

the frame; but what is that to him whose limited service it is to watch and ward, to keep them in and keep them out? To weep is not his vocation, who sits at the door. He has no part in the drama, and is no more bound to suffer than they who snuff the candles for the stage. His emotions are for home consumption, his sympathies are elsewhere, left behind with his better coat and hat, and well it is so, or they would soon be worn to tatters—all—heart, cloth, and beaver.

What, then, is this "Black Maria," so jocularly named, yet so sad in its attributes? The progress of time brings new inventions, necessity leads to many deviations from the beaten track of custom, and the criminal, in earlier days dragged through the crowded streets by the inexorable officers of the law, exposed to the scorn, derision or pity, as the case might be, of every spectator, now finds a preliminary dungeon awaiting him at the very portals of justice, a locomotive cell, a penitentiary, upon wheels. He is incarcerated in advance, and he begins his probationary term at the steps of the court-house. Once there was an interval,

*"Some space between the theatre and grave,"*

some breathing time from judge and jury to the jailer—a space to be traversed with the chances incident to a journey. Constables on foot are but flesh and blood, after all, and an adroit blow from a brawny thief has often laid them prostrate. A short quick evasion of the body has extricated the collar from many a muscular grasp, and once it was a thing of not unfrequent occurrence that the rogue flew down the street, diving into all sorts of interminable alleys, while panting tipstaves "icld" after him in vain. There were no cowardly sneaking advantages taken then—enterprise was not cabined in a perambulating chicken-coop—valour had room to swing its elbow, and some opportunity to trip up the heels of the law. But as things are at present managed, a man is in prison as he traverses the city—in prison, with but a plank between him and the moving concourse of the free—in prison, while the horses start at the crack of the whip—in prison, as he whirls around the corner—in prison yet moving from place to place—jolted in prison—perhaps upset in prison. He hears the voices of the people—the din of traffic—the clamours of trade—the very dogs run barking after him and he is jarred by rough collisions; but still he is in prison—more painfully in prison, by the bitterness of intruding contrast, than if he were immured beyond all reach of

exterior sound, and when the huge gates of his place of destination creak upon their hinges, to the harsh rattling of the keeper's key, the captive, it may be, rejoices that the busy world is no longer about him, mocking his misery with its cheerful hum.

If it were in accordance with the spirit of the age to refine upon punishment and to seek aggravation for misery, the "Black Maria" would perhaps furnish a hint that the pang might be rendered sharper by secluding the felon from liberty by the most minute interval—that freedom might be heard yet not seen—as the music of the ball-room fitfully reaches the chamber of disease and suffering—that he might be in the deepest shadow, yet know that light is beaming close around him; in the centre of action, yet deprived of its excitements—isolated in the midst of multitudes—almost jostled by an invisible concourse—dead yet living—a sentient corpse.

It is not then to be marvelled at, that the "Black Maria" causes a sensation by her ominous presence—that labour rests from toil when the sound of her wheels is heard—that the youthful shrink and the old look sad, as she passes by. Nor is it strange that even when empty she is encircled by a curious but meditative crowd, scanning the horses with a degree of reverential attention which unofficial horses, even if they were Barbary coursers or Andalusian steeds, might vainly hope to excite. The very harness is regarded with trepidation, and the driver is respectfully scrutinized from head to foot, as if he were something more or less than man; and if the guard does but carelessly move his foot, the throng give back lest they should unwittingly interfere with one who is looked upon as the ultimatum of criminal justice. Should the fatal entrance be left unclosed, see how the observant spectator manoeuvres to obtain a knowledge of its interior, without approaching too closely, as if he laboured under an apprehension that the hungry creature would yawn and swallow him, as it has swallowed so many, body, boots, and reputation. Now, he walks slowly to the left hand, that he may become acquainted with every particular of the internal economy afforded by that point of view. Again, he diverges to the right, on another quest for information. Do not be surprised, if he were even to "squat," and from that graceful posture glance upwards to ascertain the condition of the floor, or sidle about to note the style of the lynchpins. A mysterious interest envelopes the "Black Maria," every feature about her re-