WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

Devoted to the Intellectual and Moral Improvement of the Young.

Vol. 1. Halifax, N. S. Tuesday, September 15, 1863. No. 13.

HALIFAX, N. S. SEPTEMBER 15, 1863.

TO AGENTS AND SUBSCRIBERS.

We regret to learn from our correspondent at Lingan, that the papers for that place have not been received for several weeks. As all the papers have been forwarded, we are at a loss to account for this omission; but inquiries will be made in reference to the cause. In the mean time other copies shall be forwarded, in order that the subscribers may not be at the loss of the missing numbers. Detentions of this kind are sometimes unavoidable; agents will therefore oblige by informing us when similar mistakes occur, and we will endeavor to have them promptly rectified.

We would also state here, that although the subscription list is so far encouraging, an additional number of subscribers is still requisite to enable us to carry out several contemplated improvements; and if each of our readers could send to the office of publication, or introduce to the nearest agent, *one* new subscriber, it would contribute materially towards that object. All the back numbers can be supplied if applied for early.

Those who have not as yet conformed to our terms, will oblige by doing so without further delay—as our preparatory outlay has been considerable, and the publishing expenses, which are weekly incurred, render the required advance indispensable. Small sums that cannot be remitted in paper currency may be sent in postage stamps.

It has been suggested, that if the *Miscellany* was published at a later period of the week, it would be more accommodating to subscribers generally who receive their papers by mail; we have therefore concluded to issue the succeeding numbers on *Thursday*, instead of Tuesday.

COAL.

Coal—or the Black Diamond as it has long been familiarly called,—not only on account of its vast value to the countries in which it is found, but because it actually consists chiefly of the substance which constitutes that brilliant gem the diamond, which is perfectly pure carbon—or, to speak intelligibly to our young friends, charcoal. Coal and the diamond are both of vegetable origin, and when burnt in the open air are entirely consumed; the coal leaving ashes, which are foreign to its constitution, consisting of sand, lime, iron, &c. The diamond is supposed to have been produced by the slow decomposition of vegetable matter; but it is of coal that we have at present to speak.

Coal is formed from vast forests of an early period of time, the precious relics of a former world—it has altered but little from its original vegetable condition, but all traces of woody fibre have disappeared. It lies in vast beds of variable thickness, overlaying each other, and is generally associated with sands and clays. The most early date to which we can carry back its origin was when it existed amongst the swamps and forests of the primeval earth; in a climate considered by geologists to have been hotter than the tropics of the present day. The trees and plants must have been torn from their native beds by the storms and inundations of a hot and humid climate, and transported into some lake, estuary or sea. There they floated on waters until they sank saturated to the bottom, and being buried in the detritus of other lands, became transferred to a new estate among the members of the Mineral Kingdom. A long interval followed, during which a course of chemical changes and pressure have converted their vegetable elements to their present condition of coal. By the elevating force of submarine fires these beds of coal have been uplifted from beneath the water, to a new position where they are within the reach of and available to the industry and comfort of man.

Many of our readers may suppose that when coal is burnt it is destroyed entirely. Not so—*as coal* it may be said to be destroyed; but it is merely decomposed. Not an atom of its elements is destroyed, and the apparent destruction is only the commencement of a new succession of changes. The elements are merely set free from imprisonment to return to their native atmosphere, from which they were absorbed to take part in the primeval vegetation, again to contribute to the substance of trees in our existing forests.

The presence of coal in a country is the foundation of increasing riches, population and power. The wealth and strength of Great Britain are clearly attributable to her extensive resources in coal and iron, which constitute the foundation of her manufactures and commerce. And we have reason to congratulate ourselves that the resources of Nova Scotia are so similar to hers.

The Albion Mines are considered, as yet, to be the most important coal measures. In one section the vertical thickness of a seam of coal is thirty-seven feet and a half; and a pillar or column from this was sent to the International Exhibition in London last year. The Pictou coal ranks high amongst the qualities of bituminous coal. The Sydney coal ranks next in importance, and is said to cover an area of 250 square miles. It is principally used for domestic fires, for which it is well suited.

Other valuable coal fields exist at Lingan, east of Sydney; one of which is found to be a superior gas coal.

Next follows the coal field at the Joggins in Cumberland, which is known as the "South Joggins." It abounds in roots of the early vegetables of our earth which are now extinct; and is remarkable for the great number and small thickness of its coal seams. The main seam consists of two beds, 3 feet 6 inches, and 1 foot 6 inches in thickness.

There are mines in the Pictou coal measures where oil coal is found. They yield 63 gallons of oil per ton, and are likely to prove a source of great wealth.

There are other places in Nova Scotia where coal has been found, but in seams too thin to be worth working. These may be the indications of thicker and more valuable seams in their vicinity.

It is not to be supposed that all the valuable coal deposits in our country have as yet been discovered. In all probability there are several that we yet know nothing about. But enough is known to assure us that sufficient coal exists in Nova Scotia to last, at a very greatly increased rate of demand beyond the present, for many ages to come. One square mile of coal, of 24 feet deep, will yield 23,000,000 tons.