

## Calendar of Customs and Festivals.

### ADDENDA.

#### August 5.

**LAMMAS SUNDAY. GARLAND SUNDAY.**—In Ireland this is a survival of a pagan festival in honour of the earth about to yield up its fruits. The farmer feeds his family on the first fruits. No potatoes may be dug before this day and no flower or fruit placed on the altar. The day was also devoted to solemn rites in honour of the dead. A garland was decorated the night before with coloured ribbons. Early in the morning maidens gathered flowers to decorate the garland, but no married woman might either gather flowers or touch the garland lest it should wither and bring ill luck. The procession to the churchyard was headed by the finest young man of the village, who bore the garland. If any of the apples which hung on the garland fell while they were on the way to the churchyard, it portended prosperity and long life for the bearer. But if an apple fell after the garland had been hung up in or near the churchyard it brought bad luck to all who were dancing at the time.

#### August 15.

In the Highlands of Scotland the Assumption of the Virgin Mary marks the middle day of autumn; it is known as the Big St. Mary, and is held in even greater veneration than the Little St. Mary of spring. It also marks the height of harvest, for, as the popular saying has it, it is the time of "Harvest, sheaf and binding, and men with their coats off."

In Ireland the Assumption of the Virgin was one of the great festivals of the year and was observed from a remote antiquity. It was mentioned by Ængus in his compilation of the Irish Saints at the beginning of the ninth century. A curious and obscure note to the passage points to a tradition other than that of the Church. "Mary is called 'Mother of Maelruain,' because Maelruain was her doctor, or because she was Maelruain's sister." Again it may be noted a remarkable association of a male character with the Virgin.

'Ladyday in Harvest' is in Ireland the time of fruitfulness. An ancient Irish quatrain refers to 'the apple soft and yellow,' 'the berry black on the branch,' and 'the bellowing of cows and calves.'

The pilgrimages to which the name of patron was given were numerous on this day, and the wells dedicated to the Virgin were many. At Agadha, near Cloyne, Co. Cork, the people assembled to perform their stations and pray in the middle of a marshy field. A solitary tree near the well was covered with pieces of cloth tied to the tree by the pilgrims who had benefited by the waters—the familiar form in which the pagan offering or sacrifice survives, especially at holy wells. A patron at Our Lady's Well at Ballyhea was, by the influence of the clergy, converted into a cattle-fair.

#### August 24.

**ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.**—By an ancient custom of Croyland Abbey, little knives were given to all comers on St. Bartholomew's Day. In the north of England it was one of the days on which rush-bearing took place. At Dorrington, in Lincolnshire, a number of maidens went in procession to a chapel, where they strewed the floor with rushes and then went to a piece of ground known as the 'play-garths,' where they were followed by most of the inhabitants and the day spent in wrestling and other athletic sports.

In England, St. Bartholomew is perhaps most noted

for the fair held for over seven centuries at Smithfield, London, until its abolition in 1855. It is said to have been constituted in 1133 by Henry I. as a grant to the monk Rahere, who had been his jester, and had founded the Priory of St. Bartholomew. It therefore was originally closely associated with the Church and was the occasion of the presentation of plays—mysteries, miracles, and moralities. It is to be noted, however, that traditionally the first proceedings of the fair after it had been opened by the Lord Mayor of London consisted of wrestling matches. After they were over, rabbits were let loose to be chased by the boys. Similar athletic sports, and especially wrestling matches, are the characteristic feature of the Lammas and other August celebrations, especially of the traditional type, of which some unquestionably go back to pagan times. The monastic character of the fair survived in the dialectical and grammatical disputations between the boys of the London schools which took place in the priory as recorded by Stow.

Many records, besides the famous 'Bartholomew Fair' of Ben Jonson, bear witness to the degeneration of the fair into a licence which led to its restriction to the original limit of three days, and its final abolition. Cases of dispute over debts and contracts and offences such as "slander of goods," which in the ordinary course would have been referred to the jurisdiction of the law, were settled within the fair by "the Court of Piepowders" held within the priory, and composed of a jury of traders formed on the spot, and the prior as president. Similar independence of jurisdiction within the fair is recorded in other cases. This is not entirely a privilege arising out of the ecclesiastical origin of the fair or its location on or within the bounds of church property—many fairs were held in churchyards—but is to be regarded rather as akin to the neutrality of the markets of primitive peoples. Where the trading is a by-product of a religious feast, the appeal to arms which in the ordinary course would settle a dispute between members of different tribes is taboo, and the sacred character of the occasion places it outside the usual jurisdiction. In Ireland, where the great national and provincial Games, such as the Tailtean Games revived in 1924, long antedated the introduction of Christianity, elaborate precautions were taken that the sacred peace of the Games should not be disturbed.

**ST. OÜEN.**—A saint of N. France, who attained high office under Clothaire and Dagobert I. and became archbishop of Normandy, the author of many miracles. His shrine at Rouen was sanctuary and on one day in each year it procured the pardon of one criminal condemned to death in the prisons of the city. The criminal touched the shrine and his pardon was immediate.

#### August 25.

**ST. MAELRUBA, MOURIE OR MOURY.**—The saint whose feast day in the ecclesiastical calendar falls on April 21 (*see* St. Maelrubius, NATURE, April 14, p. 605) in Scotland was traditionally assigned a feast day on August 25. He has superseded a deity whose cult once extended over a wide area in the north of Scotland and culminated in a great festival in August. Both ritual and belief belonging to the earlier worship long survived in association with the saint. Down to A.D. 1678 bulls were sacrificed on this day on the island of Inis Maree, and milk was poured on hills as an offering. In the seventeenth century it is recorded that certain persons were indicted for sacrificing a bull on the island of S. Rufus or Ellan Moury for the recovery of a woman from illness. Maelruba was frequently called the God Moury by the people of the area of which he was patron.