

## Calendar of Customs and Festivals.

### ADDENDA.

Two feasts observed in Macedonia during the month of November may be noted for their bearing on the ecclesiastical calendar and popular belief.

#### November 18.

The feast of St. Plato the Martyr, which has been translated in popular speech into St. Plane Tree (*Πλάτωνος*—*ἡ Πλάτανος*). This is an important date in weather lore, especially on the coast, for not only is this holy day said to witness all kinds of weather, but also the weather at sundown will last through all the forty days of Advent.

#### November 21.

THE FEAST OF THE VIRGIN.—The month of November is known as the "Sower" (*Σπορίαις*) and the Virgin is known as the "Patroness of the Seed-Time" (*Ζεσπορίτισσα*), a very interesting attribution which directly identifies the Madonna as a fertility goddess.

#### December 12.

ST. FINNAN.—Confessor and Bishop of Clonard in Ireland in the sixth century. The day on which he is venerated, now fixed as Dec. 12, was in the Highlands of Scotland formerly celebrated on the shortest day of the year. The eve, being the longest night, was spent in festivities. It was a favourite occasion for playing tricks on children. They were told that on this night the rain is wine and the stones are cheese. They were sent out to watch for the transformation or to sip water from a tub until it is turned to wine—a trick which preserved vaguely a belief in magical forces operative on one of the most critical occasions of the year.

ST. CORENTIN, Bishop of Quimper, probably in the fifth century. The son of a British nobleman, he is said to have retired to a forest in the parish of Ploumadiern, where he passed several years in solitude. The association of his cult with Quimper brings it into relation with earlier belief, for not only was it the religious centre of that part of Brittany which maintained its independence of Clovis and his successors, but also as "the place of the meeting of the rivers," it was an important centre of Breton cult, while the Counts of Cornouailles, one of whom is said to have given his palace at Quimper to the Bishop, were themselves in legend connected with the cult of a sea and river goddess. The cult of a Corentin or Cury also appears in Devon and Cornwall as a hermit at the foot of a hill Menehent.

#### December 14.

ST. TIBBA'S DAY.—A day which was at one time devoted by the fowlers and falconers of Rutlandshire to the veneration of this saint, whom they regarded as their patroness. St. Tibba and her cousin St. Eabba were in early life passionately devoted to the pursuit of hunting, but afterwards became saints. Ryhill in Rutlandshire was the centre of the cult, and Camden says that this superstition prevailed among the people to such an extent as to make them forgetful of the true god in their devotion to this pagan goddess, a kind of Diana.

The remains of St. Tibba were translated to Peterborough Cathedral, and the true character of her shrine and sacred well were forgotten, the latter in local legend becoming associated with a queen who used to climb the hill and bathe in the spring daily. Its name, from St. Tibba's Well, was corrupted into Stibba's Hill Well. Anniversary meetings were once held on the brow of the hill at Halegreen, a name said

to be derived from the solemnities once enacted there, and evidently therefore a traditional place of some early religious ceremonial. The memory of St. Eabba is preserved in the corrupted form of Staplesford (St. Eabba's Ford) Bridge above Ryhill, where was situated a well once sacred to her but afterwards known to shepherds as St. Jacob's Well. The association of a goddess of the ford, *i.e.* of the river, with hunting, is worthy of note.

THE GROWTH OF RITUAL IN INDIA.—Beliefs and ritual practices connected with agriculture among the peasant population of India not only serve to throw light upon the development of a number of general religious ideas, but also illustrate or elucidate some of the more primitive survivals among the European peasantry.

In the Karnatak, the plough is worshipped before it is taken to the fields, and the drill is worshipped at the time of sowing. Not only is the corn itself worshipped at harvest time, and coconuts broken over the heap of the grain, but also the baskets in which the ears are gathered. The bullocks and drivers bringing in the harvest in the Deccan are worshipped by lighted lamps being waved before them. A further stage towards the development of the idea of a deity is seen in the worship of a consecrated stone besmeared with red powder, which may be taken to represent the blood of a victim, by the side of a field.

Similarly, in the Thana District (Bombay), in choosing the deities of a newly founded village, one of them, Cheda, is represented by a long piece of wood or stone besmeared with red powder. This deity may be established without the aid of a Brahman, and is, therefore, still at a very primitive stage of religious thought. In some parts the people believe that a deity resides in every farm or collection of fields, and that good or bad harvests result in his pleasure or displeasure. The genesis of the animal god can be seen in the figure of a tiger made of canes, which is posted in a conspicuous place in the fields of sugar cane. One of the party personates the tiger and is driven off with pieces of cane. At Malad (Thana District) the tiger god Waghoba is worshipped on the "Tiger Twelfth"—the twelfth day of the month Ashvin (September–October) for the protection of cattle.

Out of these beliefs have grown the cults of the godlings (Bhuta-Devatas) who are the field guardians. In some cases the field guardians are also the Brahmanic godlings, Maruti and Shiva, to whom field-coconuts and flowers are offered. To the others the peasants offer coconuts and sometimes goats or sheep. The propitiation of these spirits tends to centre around certain critical points of the agricultural year, ploughing, sowing, transplanting in the case of the rice crop, and harvest, which fall in certain fixed months and on certain days, thus becoming calendrical. Thus in the Katnagiri district on the no-moon day of Jyeshth (May–June), the people assemble in the temple of the village deity and perform a rite in order that they shall have a good crop, that their village may be free from disease, and that their cattle may be protected; and a similar rite is performed on the first day of the bright half of the month of Margashirsh (November–December), when a goat or sheep is sacrificed on the boundary of the village. The goddess Khema is worshipped to obtain good crops and for the protection of the cattle, but on the full-moon day of Margashirsh a special worship takes place and the sacred gondhal dance is performed, while in Kankaoli, also in the Bombay Presidency, the villagers worship the minor deities of the field with offerings on certain days of each month from Kartik (October–November) up to March.