

by the name "Oannes". It was observed far and wide by Pagan nations in China, by Egyptians, Chaldeans, Turks, Peruvian Indians, and fire worshippers of India.

It was too celebrated a festival to be put aside by the Romish Church, which was bent upon proselytising the Pagans, and so happening as it did just six months before the 25th December, the assumed birthday of the Lord, it fitted exactly for the nativity of John the Baptist, which happened six months before the birth of Christ, whenever that may have taken place, and about which Scripture is silent.

Thus then the Pagan name for the festival being "Oannes" it was only needful to add the letter J to make it "Joannes" or the name adopted by the Roman Church for John the Baptist. Thus was the Pagan festival christianised, but with all its Pagan ceremonies retained, with a subtilty worthy of Rome, and from Rome is now adopted by the churches of Christendom.

The special peculiarity of this festival was the celebration of it by bonfires, especially in France, Switzerland, and Ireland; here is truly seen the old custom of passing children through the fire, the old worship of Baal (*Jeremiah* xxxii. 35, etc.), an abomination to the Lord. It was celebrated in the British Isles by the Druids before Christianity was known.

BISHOPS' MITRES.

The origin of this head-dress of the Bishops of Christendom arises from the dress of the Priests of "Dagon", the Fish god of the Babylonians (*see Judges* xvi. 23). These priests wore a fish's head on their head, the jaws opened and pointing upwards, while the skin and tail lay over and down their backs. In time the skin and tail seem to have been set aside, and the jaws of the fish, as a head-dress, alone remained, and was thus adopted into the Christian Church as a mark of priestly dignity in common with numberless other Pagan rites and forms.

CROZIERS.

Another of the relics of Paganism, supposed to be a sort of staff of office for the Bishops of present Christianity.

This is nothing more than the Shepherd's Crook, and was used by the Chaldean priests and soothsayers in the performance of their magic rites, from hence it can be traced by the Assyrian sculptures up to "Nimrod", the founder of Babel, who was the first that bore the title of the Shepherd King. The crozier was used by African negroes as a figure for one of their gods; Osiris, the Egyptian deity, was always represented with the crozier.

* The Assyrian sculptures show distinctly this dress.—See Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 348.