

a city as Boston there was at present (October, 1845) no regular theater, I was told, among other reasons, that if I went into the houses of persons of the middle and even humblest class, I should often find the father of a family, instead of seeking excitement in a shilling gallery, reading to his wife and four or five children one of the best modern novels, which he has purchased for twenty-five cents; whereas, if they could all have left home, he could not for many times that sum have taken them to the play. They often buy, in two or three successive numbers of a penny newspaper, entire reprints of the tales of Dickens, Bulwer, or other popular writers.

Dana, now a lawyer in Boston, and whose acquaintance I had the pleasure of making there, has, in his singularly interesting and original work, entitled "Two Years before the Mast," not only disclosed to us a lively picture of life in the fore-castle, but has shown incidentally how much a crew, composed of the most unpromising materials, rough and illiterate, and recruited at random from the merchant service of different nations, could be improved by associating with a single well-educated messmate. He was able, on one of the few holidays which were granted to them in California by the most tyrannical of captains, to keep them from going ashore, where they would have indulged in dissipation, by reading to them for hours Scott's historical tale of "Woodstock." We ought scarcely, then, to wonder, after what I have said of the common schools of this city, that crowded audiences should be drawn night after night, through the whole winter, in spite of frost and snow, from the class of laborers and mechanics, mingled with those of higher station, to listen with deep interest to lectures on natural theology, zoology, geology, the writings of Shakspeare, the beauties of "Paradise Lost," the peculiar excellencies of "Comus" and "Lycidas," treated in an elevated style by men who would be heard with pleasure by the most refined audiences in London.

Still, however, I hear many complaints that there is a want of public amusements to give relief to the minds of the multitude, whose daily employments are so monotonous that they require, far more than the rich, opportunities of innocent recreation, such