

must atone for the large space they will occupy. They will illustrate the political, moral, and religious purposes, which they were designed to accomplish, and to which this species of composition may be rendered effectually subservient.

We begin with the parable of Jotham, the oldest extant, produced on an occasion which fired all the feelings of the man who framed and delivered it. Abimelech, the son of the concubine of Gideon, had, after the death of his father, procured to himself the government of Israel, and to render his usurped authority the more secure, had sealed it with the blood of the sons of his father by his wives, to the amount of seventy persons. Jotham, the youngest alive, found means to escape this remorseless slaughter; and, availing himself of an early opportunity of convening the men of Shechem, the seat of his unnatural brother's government, not daring to trust himself among them, he cried from the summit of a neighbouring hill, and addressed to them the following parable; which contains in its spirit and application one of the finest possible specimens of reproach and censure to be found in this figurative language, "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you." Judges ix. 7-20.

An awful invocation, spoken with a solemn tongue, which could not fail to arrest their attention.

In this parable every thing is produced likely to rouse the passions, to touch the affections, and to awaken a sense of justice, if the principle were not indeed quite extinguished. The services of his father, the humility of his family, who had rather avoided than courted the sovereignty, the meanness as well as the ambition of the man who ruled them, and whom he denominates, in contempt, "a bramble," both because of his illegitimate birth and his cruel qualities—the ingratitude of the Shechemites, who could see this injustice done to the house of their disinterested deliverer, and neither prevent or avenge it—all are finely pourtrayed; but the conclusion, in which he makes a solemn appeal to their consciences, and leaves an awful curse upon their guilt, winds up the address with inimitable grandeur.

Miscellaneous.

LUNATIC ASYLUM AT PALERMO.

Two of the best conducted lunatic asylums in the world are in the kingdom of Naples—one at Aversa, near Capua, and the other at Palermo. The latter is managed by a whimsical Sicilian baron, who has devoted his time and fortune to it, and with the assistance of the government, has carried it to great extent and perfection. The poor are received gratuitously; and those who can afford it enter as boarders, and are furnished with luxuries according to their means.

The hospital stands in an airy situation in the lovely neighbourhood of Palermo. We were received by a porter in a respectable livery, who introduced us immediately to the old baron—a kind-looking man, rather advanced beyond middle life, of manners singularly well-bred and prepossessing. "*Je suis le premier fou*," said he, throwing his arms out, as he bowed on our entrance. We stood in an open court, surrounded with porticos, lined with stone seats. On one of them lay a fat, indolent-looking man, in clean grey clothes, talking to himself with great apparent satisfaction. He smiled at the baron as he passed, without checking the motion of his lips; and three others standing in the doorway of a room, marked as the kitchen, smiled also as he came up, and fell into his train, apparently as much interested as ourselves in the old man's explanation.

The kitchen was occupied by eight or ten people all at work, and all, the baron assured us, mad. One man, about forty, was broiling a steak with the gravest attention. Another, who had been furious till employment was given him, was chopping meat with violent industry in a large wooden bowl. Two or three girls were about, obeying the orders of a middle aged man, occupied with several messes cooking on a patent stove. I was rather incredulous about his insanity, till he took a small bucket and went to the jet of a fountain, and getting impatient from some cause or other, dashed the water upon the floor. The baron mildly called him by name, and mentioned to him as a piece of information, that he had wet the floor. He nodded his head, and, filling his bucket quietly, poured a little into one of the pans, and resumed his occupation.

We passed from the kitchen into an open court, curiously paved, and ornamented with Chinese grottoes, artificial rocks, trees, cottages, and fountains. Within the grottoes reclined figures of wax. Before the altar of one, fitted up as a Chinese chapel, a mandarin was prostrated in prayer. The walks on every side were painted in perspective scenery, and the whole had as little the air of a prison as the open valley itself. In one of the corners was an unfinished grotto, and a handsome young man was entirely absorbed in thatching the ceiling with strips of cane. The baron pointed to him, and said he had been incurable till he found this employment for him. Every thing about us, too, he assured us, was the work of his patients. They had paved the court, built the grottoes and cottages, and painted the walls under his direction. The secret of his whole system, he said, was employment and constant kindness. He had usually about one hundred and fifty patients, and he dismissed upon an average two-thirds of them quite recovered.

We went into the apartment of the women. These, he said, were his worst subjects. In the first room sat eight or ten, employed in spinning, while one infuriated creature, not more than thirty, but quite grey, was walking up and down the floor, talking and gesticulating with the greatest violence. A young girl of sixteen, an attendant, had entered into her humor, and with her arm put affectionately round her waist, assented to every thing she said, and called her by every name of endearment while endeavouring to silence her. When the baron entered, the door creature addressed herself to him, and seemed delighted that he had come. He made several mild attempts to check her, but she seized his hands, and with the veins of her throat swelling with passion, her eyes glaring terribly, and her tongue white and trembling, she continued to declaim more and more violently. The baron gave an order to a male attendant at the door, and beckoning us to follow, led her gently through a small court planted with trees, to a room containing a hammock. She checked her torrent of language as she observed the preparations going on, and seemed amused at the idea of swinging. The man took her up in his arms without resistance, and laced the hammock over her, confining every thing but her head! and the female attendant, one of the most playful and prepossessing little creatures I ever saw, stood on a chair, and at every swing threw a little water on her face as if in sport. Once or twice the maniac attempted to resume the subject of her ravings, but the girl laughed in her face, and diverted her from it, till at last she smiled, and, dropping her head into the hammock, seemed disposed to sink into an easy sleep.

We left her swinging, and went out into the court, where eight or ten women in the grey gowns of the establishment, were walking up and down, or sitting under the trees, lost in thought. One, with a fine intelligent face, came up to me, and courtesied grace-

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