

people. The current of entertainment is accepted as the system of society; and many of those we now refer to have ceased to make any stand against it; they do not seem to see any reason why in this respect they should be different from their neighbours. The rapid growth in wealth, naturally accompanied by a desire to enjoy it, has had something to do with this tendency. Something is due also to the mere pressure and attraction of the example of the great world. The influence from this source is now-a-days rapidly transmitted; and it is so strong that it will probably always tend to gain upon the Church, unless it is met and checked, from time to time, by a somewhat decided and vigorous movement of religious earnestness. Now, of late, the movements of religious earnestness among us have affected the lower much more powerfully than the upper classes of our people. Still more is due to the insidious influence of a mode of view which is very largely prevalent in our literature, even in some of what professes to be religious and edifying literature. It is this, that a much larger and freer indulgence in amusements and gaieties, which old-fashioned people used to think questionable, is altogether good. The religion, as we are taught, thus becomes more spiritual and large-minded, and the whole nature receives its due development. Lastly, a good deal is due to the tendency of our time to judge afresh whatever gives itself out for settled. People decline to be restrained from anything that they do not themselves perceive to be clearly reprehensible. Now, it requires more comprehensiveness and patience than most people possess, to settle, in theory at least, the right line in the matter of amusement. It is no wonder, therefore, if there are abundant judgments arrived at, with a kind of honesty, though with too much haste and confidence, by young casuists in evening dress, to the effect that a very large latitude is all right. Whether it is to be ascribed to these or to other causes, the fact to which we have referred is, we believe, undeniable.

“Hence the extension of those forms of prolonged entertainment in which the frivolity and idleness of Society have always found their fittest expression. Members of churches, and of churches which lay claim to some energy of religious conviction, *go in* for these (to use a convenient colloquial phrase) increasingly with each year. A system of exciting amusement is prolonged through the winter. The dissipating effect on the mind and on family life is enhanced by late hours. People of all ages, but especially young people, become formed to the tone of mind congenial to the system. The discipline, the habit of self-denial and sobriety which is essential to Christianity, and which, for young people, has one of its chief applications in the matter of amusement, is practically discarded. Persons of promising religious character are gradually secularized. Others receive a wrong bias at the very time when religious impressions might be expected to show themselves. Nor is it any wonder that one hears complaints, with regard to young people generally, of a tendency to make demands in the matter of amusement and self-indulgence, and to rebel against needful self-denial and patient exertion, in a degree that is seriously detrimental to their own well-being, and to the comfort of those connected with them.

There is no question at all that amusement and enjoyment ought to have their place in life, and that they should be deliberately provided for, particularly with an eye to the case of young people. Indeed, to see young people happy is about as much amusement as most older people have any great need for. But in deciding what form it is to take, two questions arise. First, of course, whether a particular form of it may be looked on