

cry rose higher than before, "A mad dog! a mad dog!"

Never sure was such a confusion known. The dog followed the churchwarden, and the throng followed the dog, running, panting, and shouting loud enough to raise the whole parish; wherever they went, the hubbub increased, women were bawling, children squalling, men shouting, and dogs barking.

When the dog had got to the old yew tree, he ran up the narrow lane leading to Benson's barn, followed hard by his pursuers; but unluckily the gate at the top was shut, and the bars were too close for the dog to get through, so he turned suddenly back again and put his tormentors to the rout. Old Norbury was behind, but in turning round his long leathern apron got between his legs and threw him down, Boughton tumbled over him, Wellings and Sherrod fell over the butcher, and the tailor's apprentice leaped into the old sawpit by the side of the lane.

For a moment all was consternation and dismay, but no sooner did they find themselves unbitten by the dog than the wheelwright and the shoemaker rose from the ground, the butcher picked up his cleaver, the blacksmith his bar of iron, and the tailor's apprentice crept out of the sawpit.

And now again the dog was seen running with as many people after him as before, panting, puffing, and shouting as loud as they could bawl, "A mad dog! a mad dog!"

*And clamour and confusion rung  
The peaceful lanes and fields among.*

The dog passed near the school on the hill, and the boys, being at play, sallied forth, in a band, to join the chase. Farmer Brown was talking to some of his men when the dog crossed a field of clover near the house, the farmer ran into the house for his gun, the shepherd laid hold of a hay fork, and the cowlad picked up a brick end. The dog was almost exhausted, the sun was hotter than ever, the butcher with his red face was out of breath, and old Norbury the blacksmith was full fifty yards behind, the cowlad threw his brickend at the dog and knocked him head over heels, the farmer fired but missed him, the shepherd ran forwards with his hay fork, but the dog crept through a hole in the hedge, rolled down the steep bank into the Stone Quarry Lane, and slowly padded along towards Pike Pool.

None but the farmer, the shepherd, and the cowlad were able to keep near the dog, which was at last killed by the shepherd, who knocked him on the head just as he scrambled up a sand bank.

Thus ended the hubbub and confusion, the running, the panting, the bawling, the squalling, and the clamorous cry of "A mad dog! a mad dog!" the boys returned to school and the throng moved slowly back towards the village in triumph.

The farmer led the way with his gun in his hand, the shepherd shouldered his hay fork, the wheelwright and shoemaker carried their mop and besom, the butcher bore his cleaver, and the blacksmith his iron bar.

When they arrived at the Malt Shovel, Perrins the village schoolmaster was standing under the trees at the door talking with the exciseman. Perrins was a square, thin man, about fifty years of age, dressed in a threadbare suit of black cloth; meekness and intelligence might be read in his face, nor was there one in the whole village who did not respect him,

*He was a man who, upright in his ways,  
Had lived in happier times, and better days,  
And was, by all the rustics round, confest,  
Of village schoolmasters to be the best.*

When the Farmer and the rest of the throng sat down on the benches under the trees and began to boast of killing the dog, "My good neighbours," said Perrins, "I am afraid that you have not so much to boast of as you imagine; you have killed the dog it is true, but the dog was no more mad than I am."

Just as he said this, old Norbury was lifting a pot of porter to his lips, for the chase after the dog, and the hot, broiling sun had sadly parched him, but he lowered the pot to reply to the schoolmaster, "Not mad, master Perrins? I reckon that if you had seen him, with the foam in his mouth, when he turned up the lane, you would be of another mind; if ever dog was mad, he was!"

Here Norbury took a hearty draught at the porter pot.

"And so say I," said the butcher, "never did a madder dog run on four legs; but we have done for him."

"There can be no doubt at all about the dog being mad," cried the farmer, "but mad or not mad, he is harmless enough now."

"If the dog really was mad," replied the schoolmaster, "he must have been driven mad by the mischievous prank that was played him. I have made it my business to inquire into the matter; and I find that the poor animal was lying, quietly enough, half asleep in widow Perkins' back door till some unlucky lads tied a tin kettle to his tail; then he set off, sure enough, like a mad thing, but had he been left to himself, all might have ended well; just, however, as he had got rid of the tin kettle the cry was raised, 'A mad dog!' and then the poor thing was hunted to death."

The farmer, the shepherd, the wheelwright, the shoemaker, the butcher, and the blacksmith, looked at each other, for they believed every word that the schoolmaster had spoken, and Perrins thus went on:

"We are too apt, my good neighbours, to believe in every idle report, and to join in persecuting the miserable; I am sorry for poor widow Perkins, it is not more than

three years ago that her son, as honest a lad as ever was born, got a place as footman in a gentleman's family. The gentleman was robbed, and some evil disposed person spread the report that young Perkins must be the thief. He was turned away, every body shunned him, and driven to distraction by want, and reproach, he at last became a thief in reality, and a month ago was transported. It was found out when too late, that Perkins was innocent of robbing his master; but that did not signify, he had a bad name given him, and that occasioned his destruction, just like the poor dog that you have all hunted to death.

"Let these things be a lesson to us all, that we may be more careful how we join in reports that may be spread by slander, and in cruel persecutions, that may lead to the destruction of either man or beast."

The farmer and the shepherd walked away, the wheelwright and the shoemaker took their leave, the butcher and the tailor's apprentice went off together, and old Norbury, the blacksmith, once more entered his smithy leaving the meek and merciful schoolmaster alone with the exciseman.

*ANECDOTE.—"An excellent clergyman, possessing much knowledge of human nature, instructed his large family of daughters, in the ordinary practice of music. They were all observed to be exceedingly amiable and happy. A friend inquired if there was any secret in his mode of education. He replied, 'when any thing disturbs their temper, I say to them sing, and if I hear them speaking against any person, I call them to sing to me, and so they sung away all causes of discontent, and every disposition to scandal.' Such a use of this accomplishment, might serve to fit a family for the company of angels. Young voices around the domestic altar, breathing sacred music, at the hour of morning and evening devotion are a sweet touching accompaniment."*

*JUSTICE.—Sir Matthew Hale, when chief Baron of the exchequer, was very exact, and impartial in his administration of justice. He would never receive any private addresses, or recommendations from the greatest persons in any matter in which justice was concerned. One of the first peers of England, went once to his chamber, and told him, that having a suit in law to be tried before him; he was then come to acquaint him with it, that he might the better understand it when it should be heard in court; upon which Sir Matthew interrupted him, and said, he did not deal fairly to come to his chamber about such affairs; for he never received any information of causes but in open court, where both parties were to be heard alike, and would not suffer him to go on. The Duke went away, and complained of it to the king, as a rudeness that was not to be borne. But his Majesty bade him*