset.

When two parties met, and one of them yielded to the other, they marched together for some time in two separate bodies, the subjected body behind the other, and then they parted good friends, each performing their races at their own appointed place. Next day, after the ceremony was over, the ribbons and napkin that formed the colours were carefully returned to their respective owners, the tower was no longer a matter of consequence, and the country returned to its usual state of tranquillity.—*Trans. Soc. Antiq. of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 194.

AUG. 2.]

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Hunting the ram was a very ancient custom observed at Eton, but is now abolished. Lipscomb, in his *History of Buckinghamshire* (1847, vol. iv. p. 467), thus describes it:—

The college had an ancient claim upon its butcher to provide a ram on the Election Saturday, to be hunted by the scholars; but the animal having upon one occasion been so pressed as to swim across the Thames, it ran into Windsor Market, with the boys after it, and much mischief was caused by this unexpected accident. The health of the scholars had also occasionally suffered from the length of the chase, or the heat of the season. The character of the sport was therefore changed about 1740, when the ram was ham-strung, and, after the speech, was knocked on the head with large twisted clubs, which are reported to have been considered as Etonian curiosities. But the barbarity of the amusement caused it to be altogether laid aside at the election in 1747, and the flesh of the ram was given to be prepared in pasties. The dish still continues nominally to grace the Election Monday, though the meat no longer boasts its original toughness, being in fact the flesh of excellent wethers.

Browne Willis (quoted by Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 441) would derive this custom from what was used in the manor of East Wrotham, Norfolk, where the lord of the manor, after the harvest, gave half an acre of barley and a ram to the tenants thereof; the which ram, if they caught it was their own; if not, it was for the lord again.

In the *Gent. Mag.* (Aug. 1731, vol. i. p. 351) is the following:—

"Monday, August 2nd, was the election at Eton College, when the scholars, according to custom, hunted a ram, by which the provost and fellows hold a manor."

AUG. 4.]

APPRENTICES' FEAST.

The City apprentices, about the time of Charles II., had an annual feast. On one occasion Charles II. sent them a brace of bucks for dinner at Saddlers' Hall, where several of his courtiers dined with them, and his natural son, the duke of Grafton, officiated as one of the stewards.—Noorthouck, *History of London*, 1773, p. 248.

AUG. 5.]

ST. OSWALD'S DAY

LANCASHIRE.

Dr. Whitaker (*History of Richmond*, vol. ii. p. 293) quotes a manuscript description of a rush-bearing observed at Warton, on St. Oswald's Day, or the Sunday nearest to it—he being the patron of the church. "The vain custom," says the writer, "of dancing, excessive drinking, &c., having been many years laid aside, the inhabitants and strangers spend

that day in duly attending the service of the church and making good cheer, within the rules of sobriety, in private houses; and the next in several kinds of diversions, the chiefest of which is usually a rush-bearing, which is on this manner:—They cut hard rushes from the marsh, which they make up into long bundles, and then dress them in fine linen, silk ribbons, flowers, &c.; afterwards, the young women of the village which perform the ceremony that year, take up the burdens erect, and begin the procession (precedence being always given to the churchwardens' burden), which is attended not only with multitudes of people, but with music, drums, ringing of bells, and all other demonstrations of joy they are able to express. When they arrive at the church they go in at the west end, and setting down their burdens in the church, strip them of their ornaments, leaving the heads or crowns of them decked with flowers, cut paper, &c., in some part of the church, generally over the cancelli. Then the company return to the town and partake of a plentiful collation provided for that purpose, and spend the remaining part of the day, and frequently a great part of the night also, in dancing, if the weather permits, about a Maypole, adorned with greens and flowers, or else in some other convenient place."

AUG. 5.]

RAVENGLASS FAIR.

CUMBERLAND.

On the first day of a fair held annually in Muncaster, called Ravenglass Fair, the lord's steward was attended by the serjeant of the borough of Egremont with the insignia called the Bow of Egremont, the foresters with their bows and horns, and all the tenants of the forest of Copeland, whose special service was to attend the lord and his representatives at Ravenglass Fair, and abide there during its continuance. On the third day, at noon, the officers and tenants of the forest departed, after proclamation made; Lord Muncaster and his tenants took a formal re-possession of the place, and the day was concluded with horse races and rural diversions. Afterwards the fair was held for one day.—Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, 1816, vol. iv. p. 141.

AUG. 5.]

MIDDLESEX.

Formerly a silver arrow used annually to be shot for by the scholars of the Free School at Harrow. The following extract is taken from the *Gent. Mag.*, 1731, vol. i., p.
351:—

Thursday, August 5th, according to an ancient custom, a silver arrow, value £3, was shot for at the butts on Harrow-on-the-Hill, by six youths of the Free School, in archery habits, and won by a son of Captain Brown, commander of an East Indiaman. This diversion was the gift of John Lyon, Esq., founder of the said school.

AUG. 6.]
BLACK-CHERRY FAIR.

SURREY.

Henry VI., in the eighteenth year of his reign (1440), granted to John de Harmondesnorth, Abbot of Chertsey, the right to hold a fair on St. Anne's Day, July 26th, old style; but this is now held in the town on the 6th of August, and called "Black Cherry Fair," from the abundance of that fruit sold there.—Brayley, *History of Surrey*, 1841, vol. ii. p. 191.

AUG. 15.]
ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

This was formerly a great festival; and it was customary to implore blessings upon herbs, plants, roots, and fruits, bundles of which were taken to the church and consecrated against hurtful things.—Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 98.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

The following abridged account of the Minstrels' Festival at Tutbury, celebrated at this season, is taken from *The Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 224:—

During the time of the Dukes of Lancaster the little town of Tutbury was so enlivened by the noble hospitality they kept up, and the great concourse of people who gathered there, that some regulations became necessary for keeping them in order; more

especially those disorderly favourites of both the high and low, the wandering jugglers or minstrels, who displayed their talents at all festive boards, weddings, and tournaments. A court was, therefore, appointed by John of Gaunt, to be held every year on the day after the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin, to elect a king of the minstrels, try those who had been guilty of misdemeanours during the year, and grant licences for the future year, all which were accompanied by many curious observances.

The wood-master and ranger of Needwood Forest began the festivities by meeting at Berkley Lodge, in the forest, to arrange for the dinner which was given them at this time at Tutbury Castle, and where the buck they were allowed for it should be killed, as also another, which was their yearly present to the prior of Tutbury for his dinner. These animals having received their death blow, the master, keepers, and deputies met on the Day of Assumption, and rode in gay procession two and two, into the town to the High Cross, each carrying a green bough in his hand, and one bearing the buck's head, cut off behind the ears, garnished with a rye of pease and a piece of fat fastened to each of the antlers. The minstrels went on foot, two and two, before them, and when they reached the cross, the keeper blew on his horn the various hunting signals, which were answered by the others; all passed on to the churchyard, where, alighting from their horses, they went into the church, the minstrels playing on their instruments during the time of the offering of the buck's head, and whilst each keeper paid one penny as an offering to the church. Mass was then celebrated, and all adjourned to the good dinner which was prepared for them in the castle, towards the expenses of which the prior gave them thirty shillings.

On the following day the minstrels met at the bailiff's house in Tutbury, where the steward of the court, and the bailiff of the manor, with the wood-master, met them. A procession was formed to go to church, the trumpeters walking first, and then the musicians on stringed instruments all playing; their king, whose office ended on that day, had the privilege of walking between the steward and bailiff; after them came the four stewards of music, each carrying a white wand, followed by the rest of the company. The psalms and lessons were chosen in accordance with the occasion, and each minstrel paid a penny as a due to the vicar of Tutbury.

On their return to the castle-hall one of the minstrels cried out, "Oyez, oyez, oyez! all minstrels within this honour, residing in the counties of Stafford, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, and Warwick, come in and do your suit and service or you will be amerced." All were then sworn to keep the king of music's counsel, their fellows', and their own; and a lengthy charge from the steward followed, in which he expatiated on the antiquity and excellence of their noble science. After this the jurors proceeded to choose a new king, who was taken alternately from the minstrels of Staffordshire and Derbyshire, as well as four stewards, and retired to consider the offences which were alleged against any minstrel, and fine him if necessary. In the meantime the old stewards brought into the court a treat of wine, ale, and cakes, and the minstrels diverted themselves and the company by playing their merriest airs. The new king entered, and was presented by the jurors, the old one rising from his place, and giving the white wand to his successor, pledging him in a cup of wine; the old stewards followed his example, and at noon all partook of a dinner prepared for them by the old

king.

In the afternoon they all met at the abbey gate, where a bull was given by the prior. The poor beast, after having had the tips of his horns sawed off, his ears and tail cut off, his body smeared with soap, and his nose filled with pepper, was let loose, and if the surrounding minstrels could succeed in cutting off a piece of his skin before he crossed the river Dove into Derbyshire, he became the property of the king of music, but if not he was returned to the prior again. After becoming the king's own, he was brought to the High Street, and there baited with dogs three times. It has been supposed that John of Gaunt, who assumed the title of King of Castile and Leon, introduced this sport in imitation of the Spanish bull-fights. In course of time, however, the pursuit of the bull, which had been confined to the minstrels, became general, and the multitude promiscuously joined in the barbarous sport, which sometimes terminated in broken heads. In 1778 the custom was abolished by the Duke of Devonshire, after lasting four hundred years.—See Pitt's *History of Staffordshire*, 1817, p. 49; *Archæologia*, vol. ii. p. 86; Plot, *Natural History of Staffordshire*, 1686, p. 439; Shauff, *History of Staffordshire*, vol. i. p. 52.

AUG. 16.]

ST. ROCHE'S DAY.

This day was anciently kept like a wake, or general harvest-home, with dances in the churchyard in the evening.—Fosbrooke, *Dict. Antiq.*

AUG. 18.]
ST. HELEN'S DAY.

This saint gives name to numerous wells in the north of England. Dr. Kuerden, in the middle of the seventeenth century, describing one in the parish of Brindle, says: "To it the vulgar neighbouring people of the Red Letter do much resort with pretended devotion, on each year upon St. Ellin's Day, where and when, out of a foolish ceremony, they offer, or throw into the well, pins, which, there being left, may be seen a long time after by any visitor of that fountain." A similar custom was observed some years ago by the visitors of St. Helen's well in Sefton, but more in accordance with an ancient practice than from any devotion to the saint.—Baines, *History of County of Lancaster*, 1836, vol. iii. p. 497; *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. pp. 336, 337.

AUG. 24.]
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

Bartholomew Fair—The origin of Bartholomew Fair was a grant from Henry I., in 1133, to a monk named Rayer, or Rahere, who had been his jester, and had founded the Priory of St. Bartholomew, in later times transformed into a hospital. The fair was annually held at the festival of St. Bartholomew, and, like all other ancient fairs, was originally connected with the Church, under whose auspices miracle-plays, founded on the legends of saints, were represented, which gave place to mysteries, and these again to moralities; afterwards, profane stories

were introduced, the origin of the modern English drama. It was discontinued after 1855, having flourished for seven centuries and a half. Established originally for useful trading purposes, it had long survived its claim to tolerance, but, as London increased, became a great public nuisance, with its scenes of riot and obstruction in the very heart of the city. After the opening of the fair, it was customary anciently for wrestlers to exercise their art, of which Paul Hentzner, a German tutor, travelling in the year 1598 through England has given an account. He says, “that every year upon St. Bartholomew’s day, when the fair is held, it is usual for the mayor, attended by the twelve principal aldermen, to walk in a neighbouring field, dressed in his scarlet gown, and about his neck a golden chain to which is hung a golden fleece, and, besides, that particular ornament which distinguishes the most noble Order of the Garter. When the mayor goes out of the precincts of the city a sceptre and sword and a cap are borne before him, and he is followed by the principal aldermen in scarlet gowns with gold chains, himself and they on horseback. Upon their arrival at a place appointed for that purpose, where a tent is pitched, the mob begin to wrestle before them, two at a time; the conquerors receiving rewards from the magistrates. After this is over, a parcel of live rabbits are turned loose among the crowd, which are pursued by a number of boys, who endeavour to catch them, with all the noise they can make.” In a proclamation, made in 1608, we find the following command laid down in reference to the wrestling: “So many aldermen as dine with my Lord Mayor and the sheriffs, be apparelled in their scarlet gowns lined, and after dinner their horses be brought to them where they dine, and those aldermen which

dine with the sheriffs, ride with them to my lord's house, to accompany him to the wrestling. Then when the wrestling is done, they take their horses, and ride back again through the fair, and so in at Aldersgate, and so home again to the said Lord Mayor's house." Mr. Samuel Pepys (1663) alludes to this wrestling in his diary.

The scholars from the different London schools met at the Priory for disputations on grammar and logic, and wrangled together in verse. John Stow says: "I myself, in my youth, have yearly seen on the eve of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, the scholars of divers grammar schools repair unto the churchyard of St. Bartholomew, the Priory in Smithfield, where upon a bank boarded about under a tree, some one scholar hath stepped up, and there hath opposed and answered till he were by some better scholar overcome and put down; and then the overcomer taking his place did like as the first. And in the end, the best opposers and answerers had rewards, which I observed not but it made both good schoolmasters and also good scholars, diligently against such times to prepare themselves for the obtaining of this garland. I remember there repaired to these exercises, amongst others, the masters and scholars of the free schools of St. Paul's in London, of St. Peter's at Westminster, of St. Thomas Acon's Hospital, and of St. Anthonie's Hospital; whereof the last named commonly presented the best scholars, and had the prize in those days. This Priory of St. Bartholomew being surrendered to Henry VIII., those disputations of scholars in that place surceased; and was again, only for a year or twain, revived in the cloister of Christ's Hospital, where the best scholars, then still of St. Anthonie's School, howsoever the same be now fallen both in number and estimation,

were rewarded with bows and arrows of silver, given to them by Sir Martin Bower, goldsmith. Nevertheless, however, the encouragement failed; the scholars of St. Paul's, meeting with them of St. Anthonie's, would call them Anthonie's Pigs, and they again would call the other Pigeons of Paul's, because many pigeons were bred in St. Paul's Church, and St. Anthonie was always figured with a pig following him; and mindful of the former usage, did for a long season disorderly provoke one another in the open street with *Salve tu quoque, placet mecum disputare? Placet!* And so proceeding from this to questions in grammar, they usually fell from words to blows, with their satchels full of books, many times in great heaps that they troubled the streets and passengers; so that finally they were restrained with the decay of St. Anthonie's School."

In the first centuries of its existence Bartholomew Fair was one of the great annual markets of the nation and the chief cloth fair of the kingdom. It was the great gathering in the metropolis of England, for the sale of that produce upon which England especially relied for her prosperity. Two centuries after the Conquest our wealth depended upon wool, which was manufactured in the time of Henry II., in whose days there arose guilds of weavers. In King John's reign there was prohibition of the export of wool and of the import of cloth. A metropolitan cloth fair was therefore a commercial institution, high in dignity and national importance. There was a trade also at Bartholomew Fair in live stock, in leather, pewter, and in other articles of commerce, but cloth ranked first among the products of our industry. The clothiers of England, and the drapers of London, had their standings during the fair in the Priory churchyard. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth,

however, Bartholomew Fair ceased to be a cloth fair of any importance; but its name and fame is still preserved in the lane running parallel to Bartholomew Close, termed “Cloth Fair,” which was generally inhabited by drapers and mercers in the days of Strype.

A Pedlars’ Court of Piepowder was held within the Priory gates, for debts and contracts, before a jury of traders formed on the spot, at which the prior, as lord of the fair, presided by his representative. It remained always by its original site, being held in Cloth Fair to the last. There is no record to be found of any ordinance by which the court of Piepowder was first established in this country. There never had been known a fair in Europe to which such a court was not by usage attached. Such courts were held in the markets of the Romans, which some writers regard as fairs, and in which they find the origin of modern fairs. The court of Piepowder in Bartholomew Fair, or the corresponding court in any other fair in England, had jurisdiction only in commercial questions. It could entertain a case of slander if it was slander of wares, not slander of person: not even the king, if he should sit in a court of Piepowder, could extend its powers. In 1445 four persons were appointed by the court of aldermen as keepers of the fair and of the court of Piepowder, the city being thus in that case represented as joint lord of the fair with the prior. As the fair prospered it was rendered attractive by a variety of popular amusements. All manner of exhibitions, theatrical booths, &c., thronged the fair, and tumblers, acrobats, stilt-walkers, mummers, and mountebanks, resorted to it in great numbers. Shows were exhibited for the exhibition of puppet-plays, sometimes constructed on religious history, such as

"The Fall of Nineveh," others were constructed on classic story, as "The Siege of Troy." Shows of other kinds abounded, and zoology was always in high favour. In 1593 the keeping of the fair was for the first time suspended, by the raging of the plague. The same thing happened in 1603, in 1625, in 1630, in 1665, and in 1666. The licence of the Restoration mainly arising from the low personal character of the king, but greatly promoted by the natural tendency to reaction after the excess of severity used by the Puritans in suppressing what was not to be suppressed, at once extended Bartholomew Fair from a three days' market to a fortnight's—if not even at one time to a six weeks'—riot of amusement. In 1678 the civil authorities had already taken formal notice of the "Irregularities and Disorders" of Bartholomew and Lady Fairs, and referred it to a committee "to consider how the same might be prevented, and what damages would occur to the city by laying down the same." This is the first hint of suppression that arises in the history of the fair, and its arising is almost simultaneous with the decay of the great annual gathering as a necessary seat of trade. In 1685 the fair was leased by the city to the sword bearer for three years at a clear rent of £100 per year. At the expiration of two years a committee having reported that the net annual profit for those years had amounted to not more than £68, the city fair, then lasting fourteen days, was, on his application, leased to the same sword-bearer for twenty-one years at the same rent. As time went on, however, the Corporation of London was still setting daily against the evil that was in the fair. In 1691, and again in 1694, a reduction to the old term of three days was ordered, as a check to vice, and in order that the pleasures of the fair might not choke

up the avenues of the traffic. In 1697, the Lord Mayor, on St. Bartholomew's Day, published an ordinance recorded in the *Postman* "for the suppression of vicious practices in Bartholomew Fair, as obscene, lascivious, and scandalous plays, comedies and farces, unlawful games and interludes, drunkenness, etc., strictly charging all constables and other officers to use their utmost diligence in persecuting the same." But there was no suppression of the puppet-theatres. *Jephthah's Rash Vow* was performed that year at Blake's Booth, as in the following years at Blake and Pinkethman's. Again on the 18th of June, 1700, stage-plays and interludes at the fair were for that year prohibited: they were again prohibited by the mayor who ruled in the year 1702. In 1698, a Frenchman, Monsieur Sorbière, visiting London, says, "I was at Bartholomew Fair. It consists most of toy-shops, also fiacres and pictures, ribbon shops, no books; many shops of confectioners, where any woman may be commodiously treated. Knavery is here in perfection, dextrous cut-purses and pickpockets. I went to see the dancing on the ropes, which was admirable. Coming out, I met a man that would have took off my hat, but I secured it, and was going to draw my sword, crying out "Begar! damn'd rogue! morbleu!" &c., when on a sudden I had a hundred people about me, crying, "Here, monsieur, see *Jephthah's Rash Vow*;" "Here, monsieur, see *The Tall Dutchwoman*;" "See *The Tiger*," says another; "See *The Horse and No Horse*, whose tail stands where his head should do;" "See the *German Artist*, monsieur;" "See *The Siege of Namur*, monsieur;" so that betwixt rudeness and civility I was forced to get into a fiacre, and, with an air of haste and a full trot, got home to my lodgings."

In 1701 Bartholomew Fair was presented as a

nuisance by the Grand Jury of London, and in 1750 it was reduced to its original three days. By the alteration of the calendar in 1752, the fair, in the following year, was, for the first time, proclaimed on September 3rd.

On the 3rd of December, 1760, the London Court of Common Council referred to its City Lands Committee to consider the tenures of the City fair, with a view to their abolition. The subject was then carefully discussed, and a final report sent in, with the opinion of counsel, upon which the court came to a resolution, that, owing to the interest of Lord Kensington in Bartholomew Fair, that was a nuisance which they could endeavour only by a firm practice of restriction to abate. In 1769 plays, puppet-shows, and gambling were suppressed. In 1798, when the question of abolishing the fair was discussed, a proposal to restrict it to one day was made and set aside, because the measure might produce in London a concentrated tumult dangerous to life. In the course of a trial at Guildhall in 1817, involving the rights of Lord Kensington, it was stated on Lord Kensington's behalf, that considering the corrupt state of the fair, and the nuisance caused by it in the neighbourhood of Smithfield, he should throw no obstacle in the way of its removal, and was ready to give up his own rights over it, on being paid their value. His receipts from toll were stated to be 30*l.* or 40*l.* a year, and their estimated value 500*l.* or 600*l.* In the year 1830 the Corporation of London did accordingly buy from Lord Kensington the old Priory rights, vested in the heirs of Chancellor Rich, and all the rights and interests in Bartholomew Fair then became vested in the City. Having thus secured full power over the remains in question, the Corporation could take into its own hands the whole business of

their removal. The fair at this time had long ceased to be a place of traffic, and was only a haunt of amusement, riot, and dissipation. Latterly it had only been attended by the keepers of a few gingerbread stalls; and consequently in 1839 measures were for the first time seriously adopted for its suppression, and in the following year the exhibitions were removed to Islington. In 1850 the last proclamation by the Lord Mayor took place, and in 1855 the once famous Bartholomew Fair came to an end.—*History and Origin of Bartholomew Fair*, published by Arliss and Huntsman, 1808; Chambers' *Encyclopædia* (1860), vol. i. p. 719; Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair*, 1859; Chambers' *Book of Days*, vol. ii. pp. 263-267.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

In the morning a number of maidens, clad in their best attire, went in procession to a small chapel, situated in the parish of Dorrington, and strewed its floor with rushes, from whence they proceeded to a piece of land called the "Play-Garths," where they were joined by most of the inhabitants of the place, who passed the remainder of the day in rural sports, such as foot-ball, wrestling and other athletic exercises, with dancing, &c.—*History of County of Lincoln*, 1834, vol. ii. p. 255.

It was customary at Croyland Abbey to give little knives to all comers on St. Bartholomew's Day. Mr. Gough, in his *History of Croyland Abbey*, p. 73. says that this abuse was abolished by Abbot John de Wisebech, in the time of Edward IV., exempting both the abbot and convent from a great and needless expense. This custom originated in allusion to the knife wherewith St. Bartholomew was flayed. Three

of these knives were quartered, with three of the whips so much used by St. Guthlac, in one coat borne by this house. Mr. Hunter had great numbers of them, of different sizes, found at different times in the ruins of the abbey and in the river.

YORKSHIRE.

Dr. Johnston, quoted by Hampson (*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 342), has preserved an account of a pageant exhibited at Dent on the rush-bearing (St. Bartholomew's Day) after the Restoration, in which, among other characters, Oliver and Bradshaw, Rebellion and War, were represented, all decked by times with vizardes on, and strange deformities; and Bradshaw had his tongue run through with a red hot iron, and Rebellion was hanged on a gibbet in the market-place. Then came Peace and Plenty, and Diana with her nymphs, all with coronets on their heads, each of which made a several speech in verses of their loyalty to their king.

AUG. 30.]

PRESTON GUILD.

LANCASHIRE.

Concerning this curious custom, Britton, in his *Lancashire* (1818, p. 109), gives the following account:—

It is a sort of public carnival or *jubilee*, and is held every twenty years, as appears by the records of the corporation. The last confirmation was by Charles II., in 1684, since which time it has been regularly held, in the first of Anne, ninth of George I., sixteenth of George II., and second, twenty-second, and again in the forty-second year of George III., the only monarch, except Queen Elizabeth, who has reigned during the time of three guilds. It begins about the latter end of August, and, by the Charter, which obliges the corporation to celebrate it at the end of every twenty years, on pain of forfeiting their elective franchises and their right as burgesses, twenty-eight days of grace are allowed to all who are disposed to renew their freedom. By public proclamation it is declared that, on failure of doing so, they are ever after to be debarred of the same on any future occasion. The last guild commenced on the 30th of August, 1802, when an immense concourse of people of all ranks were assembled, and processions of the gentlemen at the heads of the different classes of manufactories with symbolical representations of their respective branches of trade

and commerce; and bands of music passed through the principal streets of the town. The mayor and corporation, with the wardens of the different companies at the head of their respective incorporated bodies, each in their official dresses, and with their usual insignia, fell into the ranks in due order, and the whole was preceded by an excellent band of music belonging to the 17th Regiment of Light Dragoons, in full dress, and their officers newly clothed. Besides the wool-combers', spinners', weavers', cordwainers', carpenters', vintners', tailors', smiths', plumbers', painters', glaziers', watchmakers', mercers' and drapers' companies, the whole was closed by the butchers, skinners, tanners, and glovers, habited in characteristic dresses, each company being attended by a band of music and a very elegant ensign. In this order they proceeded to church, and after service returned and paraded through the different streets in the same order. The mayor afterwards entertained the gentlemen at his house, and on the next day the mayoress repeated the treat to the ladies of the town and its vicinity, who formed a procession on this day, in a similar manner, preceded by the girls of the cotton manufactory.

SEPT.]

ECCLES WAKE.

LANCASHIRE.

An annual festival used to be held at Eccles, of great antiquity, as old probably as the first erection

of the church, called Eccles Wake, celebrated on the first Sunday in September, and was continued during the three succeeding days, and consisted of feasting upon a kind of local confectionery, called "Eccles Cakes," and ale, with various sports.

The following was the programme on such an occasion:

"*Eccles Wake.*—On Monday morning, at eleven o'clock the sports will commence (the sports of Sunday being passed over in silence) with that most ancient, loyal, rational, constitutional and lawful diversion—

"*Bull Baiting*—In all its primitive excellence, for which this place has been long noted. At one o'clock there will be a foot race; at two o'clock, a bull baiting for a horse collar; at four o'clock, donkey races for a pair of panniers; at five o'clock, a race for a stuff hat; the day's sport to conclude with baiting the bull, Fury, for a superior dog-chain. On Tuesday, the sports will be repeated; also on Wednesday, with the additional attraction of a smock race by ladies. A main of cocks to be fought on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday for twenty guineas, and five guineas the byes, between the gentlemen of Manchester and Eccles; the wake to conclude with a fiddling match by all the fiddlers that attend for a piece of silver."—Baines, *History of County of Lancaster*, 1836, vol. iii. p. 123.

CHALK-BACK DAY.

NORFOLK.

At Diss, it is customary for the juvenile populace, on the Thursday before the third Friday in September (on which latter day a fair and session for hiring servants are held), to mark and disfigure each other's dresses with white chalk, pleading a prescriptive right to be mischievous on "Chalk-Back Day."—*N. & Q. 1st. S.* vol iv. p. 501.

IRELAND.

The following extract is taken from the *Leeds Mercury*, September 8th, 1863:—The triennial ceremony of "throwing the dart" in Cork Harbour was performed on Thursday afternoon by the mayor of that city. This is one of those quaint ceremonials by which, in olden time, municipal boundaries were preserved and corporate rights asserted. A similar civic pageant called "riding the fringes" (franchises) was formerly held by the lord mayor and corporation of Dublin, in which, after riding round the inland boundaries of the borough, the cavalcade halted at a point on the shore near Bullock, whence the lord mayor hurled a dart into the sea, the spot where it fell marking the limit of the maritime jurisdiction. At 2 o'clock, P.M., the members of the Cork town council embarked on board a steam-vessel, attended by all the civic officers, and the band of the Cork civil artillery. A number of ladies also attended. The steamer proceeded out to sea until she reached an imaginary line between Poor Head and Cork Head, which is supposed to be the maritime boundary of the borough. Here the mayor donned his official robes and proceeded, attended by the mace and sword bearer, the city treasurer, and the town clerk, all wearing their official costumes, to the prow of the vessel, whence he launched his javelin into the

water, thereby asserting his authority as lord high admiral of the port. The event was celebrated by a banquet in the evening.

SEPT. 4.]
ST. CUTHBERT'S DAY.

DURHAM.

An offering of a stag was at one time annually made on St. Cuthbert's Day, in September, by the Nevilles of Raby. On one occasion, however, Lord Neville claimed that himself, and as many as he might bring with him, should be feasted by the Prior upon the occasion. To this the Prior demurred, as a thing that had never been before claimed as of right, and as being a most expensive and onerous burden, for the trains of the great nobility of that day were numerous in the extreme. The result was that the Prior declined to accept the stag when laid before the shrine, by which they of the Nevilles were so grievously offended that from words they got to blows, and began to cuff the monks who were ministering at the altar. The latter, upon this occasion, were not contented to offer a mere passive resistance, for they made such good use of the large wax candles which they carried in belabouring their opponents as to compel them to retreat. The retainers of the Nevilles did not, however, condescend to take back again the stag which, as they deemed, had been so uncourteously refused. The stag was an oblation by the Nevilles of great antiquity, and appears to have been brought into the

church, and presented with winding of horns.—Ornsby, *Sketches of Durham*, 1846, p. 77; Mackenzie, *View of County of Durham*, 1834, vol. ii. p. 201.

SEPT. 8.]
NATIVITY OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

An old tradition existing within the town of Grimsby asserts that every burgess at his admission to the freedom of the borough anciently presented to the mayor a boar's head, or an equivalent in money when the animal could not be procured. The lord, too, of the adjacent manor of Bradley, it seems, was obliged by his tenure to keep a supply of these animals in his wood for the entertainment of the mayor and burgesses, and an annual hunting match was officially proclaimed on some particular day after the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. In the midst of these extensive woods the sport was carried on, and seldom did the assembled train fail to bring down a leash of noble boars, which were designed for a public entertainment on the following day. At this feast the newly-elected mayor took his seat at the head of the table, which contained the whole body corporate and the principal gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood—*Med. Ævi Kalend.*, vol. i. p. 96.

SEPT 12.]

HAMPSHIRE.

A fair used to be celebrated at Winchester on the 12th of September, and was by far the greatest fair in the kingdom. The mayor resigned the keys of the four gates to a magistrate appointed by the bishop, and collectors were stationed on all the roads. Merchants resorted to it from distant parts of Europe, and it formed a temporary city; each street being appropriated to different commodities.—*Historical and Descriptive Guide to Winchester*, 1829, p. 86.

SEPT. 14.]

HOLY-ROOD DAY.

This festival, called also Holy-Cross Day, was instituted by the Romish Church on account of the recovery of a large piece of the cross by the Emperor Heraclius, after it had been taken away on the plundering of Jerusalem by Chosroes, King of Persia.

It appears to have been customary to go a-nutting upon this day, from the following passage in the old play of *Grim the Collier of Croydon*:

> "This day, they say, is called Holy-Rood Day,
> And all the youth are now a-nutting gone."

In the *Gent. Mag.* is the following:—"Tuesday, September 14th, 1731, being Holy-Rood Day, the king's huntsmen hunted their free buck in Richmond New Park, with bloodhounds, according to custom."

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

It appears from the MS. *Status Scholæ Etonensis*, 1560, already quoted, that, in the month of September, "on a certain day," most probably the 14th, the boys of Eton School were to have a play-day, in order to go out and gather nuts, a portion of which, when they returned, they were to make presents of to the different masters. Before leave, however, was granted for their excursion, they were required to write verses on the fruitfulness of autumn, the deadly cold, &c., of the coming winter.

SURREY.

At Chertsey a fair is held on Holy-Rood Day (Old Style), and goes by the name of "Onion Fair," from the quantity of this esculent brought for sale.—Brayley, *History of Surrey*, 1841, vol. ii. p. 191.

SEPT. 21.]
ST. MATTHEW'S DAY.

In Brayley's *Londiniana* (1829, vol. ii. p. 30) is the following extract from the MS. copy of the journal of Richard Hoare, Esq., during the year of his shrievalty, 1740-41:—Monday, September 21st (1741), being St. Matthew's Day, waited on my lord mayor to the great hall in Christ's Hospital, where we were met by several of the presidents and governors of the other hospitals within the city, and being seated at the upper end the children passed two and two, whom we followed to the church, and after having a sermon came back to the grammar-

school, where the boys made speeches in commemoration of their benefactors, one in English, the other in Latin, to each of whom it is customary for the lord mayor to give one guinea, and the two sheriffs half-a-guinea a-piece as we did; afterwards, the clerk of the hospital delivered to the lord mayor a list of the several governors to the several hospitals nominated the preceding year. Then the several beadles of all the hospitals came in, and laying down their staves on the middle of the floor, retired to the bottom of the hall. Thereupon the lord mayor addressed himself to the city marshal, inquiring after their conduct, and if any complaint was to be made against any one in particular, and no objection being made, the lord mayor ordered them to take up their staves again; all which is done in token of their submission to the chief magistrate, and that they hold their places at his will, though elected by their respective governors. We were afterwards treated in the customary manner with sweet cakes and burnt wine.

SEPT. 22.]

BEDFORDSHIRE.

On this day, at Biddenham, shortly before noon, a little procession of villagers convey a white rabbit decorated with scarlet ribbons through the village, singing a hymn in honour of St. Agatha. This ceremony is said to date from the year of the first Crusade. All the unmarried young women who meet the procession extend the first two fingers of the left hand, pointing towards the rabbit, and

say—

"Gustin, Gustin, lacks a bier!
Maidens, maidens, bury him here."

The Penny Post, November 1870.

SEPT. 24.]
SCALDING THURSDAY.

In Laud's diary occurs the following: "[1635] Sept. 24th, Scalding Thursday."

This was probably a homely term for the day of preparation for that high-day Michaelmas, when the victim goose was scalded, plucked, and hung—a week's hanging is the rule for a goose.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.*, vol. iv. p. 441.

SEPT. 28.]
MICHAELMAS EVE.

SURREY.

A curious custom once existed at Kingston, viz., that of the congregation cracking nuts during the performance of divine service on the Sunday next before the eve of St. Michael's Day: hence the phrase, "Crack-Nut Sunday." This custom is considered by some to have had originally some connection with the choosing of the bailiff and other members of the corporate body on St. Michael's Day, and of the usual

civic feast attending that proceeding. It would seem, however, from the following passage in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (chap. iv.), that the custom was not confined to Kingston; for the good vicar, speaking of his parishioners, says:—"They kept up the Christmas carol, sent true-love-knots on Valentine morning, ate pancakes on Shrovetide, showed their wit on the first of April, and religiously cracked nuts on Michaelmas eve."—Brayley, *Topographical History of Surrey*, 1841, vol. iii. p 41.

IRELAND.

The last Sunday of summer has been, heretofore, a day of great importance with the Irish, as upon it they first tried the new potato, and formed an opinion as to the prospects of the future harvest. The day was always called, in the west in particular, "Garlic Sunday," perhaps a corruption of Garland Sunday.—*N. & Q. 1st. S.* vol. ix. p. 34.

SEPT. 29.]

MICHAELMAS DAY.

At this season village maidens, in the west of England, go up and down the hedges gathering crab apples, which they carry home, putting them into a loft, and forming with them the initials of their supposed suitors' names. The initials which are found, on examination, to be most perfect on *Old* Michaelmas Day are considered to represent the strongest attachments and the best for choice of husbands.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 356.

Michaelmas Goose.

—It was long a prevalent notion that the practice of eating goose on Michaelmas Day arose from the circumstance that Queen Elizabeth received the news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada whilst partaking of a goose on that anniversary. This, however, is disproved by the fact that, so far back as the tenth year of Edward IV. (1470), one John de la Hay was bound, amongst other services, to render to William Barnaby, lord of Lastres, in Herefordshire, for a parcel of the demesne lands, "xx^{d} and one goose fit for his lord's dinner on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel."—*Sports, Pastimes, and Customs of London*, 1847, p. 37.

In the poems of George Gascoigne, 1575, occur too the following lines:—

> "And when the tenantes come to paie their quarter's rent,
> They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent;
> At Christmasse a capon, at Michaelmasse a goose,
> And somewhat else at New-yere's tide, for feare their lease flie loose."

Blount, in his *Tenures*, says that probably no other reason can be given for this custom but that Michaelmas day was a great festival, and geese at that time were most plentiful.—See Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. pp. 367-371.

BERKSHIRE.

It appears from a tablet in the church at Great Coxwell, that the Rev. David Collier charged certain lands in the hamlet of Little Coxwell with the

payment of eight bushels of barley yearly, on the 29th of September, for teaching the poor children of this parish to read, write, and cast accounts, for three years, when they were to be succeeded by two others to be taught for the same term, and so on successively for ever, and he empowered the vicar and churchwardens, or the major part of them (the vicar being always one) to nominate the children. The payment has been regularly made, sometimes in kind, but latterly in money estimated at the price of barley, at the Farringdon market, the nearest to the day when the annual payment becomes due. The payment is made, under the direction of the churchwardens, to a schoolmistress for teaching three children to read, and, if girls, to mark also. The number of children was formerly two only, who were further taught to write and cast accounts; but this part of their education was discontinued many years ago in consequence at the inadequacy of the fund, and, instead thereof an additional child was sent to be instructed with the others.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 40.

The inhabitants of Abingdon once had a custom of adorning their houses with flowers, &c., on the election of a mayor. A writer in the *Gent. Mag.* (1782, vol. lii. p. 558), says:—Riding through Abingdon early on one of the first Sundays in October, he found the people in the streets at the entrance of the town, very busy in adorning the outside of their houses with garlands of flowers and boughs of trees, and the paths were strewed with flowers. One house was distinguished by a greater number of garlands than the rest, and some were making to be fixed at the end of poles. On inquiring the reason, he was told that it was usual to have this ceremony performed in the street in which the new

mayor lived on the first Sunday that he went to church after his election.

CORNWALL.

The manor of Roscarrock, the *Roscaret* of Domesday, situated near Endellion, was held in the time of Edward the Confessor by Alvin, and at the time of the Domesday survey by Nigel under the Earl of Moriton. A substantial house has been constructed on the site of the old mansion. Roscarrock pays a modus of £9 in lieu of tithes; this modus was anciently paid, according to established custom, in the church porch before sunrise on the morning of Michaelmas Day.—*Parochial History of County of Cornwall*, 1867, vol. i. p. 333.

ESSEX.

The Lawless Court is kept, says Morant (*History of Essex* 1768, vol. i. p. 272), at King's-hill, about half a mile north-east of Rochford Church, in the yard of a house once belonging to .... Crips, Gent., and afterwards to Robert Hackshaw, of London, merchant, and to Mr. John Buckle. Here the tenants kneel, and do their homage. The time is the Wednesday morning next after Michaelmas Day, upon the first cock-crowing, without any kind of light but such as the heavens will afford. The steward of the Court calleth all such as are bound to appear with as low a voice as possible, giving no notice, when he that gives not an answer is deeply amerced. They are all to whisper to each other; nor have they any pen and ink, but supply that office with a coal; and he that owes suit and service thereto, and appears not, forfeits to the lord double his rent every

hour he is absent. A tenant of this manor forfeited not long ago his land for non-attendance, but was restored to it, the lord only taking a fine. The Court is called Lawless because held at an unlawful or lawless hour, or *quia dicta sine lege*: the title of it runs in the Court rolls to this day according to the form below:—

KING'S HILL IN ROCHFORD.

Curia de Domino Rege
Dicta sine Lege,
Tenta est ibidem
Per ejusdem consuetudinem.
Ante ortum Solis,
Luceat nisi Polus,
Nil scribit nisi colis.
Toties voluerit,
Gallus ut cantaverit,
Per cujus solum sonitum,
Curia est summonita.
Clamat clam pro Rege
In Curia sine Lege,
Et nisi cito venerint,
Citius pœnituerint;
Et nisi clam accedant
Curia non attendat;
Qui venerit cum lumine,
Errat in regimine
Et dum sunt sine lumine
Capti sunt in crimine,
Curia sine cura
Jurati de injuria;

Tenta ibidem die Mercurii (ante diem) proximo, post Festum Sancti Michaelis Archangeli, anno Regni Regis, &c.

There is a tradition that this servile attendance was imposed at first upon certain tenants of divers manors hereabouts for conspiring in this place at

such an unreasonable time to raise a commotion.[77]

[77] At Kidderminster, says a correspondent of *Gent. Mag.* (1790, vol. lx. p. 1191), is a singular custom. On the election of a bailiff the inhabitants assemble in the principal streets and throw cabbage-stalks at each other. The town-house bell gives signal for the affray. This is called "lawless hour." This done (for it lasts an hour), the bailiff elect and corporation, in their robes, preceded by drums and fifes (for they have no waits), visit the old and new bailiff, constables, &c., attended by a mob. In the meantime the most respectable families in the neighbourhood are invited to meet and fling apples at them on their entrance.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

The custom of hanging out bushes of ivy, boughs of trees, or bunches of flowers at *private* houses as a sign that good cheer may be had within, prevails in the city of Gloucester at the fair held at Michaelmas, called Barton Fair from the locality.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. ix. p. 113.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

In Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* (1849, vol. i. p. 372) is the following account of a curious septennial custom observed at Bishop Stortford and in the adjacent neighbourhood on old Michaelmas Day, taken from a London newspaper of the 18th of October, 1787:—

On the morning of this day, called Ganging Day, a great number of young men assemble in the fields where a very active fellow is nominated the leader.

This person they are bound to follow, who, for the sake of diversion, generally chooses the route through ponds, ditches, and places of difficult passage. Every person they meet is bumped, male or female, which is performed by two other persons taking them up by their arms, and swinging them against each other. The women in general keep at home at this period, except those of less scrupulous character, who, for the sake of partaking of a gallon of ale and a plumcake, which every landlord or publican is obliged to furnish the revellers with, generally spend the best part of the night in the fields if the weather is fair, it being strictly according to ancient usage not to partake of the cheer anywhere else.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

A correspondent of *Book of Days* (vol ii. p. 393) gives the following account of the ceremonies formerly connected with the election of the mayor at Nottingham. On the day the new mayor assumed office (September 29), he, the old mayor, the aldermen, and councillors, all marched in procession to St. Mary's Church, where divine service was said. After service the whole body went into the vestry, where the old mayor seated himself in an elbow chair, at a table covered with *black* cloth, in the middle of which lay the mace covered with rosemary and sprigs of bay. This was termed "the burying of the mace," doubtless a symbolical act, denoting the official decease of its late holder. A form of electing the new mayor was then gone through, after which the one retiring from office took up the mace, kissed it, and delivered it into the hand of his successor. The new mayor then proposed two persons for

sheriffs, and two for the office of chamberlains; and after these had also gone through the votes, the whole assemblage marched into the chancel, where the senior coroner administered the oath to the new mayor in the presence of the old one: and the town-clerk gave to the sheriffs and chamberlains their oath of office. These ceremonies being over, they marched in order to the New Hall, attended by such gentlemen and tradesmen as had been invited by the mayor and sheriffs, where the feasting took place. On their way, at the Week-day Cross, over against the ancient Guild Hall, the town-clerk proclaimed the mayor and sheriffs; and at the next ensuing market-day they were again proclaimed in the face of the whole market at the Malt Cross. On these occasions the mayor and sheriffs welcomed their guests with bread and cheese, fruit in season, and pipes and tobacco.

SUSSEX.

At Chichester, Sloe Fair was always proclaimed under the Canon Gate by the bishop's steward eight days before the eve of St. Faith the Virgin, during which time the jurisdiction of the mayor ceased, and the bishop had power to collect, and did by his agent collect, the tolls of the market and fair. An instance is recorded (1702) in the annals of the corporation of the bishop claiming the keys of the city during the Piepowder Court. The bishop's claim arose from a grant made as early as Henry I.—Dally, *Chichester Guide*, 1831, p. 24.

The bailiff of Seaford is annually elected on St. Michael's Day. The freemen of the town having previously assembled at the Court Hall—leaving the jurats on the bench—retire to a certain spot at the

gate-post of a field near the west end of the town, where the serjeant-at-mace of the body corporate nominates the chief magistrate for the ensuing year, who is then and there elected. This peculiar custom is supposed to have originated to prevent any influence on the part of the corporation magistrates (jurats), and to enable the freemen to make a free choice of their mayor.

WESTERN ISLES OF SCOTLAND.

Martin, in his *Account of the Western Isles of Scotland*, (1703, p. 79), speaking of the island Lingay, says that the inhabitants are much addicted to riding, the plainness of the country disposing both men and horses to it. They observe an anniversary cavalcade on Michaelmas Day, and then all ranks of both sexes appear on horseback. The place for this rendezvous is a large piece of firm sandy ground on the sea-shore, and there they have horse racing for small prizes for which they contend eagerly. There is an ancient custom by which it is lawful for any of the inhabitants to steal his neighbour's horse the night before the race and ride him all next day, provided he delivers him safe and sound to the owner after the race. The manner of running is by a few young men who use neither saddles nor bridles, except small ropes made of bent instead of a bridle, nor any sort of spurs but their bare heels; and when they begin the race, they throw these ropes on their horses' necks, and drive them on vigorously, with a piece of long sea-ware in each hand instead of a whip, and this is dried in the sun several months before for that purpose. This is a happy opportunity for the vulgar, who have few occasions for meeting except on Sundays; the men have their sweethearts behind

them on horseback and give and receive mutual presents: the men present the women with knives and purses, the women present the men with a pair of fine garters of divers colours; they give them likewise a quantity of wild carrots.

Macaulay says it was the custom, till of late, at St. Kilda, on Michaelmas Day, to prepare in every family a loaf or cake of bread, enormously large, and compounded of different ingredients. This cake belonged to the Archangel, and had its name from him. Every one in each family, whether strangers or domestics, had his portion of this kind of shew-bread, and had of course some title to the friendship and protection of St. Michael.—*History of St. Kilda*, 1764, p. 22.

Martin, speaking of the Protestant inhabitants of Skye, says: They observe the festivals of Christmas, Easter, Good Friday, and St. Michael. Upon the latter day, they have a cavalcade in each parish, and several families bake the bread called St. Michael's bannock. Alluding to St. Kilbar village, he observes that they likewise have a general cavalcade on St. Michael's Day, and take a turn round their church. Every family, as soon as the solemnity is over, is accustomed to bake St. Michael's cake; and all strangers, together with those of the family, must eat the bread that night.—Martin's *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, p. 213.

IRELAND.

In Ireland, this season is celebrated by the making of the Michaelmas cake. A lady's ring is mixed in the dough, and, when the cake is baked it is cut into sections and distributed to the unmarried people at table, and the person who gets the slice with the ring

"is sure to be married before next Michaelmas."—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. ix. p. 520.

OCT. 2.]

GOOSE FAIR.

NOTTINGHAM.

The origin of this fair arose from the large quantities of geese which were driven up from the fens of Lincolnshire for sale at this fair, which is on the 2nd of October, when geese are just in season. Persons now living can remember seeing fifteen or twenty thousand geese in the market-place, each flock attended by a gooseherd with a crook, which he dexterously threw round the neck of any goose, and brought it out for inspection by the customer. A street on the Lincolnshire side of the town is still called Goosegate, and the flavour of the goose is fully appreciated by the good people of Nottingham, as, on the fair day, one is sure to be found on the table of twenty-nine out of a hundred of the better class of the inhabitants.—*N. & Q. 1st S.*, vol. vi. p. 563.

A writer in *Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* (1853, vol. viii. p. 236), alluding to the customs allowed at Nottingham, says that the mayor of Nottingham formerly appears to have given a feast of hot roast geese on the last day of his mayoralty previous to the election of his successor.

LANCASHIRE.

At Great Crosby, a suburban village about seven

miles from Liverpool, early in October, every year there is held a local festival, which is called the "Goose Fair." The feast takes place when the harvest is gathered in about that part of the country, and so it forms a sort of "harvest-home" gathering for the agriculturists of the neighbourhood. It is said also that, at this particular period, geese are finer and fatter after feeding on the stubble-fields than at any other time. Curious to say, however, the bird in question is seldom, if ever, eaten at these feasts.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. iii. p. 158, and vol. iv. p. 82.

OCT. 6.]

ST. FAITH'S DAY.

On this day a very curious custom is observed in the North of England. A cake of flour, spring-water, salt, and sugar must be made by three maidens or three widows, and each must have an equal share in the composition. It is then baked before the fire in a Dutch-oven, and, all the while it is doing, silence must be strictly observed, and the cake must be turned nine times, or three times to each person. When it is thoroughly done it is divided into three parts. Each one taking her share, and cutting it into nine slips, must pass each slip three times through a wedding-ring previously borrowed from a woman who has been married at least seven years. Then each one must eat her nine slips as she is undressing, and repeat the following
rhyme:—

"O good St. Faith, be kind to-night,
And bring to me my heart's delight;

Let me my future husband view,
And be my visions chaste and true."

Then all three must get into bed with the ring suspended by a string to the head of the couch, and they will be sure to dream of their future husbands. —Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 373.

OCT. 10.]

DORSETSHIRE.

Pack Monday Fair is held at Sherborne on the first Monday after the 10th of October, and is ushered in, says Hutchins (*Hist. of Dorset*, 1774), by the ringing of the great bell at a very early hour in the morning, and by the boys and young men perambulating the streets with cows' horns. Tradition asserts that this fair originated at the termination of the building of the church, when the people who had been employed about it packed up their tools, and held a fair or wake in the churchyard, blowing cows' horns in their rejoicing.—See *Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 1037.

KENT.

A fair was formerly held yearly on the 10th of October, in the precincts of the ville of Christ Church, and was usually called Jack and Joan Fair, from its being esteemed a statute fair for the hiring of servants of both sexes, for which purpose it continued till the second Saturday or market-day had passed.—Hasted's *History of Kent*, 1799, vol. iv. p. 424.

LANCASHIRE.

About the year 1760, it was customary with the burgesses of Liverpool on the annual election of a mayor to have a bear baited. This event took place on the 10th of October, and the demonstrations of rejoicing continued for several days. The animal was first baited at the White Cross, at the top of Chapel Street, and was then led in triumph to the exchange, where the conflict was renewed. A repetition of the same brutal cruelties was likewise exhibited in Derby Street, and the diversion was concluded by the animal undergoing reiterated assaults at the Stock Market opposite the top of Pool Lane. The bear was assailed separately by large mastiffs, and if any dog compelled him to yell, or was able to sustain the contest with superior address, he was rewarded with a brass collar. It was remarkable, however, that few of the bear's assailants could be induced to renew the fight after having once received the fraternal embrace.—Corry, *History of Liverpool*, 1810, p. 93.

YORKSHIRE.

Formerly, there existed in Hull a custom of whipping all the dogs that were found running about the streets on the 10th of October,[78] and at one time so common was the practice, that every little urchin considered it his duty to prepare a whip for any unlucky dog that might be seen in the street on that day.

[78] See St. Luke's Day.

Tradition assigns the following origin to the custom:—Previous to the suppression of monasteries in Hull, it was the custom for the monks to provide

liberally for the poor and the wayfarer who came to the fair held annually on the 11th of October; and while busy in this necessary preparation the day before the fair, a dog strolled into the larder, snatched up a joint of meat and decamped with it. The cooks gave the alarm, and when the dog got into the streets he was pursued by the expectants of the charity of the monks, who were waiting outside the gate, and made to give up the stolen joint. Whenever, after this, a dog showed his face while this annual preparation was going on, he was instantly beaten off. Eventually, this was taken up by the boys and, until the introduction of the new police, was rigidly put in practice by them every 10th of October.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. viii. p. 409.

OCT. 18.]

ST. LUKE'S DAY.

KENT.

At Charlton, a fair was held on this day, and was characterized by several curious peculiarities. Every booth in the fair had its horns conspicuous in the front. Rams' horns were an article abundantly represented for sale, even the gingerbread was marked by a gilt pair of horns. It seemed an inexplicable mystery how horns and Charlton Fair had become associated in this manner, till an antiquary at length threw a light upon it by pointing out that a horned ox is the recognised mediæval symbol of St. Luke, the patron of the fair, fragmentary examples of it being still to be seen in

the painted windows of Charlton Church. This fair was one where an unusual licence was practised. It was customary for men to come to it in women's clothes—a favourite mode of masquerading two or three hundred years ago—against which the puritan clergy launched many a fulmination. The men also amused themselves, on their way across Blackheath, in lashing the women with furze, it being proverbial that "all was fair at Horn Fair."—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 645.

A sermon was formerly preached at Charlton Church on the day of the fair. A practice which originated by a bequest of twenty shillings a year to the minister of the parish for preaching it.—See *Every Day Book*, 1826, vol. i. pp. 1386-1389.

YORKSHIRE.

Drake, in his *Eboracum* (1736, p. 218), says that a fair was always kept in Micklegate, on St. Luke's Day, for all sorts of small wares. It was commonly called *Dish Fair* from the great quantity of wooden dishes, ladles, &c., brought to it. An old custom was observed at this fair, of bearing a wooden ladle in a sling on two stangs about it, carried by four sturdy labourers, and each labourer was supported by another. This, without doubt, was a ridicule on the meanness of the wares brought to the fair, small benefit accruing to the labourers at it.

Drake tells us that in his time St. Luke's Day was known in York by the name of Whip-Dog Day, from a strange custom that schoolboys had of whipping all dogs that were seen in the streets on that day. Whence this uncommon persecution, he says, took its rise is uncertain, and has even been considered by some to be of Roman origin. He regards, however,

the following tradition as most probable:—That in some time of popery a priest celebrating mass at this festival, in some church in York, unfortunately dropped the host after consecration, which was suddenly snatched up and swallowed by a dog that lay under the altar table. The profanation of this high mystery occasioned the death of the dog, and a persecution began which was continued on the anniversary of this day. The same custom also existed at Manchester on the first day of Acres Fair, which was held about the same time.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 360.

OCT. 21.]

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Richard Aldridge gave the interest of 200*l.*, Three per Cent. Consols, that the dividend should, for ever, be disposed of as follows:—1*l.* 1*s.* to the vicar of the parish of St. Nicholas for performing morning service annually in the parish church on the 21st of October, and preaching a sermon in commemoration of the glorious victory obtained by Lord Nelson over the combined fleets of France and Spain off Cape Trafalgar, on the 21st of October 1805; 10*s.* 6*d.* equally between the clerk and sexton for their attendance at such service and sermon. The residue of the dividend to be applied to keeping a monument of his friend in good condition, and the surplus after such repair to be given to the poor on the 6th of December each year in coals and garments.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 170.

OCT. 25.]

ST. CRISPIN'S DAY.

In many places St. Crispin's Day is a great holiday among the shoemakers, and the origin of it is thus explained:—Two brothers, Crispin and Crispinian, natives of Rome, having become converts to Christianity, travelled to Soissons in France about the year 303, in order to propagate the Christian faith. Being desirous, however, of rendering themselves independent they gained a subsistence by making shoes, with which it is said they furnished the poor at an extremely small price, an angel, according to the legend, supplying them with leather. They suffered martyrdom in the persecution under Maximian.

In *Time's Telescope* for 1816 it is observed that the shoemakers of the present day are not far behind their predecessors in the manner of keeping St. Crispin. From the highest to the lowest it is a day of feasting and jollity. It is also observed as a festival with the corporate body of cordwainers or shoemakers of London, but without any sort of procession on the occasion.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

In the town of Hexham, the following custom is, or was, at one time observed:—The shoemakers of the town meet and dine by previous arrangements at some tavern; a King Crispin, queen, prince, and princess, elected from members of their fraternity of families, being present. They afterwards form in

grand procession (the ladies and their attendants excepted), and parade the streets with banners, music, &c., the royal party and suite gaily dressed in character. In the evening they reassemble for dancing and other festivities. To his majesty and consort, and their royal highnesses the prince and princess (the latter usually a pretty girl), due regal homage is paid during that day.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. vi. p. 243.

At one time the cordwainers of Newcastle celebrated the festival of St. Crispin by holding a coronation of their patron saint in the court of the Freemen's Hospital at the Westgate, and afterwards walking in procession through the principal streets of the town. This caricature show produced much laughter and mirth.—Mackenzie, *History of Newcastle,* 1827, vol. i. p. 88.

SUSSEX.

In the parishes of Cuckfield and Hurst-a-point, St. Crispin's Day is kept with much rejoicing. The boys go round asking for money in the name of St. Crispin, bonfires are lighted, and it passes off very much in the same way as the 5th of November. It appears from an inscription on a monument to one of the ancient family of Bunell, in the parish church of Cuckfield, that a Sir John Bunell attended Henry V. to France in the year 1415, with one ship, twenty men-at-arms, and forty archers, and it is probable that the observance of this day in that neighbourhood is connected with that fact.—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. v. p. 30.

WALES.

At Tenby an effigy was made and hung on some elevated and prominent place (the steeple for instance) on the previous night. On the morning of the Saint's day it was cut down and carried about the town, a will being read in doggrel verse, purporting to be the last testament of the Saint, in pursuance of which the several articles of dress were distributed to the different shoemakers. At length nothing remained of the image but the padding, which was kicked about by the crowd. As a sort of revenge for the treatment given to St. Crispin, his followers hung up the effigy of a carpenter on St. Clement's Day.—Mason's *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 26.

OCT. 29.]
ST. MODWEN'S DAY.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

This day used to be observed at Burton-on-Trent. On it was held a sale of cheese, and a variety of sports and pastimes took place.—Pitt, *Topographical History of Staffordshire*, 1817, p. 45.

OCT. 30.]
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

The manor of Chetwode—a small village about five miles from Buckingham—has been the property of the Chetwode family from Saxon times. Though of

small extent, it is the paramount manor of a liberty or district, embracing several other manors and villages, which are required to do suit and service at the Court-Leet held at Chetwode every three years. The lord of Chetwode manor has also the right to levy a yearly tax, called the "Rhyne Toll," on all cattle found within this liberty, between the 30th of October and the 7th of November, both days inclusive. The commencement of the toll, which is proclaimed with much ceremony, is thus described in an old document of Queen Elizabeth's reign:—

"In the beginning of the said drift of the common, or rhyne, first at their going forth, they shall blow a welke-shell, or horne, immediately after the sun rising at the Mansion-House of the manor of Chetwode, and then, in their going about, they shall blow their horne the second time in the field between Newton Purcell and Barton Hartshorne, in the said county of Bucks, and also shall blow their horne a third time at a place near the town of Finmere, in the county of Oxford, and they shall blow their horne the fourth time at a certain stone in the market of the town of Buckingham, and there to give the poor sixpence; and so, going forward in this manner about the said drift, shall blow the horne at several bridges called Thornborough Bridge, King's Bridge, and Bridge Mill. And they also shall blow their horne at the Pound Gate, called the Lord's Pound, in the parish of Chetwode..... And also (the Lord of Chetwode) has always been used by his officers and servants to drive away all foreign cattle that shall be found within the said parishes, fields, &c., to impound the same in any pound of the said towns, and to take for every one of the said foreign beasts twopence for the mouth, and one penny for a

foot for every one of the said beasts." All cattle thus impounded at other places were to be removed to the pound at Chetwode, and if not claimed and the toll paid within three days, "then the next day following after the rising of the sun, the bailiff or officers of the lord for the time being shall blow their horne three times at the gate of the said pound, and make proclamation that, if any persons lack any cattle that shall be in the same pound, let them come and shew the marks of the same cattle so claimed by them, and they shall have them, paying unto the lord his money in the manner and form before mentioned, otherwise the said cattle that shall so remain, shall be the lord's as strays." This toll was formerly so rigidly enforced, that if the owner of cattle so impounded made his claim immediately after the proclamation was over, he was refused them, except by paying their full market price.

Though the custom is still regularly observed, it has undergone some changes since the date of the above document. The toll now begins at nine in the morning instead of at sunrise, and the horn is first sounded on the church-hill at Buckingham, and gingerbread and beer distributed among the assembled boys, the girls being excluded. The officer then proceeds to another part of the liberty on the border of Oxfordshire, and there, after blowing his horn as before, again distributes gingerbread and beer among the assembled boys. The toll is then proclaimed as begun, and collectors are stationed at different parts to enforce it, at the rate of two shillings a score upon all cattle and swine passing on any road within the liberty, until twelve o'clock at night on the 7th of November, when the "Rhyne" closes.

The occupiers of land within the liberty have long

been accustomed to compound for the toll by an annual payment of one shilling. The toll has sometimes been refused, but has always been recovered with the attendant expenses. It realised about 20*l.* a year before the opening of the Buckinghamshire Railway; but now, owing to Welsh and Irish cattle being sent by trains, it does not amount to above 4*l.*, and is let by the present lord of the manor for only 1*l.* 5*s.* a year.

The existence of this toll may be traced to remote antiquity, but nothing is known of its origin except from local tradition, which, however, in this case has been so remarkably confirmed, that it may safely be credited. The parish of Chetwode, as its name implies, was formerly thickly wooded; indeed it formed a part of an ancient forest called Rookwoode, which is supposed to have been conterminous with the present liberty of Chetwode. At a very early period, says our tradition, this forest was infested with an enormous wild boar which became the terror of the surrounding country. The inhabitants were never safe from his attacks, and strangers who heard of his ferocity were afraid to visit or pass through the district, so that traffic and friendly intercourse were seriously impeded, as well us much injury done to property by this savage monster. The lord of Chetwode, like a valiant knight, determined to rid his neighbourhood from this pest, or to die in the attempt. Bent on this generous purpose, he sallied forth into the forest, and, as the old song has it,—

> "Then he blowed a blast full north, south, east, and west—
> Wind well thy horn, good hunter;
> And the wild boar then heard him full in his den,
> As he was a jovial hunter.

Then he made the best of his speed unto him—
Wind well thy horn, good hunter;
Swift flew the boar, with his tusks smeared with gore,
To Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.

Then the wild boar, being so stout and so strong—
Wind well thy horn, good hunter;
Thrashed down the trees as he ramped him along
To Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.

Then they fought four hours in a long summer day—
Wind well thy horn, good hunter;
Till the wild boar fain would have got him away
From Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.

Then Sir Ryalas he drawed his broad-sword with might—
Wind well thy horn, good hunter;
And he fairly cut the boar's head off quite,
For he was a jovial hunter."

Matters being thus settled, the neighbourhood rung with the praises of the gallant deed of the lord of Chetwode, and the news thereof soon reached the ears of the king, who "liked him so well of the achievement," that he forthwith made the knight tenant *in capite*, and constituted his manor paramount of all the manors within the limits and extent of the royal forest of Rookwoode. Moreover, he granted to him, and to his heirs for ever, among other immunities and privileges, the full right and power to levy every year the "Rhyne Toll," which has already been described.

Such a custom as the "Rhyne Toll" is not without its use. It is a perpetual memorial, perhaps more convincing than written history, of the dangers which surrounded our ancestors, and from which our country has happily been so long delivered that we

can now scarcely believe they ever existed.—*The Book of Days*, vol. ii. pp. 517-519.

OCT. 31.]

HALLOW EVE.

This eve is so called from being the vigil of All Saints' Day, and is the season for a variety of superstitious and other customs. In the north of England many of these still linger. One of the most common is that of diving for apples, or of catching at them with the mouth only, the hands being tied behind, and the apples suspended on one end of a long transverse beam, at the other extremity of which is fixed a lighted candle. The fruit and nuts form the most prominent parts of the evening feast, and from this circumstance the night has been termed *Nutcrack Night*.[79]
—Soane's *Book of the Months*, 1849, vol. ii. p. 215; see *Book of Days*, vol. ii. pp. 519-520.

[79] See Michaelmas Eve, p. 375.

Sir William Dugdale (*Life, Diary, and Correspondence of Sir W. Dugdale, edited by* W. Hamper, 1827, p. 104) tells us that formerly, on Halloween, the master of the family used to carry a bunch of straw, fired, about his corn, saying:

> "Fire and red low
> Light on my teen now."

This fire-straw, says a correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*3rd S.* vol. i. p. 316), was meant to ward off witchcraft, and so preserve the corn from being

spoiled. In Scotland, on Halloween, the red end of a fiery stick is waved about in mystic figures in the air to accomplish for the person the same spell. Red appears to be a colour peculiarly obnoxious to witches. One Halloween rhyme enjoins the employment of:

> "Rowan tree and red thread,
> To gar the witches dance their dead;"

i.e., dance till they fall down and expire. The berries of the rowan-tree (mountain-ash) are of a brilliant red. The point of the fiery stick waved rapidly takes the appearance of a "red thread."

CORNWALL.

The ancient custom of providing children with a large apple on Allhallows Eve is still observed to a great extent at St. Ives. "Allan Day," as it is termed, is the day of days to hundreds of children who would deem it a great misfortune were they to go to bed on Allan night without the time honoured allan apple to hide beneath their pillows. A large quantity of apples are thus disposed of, the sale of which is dignified by the term Allan Market.—Hunt's *Romances of the West of England*, 1871, p. 388.

LANCASHIRE.

In Lancashire, says Hampson (*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 365), it was formerly believed that witches assembled on this night to do "their deeds without a name," at their general rendezvous in the forest of Pendle, a ruined and desolate farmhouse, denominated the *Malkin Tower*, from the awful purposes to which it was devoted. This superstition

led to a ceremony called *lating*, or perhaps *leeting the witches*. It was believed that, if a lighted candle were carried about the fells or hills from eleven till twelve o'clock at night, and burned all that time steadily, it had so far triumphed over the evil power of the witches, who, as they passed to the Malkin Tower, would employ their utmost efforts to extinguish the light, and the person whom it represented might safely defy their malice during the season; but if by accident the light went out, it was an omen of evil to the luckless wight for whom the experiment was made. It was also deemed inauspicious to cross the threshold of that person until after the return from *leeting*, and not then unless the candle had preserved its light.—See *Year Book*, 1838, p. 1276.

Isle of Man.

This festival, called by the islanders *Sauin*, was formerly observed in the Isle of Man by kindling of fires with all the accompanying ceremonies, to prevent the baneful influence of fairies and witches. The island was perambulated at night by young men who stuck up at the door of every dwelling-house, a rhyme in Manks, beginning:

"Noght oie howney hop-dy-naw,
This is Hollantide Eve," &c.

On Hollantide Eve, boys go round the town shouting out a doggrel, of which the following is an extract:

"This is old Hollantide night,
The moon shines fair and bright;
I went to the well
And drank my fill;

On the way coming back
I met a pole-cat;
The cat began to grin
And I began to run;
Where did you run to?
I ran to Scotland;
What were they doing there?
Baking bannocks and roasting collops.

****

If you are going to give us anything, give us it soon,
Or we'll be away by the light of the moon!"

For some peculiar reason, potatoes, parsnips, and fish, pounded together and mixed with butter, form always the evening meal.—Train, *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 123.

MIDDLESEX.

In the reign of Charles I., the young gentlemen of the Middle Temple were accustomed at All Hallow Tide, which they considered the beginning of Christmas, to associate themselves for the festive objects connected with the season. In 1629 they chose Bulstrode Whitelocke as Master of the Revels, and used to meet every evening at St. Dunstan's Tavern, in a large new room, called "The Oracle of Apollo," each man bringing friends with him at his own pleasure. It was a kind of mock parliament, where various questions were discussed as in our modern debating societies, but these temperate proceedings were seasoned with mirthful doings, to which the name of revels was given and of which dancing appears to have been the chief. On All Hallows Day, "the Master (Whitelocke, then four-and-twenty), as soon as the evening was come,

entered the hall followed by sixteen revellers. They were proper, handsome young gentlemen, habited in rich suits, shoes and stockings, hats and great feathers. The master led them in his bar gown, with a white staff in his hand, the music playing before them. They began with the old masques; after which they danced the
Brawls,[80]
and then the master took his seat, while the revellers flaunted through galliards, corantos, French and country dances, till it grew very late. As might be expected, the reputation of this dancing soon brought a store of other gentlemen and ladies, some of whom were of great quality, and when the ball was over the festive party adjourned to Sir Sydney Montague's chamber, lent for the purpose to our young president. At length the court ladies and grandees were allured, to the contentment of his vanity it may have been, but entailing on him serious expense, and then there was great striving for places to see them on the part of the London citizens. To crown the ambition and vanity of all, a great German lord had a desire to witness the revels, then making such a sensation at court, and the Templars entertained him at great cost to themselves, receiving in exchange that which cost the great noble very little—his avowal that 'Dere was no such nople gollege in Christendom as deirs.'"—Whitelocke's *Memoirs of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 1860, p. 56; quoted in *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 538.

[80] Erroneously written *Brantes* in the authority quoted.

Nottinghamshire.

If a girl had two lovers, and wished to know which

would be the most constant, she procured two brown apple pippins, and sticking one on each cheek (after having named them from her lovers) while she repeated this couplet:

"Pippen, pippen, I stick thee there,
That that is true thou may'st declare,"

patiently awaited until one fell off, when the unfortunate swain whose name it bore was instantly discarded as being unfaithful. It is to this custom that Gay has thus alluded:

"See from the core two kernels now I take,
This on my cheek for Lubberkin is worn,
And Booby Clod on t'other side is borne;
But Booby Clod soon falls upon the ground,
A certain token that his love's unsound;
While Lubberkin sticks firmly to the last;
Oh! were his lips to mine but joined so fast."

Jour. of Arch. Assoc. 1853, vol. iii. p. 286.

YORKSHIRE.

At Ripon, the women make a cake for every one in the family, whence this eve is by them called *cake-night.—Gent. Mag.* 1790, vol. lx. p. 719.

WALES.

In North Wales there is a custom upon All Saints' Eve of making a great fire called *Coel Coeth*, when every family for about an hour in the night, makes a great bonfire in the most conspicuous place near the house, and when the fire is almost extinguished every one throws a white stone into the ashes, having first marked it; then having said their prayers

turning round the fire, they go to bed. In the morning, as soon as they are up, they come and search out the stones, and if any one of them is found wanting they have a notion that the person who threw it in will die before he sees another All Saints' Eve.—Pennant MS., quoted by Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 389.

In Owen's *Account of the Bards*, preserved in Sir R. Hoare's *Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales* (vol. ii. p. 315), the following particulars are given in connection with the above custom:—The autumnal fire kindled in North Wales on the eve of the 1st of November is attended by many ceremonies, such as running through the fire and smoke, each casting a stone into the fire, and all running off at the conclusion, to escape from the black short-tailed sow; then supping upon parsnips, nuts, and apples; catching at an apple suspended by a string, with the mouth alone, and the same by an apple in a tub of water; each throwing a nut into the fire, and those that burn bright betoken prosperity to the owners through the following year, but those that burn black and crackle, denote misfortune. On the following morning the stones are searched for in the fire, and if any be missing, they betide ill to those who threw them in.

SCOTLAND.

Burns, in his notes upon Halloween, gives the following interesting account of the superstitious customs practised by the Scottish peasantry:

1. The first ceremony of Halloween is pulling each a stock or plant of kail. They must go out hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with; its being big or little, straight or crooked, is

prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any *yird*, or earth stick to the root, that is *tocher* or fortune; and the taste of the *custoc*, that is the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or—to give them their ordinary appellation—the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people, whom chance brings into the house are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question.

2. They go to the barn-yard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the *top-pickle*, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid.

3. Burning the nuts is a famous charm, they name the lad and lass to each particular nut as they lay them in the fire. Accordingly, as they burn quietly together or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.

4. Steal out all alone to the *kiln*, and darkling throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn, wind it in a new clue off the old one; and towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand, "Who hauds?" i.e., who holds. An answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.

5. Take a candle and go alone to a looking-glass, eat an apple before it, and, some traditions say you should comb your hair all the time, the face of your conjugal companion to be will be seen in the glass as if peeping over your shoulder.

6. Steal out unperceived and sow a handful of hempseed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, "Hempseed I sow thee; hempseed, I sow thee; and

him (or her) that is to be my true love come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me, and show thee," that is show thyself, in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me and harrow thee."

7. *To win three wechts o' naething.*—This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone, you go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges if possible; for there is danger that they, being about to appear, may shut the doors and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which in our dialect is called a *wecht*; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in it at the windy door and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue marking the employment or station in life.

8. Take an opportunity of going unnoticed to a bean stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.

9. You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south running spring or rivulet, where three lairds' lands meet, and dip your left shirt sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and sometime near midnight an apparition, having an exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve as if to dry the other side of it.

10. Take three dishes, put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty; blindfold a

person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand; if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells with equal certainty no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

The following extract is taken from the *Guardian* (November 11th, 1874):—Halloween was duly celebrated at Balmoral Castle. Preparations had been made days beforehand, and farmers and others for miles around were present. When darkness set in the celebration began, and her Majesty and the Princess Beatrice, each bearing a large torch, drove out in an open phaeton. A procession formed of the tenants and servants on the estates followed, all carrying huge torches lighted. They walked through the grounds and round the Castle, and the scene as the procession moved onwards was very weird and striking. When it had arrived in front of the Castle an immense bonfire, composed of old boxes, packing-cases, and other materials, stored up during the year for the occasion, was set fire to. When the flames were at their brightest a figure dressed as a hobgoblin appeared on the scene, drawing a car surrounded by a number of fairies carrying long spears, the car containing the effigy of a witch. A circle having been formed by the torch-bearers, the presiding elf tossed the figure of the witch into the fire, where it was speedily consumed. This cremation over, reels were begun, and were danced with great vigour to the stirring strains of Willie Ross, her

Majesty's piper.

BANFFSHIRE.

In former times at Halloween, Christmas, and other holidays, the younger part of the community of Cullen resorted to the sands and links of the bay for the purpose of playing foot-ball, running foot-races, &c. They left the town in procession, preceded by a piper and other music, and were attended by numbers from the adjacent districts. The games were keenly contested, and the victor was crowned by a bonnet adorned with feathers and ribbons, previously prepared by the ladies. When the games were over, the whole party had a dance on the green, with that merriment and glee to which the etiquette and formation of the ballroom at the present day are total strangers. Afterwards, the procession was again formed, and returned to the town, the victor preceded by the music, leading the way. A ball took place in the evening, at which he presided, and, moreover, had the privilege of wearing his bonnet and feathers.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1845, vol. xiii. p. 381.

MORAYSHIRE.

Shaw, in his *History of the Province of Moray* (p. 241), considers the festivity of this night as a kind of harvest-home rejoicing. He says, a solemnity was kept on the eve of the 1st of November, as a thanksgiving for the safe ingathering of the produce of the fields.

PERTHSHIRE.

On All Saints' Even, the inhabitants of Callander, set up bonfires in every village. When the bonfire is consumed, the ashes are carefully collected into the form of a circle. There is a stone put in near the circumference, for every person of the several families interested in the bonfire; and whatever stone is removed out of its place or injured before the next morning, the person represented by that stone is devoted, or *fey*, and is supposed not to live twelve months from that day.—Sinclair, *Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1793, vol. xi. p. 621.

On the evening of the 31st of October (Old Style), the inhabitants of Logierait practise the following custom:—Heath, broom and dressings of flax are tied upon a pole; this faggot is then kindled; one takes it upon his shoulders, and, running, bears it round the village; a crowd attending him. When the first faggot is burnt out, a second is bound to the pole and kindled in the same manner as before. Numbers of these blazing faggots are often carried about together, and when the night happens to be dark they form a splendid illumination.—Sinclair, *Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1793, vol. v. p. 84.

IRELAND.

At this season the peasants assemble with sticks and clubs, and go from house to house collecting money, bread-cake, butter, &c., for the feast, repeating verses in honour of the solemnity, and demanding the inhabitants to lay aside the fatted calf and to bring forth the black sheep.[81]

The women are employed in making the griddle cake and candles; these last are sent from house to house in the vicinity, and are lighted up on the next day

before which they pray, or are supposed to pray, for the departed soul of the donor. Hempseed is sown by the maidens, and they believe that, if they look back, they will see the apparition of the man intended for their future husbands; they hang a smock before the fire on the close of the feast, and sit up all night concealed in a corner of the room, convinced that his apparition will come down the chimney and turn the smock. They also throw a ball of yarn out of the window, and wind it up on a reel within, thinking that, if they repeat the Paternoster backwards and look at the ball of yarn without, they will see his apparition. They, moreover, dip for apples in a tub of water, and endeavour to bring one up in the mouth; they suspend a cord with a cross stick, with apples at one point and candles lighted at the other, and endeavour to catch the apple, while it is in circular motion, in the mouth. These and many other superstitious customs are observed.—Valiancy, *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, 1786, vol. iii. p. 459.

[81] This was preparatory to the sacrifice of the black sheep on the following day to Saman—See Soane's *New Curiosities of Literature*, 1847, p. 219.

On Halloween, women take the yolk from eggs boiled hard, fill the eggs with salt, and eat egg, shell and salt. They are careful not to quench their thirst till morning.—*N. & Q. 4th. S.* vol. iv. p. 505.

NOV.]

DERBYSHIRE.

At Duffield, a curious remnant of the right of hunting wild animals is still observed—this is called

the “squirrel hunt.” The young men of the village assemble together on the Wakes Monday, each provided with a horn, a pan, or something capable of making a noise, and proceed to Keddleston Park, where, with shouting and the discordant noise of the instruments, they frighten the poor little squirrels, until they drop from the trees. Several having been thus captured the hunters return to Duffield, and having released the squirrels amongst some trees, recommence the hunt.—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 208.

At Duffield, the right of collecting wood in the forest is also singularly observed. The young men in considerable numbers collect together, and having taken possession of any cart they can find, yoke themselves to it, and preceded by horns, remove any trees or other wood from the various lanes and hedge-rows; this is done almost nightly, between September and the Wakes, in the first week in November, when a bonfire is made of the wood collected on the Wakes Monday.—*Ibid.* p. 208.

NOV. 1.]

ALL SAINTS’ DAY.

This festival takes its origin from the conversion, in the seventh century, of the Pantheon at Rome into a Christian place of worship, and its dedication by Pope Boniface IV. to the Virgin and all the Martyrs. The anniversary of this event was at first celebrated on the 1st of May, but the day was subsequently altered to the 1st of November, which was thenceforth, under the designation of the feast of All

Saints, set apart as a general commemoration in their honour. The festival has been retained by the Anglican Church—*Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 529; See Soane's *Book of the Months*, 1849, vol. ii. p. 235.

A writer in the *Gent. Mag.* 1783 (vol. liii. p. 578), thinks the custom prevailing among the Roman Catholics of lighting fires upon the hills on All Saints' night, the Eve of All Souls, scarcely needs explaining, fire being, even among the Pagans, an emblem of immortality, and well calculated to typify the ascent of the soul to heaven.

A correspondent of the same periodical (1788, vol. lviii. p. 602) alludes to a custom observed in some parts of the kingdom among the Papists, of illuminating some of their grounds upon the eve of All Souls, by bearing round them straw, or other fit materials, kindled into a blaze. This ceremony is called a *Tinley*, said to represent an emblematical lighting of souls out of purgatory.

CHESHIRE.

On All Souls' Eve, both children and grown-up people go from door to door, a-souling, i.e., begging for soul cakes, or anything else they can get. In some districts they perform a kind of play as well, but in all instances the following, or a similar song, is sung:—

"You gentlemen of England, pray you now draw near
To these few lines, and you soon shall hear
Sweet melody of music all on this evening clear,
For we are come a-souling for apples and strong
beer.

Step down into your cellar, and see what you can
find,

If your barrels are not empty, we hope you will
prove kind;
We hope you will prove kind with your apples and
strong beer,
We'll come no more a-souling until another year.

Cold winter it is coming on, dark, dirty, wet and
cold,
To try your good nature, this night we do make bold;
This night we do make bold with your apples and
strong beer,
And we'll come no more a-souling until another year.

All the houses that we've been at, we've had both
meat and drink,
So now we're dry with travelling, we hope you'll on
us think;
We hope you'll on us think with your apples and
strong beer,
For we'll come no more a-souling until another year.

God bless the master of this house, and the mistress
also.
And all the little children that round the table go;
Likewise your men and maidens, your cattle and
your store,
And all that lies within your gates we wish you ten
times more;
We wish you ten times more with your apples and
strong beer,
And we'll come no more a-souling until another
year."

Jour. of the Arch. Assoc. 1850, vol. v. p. 252.

In the parish of Lymm it is customary, for a week or ten days before the 5th of November, for the skeleton of a horse's head, dressed up with ribbons, &c., having glass eyes inserted in the sockets, and mounted on a short pole by way of handle, to be

carried by a man underneath covered with a horse-cloth. There is generally a chain attached to the nose, which is held by a second man, and they are attended by several others. In houses to which they can gain access, they go though some kind of performance, the man with the chain telling the horse to rear, open its mouth, &c. The object of course is to obtain money. The horse will sometimes seize persons, and hold them fast till they pay for being set free; but he is generally very peaceable, for, in case of resistance being offered, his companions generally take to flight and leave the poor horse to fight it out.—*N. & Q. 1st. S.* vol. i. p. 258.

LANCASHIRE.

At Great Marton, there was formerly a sort of procession of young people from house to house, at each of which they recited psalms, and, in return, received presents of cakes, whence the custom was called *Psalm-caking.—Med. Ævi Kalend.* 1841, vol. i. p. 375.

MIDDLESEX.

At a pension held at Gray's Inn in Michaelmas Term, 21 Henry VIII., there was an order made that all the fellows of this house who should be present upon any Saturday at supper, betwixt the feasts of All Saints and the Purification of our Lady, or upon any other day at dinner or supper, when there are *revels*, should not depart out of the hall until the said *revels* were ended, upon the penalty of 12*d.*

In 4 Edward VI. (17 Nov.), it was also ordered, that thenceforth there should be no comedies, called *interludes*, in the house out of term time, but when

the feast of the Nativity of our Lord is solemnly observed, and that when there shall be any such comedies, then all the society at that time in common to bear the charge of the apparel.

In 4 Charles I. (17 Nov.), it was also ordered that all playing of dice, cards, or otherwise, in the hall, buttery, or butler's chamber, should be thenceforth forbidden at all times of the year, the twenty days of Christmas only excepted.—Herbert, *Antiquities of the Inns of Court*, 1804, p. 336.

MONMOUTHSHIRE.

In this county, says Hone, *Year Book* (p. 1288), a custom prevails among the lower classes of begging bread for the souls of the departed on All Saints' Day; the bread thus distributed is called *dole* bread.

SHROPSHIRE.

It is customary, says a correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*1st S.* vol. iv. p. 381) for the village children to go round to all their neighbours *Souling*, collecting contributions, and singing the following doggrel:—

"Soul! soul! for a soul-cake;
Pray, good mistress, for a soul-cake.
One for Peter, and two for Paul,
Three for them who made us all.

Soul! soul! for an apple or two;
If you've got no apples, pears will do.
Up with your kettle, and down with your pan,
Give me a good big one, and I'll be gone.
Soul! soul! for a soul-cake, &c.

An apple or pear, a plum or a cherry,

Is a very good thing to make us merry.
Soul! soul! &c."

The soul-cake referred to is a sort of bun, which at one time it was an almost general custom for persons to make, to give to one another on this day.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

Tollett, in his *Variorum* Shakspeare (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ii. 2, note) says, On All Saints' Day the poor people in Staffordshire, and perhaps in other country places, go from parish to parish *a-souling*, as they call it, i.e. begging and puling (or singing small, as Bailey's *Dictionary* explains puling) for soul-cakes, or any good thing to make them merry." Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* (1849, vol. i. p. 393), gives the following lines as sung on the occasion:

"Soul, soul, for a soul-cake,
Pray you, good mistress, a soul-cake."

WESTERN ISLES OF SCOTLAND.

In St. Kilda, the inhabitants used to make a large cake in the form of a triangle furrowed round, all of which was eaten the same night.—Martin's *Western Isles of Scotland*, 1716, p. 287.

From the same authority we learn that the inhabitants of Lewis had an ancient custom of sacrificing to the sea-god called Shony. The inhabitants round the island came to the church of St. Mulvay, each man having his provisions with him. Every family furnished a peck of malt, which was brewed into ale. One of their number was picked out to wade into the sea up to the middle, and carrying a cup of ale in his hand, he cried out with a

loud voice, saying, “Shony, I give you this cup of ale, hoping that you’ll be so kind as to send us plenty of sea-ware, for enriching our ground the ensuing year;” and so threw the cup of ale into the sea—this was performed in the night time. At his return to land, they all went to church, where there was a candle burning upon the altar; and then standing silent for a little time one of them gave a signal, at which the candle was put out, and immediately all of them went to the fields, where the rest of the night was spent in merriment.

IRELAND.

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*3rd S.* vol. i. p. 446) mentions a custom at
Wexford,[82]
of lighting candles (more or less) in every window in the house, on the night of the vigil of All Souls, and when travelling along a country road where farmhouses and cottages are numerous, the effect is quite picturesque on a dark November eve.

[82] This custom extends over the whole of Ireland, and is common in some parts of the Continent.

NOV. 2.]

ALL SOULS’ DAY.

All Souls’ Day is set apart by the Roman Catholic Church for a solemn service for the repose of the dead. In this country the day was formerly observed by ringing of the passing bell, making soul-cakes, blessing beans, and other customs. Various tenures

were held by services to be performed on this day. The nut and apple omens of Hallow Even were continued on this day. Soul-mass cakes were given to the poor; and at Hallowasse frankincense was newly provided.—Timbs, *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 115.

CHESHIRE.

From All Souls' Day to Christmas Day, Old Hob is carried about; this consists of a horse's head enveloped in a sheet, taken from door to door, accompanied by the singing of doggerel-begging rhymes.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.* 1850, vol. v. p. 253.

DERBYSHIRE.

Formerly, at the village of Findern, the boys and girls used to go every year in the evening of All Souls' Day to the adjoining common, and light up a number of small fires among the furze growing there, which they called *Tindles*.—*Gent. Mag.* 1784, vol. iv. p. 836.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

In this county and also in Lancashire it was in days gone by usual for the wealthy to dispense oaten cakes, called *soul-mass cakes*, to the poor, who upon receiving them repeated the following couplet in acknowledgment:

"God have your soul
Beens and all."

See Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 392.

SHROPSHIRE.

In this county the inhabitants set on a board a high heap of small cakes, called soul-cakes, of which they offer one to every person who comes to the house on this day, and there is an old rhyme, which seems to have been sung by the family and guests:

> "A soul-cake, a soul-cake;
> Have mercy on all Christian souls for a soul-cake."
>
> Kennett's *Collections*, MS. *Bibl. Lansdown*, No. 1039, vol. 105, p. 12.

The same custom is mentioned, and with very little variation, by Aubrey in the *Remains of Gentilisme*; see *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. x. pp. 409, 525.

WALES.

The people of North Wales have a custom of distributing soul-cakes on All Souls' Day, at the receiving of which the poor people pray to God to bless the next crop of wheat.—*Pennant.*

SCOTLAND.

In the county of Aberdeen on All Souls' Day, baked cakes of a particular sort are given away to those who may chance to visit the house where they are made. The cakes are called "dirge-loaf."—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. ii. p. 483.

NOV. 5.]

GUNPOWDER PLOT.

The 5th of November is not observed by the populace with nearly so much festive diversion as in former times. Originally, the burning of Guy Fawkes in effigy was a ceremony much in vogue, especially among the lower classes, but it is now confined chiefly to school-boys, and even with them it is not so popular as in days gone by. Formerly, the burning of "a good guy" was a scene of uproar perhaps unknown to the present day. The bonfire, for example, in Lincoln's Inn Fields was conducted on a very grand scale. It was made at the Great Queen Street corner, immediately opposite Newcastle House. Fuel came all day long in carts properly guarded against surprise. Old people have recollected when upwards of two hundred cart-loads were brought to make and feed this bonfire, and more than thirty "guys" were burnt upon gibbets between eight and twelve o'clock at night.[83]

[83] The following extract is from the *Evening Standard* (February 5th, 1875):—"This morning at ten o'clock the Yeomen of the Guard (Beefeaters) made their usual search before the meeting of Parliament for any barrels of gunpowder that might be stowed away in the vaults under the Houses of Parliament."

The butchers of Clare Market, also, were accustomed to celebrate this anniversary in a somewhat peculiar style; one of their body, personating Guy Fawkes, being seated in a cart, with a prayer-book in his hand, and a priest, executioner, &c., attending, was drawn through the streets, as if going to the place of execution; while a select party, with marrow-bones and cleavers, led the way, and

others solicited money from the inhabitants and spectators. The sums thus obtained were spent at night in jollity and carousing.—*Sports, Pastimes, and Customs of London*, 1847, p. 39.

The following time-honoured rhyme is still sung, and varies in different parts of the country:

"Pray remember
The Fifth of November,
Gunpowder treason and plot;
For I know no reason
Why Gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.
Hollo boys! Hollo boys! Hurrah."

In Poor Robin's *Almanack* for the year 1677 is the following:

"Now boys with
Squibs and crackers play,
And bonfire's blaze
Turns night to-day."

In some parts of the north of England the following song is sung:

"Happy was the man,
And happy was the day,
That caught Guy
Going to his play,
With a dark lanthorn
And a brimstone match
Ready for the prime to touch.

As I was going through the dark entry
I spied the devil.
Stand back! Stand back!
Queen Mary's daughter.
Put your hand in your pocket,
And give us some money

To kindle our bonfire. Hurrah."

Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 398.

DERBYSHIRE.

The rhyme formerly sung in many parts of this county is as below:

"Remember, remember,
Th' fifth o' November,
Th' gunpowder plot,
Shall ne'er be forgot!
Pray gi's a bit o' coal,
Ter stick in th' bun-fire hole!
A stick an' a stake,
For King George's sake—
A stowp an' a reel,
Or else wey'll steal."

Long Ago, 1873, vol. i. p. 338.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

In this county the following quaint rhyme was sung on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot:

"Remember, remember
The fifth o' November!
Guy and his companions' plot:
We're going to blow the Parliament up!
By God's mercy we wase catcht,
With a dark lantern an' lighted matcht!"

Long Ago, 1873, vol. i. p. 338.

MIDDLESEX.

It is stated in the register at Harlington, under the date of 1683, that half an acre of land was given by some person, whose name has been forgotten, for the benefit of the bell-ringers of the parish, to provide them with a leg of pork for ringing on the 5th of November. It is called the Pork Acre. The ground is let by the parish officers at 50*s.* a year, which is paid by them to the bell-ringer.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 27.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

The following is the rhyme formerly sung in this county:

"Gunpowder treason!
Gunpowder treason!
Gunpowder treason plot!
I know no reason
Why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.

Guy Fox and his companions
Did the scheme contrive,
To blow the King and Parliament
All up alive.

But, by God's providence, him they catch,
With a dark lantern, lighting a match!
Hollo, boys! hollo, boys! make the bells ring!
Hollo, boys! hollo, boys! God save the king! Hurrah."

Long Ago, 1873, vol. i. p. 338.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

At Clifton the following rhyme is sung:

"Please to remember

The fifth of November.
Old Guy Faux
And gunpowder plot
Shall never be forgot,
While Nottingham castle
Stands upon a rock!"

Long Ago, 1873, vol. i. p. 338.

OXFORDSHIRE.

"The fifth of November,
Since I can remember,
Gunpowder treason and plot;
This was the day the plot was contriv'd,
To blow up the King and Parliament alive;
But God's mercy did prevent
To save our King and his Parliament.

A stick and a stake
For King James's sake!
If you won't give me one,
I'll take two,
The better for me,
And the worse for you."

This is the Oxfordshire song chanted by the boys when collecting sticks for the bonfire, and it is considered quite lawful to appropriate any old wood they can lay their hands on after the recitation of these lines. If it happen that a crusty chuff prevents them, the threatening *finale* is too often fulfilled. The operation is called *going a-progging*. In some places they shout, previously to the burning of the effigy of Guy Fawkes,

"A penn'orth of bread to feed the Pope,
A penn'orth of cheese to choke him;

A pint of beer to wash it down,
And a good old faggot to burn him."

Halliwell's *Pop. Rhymes*, 1849, pp. 253, 554.

Formerly, it was the custom for the undergraduates of Pembroke College, Oxford, to make verses on the 5th of November, and to have two copies of them, one to present to the master, the other to stick up in the Hall, and there to remain till a speech on this occasion was spoken before supper. —Pointer, *Oxoniensis Academia*, 1749, p. 109.

SUSSEX.

At Lewes on the 5th of November in each year, a great torchlight procession, composed of men dressed up in fantastic garbs, and with blackened faces, and dragging blazing tar barrels after them, parade the high street, while an enormous bonfire is lighted, into which, when at its highest, various effigies are cast. The day's festivities not unfrequently terminate in a general uproar and scene of confusion. See *Lewes Times*, November 13th, 1856.

WESTMORELAND.

The following doggerel is sung in this county:

"I pray you remember the fifth of November,
Gunpowder treason and plot;
The king and his train had like to be slain—
I hope this day'll ne'er be forgot.

All the boys, all the boys, let the bells ring!
All the boys, all the boys, God save the king!
A stick and a stake for King Jamie's sake,—
I hope you'll remember the bonfire!"

N. & Q. 4th S. vol. vii. p. 32.

WILTSHIRE.

At Marlborough the rustics have the following peculiar custom at their bonfires. They form themselves into a ring of some dozen or more round the bonfire, and follow each other round it, holding thick club-sticks over their shoulders; while a few others, standing at distances outside this moving ring with the same sort of sticks, beat those which the men hold over their shoulders, as they pass round in succession, all shouting and screaming loudly. This might last half an hour at a time, and be continued at intervals till the fire died out.—*N. & Q. 1st. S.* vol. v. p. 355.

At Purton the boys, for several weeks before the 5th of November, used to go from house to house begging faggots for the bonfire, in the middle of which was burnt the effigy of Guy Fawkes. The following rhyme was sung on the occasion:

"My brave lads remember
The fifth of November,
Gunpowder treason and plot;
We will drink, smoke, and sing, boys,
And our bells they shall ring, boys,
And here's health to our King, boys,
For he shall not be forgot."

See *Every Day Book*, 1827, vol. ii. p. 1379.

YORKSHIRE.

A very old custom prevails in the West Riding of Yorkshire, of preparing, against the anniversary of

Gunpowder Plot, a kind of oatmeal gingerbread, if it may be so called, and of religiously partaking of the same on this day and subsequently. The local name of the delicacy is *Parkin* and it is usually seen in the form of massive loaves, substantial cakes, or bannocks.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. iv. p. 368.

Blount, in his *Fragmenta Antiquitatis* (Beckwith, 1815, p. 565), gives the following account of a custom observed at Doncaster. He says at this place on the 5th November, yearly, whether it happens on a Sunday, or any other day in the week, the town waits play for some time on the top of the church steeple, at the time when the congregation are coming out of the church from morning service, the tune of "God Save the King." This has been done for four-score years at least, and very possibly ever since the 5th of November has been a festival, except that formerly the tune played was "Britons, strike home." The waits always receive from the churchwardens sixpence a-piece for this service.

NOV. 6.]
ST. LEONARD'S DAY.

ESSEX.

Every tenant of the Manor of Writtell, upon St. Leonard's Day, pays to the lord for everything under a year old a halfpenny, for every yearling pig a penny, and for every hog above a year old twopence, for the privilege of pawnage in the lord's woods: and this payment is called Avage or Avisage.—Blount's *Law Dictionary*, 1717.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

A list of holy days published at Worcester, in 1240, ordains St. Leonard's festival to be kept a half holy day, enjoins the hearing of mass, and prohibits all labour except that of the plough.—*Every Day Book*, vol. ii. p. 1382.

NOV 9.]

LORD MAYOR'S DAY.

The office of Chief Magistrate of London was held for life till about 1214, nor was it until more than a hundred years afterwards that the title of *Lord* was given to the Mayor. This arose in the time of Richard II., on occasion of Walworth, the Mayor of the day, basely murdering Wat Tyler in Smithfield.

That which in later days has been called the *Lord Mayor's Show* was but a degenerate copy of the old *Pageant* or *Triumph*, which assumed a variety of forms at different times, blending Paganism, Christianity, and chivalry in marvellous confusion. This, however, was not always the case, for at one time it became the fashion for the city to employ dramatists of note upon these matters; and there are yet extant certain pageants by Decker, Middleton, Webster, and others, though perhaps inferior writers. —Soane's *Curiosities of Literature*.

With the processions, &c., of late years, most readers are sufficiently well acquainted from the newspapers of the day. Fully to describe those of former ages would require, however, a volume of no mean size; but some idea of their general character may be formed from the following brief sketch:—The

first account of this annual exhibition known to have been published, was written by George Peele for the inauguration of Sir Wolstone Dixie, Knight, on the 29th of October (Old Style), 1585. On that occasion, as was customary to the times, there were dramatic representations in the procession of an allegorical character. Children were dressed to personify the city, magnanimity, loyalty, science, the country, and the river Thames. They also represented sailors, soldiers, and nymphs, with appropriate speeches. The show opened with a Moor mounted on a lynx. On Sir Thomas Middleton's mayoralty, in 1613, the solemnity is described as unparalleled for the cost, art, and magnificence of the shows, pageants, chariots, morning, noon, and night triumphs. In 1655 the city pageants, after a discontinuance of about fourteen years, were revived. Edmund Gayton, the author of the description for that year, says that "our metropolis, for these planetary pageants, was as famous and renowned in foreign nations as for their faith, wealth, and valour." In the show of 1659, an European, an Egyptian, and a Persian were personated. On Lord Mayor's Day, 1671, the King, Queen, and Duke of York, and most of the nobility being present, there were "sundry shows, shapes, scenes, speeches, and songs in part;" and the like in 1672 and 1673, when the King again graced the triumphs. The King, Queen, Duke and Duchess of York, Prince Rupert, the Duke of Monmouth, foreign ambassadors, the chief nobility, and Secretary of State, were at the celebration of Lord Mayor's Day in 1674, when there "were emblematical figures, artful pieces of architecture, and rural dancing, with pieces spoken on each pageant."—See Hone's *Every Day Book*, vol. i. p. 1445.

Nov. 11.]
ST. MARTIN'S DAY.

The festival of St. Martin, happening at that season when the new wines of the year are drawn from the lees and tasted, when cattle are killed for winter food, and fat geese are in their prime, is held as a feast day over most parts of Christendom. On the ancient clog almanacs, the day is marked by the figure of a goose, our bird of Michaelmas being, on the continent, sacrificed at Martinmas. In Scotland and the north of England, a fat ox is called a *mart*[84] clearly from Martinmas, the usual time when beeves are killed for winter use.—*Book of Days*, vol ii. p. 568.

[84] *Mart*, according to Skinner, is a fair, who considers it a contraction of market. Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 400) says that, had not *mart* been the general name for a fair, one might have been tempted to suppose it a contraction of Martin, the name of the saint whose day is commemorated.

Salt Silver.—In the glossary to Kennett's *Parochial Antiquities* (p. 496) is the following:—"Salt Silver.—*One penny paid at the Feast of St. Martin*, by the servile tenants to their lord, as a commutation for the service of carrying their lord's salt from market to his larder."

Buckinghamshire.

There is a house in Fenny Stratford, called St. Martin's house, in the wall of which is a stone bearing the following
inscription:—

"This house was settled on the parish officers of this town, for the annual observance of St. Martin's Day."—"Anno Domini 1752."

The house is let at 5*l.* 4*s.* per annum, and the rent, after defraying the expense of repairs, is laid out in giving an entertainment to the inhabitants of the town.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 59.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Within the manor of Whitlesea there is a custom for the inhabitants to choose, on the Sunday next after the feast of St. Martin, two persons called storers, to oversee the public business, and likewise to provide a common bull, in consideration whereof they enjoy a certain pasture called Bull Grass; and the major part of the freeholders and copyholders at a meeting grant the grass every year to any person who will take it, to have the same from Lady-day till the corn is carried out of Coatsfield.—Blount's *Fragmenta Antiquitatis*, 1815, p. 576.

CUMBERLAND.

Thomas Williamson, by will, dated 14th December, 1674, gave the sum of 20*l.* to be laid out in land to be bestowed upon poor people born within St. John's Chapelry or Castlerigg, in mutton or veal, at Martinmas yearly, when flesh might be thought cheapest, to be by them pickled or hung up and dried, that they might have something to keep them

within doors upon stormy days.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 63.

WARWICKSHIRE.

Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1730, vol. i. p. 4), says:—There is a certain rent due unto the lord of the Hundred of Knightlow, called *Wroth* money or *Warth* money or *Swarff* penny, probably the same with *Ward* penny. This rent must be paid every Martinmas Day, in the morning, at Knightlow Cross, before the sun riseth: the party paying it must go thrice about the cross, and say "The *Wrath* money," and then lay it in the hole of the said cross before good witness, for if it be not duly performed the forfeiture is thirty shillings and a white bull.

YORKSHIRE.

In the North Riding of Yorkshire it is customary for a party of singers, mostly consisting of women, to begin at the feast of St. Martin a kind of peregrination round the neighbouring villages, carrying with them a small waxen image of our Saviour adorned with box and other evergreens, and singing at the same time a hymn which, though rustic and uncouth, is nevertheless replete with the sacred story of the Nativity. The custom is yearly continued till Christmas Eve, when the feasting, or as they usually call it, "good living," commences; every rustic dame produces a cheese preserved for the sacred festival, upon which, before any part of it is tasted, according to an old custom, she with a sharp knife makes rude incisions to represent the Cross. With this, and furmity made of barley and meal, the cottage affords uninterrupted hospitality.—*Gent.*

Mag. 1811, vol. lxxxi. pt. i. p. 423.

IRELAND.

At St. Peter's, Athlone, every family of a village, says Mason, in his *Stat. Acc. of Ireland* (1819, vol. iii. p. 75), kills an animal of some kind or other: those who are rich kill a cow or a sheep, others a goose or a turkey; while those who are poor and cannot procure an animal of greater value, kill a hen or a cock, and sprinkle the threshold with the blood, and do the same in the four corners of the house, and this ceremonious performance is done to exclude every kind of evil spirit from the dwelling where this sacrifice is made, till the return of the same day in the following year.

NOV. 13.]

ST. BRICE'S DAY.

The Stamford Bull Running. —From time immemorial down to a late period this day was annually celebrated at the town of Stamford, in Lincolnshire, by a rough sport called bull-running. Butcher, in his *Survey of Stamford* (1717, pp. 76, 77), alluding to this custom, says:—"The butchers of the town at their own charge provide the bull, and place him over-night in a stable or barn belonging to the alderman. The next morning proclamation is made by the common bell-man of the town that each one shut up his shop-door and gate, and that none, upon pain of imprisonment, do any violence to strangers, for the preventing whereof (the town being a

thoroughfare and then being in Term time) a guard is appointed for the passing of travellers through the same without hurt. That none have any iron upon their bull-clubs or other staff which they pursue the bull with. Which proclamation made, and all the gates shut up, the bull is turned out of the alderman's house, and the men, women, and children, with all the dogs in the town, run after him, &c."

According to tradition the origin of the custom dates from the time of King John, when, one day, William, Earl of Warren, standing on the battlements of the castle, saw two bulls fighting in the meadow beneath. Some butchers, coming to part the combatants, one of the bulls ran into the town, causing a great uproar. The earl, mounting his horse, rode after the animal, and enjoyed the sport so much that he gave the meadow in which the fight began to the butchers of Stamford, on condition that they should provide a bull, to be run in the town annually, on the 13th of November, for ever after.

There is no documentary evidence on the subject, but the town of Stamford undoubtedly holds certain common rights in the meadow specified, which is still termed the bull-meadow.—See *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 574.

NOV. 14.]
St. ERCONWALD'S DAY.

Strype, in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 322), says:—"It was commanded, that every priest in the diocese of London should go to St. Paul's in procession in copes on St. Erconwald's

Day." [November 14th, 1554].

NOV. 17.]
QUEEN ELIZABETH'S ACCESSION.

Queen Elizabeth's accession was long observed as a Protestant festival, and with the society of the Temple, the Exchequer, Christ's Hospital, Westminster, and Merchant Taylors' Schools, is, says Timbs, kept as a holiday. The Pope in effigy, in a chair of state, with the devil, a real person, behind him, caressing him, &c., was formerly paraded in procession on this day in the streets of London, and afterwards thrown into a bonfire. In Queen Anne's time the Pretender was added to the Pope and the devil. There were also great illuminations in the evening. This anniversary was first publicly celebrated about 1570, twelve years after Elizabeth's accession. (Timbs, *Something for Everybody*, p. 122.) Brayley in his *Londiniana*, vol. iv. p. 74, *et seq.*, has given a very interesting account of these processions.

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*1st S.* vol. iv. p. 345) says that when he was at Christ's Hospital the following curious custom prevailed on the 17th of November.

Two or more boys would take one against whom they had any spite or grudge, and having lifted him by the arms and legs, would bump him on the hard stones of the cloisters.

In reading *Sir Roger de Coverley*, with notes by Willis published in the *Traveller's Library*, the same correspondent says that he found (at p. 134) what he considered a fair explanation. A full account is there

given, he says, of the manner in which the citizens of London intended celebrating, in 1711, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession on the 17th of November, some parts of which would almost seem to have been copied during the excitement against the papal bull in November 1850. Probably therefore, originally, the unfortunate boy who had to endure the rude bumping by his schoolfellows was intended to represent the Pope or one of his emissaries, and that those who inflicted the punishment were looked upon as good Protestants.

NOV. 23.]
ST. CLEMENT'S DAY.

The festival day of St. Clement was formerly considered as the first day of winter, in which were comprised ninety-one days. From a State proclamation in 1540 it appears that processions of children were frequent on St. Clement's Day; and, in consequence of a still more ancient custom of perambulating the streets on the night of this festival to beg drink for carousing, a pot was formerly marked against the 23rd of November upon the old runic or clog almanacs; but not upon all.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* 1841, vol. i. p. 60.; Plot, *History of Staffordshire*, 1686, p. 430; see Gough's *Camden Brit.* vol. ii. pt. xvi. p. 499.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

The bakers of Cambridge hold an annual supper on

St. Clement's Day, which supper is called the "Baker's Clem."—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. iv. p. 492.

KENT.

In *Every Day Book* (1826, vol. i. p. 1501) is the following account of an annual ceremony formerly celebrated on the evening of St. Clement's Day, by the blacksmiths' apprentices of the dockyard at Woolwich:—

One of the senior apprentices being chosen to serve as *Old Clem* (so called by them), is attired in a great coat, having his head covered with an oakum wig, face masked, and a long white beard; thus attired, he seats himself in a large wooden chair, chiefly covered with a sort of stuff called bunting, with a crown and anchor, made of wood, on the top and around it, four transparencies representing the "Blacksmiths' Arms," "Anchor Smiths at Work," "Britannia with her Anchor," and "Mount Etna." He has before him a wooden anvil, and in his hands a pair of tongs and wooden hammer. A mate, also masked, attends him with a wooden sledge-hammer; he is also surrounded by a number of other attendants, some of whom carry torches, banners, flags, &c.; others, battle-axes, tomahawks, and other accoutrements of war. This procession, headed by a drum and fife, and six men with Old Clem mounted on their shoulders, proceed round the town, not forgetting to call on the blacksmiths and officers of the dockyard: here the money-box is pretty freely handed, after Old Clem and his mate have recited their speeches, which commence by the mate calling for order with,

"Gentlemen all, attention give,

And wish St. Clem long, long to live."

Old Clem then recites the following speech:—

"I am the real St. Clement, the first founder of brass, iron, and steel, from the ore. I have been to Mount Etna, where the god Vulcan first built his forge, and forged the armour and thunderbolts for the god Jupiter. I have been through the deserts of Arabia; through Asia, Africa, and America; through the city of Pongrove, through the town of Tipmingo, and all the northern parts of Scotland. I arrived in London on the 23rd of November, and came down to his Majesty's dockyard at Woolwich to see how all the gentlemen Vulcans came on there. I found them all hard at work, and wish to leave them well on the twenty-fourth."

The mate then subjoins:

"Come all you Vulcans stout and strong,
Unto St. Clem we do belong;
I know this house is well prepared
With plenty of money and good strong beer;
And we must drink before we part,
All for to cheer each merry heart.
Come all you Vulcans, strong and stout,
Unto St. Clem I pray turn out;
For now St. Clem's going round the town,
His coach-and-six goes merrily round.
Huzza—a—a."

After having gone round the town and collected a pretty decent sum, they retire to some public-house, where they enjoy as good a supper as the money collected will allow.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

On the feast of St. Clement, a custom exists in Staffordshire for the children to go round to the various houses in the village to which they belong singing the following doggerel:

"Clemany! Clemany! Clemany mine!
A good red apple and a pint of wine,
Some of your mutton and some of your veal,
If it is good, pray give me a deal;
If it is not, pray give me some salt.
Butler, butler, fill your bowl;
If thou fillst it of the best,
The Lord'll send your soul to rest;
If thou fillst it of the small,
Down goes butler, bowl and all.
Pray, good mistress, send to me
One for Peter, one for Paul,
One for Him who made us all:
Apple, pear, plum, or cherry,
Any good thing to make us merry;
A bouncing buck and a velvet chair,
Clement comes but once a year;
Off with the pot and on with the pan,
A good red apple and I'll be gone."

N. & Q. 1st. S. vol. viii. p. 618.

The following rhyme is also sung:

"Clemeny, Clemeny, God be wi' you,
Christmas comes but once a ye-ar;
When it comes, it will soon be gone,
Give me an apple, and I'll be gone."

Ibid. 3rd. S. vol. iv. p. 492; See Oliver's *History of Collegiate Church of Wolverhampton*, 1836, p. 16.

WALES.

At Tenby, on St. Clement's Day, it was customary for the owners of fishing-boats to give a supper of roast goose and rice pudding to their crews.—Mason's *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 27.

NOV. 24.]
ST. CATHERINE'S EVE.

In Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 507) is the following notice of this festival:

"The 24th (1556) being St. Katharine's Day (or rather Eve), at six of the clock at night St. Katharine went about the battlements of St. Paul's Church accompanied with fine singing and great lights; this was St. Katharine's procession."

NOV. 25.]
ST. CATHERINE'S DAY.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

On Cattern Day the lace makers hold merry-makings, and eat a sort of cakes called "wigs"[85] and drink ale. Tradition says it is in remembrance of Queen Catherine, who, when the trade was dull, burnt all her lace, and ordered new to be made. The ladies of the court could not but follow her example, and the consequence was a great briskness in the manufacture.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. i. p. 387.

[85] Cakes called “wigs” were very commonly sold in the Midland counties some years ago, and they are even mentioned as allowable at the collation in Lent by a Catholic writer nearly two centuries ago. They were light and spongy, and something like very light gingerbread. As to the derivation of the name “wig” as applied to them, a correspondent of *Notes and Queries* says he never dreamed of seeing it any where but in the shape of these cakes, which greatly resembled a wig; being round, and having a thick rim round them, which turned up like the curls of a wig of the olden times.—See *N. & Q. 3rd. S.* vol. i. p. 436.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

A paragraph in the *Cambridge Chronicle* (December 8th, 1860) alludes to the custom of the carpenters of Chatteris, in the Isle of Ely, observing the feast of their patron Saint, St. Catherine, by dining together, &c.

KENT.

The following extract is taken from *N. & Q.* (*2nd S.* vol. v. p. 47):—On Wednesday (the 25th) night last the towns of Chatham, Rochester, and Brompton exhibited considerable excitement in consequence of a torchlight procession appearing in the streets, headed by a band of fifes and drums. Notwithstanding the late hour (eleven o’clock) a large number of persons of both sexes, accompanied the party. The demonstration was got up by the rope-makers of the dockyard, to celebrate the anniversary of the founder of the ropery (Queen Catherine). The female representing her Majesty (who was borne in a chair of state by six rope-makers) was dressed in

white muslin, wore a gilt crown, and carried in her hand a Roman banner.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

At one time it was customary, at Peterborough, till the introduction of the new poor laws, for the female children belonging to the workhouse, attended by the master, to go in procession round the city on St. Catherine's Day. They were all attired in white, and decorated with various coloured ribbons, principally scarlet; the tallest girl was selected to represent the Queen, and was adorned with a crown and sceptre. The procession stopped at the houses of the principal inhabitants, and they sang the following rude ballad, begging for money at every house as they passed along:

"Here comes Queen Catherine, as fine as any queen,
With a coach and six horses a coming to be seen.
And a spinning we will go, will go, will go,
And a spinning we will go.

Some say she is alive, and some say she is dead,
And now she does appear with a crown upon her head.
And a spinning we will go, &c.

Old Madam Marshall she takes up her pen,
And then she sits and calls for all her royal men.
And a spinning we will go, &c.

All you that want employment, though spinning is but small,
Come list, and don't stand still, but go and work for all.
And a spinning we will go, &c.

If we set a spinning, we will either work or play,

But if we set a spinning we can earn a crown a day.
And a spinning we will go, &c.

And if there be some young men, as I suppose there's some,
We'll hardly let them stand alone upon the cold stone.
And a spinning we will go, &c."

St. Catherine being the patron of the spinners, as well as of spinsters, and spinning being formerly the employment of the females at the workhouse, it naturally followed that they should be selected to commemorate the anniversary of this Saint; and that this commemoration is of great antiquity appears from the early entries in the Dean and Chapter's accounts of payments on St. Catherine's Day for wheels and reels for the children of the workhouse. —Baker, *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, 1854, vol. ii. p. 436.

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*4th S.* vol. ii. p. 332), alluding to the above custom, says that it was not confined to Peterborough, but was observed throughout the whole of the Northamptonshire lace-making districts, as well as in those of Bedfordshire. According to popular tradition the custom is derived from one of the Queens Catherine in the time of Henry VIII.—probably from Catherine Parr, who was a Northamptonshire woman. By some this day is called "Candle Day," from its forming the commencement of the season for working at lace-making by candle-light.

Isle of Thanet.

On St. Catherine's Day in the Isle of Thanet, the carters place a small figure on a wheel on the front

of their cart sheds.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. v. p. 235.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

In this county the children go round to the farmhouses collecting apples and beer for a festival, and sing the following lines:

"Catherine and Clement, be here, be here,
Some of your apples, and some of your beer;
Some for Peter, and some for Paul,
And some for Him that made us all.

Clement was a good man,
For his sake give us some,
Not of the worse, but some of the best,
And God will send your soul to rest."

The Chapter of Worcester have a practice of preparing a rich bowl of wine and spices, called the "Cathern bowl," for the inhabitants of the college upon this day.—Halliwell's *Popular Rhymes*, 1849, p. 238; see *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. iv. pp. 495, 496.

NOV. 30.]
ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

The commencement of the ecclesiastical year is regulated by the feast of St. Andrew, the nearest Sunday to which, whether before or after, constitutes the first Sunday in Advent, or the period of four weeks which heralds the approach of Christmas. St. Andrew's Day is thus sometimes the first and sometimes the last festival in the Christian Year.—*Book of Days*, vol ii. p. 636.

KENT.

Hasted, in his *History of Kent* (vol. ii. p. 757), speaking of the parish of Eastling, says that, on St. Andrew's Day, there is a yearly diversion called squirrel-hunting in this and the neighbouring parishes, when the labourers and lower kind of people, assembling together, form a lawless rabble, and being accoutred with guns, poles, clubs and other such weapons, spend the greater part of the day in parading through the woods and grounds, with loud shoutings, and under pretence of demolishing the squirrels, some few of which they kill, they destroy numbers of hares, pheasants, partridges, and, in short, whatever comes in their way, breaking down the hedges, and doing much other mischief, and, in the evening betaking themselves to the ale-houses, finish their career there as is usual with such sort of gentry.

MIDDLESEX.

Strype, in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 21), says:—"The 30th November [1557] being St. Andrew's Day, was a procession at Paul's, and a priest of every parish attending, each in his cope, and a goodly sermon preached, and after that, the procession, with *salve festa dies*."

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Tander and Tandrew are the names given to the festival of St. Andrew, of which they are corruptions.

The anniversary of this saint is, or rather was, kept by the lacemakers as a day of festivity and merry-making; but since the use of pillow-lace has in a

great measure given place to that of the loom, this holiday has been less and less observed. The day in former times was one of unbridled licence: village "scholards" barred out their master; the lace schools were deserted; and drinking and feasting prevailed to a riotous extent. Towards evening the villagers used to become suddenly smitten with a violent taste for masquerading. Women might be seen walking about in male attire, while men and boys clothed in female dress visited each other's cottages, drinking hot "eldern wine," the staple beverage of the season. Then commenced the mumming.—Sternberg, *Dialect and Folk Lore of Northamptonshire*, 1851, p. 183; A. E. Baker, *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, 1854, vol. ii. p. 326.

SUSSEX.

A correspondent of the *Athenæum* (No. 993) says that the custom of squirrel-hunting was at one time kept up in this county, but, in consequence of the inclosure of the coppices and the more strict observance of the game, it has wholly dropped.

SCOTLAND.

In Scotland this day is called Andrys Day, Androiss Mess, and Andermess.

Singed sheep's heads are borne in the procession before the Scots in London on St. Andrew's Day.—Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 415.

STIR UP SUNDAY.

The 25th Sunday after Trinity is called by the schoolboys "Stir Up Sunday," from the collect used on that day; and they repeat the following lines without considering their irreverent application:

"Stir up, we beseech thee,
The pudding in the pot,
And when we get home,
We'll eat it all hot."

Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1859, vol. i. p. 414; See *Times*, November 25th, 1863.

ADVENT.

Advent Bells.
—Advent bells are rung in many parishes throughout various parts of England during the month of December. A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*1st S.* vol. i. p. 21) says that, in his neighbourhood—on the western borders of Berks—he has heard their merry peals break gladsomely upon the dark stillness of the cold evening from many a steeple round.

ISLE OF MAN.

Train, in his *History of the Isle of Man* (1845, vol. ii. p. 127), says, that the fiddlers go round from house to house, in the latter part of the night for two or three weeks before Christmas, playing a tune called

the *Andisop*. On their way they stop before particular houses, wish the inmates individually "good morning," call the hour, then report the state of the weather, and after playing an air, move on to the next halting-place.

PICROUS DAY.

CORNWALL.

The Second Thursday before Christmas Day is a festival observed by the tinners of the district of Blackmore, and known as "Picrous Day." It is said to be the feast of the discovery of tin by a man named Picrous. It is not at present marked by any distinctive ceremonies, but it is the occasion of a merry-making, and the owner of the tin stream contributes a shilling a man towards it. Mr. T. Q. Couch says his first impression was that the day took its name from the circumstance of a *pie* forming the *pièce de resistance* of the supper; but this explanation is not allowed by tinners, nor sanctioned by the usages of the feast.—Hunt's *Romances of the West of England*, 1871, p. 468.

DEC. 5.]

ST. NICHOLAS' EVE.

Strype, in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. part. i. p. 326), says:—"On the 5th December [1554], the which was St. Nicholas' Eve, at evensong

time, came a commandment that St. Nicholas should not go abroad nor about. But, notwithstanding, it seems, so much were the citizens taken with the mock St. Nicholas, that is, a boy-bishop, that there went about three St. Nicholases in divers parishes, as in St. Andrew's Holborn and St. Nicolas Olave's in Bread Street. The reason the procession of St. Nicholas was forbid was because the Cardinal had this St. Nicholas' Day sent for all the convocation, bishops, and inferior clergy, to come to him to Lambeth, there to be absolved from all their prejudices, schisms, and heresies."

DEC. 6.]
ST. NICHOLAS' DAY.

THE BOY-BISHOP.

St. Nicholas was deemed the patron of children in general, but much more particularly of all schoolboys, amongst whom the 6th of December (the saint's festival) used to be a very great holiday for more than one reason. In those bygone times all little boys either sang or served about the altar at church; and the first thing they did upon the eve of their patron's festival was to elect from among themselves, in every parish church, cathedral, and nobleman's chapel, a bishop and his officials, or, as they were then called, "a Nicholas and his clerks." This boy-bishop and his ministers afterwards sang the first vespers of their saint, and, in the evening, arrayed in their appropriate vestments, walked all about the parish; all were glad to see them, and those who

could afford it asked them into their houses to bestow a gift of money, sweetmeats, or food upon them. In the year 1299 we find Edward I., on his way to Scotland, permitting one of these boy-bishops to say vespers before him in his chapel at Heton, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and making a considerable present to the said bishop and certain other boys that came and sang with him on the occasion, on the 7th of December, the day after St. Nicholas' Day. What was the custom in the houses of our nobles we may learn from the *Northumberland Household Book*, which tells us that "My lord useth and accustomyth to gyfe yerly, upon Saynt Nicolas-Even, if he kepe chapell for Saynt Nicolas, to the master of his childeren of his chapell, for one of the childeren of his chapell, yerely, vi$^{s.}$ viii$^{d.}$; and if Saynt Nicolas com owt of the towne wher my lord lyeth, and my lord kepe no chapell, than to have yerely iii$^{s.}$ iiij$^{d.}$" At Eton College, it was on St. Nicholas' Day, and not on Childermas, that the boy-bishop officiated, which he did not only at evensong, but at mass, which he began and went on with up to the more solemn part at the offertory: "In festo Sancti Nicholai, in quo, et nullatenus in festo Sanctorum Innocentium, divina officia præter missæ secreta exequi et dici permittimus per episcopum puerorum scholiarium ad hoc de eisdem annis singulis eligendum."

It was upon this festival that some wealthy man or other of the parish would make an entertainment on the occasion for his own household, and invite his neighbours' children to come and partake of it; and, of course, Nicholas and his clerks sat in the highest place. The *Golden Legend* tells how "a man, for the love of his sone that wente to scole for to lerne, halowed every year the feest of Saynt Nycholas moche solemply. On a time it happed that the fader

had doo make redy the dyner, and called many clerkes to this dyner." Individuals sometimes bequeathed money to find a yearly dinner on St. Nicholas' day for as many as a hundred Childermas' tide scholars, who were, after meat, to pray for the soul of the founder of the feast. In our large schools and universities the festival was kept with public sports and games. But it was at Holy Innocents, or Childermas' tide, that Nicholas and his clerks came forth in all their glory. The boy-bishop had a set of pontificals provided for him. St. Paul's, London, had its "una mitra alba cum flosculis breudatis—ad opus episcopi parvulorum—baculus ad usum episcopi parvulorum;" York Minster, too, its "una capa de tissue pro episcopo puerorum;" Lincoln Cathedral, "a cope of red velvet, ordained for the barn-bishop;" All Souls' College, Oxford, "j. chem. (ches.?) j. cap et mitra pro episcopo Nicholao;" St. Mary's Church, Sandwich, "a lytyll chesebyll for Seynt Nicholas bysschop." For the boy-bishop's attendants copes were also made, and York had no fewer than "novem capæ pro pueris."

Towards the end of evensong on St. John's Day the little Nicholas and his clerks, arrayed in their copes, and having burning tapers in their hands, and singing those words of the Apocalypse (*c.* xiv.) "Centum quadraginta" walked processionally from the choir to the altar of the Blessed Trinity, which the boy-bishop incensed; afterwards they all sang the anthem, and he recited the prayer commemorative of the Holy Innocents. Going back into the choir these boys took possession of upper canons' stalls, and those dignitaries themselves had to serve in the boys' place, and carry the candles, the thurible, and the book, like acolytes, thurifers, and lower clerks. Standing on high, wearing his mitre, and holding his

pastoral staff in his left hand, the boy-bishop gave a solemn benediction to all present, and, while making the sign of the Cross over the kneeling crowd, said:

> "Crucis signo vos consigno; vestra sit tuitio,
> Quos nos emit et redemit suæ carnis pretio."

The next day, the feast itself of Holy Innocents, the boy-bishop preached a sermon, which of course had been written for him; and one from the pen of Erasmus, "Concio de puero Iesu," spoken by a boy of St. Paul's School, London, is still extant, and Dean-Colet, the founder of that seminary, in his statutes for it, ordained that "all these children shall, every Childermas Daye, come to Paulis Churche, and hear the childe bishop sermon; and after be at the high masse, and each of them offer a 1d. to the childe bysshop, and with them the maisters and surveyors of the scole." At evensong bishop Nicholas and his clerks officiated as on the day before, and until Archbishop Peckham's times, used to take some conspicuous part in the services of the church during the whole octave of Childermas tide. About 1279 A.D. that primate decreed, however, thus:—"Puerilia autem solennia, quæ in festo solent fieri Innocentum post vesperas S. Johannis tantum inchoari permittimus, et in crastino in ipsa die Innocentum totaliter terminentur." This festival, like St. Nicholas' Day, had its good things; and then, as now, was marked by a better dinner in nunneries, wherein the little boys who had served at the altars of the nuns' churches were not forgotten, as we see by the expenses of St Mary de Prees: "Paid for makyng of the dyner to the susters upon Childermas Day, iiis. iiijd. It. Paid for brede and ale for Saint Nicholas, iiis.

If schoolboys had the patron St. Nicholas, little girls had their patroness too, St. Catherine, who by

her learning overthrew the cavilings of many heathen philosophers and won some of them to Christianity. On this holy martyr's festival, therefore, did the girls walk about the towns in their procession. All this was looked upon with a scowl by those who pulled down the Church of God in this land: hence Cranmer, towards the end of Henry VIII.'s reign, forbade these and other like processions:—"Whereas heretofore dyverse and many superstitious (?) and childysshe observations have been used, and yet to this day are observed and kept in many and sondry parties of this realm, as upon Sainte Nicolas, Sainte Catheryne, Sainte Clement, the Holy Innocentes, and such like; children be strangelye decked and apparelid to counterfaite priestes, byshoppes, and women; and so ledde with songes and daunces from house to house, bleassing the people, and gatherynge of monye, and boyes doo singe masse and preache in the pulpitt ... the Kyng's majestie willith and commaundeth that from henceforth all suche superstitions be loste and clyerlye exstinguished," &c. Queen Mary restored these rites, and the people were glad to see this, along with other of their old religious usages, given back to them; and an eye-witness tells us that, in A.D. 1556, "the V. day of December was Sant Necolas evyn, and Sant Necolas whentt abrod in most partt in London, syngyng after the old fassyon, and was reseyvyd with mony good pepulle into their howses, and had mych good chere as ever they had, in mony plasses."

Some have thought that it was owing to his early abstinence that St. Nicholas was chosen patron of schoolboys; a better reason perhaps is given to us by a writer in the *Gent. Mag.* (1777, vol. xlvii. p. 158), who mentions having in his possession an Italian life

of St. Nicholas, from which he translates the following story, which explains the occasion of boys addressing themselves to St. Nicholas' patronage:—

"The fame of St. Nicholas' virtues was so great that an Asiatic gentleman, on sending his two sons to Athens for education, ordered them to call on the bishop for his benediction; but they, getting to Myra late in the day, thought proper to defer their visit till the morrow, and took up their lodgings at an inn, where the landlord, to secure their baggage and effects to himself, murdered them in their sleep and then cut them into pieces, salting them, and putting them into a pickling tub with some pork, which was there already, meaning to sell the whole as such. The bishop, however, having a vision of this impious transaction, immediately resorted to the inn, and calling the host to him, reproached him for his horrid villany. The man, perceiving that he was discovered, confessed his crime, and entreated the bishop to intercede on his behalf to the Almighty for his pardon, who being moved with compassion at his contrite behaviour, confession, and thorough repentance, besought Almighty God not only to pardon the murderer, but also, for the glory of His name, to restore life to the poor innocents who had been so inhumanly put to death. The saint had hardly finished his prayer when the mangled and detached portions of the youths were, by Divine Power, reunited, and perceiving themselves alive, threw themselves at the feet of the holy man to kiss and embrace them. But the bishop not suffering their humiliation, raised them up, exhorting them to return thanks to Almighty God for this mark of His mercy, and gave them good advice for the future conduct of their lives; and then, giving them the

blessing, he sent them with great joy to prosecute their studies at Athens."—D. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, 1853, vol. iii. part. ii. p. 215.

DEC. 8.]
CONCEPTION OF VIRGIN MARY.

Strype, in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1822, vol. iii. part 1. p. 327), says:—"The 8th December (1554), being the day of the Conception of our Blessed Lady, was a goodly procession at the Savoy by the Spaniards, the priest carrying the Sacrament between his hands, and one deacon carrying a censer censing, and another the holy-water stock, and a number of friars and priests singing; and every man and woman, knights also and gentlemen, bearing green tapers burning, and eight trumpets blowing; and when they ceased, then began the sackbuts to play, and when they had done, there was one who carried two drums on his back, and one came after beating them. And so done, they went about the Savoy, now singing, and a while after playing again, and by-and-by came singing into the church, and after that they went to mass."

DEC. 13.]
ST. BARCHAN'S DAY.

SCOTLAND.

His day is still celebrated at Kilbarchan by a fair, held on the 1st of December, Old Style, (13th December, New Style.) This rustic festival is alluded to in the Laird of Beltrees' poem on the life and death of the famous piper of Kilbarchan, Habbie Simpson:

"Sae kindly to his neighbour's niest,
At Beltane and St. Barchan's feast.
He blew and then held up his breist,
As he were wead;
But now we needna him arreist,
For now he's deid!"

Chambers's *Pop. Rhymes of Scotland*, 1870, p. 391.

DEC. 14.]

ST. TIBBA'S DAY.

This day was formerly celebrated in Rutlandshire by fowlers and falconers, who regarded the saint as their peculiar patroness. Camden mentions the town of Rihall as particularly addicted to this superstitious observance,[86]
and the passage, which is strongly expressed, was ordered to be expunged from his *Britannia* by the *Index Expurgationis*, printed at Madrid in 1612 by Louis Sanchez.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 82.

[86] Rihall, ubi cum majores nostros ita fascinasset superstitio, ut deorum multitudine Deum verum propemodum sustulisset, Tibba minorum gentium diva, quasi Diana ab aucupibus utique rei accipitrariæ præses colebatur.—Britan. 8vo. Lond. edit. 1590, p. 419.

DEC. 17.]

SOW DAY.

SCOTLAND.

At Sandwick, in the Orkneys, it is usual for every family to kill a sow, whence this day is called Sow Day. This custom probably has some reference to the heathen worship of the sun, to which, among the northern nations, the male of this animal was sacred. —Sinclair, *Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1793, vol. xvi. p. 460; *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 82.

DEC. 21.]

ST. THOMAS' DAY.

In some parts of the country St. Thomas' Day is observed by a custom called *Going a Gooding*.[87]

The poor people go round the parish and call at the houses of the principal inhabitants, begging money or provisions wherewith to celebrate the approaching festivity of Christmas. In return for the alms bestowed during these "gooding" peregrinations, it was customary for the recipients, in former times, to present to their benefactors a sprig of holly or mistletoe.—*Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 724; see *Gent. Mag.* 1794, vol. lxiv. p. 292.

[87] Northamptonshire, Kent, Sussex, Herefordshire,

Worcestershire, etc.

Girls, says Halliwell, used to have a method of divination with a "St. Thomas's Onion," for the purpose of ascertaining their future partners. They peeled the onion, wrapped it up in a clean handkerchief, and then, placing it under their heads, said the following lines:

"Good St. Thomas, do me right,
And see my true love come to-night,
That I may see him in the face,
And him in my kind arms embrace."

One of the old cries of London was, "Buy my rope of onions—white St. Thomas's Onions."—*Popular Rhymes*, 1849, p. 224.

BEDFORDSHIRE.

An ancient annual payment of 5*l.* out of an estate at Biddenham, formerly belonging to the family of Boteler, and now the property of Lord Viscount Hampden, is regularly paid on St. Thomas's Day to the overseers of the poor for the purchase of a bull, which is killed, and the flesh thereof given amongst the poor persons of the parish. For many years past the annual fund, being insufficient to purchase a bull, the deficiency has been made good out of other charities belonging to the parish. It was proposed some years ago by the vicar that the 5*l.* a year should be laid out in buying meat, but the poor insisted on the customary purchase of a bull being continued, and the usage is accordingly kept up.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 64.

BERKSHIRE.

The cruel practice of bull-baiting was continued annually on St. Thomas's Day, in the market place of the town of Wokingham so lately as 1821. In 1822, upon the passing of the Act against cruelty to animals, the corporation resolved on abolishing the custom. The alderman (as the chief magistrate is called there) went with his officers in procession, and solemnly pulled up the bull-ring, which had from time immemorial been fixed in the market-place. The bull-baiting at Wokingham was regarded with no ordinary attachment by the inhabitants; for, besides the love of sport, it was here connected with something more solid, viz., the Christmas dinner. In 1661, George Staverton gave by will, out of his Staines house, after the death of his wife, 4*l.* to buy a bull for the use of the poor of Wokingham parish, to be increased to 6*l.* after the death of his wife and her daughter, the bull to be baited, and then cut up, "one poor's piece not exceeding another's in bigness." Great was the wrath of the populace in 1822 at the loss, not of the beef—for the corporation duly distributed the meat—but of the baiting. They vented their rage for successive years in occasional breaches of the peace. They found out, often informed by the sympathising farmer or butcher, where the devoted animal was domiciled; proceeded at night to liberate him from stall or meadow, and to chase him across the country with all the noisy accompaniments imaginable. So long was this feeling kept alive that, thirteen years afterwards, viz., in 1835, the mob broke into the place where one of the two animals to be divided was abiding and baited him, in defiance of the authorities, in the market-place; one enthusiastic individual, tradition relates, actually lying on the ground and seizing the miserable brute by the nostril with his own teeth. This was not to be

endured, and a sentence of imprisonment in Reading Gaol cooled the ardour of the ringleaders, and gave the *coup de grâce* to the sport. The bequest of Staverton now yields an income of 20*l.*, and has for several years been appropriated to the purchase of two bulls. The flesh is divided and distributed annually on St. Thomas's Day by the alderman, churchwardens, and overseers, to nearly every poor family (between 200 and 300), without regard to their receiving parochial relief. The produce of the offal and hide is laid out in the purchase of shoes and stockings for the poor women and children. The bulls' tongues are recognised by courtesy as the perquisites of the alderman and town clerk.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. v. p. 35.

CHESHIRE.

The poor people go from farm to farm "a-thomasin," and generally carry with them a bag and a can, into which meal, flour, and corn, are put. Begging on this day is universal in this and the neighbouring counties.—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1850, vol. v. p. 253.

DORSETSHIRE.

At the village of Thornton, near Sherborne, a custom prevails amongst the tenants of the manor, of depositing five shillings in a hole in a certain tombstone in the churchyard, which precludes the lord of the manor from taking the tithe of hay during the year. This must be done before twelve o'clock on St. Thomas's Day, or the privilege is void.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* 1842, vol. i. p. 83.

There was a custom very generally practised in

some parts of this county, and which may even now be practised. A few days before Christmas the women, children, and old men in a parish would visit by turns the houses of their wealthier neighbours, and in return for, and in recognition of Christmas greetings, and their general demand of "Please give me something to keep up a Christmas," would receive substantial pieces or "hunks" of bread and cheese, bread and meat, or small sums of money. The old and infirm of either sex were generally represented by their children or grandchildren, those only being refused the dole who did not belong to the parish.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. x. p. 494.

Herefordshire.

St. Thomas's Day is called by the poor inhabitants of this county "Mumping Day;" and the custom of going from house to house asking for contributions, is termed *going a-mumping*.

Hertfordshire.

Small pyramids, says Fosbroke (*Encyclopædia of Antiquities*, 1840, p. 661), formed of gilt evergreens, apples, and nuts, are carried about at this time in Hertfordshire for presents.

Isle of Man.

Formerly, it was customary for the people to go to the mountains to catch deer and sheep for Christmas, and in the evening always to kindle a large fire on the top of every fingan or cliff. Hence, at the time of casting peats, every one laid aside a large one, saying: "Faaid mooar moayney son oie'l fingan," that

is, "A large turf for Fingan's Eve."—Train, *History of Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 124; Cregeen's *Manks Dictionary*, p. 67.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

Samuel Higgs, by his will, bearing date 11th May, 1820 (as appears from the church tablet), gave 50*l.* to the vicar and churchwardens of the parish of Farnsfield, and directed that the interest should be given every year on the 21st of December, in equal proportions, to the poor men and women who could repeat the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the ten commandments, before the vicar or other such person as he should appoint to hear them. The interest is applied according to the donor's orders, and the poor persons appointed to partake of the charity continue to receive it during their lives.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 209.

OXFORDSHIRE.

At Tainton, a quarter of barley is provided annually, at the expense of Lord Dynevor, the lord of the manor, and made into loaves called "cobbs." These were formerly given away in Tainton church to such of the poor children of Burford as attended. A sermon was preached on St. Thomas's Day, 6*s.* 8*d.* being paid out of Lord Dynevor's estate to the preacher. The children, however, made so much riot and disturbance in the church, that, about the year 1809, it was thought better to distribute the cobbs in a stable belonging to one of the churchwardens, which course has been pursued ever since.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p.

25.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

In many parts of this county not only the old women and widows, but representatives from every poor family in the parish, go round for alms. The clergyman is expected to give one shilling to each person, and consequently the celebration of the day is attended with no small expense. Some of the parishioners give alms in money, others in kind. Thus, for example, some of the farmers give corn, which the millers grind gratis. In some places the money collected is given to the clergyman and churchwardens, who, on the Sunday nearest to St. Thomas's Day, distribute it at the vestry. The fund is called St. Thomas's Dole, and the day itself Doleing Day.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. iv. pp. 103, 487.

SUSSEX.

A sum of 15*l.* was placed in the Arundel Savings-Bank in the year 1824, the interest of which is distributed on St. Thomas's Day. It is said that this money was found, many years since, on the person of a beggar, who died by the road-side; and the interest of it has always been appropriated by the parish officers for the use of the poor.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities,* 1842, p. 129.

WARWICKSHIRE.

In this county it is customary for the poor people to visit the farm-houses to beg contributions of corn. This is called *going a-corning.*

WORCESTERSHIRE.

At Harvington the following rhyme is sung:

"Wissal, wassail through the town,
If you've got any apples throw them down;
Up with the stocking and down with the shoe
If you've got no apples money will do.
The jug is white and the ale is brown,
This is the best house in the town."

N. & Q. 1st S. vol. viii. p. 617.

YORKSHIRE.

Drake, in his *Eboracum* (1736, p. 217), gives the following account of a custom that once existed at York on St. Thomas's Day, which he says he obtained from a manuscript that fell into his hands. "William the Conqueror, in the third year of his reign (on St. Thomas's Day), laid siege to the city of York, but finding himself unable, either by policy or strength, to gain it, raised the siege, which he had no sooner done, but by accident he met with two fryers at a place called Skelton, not far from York, and had been to seek reliefe from their fellows and themselves against Christmas: the one having a wallet full of victualls and a shoulder of mutton in his hand, with two great cakes hanging about his neck; the other having bottles of ale, with provisions, likewise of beife and mutton in his wallett. The king, knowing their poverty and condition, thought they might be serviceable to him towards the attaining York, wherefore (being accompanied with Sir George Fothergill, general of the field, a Norman born), he gave them money, and withall a promise, that if they would lett him and his soldiers into their priory at a time appointed, he would not only rebuild their

priory, but indowe it likewise with large revenues and ample privileges. The fryers easily consented and the conqueror as soon sent back his army, which, that night, according to agreement, were let into the priory by the two fryers, by which they immediately made themselves masters of all York; after which Sir Robert Clifford, who was governor thereof, was so far from being blamed by the conqueror for his stout defence made the preceding days, that he was highly esteemed and rewarded for his valour, being created Lord Clifford and there knighted, with the four magistrates then in office, viz., Horongate, Talbot (who after came to be Lord Talbott), Lassells, and Erringham.

"The arms of the city of York at that time was, argent, a cross, gules, viz., St. George's *cross*. The conqueror charged the cross with five lyons, passant gardant, *or*, in memory of the five worthy captains, magistrates, who governed the city so well, that he afterwards made Sir Robert Clifford governour thereof and the other four to aid him in counsell; and the better to keep the city in obedience he built two castles, and double moated them about; and to shew the confidence and trust that he put in these old, but new made, officers by him he offered them freely to ask whatsoever they would of him before he went, and he would grant their request, wherefore they (abominating the treachery of the two fryers to their eternal infamy), desired that, on St. Thomas's Day for ever, they might have a fryer of the priory of St. Peter's to ride through the city on horseback, with his face to the horse's tayle, and that in his hand, instead of a bridle, he should have a rope, and in the other a shoulder of mutton, with one cake hanging on his back and another on his breast, with his face painted like a *Jew*; and the youth of the city to ride

with him, and to cry and shout "Youl, Youl," with the officers of the city rideing before and making proclamation, that on this day the city was betrayed; and their request was granted them, which custom continued till the dissolution of the said fryery; and afterwards in imitation of the same, the young men and artizans of the city on the aforesaid St. *Thomas's Day*, used to dress up one of their own companions like a fryer, and called him youl, which custom continued till within this three-score years, there being many now living which can testify the same, but upon what occasion since discontinued I cannot learn: this being done in memory of betraying the city by the said fryers to William the Conqueror."

WALES.

William Rogers, by will, June 1806, gave to the minister and churchwardens of Nevern, Pembrokeshire, and their successors, 800*l.*, Three per Cent. Consols, to be transferred by his executors within six months after his decease; and it was his will that the dividends should be laid out annually, one moiety thereof in good beef, the other moiety thereof in good barley, the same to be distributed on every St. Thomas's Day in each year, by the minister and churchwardens, to and among the poor of the said parish of Nevern.—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 24.

DEC. 24.]

CHRISTMAS EVE.

CHESHIRE.

In Chester, and its neighbourhood, numerous singers parade the streets and are hospitably entertained with meat and drink at the various houses where they call.—See *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 736.

CORNWALL.

On Christmas Eve, in former days, says Hunt (*Romances of the West of England*, 1871, p. 349), the small people, or the spiggans, would meet at the bottom of the deepest mines, and have a midnight mass. In this county the yule log is called "the mock."

DERBYSHIRE.

In some parts the village choir meet in the church on Christmas Eve, and there wait until midnight, when they proceed from house to house, invariably accompanied by a small keg of ale, singing "Christians awake;" and during the Christmas season they again visit the principal houses in the place, and having played and sung for the evening, and partaken of the Christmas cheer, are presented with a sum of money.—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 208.

DEVONSHIRE.

The ashton faggot is burned in Devonshire on Christmas Eve. The faggot is composed entirely of ash timber, and the separate sticks or branches are securely bound together with ash bands. The faggot

is made as large as can conveniently be burned in the fire-place, or rather upon the floor, grates not being in use. A numerous company is generally assembled to spend the evening in games and amusements, the diversions being heightened when the faggot blazes on the hearth, as a quart of cyder is considered due and is called for and served upon the bursting of every hoop or band round the faggot. The timber being green and elastic, each band generally bursts open with a smart report when the individual stick or hoop has been partially burned through.—*N. &. Q. 1st S.* vol. iv. p. 309.

In one or two localities, it is still customary for the farmer with his family and friends, after partaking together of hot cakes and cider (the cake being dipped in the liquor previous to being eaten), to proceed to the orchard, one of the party bearing hot cake and cider as an offering to the principal apple-tree. The cake is formally deposited on the fork of the tree, and the cider thrown over the latter.[88]

—See *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 736.

[88] In some places this custom is observed on New Year's Eve.

A superstitious notion prevails in the western parts of Devonshire that, at twelve o'clock at night on Christmas Eve, the oxen in their stalls are always found on their knees, as in an attitude of devotion, and that since the alteration of the style they continue to do this only on the eve of Old Christmas Day.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 473.

It appears, from a statement of charities in an old book, that John Martyn, by will, 28th of November, 1729, gave to the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of St. Mary Major, Exeter, twenty pounds, to be put out at interest, and the

profits thereof to be laid out every Christmas Eve in twenty pieces of beef, to be distributed to twenty poor people of the parish, such as had no relief on that day, for ever.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 4.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

It appears by the benefaction table in the church of Ruardean, that the Rev. Mr. Anthony Sterry, vicar of Lidney, gave by deed, in the fortieth year of Queen Elizabeth, five shillings per annum, payable out of an estate called the Glasp, in this parish, for ringing a peal on Christmas Eve, about midnight, for two hours, in commemoration of the Nativity.—*Old English Customs and Charities,* 1842, p. 6.

HAMPSHIRE.

In the neighbourhood of the New Forest the following lines are sung on the wassailing of the trees:

"Apples and pears with right good corn,
Come in plenty to every one;
Eat and drink good cake and hot ale,
Give earth to drink and she'll not fail."

Christmas in the Olden Time, London, 1839.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

In the *Gent. Mag.* (vol. xc. pt. i. p. 33) is the following account of a custom that formerly existed at Tretyre on Christmas Eve. The writer says:—They make a cake, poke a stick through it, fasten it upon the horn of an ox, and say certain words, begging a

good crop of corn for the master. The men and boys attending the oxen, range themselves around. If the ox throws the cake behind, it belongs to the men, if before, to the boys. They take with them a wooden bottle of cyder and drink it, repeating the charm before mentioned.

KENT.

Hasted (*History of Kent*, vol. iii. p. 380) says there was a singular custom used of long time by the fishermen of Folkestone. They chose eight of their largest and best whitings out of every boat when they came home from the fishery and sold them apart from the rest, and out of the money arising from them they made a feast every Christmas Eve which they called a "Rumbald." The master of each boat provided this feast for his own company. These whitings, which are of a very large size, and are sold all round the country as far as Canterbury, are called Rumbald whitings. This custom (which is now left off, though many of the inhabitants still meet jovially on Christmas Eve, and call it Rumbald Night) might have been anciently instituted in honour of St. Rumbald, and at first designed as an offering to him for his protection during the fishery.[89]

[89] Cole, in his *History and Antiquities of Filey* (1828, p. 143), gives the following account of a custom that existed in his time in connection with the herring fishery at that place. He says, during the time the boats are on the herring fishery the junior part of the inhabitants seize all the unemployed waggons and carts they can find and drag them down the streets to the cliff tops; then leaving them to be owned and taken away by their respective proprietors on the following

morning; this is carried into effect about the third Saturday night after the boats have sailed from Filey, under a superstitious notion that it drives the herrings into the nets. Previously to the fishermen setting out upon their expedition they send a piece of sea-beef on shore from each boat to such of their friends at the public houses as they wish "weel beea;" this occasions "a bit of a supper," at which those who are going away and those who stay enjoy good cheer, heightened by mutual good-will. The Sunday preceding their departure is called *Boat Sunday*, when all their friends from the neighbouring villages attend to bid them farewell.

Isle of Man.

Waldron, in his *Description of the Isle of Man* (1859, p. 125) says that on Christmas Eve every one leaves off work, and rambles about till the bells begin to ring at midnight. Lord Teignmouth (*Sketches of the Coast of Scotland and the Isle of Man*, vol. ii. p. 264) states that they then all flock to the churches, bearing the largest candle they can procure. The churches are decorated with holly, and the service, in commemoration of the birth of our Saviour is called *Oiel Verry*.—See Train's *History of the Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 127.

Norfolk.

In some parts of Norfolk libations of spiced ale used to be sprinkled on orchards and meadows.—*Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 736.

Northamptonshire.

On Christmas Eve, 1815, says Cole (*History of Ecton*, 1825), the musicians of Ecton, accompanied by the vocalists of the church, revived the custom of going round the village at midnight and singing a carol at the principal houses.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

At Nottingham, on Christmas Eve, as well as in many other of the villages, it is customary to toast apples on a string until they drop into a bowl of hot spiced ale, which is placed to receive them; this, from the softness of the beverage is called "lamb's-wool."

OXFORDSHIRE.

Pointer, in his *Oxoniensis Academia* (1749, p. 20), says that, at Merton College, Oxford, the fellows meet together in the Hall on Christmas Eve and other solemn times to sing a psalm and drink a grace-cup to one another (called *Poculum Charitatis*), wishing one another help and happiness. These grace-cups they drink to one another every day after dinner and supper, wishing one another peace and good neighbourhood.

SUSSEX.

At Chailey, the following doggerel is sung at the wassailing of the apple trees:

"Stand fast root, bear well top,
Pray the God send us a good howling crop.
Every twig, apples big,
Every bough, apples enow.

Hats full, caps full,
Full quarters, sacks
full."[90]

N. & Q. 1st S. vol. v. p. 293.

[90] See Eve of Epiphany, p. 21.

WARWICKSHIRE.

A correspondent of the *Gent. Mag.* (1795, vol. lxv. p. 110) thus describes an amusement practised on Christmas Eve at Aston Hall, down to the end of last century. As soon as supper is over a table is set in the hall. On it is placed a brown loaf, with twenty silver threepences stuck on the top of it, a tankard of ale, with pipes and tobacco, and the two oldest servants have chairs behind it to sit as judges if they please. The steward brings the servants, both men and women, by one at a time, covered with a winnow sheet, and lays their right hand on the loaf, exposing no other part of the body. The older of the two judges guesses at the person, by naming a name, then the younger judge, and lastly, the older again. If they hit upon the right name, the steward leads the person back again; but if they do not, he takes off the winnow sheet, and the person receives a threepence, makes a low obeisance to the judges, but speaks not a word. When the second servant was brought, the younger judge guessed first and third; and this they did alternately till all the money was given away. Whatever servant had not slept in the house the preceding night forfeited his right to the money. No account is given of the origin of this strange custom, but it has been practised ever since the family lived here. When the money is gone the servants have full

liberty to drink, dance, sing, and go to bed when they please. Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 472), speaking of this custom, says, can it be what Aubrey, in his introduction to his *Survey of Wiltshire*, calls "Cob-loaf-stealing?"

YORKSHIRE.

There is in Yorkshire a custom, which has been by the country people more or less revived, ever since the alteration in the style and calendar, namely, of watching, on the midnight of the new and old Christmas Eve, by beehives, to determine upon the right Christmas from the humming noise which they suppose the bees will make when the birth of our Saviour took place.—*Gent. Mag.* 1811, vol. lxxxi. part. i. p. 424.

Christmas Eve in Yorkshire, says a writer in *Time's Telescope* (1822, p. 298), is celebrated in a peculiar manner at eight o'clock in the evening the bells greet "Old Father Christmas" with a merry peal, the children parade the streets with drums, trumpets, bells, or perhaps, in their absence, with the poker and shovel, taken from their humble cottage fire; the yule candle is lighted,
and—

> "High on the cheerful fire
> Is blazing seen th' enormous Christmas brand."

Supper is served, of which one dish, from the lordly mansion to the humblest shed, is invariably furmety; yule cake, one of which is always made for each individual in the family, and other more substantial viands are also added.

At St. Cuthbert's Church, Ackworth, a sheaf of corn was at one time suspended on Christmas Eve outside

the porch, for the especial benefit of the birds.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. ii. p. 505; see *N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. iii. p. 117.

At Dewsbury, one of the church bells is tolled as at a funeral; this is called the Devil's Knell, the moral of which is that "the Devil died when Christ was born." This custom was discontinued for many years, but revived by the vicar in 1828.—Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 150.

At Ripon, on Christmas Eve, the grocers send each of their customers a pound or half of currants and raisins to make a Christmas pudding. The chandlers also send large mould candles, and the coopers logs of wood, generally called *yule clogs*, which are always used on Christmas Eve; but should it be so large as not to be all burnt that night, which is frequently the case, the remains are kept till old Christmas Eve.—*Gent. Mag.* 1790, vol. lx. p. 719.

Cole in his *Historical Sketches of Scalby, Burniston, and Cloughton* (1829, p. 45) says the village choristers belonging to Scalby assemble on Christmas Eve, and remain out the whole night singing at the principal houses.

IRELAND.

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*3rd S.* vol. viii. p. 495) says that, in the south-east of Ireland on Christmas Eve, people hardly go to bed at all, and the first who announces the crowing of the cock, if a male, is rewarded with a cup of tea, in which is mixed a glass of spirits; if a female, with the tea only, but as a substitute for the whisky she is saluted with half-a-dozen of kisses.

DEC. 25.]
CHRISTMAS DAY.

St. Chrysostom informs us that, in the primitive times, Christmas and Epiphany were celebrated at one and the same feast (*Homil. in Diem Nativ. D. N. J. Christi*, Opera, edit. Monfaucon, tom. iii.), probably from a belief that the rising of the star in the East and the birth of Christ were simultaneous. The separation took place at the Council of Nice, A.D. 325. The Armenians, however, continued to make but one feast of the two as late as the thirteenth century. The learned have long been divided upon the precise day of the Nativity. Some have fixed it at the Passover; others, amongst whom was Archbishop Usher, at the feast of Tabernacles; and it has been observed that, if others were watching their flocks when it occurred in the field by night, it would hardly have happened in the depth of winter. Be this as it may, the 25th of December has been the day most generally fixed upon from the earliest ages of the Church. Sir Isaac Newton, in his *Commentary on the Prophecies of Daniel* (Part I. chap. ii. p. 144), has a chapter, "Of the Times of the Birth and Passion of our Saviour," in which he accounts for the choice of the 25th of December, the winter solstice, by showing that not only the feast of the Nativity, but most others, were originally fixed at cardinal points of the year; and that the first Christian calendar having been so arranged by mathematicians at pleasure, without any ground in tradition, the Christians afterwards took up with what they found in the calendars: so long as a fixed time of commemoration was solemnly appointed they were content.—See Baronii *Apparatus ad Annales Ecclesiasticos*, fol. Lucæ, 1740, p. 475 et seq.; Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, lib. xx.

cap. 4; a curious tract entitled, *The Feast of Feasts*, or 'The Celebration of the Sacred Nativity of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, grounded upon the Scriptures and confirmed by the Practice of the Christian Church in all Ages;' see also Knight's *English Cyclopædia*, 1859, vol. ii. p. 882.

The name given, says a correspondent of *Book of Days*, (vol. ii. p. 745) by the ancient Goths and Saxons to the festival of the winter solstice was *Jul* or *Yule*, the latter term forming to the present day the designation in the Scottish dialect of Christmas, and preserved also in the phrase of the "yule log." Perhaps the etymology of no term has excited greater discussions among antiquaries. Some maintain it to be derived from the Greek ουλος or ιουλος, the name of a hymn in honour of Ceres, others say it comes from the Latin *jubilum*, signifying a time of rejoicing, or from its being a festival in honour of Julius Cæsar; whilst some also explain its meaning as synonymous with *ol* or *oel*, which in the ancient Gothic language denotes a feast, and also the favourite liquor used on such occasions whence our word *ale*. A much more probable derivation, however, of the term in question is from the Gothic *giul* or *hiul*, the origin of the modern word *wheel*, and bearing the same significance. According to this very probable explanation, the yule festival received its name from its being the turning-point of the year, or the period at which the fiery orb of day made a revolution in his annual circuit and entered on his northern journey. A confirmation of this view is afforded by the circumstance that, in the old clog almanacs, a wheel is the device employed for marking the season of yule-tide.

The season of the Nativity is now no longer marked by that hospitality which characterized its

observance among our forefathers. At present Christmas meetings are chiefly confined to family parties. The wassail-bowl, the yule-clog, and the lord of misrule, with a long train of sports and customs which formerly prevailed at this season are forgotten, even Christmas carols are nearly gone by; and the decking of churches, and occasionally of houses, with holly and other evergreens, forms now almost the only indication that this great festival is at hand.—Knight's *English Cyclopædia*, 1859, vol. ii. p. 882.

Christmas, says Père Cyprian (quoted by Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, 1865, vol. iv. pp. 320, 321), was always observed in this country, especially at the King's palaces, with greater ceremony than in any other realm in Europe. Among other ancient ceremonies, he tells us how a branch of the Glastonbury thorn used to be brought up in procession, and presented in great pomp to the King and Queen of England on Christmas morning.

Under the Commonwealth.

—In the *Diary of John Evelyn* (1859, vol. i. p. 297), under the date of the 25th of December, occurs the following:—

"Christmas Day. No sermon anywhere, no church being permitted to be open, so observed it at home."

Again, under the same date in 1654 (p. 341), the statement is renewed:

"Christmas Day. No churches or public assembly. I was fain to pass the devotions of that Blessed Day with my family at home."

Alluding to the observance of Christmas Day in 1657, the same writer says:—

"I went to London with my wife to celebrate Christmas Day, Mr. Gunning preaching in Exeter

Chapel, on Micah, vii. 2. Sermon ended; as he was giving us the Holy Sacrament the chapel was surrounded with soldiers, and all the communicants and assembly surprised and kept prisoners by them, some in the house, others carried away. It fell to my share to be confined to a room in the house, where yet I was permitted to dine with the master of it, the Countess of Dorset, Lady Hatton, and some others of quality who invited me. In the afternoon came Colonel Whalley, Goffe, and others from Whitehall to examine us one by one; some they committed to the Marshal, some to prison. When I came before them they took my name and abode, examined me why, contrary to the ordinance made that none should any longer observe the superstitious time of the Nativity (as esteemed by them), I durst offend, and particularly be at Common Prayers, which they told me was but the mass in English, and particularly pray for Charles Stuart, for which we had no Scripture. I told them we did not pray for Charles Stuart, but for all Christian kings, princes, and governors. They replied, in so doing we prayed for the king of Spain too, who was their enemy and a Papist; with other frivolous and ensnaring questions and much threatening, and, finding no colour to detain me, they dismissed me with much pity of my ignorance. These were men of high flight and above ordinances, and spake spiteful things of our Lord's Nativity. As we went up to receive the sacrament the miscreants held their muskets against us, as if they would have shot us at the altar, but yet suffering us to finish the office of communion, as perhaps not having instructions what to do in case they found us in that action; so I got home late the next day, blessed be God!"

In a tract entitled *Round about our Coal-Fire*, is the

following account of the manner in which Christmas was observed in days gone by:—An English gentleman at the opening of the great day, i.e., on Christmas Day in the morning, had all his tenants and neighbours enter his hall by daybreak. The strong beer was broached, and the black-jacks went plentifully about with toast, sugar, nutmeg, and good Cheshire cheese. The hackin (the great sausage) must be boiled by daybreak, or else two young men must take the maiden (i.e., the cook) by the arms, and run her round the market-place till she is ashamed of her laziness. In Christmas holidays, the tables were all spread from the first to the last; the sirloins of beef, the minced pies, the plum-porridge, the capons, turkeys, geese, and plum-puddings, were all brought upon the board. Every one eat heartily, and was welcome, which gave rise to the proverb, "Merry in the hall when beards wag all."—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 531.

Boar's Head.

—Aubrey, in a MS. dated 1678, says: "Before the last civil wars, in gentlemen's houses at Christmas, the first diet that was brought to table was a boar's head with a lemon in his mouth."

Christmas Book.

—A book in which people were accustomed to keep an account of the Christmas presents they received. —Nares' *Glossary* (Halliwell and Wright), 1857, vol. i. p. 11.

Bustard.

—The bustard, says Timbs (*Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 148), has almost disappeared; but within memory it might be seen in the Christmas larders of large inns.

Christmas Candles.

—Those were candles of an uncommon size, and the

name has descended to the small candles which children light up at this season. Hampson (*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 109), alluding to the custom, says, in some places candles are made of a particular kind, because the candle that is lighted on Christmas Day must be so large as to burn from the time of its ignition to the close of the day, otherwise it will portend evil to the family for the ensuing year. The poor were wont to present the rich with wax tapers, and yule candles are still in the north of Scotland given by merchants to their customers. At one time children at the village schools in Lancashire were required to bring each a mould candle before the *parting* or separation for the Christmas holidays.

Christmas Carols.

—The Christmas carol (said to be derived from *cantare* to sing, and *rola*, an interjection of joy) is of very ancient date. Bishop Taylor observes that the 'Gloria in Excelsis,' the well-known hymn sung by the angels to the shepherds at our Lord's Nativity, was the earliest Christmas carol. In the early ages of the Church bishops were accustomed to sing these sacred canticles among their clergy. The oldest printed collections in England are those of Wynkyn de Worde, 1521, and of Kele soon after. Warton, in his *History of English Poetry*, notices a licence granted in 1562 to John Tysdale for printing "Certayne goodly carowles to be songe to the glory of God;" and again, "Crestenmas carowles auctorisshed by my lord of London." See *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. x. p. 485. In the sixteenth century the popularity of carol-singing occasioned the publication of a duodecimo volume, published in 1642, entitled, "Psalmes or Songs of Sion, turned into the language, and set to the tunes of a strange land. By W(illiam) S(layter), intended for Christmas carols, and fitted to divers of the most

noted and common but solemne tunes, everywhere in this land familiarly used and knowne."—See *Athenæum*, December 20th, 1856; Sandy's *Christmas Carols*, 1833.

Decorations.

—Tradition, says Phillips in his *Sylva Florifera* (1823, vol. i. p. 281), asserts that the first Christian church in Britain was built of boughs, and that this plan was adopted as more likely to attract the notice of the people because the heathens 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 held in December, and as the oaks of this country were then without leaves, the priests obliged the people to bring in boughs and sprigs of evergreens; and Christians, on the 20th of the same month, did likewise, from whence originated the present custom of placing holly and other evergreens in our churches and houses to show the arrival of the feast of Christmas. The name of holly is a corruption of the word *holy*, as Dr. Turner, our earliest writer on plants, calls it *Holy* and *Holy tree*. It has a great variety of names in Germany, amongst which is *Christdorn*; in Danish it is also called *Christorn*; and in Swedish *Christtorn*, amongst other appellations.

A correspondent of *Book of Days*, speaking of this custom (vol. ii., p. 753), says the decking of churches, houses, and shops with evergreens at Christmas springs from a period far anterior to the revelation of Christianity, and seems proximately to be derived from the custom prevalent during the Saturnalia of the inhabitants of Rome, ornamenting their temples and dwellings with green boughs.

The favourite plants for church decoration at Christmas are holly, bay, rosemary, and laurel. Ivy is

rather objectionable, from its associations, having anciently been sacred to Bacchus. Cypress seems inappropriate from its funereal relations. One plant, in special, is excluded—the mistletoe. Ibid. p. 753.

Game Pies.

—These were formerly made at the season of Christmas. In the books of the Salters' Company, London, is the following—

"Receipt. Fit to make a moost choyce paaste of gamys to be eten at ye Feste of Chrystmasse" (17th Richard II A.D. 1394). A pie so made by the company's cook in 1836 was found excellent. It consisted of a pheasant, hare, and a capon; two partridges, two pigeons, and two rabbits; all boned and put into paste in the shape of a bird, with the livers and hearts, two mutton kidneys, forced meats, and egg-balls, seasoning, spice, catsup and pickled mushrooms, filled up with gravy made from the various bones.—See Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 148.

Mince Pies.

—These were popular under the name of "mutton pies" so early as 1596: *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 755. They were also known as Shred and Christmas pies. Thus, in Sheppard's *Epigrams* (1651, p. 121), we find the following:—

"No matter for plomb-porridge or *Shrid* pies;" and Herrick, alluding to the custom of setting a watch upon the pies the night before Christmas, says:

> "Come guard this night the Christmas pie,
> That the thief, though ne'er so sly,
> With his flesh-hooks don't come nigh,
> To catch it."

Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 527), quoting from an old tract, printed about the time of Elizabeth, or James I., says they were also called *Minched* pies.

Selden, in his *Table Talk*, tells us that mince pies were baked in a coffin-shaped crust, intended to represent the cratch or manger wherein the infant Jesus was laid. This statement may be regarded, however, as improbable, as in old English cookery books the crust of a pie is generally called "the coffin."

Minced pies, says Timbs (*Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 149), were derived from the paste images and sweetmeats given to the Fathers of the Vatican at Rome on Christmas Eve. Eating minced pies at Christmas was formerly a test of orthodoxy against recusants.

Mistletoe.

—At what period mistletoe came to be recognised as a Christmas evergreen, is not by any means certain. We have Christmas carols in praise of holly and ivy of even earlier date than the fifteenth century, but allusion to mistletoe can scarcely be found for two centuries later, or before the time of Herrick. Coles, too, in his *Knowledge of Plants*, 1656, says of mistletoe, "it is carried many miles to set up in houses about Christmas-time, when it is adorned with a white glistening berry." In the tract, *Round about our Coal-Fire*, published early in the last century, we are told the rooms were embowered with holly, ivy, cypress, bays, laurel, and mistletoe. Brand (*Pop. Antiq.*, 1849, vol. i. p. 523) thinks that mistletoe was never put in churches among evergreens but by mistake or ignorance; for, says he, it was the heathenish, or profane plant, as having been of such distinction in the pagan rites of

druidism, and it had its place therefore assigned it in kitchens, where it was hung in great state.—See Timbs' *Things Not Generally Known*, 1856, pp. 159-160.

Lord of Misrule.

—His office was to preside over the festivities of Christmas, and his duties consisted in directing the various revels of the season. In some great families, and occasionally at Court, he was also called the *Abbot of Misrule*, corresponding with the French *Abbé de Liesse*, a word which implies merriment. Stow, in his *Survey of London*, alluding to this whimsical custom says:—"In the feast of Christmas there was in the king's house, wheresoever he lodged, a Lord of Misrule, or master of merry disports, and the like, had ye in the house of every nobleman of honour, or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal. The Mayor of London, and either of the sheriffs, had their several lords of misrule, ever contending, without quarrel or offence, who should make the rarest pastime to delight the beholders, these lords beginning their rule at Allhallowed Eve, continued the same till the morrow after the Feast of the Purification, commonly called Candlemas Day, in which space there were fine and subtle disguisings, masks, and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nayles, and points, in every house, more for pastimes than for game."

Leland (*Collectanea de Rebus Anglicis*, 1770, vol. iii., Append. p. 256), speaking of the year 4 Henry VII., 1489, says:—"This Christmas I saw no disguisings, and but right few playes; but there was an Abbot of Misrule that made much sport, and did right well his office." It appears that large sums of money were expended by this king upon these masquerades and sports, as the following extracts

from his "Privy Purse Expenses" will show:—

"Dec. 24 (1491). To Ringley, Lorde of Mysrewle, upon a preste, 5*l.*

"Oct. 24 (1492). To Ringley, Abbot of Mysreule, 5*l.*

"Jan. 2 (1494). For playing of the Mourice daunce, 2*l.*

"Jan. 15 (1494). To Walter Alwyn, in full payment for the disguising made at Christenmas, 14*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*

"March 3 (1490). To Jacques Haulte, in full payment for the disguising at Christenmas, 32*l.* 18*s.* $6^1/_2$*d.*

"Jan. 2 (1503). To the Abbot of Misrule, in rewarde, 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*

"Feb. 12 (1503). To Lewis Adams, that made disguysings, 10*l.*"

The Lord or Abbot of Misrule at Court, says Hampson, (*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 117) was usually a writer of interludes and plays, and the office was not unfrequently held by a poet of some reputation. Such, for example, was George Ferrers, "in whose pastimes Edward the Sixth," we are told by Warton, "had great delight." There can be no doubt, however, that scandalous abuses often resulted from the exuberant licence assumed by the lord of misrule and his satellites, and consequently we find their proceedings denounced in no measured terms by Prynne, and other zealous puritans.—See *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 742.

Stubbes, a morose puritan in the days of Elizabeth, denominates the lord of misrule "a grand captaine of mischiefe," and has preserved a minute description of all his wild doings in the country, of which the following is a summary. He says that the lord of misrule on being selected, takes twenty to sixty others, "lyke hymself," to act as his guard, who are

decorated with ribbands and scarfs and bells on their legs. Thus, all things set in order, they have their hobby-horses, their dragons, and other antiques, together with the gaudie pipers and thunderyng drummers, and strike up the devill's dance withal. So they march to the church, invading it, even though service be performing, with such a confused noyse that no man can hear his own voice. Then they adjourn to the churchyard, where booths are set up, and the rest of the day spent in dancing and drinking. The followers of "My Lord" go about to collect money for this, giving in return "badges and cognizances" to wear in the hat: and do not scruple to insult, or even duck, such as will not contribute. But, adds Stubbes, another sort of fantasticall fooles are well pleased to bring all sorts of food and drink to furnish out the feast.—See Disraeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, 1858, vol. ii. p. 262; and Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, p. 254.

Mummers.

—These were amusements derived from the Saturnalia, and so called from the Danish *Mumme*, or Dutch *Momme*, disguise in a mask. Christmas was the grand scene of mumming, and some mummers were disguised like bears, others like unicorns, bringing presents. Those who could not procure masks rubbed their faces with soot, or painted them. In the Christmas mummeries the chief aim was to surprise by the oddity of the masques and singularity and splendour of the dresses. Everything was out of nature and propriety. They were often attended with an exhibition of gorgeous machinery.—Fosbroke's *Encylopædia of Antiquities*, 1840, p. 669; see Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, 1801, pp. 124, 189, 190; also *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. x. pp. 464, 465, vol. xi. p. 271, vol. xii. p. 407; *3rd S.* vol. i. p. 66, vol. iv. p. 486.

Pantomime.

—The Christmas pantomime or harlequinade is, in its present shape, essentially a British entertainment, and was first introduced into this country by a dancing master of Shrewsbury named Weaver in 1702. One of his pantomimes, entitled *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, met with great success. The arrival, in the year 1717, in London of a troupe of French pantomimists with performing dogs, gave an impetus to this kind of drama, which was further developed in 1758 by the arrival of the Grimaldi family, the head of which was a posture-master and dentist. Under the auspices of this family the art of producing pantomimes was greatly cultivated, and the entertainment much relished. Joseph Grimaldi, the son of the dentist, was clever at inventing tricks and devising machinery, and *Mother Goose*, and others of his harlequinades, had an extended run. At that time the wit of the clown was the great feature, but, by-and-by, as good clowns became scarce, other adjuncts were supplied, such as panoramas or dioramic views; and now the chief reliance of the manager is on scenic effects, large sums of money being lavished on the *mise en scène*. This is particularly the case as regards the transformation scene—i.e., the scene where the characters are changed into clown, harlequin, &c., as much as 1000*l.* being frequently spent on this one effort. In London alone a sum of 40,000*l.* is annually expended at Christmas time on pantomimes. The *King of the Peacocks*, a pantomime produced at the London Lyceum Theatre during the management of Madame Vestris, cost upwards of £3000. Even provincial theatres, such as those of Manchester or Edinburgh, consider it right to go to considerable expense in the production of their Christmas pantomime.—

Chambers' *Encyclopædia*, 1874, vol. vii. p. 237; see Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, 1858, pp. 116-130; *N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. v. pp. 193-95.

Plum-Porridge.

—This, says Misson, was a "sort of soup with plumbs, which is not at all inferior to the pye." Dr. Rimbault says, was not this the same as *plum-pudding*? Pudding was formerly used in the sense of stuffing or force-meat, as we now say black-puddings. Porridge, on the other hand, was used in the sense of our pudding. Thus Shakspeare talks of "porridge after meat," meaning *pudding* after meat.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. xii. p. 489.

Snapdragon.

—A very favourite pastime at this season. Although so prevalent in England, it is almost unknown in Scotland.—See *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 738.

A writer in the *Pantalogia* (1813, vol. x.) thus describes this sport:—It is a kind of play, in which brandy is set on fire, and raisins thrown into it, which those who are unused to the sport are afraid to take out, but which may be safely snatched by a quick motion and put blazing into the mouth, which being closed, the fire is at once extinguished. A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*2nd S.* vol. vii. p. 277) suggests as a derivation the German *schnapps*, spirit, and *drache*, dragon, and that it is equivalent to spirit-fire. The game has also been called *flap-* and *slap-dragon* at different times. Shakspeare, for example, in the second part of *Henry IV.* act ii. sc. 4, makes Falstaff answer:

> "And drinks off candles' ends for *flap-dragons*."

And in *Love's Labours Lost*, act v. sc. 1:

> "Thou art easier swallowed than a *flap-dragon*."

See also the *Tatler*, No. 85.

Christmas Sports.

—Among the various games and sports of an olden Christmas, says Dr. Rimbault, were card-playing, chess, and draughts, jack-pudding in the hall; fiddlers and musicians, who were regaled with a black-jack of beer and a Christmas pie; also singing the wassail, scrambling for nuts, cakes, and apples; dancing round standards decorated with evergreens in the streets; the famous old hobby-horse, hunting owls and squirrels, the fool plough, hot cockles, and the game of hoodman-blind.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. xii. p. 489.

Christmas Tree.

—Various suggestions have been made as to the origin of the Christmas tree. Mr. Timbs, in his *Something for Everybody* (1861, p. 127), suggests its being traceable to the ancient Egyptians and their palm-tree, which produces a branch every month, and therefore held to be emblematical of the year. The Germans may be said to claim it as peculiar to themselves, as being indicative of their attachment to Christianity; they identify it with the apostolic labours of St. Maternus, one of the earliest, if not the very first, of the preachers of the Gospel among them. They have a legend of his sleeping under a fir-tree, and of a miracle that occurred on that occasion. Mr. MacCabe (*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. viii. p. 489), however, thinks the Christmas tree is traceable to the Roman Saturnalia, and was not improbably first imported into Germany with the conquering legions of Drusus. The Christmas tree, such as we now see it, with its pendent toys and mannikins, is distinctly portrayed in a single line of Virgil (Georg. ii. 389):

> “Oscilla ex alta suspendunt mollia pinu.”

Consult Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (1849, 2nd ed. p. 846, in verb. "oscillum"), where there is given an engraving "from an ancient gem (Maffei, Gem. Ant. iii. 64) representing a tree with four oscilla hung upon its branches." Any one looking into that valuable work will see at once that it is an exact picture of a Christmas tree.

A correspondent of *Book of Days* (vol. ii. p. 787) says, within the last twenty years, and apparently since the marriage of Queen Victoria with Prince Albert, previous to which time it was almost unknown in this country, the Christmas tree has been introduced into England with the greatest success.

The Vessel-Cup.

—There is a very pretty custom, now nearly obsolete, of bearing the "vessel," or, more properly the wassail-cup, at Christmas. This consists of a box containing two dolls, dressed up to represent the Virgin and the Infant Christ, decorated with ribbons and surrounded by flowers and apples; the box has usually a glass lid, is covered over by a white napkin, and carried from door to door on the arms of a woman; on the top, or in the box, a china bason is placed, and the bearer on reaching a house, uncovered the box and sung the carol known as the "Seven Joys of the Virgin."

The carrying of the "vessel-cup" is a fortuitous speculation, as it is considered so unlucky to send any one away unrequited, that few can be found whose temerity is so great as to deter them from giving some halfpence to the singer.

In Yorkshire, formerly, only one image used to be carried about—that of the Saviour, which was placed in a box surrounded by evergreens, and such flowers as could be procured at the season. The party to

whose house the figure was carried were at liberty to take from the decorations of the image a leaf or a flower, which was carefully preserved and regarded as a sovereign remedy for the toothache.—*Jour. of Arch. Assoc.* 1853, vol. viii. p. 38; *Book of Days*, 1864, vol. ii. p. 725; Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 454.

Turkey.

—The turkey has graced the Christmas table from the date of its introduction into England, about the year 1524. Tusser mentions the bird as forming part of the Christmas fare in 1587:

> "Beefe, mutton, and porke, shred pies of the best;
> Pig, veale, goose, and capon, and turkie well drest."

Waits.

—Musicians who play by night for two or three weeks before Christmas, terminating their performances generally on Christmas Eve. It is uncertain, says a correspondent of *Book of Days* (vol ii. p. 742), whether the term *Waits* denoted originally musical instruments, a particular kind of music, or the persons who played under certain special circumstances. There is evidence in support of all these views. At one time the name of waits was given to minstrels attached to the king's court, whose duty it was to guard the streets at night and proclaim the hour, something in the same manner as the watchmen were wont to do in London before the establishment of the metropolitan police. Down to the year 1820, perhaps later, says the same writer (p. 743), the waits had a certain degree of official recognition in the cities of London and Westminster. In London, the post was purchased; in Westminster, it was an appointment under the control of the high constable and the court of burgesses. A police inquiry about Christmas time in that year brought the matter

in a singular way under public notice. Mr. Clay had been the official leader of the waits for Westminster, and, on his death, Mr. Monro obtained the post. Having employed a number of persons in different parts of the city and liberties of Westminster to serenade the inhabitants, trusting to their liberality at Christmas as a remuneration, he was surprised to find that other persons were, unauthorized, assuming the right of playing at night, and making applications to the inhabitants for Christmas boxes. Sir R. Baker, the police magistrate, promised to aid Mr. Munro in the assertion of his claims, and the result, in several cases, showed that there really was this "vested right" to charm the ears of the citizens with nocturnal music. At present, however, there is nothing to prevent any number of such itinerant minstrels from plying their midnight calling. See two interesting articles on the subject by Mr. Chappell in *N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. vi. pp. 489, 509.

Yule-clog or Yule-log.—This was generally lighted on Christmas Eve, and was, says Soane, as large as the hearth would admit of, or the means of the rejoicers could supply; and, in some of the northern counties of England, so long as the log lasted, the servants were entitled to ale at their meals. At one time custom prescribed that it should be lighted with a brand of the last year's block, which had been carefully put by and preserved for that purpose, as we find it recorded by Herrick:

"Come bring with a noise,
My merrie, merrie boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psalteries play
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a
tiending."[91]

[91] To *Teend* is to kindle, or to *burn*, from the Anglo-Saxon *Tendan* to set on fire.

It is also requisite that the maidens who blow a fire, should come to the task with clean hands:

"Wash your hands, or else the fire
Will not tiend to your desire;
Unwash'd hands, ye maidens, know,
Dead the fire though ye blow."

BERKSHIRE.

At Cumnor the parishioners, who paid vicarial tithes, claimed a custom of being entertained at the vicarage, on the afternoon of Christmas Day, with four bushels of malt brewed into ale and beer, two bushels of wheat made into bread, and half a hundred weight of cheese. The remainder was given to the poor the next morning after divine service.—Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, 1813, vol. i. pt. ii. p. 271.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

By the will of John Popple, dated the 12th of March, 1830, 4*l.* yearly is to be paid unto the vicar, churchwardens, and overseers of the poor of the parish of Burnham, to provide for the poor people who should be residing in the poorhouse, a dinner,

with a proper quantity of good ale and likewise with tobacco and snuff.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 4.

Up to about 1813, a bull and boar, a sack of wheat, and a sack of malt were given away to the poor by the lord of the manor of Prince's Risborough about six o'clock every Christmas morning. This practice was then discontinued, and for about five or six years after the discontinuance, beef and mutton were distributed to the poor about Christmas in lieu of the above articles.—*Ibid.* p. 66.

The following extract is taken from the *Gent. Mag.* (1753, vol. xxiii. p. 49):—At Quainton, above two thousand people went, with lanterns and candles, to view a blackthorn in that neighbourhood, and which was remembered to be a slip from the famous Glastonbury thorn, and that it always budded on the 24th, was full blown the next day, and went all off at night. The people finding no appearance of a bud, it was agreed by all that December 25th (New Style) could not be the right Christmas Day, and accordingly refused going to church, and treating their friends on that day as usual. At length the affair became so serious, that the ministers of the neighbouring villages, in order to appease them, thought it prudent to give notice that the *Old* Christmas Day should be kept holy as before.

This famous hawthorn was supposed to be sprung from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, who having fixed it in the ground with his own hand on Christmas Day, it took root immediately, put forth leaves, and the next day was covered with milk-white
blossoms.[92]
—See Hearne's *History and Antiquities of Glastonbury*, 1722.

[92] Collinson, in his *History of Somersetshire* (1791), alludes to the miraculous walnut-tree, which grew in the Abbey churchyard of Glastonbury, and never budded forth before the feast of St. Barnabas, viz., 11th June, and on that very day shot forth leaves, and flourished.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

At Clare Hall, in Cambridge, a collar of brawn is always provided for the Fellows' table on Christmas Day, which comes up every day during the twelve days and then makes another and last appearance on Candlemas Day. A sprig of ivy with berries is stuck in the centre of the top; the berries are first dipped in flour, probably to represent the hoar frost.—*Time's Telescope*, 1863, p. 338.

CORNWALL.

Hitchins, in his *History of Cornwall* (1824, vol. i. p. 718), gives the following account of the Christmas plays, which at one time were performed in this county at Christmas. He says, the lads who engage in these theatrical representations appear fantastically dressed, decorated with ribbons and painted paper, with wooden swords, and all the equipage necessary to support the several characters they assume. To entertain their auditors, they learn to repeat a barbarous jargon, in the form of a drama, which has been handed down from distant generations. War and love are the general topics, and St. George and the Dragon are always the most prominent characters. Interludes, expostulations, debate, battle, and death, are sure to find a place among the

mimicry; but a physician who is always at hand immediately restores the dead to life. It is generally understood that these Christmas plays derived their origin from the ancient crusades, and hence the feats of chivalry and the romantic extravagance of knight-errantry that are still preserved in all the varied pretensions and exploits.—See *Every Day Book*, 1827, vol. ii. p. 122.

It was customary at one time in Cornwall on the last Thursday that was one clear week before Christmas Day, which was anciently called *jeu-nhydn*, or White Thursday, for the tinners to claim a holiday, because, according to tradition, on this day black tin or ore was first melted or turned into white tin or metal in these parts.—Hitchins, *History of Cornwall*, 1824, vol. i. p. 725.

CUMBERLAND.

In this county, and in all the great towns in the North of England, about a week before Christmas, what are called *Honey-Fairs* are held, in which dancing forms the leading amusement.—*Time's Telescope*, 1824, p. 297.

DERBYSHIRE.

Christmas festivities are well observed in Derbyshire; mummers or guisers go from house to house, and perform a play of St. George. They are dressed up in character and decorated with ribbands, tinsel, and other finery, and on being admitted into the house commence their performance by St. George announcing himself by beginning his oration:

"I am St. George, the noble champion bold,

And with my glittering sword
I've won three crowns of gold;
It's I who fought the fiery dragon,
And brought it to the slaughter;
And so I won fair Sabra,
The king of Egypt's daughter.
—Seven have I won, but married none,
And bear my glory all alone,
—With *my* Sword in my hand,
Who dare against me stand?
I swear I'll cut him down
With my victorious brand."

A champion is soon found in the person of Slasher, who accepts the challenge. St. George then replies in a neat speech, when they sing, shake hands, and fight with their wooden swords, and Slasher is slain. The King then enters, saying:—"I am the King of England, the greatest man alive," and after walking round the dead body, calls for, "Sir Guy, one of the chiefest men in the world's wonder," who shows his wonderful courage and prowess in calling for a doctor. The doctor, on making his appearance, gives a long and quaint account of his birth, parentage, education, and travels, whilst perambulating around the fallen Slasher, and ends his oration by saying:

"Here take a little out of my bottle,
And put it down thy throttle."

The dead man is thus cured, and having received the advice of, "Rise, Jack, and fight again, the play is ended."—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 206.

DORSETSHIRE.

It appears that in some parts of this county the

mummers still go round at Christmas-tide, performing a species of play.—See *N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. ii. p. 505.

ESSEX.

On Christmas day at Hornchurch the lessee of the tithes, which belong to New College, Oxford, supplies, says Hone, (*Every Day Book*, 1827, vol. ii. p. 1649), a boar's head dressed and garnished with bayleaves, &c. In the afternoon it is carried in procession into the mill-field adjoining the churchyard, where it is wrestled for and afterwards feasted upon at one of the public-houses by the rustic conqueror and his friends with all the merriment peculiar to the season.

The following appeared in the *Daily News* of January 5th, 1852:—By ancient charter or usage in Hornchurch a boar's head is wrestled for in a field adjoining the church, a boar, the property of the parish, having been slaughtered for the purpose. The boar's head, elevated on a pole and decorated with ribbons, was brought into the ring where the competitors entered, and the prize was awarded.—See Morant, *History of Essex*, 1768, vol. i. p. 74.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

It was formerly the custom of the city of Gloucester to present to the Sovereign at Christmas a lamprey-pie with a raised crust. The custom is of great antiquity, and as Henry I., of lamprey-loving celebrity, frequently held his Court during Christmas at Gloucester, it may have originated in his time. In 1530 the Prior of Lanthony at Gloucester sent "cheese, carp, and baked lampreys" to Henry VIII. at

Windsor, for which the bearer received twenty shillings.—Tighe and Davis, *Annals of Windsor*, p. 562.

During the Commonwealth it appears from the following entry in the corporation minutes that the pie was sent to the members for the city:—

"*Item.*—Paid to Thomas Suffield, cook, for lamprey-pies sent to our Parliament men, £08 00*s.* 00*d.*"

In 1752 it appears to have been the custom to present a lamprey-pie to the Prince of Wales, as appears by Mr. Jesse's book, *George Selwyn and his Contemporaries* (vol. i. p. 153), where is printed the following letter from Mr. Alderman Harris to George Selwyn, then M.P. for Gloucester:—

"*Gloucester, 15th January, 1752.*

"SIR,—At the request of Mr. Mayor, whose extraordinary hurry of business will not afford him leisure to direct himself, I am desired to acquaint you that by the Gloucester waggon this week is sent the usual present of a lamprey-pie from this Corporation to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. It is directed to you; and I am further to request the favour of you to have the same presented with the compliments of this body, as your late worthy father used to do.

"Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"GAB. HARRIS.

"P.S.—The waggoner's inn is the King's Head, in the Old Change."[93]

—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ix. p. 184.

[93] Another correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*2nd S.* vol. ix. p. 185) says that it was formerly the custom to send to the King the first lamprey caught in the river at the commencement of the season; it

was stewed, that being the best way of cooking this fish.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

In this county, and also in Worcestershire, it is considered very unlucky for new shoes or tanned leather to be received into the house during the Christmas week or on New Year's Day.—See *N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. iii. p. 7.

KENT.

At one time the festivities of Christmas were commenced at Ramsgate by a curious musical procession. The following account is taken from Busby's *Concert Room and Orchestra Anecdotes* (1825, vol. i. p.
73):—

A party of young people procure the head of a dead horse, which is affixed to a pole about four feet in length, a string is tied to the lower jaw, a horsecloth is then attached to the whole, under which one of the party gets, and by frequently pulling the string keeps up a loud snapping noise, and is accompanied by the rest of the party grotesquely habited and ringing hand-bells. They thus proceed from house to house, sounding their bells and singing carols and songs. They are commonly gratified with beer and cake, or perhaps with money. This is provincially called a *hodening*; and the figure above described a "hoden," or wooden horse.

This curious ceremony is also observed in the Isle of Thanet on Christmas Eve, and is supposed to be an ancient relic of a festival ordained to commemorate

our Saxon ancestors' landing in that island.

LANCASHIRE.

The following description of primitive manners in the houses of the gentry at Christmas is extracted by Baines (*Hist. of Lancashire*, vol. iii. p. 294) from a family manuscript of the Cunliffes, of Wycoller, in Lancashire, and refers to an age antecedent to the wars of the Parliament:—"At Wycoller-Hall the family usually kept open house the twelve days at Christmas. Their entertainment was a large hall of curious ashler wood, a long table, plenty of *furmerty*, like new milk, in a morning, made of husked wheat boiled, roasted beef with fat goose and a pudding, with plenty of good beer for dinner. A roundabout fire-place, surrounded with stone benches, where the young folks sat and cracked nuts, and diverted themselves; and in this manner the sons and daughters got matching without going much from home."—See *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 91.

ISLE OF MAN.

Train, in his *History of the Isle of Man* (1845, vol. ii. p. 127), says:—The Christmas festival is introduced by young persons perambulating the various towns and villages in the evenings, fantastically dressed, and armed with swords, calling as they proceed, "Who wants to see the White Boys act?" When their services are engaged they, like the Scotch *guisards* or *Quhite boys of Yule*, perform a rude drama, in which St. George, Prince Valentine, King of Egypt, Sambo, and the Doctor are the *dramatis personæ*.

It was customary in the Isle of Man for every family that could afford it to have a brewing called

Jough-ny-nollick, i.e., Christmas drink, prepared for the festivities of the season. On such occasions one brewing-kettle generally served a whole neighbourhood, which gave rise to the monk's proverb, "To go about like a brewing-pan."—*Ibid.* p. 127.

MIDDLESEX.

Malcolm, in his *Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London* (1811, p. 259), speaking of Christmas Day, says:—"It was a day of grand difference in the judgment of some, and in the City of London some opened their shops, but to stop mutinying they were shut up again; yet do very few understand what the difference is that is now embraced in the judgments of those who desire the reformation from Popish innovation, but to give such further satisfaction herein, it is the opinion of these that it is a day wherein it is very fit for the people of God to congregate in the church to hear the Word of God preached, but not a holiday or such a day as is of absolute necessity to be kept holy; it is a day wherein it is no sin for a man to follow his calling, and he must not by a Popish innovation adore the day."

Inns of Court.—There were anciently great doings in the halls of the Inns of Court at Christmas. At the Inner Temple early in the morning the gentlemen of the Inn went to church, and after the service they repaired into the hall to breakfast with brawn, mustard, and malmsey. At the first course at dinner was "served in, a fair and large *Bore's head* upon a silver platter, with minstralsye."—Dugdale's *Orig. Jurid.*

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*5th S.* vol. ii. p. 507),

alluding to the time-honoured custom of the Boar's Head Feast at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, says the boar's head is still served up at Queen's College, Oxford (see p. 477), but I do not think it can be more enjoyable than the Christmas custom used to be at Clerkenwell, with the hall strewn with rushes, the gigantic yule-log drawn in by the sons of the host (the late proprietor), with the accompanying announcement, by bugles, and the bringing in of the boar's head, the "cook dressed all in white," singing the good old carol (printed by Wynkyn, de Worde, 1521), copies of which being in the hands of the guests, who joined in the chorus, rendering the whole scene so pleasant as never to be forgotten. The loving cup was never omitted, and of course wassail was duly brought in, "yᵉ Lorde of Mysrewle doing his duty 'passing well.'" The following is an exact copy of the carol:

"Caroll at ye Bryngyne in ye Bore's Heed.

Caput apri differo
Reddens laudem Domino.

The bore's heed in hande bringe I,
With garlens gay and rosemarie,
I pray you all synge merrilie,
Qui estis in convivio.

The bore's heed I understande,
Is the chefe servyce in this lande,
Loke wherever it be fonde,
Servite cum cantico.

Be gladde lordes, both more and lesse,
For this hath ordeyned our stewarde
To chere you all this Christmasse,
The bore's heed with mustarde."

Subjoined is a copy of the invitation the late host and his predecessor used to issue, which is a curious production:

"We'll passe aboute ye lovynge cuppe,
And sende ye wassaile rounde;
With myrthe and songes of chyvalrie,
These goodlye Halles shall sounde.

[Here is an illustration of the north side of the Gate.]

"Samuel Wickens, ye Grande Mayester of ye Priorye of Sainte John, Greetinge welle hys ryght trustye and welle beloved friends, dothe herebye summon them to hys councill to be holden in ye Greate Halle of ye Priorye, aforesaide, on ye ninthe daye of Ianuarie, anno Domini, one thousande eighte hundrede and seventie-three, to adjudycate on ye qualitie of hys viandes: that is to saye, roaste beefe and plumbe puddynge, and with a cordialle greetinge in ye wassaile boule and ye lovynge cuppe, perpetuate to alle tyme and to tyme oute of mynde a ryghte goodlye and lastynge fellowshipe. Ye Boare's heade will be broughte into ye halle, and ye chante will be sange, at sixe of the clocke, at which tyme ye Feast will begine."

NORFOLK.

At Yarmouth before the Reformation it was a custom for the prior and monks, and afterwards for the dean and chapter, or the farmer of their parsonage, to provide a breakfast for the inhabitants of the town every year on Christmas Day, which custom continued till the 21st of Elizabeth, when, on account of a grievous plague which carried off two thousand of the inhabitants in one year, and on

consideration of the ruinous condition of the parsonage-house, it was agreed that Thomas Osborne, who was then farmer of the parsonage, should pay 5*l.* a year to the churchwardens for the use of the town in lieu of the said breakfast. After the plague had ceased, the breakfast was resumed and continued as usual, till the reign of James I., when William Gostlynge, then farmer, absolutely refused to provide it or to pay an equivalent composition, upon which the town preferred a complaint to the dean and chapter, who promised not to countenance him in such a non-conformity to the terms of the lease by which he held of them. Finally, Mr. Gostlynge was obliged to sign an agreement, whereby he engaged to pay yearly to the town in lieu of the breakfast, 10*l.*, which was distributed to poor fishermen, &c., and 5*l.* for his default, in before refusing to provide the breakfast. This continued till the making of a new agreement, between the corporation and Mr. Gostlynge, of a grant of nomination and appointment of preachers and ministers in the town, since which it seems that both breakfast and composition shared the fate of all human institutions and sank into oblivion.—Parkin, *History of Great Yarmouth*, 1776, p. 330.

Northamptonshire.

Cole, in his *History of Weston Favell* (1827, p. 60), says Christmas Day is ushered in by the ringing of the bells of the church, precisely at twelve o'clock, called the midnight peal, till which time many of the inhabitants sit round the jovial fire, whence at twelve o'clock they emerge into the midnight air to listen to the peals of the bells of the neighbouring churches.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

In Alnwick a custom existed of giving sweetmeats to children at Christmas time, called Yule Babies, in commemoration of our Saviour's nativity.—*History of Alnwick*, 1822, p. 262.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

The inhabitants of North Clifton were formerly ferry free. In consequence, the ferryman and his dog were indulged with a dinner each at the vicar's at Christmas. The ferryman also on that day received of the inhabitants a prime loaf of bread.—*N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. ii. p. 509.

Near Raleigh there is a valley said to have been caused by an earthquake several hundred years ago, which swallowed up a whole village, together with the church. Formerly, it was the custom of the people to assemble in this valley every Christmas Day morning to listen to the ringing of the bells of the church beneath them. This, it was positively stated, might be heard by placing the ear to the ground and hearkening attentively. As late as 1827 it was usual on this morning for old men and women to tell their children and young friends to go to the valley, stoop down, and hear the bells ring merrily. The villagers heard the ringing of the bells of a neighbouring church, the sound of which was communicated by the surface of the ground. A similar belief exists, or did a short time ago, at Preston, in Lancashire.—*Ibid.* p. 509.

OXFORDSHIRE.

In the buttery of St. John's College, Oxford, an

ancient candle socket of stone still remains, ornamented with the figure of the Holy Lamb. It was formerly used to burn the Christmas candle in, on the high table at supper during the twelve nights of this festival.—Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 467.

It was formerly a custom for the butcher of Merton College, about Christmas time, to invite the scholars to a treat at his house, when he used to provide a *bull* for the steward to knock down with his own hands, whence this treat was called *The Kill-Bull*.—Pointer, *Oxoniensis Academia*, 1749, p. 23.

The following account of the ancient custom of bringing in a boar's head at Queen's College, Oxford, is taken from a MS., in the Bodleian Library, quoted in the *Antiquary* (1873, vol. iii. p. 47):—

There is a custom at Queen's College to serve up every year a boar's head, provided by the manciple against Christmas Day. This boar's head being boyl'd or roasted, is laid in a great charger, covered with a garland of bays or laurell as broad at bottom as the brims of the chargers. When the first course is served up in the refectory on Christmas Day, in the said college, the manciple brings the said boar's head from the kitchen up to the high table, accompanied with one of the tabarders (i.e., the scholars), who lays his hand on the charger. The tabarder sings a song, and when he comes to the chorus all the scholars that are in the refectory joyn together and sing it:

I.

"The boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedeck'd with bays and rosemary,
And I pray you master merry be,
Quotquot estis in convivio.

CHORUS. *Caput apri defero*
Reddens laudes Domino.

II.

The boar's head, as I understand,
Is the bravest dish in the land,
Being thus bedeck'd with a gay garland,
Let us *servire convivio*.

CHORUS. *Caput apri, &c.*

III.

Our steward has provided this
In honour of the King of bliss,
Which on this day to be served is,
In *Reginensi atrio*.

CHORUS. *Caput apri," &c.*

According to Mr. Wade (*Walks in Oxford*, 1817, vol. i. p. 128) the usage is in commemoration of an act of valour performed by a student of the college, who, while walking in the neighbouring forest of Shotover, and reading Aristotle, was suddenly attacked by a wild boar. The furious beast came open-mouthed upon the youth, who, however, very courageously, and with a happy presence of mind, rammed in the volume, and crying *Græcum est*, fairly choked the savage.

In an audit-book of Trinity College for the year 1559, Warton found a disbursement "*pro prandio Principis natalicii*." A Christmas prince, or Lord of Misrule, he adds, corresponding to the Imperator at Cambridge, was a common temporary magistrate in the colleges of Oxford.—See Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 498; *The Antiquary*, 1873, vol. iii. p. 53; Wood, in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, alludes to the

Christmas prince at St. John's and Merton Colleges.

Mummings at Christmas are common in Oxfordshire. At Islip some of the mummers wear masks, others, who cannot get masks, black their faces and dress themselves up with haybands tied round their arms and bodies. The smaller boys black their faces, and go about
singing—

> "A merry Christmas and a happy new year,
> Your pockets full of money, and your cellars full of beer."

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 466.

Dr. Lee, in *N. & Q.* (*5th S.* vol. ii. pp. 503-505), has given a curious old miracle play, the text of which he says was taken down by himself from the lips of one of the performers in 1853.

Aubrey informs us that in several parts of Oxfordshire it was the custom for the maidservant to ask the man for ivy to decorate the house, and if he refused or neglected to fetch in a supply the maids stole a pair of his breeches, and nailed them up to the gate in the yard or highway. A similar usage prevailed in other places, when the refusal to comply with such a request incurred the penalty of being debarred from the well-known privilege of the mistletoe.—See *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 753.

SCILLY ISLES.

Troutbeck, in his *State of the Scilly Isles* (1796, p. 172), gives the following account of how Christmas was celebrated in his time. The young people, he says, exercise a sort of gallantry among themselves, which they call goose-dancing, when the maidens are

dressed up for young men and the young men for maidens. In the day time they dance about the streets in masquerade, vieing with each other who can appear the most uncouth. In the evenings they visit their neighbours in companies, where they dance and make their jokes upon what has happened in the islands. By this sort of sport according to yearly custom and toleration, there is a spirit of wit and drollery kept up among the people. The maidens, who are sometimes dressed up for sea captains and other officers, display their alluring graces to the ladies, who are young men equipped for that purpose; and the ladies exert their talents to them in courtly addresses, their hangers are sometimes drawn, &c., after which, and other pieces of drollery, the scene shifts to music and dancing, which being over they are treated with liquor and then go to the next house of entertainment.

They have a custom also of singing carols at church on Christmas Day, to which the congregation make contributions by dropping money into a hat carried about the church when the performance is over.—Heath's *Account of the Scilly Isles*, p. 125.

SOMERSETSHIRE.

At West Hatch the reeve or bailiff to the manor provided at the lord's expense a feast on Christmas Day, and distributed to each householder a loaf of bread, a pound and a half of beef, and the like quantity of pork, undressed, and the same evening treated them with a supper.—Collinson, *History of County of Somerset*, 1791, vol. ii. p. 186.

The following lines are sung at the Christmas mummings in this county:

"Here comes I, liddle man Jan,
With my zword in my han!
If you don't all do,
As you be told by I,
I'll zend you all to York,
Vor to make apple-pie."

Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 466.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

In Shaw's *History of Staffordshire* (1798-1801) is mentioned a custom formerly prevalent in the parish of Great Barr, for the rector on every Christmas Day to give to each person, great and small, of his parish that came to his house, so much bread, beef, mustard, and vinegar as they could eat. Latterly, however, money was given instead.

Plot, in his *Natural History of Staffordshire* (1686, p. 434), gives the following account of a jocular custom celebrated in olden times at Bromley Abbots. He says:—Within memory, at Abbots or Pagets Bromley, they had a sort of sport which they celebrated at Christmas (on New Year and Twelfth Day) called the *Hobby-horse Dance* from a person who carried the image of a horse between his legs, made of thin boards, and in his hands a bow and arrow which, passing through a hole in the bow and stopping upon a shoulder it had in it, he made a snapping noise as he drew it to and fro, keeping time with the musick; with this man danced six others, carrying on their shoulders as many reindeer heads, three of them painted white, with three red, with the arms of the chief families (viz., of Paget, Bagot, and Wells), to whom the revenues of the town chiefly belonged, depicted on the *palms* of them, with which they danced the hays and other country dances. To this

hobby-horse dance there also belonged a pot, which was kept by turns by four or five of the chief of the town, whom they called reeves, who provided cake and ale to put into this pot; all people who had any kindness for the good intent of the institution of the sport, giving pence a piece for themselves and their families, and so foreigners too that came to see it, with which money (the charge of the cakes and ale being defrayed) they not only repaired their church, but kept the poor too, which charges are not now perhaps so cheerfully borne.

There is an ancient payment made by the chamberlain of the corporation of Stafford, of an annual sum of money, generally six shillings, at Christmas, for the purchasing of plums, to be distributed among the inhabitants of certain old houses in the liberty of Forebridge.

The origin of this payment is ascribed by general reputation to the bounty of some individual who heard from some poor children a complaint on Christmas Day that they had no plums for a pudding; and it is reported that he counted the houses then in the place, and made provision for the supply of a pound of plums for each house. The money received is laid out in plums, which are divided into equal quantities, and made up into parcels, one for each of the houses, fifteen or sixteen in number, entitled by the established usage to receive a portion, without reference to the circumstances of the inhabitants.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 5.

Suffolk.

Brand (*Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 489) alludes to a custom practised in the neighbourhood of Bury St. Edmunds among the young men, of hunting owls and

squirrels on Christmas Day.

In 1358, at Hawstead, the customary tenants paid their lord at Christmas a small rent, called *offering silver*. Eleven of them paid in all xviij$^{d.}$ In 1386 the Christmas offerings made by the master for his domestics amounted to xiiij$^{d.}$ for seven servants.—Cullum, *History of Hawstead*, 1813, pp. 13-14.

WESTMORELAND.

At Kendal, if a man be found at work in Christmas week his fellow-tradesmen lay violent hands on him, and carry him on a pole to the ale-house, where he is to treat them.—Southey's *Common Place Book*, 1851, 4th series, p. 354.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

At Bewdley it was the custom for the bellman to go round on Christmas morning, ringing his bell in several parts of the town, and singing the following doggerel, first saying, "Good morning, masters and mistresses all, I wish you all a merry Christmas":

"Arise mistress, arise,
And make your tarts and pies,
  And let your maids lie still;
For if they should rise and spoil your pies
  You'd take it very ill.
Whilst you are sleeping in your bed,
  I the cold wintry nights must tread,
  Past twelve o'clock. Ehe!"

Kidderminster Shuttle, Dec. 2nd, 1871.

At Yardley such of the poor as are excluded from partaking of certain doles on account of receiving

regular weekly relief, are allowed one shilling each out of a general charity fund at Christmas, under the name of plum-pudding money, to the extent of about 4*l.*—Edwards, *Old English Customs and Charities*, p. 23.

YORKSHIRE.

Blount tells us that, in Yorkshire and other northern parts, after sermon or service on Christmas Day, the people will, even in the churches, cry "*Ule! Ule!*" as a token of rejoicing; and the common sort run about the streets singing:

> "*Ule! Ule! Ule! Ule!*
> Three puddings in a pule,
> Crack nuts and cry *Ule*!"

See Brand, *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. pp. 476-477.

One never-failing remnant of the olden time observed in this county, says Soane (*Curiosities of Literature*), was the *cheese*, which had been especially made and preserved for the season. It was produced with much ceremony by every rustic dame, who, before she allowed it to be tasted, took a sharp knife and scored upon it rude resemblances to the cross. To this were added the mighty wassail bowl brimming with *lamb's-wool*, and furmity made of barley-meal, which last was also an essential of the breakfast-table.

Between Christmas Day and the New Year it is customary in the North Riding of Yorkshire to give every visitor a slice of "pepper cake" (a spiced gingerbread cake) and cheese and a glass of gin.

In the North Riding of Yorkshire it is also the

custom for the parishioners, after receiving the Sacrament on Christmas Day, to go from church directly to the ale-house, and there drink together as a testimony of charity and friendship.—Aubrey, MS. quoted in *Time's Telescope*, 1826, p. 293.

At Filey, on Christmas morning before break of day, there existed formerly the greatest uproar, by numbers of boys going round from house to house, rapping at every door, and roaring out, "I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year," which words were vociferated again and again till the family awoke and admitted the clamorous visitor; who, if he were the *first*,[94] was treated with money or cheese and gingerbread, which were also distributed, but less liberally, to subsequent visitors. No persons (boys excepted) ever presumed to go out of doors till the threshold had been consecrated by the entrance of a male. Females had no part in this matter, and if a damsel, lovely as an angel, entered *first*, her fair form was viewed with horror as an image of death.—Cole, *Antiquities of Filey*, 1828, p. 137.

[94] The custom of *first footing* seems to have been confined in other places to New Year's Morning.

At Huddersfield the children carry about a "wessel-bob," or large bunch of evergreens hung with oranges and apples, and coloured ribbons, singing the following carol:

"Here we come a wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a wandering
So fair to be seen.

Chorus.
For it is in Christmas time

Strangers travel far and near,
So God bless you and send you a happy
New year.

We are not daily beggars,
That beg from door to door,
But we are neighbours' children,
Whom you have seen before.

Call up the butler of this house,
Put on his golden ring,
Let him bring us a glass of beer,
And the better we shall sing.

We have got a little purse
Made of stretching leather skin,
We want a little of your money
To line it well within.

Bring us out a table
And spread it with a cloth;
Bring out a mouldy cheese,
Also your Christmas loaf.

God bless the master of this house,
Likewise the mistress too,
And all the little children
That round the table go.

Good master and mistress,
While you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
Who are wandering in the mire."

N. & Q. 3rd S. vol. xi. p. 144.

Some years ago it was the custom in Leeds, and the neighbourhood, for children to go from house to house singing and carrying what they called a "wesley-bob." This they kept veiled in a cloth till they came to a house door, when they uncovered it.

The wesley-bob was made of holly and evergreens, like a bower, inside were placed a couple of dolls, adorned with ribbons, and the whole affair was borne upon a stick. Whilst the wesley-bob was being displayed, a song or ditty was sung.

At Aberford, near Leeds, two dolls are carried about in boxes in a similar way, and such an affair here is called a wesley-box.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. vi. p. 494.

At Ripon, on Christmas Day, says a correspondent of the *Gent. Mag.* (1790, vol. lx. p. 719), the singing boys come into the church with large baskets full of red apples, with a sprig of rosemary stuck in each, which they present to all the congregation, and generally have a return made them of 2*d.*, 4*d.*, or 6*d.*, according to the quality of the lady or gentleman.

The sword or morisco dance used to be practised at Richmond, during the Christmas holidays, by young men dressed in shirts ornamented with ribbons folded into roses, having swords, or wood cut in the form of that weapon. They exhibited various feats of activity, attended by an old fiddler, by Bessy in the grotesque habit of an old woman, and by the fool almost covered with skins, a hairy cap on his head, and the tail of a fox hanging from his head. These led the festive throng, and diverted the crowd with their droll antic buffoonery. The office of one of these characters was to go about rattling a box, and soliciting money from door to door to defray the expenses of a feast and a dance in the evening.—*History of Richmond*, 1814, p. 296.

In Sheffield, a male must be the first to enter a house on the morning of both Christmas Day and New Year's Day; but there is no distinction as to complexion or colour of hair. In the houses of the

more opulent manufacturers, these first admissions are often accorded to choirs of work-people, who, as "waits," proceed at an early hour and sing before the houses of their employers and friends Christmas carols and hymns, always commencing with that beautiful composition:

"Christians, awake, salute the happy morn,
Whereon the Saviour of mankind was born."

On expressing their good wishes to the inmates, they are generally rewarded with something warm and occasionally with a pecuniary present.

Among the class called "respectable," but not manufacturers, a previous arrangement is often made; that a boy, the son of a friend, shall come and be first admitted, receiving for his good wishes a Christmas-box of sixpence or a shilling. The houses of the artisans and poor are successively besieged by a host of *gamins*, who, soon after midnight, spread themselves over the town, shouting at the doors, and through keyholes, as follows:

"Au wish ya a murry Chrismas,—
A 'appy new year,—
A' pockit full of munny,
An' a celler full a' beer.

God bless the maester of this 'ouse—
The mistriss all-so,
An' all the little childrun
That round the table go.

A apple, a pare, a plom, an' a cherry;
A sup a' good ale mak' a man murry," &c.

The same house will not admit a second boy. One is sufficient to protect it from any ill-luck that might otherwise happen. A penny is the usual gratuity for

this service.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. v. p. 395.

WALES.

A custom prevails in Wales of carrying about at Christmas time a horse's skull dressed up with ribbons, and supported on a pole by a man who is concealed under a large white cloth. There is a contrivance for opening and shutting the jaws, and the figure pursues and bites everybody it can lay hold of, and does not release them except on payment of a fine. It is generally accompanied by some men dressed up in a grotesque manner, who, on reaching a house, sing some extempore verses requesting admittance, and are in turn answered by those within, until one party or the other is at a loss for a reply. The Welsh are undoubtedly a practical people, and these verses often display a good deal of cleverness. This horse's head is called *Mari Lwyd*, which I have heard translated "Grey mare." *Lwyd* certainly is grey, but *Mari* is not a mare in Welsh.[95]
—*N. & Q. 1st S.* vol. i. p. 173.

[95] This custom was also practised in one or two places in Lancashire about the year 1840. The horse was played in a similar way, but the performer was called "Old Ball." It is no doubt a vestige of the old "hobby-horse."—*Ibid.* p. 245.

Upon Christmas Day, about three o'clock in the morning, the Welsh in many parts used to assemble in church, and after prayers and a sermon, continue there singing psalms and hymns with great devotion, till it was daylight; and if, through age or infirmity, any were disabled from attending, they never failed having prayers at home, and carols on our Saviour's nativity. This act of devotion was called *Pulgen*, or

the *crowning of the cock*. It was a general belief among the superstitious that
instantly—

> "At his warning,
> Whether in sea, or fire, in earth, or air,
> Th' extravagant, and erring spirit, hies
> To his confine—"

During Christmas time, the cock was supposed to exert his power throughout the night, from which no doubt originated the Welsh word "Pulgen" as applied to this custom.—Bingley's *Tour Round North Wales*, 1800, vol. ii. p. 226.

At Tenby it was customary at 4 o'clock on Christmas morning for the young men of the town to escort the rector with lighted torches from his residence to church.—Mason's *Tales and Traditions of Tenby*, 1858, p. 4.

Sometimes also before or after Christmas Day the fishermen of Tenby dressed up one of their number whom they called the "Lord Mayor of Pennyless Cone," with a covering of evergreens and a mask over his face; they would then carry him about, seated on a chair, with flags flying, and a couple of violins playing before him. Before every house the "Lord Mayor" would address the occupants, wishing them a merry Christmas and a happy new year. If his good wishes were responded to with money his followers gave three cheers, the masquer would himself return thanks, and the crowd again cheered. —*Ibid.* p. 5.

SCOTLAND.

In some parts of Scotland, he who first opens the door on Yule Day expects to prosper more than any

other member of the family during the future year because, as the vulgar express it, “He lets in yule.” On opening the door, it is customary with some to place in the doorway a table or chair covered with a clean cloth; and, according to their own language, to “set on it bread and cheese to yule.” Early in the morning, as soon as any one of the family gets out of bed, a new besom is set behind the outer door, the design being to “let in yule.” These superstitions, in which yule is not only personified, but treated as a deity, are evidently of heathen origin. It is common also to have a table covered in the house, from morning until evening, with bread and drink upon it, that every one who calls may take a portion, and it is considered particularly inauspicious if any one comes into a house and leaves it without doing so. Whatever number of persons call on this day, all must partake of the good cheer.—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 48; see Jamieson, *Etymol. Dict.*, Art. *Yule*.

Any servant who is supposed to have a due regard to the interests of the family, and is not at the same time emancipated from the yoke of superstition, is careful to go early to the well on Christmas morning to draw water, pull the corn out of the sack, and also to bring kale from the kitchen garden. This is intended to insure prosperity to the family (*Ibid.* p. 99). It is in fact the same as the *Usque Cashrichd*, which was noticed among the superstitious customs of the first of January.—See p. 17.

The doings of the guisards (that is, masquers), says Chambers (*Pop. Rhymes*, 1870, p. 169), form a conspicuous feature in the New Year proceedings throughout Scotland. The evenings on which these personages are understood to be privileged to appear, are those of Christmas, Hogmanay, New Year’s Day, and Handsel Monday. Dressed up in

quaint and fantastic attire, they sing a selection of songs which have been practised by them some weeks before. There were important doings, however, one of a theatrical character. There is one rude and grotesque drama (called Galatian) which they are accustomed to perform on each of the four above-mentioned nights, and which in various fragments or versions exists in every part of Lowland Scotland. The performers, who are never less than three, but sometimes as many as six, having dressed themselves, proceed in a band from house to house, generally contenting themselves with the kitchen for an arena, whither in mansions, presided over by the spirit of good humour, the whole family will resort to witness the scene of mirth.—See Chambers' *Pop. Rhymes*, p. 170.

ANGUS-SHIRE.

At Christmas and the New Year, the opulent burghers begin to feast with their friends, and go a round of visits, which takes up the space of many weeks. Upon such occasions the gravest is expected to be merry, and to join in a cheerful song.—Sinclair, *Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1793, vol. v. p. 48.

FORFARSHIRE.

From the same authority we learn that, in the parish of Kirkden, on Christmas Day, the servant is free from his master, and goes about visiting his friends and acquaintances. The poorest man must have beef or mutton on the table, and what they call a dinner with their friends. They amuse themselves with various diversions, particularly with shooting for prizes, called here *wad-shooting*, and many do but

little business all the Christmas week.—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 509.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

Christmas morn is welcomed at St. Fergus by liberal libations of *drinking-sowins*, or, as they are called by the old people, *knotting-sowins*; and by the gathering of friends and neighbours around the social hearth. That the humblest householder in the parish may have his Christmas cakes, a distribution of meal, the gift of a benevolent individual, is annually made by the kirk-session on Christmas Day, to the poor on the roll.—*Stat. Acc. of Scotland*, 1845, vol. xii. p. 198.

In certain parts also of the county of Aberdeen, the custom of not working during the three days of Christmas (Old Style) is still kept up. Straw, termed "yule straw," is gathered beforehand, and everything needed for food and fuel prepared in a similar way, so that the festival may be kept in peace.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. ii. p. 483.

BANFFSHIRE.

In the account of Keith, given in the *Stat. Acc. of Scotland* (1793, vol. v. p. 428), the inhabitants are said to have no pastimes or holidays except dancing on Christmas and New Year's Day.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED.

Fuller, in his *History of Berwick upon Tweed* (1799, p. 446), alluding to the customs of that place, says, there are four men called town waits, who belong to the borough. Their business is to walk before the

mayor, recorder, and justices, playing on violins, all the way to and from church on Christmas Day, the day of the election of a mayor, and November the 5th. They also are obliged to attend these gentlemen at their four public dinners.

THE HIGHLANDS.

As soon as the brightening glow of the eastern sky warns the anxious housemaid of the approach of Christmas Day, she rises, full of anxiety, at the prospect of her morning labours. The meal, which was steeped in the *sowans-bowie* a fortnight ago to make the *Prechdacdan sour* or *sour scones*, is the first object of her attention. The gridiron is put on the fire, and the sour scones are soon followed by hard cakes, soft cakes, buttered cakes, bannocks, and pannich perm. The baking being once over, the sowans pot succeeds the gridiron, full of new sowans, which are to be given to the family, agreeably to custom, this day in their beds. The sowans are boiled into the consistence of molasses, when the *lagan-le-vrich* or yeast-bread, to distinguish it from boiled sowans, is ready. It is then poured into as many bickers as there are individuals to partake of it, and presently served to the whole, both old and young. As soon as each despatches his bicker, he jumps out of bed—the elder branches to examine the ominous signs of the day, and the younger to enter on its amusements. Flocking to the swing, a favourite amusement on this occasion, the youngest of the family gets the first “shouder,” and the next oldest to him in regular succession. In order to add more to the spirit of the exercise, it is a common practice with the person in the *swing* and the person appointed to swing him to enter into a very warm

and humorous altercation. As the swinged person approaches the swinger, he exclaims, "*Ei mi tu chal*," "I'll eat your kail." To this the swinger replies, with a violent shove, "*Cha ni u mu chal*," "You shan't eat my kail." These threats and repulses are sometimes carried to such a height as to break down or capsize the threatener, which generally puts an end to the quarrel.

As the day advances those minor amusements are terminated at the report of the gun or the rattle of the ball clubs—the gun inviting the marksman to the "*kiavamuchd*," or prize shooting, and the latter to "*Luchd-vouil*," or the ball combatants—both the principal sports of the day. Tired at length of the active amusements of the field, they exchange them for the substantial entertainment of the table. Groaning under the "*Sonsy-haggis*" and many other savoury dainties unseen for twelve months before, the relish communicated to the company by the appearance of the festive board is more easily conceived than described. The dinner once despatched, the flowing bowl succeeds and the sparkling glass flies to and fro like a weaver's shuttle. The rest of the day is spent in dancing and games.—Grant, *Popular Superstitions of the Highlands*.

ORKNEY.

A writer in the *Stat. Acc. of Scotland* (1845, vol. xv. p. 127), speaking of Westray, says:—One custom in this parish and common to Orkney at large, is that of allowing the servants four or five days' liberty at Christmas to enjoy themselves, only the most necessary part of domestic work, with due attention to the bestial on the farm, is done on these days. The master of the house has also to keep up a well-

furnished table for all his servants at this season.

IRELAND.

At Culdaff, previous to Christmas, it is customary with the labouring classes to raffle for mutton, when a sufficient number can subscribe to defray the cost of a sheep. During the Christmas holidays they amuse themselves with a game of kamman, which consists in impelling a wooden ball with a crooked stick to a given point, while an adversary endeavours to drive it in a contrary direction.—Mason, *Stat. Acc. of Ireland*, 1814, vol. ii. p. 160.

DEC. 26.]
ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

For some unexplained reason St. Stephen's Day was a great period with our ancestors for bleeding their horses, which was practised by people of all ranks, and recommended by the old agricultural poet Tusser, in his *Five Hundred Points of Husbandry* (chap. xxii. st. 16), who says:

> "Yer, Christmas be passed, *let horsse be let blood*,
> For manie a purpose it dooth him much good;
> The day of S. Steeven old fathers did use;
> If that do mislike thee, some other day chuse."

Mr. Douce says that the practice was introduced into this country by the Danes.

Naogeorgus, according to his translator, Barnaby Googe, refers to it, and assigns a reason:

> "Then followeth Saint Stephen's Day, whereon doth

every man,
His horses jaunt and course abrode, as swiftly as he can,
Until they doe extreemely sweate, and then they let them blood;
For this being done upon this day, they say doth do them good,
And keepes them from all maladies, and sicknesse through the yeare,
As if that Steven any time took charge of horses heare."

In explanation, it may be stated that the Saint was the patron of horses, and that on this day, which the Germans call *Der grosse Pferdstag*, the Pope's stud was physicked and bled for the sake of the blood which was supposed to be a remedy in many disorders.

Aubrey, in his *Remains of Gentilisme* (MS. Lansd. 226), says: "On St. Stephen's day, the farrier came constantly and blouded all our cart-horses." In the "Receipts and Disbursements of the canons of St. Mary in Huntingdon," is the following entry: "Item, for letting our horses blede in Chrystmasse weke, iiij^{d}."—*Med. Ævi Kalend.* 1841, vol. i. p. 118.

Christmas Boxes is a term now applied to gifts of money at Christmas given away on St. Stephen's Day, commonly called Boxing Day, whereas, anciently, it signified the boxes in which gifts were deposited. These boxes closely resembled the Roman *Paganalia*, for the reception of contributions at rural festivals; from which custom, with certain changes, is said to have been derived our Christmas Boxes. At Pompeii have been found earthen boxes, in which money was slipped through a hole. Aubrey found one filled with Roman denarii.—Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 152; see *N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. xi. pp. 65, 107, 164, 245; see also Fosbroke's *Enclyclopædia of Antiquities*, 1840, p. 662.

BEDFORDSHIRE.

In Bedfordshire there formerly existed a custom of the poor begging the broken victuals the day after Christmas Day.—*Time's Telescope*, 1822, p. 298.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

It is stated in the Parliamentary Returns in 1786, that some land, then let at 12*l.* per annum, was given by Sir Hugh Kite for the poor of the parish of Clifton Reynes. It appears from a book, in the custody of the minister, dated 1821, compiled by an antiquary for a history of the county, that the rector holds a close of pasture-ground called Kites, which had been formerly given to support a lamp burning in the church of Clifton Reynes, but which was subject to a charge of finding one small loaf, a piece of cheese, and a pint of ale to every married person, and half-a-pint for every unmarried person, resident in Clifton on the feast of St. Stephen, when they walked in the parish boundaries in Rogation week. The close was annexed to the rectory in the 12th of Elizabeth.—*Old English Customs and Charities*, 1842, p. 120.

There was formerly a custom in the parish of Drayton Beauchamp called *Stephening*. All the inhabitants used to go on St. Stephen's Day to the rectory, and eat as much bread and cheese and drink as much ale as they chose at the expense of the rector.

The usage gave rise to so much rioting that it was discontinued, and an annual sum was distributed instead in proportion to the number of the claimants. In time, the number of inhabitants, however, increased so considerably, that about the year 1827 the custom was dropped.—*Ibid.* p. 121.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

St. Stephen's Day was formerly observed at Cambridge. Slicer, a character in the old play of the *Ordinary* says,

> "Let the Corporal
> Come sweating under a breast of mutton, stuffed
> With pudding."

This, says the annotator, was called St. Stephen's pudding; it used formerly to be provided at St. John's College, Cambridge, uniformly on St. Stephen's Day. —Dodsley's *Old Plays*, 1721, vol. x. p. 229; *Med. Ævi Kalend.* vol. i. p. 119.

ISLE OF MAN.

Hunting the wren has been a pastime in the Isle of Man from time immemorial. In Waldron's time it was observed on the 24th of December, though afterwards it was observed on St. Stephen's Day. This singular ceremony is founded on a tradition that, in former times, a fairy of uncommon beauty exerted such undue influence over the male population, that she, at various times, induced, by her sweet voice, numbers to follow her footsteps, till by degrees she led them into the sea where they perished. This barbarous exercise of power had continued for a great length of time, till it was apprehended that the island would be exhausted of its defenders, when a knight-errant sprang up, who discovered some means of countervailing the charms used by this siren, and even laid a plot for her destruction, which she only escaped at the moment of extreme hazard by taking the form of a *wren*. But though she evaded instant annihilation, a spell was cast upon her by which she

was condemned, on every succeeding New Year's Day, to reanimate the same form with the definite sentence that she must ultimately perish by human hand. In consequence of this legend, on the specified anniversary, every man and boy in the island (except those who have thrown off the trammels of superstition) devote the hours between sunrise and sunset to the hope of extirpating the fairy, and woe be to the individual birds of that species who show themselves on this fatal day to the active enemies of the race; they are pursued, pelted, fired at, and destroyed, without mercy, and their feathers preserved with religious care, it being an article of belief that every one of the relics gathered in this laudable pursuit is an effective preservative from shipwreck for one year; and that fisherman would be considered extremely foolhardy who should enter upon his occupation without such a safeguard; when the chase ceases, one of the little victims is affixed to the top of a long pole with its wings extended, and carried in front of the hunters, who march in procession to every house, chanting the following rhyme:

> "We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
> We hunted the wren for Jack of the Can,
> We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
> We hunted the wren for every one."

After making the usual circuit and collecting all the money they could obtain, they laid the wren on a bier and carried it in procession to the parish churchyard, where, with a whimsical kind of solemnity, they made a grave, buried it and sang dirges over it in the Manks language, which they call her knell. After the obsequies were performed, the company, outside the churchyard wall, formed a

circle and danced to music which they had provided for the occasion.

At present there is not a particular day for pursuing the wren: it is captured by boys alone, who follow the old custom principally for amusement. On St. Stephen's Day a group of boys go from door to door with a wren suspended by the legs, in the centre of two hoops crossing each other at right angles, decorated with evergreens and ribbons, singing lines called *Hunt the Wren*. If at the close of this rhyme they are fortunate enough to obtain a small coin, they give in return a feather of the wren; and before the close of the day the little bird may sometimes be seen hanging about featherless. The ceremony of the interment of this bird in the churchyard, at the close of St. Stephen's Day, has long since been abandoned; and the sea-shore or some waste ground was substituted in its place.

NORFOLK.

It is an old custom in the town of East Dereham, to ring a muffled peal from the church tower on the morning of St. Stephen's Day.—*N. & Q. 3rd S.* vol. iii. p. 69.

OXFORDSHIRE.

The three vicars of Bampton, give beef and beer on the morning of St. Stephen's Day to those who choose to partake of it. This is called St. Stephen's breakfast.—Southey's *Common Place Book*, *4th S.* 1851, p. 395.

YORKSHIRE.

A correspondent of the *Gent. Mag.* (1811, vol. lxxxi. pt. i. p. 423) says, that in the North Riding of Yorkshire on the feast of St. Stephen large goose pies are made, all of which they distribute among their needy neighbours, except one, which is carefully laid up, and not tasted till the Purification of the Virgin, called Candlemas.

On this day, also, six youths, clad in white and bedecked with ribbands, with swords in their hands, travel from one village to another, performing the "sword dance." They are attended by a fiddler, a youth whimsically dressed, named "Bessy," and by one who personates a physician. One of the six youths acts the part of a king in a sort of farce, which consists chiefly of music and dancing, when the "Bessy" interferes while they are making a hexagon with their swords, and is killed.—*Time's Telescope*, 1814, p. 315.

WALES.

On St. Stephen's Day, everybody is privileged to whip another person's legs with holly, and this is often reciprocally done till the blood streams down. —Southey's *Common Place Book* (1851, *4th S.* p. 365). In Mason's *Tales and Traditions of Tenby* (1858, p. 5) this custom is alluded to as being celebrated at that place.

IRELAND.

On the anniversary of St. Stephen it is customary for groups of young villagers to bear about a holly-bush adorned with ribbons, and having many wrens depending from it. This is carried from house to house with some ceremony, the "wren-boys"

chanting several verses, the burthen of which may be collected from the following lines of their song:

"The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze,
Although he is little, his family's great,
I pray you, good landlady, give us a treat.

My box would speak if it had but a tongue,
And two or three shillings would do it no wrong;
Sing holly, sing ivy—sing ivy, sing holly,
A drop just to drink, it would drown melancholy.

And if you draw it of the best,
I hope in Heaven your soul may rest;
But if you draw it of the small,
It won't agree with the wren-boys at all;" &c., &c.

A small piece of money is usually bestowed on them, and the evening concludes in merry-making with the money thus collected.—Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 1824, p. 233.

DEC. 28.]
HOLY INNOCENTS' DAY.

In consequence probably of the feelings of horror attached to such an act of atrocity as Herod's murder of the children, Innocents' Day used to be reckoned about the most unlucky throughout the year; and in former times no one who could possibly avoid it began any work or entered on any undertaking on this anniversary.[96]

To many Childermas Day was especially inauspicious. It is said of the equally superstitious

and unprincipled monarch, Louis XI., that he would never perform any business, or enter into any discussion about his affairs, on this day, and to make to him then any proposal of the kind was certain to exasperate him to the utmost. We are informed too that, in England, on the occasion of the coronation of King Edward IV., that solemnity which had been originally intended to take place on Sunday, was postponed till the Monday, owing to the former day being in that year the festival of Childermas. This idea of the inauspicious nature of the day was long prevalent, and is even yet not wholly extinct. To the present hour the housewives in Cornwall, and probably also in other parts of the country, refrain scrupulously from scouring or scrubbing on Innocents' Day.—*Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 776.

[96] In the play of *Sir John Oldcastle*, the prevalence of this belief is instanced by an objection urged to an expedition proposed on a Friday:—"Friday, quoth'a, a dismal day; Candlemas-day this year was Friday."

It was, moreover, not considered lucky upon this day to put on new clothes or pare the nails.

In 1517, however, King Henry VIII., by an order, enjoined, "that the *King of Cockneys*, on *Childermas Day*, should sit and have due service; and that he and all his officers should use honest manner and good order, without any waste or destruction making in wine, brawn, chely, or other vitails; and also that he and his marshal, butler, and constable marshal, should have their lawful and honest commandments by delivery of the officers of Christmas, and that the said King of Cockneys, he, none of his officers, medyl neither in the buttery nor in the stuard of Christmass, his officer, upon pain of 40*s.* for every such meddling; and lastly, that Jack Straw and all his

adherents should be thenceforth utterly banisht, and no more to be used in this house, upon pain to forfeit, for every time, five pounds, to be levied on every fellow happening to offend against this rule."—*Every Day Book*, 1862, vol. i. p. 1648; Dugdale's *Orig. Jurid.*

It was at one time customary on this day to whip the juvenile members of a family. Gregory remarks that "it hath been a custom, and yet is elsewhere, to whip up the children upon Innocents' Day morning, that the memorie of this murther might stick the closer; and, in a moderate proportion, to act over the crueltie again in kind." Gregory also states another custom, on the authority of an old ritual belonging to the Abbey of Oseney, communicated to him by his friend, Dr. Gerard Langbain, the Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, from which it appears that, at the church of Oseney, "they were wont to bring out, upon this day, the foot of a child prepared after their fashion, and put upon with red and black colours, as to signify the dismal part of the day. They put this up in a chest in the vestry, ready to be produced at the time, and to be solemnly carried about the church to be adored by the people."—Gregorie's Works, *Episcopus Puerorum in Die Innocentium*, 1684, p. 113.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

At Woodchester a muffled peal is rung on this day. —*Kalendar of the English Church*, 1866, p. 194.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

In Northamptonshire this festival was called "Dyzemas Day." Miss Baker, in her *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words* (1854, vol. i. p. 207), says

she was told by a sexagenarian on the southern side of the county that, within his remembrance, this day was kept as sacred as the Sabbath, and it was considered particularly unlucky to commence any undertaking, or even to wash, on the same day of the week throughout the year on which the anniversary of this day last fell, and it was commonly said, "What is begun on Dyzemas Day will never be finished."

The source of the ill-omened *Dyzemas* has not been settled: its origin has been suggested from Greek *dus*, and *mass*, as being expressive of misfortune, evil, peril, in allusion to the massacre of the Innocents. A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*2nd S.* vol. iii. pp. 289 and 495) asks if it has not reference to the name *Desmas*, given to one of the thieves crucified with our Lord; universal tradition seeming to attach Desmas to the penitent, and Gestas (or Yesmas) to the impenitent thief? And if the local tradition has any reference to these names, it would seem as if Desmas was the name of ill-omen. It has also been suggested that Dyzemas Day is tithe day: in Portuguese, *dizimas*, *dizimos*, tenths, tithes; in law Latin, *decimae*, the same. Timbs thinks it referable to the old north-country word *disen*, i.e., to dress out in holiday finery, especially at this festive season.—*Something for Everybody*, (1861, p 154).

SOMERSETSHIRE.

From time immemorial a muffled peal has been rung on this festival at Leigh-upon-Mendip. At Wells, also, on this day, the bells of the cathedral ring out a muffled peal in commemoration of the martyrdom of the Innocents.—*Kalendar of the Church of England*, 1866, p. 194.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

At Norton, near Evesham, it is customary, says a correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*1st S.* vol. viii. p. 617), to ring first a muffled peal for the slaughter of the Holy Innocents, and then an unmuffled peal of joy for the deliverance of the Infant Christ.

IRELAND.

Holy Innocents' Day is with the Irish "the cross day of the year," which they call in their own tongue "La crosta na bliana," or sometimes "Diar daoin darg," the latter phrase signifying "blood Thursday." On this day the Irish housewife will not warp thread, or permit it to be warped; and the Irish say that anything begun on this day must have an unlucky ending. The following legend regarding the day is current in the county of
Clare:—

Between the parishes of Quin and Tulla in this county is a lake called Turlough. In the lake is a little island, and among a heap of loose stones in the middle of the island rises a white thorn-bush, which is called "Scagh an Earla" (the earl's bush). A suit of clothes made for a child on the "Cross day," or "Diar daoin darg," was put on the child—the child died. The clothes were put on a second and on a third child—they also died. The parent of the children at length put out the clothes on the "Scagh an Earla," and when the waters fell which for a time covered the bush, the clothes were found to be full of dead eels. Such is the story; and other stories like it are freely told of the consequences of commencing work on "the cross day of the year" in Ireland.—*N. & Q. 4th S.* vol. xii. p. 185.

DEC. 31.]
NEW YEAR'S EVE.

The last night of the old year has been called *Singing-E'en*, from the custom of singing carols on the evening of this day.

This eve is called by the Wesleyan Methodists *Watch Night*, because at their principal chapels the ministers and congregations hold a service to watch out the old year, i.e., they pray until about five minutes to twelve o'clock, and then observe a profound silence until the clock strikes, when they exultingly burst forth with a hymn of praise and joy. Latterly, this service has been very generally observed by evangelical churchmen.—See Timbs' *Something for Everybody*, 1861, p. 156.

Wassail-bowl.—Formerly, at this season, the head of the house assembled his family around a bowl of spiced ale, from which he drank their healths, then passed it to the rest, that they might drink too. The word that passed amongst them was the ancient Saxon phrase, *wass hael*; that is, *to your health*. Hence this came to be recognised as the Wassail or Wassel-bowl. The poorer class of people carried a bowl adorned with ribbons round the neighbourhood, begging for something wherewith to obtain the means of filling it.—*Book of Days*, vol. i. p. 27; See Nare's *Glossary* (Halliwell and Wright), 1859, vol. ii. p. 943; *Antiquarian Repertory*, vol. i. p. 218; Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, 1790, p. 304.

CORNWALL.

New Year's Day and Eve are holidays with the miners. It has been said they refuse to work on these days from superstitious reasons.—Hunt's *Romances of the West of England*, 1871, p. 350.

CUMBERLAND.

At Muncaster, on the eve of the new year, the children used to go from house to house singing a ditty which craves the bounty "they were wont to have in old King Edward's days." No tradition exists as to the origin of this custom. The donation was twopence or a pie at every house.—Hutchinson, *History of Cumberland*, 1794, vol. i. p. 570, *note*.

DERBYSHIRE.

On New Year's Eve a cold possett, as it is called, made of milk, ale, eggs, currants, and spice, is prepared, and in it is placed the wedding-ring of the hostess; each of the party takes out a ladle full, and in doing so takes every precaution to fish up the ring, as it is believed that whoever is fortunate enough to "catch" the ring will be married before the year is out. On the same night it is customary in some districts to throw open all the doors of the house just before midnight, and to wait for the coming year, as for an honoured guest, by meeting him as he approaches, and crying, "Welcome!"—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.* 1852, vol. vii. p. 201.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

On New Year's Eve the wassailers go about carrying with them a large bowl, dressed up with garlands and ribbons, and repeat the following song:

"Wassail! wassail! all over the town,
Our toast it is white, our ale it is brown,
Our bowl it is made of a maplin tree;
We be good fellows all, I drink to thee.

Here's to our horse, and to his right ear,
God send our maister a happy New Year;
A happy New Year as e'er he did see—
With my wassailing bowl I drink to thee.

Here's to our mare and to her right eye,
God send our mistress a good Christmas pye:
A good Christmas pye as e'er I did see—
With my wassailing bowl I drink to thee.

Here's to Fil'pail [cow] and to her long tail,
God send our measter us never may fail
Of a cup of good beer, I pray you draw near,
And our jolly wassail it's then you shall hear.

Be here any maids? I suppose there be some,
Sure they will not let young men stand on the cold
stone;
Sing hey, O maids, come trole back the pin,
And the fairest maid in the house let us all in.

Come, butler, come bring us a bowl of the best:
I hope your soul in heaven will rest;
But if you do bring us a bowl of the small,
Then down fall butler, bowl and all."

See *Dixon's Ancient Poems*, 1846, p. 199.

Isle of Man.

In many of the upland cottages it is customary for the housewife, after raking the fire for the night, and just before stepping into bed, to spread the ashes smooth over the floor with the tongs in the hope of finding in it, next morning, the tract of a foot; should

the toes of this ominous print point towards the door, then it is believed a member of the family will die in the course of that year; but should the heel of the fairy foot point in that direction, then it is firmly believed that the family will be augmented within the same period.—Train, *History of Isle of Man*, 1845, vol. ii. p. 115.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

Of the New Year's customs observed in this county the wassail was until recently observed to a considerable extent. This friendly custom was observed by the young women of the village, who accustomed themselves to go about from door to door on New Year's Eve, neatly dressed for the occasion, and bearing a bowl richly decorated with evergreens and ribbands, and filled with a compound of ale, roasted apples, and toast, and seasoned with nutmeg and sugar. The bowl was offered to the inmates with the singing of the following amongst other verses:

"Good master, at your door,
Our wassail we begin;
We all are maidens poor,
So we pray you let us in,
And drink our wassail.
All hail, wassail!
Wassail, wassail!
And drink our wassail!"

Jour. of the Arch. Assoc. 1853, vol. viii. p. 230.

On this night also, in many parts of this county, as well as in Derbyshire, a muffled peal is rung on the church bells till twelve o'clock, when the bandages are removed from the bells whilst the clock is

striking, and a merry peal is instantly struck up; this is called "ringing the old year out and the new year in."—*Jour. of the Arch. Assoc.*, 1853, vol. viii. p. 230.

Oxfordshire.

It is a custom at Merton College, says Pointer, in his *Oxoniensis Academia* (1749, p. 24), on the last night in the year (called Scrutiny Night), for the college servants, all in a body, to make their appearance in the hall before the warden and fellows (after supper), and there to deliver up the keys, so that if they have committed any great crime in the year their keys are taken away, and consequently their places, otherwise they are of course delivered to them again.

At the opening of the scrutiny the senior Bursar makes this short speech:

> In hoc scrutinio hæc tria sunt proponenda,
> Mores servientium—numerus Portionistarum,
> Electio Hortulanorum.

Isle of Wight.

At Yarmouth the following doggerel is sung at the season of the new year:

> "Wassal, wassal to our town!
> The cup is white and the ale is brown;
> The cup is made of the ashen tree,
> And so is the ale of the good barley;
> Little maid, little maid, turn the pin,
> Open the door and let us come in;
> God be here, God be there,
> I wish you all a Happy New Year."

Halliwell's *Popular Rhymes*, 1849, p. 236.

YORKSHIRE.

At Bradford it is the practice of men and women, dressed in strange costumes, with blackened faces, and besoms in hand, to enter houses on New Year's Eve so as to "sweep out the old year."—*N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. i. p. 383.

SCOTLAND.

Hogmanay is the universal popular name in Scotland for the last day of the year. It is a day of high festival among young and old—but particularly the young, who do not regard any of the rest of the Daft Days with half so much interest. It is still customary, in retired and primitive towns, for the children of the poorer class of people to get themselves on that morning swaddled in a great sheet, doubled up in front, so as to form a vast pocket, and then to go along the streets in little bands, calling at the doors of the wealthier classes for an expected dole of oaten bread. Each child gets one quadrant section of oat-cake (sometimes, in the case of particular cases, improved by an addition of cheese), and this is called their *hogmanay*. In expectation of the large demands thus made upon them, the housewives busy themselves for several days beforehand in preparing a suitable quantity of cakes. The children, on coming to the door, cry "Hogmanay!" which is in itself a sufficient announcement of their demands; but there are other exclamations, which either are or might be used for the same purpose. One of these is:

"Hogmanay,
Trollolay,
Give us of your white bread, and none of your grey!"

What is precisely meant by the word *hogmanay*, or by the still more inexplicable *trollolay*, has been a subject fertile in dispute to Scottish antiquaries, as the reader will find by an inspection of the *Archæologia Scotica*. A suggestion of the late Professor Robison of Edinburgh seems the best, that the word hogmanay was derived from *Au qui menez*, ("To the misletoe go"), which mummers formerly cried in France at Christmas. Another suggested explanation is, *Au queux menez*—that is, bring to the beggars. At the same time, it was customary for these persons to rush unceremoniously into houses, playing antic tricks, and bullying the inmates, for the money and choice victuals, crying: *Tire-lire* (referring to a small money-box they carried), *maint du blanc, et point du bas*." These various cries, it must be owned, are as like as possible to "Hogmanay, trollolay, give us of your white bread, and none of your grey."—Chambers' *Pop. Rhymes of Scotland*, 1870, pp. 164-165; see Hales's *Analysis of Chronology*, 1830, vol. i. pp. 50, 51, also *N. & Q. 5th S.* vol. ii. pp. 329, 517.

In Scotland also, upon the last of the old year, the children go about from door to door, asking for bread and cheese, which they call "Nog-money," in these words:

> "Get up, gude wife, and binno sweir (i.e., be not lazy),
> And deal your cakes and cheese while you are here;
> For the time will come when ye'll be dead,
> And neither need your cheese nor bread."

Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 14.

LANARKSHIRE.

At the town of Biggar (in the upper ward of

Lanarkshire) it has been customary from time immemorial among the inhabitants to celebrate what is called “burning out the old year.” For this purpose, during the day of the 31st of December, a large quantity of fuel is collected, consisting of branches of trees, brushwood, and coals, and placed in a heap at the “cross;” and about nine o’clock at night the lighting of the fire is commenced, surrounded by a crowd of lookers-on, who each think it a duty to cast into the flaming mass some additional portion of material, the whole being sufficient to maintain the fire till next or New Year’s Day morning is far advanced. Fires are also kindled on the adjacent hills to add to the importance of the occasion.

It is considered unlucky to give out a light to any one on the morning of the new year, and therefore if the house-fire has been allowed to become extinguished, recourse must be had to the embers of the pile. This then accounts for the maintenance of the fire up to a certain time on New Year’s Day.

Some consider these fires to be the relics of Pagan or of Druidical rites of the dark ages; perhaps of a period as remote as that of the *Beltaine fires*, the change of circumstances having now altered these fires, both as to the particular season of year of their celebration, and of their various religious forms.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ix. p. 322.

MORAYSHIRE.

In the village of Burghead, situated on the southern shore of the Moray Frith, about nine miles from Elgin, the county town of Morayshire, the following curious custom is observed:

On the evening of the last day of December (Old Style), the youths of the village assemble about dusk,

and make the necessary preparations for the celebration of the “Clavie.” Proceeding to some shop they demand a strong empty barrel, which is usually given at once, but if refused taken by force. Another for breaking up, and a quantity of tar are likewise procured at the same time. Thus furnished they repair to a particular spot close to the sea-shore, and commence operations. A hole about four inches in diameter is first made in the bottom of the stronger barrel, into which the end of a stone pole, five feet in length, is firmly fixed: to strengthen their hold a number of supports are nailed round the outside of the former, and also closely round the latter. The tar is then put into the barrel, and set on fire, and the remaining one being broken up, stave after stave is thrown in until it is quite full. The “Clavie,” already burning fiercely, is now shouldered by some strong man, and borne away at a rapid pace. As soon as the bearer gives signs of exhaustion, another willingly takes his place; and should any of those who are honoured to carry the blazing load meet with an accident, as sometimes happens, the misfortune incites no pity even among his near relatives. In making the circuit of the village they are said to confine themselves to its old boundaries. Formerly, the procession visited all the fishing-boats, but this has been discontinued for some time. Having gone over the appointed ground, the “Clavie” is finally carried to a small artificial eminence near the point of the promontory, and interesting as being a portion of the ancient fortifications, spared probably on account of its being used for this purpose, where a circular heap of stones used to be hastily piled up, in the hollow centre of which the “Clavie” was placed still burning. On this eminence, which is termed the “durie,” the present proprietor has lately erected a

small round column, with a cavity in the centre for admitting the fire end of the pole, and into this it is now placed. After being allowed to burn on the "durie" for a few minutes, the "Clavie" is most unceremoniously hurled from its place, and the smoking embers scattered among the assembled crowd, by whom, in less enlightened times, they were eagerly caught at and fragments of them carried home and carefully preserved as charms against witchcraft. At one time superstition invested the whole proceedings with all the solemnity of a religious rite, the whole population joining in it as an act necessary to the welfare and prosperity of the little community during the year about to commence.

The "Clavie" has now, however, degenerated into a mere frolic, kept up by the youngsters more for their own amusement than for any benefit which the due performance of the ceremony is believed to secure.—*N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ix. p. 38; see also *N. & Q. 2nd S.* vol. ix. pp. 106, 169, 269; and *Book of Days*, vol. ii. pp. 789-791.

ORKNEY.

It was formerly the custom in Orkney for large bands of the common class of people to assemble on New Year's Eve, and pay a round of visits, singing a song which commenced as follows:

"This night it is guid New'r E'en's night,
We're a' here Queen Mary's men;
And we're come here to crave our right,
And that's before our Lady."

Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* 1849, vol. i. p. 9; see Chambers' *Pop. Rhymes of Scotland*, 1870, pp.

167, 168, 324.

IRELAND.

On the last night of the year a cake is thrown against the outside door of each house by the head of the family, which ceremony is said to keep out hunger during the ensuing one.—Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 1824, p. 233.

A correspondent of *N. & Q.* (*5th S.* vol. iii. p. 7) says, on New Year's Day about the suburbs at the County Down side of Belfast, the boys run about carrying little twisted wisps of straw, which they offer to persons whom they meet, or throw into their houses, as New Year's offerings, and expect to get in return any small present, such as a little money or a piece of bread.

About Glenarm, on the coast of County Antrim, the "wisp" is not used, but on this day the boys go about from house to house, and are regaled with bannocks of oaten bread, buttered; these bannocks are baked specially for the occasion, and are commonly small, thick, and round, and with a hole through the centre. Any person who enters a house on New Year's Day must either eat or drink before leaving it.

INDEX.

Abbé de Liesse, 459
Abbot of Misrule, 459
Acres Fair, 388
Advent Bells, 431

Agatha (St.), 374
Agnes' (St.) Day, 47
Agnes' (St.) Eve, 46
Agnes' (St.) Fast, 46
Alaf-mass, 347
Ale, the Whitsun, 278
Allan Day, 395
Alleluia, Funeral of the, 45
All Fools' Day, 184
All Hallows' Day, 397
All Hallow Mass, 55
All Saints' Day, 404
All Souls' Day, 409
All Souls' Eve, 405
Andermess, 430
Andisop, 431
Andrew's (St.), Day, 429
Andrew's (St.), Under Shaft, 247
Androis Mess, 430
Andrys Day, 430
Anne's (St.) Day, 346, 357
Annunciation, Festival of, 180
Apparition of St. Michael, 275
Apples, given away on New Year's Day, 5
Apples, ducking for, on Halloween, 394
Apple-trees, wassailing of, 450
April Gouks, 187
Apprentices' Feast, 355
Array, Court of, 287
Ascension Day, 210
Ash Wednesday, 84
Ashton faggot, 446
Ass-ridlin, 199
Assumption of the Virgin Mary, 357
Aughrim, battle of, 340
August, Gule of, 347

Auld Handsel Monday, 19
Avage or Avisage, 416

Bacchus, Verses written in honour of, 58
Bacon, gammon of, eaten at Easter, 162
Bairn bishop, 291
Baker's Clem, 423
Balmoral Castle, Halloween at, 401
Bannich Bruader, 90
Bannich Junit, 89
Barchan's (St.) Day, 437
Barnabas' (St.) Day, 310
Barring out, 72
Bartholomew's (St.) Day, 361
Barton Fair, 379
Bay, used as a decoration at Christmas, 458
Beans, kings created by, 20
Bear-baiting, 385
Beating the Bounds, 210
Beating the Cross, 213
Becket, Thomas-à-, 338
Becket's Fair, 339
Bedfordshire, 151, 205, 290, 374, 439, 493
Bees, Superstition regarding, 451
Bells, 5, 62, 82, 87, 476, 496, 499, 500, 504
Beltein, 223, 269
Berkshire, 119, 152, 191, 194, 233, 346, 377, 439, 466
Bezant, festival at Shaftesbury, 207
Bible, opening of, on New Year's Day, 5
Biddenham Cakes, 165
Binding Tuesday, 188
Birch, used as a decoration at Whitsuntide, 281
Black Cherry Fair, 357
Blaize's (St.) Day, 60
Blasius (St.), 60
Blayse (St.) Night, 62

Blessing of the Brine, 210
Blood Thursday, 500
Bloody Thursday, 148
Bluecoats, worn on St. George's Day, 193
Boar's Head, at Christmas, 455, 470, 473, 477
Boat Sunday, 443
Boggons, 32
Bonfires, 22, 61, 313, 395
Bounds, beating of the, 210
Bounds Thursday, 210
Boxing Day, 493
Boy's Bailiff, 287
Boy Bishop, 291, 432
Boyne, battle of, 337
Braggot, 117
Braggot Sunday, 117
Bread, baked on Good Friday, 149
Bread Mass, 347
Brices' (St.) Day, 421
Bride-Ale, 278
Bridget's (St.) Eve, 344
Brine, blessing of the, 210
Buckinghamshire, 6, 58, 69, 135, 169, 210, 234, 290, 291, 314, 323, 331, 354, 373, 390, 419, 426, 467, 493
Bull-baiting, 369, 439
Bull-running, 421
Buns, made on Good Friday, 150, 157
Burning out the Old Year, 506
'Buryin' Peter,' 333
Burying the Mace, 380
Bustard, eaten at Christmas, 456

Cake Night, 398
Cambridgeshire, 39, 105, 123, 234, 323, 334, 343, 419, 423, 426, 468, 494
Candles offered to St. Blayse, 62

Candle Bearing, 54
Candle Day, 428
Candlemas Ba', 57
Candlemas bleeze or blaze, 56
Candlemas Candle, 55
Candlemas Day, 54
Candlemas Eve, 52
Card-playing at Christmas, 463
Careing Fair, 118
Careing Sunday, 119
Care Sunday, 121
Carl Sunday, 122
Carlings, 122
Carling Groat, 123
Carling Sunday, 122
Carol Singing, 456
'Catching,' 109
Catherine's (St.) Day, 426
Cathern bowl, 429
Cattern Day, 426
Chalk-back-Day, 370
Chare Thursday, 139
Charles I., King of England, execution of, 50
Charles II., King of England, celebration of Twelfth Night by, 29; his Restoration, 301
Charlton Fair, 387
Cheese, given away at Christmas, 482
Cheshire, 69, 169, 195, 210, 234, 283, 314, 324, 405, 409, 441, 446
Childermas Day, 498
Children's Day, 177
Chimney Sweepers' Dance, 231
Chopping at the Tree, 167
Christ's Bed, making of, 158
Christ's Hospital, London, 179, 311, 374, 422
Christ's Presentation, 54

Christmas under the Commonwealth, 454
Christmas Book, 456
Christmas Box, 19, 493
Christmas Candles, 456
Christmas Carols, 457
Christmas Clog, 52, 452
Christmas Day, 452
Christmas Decorations, 457
Christmas Drink, 473
Christmas Eve, 446
Christmas Presents, 19
Christmas Sports, 403
Christmas Tree, 463
Clome, the, used in wassailing, 21
Cloth Fair, 363
Church-porch, watching in the, 200
Churches decorated, 157, 162, 280, 281, 457
Claudius Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, 204
‘Clavie,’ the burning of, 507
Clement’s (St.) Day, 423
Clipping the Church, 176
Cob loaf stealing, 451
Cobbs, given away on St. Thomas’ Day, 442
Cocks and Dumps, 67
Cock Crower, 92
Cock Fighting, 65, 177
‘Cock in the pot,’ 39
‘Cock on the dunghill,’ 39
Cock Penny, 79
Cock running, 78
Cock throwing, 78
Cocque’els, 81
Coelcoeth, 398
Coffin Crusts, 458
Cold Possett, 502
Collar of Brawn, 468

Collop Monday, 57
Columbkill, 310
Columb's (St.) Well, 310
Commencement Day, 334
Compostella, Shrine of St. James at, 345
Coquerells, 81
Coquilles, 81
Corn Showing, 172
'Corning, going a-,' 443
Cornwall, 47, 58, 73, 120, 121, 128, 162, 216, 235, 275, 279, 302, 315, 324, 338, 339, 378, 395, 431, 446, 468, 501
Corpus Christi Day, 297
Corpus Christi Eve, 297
Coteswold Games, 292
Court of Array, 287
Coventry Show Fair, 300
Crab-Apples, gathered on Michaelmas Day, 376
Crabbing the Parson, 341
Crack-nut Sunday, 375
Cracklin Friday, 153
Cramp Rings, 49
Cresset-light, 317
Creeping to the Cross, 148
Crispin's (St.) Day, 388
Cross, Invention of the, 275
Cross Day of the Year, 500
Crowdie, 88
Crowning of the Cock, 487
Croyland Abbey, knives given away at, on St. Bartholomew's Day, 367
Cuckoo, 187, 192
Cuckoo Ale, 192
Cumberland, 29, 72, 159, 163, 279, 291, 310, 315, 356, 419, 469, 501

Curfew Bell, 78
Cushion Dance, 253
Cuthbert's (St.) Day, 371
'Cutting off the fiddler's head,' 34
Cymhortha, 110
Cypress, used as decoration at Christmas, 458

Daft Days, 505
'Dart, throwing the,' 370
David's (St.) Day, 110
'Dead and Living Ford,' 17
Decoration of Churches, 157, 162, 280, 281, 457
Deptford Fair, 296
Derbyshire, 30, 39, 74, 99, 105, 128, 165, 170, 211, 237, 283, 302, 404, 409, 412, 446, 469, 502
Desmas, one of the thieves crucified with our Lord, 499
Devils' Knell, 452
Devonshire, 20, 59, 76, 100, 152, 212, 217, 237, 302, 308, 324, 348, 446
'Dipping,' 5
Dipping Day, 235
Dirge Loaf, 410
Dish Fair, 387
Dismal Day, the, 275
Distaff's (St.) Day, 36
Doggett, Thomas, 349
Dogs, Whipping of, 386, 387
Dole Bread, 401
Doleing Day, 443
Dorsetshire, 30, 55, 152, 159, 205, 385, 441, 470
Dough-nut Day, 78
Dover, Robert, 292
Drinking Sowins, 489

Druids, 1, 223
Duck-under-water, 253
Dulce Domum, sung at Winchester School, 284
Dumb-cake, 199, 312, 384
Durham, 303, 371
Dutton, family of, privileged to license the Cheshire minstrels, 324
Dyzemas Day, 499

Easter Day, 161
Easter Eve, 159
Easter Monday, 169
Easter Tuesday, 179
Eccles Cakes, 369
Eccles Wake, 369
Edward IV. of England, his Coronation, 498
Eel Fair, 293
Egg-hopping, 329
Egg Saturday, 52
Elecampane, 171
Election of kings by beans, 24
Elizabeth, Queen of England, her accession observed, 422
Epiphany, 24
Epping Hunt, 171
Erconwald's (St.) Day, 422
Essex, 6, 94, 153, 171, 212, 237, 280, 378, 416, 470
Eton Montem, 290
Eve of the Epiphany, 20
Eve of Paul's Tide, 47
Evelyn, John, 183, 454
Evil May-day, 248
Execution of Charles I., King of England, 50

Fadé-dance, 276
Fag-pies, 119

Fairchild Lecture, 291
Faith's (St.) Day, 384
Farthing Loaf Day, 319
Fastren's E'en, 88
Fastyngonge Tuesday, 81
Fern, superstitions connected with, 312
Ferrers, George, 460
Festival of Kings, 20
Fiddler's Head, cutting off of the, 34
Fig-one, 15
Fig-pies, 119
Fig-pie Wake, 119
Fig-sue, 15, 153
Fig-Sunday, 128, 133
Fires, lighting of, on Eve of the Epiphany, 22; on St Blaize's Day, 61; on St. John's Eve, 313; on Hallow Eve, 395
'First Foot,' 5, 17, 483
Flag Day, 332
Flap-dragon, 463
Flap-jack, 63
Flitting Day, 301
Floralia, 223, 245
Flower of the Well, 17
Flower Sermon, 291
Flowering Sunday, 134
Font-hallowing, 159
Fool-plough, 37
Foot ball, 75, 83, 87, 401
Freemen's Well, the, 201
Friars' Girdles, worn by ladies, 94
Friday in Lide, 120
Fritter Bell, 78
Fritter Thursday, 96
Fruttors Thursday, 96
Funeral of the Alleluia, 45

Furmity, 117, 472, 483
Furry Festival, 275

Gammon of Bacon, eaten at Easter, 162
Gang Monday Land, 210
Gangweek, 204
Ganging Day, 380
Garland Day, 243
Garland Sunday, 376
Garlic Sunday, 376
Gaunt, John of, 358
George's (St.) Day, 192
Gerard's Hall, 247
Gestas, one of the thieves crucified with our Lord, 499
Giants, display of, at Chester, 314
Gregory's (St.) Day, 125
Glastonbury thorn, 34, 454, 467
Gloucestershire, 22, 238, 280, 292, 379, 388, 447, 470, 499, 502
Gloves, at Fairs, 297, 348
Glove Money, 4
Glove Silver, 348
God Cakes, 12
Goddes Day, 148
God's Day, 148
God's Friday, 148
'God speed the Plough,' 41
Goluan, 315
Good Friday, 148
Good Friday Bread, 149
'Gooding, going-a,' 438
Goodish Tuesday, 86
'Good Morrow, Valentine,' 109
Good Pas Day, 118
Goose, eaten at Michaelmas, 376
Goose Fair, Nottingham, 383

Goose-pies, 196
Gosling, May, 233, 265
Gospel Trees, 208
Gowk, hunting the, 188
Grace Cup, 450
Grass Week, 204
Green Bower Feast, 289
Greenock Fair, 337
Grimaldi, Joseph, 461
'Grotto, pray remember the,' 345
Guisards, 488
Guisings, 181
Gule of August, 347
Gunpowder Plot, 410
Guy Fawkes, his day, 410
Gyst Ale, 181

Hackin, the, at Christmas, 456
Hailing the Lamb, 212
Halgaver Court, 389
Hall' Monday, 58
Hallow Eve, 394
Hampshire, 77, 119, 187, 238, 281, 284, 296, 304, 305, 372, 448
Handsel Monday, 19, 488
Harlequinade, 461
Harrow School, shooting at, 357
Hay, strewn in churches, 327, 338
Hays, the, 34
Heaving, 173, 177
Heaving Days, 175
Heavy Cake, 216, 236
Helen's (St.) Day, 274, 360
Hempseed, divination by, 99, 313, 400
Hen-threshing, 68
Hentzner, Paul, visits Bartholomew Fair, 361
Herb-pudding, 151

Herefordshire, 7, 22, 106, 128, 281, 409, 441, 448, 471
Heriot's Hospital, 309
Hertfordshire, 78, 128, 181, 238, 380, 442
Het Pint, 15
Hilary's (St.) Day, 44
Hirings, for servants, 279
Hobby-horse, 236, 461, 463, 486
Hobby-horse Dance, 480
Hobby-horsing, 262
Hock Day, 180
Hock Money, 191
Hock-tide, 188
Hocktide play at Chester, 189
Hock Tuesday, 188
Hodening, 472
Hogmanay, 488, 505
Hoke Day, 189
Holiday of St. Simeon, 54
Hollantide Eve, 396
Holly, used as a decoration at Christmas, 458
Holly, its derivation, 457
Holly Boy, 107
Holly Bussing, 180
Holly Night, 35
Holy Cross Day, 372
Holy Innocents' Day, 497
Holy Rood Day, 372
Holy Thursday, 215
Holy Saturday, 160
Honey Fairs, 469
Hood, throwing the, 32
Hoofing-place, 12
Horns, blown on May Day, 260
Horses, bled on St. Stephen's Day, 492
Horses, decorated on May Day, 243

Hot Cockles, 463
Hot Cross Buns, 150, 157
Hot Pint, 15, 17
Hunting the Gowk, 188
Hunting the Ram, 354
Hunting the Squirrel, 404, 429, 430, 463, 481
Hunting the Wren, 494
Huntingdonshire, 40, 78, 217, 241, 334

Inns of Court, 396, 473
Ireland, 23, 75, 91, 96, 125, 136, 139, 158, 160, 168, 178, 183, 198, 222, 270, 282, 300, 310, 321, 329, 337, 340, 344, 370, 375, 383, 403, 408, 420, 452, 491, 497, 500, 508
Irving, Washington, his remarks on seeing a Maypole, 234
Isle of Axholme, 30
Isle of Man, 8, 33, 80, 154, 221, 246, 316, 325, 348, 395, 431, 442, 449, 472, 494, 503
Isle of Thanet, 183, 428
Isle of Wight, 87, 504
Ivy, used as a decoration at Christmas, 458, 478
Ivy Girl, 107

Jack and Joan Fair, 385
Jack of Hilton, 10
Jack O'Lent, 93
Jack of May, 264
Jack-pudding, 463
James' (St.) Day, 344
James (St.) the Less, his day, 234
James' (St.) Palace, 153
Jeu-nhydn, 468
John's (St.) Day, 323
John's (St.) Eve, 311

John O Gaunt's Day, 191
Jolly Lads, 134
Joseph of Arimathea, legend regarding his staff, 467
Judas Iscariot, flogging of, 155
Jough-ny-nollick, 473
Juniper, burnt before cattle, 18

Kenelm's (St.) Day, 341
Kenilworth Castle, Queen Elizabeth's visit to, 189
Kent, 78, 107, 165, 207, 242, 296, 332, 339, 345, 385, 423, 427, 429, 448, 471
Ket Bank, 220
Kill Bull, the, 477
Kings created by Beans, 20
King's Cock Crower, 92
King of the Bean, 26
King of Cockneys, 498
King of the Millers, 285
Kit-dressing, 231
Knappan, 184
Knives, given away on St. Bartholomew's Day, 367
Knotting-sowins, 489

Laa'l Brushey, 51
Lad's Valentine, 99
Lady Day, 180
Lady Godiva, 280, 300
Lady of the Lamb, 297
Lamb Ale, 278
Lambert Simmel, 115
Lambs' Wool, 23, 449, 483
Lammas Day, 347
Lammas Towers, 351
Lamprey-pies, 470

Lancashire, 7, 79, 119, 134, 153, 181, 213, 217, 243, 284, 316, 334, 345, 355, 368, 369, 384, 385, 395, 406, 472
La Sheachanna na bleanagh, 275
Lating or Leeting the Witches, 395
Laurel, used as a Christmas decoration, 458
Lawless Court, at King's Hill, 378
Lawless Hour, at Kidderminster, 379
Leaping the Well, 201
Leeks, worn on St. David's Day, 110, 113
Leek Pasties, 83
Leet Ale, 278
Leicestershire, 40, 79, 197, 284, 338
Leith Races, 335
Lent Crocking, 76
Leonard's (St.) Day, 416
Lide, Friday in, 120
Lifting, 173
Lincolnshire, 30, 40, 128, 154, 220, 245, 294, 367, 372, 412, 421
Loaf Mass, 347
Looe Fair Day, 236
Long Rope Day, 157
"Looking through the keyhole," 105
Lord Mayor's Day, 417, 459
Lord Mayor of Pennyless Cone, 487
Lord of Misrule, 339, 459, 474, 478
Louis XI. of France, his superstition regarding Holy Innocents' Day, 498
Lotts, the, 350
Low Easter Day, 184
Low Sunday, 183
Luke's (St.) Day, 386

Mace Board, 246
Mace, burying the, 380
Mace Monday, 346

Mainstyr Fiddler, 34
Mallard Night, 44
Mandate Thursday, 140
Margaret's (St.) Day, 343
Mari Lwyd, 486
Mark's (St.) Day, 200, 203
Mark's (St.) Eve, 199, 200
Marlings, 181
Marlocking, 181
Mart, its meaning, 418
Martinmas, 347
Martin's (St.) Day, 418
Mary's (St.) Day, in Lent, 180
Matthew's (St.) Day, 373
Maternus (St.), 463
Maundy Loaves, 140
Maundy Money, 140
Maundy Thursday, 139
May Bough, 243
May Day, 223
May Dew, 225, 242
May Dolls, 216
May Eve, 215
May Fair, 249
May Feast, 263
May Gads, 245
May Games, 225
May Gosling, 233, 265
May Lady, 234
May Music, 216
Maypoles, 228
May Queen, 238, 246, 251, 255
May Songs, 232, 233, 238, 240, 242, 251, 255, 257, 259, 261, 262, 263, 273
May Syllabub, 257
'Maying, going a,' 224

Michael (St.), Apparition of, 275
Michaelmas Cake, 383
Michaelmas Day, 376
Michaelmas Eve, 375
Michaelmas Goose, 376
Michael's (St.) Bannock, 383
Middlesex, 32, 48, 80, 113, 147, 154, 160, 166, 174, 179, 187, 213, 247, 291, 297, 305, 316, 326, 344, 345, 316, 349, 355, 357, 361, 374, 396, 406, 413, 429, 473
Midlent Sunday, 113, 116
Midsummer Day, 323
Midsummer Eve, 311
Midsummer Men, 312
Midsummer Watch, 316, 318
Milk Maids' Dance, 231
Millers, King of the, 285
Mince-pies, 458
Minched pies, 458
Minstrels' Festival, 358
Miracle Plays, 283, 298, 343, 478
Mischief Night, 217
Misrule, Lord of, 339, 459, 474, 478
Mistletoe, 458, 459
Mock, the, 446
Modwen's (St.) Day, 390
Molly Grime, figure in Glentham Church, 154
Monmouthshire, 407
Morris-dancers, 30, 227, 258
Moseley's Dole, 10
'Mothering, going a,' 116
Mothering Sunday, 116
Mummers, 430, 461, 469, 478, 480
Mumping Day, 441
'Mumping, going a,' 441
Mutton-pies, 458

Myche, a kind of bread, 96

Nativity of the Virgin Mary, 372
Newark Raffling Day, 51
New Year's Day, 1
New Year's Eve, 501
New Year's Gifts, 1
New Year's Ode, 4
New Year's Offerings, 509
New Year's Song, 19
Newton, Sir Isaac, on the time of Christ's birth, 453
Nicholas (St.), tradition relating to, 436
Nicholas' (St.) Day, 432
Nicholas' (St.) Eve, 432
Nickanan Night, 58
Nicking, of Swans, 346
Nod Beuno, 295
Nog Money, 506
Norfolk, 42, 81, 95, 100, 107, 166, 183, 293, 298, 344, 370, 449, 475, 496
Northamptonshire, 42, 82, 108, 132, 199, 213, 251, 281, 286, 305, 306, 327, 332, 340, 413, 427, 430, 449, 476, 499, 503
Northumberland, 9, 83, 175, 180, 201, 214, 257, 282, 294, 298, 306, 318, 327, 332, 335, 389, 476
Nottinghamshire, 9, 51, 54, 83, 109, 124, 175, 214, 257, 306, 318, 380, 383, 397, 413, 442, 449, 476
Nut Crack Night, 394
'Nutting, going a,' 373
Oak Apple Day, 301
Offering Days, 5
Offering Silver, 481
Oiel Verry, 449
Olave's (St.) Day, 346

‘Old Ball,’ 486
Old Christmas Day, 30, 34, 467
‘Old Clem,’ 432
Old Michaelmas Day, 380
Old Midsummer Day, 328
Old Year, burning out the, 506
Onion Fair, 373
Oswald’s (St.) Day, 355
Oxen, superstition regarding, 447
Oxfordshire, 9, 43, 52, 84, 97, 110, 113, 123, 124, 133, 134, 156, 167, 208, 214, 222, 258, 282, 287, 297, 319, 327, 414, 442, 450, 476, 496, 504
Oysters, eaten on St. James’ Day, 344

Pace Eggs, 163
Pack Monday Fair, 385
Paganalia, 493
Paignton Fair, 308
Palm Saturday, 126
Palm Sunday, 126
‘Palming, going a,’ 127
Pan-burn-Bell, 82
Pancakes, 63, 375
Pancake Bell, 62, 87
Pancake Month, 65
Pantomime, 461
Parish Clerks’ Meeting, 177
Parkin, 416
Paschal Day, 148
Paschal Taper, 159
Passion-dock, 151
Passion Sunday, 121
Paste-Egg Day, 118
Patrick’s Crosses, 136
Patrick’s (St.) Day, 135
Patrick’s Pot, 137

Paul's (St.) Cathedral, 49
Paul's (St.) Day, 49
Paul's (St.) Eve, 47
Paul Pitcher Night, 48
Penderell, Richard, his monument decorated on Oak Apple Day, 305
Penny Hedge, the, 209
Penny Loaf Day, 125
Pepper Cake, 483
Pershore Fair Day, 192
Peter's (St.) Day, 331
Peter-Pence, 347
Philip's (St.) Day, 234
Picrous Day, 431
Piepowder, Court of, 364
Pin-money, 4
Pippins, divination by, 397
Piran's (St.) Day, 121
Plough Bullocks, 39
Plough-lights, 37
Plough Monday, 37
Plough Witchers, 40
Plough Witching, 40
Plowlick Monday, 42
Plum porridge, 462
Plumb-pudding, 462
Plumb-pudding Money, 482
Poisson d'Avril, 184
Pope Joan, 181
Pope-Ladies, 181
Pork Acre, 413
Pot-fair, 323
Preston Guild, 368
'Progging, going a,' 414
Procession Week, 204
Processioning, 208, 213

Psalm Caking, 406
'Pudding-pieing, going a,' 172
Pulgen, 487
Purification of the Virgin Mary, 54
Push-penny, 303

Quaaltagh, 8

Raffling-Day, at Newark, 51
Ram, hunting the, 354
Ram Feast, 257
Ravenglass Fair, 356
Rayer, or Rahere, founder of Bartholomew Fair, 361
Ream of the Well, 17
Red Spear Knights, 291
Reed Day, 332
Relic Sunday, 340
Restoration Day, 301
Rhyne Toll, the, 390
Richard's (St.) Day, 188
'Riding of the George,' 197
'Riding the Marches,' 292, 307
'Rising Peter,' 333
Robin Hood, 220, 257
Roche's (St.) Day, 350
Rock Day, 36
Rogation Sunday, 204
Rope-pulling, at Ludlow, 85
Rosemary, used as decoration at Christmas, 458
Rowan-tree, use of, 154, 394
Rowan-tree Day, 274
Rowan-tree Gads, 274
Royal Oak Day, 301
Rumbald Night, 448
Running Lands, 242

Rushes, strewn in churches, 280, 294
Rush-bearing, 334, 367

Salmon, superstition regarding, 270
Salt-Silver, 418
Saturnalia, 458, 463
Sauin, 395
Scalding Thursday, 375
Scambling Days, 95
Scarlet Days, at Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, 278
Scholastica's (St.) Day, 97
Scilly Isles, 84, 479
Scotland, 14, 19, 43, 46, 56, 88, 120, 126, 177, 188, 267, 275, 292, 301, 307, 309, 320, 334, 335, 351, 382, 394, 399, 408, 410, 430, 437, 438, 487, 505
Scrutiny Night, 504
Septuagesima, 45
'Setting the Colne,' 213
'Seven joys of the Virgin,' 464
Shaftesbury Bezant, 205
Shamrock, 136, 139
Sharp Tuesday, 86
Sheelah's Day, 139
Sher, Shere, Sheere, Thursday, 146
Shier Thursday, 146
Shig-Shag, 305
Shrewsbury Show, 300
Shrid-pies, 458
Shropshire, 82, 262, 287, 301, 407, 410
Shrove Tuesday, 39
Shying at Leaden Cocks, 67
'Shy for Shy,' 67
Simeon (St.), holiday of, 54
Simnel Bread, 115
Simnel, Lambert, 115

Simnels, 114
Simnel Sunday, 113
Singed Sheeps' Heads, carried on St. Andrew's Day, 430
Singing E'en, 501
Slap-dragon, 463
Sloe Fair, 351
Smock Race, 214
Smuchdan, 18
Smugging, 68
Snap-dragon, 462
Sollaghyn, 80
Somersetshire, 34, 86, 95, 262, 282, 328, 479, 500
Song of the Mallard, 44
Song of the Wren, 35
Sonsy-haggis, 491
Soul Cakes, 405
Souling, going a, 405, 407
Soul Mass Cakes, 409
Sow Day, 438
Sowans-bowie, 490
Spirit Fire, 463
Squirrels, hunting of, 404, 429, 430, 481
Staffordshire, 10, 23, 34, 86, 203, 208, 215, 263, 287, 340, 358, 390, 407, 425, 443, 480
Stagg, offering of, on St. Cuthbert's Day, 371
Staylaces, given to the Clergy on Ascension Day, 213
Stephening, 493
Stephen's (St.) Day, 492
Stephen's (St.) Pudding, 494
Stir-up-Sunday, 431
Subterranean Christmas Bells, 476
Suffolk, 86, 215, 263, 481
Sugar-Cupping, 165

Surrey, 86, 133, 156, 263, 293, 341, 357, 373, 375
Sussex, 11, 157, 264, 381, 389, 414, 430, 443, 450
Swan-upping, 346
Swarf Penny, 420
'Sweeping the Girls,' 106
Swig, 113
Swithin's (St.) Day, 341
Swithin's (St.) Farthings, 341
Sword-dance, 485

Tander, Tandrew, name given to St. Andrew's Day, 430
Tansy Cake, 167
Tenbury Fair Day, 192
Terminalia, 204
Tharve Cake, 30
Thomas' (St.) Day, 438
Thomas' (St.) Onion, 439
'Thomasin, going a,' 441
Threshing the Hen, 68
Throwing at Cocks, 66
'Throwing the Dart,' 370
'Throwing the Hood,' 32
Tibba's (St.) Day, 438
Timber Waits, 203
Timbrel Waits, 203
Tindles, 409
Tinley, 405
Toothache, remedy for, 464
Tooting-horn, 352
Trap and ball, 86
Trinity Monday, 296
Trinity Sunday, 294
Trololay, derivation of, 505
Trundling of Eggs, 178

Turkey, 148, 465
Tuth Day, 192
Twelfth Cake, 24
Twelfth Day, 24
Twelfth Night, 24
Twelfth Night Cards, 25
Tynwald Day, 325

Usque-Cashrichd, 488

Valentine's (St.) Day, 375
Valentine's (St.) Eve, 98
Valentines, 101
Valentine dealing, 105
Valentining, 105
Vessel Cup, 464
Vitus' (St.) Day, 311
Virgin Mary, Annunciation of, 180; Assumption of, 357; Nativity of, 372; Purification of, 54

Wad-Shooting, 489
Waits, 465, 485
Wakes Monday, 404
Wales, 35, 88, 113, 134, 158, 168, 177, 184, 222, 265, 289, 295, 297, 320, 390, 398, 410, 425, 445, 486, 496
Walk Money, 183
'Walking the Fair,' 203
Walnut-tree, legend of a miraculous, 467
Ward Penny, 420
Warwickshire, 12, 175, 300, 419, 443, 450
Wrath Money, 420
Wassail Bowl, 501
Wassail Eve, 23
Wassaile, 28
Wastel, the, 115

Watch Night, 501
Weaver, introduces the Pantomime, 461
Well-dressing, 211
Wesley Bob, 483
Westminster School, tossing the pancake at, 80
Westmoreland, 6, 35, 264, 415, 481
'Wetting the Block,' 119
Wheel, its origin, 454
Whip-dog Day, 387
Whipping Toms, 79
Whirlin Cakes, 123
Whirlin Sunday, 123
White Sunday, 183
White Thursday, 468
Whitsun Ale, 278
Whitsunday, 278
Whitsun Monday, 283
Whitsun Mysteries, 283
Whitsuntide, 278, 281
Whitsun Tuesday, 290
Whitsun Tryste Fair, 282
'Wigs,' a sort of Cake, 426
Wilfrid's (St.) Feast, 351
Wiltshire, 76, 133, 295, 309, 329, 415
Wives' Feast, 54
Worcestershire, 12, 157, 176, 188, 192, 215, 265, 306, 319, 341, 416, 428, 443, 482, 500
Wren, hunting of, 494
Wren-boys, 497
Wroth Money, 420
Wycoller Hall, Christmas at, 472

Yarrow, divination connected with, 273
Yew, Churches decorated with, on Good Friday, 156
Yorkshire, 12, 23, 43, 56, 87, 96, 110, 123, 133, 148, 157, 160, 167, 200, 209, 274,

299, 320, 329, 331, 333, 341, 351, 367, 386, 398, 416, 420, 444, 451, 482, 496, 504
Yorkshire Hagmena Song, 14
Youling, 207
Yule, derivation of the term, 453
Yule of August, 347
Yule Babies, 476
Yule Candle, 451
Yule Clog, 452, 465
Yule Day, 487
Yule Log, 453, 465
Yule Straw, 489
Yule-tide, 453

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Preface: ... the movable feasts are placed under the earliest days on which they can fall: this is not always the case, and some movable feasts are described in chapters without dates.

Pages 66 and 94: FitsStephen and FitzStephens may refer to the same person.

Page 255, And all that it wants is a more little silver: as printed in the source document. Other sources give "a little more silver".

Page 258, Hucknall Folkard: as printed in the source document; possibly Hucknall Torkard, both names appear to exist.

Page 259, Akerman: as printed in the

source document; others spellings exist as well.

Page 288, ... the enrolment of a regular armour ...: possibly an error for ... the enrolment of a regular army....

Page 440: ... after the death of his wife and her daughter ...: does not seem logical (his wife already having died), but is as printed in the source document. Other sources mention only the daughter in respect to the 6 pounds.

Changes made:

Some punctuation errors and obvious minor typographical errors have been corrected silently.

Some words were printed in Insular characters in the source document, these have been transcribed in a sans serif font: Insular.

Footnotes have been moved to under the paragraph, poem, etc. to which they belong.

For this e-text, festivals, days, dates etc. have been regarded as chapters, with countries, counties or other localities being sections. The end of the description of each chapter is indicated by an ornamental line. In some cases, this is a change compared to the source document.

In some cases the source of poems and songs has been moved to its own line underneath the poem or song.

Page 126: The date (March 15) has been moved from before SCOTLAND

to before PALM SATURDAY
Page 145: royal gate arms changed to royal gate alms
Page 179: Portaffery changed to Portaferry
Page 259: Tu, qui non dedignatus es changed to Te, qui non dedignatus es
Page 290: triennally changed to triennially (cf. biennially in the same sentence)
Page 292: SCOTLAND changed to SCOTLAND
Page 348: mobility changed to nobility
Page 369: The month (Sept.) has been moved from before Lancashire to before ECCLES WAKE
Page 370: cork town Council changed to Cork town council
Page 417: revised changed to revived
Page 431: ADVENT changed to ADVENT
Page 434: ... and the book like, acolytes, ... changed to ... and the book, like acolytes, ...
Page 519: Tuth Day moved to its proper place
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