

Juno Covella, Perpetual Calendar of the Fellowship of Isis

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All formatting has been retained from the original.
Goddesses appear in **BOLD CAPITAL** letters.

The Month of January

JANUARY 1st

Greek: **HERA** and *Roman* **JUNO; The Gamelia.** (Lempriere, *Dict.*) Gamelia, a surname of Juno, as Gamelius was of Jupiter, on account of their presiding over marriages. --A festival privately observed at three different times. The first was the celebration of a marriage, the second was in commemoration of a birth-day, and the third was an anniversary of the death of a person. As it was observed generally on the 1st January, marriages on that day were considered as a good omen and the month was called Gamelion among the 14 Athenians. Cicero *de Fin. 2, c. M.* " -See also above under Goddesses of the month.

(*Perp. Fest. Cal.*) "January 1. Jupiter and Juno. Zeus and Hera". (*Fell. of Isis Dir.*) "January 1 st: Zeus and Hera, Jupiter and Juno. Auspicious for rulership, glory and cheerfulness". See also below under Juno.

Roman: **FORTUNA.** (Seyffert, *Dict.*) "Fortuna. The goddess of good luck . . Trajan founded a special temple in her honour as the all-pervading power of the world. Here an annual offering was made to her on New Year's Day".

JUNO. (*Enc. Brit. 1810* ed.) "Kalends of January, in Roman antiquity, was a solemn festival consecrated to Juno and Janus; wherein the Romans offered vows . . to those deities, and exchanged presents among themselves as a token of friendship ".

(Ovid, *Fasti, I. 55*) "The worship of Juno claims 's Calends . . These remarks apply to the whole calendar; I have! made them once for all, that I may not be forced to break the thread of my discourse". See also under Goddesses of the Days of the Month: 1st Day.

STRENIA (Seyffert, *Dict.*) "Strenae. Gifts which it was customary for the Romans to make at the new year with accompanying good wishes. The word is connected with the name of a Sabine tutelary goddess, *Strenia*, who corresponds to the Roman *Salus*, and from whose precinct beside the Via Sacra at Rome consecrated branches were carried up to the Capitoline at the new year. The Strenae consisted of branches of bay and palm, sweetmeats made of honey, and figs or dates, as a good omen that the year might bring only joy and happiness (Ovid, *Fasti, i 185-190*). The fruits were gilded (Martial viii 33, 11) as they are now in Germany and the word as well as the custom, survives in the French *etrennes*".

(Brewer, *Dict.*) "Etrennes. New-year's gifts so called in France. Strenia, the Roman goddess, had the superintendence of newyear's gifts, which the Roman's called *strenae*. Tatius entered Rome on New-year's Day, and received from some augurs palms cut from the sacred grove, dedicated to the goddess Strenia. Having succeeded, he ordained that the 1st of January should be celebrated by gifts to be called *strenae*, consisting of figs, dates and honey; and that no word of ill omen should be uttered on that day".

(Ovid, *Fasti, I. 171*) "January 1st . . Next I asked, 'Why, Janus . . do we give and receive good wishes?' Then, leaning on the staff he bore in his right hand, the god replied: 'Omens are wont', said he, 'to wait upon beginnings . . 'What mean the gifts of dates and wrinkled figs', I said, 'and

honey glistening in snow-white jar?' 'It is for the sake of the omen', said he, 'that the event may answer to the flavour, and that the whole course of the year may be sweet, like its beginning'."

(Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Vol. 11, p. 12 1) "Some of the most sacred festivals in the Roman ritual were destined to salute the new calends of January with vows of public and private felicity".

(Cassell's *French Dict.*) "etrennes, fem. New Year's gift (usually in plural); gift, present".

See also under March 1st.

Anglo-Saxon: (Brewer, *Dict.*) "Wassail. A salutation used on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day over the spiced-ale cup, hence called the 'wassail bowl'. (Anglo-Saxon, *Waes hael*, be whole, be well)". (id.) "New Year's Day.. The civil and legal year began March 25th till after the alteration of the style, in 1752, when it was fixed, like the historic year, to January 1 st. In Scotland the legal year was changed to January 1 st as far back as 1600".

American Indian: **THE GODDESS** (Kay Turner, *LadyUnique*, 1, p. 49) "On New Year's Day the Chorti Indians of Southern Guatemala drink the water from five sacred coconuts and also fertilise the ground with it. Women officiate at these ceremonies, guarding the coconuts during the night and dedicating them to the goddess before they are drunk down on the first day of the year".

Japanese: (Chamberlain, *Things Japenese*, p. 157) "Festivals. The holidays officially observed are. . Jan. 1-3.--Termed the San-ganichi or 'three days' of New Year, when the people eat of stew called *zoni*. . More fuss is made about the New Year in China and Japan than in any Western country. . and on New Year's morning the usual sweeping and dusting of rooms is pretermitted, doubtless in order to avoid sweeping away good luck. Gateways are decorated at New Year time with pinebranches, straw ropes, oranges . . and presents are given called *o toshidama*".

BENTEN, BENZAITEN. (Chamberlain, id. p. 307) on the Seven Deities of Luck, which include the Goddess Benten: "Connected with the Gods of Luck is the *Takara-bune*, or 'Treasure Ship', which is said to sail into port on New Year's Eve, with the Gods of Luck as passengers and, as cargo, the *takara-mono*, or 'treasures' of popular lore, which are enumerated by Anderson as follows:-the hat of invisibility, the lucky rain-coat, the sacred key, the inexhaustible purse, the precious jewel, the clove, the weight, and a flat object apparently representing a coin. Pictures of this 'Treasure Ship' are hawked about the streets at New Year time, and every person who puts one into the little drawer of his wooden pillow on the night of the 2nd January, is supposed to ensure a lucky dream".

Sumerian: **INANNA; Nativity Eve.** (*The Coming Age*, No. 13) "Nativity Eve (Hestia 8, January 1st): A white candle is lit at sunset to burn throughout the night and to be extinguished at dawn on Nativity morning".

JANUARY 2nd

Egyptian: **ISIS; The Advent of Isis from Phoenicia.** (Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World*, p. 308) "The 'Advent of Isis' from Phoenicia to Egypt was on 2 January. See Plut. 50: *Fontes Historiae Religionis Aegyptiacae* (ed. Hopfer) 1922; 244, 32". (id. p. 166) "Isis . . on discovering that the Ark of Osiris had been cast up by the Mediterranean in the region of the Phoenician Byblos went across the sea to find it, and then shipped it back with her to Egypt".

(Plutarch, *De Iside Et Osiride*, 371 D, or 50) "they make offering on the seventh day of the month Tybi; which they call the 'Coming of Isis from Phoenicia'".

Sumerian: **INANNA; The Nativity of Our Lady.** (*Lux Madriana Cal.*) "Hestia 8 (January 2). The Nativity of Our Lady".

"In Hestia, the darkest month, A tiny light is born.

Our Lady, in Her Mother's arms, Shines forth on the grey dawn".

(*The Coming Age*, No. 13) "Nativity: We celebrate the birth of Inanna. Princess of the earth and Queen of Heaven, on one of the greatest feasts of the year. She will guide and help us on our way back to our true home in Heaven. . Nativity songs are sometimes known as 'yules', a carol in honour of the Mother and Daughter (as Demeter and Persephone), and the name extends to the season as a whole".

Japanese: **BENTEN**. See under January 1st.

JANUARY 5th

Greek: **KORE, PERSEPHONE; Eve of the Epiphany of Kore.** (Kerenyi, *Eleusis*, p. 116) "In the Alexandrian Koreion the Eleusinian rite had been replaced by other ceremonies. A *drama mystikon* - that in the term used by Clement of Alexandria - in several acts was performed on different levels: below the earth and upon it. Such a drama was possible in the Koreion of Alexandria . . . Epiphanius describes a nocturnal rite in the Koreion . . . a later phase of the holy history, the pagan feast of the Epiphany in the night of January 5. The people spent this night in the temple, singing to the accompaniment of flutes. A troop of torchbearers entered and went down into the underground cult chamber - *sekos hypogaios* whence they, brought up a statue: 'A wooden idol, its forehead, hands, and knees adorned with golden cruciform seals, otherwise naked, was placed in a litter and carried seven times round the inner temple'. (*id.* p. 147) "The *visio beatifica* of the *epopteia*, the epiphany of Kore continues the *imitatio deae* of all the *mystai*".

Irish: **ST. CERA.** (Smith, *County and City of Cork*, Vol. 1. p. 173) "Kilcrea signifies 'the cell of Cera', whose festivals are celebrated on the 16th of October and 5th of January". See also under the October 16th.

JANUARY 6th

Greek: **KORE, PERSEPHONE; Feast of the Epiphany of Kore, The Beatific Vision.** See under January 5th. (*Fell. of Isis Dir.*) "January 6th . . . Epiphany of Persephone".

Celtic: **The Three-fold Celtic Deities.** (*The Druids Cal.*) "January 6th, Twelfth Night. A Celtic god or goddess manifests him or herself as three". (*Fell. of Isis Dir.*) "January 6th: Threefold Celtic Deities".

General: **Twelfth-day, Twelfth-night.** (*O.E.D.*) "Twelfthday, Old Eng . . . the sixth of January. . . (id.) " *Twelfth-night*, Old Eng. The night of the twelfth day . . . (id.) Twelfthtide . . . The season including Twelfth-night and Twelfth-day . . . " See under December 26th.

THE QUEEN OF TWELFTH-NIGHT. (*O.E.D.*) "Twelfth-cake . . . A large cake used at the festivities of Twelfth-night, usually frosted and otherwise ornamented, and with a bean or coin introduced to determine the 'king' or 'queen' of the feast".

(Peacock, Coll. *Works*, *Gryll Grange*, p. 949) from a description of a Twelfth Night ball: "children, who came in some force . . . were placed within the magnetic attraction of an enormous twelfthcake, which stood in a decorated recess . . .

" .. the twelfthcake was divided. The characters were drawn exclusively among the children, and the little king and queen were duly crowned, placed on a theatrical throne, and paraded in state (Whistler, *The English Festivals*, p. 77) on the Twelfth Cake: "A bean and a pea are put in the cake, and when it is cut and distributed he who finds the bean is King and she who finds the pea is Queen. If the bean is found by a girl she must name her sovereign, and if the pea by a man, he has the pleasure of choosing his consort and proclaiming an attachment before the company."

THE WITCHES. (Frazer, *Golden Bough abgd.* p. 561) "Another witching time is the period of twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany. . The last of the mystic twelve days is Epiphany or Twelfth Night".

Swiss: **STRUDELI and STRATTELI.** (Frazer, *id.* p. 561), The author describes how at Brunnen, on the Lake of Lucerne, "two female spirits of the wood, Strudeli and Stratteli", appear on Twelfth Night.

Italian: **LA BEFANA.** (Brewer, *Dict.*) "Befana. The good fairy of Italian children, who is supposed to fill their stockings on Twelfth Night".

(Janet and Stewart Farrar, *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, p. 141) "in Italy Santa Claus's place is taken by a witch . . She is called Befana (Epiphany), and she flies around on Twelfth Night on her broomstick, bringing gifts for children down the chimneys ".

Irish: **Nollaig na mBan, Womens' Nollaig.** (Danaher, *The -rear in Ireland*, p. 263) "Epiphany. . In Irish it was known widely as *Nollaig na mBan.* "

French: **JOAN OF ARC.** (*Old Moore's Almanac*) "January 6th. Joan of Arc, born 1412".

JANUARY 7th

Egyptian: **SOKHIT, SEKHMET.** (*Saltier Papyrus IV.* cited by Maspero, *Dawn of Civil.* p. 212) "The 12th of Tybi. . it is the day wherein Sokhit gave forth the Decrees". Commentary by Maspero: "The decrees of Sokhit were those put forth by the goddess at the end of the reign of Ra ". Note: The Western (Gregorian) calendar dates, used here to correspond to those of the ancient Egyptians, are based on the fixed Alexandrian Calendar adopted in the year 30 before this era. See also under August 29th: Egyptian New Year's Day.

Japanese: **IZANAMI-NO-MIKOTO.** (Herbert, *Shinto*, p. 194) "January 7th . . On the same day in the same temple (i. e. the Ikukuni-tama-jinja) is also held the unique Uzue-matsuri. Each participant, priest, miko or layman, offers a branch of plum-tree (formerly peach-tree) on which he (or she) has tagged a slip of paper with his name and age (or date of birth). After the ceremony, every person takes his own offering back as 'a souvenir from Izanagi and Izanami, for protection throughout the year". Note: (The *Nihongi.* 1, 15) on Izanamino-Mikoto; "In the time of flowers, the inhabitants (i.e. of Arima in Kumano) worship the spirit of this Goddess by offerings of flowers. They also worship her with drums, flutes, flags, singing and dancing."

The Nana-Kusa. (Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 158) "Festivals. The holidays observed officially are . . Jan. 7 . . This day is termed *Nana-kusa*, or the Seven Herbs, because in early times the Court and people used them to go out to pluck parsley and six other edible herbs - a custom to which the poets make frequent allusion. Rice-gruel, or congee flavoured with greens, is the appropriate dish. (About the 9th January, the people resume their ordinary work)". Note (id. p. 162) on the Japanese old and new calendars; "the 7th of the 1st moon, which would formerly have fallen somewhere about the middle or end of February, is retained as the 7th January".

St. Distaff's Day. (Brewer, *Dict.*) "Distaff. a woman. Properly the staff from which the flax was drawn in spinning. . *St. Distaffs Day.* The 7th of January. So called because the [Yule] festival terminated on Twelfth Day, and on the day following the women returned to their distaffs or daily occupations. It is also called *Rock -Dayl* a distaff being called a rock

JANUARY 8th

Roman **JUSTITIA.** (Rose, *O.C.D.*) "Iustitia.. had a temple from 8th January, 13 (of this era). (Ovid, *Pont.* 3. 6. 25, *Fasti Praen.* under 8 January)".

JANUARY 9th

Egyptian: ISIS and NEPHTHYS. (*Perp. Fest. Cal.*) "January 9. Chanting of the Dirge over the Slain Osiris by, Isis and Nephthys". (*Fell. of Isis Dir.*) "January 9th: Dirge of Isis and Nephthys to call on the soul of Osiris".

JANUARY 10th

Roman: SECURITAS. (Mattingly, O.C.D.) "Securitas was commonly invoked when some imminent danger had been averted or on an occasion, like I Oth January 69, " (i.e. by the Arval Brethern on the adoption of Piso).

JANUARY 11th

Roman: CARMENTIS, CARMENTA, The Carmentalia; First Festival. (Ovid, *Fasti*, I, 461) "January 11th . . . When next Aurora quits Tithonus' couch, she shall behold the rite pontifical of the Arcadian goddess". (Note by Frazer) "The Carmentalia, in honour of Carmenta or Carmentis, one of the Camenae". (Preller cited by Leland, *Etr. Remains*, p. 63) "The Goddess of Birth, Carmenta, was so jealously worshipped near the Porta Carmentalis, which was named from her, that there was a *Flamen Carmentalis*, and two calendar days, the eleventh and fifteenth of January, called the Carmentalia, devoted to her worship. These were among the most distinguished festivals of the Roman matrons". (Seyffert, *Dict.*) "Carmenta or Carmentis, an Italian goddess of prophecy, who protected women in child-birth . . . the Roman matrons celebrated in her honour the festival of the Carmentalia, the *flamen* and *pontifices* assisting. Two *Carmentes*, called *Porrina* and *Postverta* were worshipped as her sisters and attendants".

(Philocalus, *Kal.* anno 354) "January 11. *Dies Carmentariorum.* " (*Silvius, Kal.* anno 448) "January 11. *Carmentalia, de nomine matris Evandri.*"

JUTURNA, The Juturnalia. (Ovid. *Fasti.* 1, 463) "January 11th . . . Thee, too, sister of Turnus (Frazer: 'The Nymph juturna'), the same morn enshrined at the spot where the Virgin Water circles the Field of Mars. " (Seyffert, *Dict.*) "Juturna. An old Italian goddess of fountains . . . On January 11th, the anniversary of the day on which her temple was erected in the Campus Martius by Lutatius Cotulus, all workmen engaged on aqueducts and the like celebrated the Juturnalia. "

(*Fell. of Isis Dir.*) "January 11th: Juturna. Fountains. Inspiration. "

JANUARY 12th

Roman: MANIA and the Lares. The Compitalia. (Guirard and Pierre, *New Larousse*, p. 213) "Mania took part in the festivals of the Compitalia and the Feralia". (Lempriere, *Dict.*) "Compitalia, festivals celebrated by the Romans the 12th of January and the 6th of March, in the cross ways, in honour of the household gods called Lares. (Frazer, *Golden Bough abgd.* p. 491 "Certain loaves made in the shape of men were called by the Romans *Maniae* . . . Now, Mania, the name of one of these loaves, was also the name of the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts, to whom woollen effigies of men and women were dedicated at the festival of the Compitalia. These .effigies were hung at the doors of all the houses in Rome". (*id.* p. 493) "the woollen effigies, which at the festival of the Compitalia might be seen hanging at the doors of all the houses in ancient Rome, were . . . vicarious offerings presented to the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts, in the hope that in her rounds through the city she would accept . . . the effigies for the inmates of the house and so spare the living for another year".

JANUARY 14th

Indian: Makar Sankranti. (Murray's *Handbook of India*, p. liii) "Hindu Festivals. *Makar Sankranti*: On the 1st of the month Magh (about 12th January) the sun enters the sign of Capricorn or Makar". Note: The change in date is due to the precession of the equinoxes. See also under Goddesses of Aquarius.

JANUARY 15th

Roman: **CARMENTIS, CARMENTA; PORRIMA and POSTVERTA; The Carmentalia, Second Festival.** (Ovid. *Fasti*, I. 617) "January 15th. When the third sun shall look back on the past Ides, the holy rites will be repeated in honour of the Parrhasian goddess (Frazer: 'Carmenta'). For of old Ausonian matrons drove in carriages (*carpenta*), which I ween were also called after Evander's parent (*Carmentis*). Afterwards the honour was taken from them, and every matron vowed not to propagate the line of her ungrateful spouse by giving birth to offspring . . They say that the Senate restored the right of which they had been mulcted; and they ordained that now two festivals be held alike in honour of the Tegean mother to promote the birth of boys and girls. It is not lawful to bring leather into her shrine, lest her pure hearths should be defiled by skins of slaughtered beasts. If thou hast any love of ancient rites, attend the prayers offered to her; you shall hear names you never heard before, Porrima and Postverta are placated, whether they be thy sisters, Maenalian goddess (i.e. Carmentis) or companions . . the one is thought to have sung of what was long ago (*porro*), the other of what should come to pass hereafter (*venturum postmodo*)".

(Philocalus, Kal.) "January 15. *Carmentalia*."

JANUARY 16th

Roman: **CONCORDIA.** (Ovid, *Fasti*, I. 639) "January 16th Fair goddess, thee the next morning set in thy snow-white fane, where high Moneta lifts her steps sublime: Now, Concord, shalt thou well o'erlook the Latin throng now hallowed hands have stablished thee. Furius . . had vowed the ancient temple, and he kept his vow."

(*Perp. Fest. Cal.*) "January 16th: Concordia. Prayers for Peace".

French: **QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE.** (von Daniken, *Miracles of the Gods*, p. 208) "A Calendar of visions . . 16.1 17.4. 1095. The 'Queen of the Universe' appeared in the clouds to all the inhabitants of the town of Arras, France".

JANUARY 17th

Roman: **FELICITAS.** (Rose, *O.C.D.*) "Felicitas, a goddess of good luck . . She is associated with the *numen Augusti* (*Fasti. Praenest.* on 17 January)".

JANUARY 18th

Roman: **ST. PRISCA.** (*Irish Catholic Dir.*) "January 18th: S. Prisca, Virgin (*Church of England Cal.*) "January 18. Prisca, Virgin . . "

Indian: **SURYA.** (*Fell. of Isis Dir.*) "January 18th: Surya and Surya. Sun God and Goddess. Good Fortune and Health".

JANUARY 20th

Roman: ST. AGNES; St. Agnes' Eve. (Druids Cal.) January 20th. *Eve of St. Agnes.* Traditionally . . . a night for dreaming deeply and truly. If a virgin dreams tonight of a man, she sees her future husband". (*Fell. of Isis Dir.*) "January 20th: St. Agnes' Eve. Dreams of future lovers".

JANUARY 21st

Sun enters Aquarius (tropical).

Roman: ST. AGNES. (Irish Catholic Dir.) "January 21st. S. Agnes, Virgin (Church of England Cal.) "January 29. Agnes, Virgin

JANUARY 29th

(*Perp. Fest. Cal.*) "January 29th. Peace Festival (Roman)."

JANUARY 30th

Roman: LIVIA, DIVA AUGUSTA. (O.C.D.) "Livia Drusilla. . . was born 30 January 58 (before this era) ". In 39 she married Octavian (Augustus) and was deified in the reign of Claudius. (Seyffert, *Dict.*) "Apotheosis (Lat. Consecratio). The act of placing a human being among the Deities . . . Empresses too were often consecrated, first Augustus' Wife Livia as *Diva Augusta*, and even other members of the imperial house ".

(Ovid, *Fasti*, I. 536) "Julia Augusta shall be a new divinity". Note by Frazer: "Livia. -become Julia Augusta."

(Montfaucon, *Antiq. Suppl.* p. 376) on apotheoses: "As for the Empresses, they were carried up to Heaven by a Peacock." See also February 16th: Faustina.

PAX. Dedication of the Altar of Peace. (*O.C.D.*) "Ara Pacis, a monument dedicated on 30 January 9 (before this era) by the Senate, as Augustus records in his Testament". Note: (Stobart, *The Grandeur that was Rome*, p. 166) on the reign of Augustus: "There are many signs of the earnest longing for Peace in the Roman world. 'Pax' and 'Irene' became common names. in the West and East; 'Pax' was the legend on coins".

(Ovid, *Fasti*. I. 709) "January 30th. The course of my song has led me to the altar of Peace. The day will be the second from the end of the month. Come, Peace, thy dainty tresses wreathed . . . and let thy gentle presence abide in the whole world. So but there be nor foes nor food for triumphs, thou shalt be unto our chiefs a glory greater than war. May the soldier bear arms only to check the armed aggressor, and may the fierce trumpet blare for naught but solemn pomp . Add incense, ye priests, to the flames that burn on the altar of Peace.

JANUARY 31st

Graeco-Roman: HECATE. (Seyffert, *Dict.*) "Hecate. On the last day of the month, which was sacred to her, offerings were made to her in the crossways . ." (O.C.D.) "Hecate . . . she is worshipped on the cross-roads (typically at a place where a side path joins a main road), which seem to be haunted the world over. Here the . . . 'Hecate's Suppers' were put out monthly for her". See also Days of the Month: 30th.

Celtic: BRIGANTIA, BRIGHID, Eve of Brighid. (McLean, *Four Fire Fest.* p. 16) "In Ireland the people prepared an image of Bride on the Eve of Brigantia, fashioned out of corn straw, and this effigy was supposed to come alive with the spirit of Bride during the night. Offerings of food

and drink were also left out overnight for Bride to partake of as she journeyed around the land on her Eve." (Frazer, *Golden Bough* abgd. p. 134) on the St. Bride's Eve ceremonies: "In the Hebrides 'the mistress and servants of each family take a sheaf of oats, and dress it up in women's apparel, put it in a large basket and lay a wooden club by it, and this they call Briid's bed; and then the mistress and servants cry three times, "Briid is come, Briid is welcome". This they do just before going to bed, and when they rise in the morning they look among the ashes, expecting to see the impression of Briid's club there; which if they do, they reckon it a true presage of a good crop and prosperous year, and the contrary they take as an ill omen'. Similarly in the Isle of Man 'on the eve of the first of February, a festival was formerly kept, called in the Manks language, La'al *Breeshey*, in honour of the Irish lady who went over to the Isle of Man . . . The custom was to gather a bundle of green rushes, and standing with them in the hand on the threshold of the door, to invite the holy Saint Bridget to come I and lodge with them that night. In the Manks language the invitation ran thus: "Brede, Brede, tar gys my thie tar dyn thie aym's nocht. Foshil ee yn dorrys da Brede, as thig do Brede e heet staigh". In English: "Bridget, Bridget, come to my house, come to my house to-night. Open the door for Bridget, and let Bridget come in". After these words were repeated the rushes were strewn on the floor by way of a carpet or bed for St. Bridget. A custom very similar to this was also observed in some of the Out-Isles of the ancient kingdom of-Man.' In these Manx and Highland ceremonies it is obvious that St. Bride, or St. Bridget, is an old heathen goddess of fertility, disguised in a threadbare Christian cloak. Probably she is no other than Brigit, the Celtic goddess of fire and apparently of the crops. "

Irish: ST. BRIGHID, Oidhche Feile Brighde, Eve of the Feast of Brighid. (Dinneen, *Dict.* p. 809) "on Bridget's (and) Bricin's Eve open the firkin and give enough (butter) to the lad (*Tuam*)."

(Danaher, *the rear in Ireland*, p. 15) "*Saint Brighid's Day* . . . The housewife . . . always provided a festive supper or at least some tasty dish on St. Brighid's Eve. Sowans, apple-cake, dumplings and colcannon were favourite food . . . Col. Val. . . lencey in his *Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language* 1781, p. 21 also tells of fruit cakes:

" 'On St. Bridget's Eve every farmer's wife in Ireland makes a cake called *Bairin-breac*, The neighbours are invited, the madder of ale and the pipe go round, and the evening concludes with mirth and festivity'.

"Butter always formed part of the meal and fresh butter was sure to be churned on the same day. The more prosperous farmers gave presents of butter and buttermilk to poor neighbours. .

"It was generally believed that the saint travelled about the countryside on the Eve of her festival, bestowing her blessing on the people and on their livestock.

"There were various ways of indicating that her visit to house and farmyard was welcome. A very common token was the placing of a cake or pieces of bread and butter on the window-sill outside. Often a sheaf of corn was put beside the cake, as refreshment for the saint's white cow which accompanied her on her rounds".

(id, p. 24) "The Brideog'. Over a large part of Ireland . . . one of the main features of St. Brighid's Eve was the going about from house to house of groups of young people carrying a symbol of the saint.

"Most commonly this effigy was supposed to represent St Brighid herself . . . Sometimes this was a nicely-dressed doll borrowed from a little girl; often such a doll was re-dressed or decorated for the occasion. More often the image was specially made; a sheaf of straw might be pushed into shape and suitably dressed, or garments might be stuffed with straw or hay to approximate a human figure. The foundation of the figure might be a broom or a churn-dash, or some sticks or pieces of lath fastened together, and the whole padded and dressed. . The head and face might be made from a mask or a carved turnip or a piece of white cloth suitably painted or coloured. .

". . . Sometimes no effigy was carried, but a chosen girl, dressed wholly or partly in white, and carrying a finely made St. Brigid's cross (see note below) of the local pattern, impersonated the saint. . .

"In the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* (1945, p. 46), T.G.F. Paterson recalls:

" 'On the Louth-Armagh border I have heard of "Brigid's Shield" and "Brigid's Crown", and was informed of a tradition that in days gone by, the most modest and most beautiful girl of a particular area, wearing a crown of rushes, a shield on her left arm, and a cross in her right hand, was escorted by a group of young girls from house to house on Brigid's Eve or Brigid's Morning'. "

Note: the Brigid's "cross" takes many forms, in most of which may be seen the symbolism of the Goddess. (Danaher, *id.* p. 16) "The most usual type of cross was the diamond or lozenge of straw". The lozenge is a universal feminine emblem, and is used as such in heraldry. (*id.* p. 17) "The next most popular type, that which has been adopted as its symbol by Radio Teleffs Eireann, the Irish Broadcasting service. . . is made by doubling rushes over each other to form an overlapp- cross. . . A subtype of this, with three legs instead of four, has been noted in several parts of the North.

"The four-legged cross has been called a swastika by some writers who have thereupon entered into much speculation regarding magic, mystic symbolism, ancient religions and so forth". The firewheel is particularly appropriate to Brigid, Goddess of smithcraft, and to the later St. Brigid of Kildare, keeper of "the perpetual fire". It is also significant that Brigid's emblem is a protection against both fire and lightning.

(*Journ. of the Cork Hist. and Arch. Soc.* 1895, p. 416, cited by Danaher, *The Year in Ireland*, p. 32) "On St. Brigid's Eve a silk ribbon is placed on the window sill (outside) during the night, and is ever after preserved as a remedy against headache".

(Danaher, *id.* p.32) "The general belief was that the Saint, going about the country on the Eve of her feast, would touch the *brat* (i.e. ribbon or mantle) and endow it with healing powers. Once thus touched it kept its virtue for ever, and many held that the older it was, the more potent it became . . .

"The *brat* might be a ribbon or a piece of linen or other cloth, or any garment. A sash, scarf or handkerchief thus touched by the saint would keep the wearer safe from harm, and men often put out a belt, a tie or a pair of braces to gain this protection. . .

"The ribbon, cloth or garment might be laid on the doorstep or the window sill, or hung up conveniently or thrown on a low roof. In Munster it was often tied to the door latch so that the saint would touch it when entering the house.

". . . the *ribin* or *brat* also gave omens for the future. Its length was carefully measured and marked down. . . When it was brought in again next morning it was again carefully measured against the marks, and if its length had increased during the night . . . this was a good sign, foretelling long life, plentiful return from crop and cattle, freedom from accident, illness and misfortune".

(*id.* p. 34) "Crios Bride. In West County Galway the party of young people going round on St. Brigid's Eve usually carried the *crios Bride* (St. Brigid's Girdle). This was a straw rope, some eight or ten feet long, spliced or woven into a loop . . .

"At each house visited, the occupants were expected to pass through the *crios*, thus obtaining the protection of the saint and freedom from illness, especially 'pains in the bones', during the coming year.

"In a few places in West County Galway there are memories of passing cattle through the *crios Bride*".

Note: (Wilford, cited by O'Brien, *Round Towers of Ireland*, p. 350) "For the purpose of regeneration it is directed to make an image of the *female* power of *nature*, in the shape either of a woman or of a cow. In this statue the person to be regenerated is inclosed, and dragged out through the usual channel. As a statue of pure gold and of proper dimensions would be too expensive, it is sufficient to make an image of the sacred *loni*, through which the person to be regenerated is to pass". (Note by O'Brien) "It is still practised in the East".

See also under December 25: Celtic, Nodlaig.

Norse: (Druids Cal.) "January 31st. Up Helly Aa, Lerwick, Shetland". (*Fell. of Isis Dir.*)
"January 31st: Up Helly Aa. Viking Feast. Abundance. Friendliness".

(*Country Life*, May 21, 1981, p. 1408) "the fire festival of UpHelly-A' [celebrated] long winter's end. It is a throwback to 'Norse days, when the Viking chiefs spent the period of Yule feasting, dancing and drinking for 24 days

"The emotional climax came as the torch bearers began a complicated formation movement of torches going in opposite directions round the galley, to finish up in a big circle. "

(Perp. Fest. Cal.) "January 31. Departed Ancestors".