

FEBRUARY.

From Febua, supposed to be one of the names of Juno.

1. *St. Bride*, Bridget or Brigida, Eve of the Purification, on which Christmas decorations are to be removed.

2. *Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Candlemas Day.* This feast dates from Anglo-Saxon times and was celebrated with many candles, in commemoration of Our Saviour's Presentation in the Temple "a light to lighten the Gentiles." It is one of the recognized half yearly terms in Scotland, and one of the "weather signal" days of the year.

"If Candlemas Day be fair and bright,
Winter will have another flight;
But if Candlemas Day be clouds and rain,
Winter is gone, and will not come again."

3. *St. Blaise*, Bishop of Sebaste, Armenia, Martyr A.D. 316. His flesh was dragged off by means of iron combs with curved teeth, for which reason he was chosen as the patron Saint of Wool Workers, and his day was formerly observed by processions, &c., at Leeds and other places where woollen manufactures are established.

5. *St. Agatha*, Martyr A.D. 253. Her flesh was nipped off with pincers, and burning torches applied to her body.

14. *St. Valentine*, Bishop, Martyr A.D. 270. In Pagan Rome, it was customary for youths to draw names in honour of Juno Februata on the 15th February. When Christianity was established this honor fell upon St. Valentine.

24. *St. Matthias*, Apostle and Martyr, said by St. Jerome to have preached the Gospel to a nation of cannibals, and to have died at Sebastopolis.

25. *Shrove Tuesday—Pancake Tuesday.* Anciently on this day penitents received absolution. The only one of the observances still kept up is that of eating pancakes.

26. *Ash Wednesday.* The first day of Lent. This fast of 40 days has been kept since the early part of the 2nd century in memory of the fast of Our Lord and as a preparation for the celebration of the great festival of Easter.

MARCH.

From Mars, the God of War—Among the Saxons *Length Month*, from which *Lent*.

1. *St. David*, Patron Saint of Wales, &c., was born of a princely family, celebrated for his learning and sanctity, was Bishop of Menevia, and died A.D. 544. In remembrance of a victory gained over the Saxons this day, the Welsh wear leeks in their hats.

2. *St. Chad*, an early English Bishop of Lichfield who died of a pestilence 673.

7. *St. Perpetua*, martyred at Carthage A.D. 203.

12. *St. Gregory the Great*: Pope 590, who sent St. Augustine to christianize Great Britain, an austere, humble, pious man. He paid great attention to the music of the Church.

17. *St. Patrick*, the Patron Saint of Ireland. Died A.D. 432, at the age of 123. To explain to the heathen the doctrine of the Trinity, he plucked a trefoil leaf, to show how three leaves might be united to make one. This is the origin of the shamrock as the national emblem of Ireland. King George III instituted an order of knighthood in his honor.

18. *St. Edward*, King and Martyr, murdered at Corfe Castle 979. His body was buried in unconsecrated ground, but would

not rest, and was in 982 translated with great pomp to Shaftesbury.

21. *St. Benedict*, founder of an order of Monks and patron of the Western Monks.

23. *4th Sunday in Lent, Mothering Sunday.* It was the custom in some parts of England for servants to visit their parents on this day, taking with them a particular kind of cake as a present to their mother. These cakes are still sold in Shrewsbury.

25. *The Annunciation, Lady Day.* Held in remembrance of the visit of the Angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin.

The three last days of March used in Scotland to be called "Borrowed Days," from a superstition that they were borrowed from April, with a view to destroy young sheep.

APRIL.

From the Greek Aphrilis, Aphrodite—Venus—The month was dedicated to Venus. Among the Anglo-saxons it was called Oster-Monath, or the month of the East Wind, from which Easter.

1. *All Fools' Day*: The Jews trace the origin of this name to Noah's sending the Dove out of the Ark before the water had abated, on the day which answers to the first of April. The Romans seems to have derived the custom from some of the Eastern nations. The Hindus celebrate the Fool's Day on the 31st of March.

4. *St. Ambrose*, Bishop of Milan, one of the great early Fathers, a strenuous opponent of Arianism, and the reputed author of the *Te Deum*.

6. *Palm Sunday*, Sunday before Easter—So named from the entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem when the multitudes strewed branches of palm in the way.

11. *Good Friday*. Anniversary of Our Lord's Crucifixion. We have no record when this day was first celebrated. In the Greek, Roman Catholic and English Churches it is a strict fast, and it is a holiday at the Banks and all Government offices.

13. *Easter Sunday*, the very queen and crown of all Christian festivals, the festival of the Resurrection. The customs peculiar to the season are dying out in England, but on the Continent Paschal Eggs are prepared and given away among all classes. In Lancashire eggs are distributed among the peasantry, and in Devon the clerk carries a few white cakes to every house as an Easter offering.

19. *St. Alphege*—Archbishop of Canterbury, 1006. Stoned to death by the Danes at Greenwich 1012.

20. *Cuckoo Day*. There is a superstition in England that the Cuckoo is never heard before the 20th of April, and that whatever a person is doing when his call is first heard, is what he will most frequently do during the remainder of the year. In some counties the labourers used to leave their work and demand a holiday, when they first heard the Cuckoo.

23. *St. George's Day*. The patron Saint of England, and the guardian saint of several continental cities. Several other nations besides the English have founded orders of knighthood in his honor. He was considered the flower of knighthood, and the most renowned of all the warrior champions of Christendom.

25. *St. Mark*, Evangelist and Martyr A.D. 68, founder of the Church of Alexandria, through whose streets he was dragged, bound with cords till he died. There is an old superstition that persons sitting in the Church