

receiving look, just as a calf will lick the butcher's hand. But cattle do not speak, the creature muttered. "Pray sir, don't hurt me." "My dear," answered I, "you should have spoken to my master. I'm only the journeyman, and must do as I'm bid." This made him cry, which seemed to relieve him, and I do think that I should have cried myself, if I had not heard shouts from the crowd. "Poor lamb! shame, murder!" "Quick," said the Sheriff. "Ready," said I. The reverend gentleman gave me the wink, the drop fell: one kick, and he swayed to and fro, dead as the feelings of the Christian people of England.

"The crowd dispersed, some swearing, some weeping with passionate exclamations, and some laughing, while they cracked blackguard jokes on you and me, and the dangling corpse. They had come for the sight; they would have come to get drunk with excitement; they went back reeling and filthy with the hot debauch. They had come to riot in the passions of fear and pity; some burning with hate, some hardened in heart to me and you—all sunk down in their own respect, ready to make light of pain and blood, corrupted by the recent show, and more fit than ever to make work for us—the judge and the hangman."

O wise law-makers! who think to soften the hearts of the people, to make them gentle and good, to give a feeling of respect for themselves and others, by showing them a sight like this.

Literary Department.

From Grant's Sketches.

THE WRONG SUBJECT.

In many cases lunatics are extremely cunning, and display a remarkable readiness of resources in unexpected emergencies. I could mention many instances of this, but will content myself with one. There was lately, and we are not sure whether there be not now, in one of our asylums, a lunatic, who, on the loss of his reason, in the first instance—for he was repeatedly cured, though he always relapsed again—lived in a neighbouring county. Belonging as he did to a family of wealth and respectability, he was provided with a keeper as soon as the first symptoms of the disease appeared. It was hoped that the unfortunate man's lunacy would be of but temporary duration; and that, by committing him to the care of a keeper, his friends would be spared the pains of sending him to an asylum. His insanity, however, lasted much longer than his relations fondly hoped it would, and it was therefore eventually determined to send him to an institution for the reception of persons labouring under mental aberration, in the hope that through the superior treatment he would there receive, an additional chance of recovery might be afforded him. On the day previous to that appointed for his being sent to the asylum, he overheard his brother giving instructions to his keeper on the subject. He took no notice of the circumstances that night, nor next morning; but when told that he, accompanied by his companion—the name by which his keeper was always called—was to have a long drive in the gig that day, he expressed himself as quite delighted with the idea, and displayed a willingness to take an airing, which strongly contrasted with the reluctance he had before shown to leave the house. After breakfast, the gig was ready, and both started for the country to—about twelve miles distant—in the suburbs of which the asylum was situated. The lunatic was unusually cheerful and docile all the way. And here I should remark, that his manner was sometimes so collected and rational, that it would have been difficult to convince a stranger that his intellects were in the slightest degree affected. On reaching the principal hotel, both parties came out of the gig with a view to get some refreshments, and to enable the keeper to make some necessary preliminary arrangements for the reception of his charge into the asylum. The former, after being some time in the house, quitted the apartment into which they were shown, for a few seconds, and not deeming it necessary either to take the lunatic with him, or to turn the key of the door. The latter, watching the opportunity, agreeably to a previous determination to that effect, stole out of the house the moment the other had quitted the apartment.

On the keeper missing the lunatic on his return, an alarm was given, and in less than five minutes, at least a dozen persons were engaged in active search for the unfortunate man, the suddenness of whose disappearance was quite unaccountable to his keeper. No trace of him was to be found for two hours, and the impression began to become general among all acquainted with the circumstances, that he had by some means or other destroyed himself. Just as all hopes of ever seeing him alive again, were on the eve of expiration, the lunatic appeared, to the infinite astonishment and joy of the person entrusted with his safe keeping. But where he had been during his absence was a point, notwithstanding all the efforts that were made with that view, that could not be elicited from him. Where does the reader suppose he was, or in what way employed? That was a piece of information which his keeper learned to his cost in a few hours after the lunatic's return. The latter had been to the asylum for which his friends had destined himself, and having procured access to the proper party, gave his keeper's name as his own, and represented him as being Mr. So-and-so, the brother of Mr. ———.

As it was not only well known at the asylum that the latter gentleman had a brother who was at that time labouring under insanity, but as, on the previous day, notice had been received that the lunatic was to be sent to the asylum, the remainder of his story was the more readily believed. "Now," says he, addressing himself to the manager of the institution, "the lunatic is remarkably clever and singularly cunning; and—"

"Oh, a great many of our lunatics are so," interrupted the Superintendent of the Institution. "We see instances of cunning and shrewdness every day, which the wisest of us could not exceed."

"I have no doubt of it," observed the lunatic, with the greatest apparent self-possession, and seemingly in the most rational manner possible. "I have no doubt of it; none whatever. I have seen many cases of it myself; but this unhappy man exceeds in cunning and shrewdness any one I have ever heard of. Why he would almost deceive the —"

"Oh, he won't deceive us," interrupted the other hastily; "we are too well accustomed to such things."

"I am am happy to hear it," continued the lunatic. "My only reason for coming out here, before taking him with me, was, that I might acquaint you with the circumstances beforehand."

"That was unnecessary, let him try all the tricks he chooses, they will be lost here," remarked the other, with a self-consequential air, as if he were beyond the power of ingenuity to deceive.

"Very good," observed the lunatic, in a satisfied tone. "I shall bring him here in an hour or so; I have left him at the Fountain Hotel, in the care of a friend."

"We shall be ready for him," said the Superintendent of the place, in that careless sort of tone which is so characteristic of men in authority.

"Good morning, Sir," said the lunatic, turning on his heel as he was about to quit the apartment.

"Good morning," echoed the other, in the same half civil, half reserved tone as before.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" said the lunatic, hastily turning round, and advancing a few steps toward the Manager of the institution: "I beg your pardon, Sir, but I entirely forgot to mention the particular way in which his madness manifests itself."

"Ay, true; this is of some importance to us," observed the other. "In what way is it?"

"Why he has the notion that every one else is mad but himself."

"Oh! that is quite a common impression among persons in his state."

"Yes; but singularly enough, his notion is, that I am the insane party, and that he is my keeper. You may rely upon it, that the very moment we arrive, he will affirm in the most positive terms, and with the utmost earnestness of man-

ner, that such is the fact; and then he will desire you to take me into the asylum."

"Poor fellow!" said the other, with some slight indications of feeling. "Poor fellow!—but there is nothing too extraordinary for these unhappy beings to fancy."

"I thought it right to acquaint you of the fact," said the lunatic, "in order that you might not be taken by surprise."

"Oh, there was not the slightest danger of that. We are too well accustomed to such things, to be deceived either by their affirmations or representations."

"Good morning, then, for the present," said the lunatic, as he quitted the Superintendent's apartment.

"Good morning," mumbled the latter.

In about two hours afterward, a gig, with two persons in it, was seen to drive up to the gate of the institution; it was opened, and both proceeded to the door. As they entered the place—"Here is an unfortunate individual," said the lunatic, addressing himself to the Superintendent, "whom you will be kind enough to take care of."

The other was so confounded by the unexpected observation, that he was unable for some seconds to utter a word.

"Very good," said the Superintendent of the institution, "we'll take care of him," at the same time laying hold of the astonished keeper of the lunatic by the breast of the coat.

"Sir—sir—sir!" stammered the confounded man; "you labour under a mistake: that," pointing to the lunatic, "is the person to be committed to your care. I—I—I—brought him here."

"No doubt of it," said the overseer, still dragging the hapless wight forward, assisted by another servant of the establishment, to the part of the asylum for which he was intended.

"Gracious Heavens, Sir! what is the meaning of this!" exclaimed the luckless party, half suffocated with astonishment and indignation, and struggling hard to disengage himself from the grasp of the parties.

"Come away, my good man, quietly with us," said the Superintendent, soothingly.

"By all that's sacred, Sir!" shouted the other, with the utmost vehemence, "I'm not the lunatic; that is he," again pointing to the actual party.

"I know it all: I told you how it would be," said the latter, in a steady voice, and with the greatest self-possession.

"This way," said the Superintendent, carelessly, still dragging the unfortunate party forward.

"It's a mistake, Sir, by—"

"Oh, there's no mistake, my good man; no mistake," interrupted the guardian of the place.

"No mistake, echoed the lunatic, with the most perfect nonchalance, displaying all the while the most rational demeanor.

"Sir," shouted the unfortunate party; "Sir, are you serious? Are you aware of what you're about?"

"Perfectly serious, perfectly aware of what we're doing," replied the Superintendent, drily.

"Sir, I'm not the lunatic, that is the lunatic," pointing a third time to the proper party. "Let go your hold, or you retain it at your peril," vociferated the other.

"Never mind the poor fellow: I told you how he would conduct himself, and what he would say," observed the lunatic.

A few pulls more, and the astonished and enraged party was actually dragged into his destined apartment, when both the Superintendent and the inferior servant let go their hold. I leave the reader to fancy what were the feelings of the poor wight.

"Quite safe now; he's in our custody now; and you are relieved from all further responsibility; said the Superintendent to the insane party, the moment he had shut the door on the supposed lunatic.

"All right," said the lunatic, as if relieved of a heavy load of responsibility. "The family of the unfortunate man will

make the necessary arrangements as to expense."

"Oh, that's all settled already; the necessary arrangements were made yesterday, when the first intimation of his coming here was sent to us."

"So I understand said the lunatic, in a matter of course sort of style; and with that he quitted the place; and springing into the gig, which had remained at the gate all this time, drove away home again, as if he had been the most sane man in his majesty's dominions.

It is impossible to describe the mingled surprise and consternation with which his relatives and friends were seized on his return home. Their first apprehension, on missing his keeper was, that he had murdered him on the way; and their fears were only partially calmed by his assuring them, in answer to their inquiries as to what had become of his companion, that when they both proceeded to the asylum, the parties having charge of the institution insisted that he was the lunatic, and took him under their care accordingly. An express was sent off to the asylum, to inquire whether the parties had been there at all, when the messenger found, to his unutterable surprise, that the facts were as the lunatic had represented; and as the messenger's statements and protestations as to the mistake which had been committed, were only discredited with those of the unfortunate party himself, the latter was not liberated until the following day.

CHAUCER.

It is natural for a man to reverence anything old. There is a kind of sacredness about everything antique, be it of whatsoever description it may; if any memento of some illustrious man is preserved, be it the most trifling thing, in itself, in the world, it is accounted by its possessor, as priceless. With feelings similar to these, does any one hear the name or read the works of some distinguished author. To the ardent lover of genuine poetry, the name of Chaucer is peculiarly endearing, and calls forth the highest feeling of veneration for the great "Father of English poetry." Chaucer had the genius to lay the foundation of a nation's and a language's poetry; he had a mind, that, in the language of another, "was cast in the mould of poetry." He was one of those men, who are born for their times—who arise to effect a complete revolution, in government, science, or literature. He gives an impetus to English Poetry, which is still felt, and will continue to be, as long as English poets and English poetry exists. His poetry may not be read so much as that of other poets, for the peculiarities of the dialect, in which he wrote, form an obstacle to his poems being generally read. But all having a true taste for poetry—and who seek it and read it, wherever it is found, will not be debarred from perusing his Canterbury Tales. In other productions also, he displays the characteristics of his mind. We will only quote a few lines from the Pardoner's Tale; it is a pretty good description of a drunkard, and is just as apt now as it was in the time of the poet.

"A likerous thing is wine and drunkenness,
Is full of striving and of wretchedness,
O drunken man! disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breath, foul art thou to embrace:
And through thy drunken nose seemeth the sun,
And though thou saidest aye Sampson! Sampson!
And yet, go wot, Sampson drunk ne'er no wine;
Thou fallest as it were a sticket swine!"

It is said that Chaucer was a "classical student, a lawyer, a soldier, a mathematician, and theologian;" but nature made him a poet, and as a poet he is, and will be known. Chaucer was the first great English poet, and it was a long time, before the second arose; yet although the poetic art was not cultivated, still the rich effusions of Chaucer's mind shone with a clear and steady effulgence, and irradiated many a heart. But the Muse left at Chaucer's death, and refused to return for a long, long time. For more than a hundred and fifty years, no poet arose to fill Chaucer's place, even in any tolerable degree; but at length a brighter day dawned upon England, and Spenser appeared to wed more strongly his native tongue and the art of verse, and once more his countrymen recognized the true fire of poetry burning in their own language. Since him the English language has known no such interim, in the department of poetry, as existed between the time of Chaucer and that of Spenser—the immortal author of Paradise Lost followed Shakspeare, and Dryden, and a host of others whose names will perish only with their language, were the successors of the blind Milton. Thus the fire originally kindled by Chaucer, although at one time, suffered nearly to go out, again