

beauty, tenderness and love. The May festival has come down to us from a very remote antiquity, and its origin is probably owing to some of the earlier nations of the east.

Some classes, such as the milkmaids and the chimney-sweepers, have in particular assumed this day for a distinctive festival; or, what is more likely, they continued to celebrate it long after it fell into disuse with their neighbours. The first of these have in most parts continued their Mayings, though Strutt, who wrote little more than seventy years ago, says, "the Mayings are in some sort yet kept up by the milkmaids of London, who go about the streets with their garlands and music, dancing." Misson, too, but he is of yet earlier date, has described the same thing, and more minutely:—"On the first of May," he observes, "and the five and six days following, all the pretty young country girls that serve the town with milk, dress themselves up very neatly and borrow abundance of silver plate, whereof they make a pyramid, which they adorn with ribbands and flowers, and carry upon their heads instead of common milk pails. In this equipage, accompanied by some of their fellow milk-maids and a bagpipe, or fiddle, they go from door to door, dancing before the houses of their customers, in the midst of boys and girls, that follow them in troops, and everybody gives them something."

Whit Sunday, or Pentecost, which occurs this year on the 27th of this month, is an Ecclesiastical festival, set apart at a very early period in commemoration of the miraculous out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. The appellation of *Whit-Sunday* is generally allowed to be only a slight abbreviation of *White-Sunday*, from the early and eastern practice of candidates for baptism being clothed in white.

This day is also the anniversary of St. Augustine, who was deputed by St. Gregory to be the converter and apostle of the English. He succeeded in impressing the truth of the Christian religion on Ethelbert, king of Kent, and many of his subjects, and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. After many years of persevering labor this venerable man died on the 26th May, about A.D. 610. and was afterwards canonized.

In many parts of England *Whitsun-week* is observed more or less as a holiday, particularly in the manufacturing districts. Tens of thousands of children in Manchester and other large towns, belonging to Sunday and other schools, are taken by railways and boats long distances into the country, for rural recreation. It has long been a practice for the young folks to appear in new attire at this festival; all are animated by expectancy and enjoyment, and the attractive beauties of spring help not a little the general effect.

We are among those who have the belief that whatever tends to refine and enlarge the range of human sympathies, and to promote the unsophisticated enjoyments of childhood, must be in accordance with the beneficent will of Providence, and should be warmly cherished. In the present material and utilitarian age there is danger lest some of the purest well springs of human happiness be permitted to dry up in the breathless race for wealth and worldly distinction. Of all dupes of society, however, the cultivators of the earth are the most inexcusable, if they neglect the moral teachings of their innocent and time-honored pursuit; in the daily following of which they not only witness the heart-striking proof of creation, wisdom, and goodness, but they are the actual instruments employed by the Divine Architect for the accomplishment of his benevolent purposes in the wonderful economy of nature, for the benefit and enjoyment of both the rational and irrational parts of his creation.

May is a busy month to the farmer, and as the present season is late, the larger portion of the most important operations of spring have yet to be performed. All kinds of grain should be sown as soon as the soil and atmospheric conditions are suitable. The early sowing of tares, carrots, parsnips, &c., for cattle food, is of much consequence, and the land should receive the best cultivation that circumstances will allow. Ground intended for turnips, mangel wurzel, potatoes, &c., ought now to be thoroughly prepared and manured, if not done before. The success of root crops depends far more on the cultivation and attention they receive than is generally imagined. It is not uncommon to hear men complain of the want of success in those matters, attributing their failure to some peculiarity of the season, when, in fact, it is simply due to their own want of skill and attention. There can be no doubt that root crops pay; but their culture must be thorough, in accordance with the most approved modern practices, and in a country like ours, it is generally inexpedient to have large breadths under such crops.

Bees still require attention, and in suitable situations will repay for all that is bestowed on them. In ordinary seasons, they seldom cast their swarms in this country before next month. Tusser in his *May's Husbandry*, says—

"Take heed to thy bees that are ready to swarm,
The loss thereof now is a crown's worth of harm;
Let skillful be ready, and diligence seen,
Lest being too careless, thou losest thy been."

There is an old proverb, as ancient as the days of Tusser, which says, in alluding to bees—

"A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay;
A swarm of bees in June,
Is worth a silver spoon;
A swarm of bees in July
Is not worth a fly."