

Calendar of Customs and Festivals.

October 9.

ST. DENYS.—Patron saint of France, beheaded with others on the hill thereafter named *Mons Martyrum* (Montmartre). After his death, the body of the saint rose, and with the head in its hand and accompanied by the singing of a celestial choir, walked a distance of two miles until it met with a woman named Catula, in whose hand it placed the head. The saint was venerated at St. Denys, near Lyons, by a procession usually of a turbulent and disorderly character, which on one occasion, at least, gave rise to a serious tumult, in which two hundred people are said to have lost their lives.

October 10.

JACK AND JOAN FAIR.—A statute fair for the hiring of servants of both sexes held at Christ Church in Kent. For this purpose it continued until after the second Saturday following. At these fairs it was customary for the farm servants to come into the town or village and stand about the market place until they had found an employer for the ensuing twelve months. Of these statute fairs some were held in the spring, but the greater number in the autumn in October and November. In both cases the custom is no doubt determined to a great extent by agricultural operations, even where the character of the employment is not directly dependent upon them; but there is evidence that it was also connected with the traditional opening of the year in the Celtic calendar in November.

On Oct. 10, at Liverpool, it was customary for the burgesses to hold a bear-baiting on the election of the mayor. That this was more than a mere provision for the popular sporting spirit of the day but partook of a ceremonial character, and possibly was a communal expiatory ceremony, is suggested by the fact that the bull-baiting took place at certain regular stations in the town in turn. It began at the White Cross; the bear was then led in triumph to the Exchange, and from there to the Stock Market.

A custom of an analogous character obtained at Hull, where all the dogs found running about the streets on Oct. 10 were whipped with switches. Varying explanations of the custom were offered. One was that the monks used to provide liberally for the poor who came to the fair on this date, but that on one occasion a dog stole the joint and was chased by the waiting beneficiaries. From that time forward all dogs were driven off to avert a repetition of the disaster. Another account was that once while Mass was being celebrated, the Host fell and was snatched up by a dog, which paid the penalty for its sacrilege by its immediate death, and that henceforth all dogs were persecuted on this day. The coincidence of the custom with a fair—Hull fair is still one of the few remaining great fairs in Great Britain—may, however, be taken as an indication of an origin of a less fortuitous character. The dog or some other animal was originally the scapegoat, which vicariously suffered for the community and purged their sins of the old year now drawing to its close.

October 11.

ST. ETHELBERGA.—In the accounts of Barking Nunnery is an entry of "wheat and milk for fromité upon St. Alburg's day." Fromety appears to have been a usual dish on this day. It is also specially mentioned on occasion as one of the dishes which should form part of the harvest home supper. It may be noted that wheat which has been steeped, and then boiled and sweetened with honey over the

fire, was a regular dish in Egypt on the *Asuram*, the specially holy tenth day of Muharram.

October 13.

TRANSLATION OF KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.—The relics of King Edward, who died on Jan. 5, 1066, and was buried at Westminster, were translated for the first time in 1102, when his body was found entire, the limbs flexible, and the clothes fresh. The Bishop of Rochester "out of a devout affection endeavoured to pluck only one hair from his head, but it stuck so firmly that he was deprived of his desire." Edward was canonised in 1161, again translated in 1163, and once more about one hundred years afterwards.

October.

In India the night of the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month Ashvin (September-October) is specially associated with black magic. In the Bombay Presidency those who are given to these practices go naked to the cemetery and cook food in a human skull as an offering to the spirits residing in the neighbourhood. Sorcerers are said to ride round the village on some mysterious conveyance. The hook-shaped instrument used by thieves in breaking through the wall of a house is made by the smith and his wife on this night. All thieves' implements made in this way ensure success. The god Kalbhairav is worshipped by low-caste people such as Dhobis, Malis, Valands, and others with special propitiatory rites in which the devotees remain nude.

On all these occasions those who perform the ceremonies and practise the rites must be naked, the state of nudity being specially associated with black magic. This, for example, is essential in the form of bewitching known in the Konkan and the Deccan as Muth-marane, when the sorcerer prepares an image of wheat flour and, worshipping it with flowers, incense, etc., places before it a lime pierced with a number of pins. When molasses is poured on the image and incantations uttered the lime disappears, going to the person whose death it is intended to procure, whereupon he falls to the ground vomiting blood. It is essential that the charmed lime should return to the sorcerer, otherwise calamity follows.

Examples of ritual nudity are by no means uncommon throughout India. In a fertility rite performed before the goddess Jhampudi and in the worship of Maruti the devotee fetched the heart or skull of a corpse from the burial ground in a state of nudity. It was an essential feature in a number of rain charms. It will be remembered that European witches stripped naked as a preparation for their Sabbath rites.

In Bihâr the first sugar cane is cut on the eleventh of the bright half of the month Kârtik (October-November, the bright half being the first half), when Vishnu wakes from his four months' sleep. Some people fasten a few canes together, place a neck ring on top, pour perfumes over the bundle, and then, removing the ring, proceed to cut the canes. It is scarcely necessary to point out that this is an act of worship of an effigy of a deity analogous to the 'corn maiden.' The Châmars of the United Provinces perform the Gâyâs rite at the cutting of the cane. Stalks of the cane are bound together and a pot placed below which is quickly filled with water in the hope that the cane may be abundantly filled with sap. A fire sacrifice is made and men walk quickly round the field a number of times. A few canes are broken off, and after these have been offered on an altar or placed on a bed with an axe, shovel, or sickle, and covered with a new cloth, a fire sacrifice is made and the canes are distributed among friends.