

their cairns, and this custom still obtains among the mountaineers of Scotland, Bavaria, Switzerland and Tyrol, though none of them probably know the why and wherefore of that custom. The Druids, on the festival of the winter's solstice, used the mistletoe and evergreens as decorations; the fire on the hills being emblematical of the power and ardour of the sun, when he should have ascended to the upper regions which he was approaching, and the evergreens are typical of the effect that would be produced in the vegetable kingdom by such an event.

The early Christians, in their anxiety to convert the Pagans, and to retain them in their fold, at first acquiesced in the continuance of the Pagan ceremonies, rites and festivals practiced by the new converts; in course of time numerous Pagan priests, finding the number of their adherents diminished by conversion to Christianity, lost their influence, and in order to regain the same became themselves converts to Christianity, upon condition that certain concessions were made to them, principal among which was the continuation of several of their rites, ceremonies and festivals; the Christians, not only joined in the practice and celebration thereof, but finally, with some slight modifications, adopted them as Christian rites, ceremonies and festivals; thus the festival of the winter's solstice, the birthday of the Egyptian Osiris, the sun, was transformed into the celebration of the birthday of Christ, and the Druidical mistletoe and evergreens were replaced by the Christmas tree; the twelfth day after the winter's solstice, a Druidical festival, was made the Epiphany of the Christian Church; the first Sunday after the full moon succeeding the vernal equinox is celebrated as the resurrection of Christ and called Easter Sunday; and Easter was an idol or goddess of the Saxons, in honor of whom sacrifices were offered about the time of the year which is now observed by the Church

in commemoration of the Saviour's resurrection.

The birthdays of the two St. Johns were fixed by the framers of the church ritual at the period of the solstices. The British Freemasons of the eighteenth century (though without any evidence or authority to warrant their so doing) claimed the two St. Johns as their ancient brethren, made them their patrons and annually celebrated the festival of St. John the Baptist and that of St. John the Evangelist.

Numerous other instances might be quoted where both the Church and the Masonic Fraternity have borrowed or copied from the ancient mysteries, and comparatively few original rites, ceremonies and festivals would remain.

It is admitted by all intelligent and well read Masons, and it cannot be denied that the mode of teaching the principles of the profession of Freemasonry is derived from the Druids, the maxims of morality from Pythagoras, and the chief emblems originally from Egypt.

Pythagoras, as is well known by every Masonic student, obtained his system of teaching from the Magi of Egypt, whither he travelled to obtain knowledge; on his return to Greece he founded his celebrated school, and among the various other emblems and symbols which he brought with him from Egypt, was the symbol of the Deity, A CENTRE WITHIN A CIRCLE.

This symbol represented by the Egyptians respectively the deity and the universe; and among the Hindoos, the Chinese, the Samothracians and the tribes contiguous to India, this symbol had the same significance; though with the latter there was instead of a mere point a yod (.) in the centre of a circle; a circle being without beginning and without end was symbolical of eternity, in which the Deity dwelt. Pythagoras esteemed them the central fire, the supernal mansion of Jove, and he called it Mesouraneo, because the most excel-