

VI. *Extracts of Two Letters from the late Roger Gale, Esquire, F. R. S. to Mr. Peter Collinson, F. R. S. concerning the Vegetation of Melon Seeds 33 Years old; and of a fossil Skeleton of a Man.*

Scruten in Yorkshire, Jan. 14. 1743-4.

S I R,

Read Jan. 24. * * *
1744-5.

ABOUT this time Twelve-month, I found, accidentally, a Paper of Melon seeds that I had laid by, with the Date of the Year 1710 upon it. I sowed some of them, not with any great Hopes of their coming up; but, to my great Surprize, I had a fine Number of Plants from them, which all prosper'd very well, till they had put out four Leaves, when they were all lost by an Accident. This I have mention'd to you, because, in *Philosophical Transactions*, N^o. 464. Mr. *Triewald* has given an Account of some old Melon-seeds that produced Fruit, tho' they exceeded mine 10 Years in Age: However mine may be a Confirmation of their long Retention of their vegetative Quality; which I suppose may be ascribed to the Oilyness of the Seed, and the Hardness of its outward Coat.

We have few or no Fossils in this Country; but a Friend in *Staffordshire* [Mr. *Platt*] informs me, that That Country abounds much in Fossils; such as Sea-Shells, Rock-Plants, and other marine Bodies left at the Deluge. Near *Bakerwell* in *Derbyshire* was lately found the Skeleton of a Man, with some Stags Horns, in digging a Lead-Mine.

L I 2

[In

[In the second Letter, dated *Scruton, May 19. 1744.* Mr. *Gale* gives the following Account of this *Skeleton* in Mr. *Platt's* own Words, from a Letter written to himself by that Gentleman.]

Dear Sir,

THE Skeleton I formerly mentioned to you was found at *Lathill-dale*, near *Tolgrave* and *Bake-well* in *Derbyshire*, as the Workmen were driving a Sough, or Drain to a Lead-Mine, about nine Yards deep from the Surface of the Earth, and about forty Fathom from the Beginning of the Sough. There were found with the Skeleton Stags Horns; two Pieces of which I have now in my Custody; *viz.* the Brow-Antler, which is nine Inches long, and seems to have about two Inches broke off the Tip-End; the other is a Piece of the large Horn near the Head, and is three Inches Diameter. Both the Horns of the Stag, and the Rib-Bones of the Skeleton, are much decayed; and as soon as the Head of the latter was exposed to the Air it crumbled all away, except a Piece of the lower Jaw; now also so imperfect as not easily to be distinguished what it has been. Several of the larger Teeth were taken out, which were covered with their natural Enamel, and perfectly found. The Place where these Things were found, is on every Side surrounded with a rocky petrified Substance, or *Terra lapidea*, by the Miners called *Tuft*, so hard (as they say) as to strike Fire against their Tools. This Substance lay above the Bones and Horns a Yard and half thick or more, and on either Side; and beneath them to a Breadth and
Depth

Depth uncertain: So that it appears, that the Skeleton and Horns lay in a Cavity, which was not however contiguous to them, there being a sort of soft coarse Clay or Marl interspersed thick with little petrify'd Balls, or Pellets of the same kind of Substance as the Tuft, for near a Quarter of a Yard round them; but none of the Bones seem'd in any Degree to be petrify'd. The Workmen conjectur'd there was more of the Skeleton to be found; but they dug no further than was necessary to complete their Sough.

This, dear Sir, I believe, is, with what I sent you before, as full and accurate an Account, as you will obtain from any other Hand, of this odd Discovery. The Interment of this Man and Stag seem to me to have been accidental, by their falling into a Chasm or wide Cleft of the Rock in very early Times; which has since closed up, and grown over them, by the Accretion of the marly Substance, which environs the Skeleton, &c. ; and in time, perhaps, will grow as hard as the Tuft, and rest of the Rock. If you have any other Particulars come to yourself, or the *Royal Society*, I should be glad to know them. I have desired Mr. *Platt* to send you up a few of the Pellets, with the Fossils he designs you, in a short time; and am

*Your most obliged Friend,
and humble Servant,*

R. Gale.

By covering up my Trees with Ivy, in *February* I have vast Quantities of Apricots and Peaches, while my Neighbours have hardly any.