

### Calendar of Customs and Festivals.

July 16.

ST. BRECCAN of Cluain-Catha (sixth and seventh centuries), of the race of Eoghan, son of Niall. Cluain-Catha is therefore identified with Cloncha or Clonca, Co. Donegal. The saint is said to have been the Abbot of Moville or Magh-bile, a foundation dating from St. Patrick's time, in Co. Donegal, and Bishop of Ardmore, Co. Meath. The obscurity and lack of precision of his legend suggest the survival of a pre-Christian cult, a suggestion which is supported by the pilgrimages to a pool in the rocks near Malin Head for the cure of various diseases, and prehistoric monuments near the ruined abbey—a curious stone circle, and what is known as Ossian's Grave. The name Magh-bile, which means "The Place of the Sacred Trees," shows that it was at one time the site of a sacred grove of the earlier faith.

July 17.

ST. KENELM'S DAY.—An annual fair was held on July 17 at Clent, in the parish of Hales Owen, in the field in which was situated the chapel of St. Kenelm. It arose out of a large concourse of people who were accustomed to assemble at the shrine on this day. The fair, at which the principal article of merchandise was cheese, was of considerable antiquity. It is probable, therefore, that, as in other cases, it perpetuated an assembly at a spot regarded as a place of sanctity long before it was associated with the saint. This view is supported by an annual custom, recorded by Brand, which was known as 'crabbing the parson.' On St. Kenelm's Wake, held on the Sunday after the fair, the clergyman of the parish on his way to conduct service was pelted with crabs as he went through the church field. According to another version, the inhabitants pelted one another with crabs, the pelting of the clergyman being incidental only while he was proceeding to the church.

July 18.

ST. THENNA, THENOG, or THANAW, of Glasgow (fifth and sixth centuries). A saint of obscure history reputed to be the mother of St. Kentigern, founder and patron of Glasgow. The story of St. Kentigern is largely legendary, and in so far that saint is identified with a Celtic god. It is therefore not surprising to find, as in the story of Merlin, that he was the son of an unknown, or, possibly in the original form of the legend, of no human father. According to one version, his mother was subjected to violation. Another story is that on Thenna's refusal to marry Ewen, son of Urien Rheged, King of Cumbria, her father, King of Laudonia of Scotia, gave her to a herdsman, who, however, in secret was a Christian, and with whom she lived inviolate. Before the birth of Kentigern she was sentenced by her father to be cast down a steep rock called Kep Duff, said to be Lammermoor, a statement which may preserve a record of a form of sacrifice similar to that to which reference is made in stories of Buddhist women of India. She was miraculously preserved from death, however, and cast ashore on the coast of Fife. She was again put to sea in a boat by a chieftain and reached Culross, where she gave birth to her son in a cave, near the cave of St. Servan.

July 20.

ST. MARGARET'S DAY.—A virgin and martyr whose cult spread widely over England, France, and Germany in the eleventh century. Her shrine in Paris was much frequented by women who desired children, a vestige of a pagan cult associated also with other

Christian saints. At Bassingbourne, in Cambridge-shire, a festival of some importance took place on this day. In 1511 the miracle play of the Holy Martyr St. George was acted on an open stage in a field, and the churchwardens' accounts show that other parishes and townships took part in providing the expenses. A minstrel and waits were hired from Cambridge, and the keep of the players was provided for several days.

A well of St. Margaret at Wereham Church, Norfolk, was at one time much frequented, when people regaled themselves with ale and cakes, music and dancing. "Alms were given and offerings and vows made."

Of St. Margaret herself, the legend runs that she was once swallowed whole by the Devil, but that on making the sign of the cross she issued sound and whole. On another occasion when the Devil appeared to her she overcame him, placing her foot upon his neck, whereupon he confessed that he was Veltis, one of the devils enclosed by Solomon in a brass bottle and released at Babylon.

July 21.

ST. VICTOR of Marseilles.—The Abbey of St. Victor, founded by St. Cassian, patriarch of Constantinople, in the fourth or fifth century, stood upon ground held specially sacred by the people of Marseilles, as there was situated the grotto to which St. Mary Magdalene was said to have retired on landing at Marseilles. A chapel was afterwards erected on this spot and named "Notre Dame de la Confession," but by a popular confusion the chapel was held sacred to the Virgin. It is evident that there must have been a number of these sacred grottoes in the neighbourhood of Marseilles, for St. Mary Magdalene is reputed to have withdrawn again a league from Marseilles to a spot where a monastery of Carmes was afterwards founded, and later to Sainte Beaume, a grotto in the mountain of St. Pilon, where she ended her days.

The association of deities, and especially female deities, with caves and grottoes is familiar in the European pagan religions and folklore. The relics of St. Victor himself, which were preserved in the monastery bearing his name, were associated with many miracles, but especially the cure of demoniacs. He is said, when armed *cap-à-pie* and mounted, to have conquered the dragon of the wood adjoining, and a sculpture bearing a close resemblance to the familiar effigy of St. George was carved over the porch of the church.

St. Victor's day was formerly celebrated at Marseilles by a procession known as 'La Triomphale,' when the relics of the saint were carried round the town by the prior of the monastery, attended by the whole community, the procession being headed by a cavalier completely armed.

That the district was of special sanctity in early times is shown by the number of beliefs and practices which long survived. No woman could enter the grotto shrine of St. Mary Magdalene without being struck blind. The notorious Queen Joan disregarded the prohibition, and suffered the penalty immediately on passing the portal. Her sight was restored only when she had placed a rail of solid silver around the image of the saint. No woman was ever allowed to enter the underground chambers or grottoes in which the rites of Mithra were performed. The marble tomb of Mary Magdalene bore witness to the memory of the varied traditions of the district of Marseilles. On it were many curious figures, and among them the wolf suckling two children. One of two small columns of granite at the well of St. Victor in the Abbey bore an imprint of the devil's claw—in reality a partially defaced acanthus leaf, dating from the previous use of the column.