

delightful fish," and immediately added it to their stock of fast-day viands. The Jews, again, could not believe it was procured from that impure beast the hog, and included it in their list of clean animals.

Minced or mince-pies, form another dish of considerable antiquity, and still remain in great request, as an essential article in Christmas dinners; and the stock of mince-meat is frequently not exhausted until Easter. It is also, I believe, customary in London to introduce them on Lord Mayor's Day (November 9th); and in a modern bill of fare for this feast (1832), there are no less than one hundred and eleven dishes of mince-pies included. This savoury article is said to have reference, in the variety of its ingredients, to the offerings of the Wise Men, and the coffin or case of them should be oblong, in imitation of the crache (rack or manger) where our Saviour was laid.

After the Restoration, these pies, with other observances of the same nature, as decorating with evergreens, &c. almost served as a test of a person's opinions; the presbyterian party looking on them as superstitious abominations. They would even refuse to eat them when in distress for a comfortable meal, as is related at first of Bunyan when in confinement. They should have eaten them with a protest, as lawyers would have done in a similar case.

Misson, in his "Travels in England," (p. 322.) in the beginning of the last century, gives the following as the ingredients of a mince-pie. Neats' tongues, chicken, eggs, sugar, currants, lemon and orange peel, with various sorts of spices. The receipts in the present day contain the same leading features, but vary a little in the minutiae. I have been told by the cognoscenti in mince-pies, that

the best receipts for mince-meat contain little or no meat, and it consequently keeps fresher, and eats lighter. The following is a valued receipt that has been handed down in a Cornish family for many generations, and the hand-writing of the receipt book will vouch for its antiquity. "A pound of beef-suet chopped fine; a pound of raisins do. stoned. A pound of currants cleaned dry. A pound of apples chopped fine. Two or three eggs. Allspice beat very fine, and sugar to your taste. A little salt, and as much brandy and wine as you like. An ancient Cornish custom at Christmas." A small piece of citron in each pie is an improvement.

There is a superstition existing in some places, that in as many different houses as you eat mince-pies during Christmas, so many happy months will you have in the ensuing year. Something like this is mentioned in "Dives and Pauper," by W. de Worde (1496), where a custom is reprobated of judging of the weather of the ensuing twelve months, by that of the twelve days at Christmas. If Christmas-day fell on a Sunday, it was also thought fortunate. In the "Golden Legend," of the same printer, (folio vi.) is a more laudable prejudice, "That what persone beyng in clene lyfe: desyre on thys daye a boone of God; as ferre as it is ryghtfull & good for hym; our lorde at reuerēce of thys blessid & hye feste of his natiuite wol graūt it to hym."

The North of England is celebrated for Christmas pies of a different description, composed of birds and game, and frequently of great size. Hone in his "Table Book," (vol. ii. p. 506.) gives the following extract from the "Newcastle Chronicle" of 6th January 1770, describing a giant of this race. "Monday last was brought from Howick to Ber-

wick, to be shipp'd for London, for Sir Hen. Grey, Bart. a pie, the contents whereof are as follows: viz. 2 bushels of flour, 20lbs. of butter, 4 geese, 2 turkies, 2 rabbits, 4 wild ducks, 2 woodcocks, 6 snipes, and 4 partridges; 2 neat's tongues, 2 curlews, 7 blackbirds, and 6 pigeons: it is supposed a very great curiosity, was made by Mrs. Dorothy Patterson, housekeeper at Howick. It was near nine feet in circumference at bottom, weighs about twelve stones, will take two men to present it to table; it is neatly fitted with a case, and four small wheels to facilitate its use to every guest that inclines to partake of its contents at table." Turkies and geese are also common at Christmas, the latter being the dish in the western counties, while the turkey prevails in London.

In Spain it was customary for patients to send their medical attendants presents of turkeys, so that doctors in large practice had to open a kind of trade in them. Capons were formerly used at this time, probably because many landlords then received them from their tenants. Gascoigne, in 1575, says,

And when the tenauntes come to paie their quarter's rent,
They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish in
Lent,

At Christmasse a capon, at Michaelmasse a goose;
And somewhat else at New-yeres tide, *for feare their
lease flie loose.*

The liquors drunk at this time were the same as at any other great feast. The Anglo-Saxons, and other northern nations, who in times of paganism drank in honour of Odin, Thor, and their other fabulous deities, afterwards, when converted to Christianity, being unwilling to resign their potations, drank large draughts of liquor in honour of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, and other

