



FURTHER STROLLS AND FUTURE CAROLS.

HOLY WEEK IN OLD ENGLAND.

PALM SUNDAY.

The commemoration of the all too brief popularity of our Saviour when on earth, when the people "took branches and went forth to meet Him, crying Hosanna," has been celebrated from a very early period in the history of the Church. In lack of palm-tree, branches of box, yew, and willow were blessed by priests after mass, and distributed among the people. After being carried in triumphant procession, they were burned, and the ashes were laid aside to be sprinkled, with the priests' blessing, on the heads of the faithful on the succeeding Ash Wednesday.

In olden times the flowers and branches to be used by the clergy were laid on the altar; those for the laity on the south step of the altar. The priest,

*Arrayed in a
Red Cope.*

consecrated them, to displace the devil, who was suspected to lurk in some hidden corner. They were then fumed in frankincense from censers. Flowers were distributed. Prayers were read. Sprinklings with holy water were performed, and the procession, led by two priests bearing crucifixes, started through the town.

In the extremity of a desire to realize every particular of the Holy Passion of our Lord, the wooden figure of

an ass on wheels, with a wooden rider, was drawn among the crowd. Amid much excitement, the people threw their branches beneath the wheels, and, as they were thereafter supposed to be an infallible protection against storms and lightnings, they were religiously gathered up again and cherished.

Sometimes cakes were cast from the steeples of the churches, and were scrambled for below by an amused crowd of boys.

An angel was also introduced into the procession, and when the parish did not possess one, it was borrowed. In the accounts of one of the ancient parishes of London, there occurs an item of 8d. for the hire of an angel on one occasion, and of 4d. on another. Crosses of palm were made, and blessed by the priest, as a safeguard against sickness.

In Cornwall the peasants carried these crosses to the village well and threw them in. If they floated, the peasant was to live through the year. If it sank, alas! he would not. He who had no palm on Sunday, would have his hand cut off.

A curious custom existed in Lincolnshire. While the first lesson was being read, a person representing the proprietor of an adjoining estate, entered the porch of the Church, and three times

CRACKED A GAD WHIP

which he then folded up and retired to a seat in the sacred edifice. During the second lesson he came up to the minister, with his whip upright, and at the upper end of it a purse containing thirty pieces of silver. Kneeling before the clergyman, he waved the whip thrice round his head, and remained in that attitude till the lesson had ended, and then retired.

GOOD FRIDAY.

This day, commemorative of the crucifixion of our Lord, was, from a very early period, kept as a season of special mourning and prayer. The priests were robed in black; the kiss of peace was omitted, in detestation of the traitor kiss of Judas; and a long series of prayers were recited for all classes and ranks of people—even for heretics, pagans, and Jews.

The most striking part of the ceremony of the day was the Adoration of the Cross, or as it was called, The Creeping to the Cross. A large crucifix was placed on the altar with great ceremony, and the entire congregation, beginning with the priest, approached, and upon their knees, reverently kissed the figure of the crucified Lord.

A sermon was preached at St. Paul's Cross, London, at which the Lord Mayor and Aldermen attended.