

SELECTIONS.

CHINESE AMUSEMENTS. There are no cock-fights, no horse racing; and fighting and boxing are unknown. They are more fond of kicking the shuttle cock than of knocking one another down. In the south, the climate disincites the people for active exercise. They display much agility in tumbling and balancing themselves on the slack rope. Dancing is unknown among them; when they first saw Europeans engaged in this amusement, they asked if it were not done for a medical purpose. A very common amusement is setting crickets to fight. Two of these insects are put into a box about a foot in diameter, and irritated with straws till they run against each other, when they will fight till one of them dies. Sometimes as much as three hundred dollars will be wagered on one of these fights. The Chinese, beyond any other nation, deserve the epithet of a gambling people. So much are they addicted to this vice, that persons who sell goods in the street, keep a dice-box, and persons who wish to purchase small articles, will rather gamble for them, than buy them in the regular way. Theatrical displays are exhibited on several occasions of religious festivals. The performances are mere pantomime, the people seldom understanding what is said. The whole affair is got up in a very bungling manner, the patience of the auditory being much more admirable than the skill of the actors. More than a thousand persons once lost their lives at a theatrical performance through the scenery taking fire.

TUNNELS.—Since the tunnel under the Thames was completed by Bunnell, projects of the same nature have been not so much the subject of constructive operation as of talk and speculation. A few years ago, it was proposed to tunnel the Hudson, at Albany, and now the Canadians, perhaps somewhat excited by the splendid canal of northern railroads now in contemplation, have come to the resolution of tunnelling the St. Lawrence, at Montreal. This can be done, as the bottom of the river there is of good rock, and the distance to be tunneled, only three-fourths of a mile. It was extremely difficult to tunnel the Thames, because the foundation was shifting sand, and after hundreds of thousands were expended, it was only completed by running huge cast iron tunnels gradually forward every few feet as they proceeded, the men working under the iron covers, which were of sufficient strength of themselves to support the weight of the river at its greatest depth. Within the past few years, tunnelling has become not uncommon in England, especially rail road tunnels. There is a tunnel between Manchester and Leeds of two and a half miles long, and under mountains from 700 to 1000 feet high. There is another between Manchester and Liverpool, 2750 feet long and 25 wide. There are two in America, one on the Great Western railroad between Pittsfield and Albany, and another between Baltimore and Ohio. Tunnels will soon become common, for we have no doubt but that with huge iron tunnels, no river need be an impediment to rail road construction.—*Family Visitor.*

LETTING OUT OF WATER.—Solomon's illustration of the beginning of strife is receiving some new enforcement now-a-days—both the illustration and thing illustrated. Mr. Shepherd, at Philips, Maine, built himself a fine stone grist mill, house, blacksmith shop, &c., on a small stream, which proved insufficient in its volume of water to carry his wheels. He thereupon repaired to a pond of some eighty acres lying on a hill above him, and cut a trench by which the water was turned from the pond into his brook. No sooner had the water commenced running through the new cut, than it began to wash the cut deeper, and the deeper it went, the faster it gulbed, till in a very short time an awful chasm let out the whole pond upon the little brook, and swelling into a torrent, swept away Mr. Shepherd's mill, house, shop, and all, and did vast mischief beside; after which, all became quiet, and the little brook ran along as peaceably as before, but it had no wheels to turn. As to the beginning of strife, look at our Mexican war. It has well nigh emptied the big pond. When shall we see the little brook running peacefully along the valley again?—*Jour. Com.*

MARRIAGE TIES.—No deliberation or circumspection can be too great in a transaction of such importance as the choice of a partner for life. An error here leads to the most awful consequences. It is fatal and irremediable. The Christian is concerned, in a particular manner, to proceed with peculiar caution in forming this delicate and important connection. No personal attractions, no brilliancy of talents, no elegance of manners, no polish of education should induce him to form such a connection till he has unquestionable evidence that these pleasing qualities are connected with *real and genuine piety*. This is the gem which sparkles with undiminished lustre in the darkest seasons of adversity, and in the broad sunshine of prosperity, which illumines the cottage and adorns the palace, which outlines the brightest diamonds upon earth, and which will emit eternal splendour from the crown of glory in heaven. The possession of the "pearl of great price" is essentially requisite to the enjoyment of conjugal felicity; but an abundance "of this world's goods" is far from being requisite. Such abundance generally increases the cares and anxieties of life, but seldom, if ever, adds to its real comfort. All who enter into the marriage state from mercenary motives, though they may enlarge their possessions, and increase their fortune, live in splendid misery, and find that they have bartered happiness for wealth. The connection which is truly desirable, is pure and disinterested; it unites hearts and hands in the bonds of mutual love. Human life has few enjoy-

ments so exquisite as that of loving and being beloved. No pleasures are comparable to pleasures which affect the *heart*. Such, in a peculiar manner, are the pleasures which are found in the sweet retirement of domestic life. They are simple, they are innocent, they are virtuous.—*Stowe.*

AN ADVENTURE WITH A BOA CONSTRICTOR.—I had taken a hasty leap over a small rut, and, alighting on something soft and slippery, fell prostrate; and I could recover myself, I felt something twist round my body, and roll me over and over. In a moment, it occurred to me that I was within the folds of a serpent. I was squeezed so tightly, that I had only time to give one loud scream for assistance, and instinctively raise my arms upwards in the endeavour to defend my head and face; being aware, from what I had heard from others, that the serpent would endeavour to make a twist round my neck. I could hear the monster hissing and playing its head round my face, but could not see, either through pain or horror at my situation. I gradually felt my ribs bending beneath its cruel gripe, and imagined that all was over with me, when to my inexpressible relief, I heard the voices of my friends: one of whom, with his cutlass, at one blow severed the monster's head from its body. It still, however, held me firm in its gripe, but speedily two or three of my faithful attendants threw themselves on the tail part of the animal, whilst another cut about two feet off from its extremity. Instantly I felt relieved, but was quite unable to stand or speak. Fortunately, water was at hand, and I soon came to myself, though now quite unconcerned about pursuing antelopes or any other game—for that day at least. The stench which proceeded either from the breath of the serpent, or from its fluids when cut asunder, was suffocating, and when relieved from its folds, I was covered with blood and slime. As near as we could make out its dimensions, the serpent was about sixteen feet in length, and at its thickest part it was about the size of the leg of a stout man. It was a boa constrictor, and its bite was not poisonous; although it left a mark or two on one of my arms which did not wear off for some years. For many days afterwards, I shuddered at the sight, or even at the mention, of a snake of any description; and for a long while after, I occasionally screamed out in my dreams; nor have I altogether got quit of my horror even at this day.—*Life of a Slave.*

THE HESSIAN FLY.—Last year the grain worm or weevil injured the wheat in this district to a considerable extent, but nothing like what we fear may be expected from the Hessian Fly, that terror to the wheat grower, which this season, for the first time we believe in this part of the county, makes its most unwelcome appearance. One-third of the wheat crop in many places has been winter-killed, and we have every reason to fear that another third will be destroyed by the fly; upon the remaining third we must subsist ourselves, and the thousands of emigrants who are coming among us, (for we are sending off every bushel we can spare of last year's crop) and after we have done this, where will the surplus be which we are to export to Great Britain? And if this same destroyer has passed over the wheatfields of the great West, what is to become of the starving millions of Europe? We fear the calamity is yet to come, and that we shall not long be suffered to occupy the position of mere spectators. A lady in this vicinity has just received a letter from two sons who are farming in the State of Illinois, and they write that the farmers in their neighbourhood are ploughing up their wheat and planting corn in its place, in consequence of the ravages of this insect. We have not yet observed statements of this kind in the papers from that quarter, and we hope it may not be general.—*Canada Farmer.*

EXTINCTION OF SLAVERY.—The Anti-Slavery work is still going on in the world. From various quarters the tidings come to us, that the system is tottering or falling. Recent accounts from Smyrna, state that the slave trade of Egypt has received a death blow. The Government has issued an edict for the abolition of slavery at the end of fifty days. Of course the slave market felt the stroke at once, and there was an immediate decline of sixty per cent. in the prices. Purchasers, even at this reduced price, all stood aloof. In New Granada the demand for the entire abolition of slavery is rising. A writer in one of their late journals urges a speedy extinction of the system. He says, "That slavery is as injurious to the proprietors of slaves as it is to society; and that an immense amount of wealth will disappear from New Granada if the present slow and destructive plan for its abolition is continued. The emancipation of the children, leaving the parents in slavery, is said to work the most injurious effects; and it is necessary to make them all free or all slaves. The parents can only entertain hatred against society where it denies to them what it bestows upon their children. The liberty of all, the writer goes on to say, is a thing which the legislature may hasten but cannot delay. He proposes that all should be made free simultaneously, on the 1st January, 1850, and that the government shall pay their proprietors five per cent. annual interest on their value, and that after that time it shall not be possible for any person to be held as a slave in the territory of New Granada."

We are often tempted to censure where we ought to be forbearing; though the more we ourselves become what we ought to be, the less acute and less gratified we are in marking or mentioning the failings of others.

The great comet of 1264 and 1556, is expected by astronomers to re-appear at the latter end of this or the commencement of the following year. March 10, 1848, is considered the most probable period. The nodes of the comet's orbit lie very close to the earth's path.