

The following notes upon the observance of Lent were communicated by a Member :—

LENTEN NOTES OF THE OLDEN TIME.

Ash Wednesday used to be kept, not many years ago, in some parts of south-western England, by dragging about the streets an effigy made of straw and old clothes, to represent Judas Iscariot. After it had been misused sufficiently, it was either set on fire, or shot to pieces, or thrown down a chimney. A similar custom is now observed on Good Friday in southern Europe, and in Catholic Spanish America.

In western England, daffodils are still called "Lenten lilies," just as in the same region the chrysanthemum is called the "Michaelmas daisy," the black hellebore the "Christmas rose," and the anemone the "Paschal flower."

The legal enforcement of Lenten fasting long outlived the supremacy of the Roman Church in Great Britain. So late as 1661, licenses to eat flesh on fish days were granted by the rectors of parishes in England. One of such licenses appeared in a Liverpool or Manchester paper lately.

In Durham, all the Sundays in Lent, except the first, are known by the following names :—

Tid. Mid. Miserere. Carlin. Palm. Pask-egg Day.

The first three names were taken from the opening words of the appropriate Latin psalms of the days in question. Te Deum, Mihi Deus, and Miserere, Palm Sunday and Paschal Sunday tell their own story. Carlin Sunday gets its name from "Carlins," a kind of gray pease, fried in butter and highly flavoured.

Under the Commonwealth, the Roundheads raged furiously against Lent and its observances. There were published sundry so-called "Lenten Litanies," for the most part mere rubbish, of which the following may be taken as fair specimens :—

From a vinegar priest on a crabtree stock,
From a foddering of prayer four hours by the clock,
From a holy sister in a pitiful smock,
Libera Nos Domine.

From the nick and froth of a penny pot-house,
From the fiddle, the cross, and a great Scotch louse,
From committees that chop up a man like a mouse,
Libera Nos Domine.

From meddling with things that are out of our reaches,
From a fighting priest, and a soldier that preaches,
From an ignoramus that writes, and a woman that teaches,
Libera Nos Domine.

When the old saints' day this year is at an end, sackcloth and ashes rather than wedding garments, fasting and penance rather than marriage and merry making will be in order; but should the impatience of the lovers urge them to declare themselves at the earliest opportunity, they will hasten to their purpose on "All Fools' Day."