

## Miscellaneous.

### THE PROGRESS OF THE SEASONS.

The sun shone bright, and all was gay,  
In love's delightful month of May;  
A little child went out to play,  
He had obtained a holiday—  
It is the *Spring*.

The fruit was hanging on the trees,  
And ripening in the northern breeze:  
That child had now become a man,  
His face was anxious, pale, and wan—  
The *Summer's* come.

The leaves were falling from the woods,  
And lying on the dusty roads;  
I saw that man—saw that his hair  
Was blanched with age, and white with care,  
'Twas *Autumn* then.

The frozen snow was on the ground,  
No fruit, no flower could be found;  
An old man then was on the hearth,  
His lips were moist with dews of death—  
'Twas *Winter* there.

Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, when  
Will your sad story teach to men  
How short is each successive stage,  
Our infancy, youth, manhood, age—  
How quickly gone!

### THE ORIGIN OF INDIAN CORN.

*From Hoffman's Wild Scenes in the Forest and Prairie.*

When the hour of dinner arrived, and pipes and cigars were laid aside for more substantial refreshment, the introduction of parched corn among the condiments of our repast raised a discussion between the "chancellor" and myself, as to the Asiatic or American origin of this great staple of our farmers; and, upon asking the opinion of Captain Gill as to how the maize was first obtained, the old chief nodded to one of his dusky satellites, who straightway set the question at rest for ever by giving an explanation, of which the following is the purport:—

"There is a place on the banks of the softly-flowing Unadilla, not far from its confluence with the Susquehannah, which in former years, was an extensive beaver meadow. The short turf sloped down almost to the brink of the stream, whose banks, in this place, nourish not a single tree to shadow its waters. Here, where they flow over pebbles so smooth and shiny that the Indian maid who wandered along the margin, would stop to tell over her strings of wampum, and think the beads had dropped below, there came one day some girls to bathe; and one, the most beautiful of all, lingered behind her companions, to gather these bright pebbles from the bed of the river.

"A water-spirit, who had assumed the form of a musquosh, set along watching her from the shore. He looked at her shining shoulders, at her dripping locks, and the gently swelling bosom over which they fell, and when the maid lifted her rounded limbs from the water, and stepped lightly upon the green sod, he, too, raised himself from the mossy nook where he had been hidden, and, recovering his own shape, ran to embrace her.

"The maiden shrieked and fled, but the enamoured spirit pressed closely in pursuit; and the meadow affording no shrub nor covert to screen her from her eager pursuer, she turned again towards the stream she had left, and made for a spot where the wild flowers grew tall and rankly by the moist margin. The spirit still followed her; and, frightened and fatigued, the girl would have sunk upon the ground as he approached, had she not been supported by a tuft of flags, while hastily seizing and twining them around her person to hide her shame.

"In this moment her slender form grew thinner and more rounded; her delicate feet became indurated in the loose soil that opened to receive them; the blades of the flag broadened around her fingers, and enclosed her hand; while the pearly

pebbles that she held resolved themselves into milky grains, which were kept together by the plaited husk.

"The baffled water-spirit sprang to seize her by the long hair that yet flowed in the breeze, but the silken tassels of the rustling maize was all that met his grasp."

**COMMERCE IN THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM.**—The various particulars of the transaction between Abraham and the children of Heth, evince very considerable progress at that early period in economics, in commerce, in law. There is money, and of a given denomination or coin—balances for weighing it—a standard thereof, such as was current with the merchant—a superiority thereof in the methods of trade above the way of barter—forms in the conveyance and exchange of property before witnesses, as here in audience of the people of Heth—the terms and specifications of a bargain, by which its several particulars were made sure to Abraham in the presence of and before many witnesses—all serving to confirm the doctrine that the progress in these days was from an original civilisation down to barbarism—the civilisation being coeval with the first and earliest revelations, or with Adam himself. A thorough attention to these early chapters of Genesis confirms our belief in this tenet—supported as it is by this very strong negative argument, that a nation was never known to emerge simultaneously and unaided from the savage state—the civilisation thereof having always, as far as known, originated in, or been aided by, a movement or influence from without.—*Dr. Chalmers's Daily Scripture Readings.*

**REMARKABLE EXPERIMENT.**—A recent work of science gives the following novel experiment, which settles questions of some importance in philosophy:—"Two hundred pounds weight of earth were dried in an oven, and afterwards put into an earthen vessel. The earth was then moistened with rain water, and a willow tree, weighing five pounds, was planted therein. During the space of five years the earth was carefully watered with rain water, or pure water; the willow grew and flourished; and, to prevent the earth being mixed with fresh earth or dust blown in it by the winds, it was covered with a metal plate perforated with a great number of small holes, suitable for the free admission of air only. After growing in the air for five years, the tree was removed, and found to weigh 169 pounds and about 3 ounces; the leaves which fell from the tree every autumn were not included in this weight. The earth was then removed from the vessel, again dried in the oven, and afterwards weighed; it was discovered to have lost only about 2 ounces of its original weight; thus 160 pounds of woody fibre, bark, and roots were certainly produced; but from what source? The air has been discovered to be the source of the solid element at least. This statement may at first appear incredible, but, on slight reflection, its truth is proved, because the atmosphere contains carbonic acid, which is a compound, or 714 parts by weight of oxygen, and 338 parts by weight of carbon."

**FORETHOUGHT AND SAGACITY OF RATS.**—In cutting through an embankment in a field adjoining the river Lune the other day, for the formation of one of the culverts rendered necessary by the passing of the North Western Railway in that direction, the labourers met with between 15lb. and 20lbs. of eels, some quite fresh, and others in the last stage of putrefaction. They varied from a quarter to half a pound in weight, and consisted of the common silver-bellied, or silver eels, and Lilliputian specimens of the conger, or sea eels. The latter, of course, had come up with the tide. As teeth marks were visible on the heads of most of them, it was conjectured they had been destroyed in that way, and stored for winter provision, by some animal whose retreat was not far distant; this proved to be the case. On digging a little further, out bounced a matronly rat, with seven half grown young ones at her heels. The workmen gave chase, and ultimately succeeded in killing both mother and progeny, with a solitary exception, the trunk of a neighboring tree affording an asylum to one of the family. The embankment is about 100 yards from the water's edge.

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