

# WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

Devoted to the Intellectual and Moral Improvement of the Young.

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HALIFAX, N. S. DECEMBER 3, 1863.

**ERRATA.**—In the first article in our last No., 8th line from the bottom of 1st column, for "wisest of our inspired men," read "wisest of uninspired men."

## AMUSEMENT.

Some people are so severe in spirit that all amusement appears to them a departure from strict rectitude. Others are so perplexed between a love of amusement and the abhorrence of abuses which many means of entertainment are liable to, that they can neither fully assent to amusements on the one hand nor condemn them on the other. There seems to be a want of principle on this point—something which may enable us to enjoy amusement with a clear conscience.

One fact strikes us—namely, that the power of producing amusement and the power of enjoying it are parts of our nature. If it is acknowledged that the Creator has, by the general arrangements of the world, manifested a disposition to confer happiness upon his creatures—which we think no one will deny—we cannot doubt that the powers in our mental system operating for enjoyment, were meant to be employed for that end: and amusement thus appears a part of the great Beneficent Design.

In amusements, as in everything else, we must distinguish between the use and the abuse. For instance, some young men will neglect their studies or other duties for the sake of music, and some young ladies will think more earnestly about a dance than about their moral and intellectual improvement. These errors form no valid argument against music or dancing—as well might we condemn eating, because some people surfeit themselves at a feast. In like manner other popular amusements—when they can be enjoyed free from circumstances of a

contaminating character—are not reprehensible. The faculties which produce entertainments of this kind, and the faculties which take pleasure in them, are, like all the rest, given to us for wise and kind purposes. When exercised in conformity with our moral obligations, they are a direct source of happiness, and our duty is not to suppress them, but to guard against their abuse.

The line between the use and abuse may, with some care and discrimination, be easily distinguished. We may represent in paintings, in statuary or tales of fiction objects only calculated to demoralize; and this is a disgraceful abuse of the powers conferred on us. But we may also body forth scenes calculated to excite, and by exciting to strengthen, the most refined and praiseworthy feelings, and carry forward our whole being in the paths of virtue; and this is a right use of these gifts.

The application of the faculties for amusement, naturally bears a reference to the mental condition of any particular people. The ancient Romans were devotedly fond of sports in which human life was wantonly sacrificed; and the Spaniards of the present day indulge in spectacles involving great cruelty to animals, and in which human life is sometimes accidentally sacrificed. The former were, as the latter are, in a moral condition of a very low description. In the days of Queen Elizabeth persons of the best condition witnessed plays turning upon incidents and involving language which would now shock the coarsest mind. In those of Charles II. the plays represented before the most illustrious companies were full of deliberate profligacy, which the former were exempt from. The first class was an emanation of the national mind when it was rude, but not positively vicious. And the latter was appropriate to a time when the national mind was positively vicious, but not rude. We must, of our own day, say that the stage has not kept pace with national morality; but many representations are comparatively faultless.

By telling young people, as many pa-

rents do, that amusements are altogether vicious, an act of deception is committed—an act extremely reprehensible, and which the children are more apt to detect and value rightly than may be supposed. They consequently lose respect for the word of their parents, and launch into forbidden indulgences with a recklessness proportioned to the indignation of the deception. If told that amusement is one of the necessaries of life, but ought to be moderately indulged in; and that various amusements, although in themselves innocent, are not conducted in such a way that good men can freely indulge in them, we think that all the necessary caution would be imposed.

**COTTON IN THE RIVER PLATE.**—The cultivation of cotton in the River Plate territories is attracting universal attention and the testimony of Mr. Hutchinson, the British consul at Rosario, is conclusive as to its practicability and the vast regions which by nature are adapted for the production of the great staple. The Buenos Ayres Standard states that the governor of Corrientes had received and distributed a ton and a half of seeds of different descriptions, and, after remarking that the majority of the estancieros of that province had planted or were about to plant cotton, predicts that "in a few years cotton will take the place of wool and hides, and become the first staple article of the Argentine Republic."

A rumor has been current here for months, which we understand has recently received confirmation, to the effect that a daughter of Gay's (a decent colored man resident for many years in Upper Amherst) who was married last spring to a colored man, has been taken South and sold into Slavery. Poor Gay, the father of the girl, is horrified and inconsolable, and declares his intention to get his daughter back if it takes all he is worth to accomplish it. If Slavery under any circumstances be justifiable, the rascal who sold the poor girl should be made feel the Overseer's lash and heaviest whip.—*Sackville Borderer.*