

## Calendar of Customs and Festivals.

### November 3.

**ST. WINIFRED—Virgin and Martyr.**—The well of St. Winifred at Treffynnon, also known as Holywell, was at one time one of the best known and most frequented wells in Great Britain. The cult of the Saint at this spot has with some probability been traced to Saxon times, but it unquestionably superseded an older worship. It was much frequented by pilgrims, and was noted for its healing qualities. The rites took the usual form of circumambulation, bathing, kissing certain stones, and a large number of votive offerings, especially crutches, bore witness to its healing qualities. A small spring near the great well was noted for the cure of weak eyes, sufferers offering crooked pins.

### November 5.

**GUNPOWDER PLOT. GUY FAWKES DAY.**—The public celebration of the discovery of the plot to blow up King and Parliament on Nov. 5, 1605, has now fallen into disuse, though its memory is preserved in the discharge of fireworks by children, and the parade of 'guys' about the streets on Nov. 5 and preceding days with the object of raising a few coppers. The appropriate and widely distributed rhymes beginning "Remember, remember the fifth of November," are still sometimes heard. Public celebration lasted well into the nineteenth century, and so late as the 'seventies it was recorded that the Yeomen of the Guard searched for any barrels of gunpowder which might be hidden in the vaults of the Houses of Parliament. In London one of the biggest of the bonfires was lit at the corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields on the Great Queen Street corner, when sometimes as many as two hundred cartloads of wood and more than thirty 'guys' were consumed. The processions were not always of a peaceful character, and rival 'guys' from different districts sometimes became involved in fights of a more or less serious character.

Among the butchers of Clare Market the celebrations took on a special character. One of their number personated the 'guy' and, being seated in a cart with a prayer book, was drawn about in the company of an executioner and priest. A select party with marrow bones and cleavers headed the procession, while others solicited alms which were spent at the ale-house on a feast at the end of the day.

At Harlington, under date 1683, half an acre of land was given for the benefit of the bellringers of the parish to provide them with a leg of pork for ringing the bells on Nov. 5.

The Fifth of November custom is widespread in England, and although the accompanying rhymes vary in detail, essentially they are identical. Certain variations in custom are recorded which are not without significance. In Oxfordshire the verses were recited while the fuel was being gathered, and were held to render lawful the appropriation of any old wood. The operation was known as 'going a-progging.' At Lewes a torchlight procession took place, those participating being dressed up, with blackened faces. Effigies were cast into the fire when it was at its highest. At Marlborough a dozen or more formed a ring around the fire and they then followed one another round it in a circle, holding thick club-sticks over their shoulders, while others standing outside the circle beat the sticks of those in the circle with similar sticks as they passed. All shouted at the top of their voices. This lasted for about half an hour, and was repeated at intervals until the fire died out. In the West Riding of Yorkshire for some weeks before, a store of the cake called

Parkin was prepared which was solemnly eaten on the day. At Doncaster the town waits played on the church steeple, for which they received sixpence.

A further indication of the ritual character of the Fifth of November festival is afforded by Lincolnshire and Yorkshire belief and practice. Some seventy or eighty years ago it was held that on Nov. 5 any farmer's son or, in some localities anyone, could shoot at will on neighbours' farms or their preserves. It is recorded that between 1805 and 1825 everyone who could procure a gun would turn out to shoot, and no one thought of preventing them.

The survival of these variations in practice points to what at one time must have been a more elaborate ceremonial. The Marlborough custom is very distinctly of a religious and sacrificial character. The widespread Fifth of November fire has clearly taken the place of the Samhain fires of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

### November 6.

**ST. LEONARD.**—A French nobleman of the court of Clovis I. converted by St. Remigius, who became a monk remarkable for his charity towards prisoners, and died in 559. His miraculous efforts in releasing prisoners continuing after his death, he was canonised. An Ordinance of Worcester, published in 1240, ordained that his day should be kept a half-holiday, and that on it there should be no labour except that of the plough. In one of the Essex manors dues on animals, especially pigs, were payable on this day for the privilege of the manorial woods.

### October-November.

In the Bombay Presidency on the twelfth day of the dark half of the month Kārtik, some villages of the Thana district of the Bombay Presidency worship the deity Waghoba or Waghya. The cowherds collect a quantity of milk and prepare a mixture of cooked rice and molasses. They then proceed to the stone image of the deity in the jungle and besmear it with new red lead, pour sweet milk over the stones, pray for the protection of the cattle, and partake of the remaining milk. An interesting ceremony, which recalls the English 'beating the bounds,' is performed at Agashi and neighbouring villages, when a goat and some cocks are sacrificed to the spirits in the cemeteries and at the boundary of the village. A goat decorated with garlands and red powder is made to walk round the village three times at night accompanied by the villagers, who scatter parched rice as they pass. This is called 'binding the boundary' and protects the cattle and crops. No farmer dares sow his seed until this rite has been performed.

### November.

In Malabar, in connexion with the cultivation of the second crop, a ceremony is held in honour of the god Muni in the month of Thulam (November). Each barn has its own Muni represented by a block of granite beneath a tree. He is the protector of cattle and field labourers, and arrack, toddy, and blood are necessary ingredients of his worship. In well-to-do families a goat, in the poorer a fowl, is sacrificed to him, the officiating priest being a Nayar or a Cheruman. The goat or fowl is brought before the god and a mixture of turmeric and lime sprinkled on it. If the animal shakes, the god is satisfied. The fact that the officiating priest is a Cheruman is significant, as they are serfs. The prominent position that they and other servile tribes take in these ceremonies is interpreted as a mark of recognition that they were once masters of the land, a fact to which Kipling refers in connexion with the Bhils in one of his Indian stories.