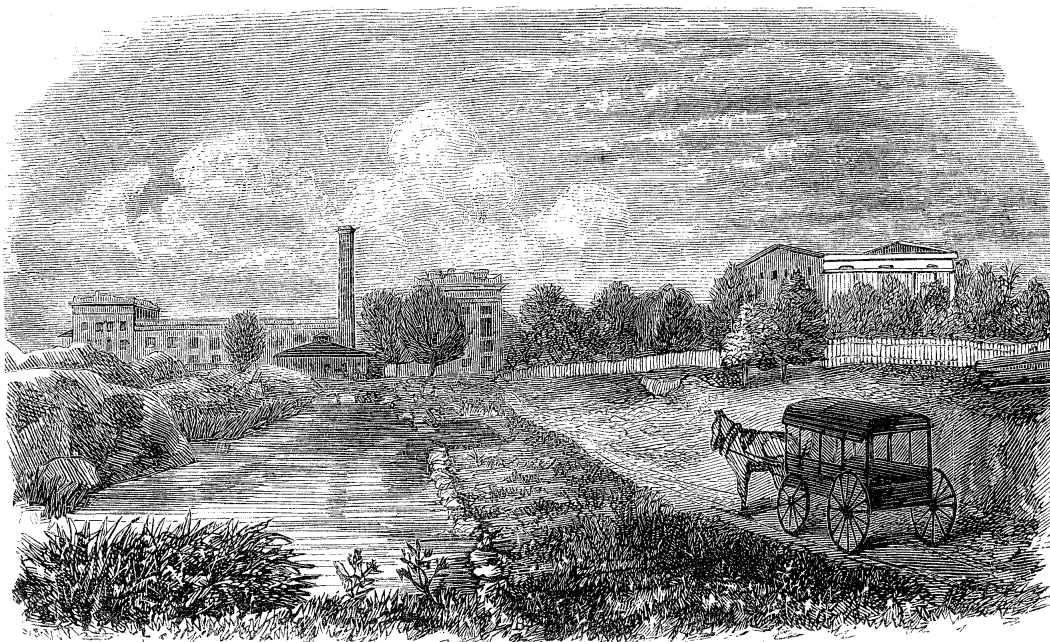


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THE ASYLUM, FROM ROAD TO STEAMBOAT LANDING.

BLACKWELL'S ISLAND LUNATIC ASYLUM.

AT no very distant date I had the misfortune to be a patient in the Institution of which this article treats. It is not necessary for me to describe the form in which my affection manifested itself. I only mention it here to show that I have had ample means of seeing the details of the management of the Asylum. Since my recovery I have as a guest visited the Institution, and thus produced the drawings and narrative which are now commended to the reader's attention. Of their truthfulness I think there will be no question. Feeling no malice, I have certainly set down nothing in that spirit; and there is little which the managers could wish me to extenuate.

Blackwell's Island, notwithstanding its beauty, has no very good name. This arises from the fact that the Penitentiary was the first building erected upon it, and the island for a long time was known only as the site of that abode of crime. To none of the other structures it contains, indeed, would one like to be compelled to go—to the Work-house, the Alms-house, the Hospital, or the Insane Asylum; yet to the last two a compulsory visit might well be unattended with disgrace.

The Lunatic Asylum stands at that end of

the island farthest from the city of New York, and is, as regards scenery, far better located than any one of the others. On the eastern side Ravenswood, with its luxuriant foliage and elegant architecture, appears. From the opposite bank of the river Bellevue Gardens and several noble mansions with their boat-houses and terraces look down. Then the eye, glancing unrestrained up the stream, sees the historic "Hell-Gate," with the adjacent smiling village of Astoria; farther on, the leafy shores of Ward's Island discover themselves. The picturesque ferry-boat landing on the Manhattan side at Eighty-sixth Street, with its surroundings of gayly-painted skiffs and sail-boats, and the Hotel rearing aloft its old rickety walls, form other objects of interest as the attention again reverts toward the city. In summer the river presents a continued scene of animation. Graceful yachts, helped by the swift current, glide by with even more than their wonted speed; the mammoth Sound steamboats plow past with increasing roar and turbulence of waters; and now and then skeleton race-boats, propelled by sturdy arms and active muscles, shoot swiftly along.

The Lunatic Asylum comprises three sepa-

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VOL. XXXII.—No. 189.—T

rate buildings, known as the "Asylum," the "Lodge," or Mad-house, and the "Retreat." I have named them in the order in which they are situated, the Asylum, or original and largest structure, being the one nearest the end of the island. This, though displaying irregularity in the architectural plan, is one of the most imposing edifices under the control of the Commissioners of Public Charities and Corrections. It consists of two wings, forming a right angle with their octagonal centre. Of these, one is inhabited by female, the other by male patients. The octagon is devoted to offices, parlors, and physicians' apartments.

Each wing has three stories and an attic, which are divided into bedrooms on either side of a long hall. These halls are inscribed at their entrance, Male or Female Halls, 1, 2, or 3, according to their elevation and the sex of the denizens. The attic contains the sick-room.

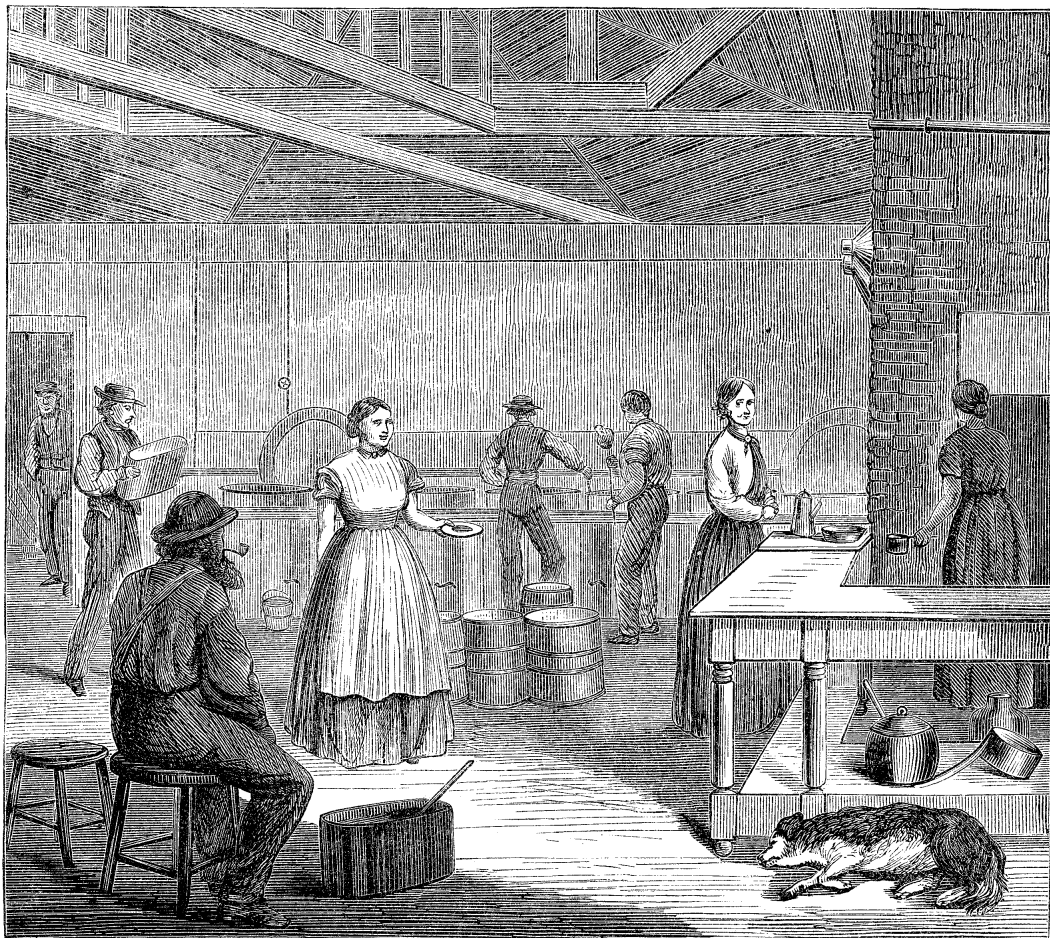
The Lodge or Mad-house, to which access is never attainable by visitors, is the place of confinement for the most violent cases. All newcomers are, however, generally placed there until they disclose their characters. Then, if sufficiently mild, they are removed to the Asylum or the Retreat. The Retreat is a building formerly belonging to the Work-house, the institution adjacent to the Insane Asylum. It is now a receptacle for female patients, who usually outnumber the male more than two to one.

In the Lodge there are four halls given up to females, while but two are inhabited by males.

There are other buildings which, though untenanted by the insane, are rendered necessary by the size of the Institution. Of these the most important is the Cook-house, where the food is prepared for use. This consists mainly of soup, boiled by means of steam-pipes in stationary kettles. From these it is carried in large tin vessels to the different halls of the three main structures. The engine-room occupies more than one-third of the Cook-house, inasmuch as, besides that necessary for cooking, it generates steam on which the warmth of the Asylum depends during winter. The washing of all the patients' clothes is performed in the same building, mainly by machinery.

The Institution is supplied with water by submarine pipes connecting with the Croton reservoir. Large tanks in the several edifices keep up the supply when, as is not infrequently, the pipes are injured by anchors or otherwise.

Among the outhouses is a stable, a carpenter's shop, a blacksmith's forge, and a paint shop. A dead-house also figures near by. Four large wooden structures are erecting for the benefit of patients sent from other institutions upon the island—the Work-house, Alms-house, etc. When typhus may rage it is probable they will also be used as a fever hospital.



THE COOK-HOUSE.



RECEIVING PATIENTS—THE EXAMINATION.

The Asylum grounds contain some fifteen or twenty acres (the island containing one hundred), and produce all the vegetables, except potatoes and turnips, used by the Institution. Of potatoes and turnips about two hundred bushels each are raised; tomatoes, two hundred bushels; carrots, one hundred; beets, one hundred and fifty; parsnips, one hundred and forty; other kinds in due proportion. The tilling of the land, like most of the work about the Asylum, is done by patients under the guidance of a paid official.

A considerable portion of the grounds is devoted to yards for the benefit of the insane, and an extensive garden blooms with many-colored flowers. Rarities are not infrequent. An ornamental summer-house adds to the charm of the spectacle, while grand old willows, horse-chestnuts, and button-woods, with other trees, make the scene immediately contiguous to the main Asylum exceedingly picturesque by their diversified and luxuriant foliage. The carriage road to the principal entrance runs through a densely-shaded avenue, and a fine vista presents itself—at the end of which the blue water gleaming in the sun, dotted here and there with a white sail, delights the eye. The aspect of nature can not be too highly estimated in its effects upon the better class of patients; it is the most prominent alleviation of the suf-

ferings they feel in being separated from friends, and for no sin confined in durance vile. It affords them that on which they can build many a pleasant thought, and helps them to relieve their minds of the fancies which oppress them.

Among other noticeable objects pertaining to the grounds is a pond of considerable size, which, though of rather brackish water, is useful in the winter, furnishing ice for the Work-house and the Asylum, and good skating for the officers and certain patients.

There are fifty-six officers, attendants, and employes salaried by the Commissioners. Of these the resident Physician holds the entire executive power. There are usually three assistant physicians and a chaplain attached to the Institution. An engineer and two watchmen are among the officials. The duties of the latter extend during the night as well as day. There are two attendants to each hall in the Asylum and Retreat. The Lodge is presided over by a female superintendent, and each hall has a single keeper. The Matron has the charge of the general housekeeping in all the buildings, and stands highest in rank among the female attachés. A gardener and a cook are noticeable, as well as the attendants in the sick-room. The laundry, wash-house, and kitchen include most of the other employes.

The number of patients is usually about 800.

More than one-half—perhaps two-thirds—are of foreign nativity: Ireland annually furnishing 150, and Germany 60. The usual number of admissions during a year is 340, while discharges and deaths amount to a similar number. Of male patients who are single there are more than of those who are married, while with females it is the reverse. The female majority in respect to age lies with those between 30 and 40 years; the male between 20 and 30. The term of residence of those discharged is generally from three to six months, though not a few have spent three years in the Asylum, and some from six to eighteen. The latter are usually discharged unimproved.

I shall not trouble my readers with medical subdivisions of the forms of insanity; suffice it to say that mania afflicts more than four-fifths of the patients—dementia, or idiocy, and general paralysis being the misfortune of the remainder. Mania includes the violent and raving madman and those oppressed by a single delusion. From six to twelve improper subjects are annually sent to the Institution. These are mostly persons laboring under a short-lived delirium occasioned by intoxicating drink, though sometimes a criminal, relieved for a time from the penalty of his crime by a plea of insanity, makes his appearance from a court of justice.

Even where the criminal is really a lunatic it is not considered that the Asylum is the proper place for him, there being at Auburn, erected by the State, an asylum for insane convicts, which combines as far as may be the comforts of an asylum with the strength of a prison.

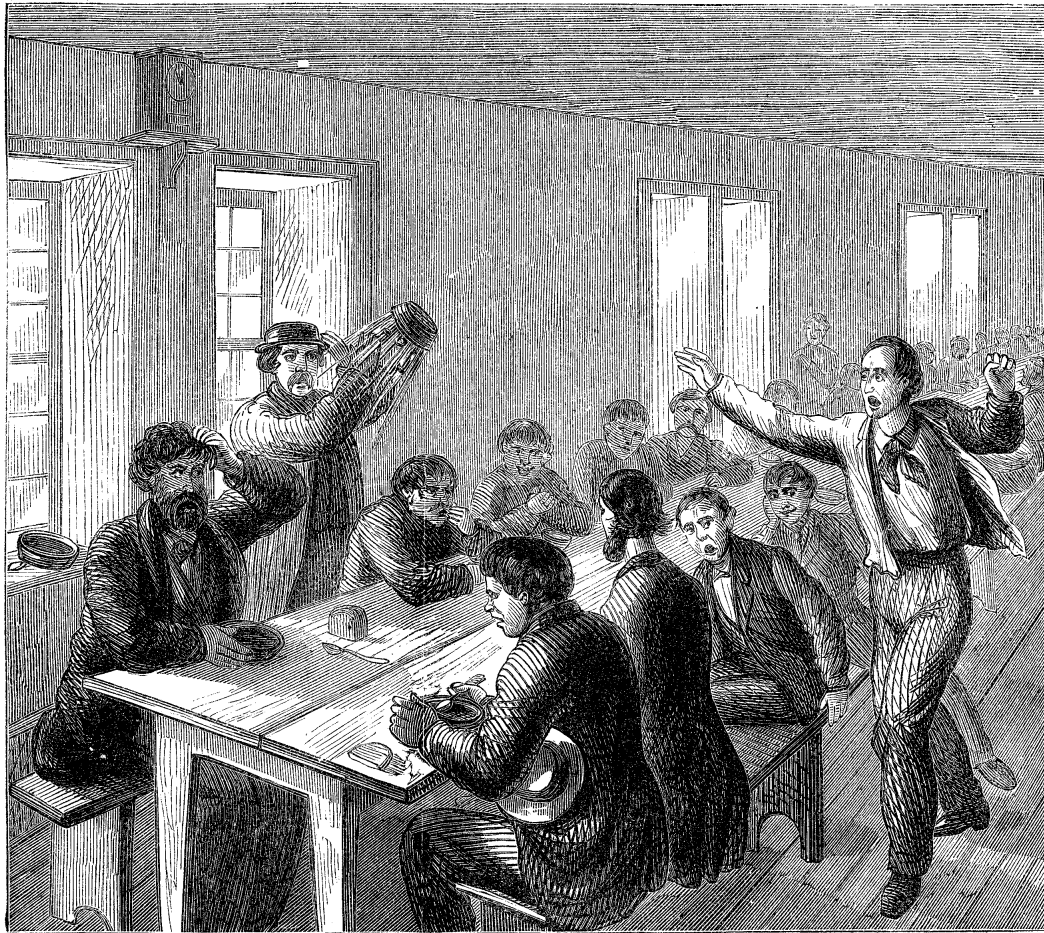
In the construction of ordinary asylums attention is given more to the homelike comforts than to the great strength of the establishment. It is the moral power that holds the patients more effectually than strong rooms, and probably there is no asylum in the country, except that at Auburn, from which a sane man could not readily escape. In the Asylum on Blackwell's Island there are no rooms really stronger than the usual sleeping-rooms of the hotels in the city, and the only appearance of extra strength is in the cast-iron sashes of the windows, which might be readily broken. They are well adapted, however, to common cases of insanity, but are insecure for the criminal insane with dangerous propensities, and afford to those who feign the disease, in order to escape punishment for their offenses, ready facilities for elopement. One of the unhappiest results of the reception of this class is, that the other insane feel truly degraded by the association, and are fearful that their own lives are endangered. Many of the patients are exceedingly sensitive, and feel deeply any real or fancied injury or injustice. It becomes with them a matter of complaint that murderers even occupy the same halls with them and sit at the same table. Expressions of feeling arouse a spirit of ill-will and antagonism, and serious quarrels and difficulties result.

There are usually between thirty and forty persons with suicidal tendencies confined in the Institution. Most of their manifestations are, however, made previous to admission. The greatest care is taken to prevent the success of their attempts at self-destruction while incarcerated, yet one or two annually effect their purpose. The nature of the attempts is various: jumping from windows and heights, hanging, starvation, strangulation, cutting throat or arm, drinking laudanum or morphine, and beating the head against the wall are enumerated. Considering the disproportion of the sexes within the Asylum, it may be stated that such cases are equally divided between them.

The clank of chains and fetters is no longer heard in the Asylum. All means are taken to conceal every prison-like appearance. Iron doors are nowhere seen; entrance to the different halls is, of course, only obtainable by a key; but, though extremely strong, ordinary locks are used; bolts and bars are not visible. The iron gratings of the windows correspond in their openings to the size of the panes of glass before them, so that a casual glance would detect nothing peculiar. The most violent cases are put simply into a cell containing only a mattress and a wooden vessel; and where that is insufficient to prevent harm a strait-jacket of bed-tick closely fastening the arms to the sides is used; but it is rarely worn.

The same care now extends to the clothes of the patients; these were formerly of striped cloth resembling that upon convicts in other buildings on the Island. Within a few years they have been exchanged for suits of navy blue, so that patients in whom some degree of sanity exists present a respectable appearance; the females are attired in calico gowns. Appreciation of their apparel is a great inducement to cleanliness and neatness. The majority of the insane are furnished with clothes by the Commissioners, though many are provided by friends and relatives with such necessities. At times, however, some of these are not allowed to wear their own garments, their destructive natures necessitating stronger and less valuable attire. Most of the inmates of the Lodge are thus clad.

The food, as I have said, consists mostly of soup with spoon meat, the impracticability of allowing the insane the use of knives and forks rendering this essential. The bill of fare is not luxurious, though better than in other institutions upon the Island. Beef soup, really meriting great commendation, is served three times weekly for dinner; mutton and salt beef once. The soup is thickened with Indian meal, and contains a variety of vegetables. Occasionally, in the season, other vegetables, such as radishes, accompany the main dish; but this is seldom. The bread is very good, and of all edibles furnished there is always an abundance. Friday is a black day with those of squeamish stomachs, for mush and molasses is then provided instead of soup. The breakfast



AT DINNER.

is composed of bread and coffee; the supper of bread, butter, and tea. Frequently, as patients are recovering from their disease, and manifest a desire for employment, they are furnished with it, and attendants' fare; this has greater variety, and includes roast meats, with coffee.

It would be desirable that each unfortunate should occupy a separate bedroom, and, as far as possible, this is done; but the overcrowded state of the Institution prevents it as a general rule. In one hall of the Retreat there are no bedrooms, and bedsteads line the walls merely. In most of the small bedrooms, also, two sleep, though on separate mattresses. Disturbances occasionally arise through this arrangement.

Most of the patients are from the lower ranks of life. They are in general friendless or poor. Persons able to afford it, and gifted with natural feeling, would, of course, prefer to send their diseased relatives or friends to other than a charitable institution. Many, however, arrive, committed by the city magistrates, their friends being ignorant of their affliction or whereabouts until weeks, or perhaps months, after their presence in the Asylum. Manifesting dangerous symptoms in the street, they are arrested by the police, brought to the station-house, thence to the Tombs; the physicians there file a certificate, and the steamboat transfers them to the Lunatic Asylum.

The time of many is mainly passed in courting from one end of the long hall to the other, some rapidly, with violent gestures and occasional exclamations, invectives, and oaths; others, with dejected countenances and hanging heads, pace wearily to and fro. Some will stand or sit motionless for hours together, and of them there are those who would not go to their meals unless bid. Some, again, are loquacious, sociable with their companions, delighted at the presence of visitors; while others sedulously avoid all society, and will not speak even if addressed.

The main treatment on which reliance is placed for cure consists in sedatives and tonics, the freedom from active excitements, and the establishment of correct habits. As happiness or unhappiness in all depends much upon mental training, so whatever tends to establish an evenness of temper aids not only in preventing insanity, but in actually restoring the diseased mind to its normal condition.

By far the majority of those in confinement being of an uncultivated class, it would be difficult to find means to alleviate the weariness they experience in their seclusion. But there are many to whom books and papers would prove highly valuable. Of these and such like inducements to mental ease the Institution exhibits a great deficiency.

The position in this Asylum of a patient from the better classes of society is not enviable. Crazy though he may be, he has yet the instincts, prejudices, and habits of the class to which he belongs, and being in daily companionship with his opposites in every respect his sensibilities are shocked on every side. Amidst the ignoble mass there are at times scholars and gentlemen. Men who have obtained distinction in their various walks of life find in this Institution a temporary resting-place or a final abode. Clever actors, fine musicians, artists, literary men, lawyers, doctors, and clergymen have been numbered among the inmates. Insanity, like death, is no respecter of persons.

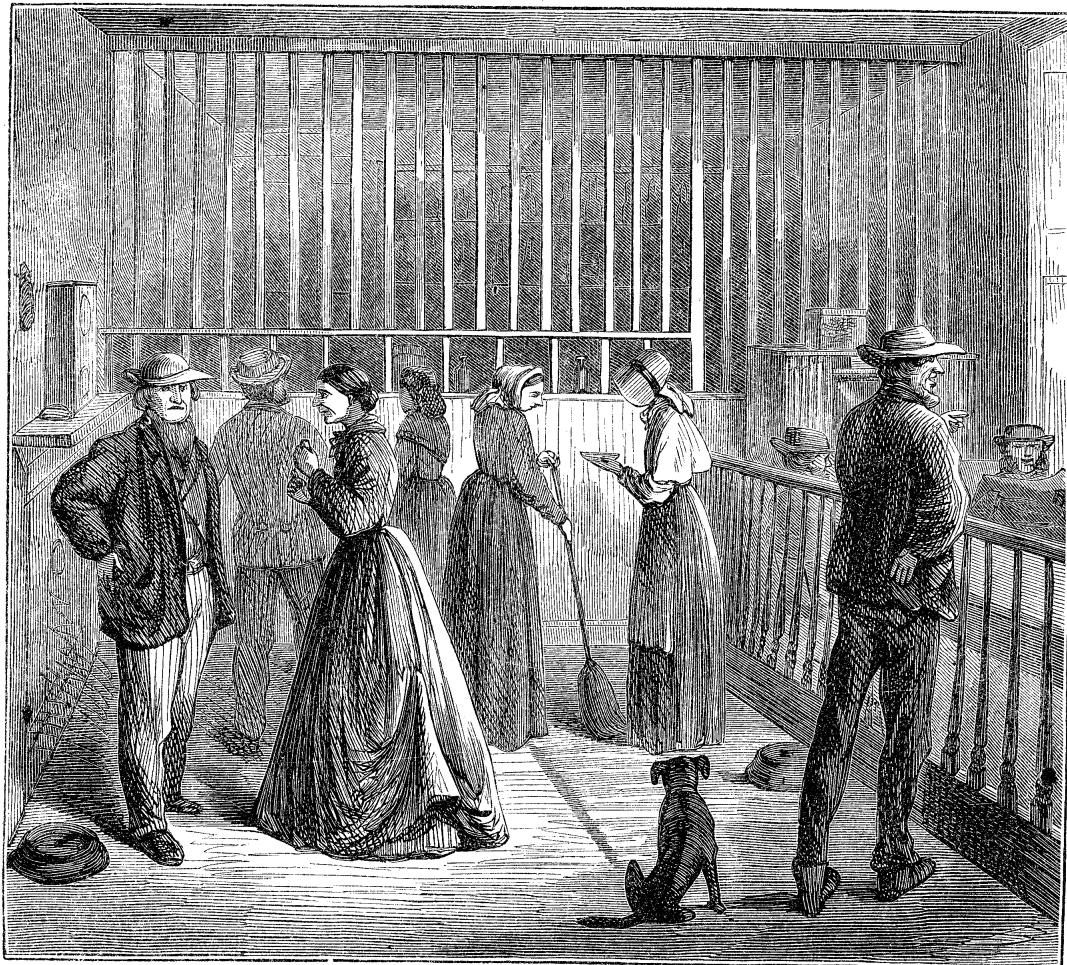
Visitors to this Institution, if they come provided with the proper ticket, will, upon presenting it to the clerk, be shown through a single female hall of the main building, usually Hall 3. I have supposed that ladies are of the party; if none but gentlemen are present, they are escorted in addition through male Hall 3.

In these two halls the quieter and better class of patients are confined. The Lodge and the Retreat are, as a rule, closed from public curiosity, the indecencies in both word and action of many of the inmates rendering them unfit for scrutiny. The reason for refusing all applications to see more of the lunatics, is the

unhealthy excitement induced by an influx of strange faces among them, reviving, as it necessarily must, old associations and starting anew delusions which have almost died out. Visitors, though always treated with politeness, are not at all desired by the physicians of the place. The cleanliness and neatness everywhere apparent always commands admiration. The white-washed walls and spotless floors show constant attention; certain of the patients, under the guidance of attendants, sweeping and dusting the boards daily, and thoroughly scrubbing them once a week.

After contemplating the strangely attired, close shaven residents, chatting, perhaps, with some mild-eyed, ladylike monomaniac, shuddering at the approach of a haggard wretch with uncouth gesticulations, receiving urgent prayers from many to effect their release, the sight-seer descends the long winding staircase of the octagon and proceeds to the grounds for further spectacles.

Here, if the weather be favorable, he will doubtless find inclosed in a yard, profusely set with trees, a motley crowd of men. Almost every variety of dishabille is visible. Some are playing or wrestling with each other, some engaged in altercation, some in quiet social converse. Occasionally one starts as on a foot-race, another jumps as if for a wager. Sing-



THE OFFICE AND DRUGGERY

ing, preaching, howling is heard, producing a Babel of the most discordant noises.

Having gazed sufficiently the summer visitor strolls into the garden, the season being summer, and there consulting his watch learns he has just time in which to walk the quarter of a mile to the steamboat dock, and the whistle of the vessel coming up the river quickens his steps. He is soon after landed at Twenty-sixth Street, joyful at having "done" the Lunatic Asylum; but that he has seen and heard merely a hundredth part of what is most interesting the succeeding conversations will, I hope, prove.

With a stranger the insane are often slow to unbosom themselves. If I occasionally seem to push the sportive vein too far, to be insufficiently filled with compassion for misfortune, the reader will please accept as my excuse that I, too, have been a madman, and feel entitled to greater license than the ordinary pleasure-seeker.

The female patients (as well as the male) exhibit every variety of ugliness of feature. It would seem, from a general survey of the inmates, that the demon of insanity prefers the most repelling abode. The "fair" sex is really represented but three or four times among the five or six hundred women in the Institution, so at least to the casual spectator it would appear. Their close-cropped hair, slovenly attire, and maniacal expression, are doubtless among the causes of this. And again many have contracted a habit of sitting in the broiling sun until the skin peels off from their noses.

If a painter wished to depict the Witch Scene in Macbeth he would here find the finest models—yet prominent among all monstrosities, a very paragon of hideousness, stands Ann Barry. The pen is inadequate to describe her, but the pencil, in the accompanying illustration, may help the imagination of the reader. Contemplation of her grotesque bulk induces the thought that, like the monster in "Frankenstein," she became distracted through the sensation her appearance ever caused among her fellows. Her gigantic head with its red, bushy, unkempt hair, is supported by a huge misshapen body covered usually by a coarse blue cotton gown, while her arms and hands would astonish a prize-fighter. Upon meeting her for the first time one experiences a feeling akin to awe. Notwithstanding her terrific aspect, this singular creature is of a most tractable disposition and very useful in the Cook-house, carrying heavy vessels. Her conversational powers are not extensive; to all questions she replies by monosyllables, given in a deep bass voice like the growl of a wearied lion. Her appetites are strong, yet she is not devoid of love for the fine arts. Music, or what doubtless to her is such, is her great delight. Would you fill her soul with soft content, place in her hands a guitar. Hugging it as though it were the idol of her heart, she will sit absorbed in ecstasy for a whole afternoon producing a monotonous tum, tum, tum. Though



ANN BARRY.

stupid, Ann seems always happy, and doubtless is one of those who are satisfied with their position in the Asylum.

With her there is usually associated in the mind of the resident her fellow-patient, Norah. She has the same carrotty locks with the same frizzled texture (though not so profuse). But while Ann is sedate and rarely smiles, a continual grin overspreads the innocent face of Norah. To glance at her is to excite a simper; a protracted look will influence her risibles to such an extent as to close her eyes and involve her whole frame in wriggles and contortions; then a pleasant expression upon your face, and she will beat the ground with both feet, turn her body from side to side, and amidst chuckles and snickers conceal her beaming countenance awkwardly with both hands and her apron. All this would be very pretty in a child of three years of age, but it is supremely ludicrous in the forty-five years Norah numbers, and the spectator's mirth soon equal hers. To her concluding grunt, "Ugh, ugh! go away! go away, there! stop it!" he is hardly able to attend. Upon her picture being taken she went through every variety of emotion, ending with suspicious glances at the artist, when her modesty burst forth in tears, evading all the endearing words and efforts of the attendants to repress. Norah always impresses her acquaintance as an elderly and overgrown baby. When provoked she wears the sullen, angry look of a spoiled boy, and emits a roar, intermingled with broken words, while she stamps savagely upon the ground. In person Norah is rather un-



NORAH.

wieldy. She may frequently be found at the entrance to Female Hall 3, where she assumes the sinecure office of door-keeper, ever seeming in an intense state of satisfaction with nothing in particular, and indulging in a vacant reverie. She may also be occasionally met carrying pails of water from the Cook-house. Her intelligence is sufficient to enable her to eat and drink, wear her clothes and sleep when she should. She also reads in the visages of those about her

their expression, a scowl rendering her frantic; her mental acumen is not otherwise noteworthy.

It is customary, during pleasant weather, for the female attendants in the Lodge to give their charges an early morning airing. In troops of fifteen or twenty, two by two, these fantastically garbed patients proceed through the walks of the Asylum grounds. Prominent in their midst is one styled the "Queen," who may be seen in the sketch of the Doctor's Morning Round through the Lodge, rejoicing in her crown of artificial flowers and old rags. The usual number of sceptre-bearers are present in this Institution; there are some six kings; Prince Albert rows in a small boat belonging to the resident physician.

Now and then, from the motley ranks prom-enading, there will dart some particularly hilarious member who is soon brought back by threats, entreaties, or force. The principal of these undisciplined stragglers is a gross, portly woman, who with wheedling smiles on her sensual countenance attacks every man who may happen to be a few yards off with demands for tobacco. If her request is complied with she pockets her treasure, pats the donor on the back or cheek, in token of thanksgiving, and rejoins her companions at a pace scarcely warranted by her unwieldy proportions.

Another oddity among these poor creatures is one who seems to imagine herself a steam-boiler, her mouth being the valve. At the bidding of her keeper, or for her own ease, she will emit, during her excursions, a screech that would do honor to the whistle of the largest boat on the river. It is given with a passionless expression and an energy of purpose that are extremely comical. Leaving her and her associates to wander leisurely back to the Lodge, let us pass that building and enter the gate of



THE DOCTOR'S MORNING ROUND.



THE RETREAT AND YARD.

the yard of the Retreat. Here we are at once assailed by the complaining old maid Miss B.

This lady is a neatly attired personage, some forty years of age, of a plain but by no means unpleasant cast of features. Her hair is very gray and in thick curls. The only peculiarity in her appearance is induced by the great care which she takes of herself, and consists of a mask made from a pasteboard box, with two rough holes cut therein, to protect her skin from the sun. A fan of the same material is held in her right hand. The left is, as a rule, occupied in buttonholing visitors. The story of her wrongs is endless. She wishes that she could write a book to horrify the world with her dire revelations of the fiendish corruptions and abuses that exist in the Asylum. She is cognizant of murders that have been committed, and gazing carefully about informs you in a thrilling whisper that she has more awful secrets but dare not breathe them: her life would be taken should she do so. Her discourse is coherent, and she is generally judged sane by those who talk with her. The writer himself once had that belief. He knew what it was to be treated as if crazy. Since, however, she rushed up to him one day, dissolved in tears and crying "outrage," and exhibited a bruised finger, he has changed his opinion concerning her. The unheard of atrocity by which such serious

injury was inflicted was caused by a frolicsome patient snatching from her lap some needlework. Miss B. pursuing her to regain the goods stumbled against a table and fell. Ten arsons and forty assassinations were as nothing to this villainy, to judge from her denunciations.

If it were not for that girl she would never have stumbled, if it were not for that stumble she would not have hurt herself, the girl was guilty of all—a perfect monster, should such things be, etc., etc. Poor Miss B. you are crazy, no doubt of it; but there are others as crazy unconfined. If you had friends willing to support you, you would not remain here. You are just insane enough to be wretched.

Miss B. is rivaled in loquacity by Mrs. N., who, however, possesses a far wilder imagination. Her style is different also, being that of a preacher. At times she has informed the world in general, and the writer in particular, that the whole Institution belongs to her, not a rag worn on the place but is hers; but that her servants somehow have got the upperhand and order her when she should order them, though a reckoning will surely come. Her mood changing, she has declared that every doctor now on the island, and many who have left it, is her husband. Mrs. N. has singular facility in extempore rhyming, yet occasionally the right

word eludes her grasp; and it is amusing to hear her without a pause, overthrowing on all sides sense and syntax, rush headlong through sentence after sentence before arriving at the destined goal.

An altercation now going on in the yard arrests our attention. Two women stand shaking their clenched hands at each other. One of them is a tall German with disheveled hair, sun-burnt skin, and toothless mouth. Her enunciation is rapid in the extreme and pitched in a high key. Part of her discourse is in her native tongue, part in broken English, but all so jumbled together, so strangely uttered as to render us unable to get at her meaning. We are less fortunate in respect to her Irish opponent—a wrinkled hag, whose maledictions, given with equal ferocity, are every where interlarded by profane expressions and obscenity.

Satisfied at length that no serious harm will be inflicted by either we approach a crouching figure, whose preternatural ugliness fixes the eye. She is engaged in embroidering strange characters on a strip of cotton cloth.

"What have you there?" we ask, irreverently.

"Take care, don't dare to touch it; hell yawns before you!" is the response; and afrighted eyes gaze into ours.

"What's the matter?"

"This is sacred. It contains a dispatch from the Almighty God. It is worth millions on millions. I am the Queen of Heaven!"

Rash mortals that we were; we effect our retreat.

And now there advances toward us with light, tripping footstep and outstretched hand a plump female. Her clothing is soiled and slovenly worn. Her countenance is unctuous with the milk of human kindness and muttunsuet. Her discolored teeth are fixed in the thigh-bone of a sheep, and her bare arms glisten to the elbows with the fat of the animal. As she nears us she drops the bone, her head falls to one side, and her mouth expands in a loving leer. It is she—the irrepressible "Moonshine." Woe is me that I am a man. It is I who have drawn the creature to us. I have whiskers, I am therefore adored. That fearful scene is to be repeated.

She sidles hesitatingly up to me and extends her dripping digits—my modesty takes alarm—I retire. She grows bolder, pouts her lips and essays to kiss me; both arms are now extended, and a tender embrace would surely follow did I not precipitately dodge behind a companion. In a low murmur are constantly emitted expressions of affection. Finally she gets wearied by my shy manner and sportively claps me on the back. I thenceforward bear a love-token on my coat, the imprint of her greasy hand. To state it mildly, Miss M. is continually playing the ancient game of Copenhagen; without much regard, however, to certain of its rules.

But where is our accomplished friend Fanny

L. Our search for her is interrupted by a red-faced woman in the raggedest of gowns, who seizes us by both arms, and, rapidly vociferating, commands us with threats to tell father that Moll Maguire has a litter of pigs and the old sow is dead. She also insists upon our making Pat Mulrooney keep away from Biddy M'Ginnis, the ould varmint, the ugly baste. Ha, ha, did we see Tim O'Flaherty climb the greased pole—didn't he fall sudden. Ann Sullivan sha'n't wear her silk dresses into the dairy; and we must tell father that Teddy Roche doesn't mind his business, and she wants to go home.

I gravely enter a note in my pocket-book and promise all that is asked.

Fanny is at length found, and a mock introduction is given her to the familiar faces about.

"Dr. Patch, the distinguished—"

"Happy to meet you, Sir. I have heard of a relative of yours, who ascended into fame by descents into the water. He was an exceedingly *decent* performer—Mr. Sam Patch. Do you remember;" and forthwith Fanny recites with appropriate and striking gestures several stanzas from well-known verses in honor of the hero of Niagara Falls. Her delivery both in word and action would excite the admiration of the eloquent Gough and do no discredit to Mrs. Kemble.

"The gentleman before you," some one remarks, "is not unworthy of his illustrious ancestor. He also has jumped over waterfalls. The ladies wear them very large now, and occasionally lose them."

"Ah! then he is doubtless acquainted with the Maid of the Mist," Fanny replies, quickly; "for I presume he was gallant enough to present it to the lady, who, having let it drop, missed it."

"We have heard much of your vocal powers, Miss L., will you not favor us with a song?"

"Sing a song of sixpence," shall I, gentlemen? 'a pocket full of rye.' A bottle of rye whisky is meant by the poet, I surmise; it often induces singing for sixpence. Ha, ha! As for me I have only a wry face."

"Pshaw, Fanny, be serious; we are exceedingly fond of music, and would delight to hear you."

"Well, what will you have? What is your favorite style? Operatic or the simpler ballad? Sad or gay?"

"Sing us the melody you like best."

"Well, the one I sing oftenest is the Blind Girl. It suits me, for I am always groping in the dark."

She strikes at once into a plaintive air, which with its pathetic words absorbs the attention of her visitors. She sings with real feeling and true expression, and her voice, though not rich, is very sweet. Upon our repeated requests she sings another and yet another.

"We are infinitely indebted to you, Miss L., but we are not yet satisfied. We know how much farther you are capable of pleasing us,

and long to see you dance. You are not tired, we hope?"

"Oh no, I have not yet thought of retiring, and so, of course, could not of tiring. What will you have?"

"Any thing you please."

She straightens herself, extends her shabby skirts with both hands after the approved manner of danseuses, and assumes a graceful attitude. Then, humming the music that should be played, she bounds into the first figure. Chassé-ing, pirouette-ing she performs many of the more difficult feats of the Terpsichorean art, every movement full of ease and elegance. Her agility is surprising, for she must number full forty-five years, and her locks are quite gray.

We clap our hands loudly as with a superb courtesy she sinks at our feet.

"The Cachuca, Fanny, the Cachuca!"

"Certainly, my lords. You will excuse my slippers, they are, ha! ha! the best I have, but their fit is charming." She protrudes her bare toes to our gaze, and then, throwing us a smile, launches into the wild dance with all the abandon of a Spanish señorita. The languor, the fire, the passion of its voluptuous figures are given *con amore*, yet chastely. Our plaudits are renewed with fervor at its conclusion, and we bid her farewell.

Fanny was unquestionably at one period

gifted with much beauty and more than ordinary intellect; sparks of the latter even now remain and frequently burst forth in repartee. Yet all her fine qualities were during their perfection prostituted to base uses—she has been one of the celebrities of the demi-monde. Her acquaintance with men prominent in the world is extensive, and she delights to relate anecdotes concerning them. One of the most singular of her delusions is connected with a young physician attached to the Asylum. She believes him the Deity, and sits daily at his door, sadly disturbing his reflections by pouring forth melody after melody. She makes him presents of bouquets of weeds, and grasses, and is never happier than when she sees him.

The interesting "Moonshine" I have mentioned is conjoined with her in persecutions of this doctor, but shows less good taste in her demonstrations—being wont to fill the key-hole of his door with gristle and fat, and thrust into his room old pieces of newspaper carefully tied up with various-colored string. At the approach of evening he usually finds a dozen of these missives on his floor.

For some reason (probably her long residence in the Asylum) "Mrs. Buchanan" is the female patient best known to the public—she is often inquired after by the visitor. Her name indicates her monomania; she believes President James Buchanan to have been her hus-



"MRS. BUCHANAN."

band. A quiet, motherly-looking old lady, she is always decently attired and inhabits a comfortable bedroom in Hall 3 of the main building. A large doll is ever with her, which she sometimes imagines is one of her children, no less than forty-five of whom, she affirms, have blessed her union with the Ex-Chief Magistrate. In times past Mrs. B. had some kittens, which she also nursed as her offspring.

The writer made a call upon her not long since, and wishing to be well received, and knowing her predilection for distinguished guests, announced himself, his modesty consenting, as traveling tutor to the Prince of Siam, then visiting the United States. She hoped the king, my master, was well, and did me all the courtesy in her power, inviting me into her apartment and giving me a seat. In the course of our conversation I ventured to say that it was strange that the wife of a President should be in her position.

Oh no, not strange at all, some political end. She would soon be free, Mr. Buchanan was coming that very afternoon. (Mr. B. has been coming every day for the last six years, yet the old lady is as cheerful as a cricket.) She suffers no disappointment, for she forgets every thing said or done as soon as it has passed.

I also hazarded the remark that I was informed and believed the venerable President was deceased. She burst into a laugh, and turned to my companion with the exclamation:

"Do hear him!—he would impose upon me with that! No, Sir; I had a letter from him yesterday."

"Are you well cared for here, madam?"

"Well, Sir, the fare is without variety. The soup is very good—but is nothing to the ten courses to which I have been accustomed."

I burst forth into rage at the inhumanity of her spouse in allowing her to remain so long with strangers, but was brought to a stop by a horrified look on my host's features.

"Do not dare to speak so, Sir! Mr. Buchanan is as much grieved at our separation as myself. Circumstances are uncontrollable; but I am resigned to the will of my Maker." And she uttered a long homily, as most Christian old ladies would in her imagined position.

Being informed that I was an artist desirous of taking her portrait, Mrs. B., with her sweetest smile, consented to sit. Upon the completion of the picture we respectfully withdrew.

Most of the amusements of the patients are only acceptable to convalescents or to monomaniacs. Of such a character are draughts, chess, dominoes, and cards. These games are continually played by certain of the insane, and great skill is not infrequently found among them. Loggerheads and quoits are at the disposal of those to whom it is safe to intrust them, and who are desirous of exercising with them. At one time daily military drills, with drum and fife, took place in the yard of the Asylum. It was amusing and instructive to see the invigorating effect of the martial airs

upon even the demented. They would go through the evolutions, too, with an exactitude that was surprising; and stimulating the melancholic cases to exertion, the drill probably not a little helped to promote their recovery. Falstaff, gazing from afar, might think he beheld his ancient army in the grotesque company before him.

Fine facilities for swimming are afforded on the island; a small shanty serves as a bath-house at its extremity, and male and female patients enjoy in the season the luxury of a dash into the East River. Mention of sharks having been seen occasionally deters the timid from venturing in, but no accident from the presence of that fish is recorded as having happened to island residents. There are sometimes discovered among the patients accomplished performers in the water—men conversant with all known feats, and able to spend half a day disporting on the surface. Good skating is also to be obtained in the winter.

Each inmate is allowed, as far as is possible, if he is fit for it, to busy himself with his favorite pursuits. The penman finds ample occupation, under the doctor's direction; the cabinet-maker, painter, carpenter—all may work at their various employments. A museum until lately existed, in which specimens of the more curious work of inmates was exhibited. Drawings showing infinite patience were exposed; needle-work of the most *outré* character. The larger part of the museum, however, consisted of contributions from outsiders.

Fishing is to be had, but it is by no means as good as formerly. Lobster-nets are, however, set at the proper time, and not a few of the shell-fish find their way into them. There is one eccentric whose whole time is devoted to the piscatory tribe. He is a sort of hermit; has built a hut in the marsh at the upper end of the island, where he spends most of the day, coming to the Cook-house for his meals (when he has not amply provided himself), and to his proper hall at bedtime. He is called Hudson, and his grizzly hair, long as a woman's, is coiled, Chinese fashion, at the back of his head, under a variety of handkerchiefs, rags, and an old hat. He speaks little English, knowing apparently just enough to enable him to ask for fish-hooks and tobacco, for he is a continual smoker. He is of German nativity.

Another prominent disciple of Isaak Walton is "Black Jimmy," a jolly, clever darkey, whose romantic story of his incarceration, as given by himself, runs thus: He is not wholly a negro, his father having been an Indian, and he inherits some of the characteristics of the savage people to which he is allied. His former master, whose coachman he was, is declared by him to have also had Indian blood in his veins, and was once the Mayor of New York. Jimmy, as time progressed, manifested matrimonial inclinations, and as his tastes leaned toward his father's race, a young squaw became the favored object of his addresses. This most beautiful

of women (Jimmy grows rapturous in picturing her charms) favored his suit, adoring him. But their marriage was not to be. When does the course of true love run smooth? The Mayor interposed, influenced by jealousy. He informed his servant that if he espoused the fair Indian—being, as he was, half red man himself—he would become equal to him, the Mayor, and such a thing could not be. Jimmy, infatuated, would not listen, and his master, by the high hand of power, shortly transferred him to the Lunatic Asylum. It will be surmised by the reader, doubtless, that Jimmy's insanity manifested itself first in love-making to a beautiful guest of his employer.

At the conclusion of his story the writer remarked that the narrator was certainly "done."

"Oh! no," Jimmy wittily replied; "I ain't done, I'm accomplished!" And this is not far from the truth. An ingenious tinker, he repairs all the umbrellas, pans, knives, rings, and spectacles brought him by attendants. He soles and patches shoes, makes tobacco-pipes and fancy canes—in fact, is a sort of mechanical Admirable Crichton. Jimmy's great delight, however, is in fishing, and many a fine mess of black-fish, bass, and eels does he furnish for the resident physician's table. There are the remains in him of a once surprising agility, but some injury has so affected his right leg that it bends with difficulty, and he drags it stiffly as he walks. His countenance is capable of the most ludicrous expression. His fancies, as a rule, appear to tickle him amazingly, and he may not unfrequently be found convulsed with smothered laughter. His eyes close, every muscle of his face is contorted, and his body writhes in a vain attempt to free himself from the grasp of mirth. An artist might seize the habitual grin that adorns his features, but the chuckle would have to be left to imagination.

Jimmy is not unable to utter brilliant sayings, but he talks sad nonsense most of the time. He is also a most amusing stammerer, working his jaws full five minutes before the word escapes. I subjoin a specimen of his style of conversation:

"Good-mornin', Mr. D."

"Good-morning, Jimmy, that was a capital eel you caught me yesterday. You shall have your tobacco to-morrow."

"I knew it! Honors as honors. When you deal with re-re-sponsibilities of course you will, will—I know honors. I know gentlemen. Gentlemen al-al-al-al—" Jimmy seems going into a fit.

"Now, James, be careful what you say. Don't do it. I would advise you to well consider—"

"D-arn it, look here, Mr. D. ! You think you've c-caught a gudgeon, but I've caught m-more fish 'n you have—kick! kick! ha, ha, ha! he, he, he!" And convinced "he had me there," my black friend goes off shuffling with his lame leg, and shrugging his shoulders with glee.

Jimmy has all the negro fondness for high-sounding words, and inasmuch as one of his numerous professions is that of corn-cutter-general, I informed him that he was a distinguished chiropodist. He labored to commit it to memory, and ever after announced himself in that capacity as a "stingus kiropokus." A large book being under my arm one day, he gravely asked if it was a "Hokopeekus," that being his nearest approach to the word Encyclopædia.

On Christmas and New-Year's Day all the talent of the Institution is usually assembled, and an entertainment is given. An exhibition of this character is present to my mind in which a magic-lantern was the prominent feature, the slides of which were mainly furnished by a young artist recovering from an attack of mania. His productions were mostly of a comic character, and numbered some two hundred pictures. He was helped in the mechanical contrivances by an ingenious physician, since deceased. The designs were all original, and drew forth enthusiastic plaudits. The war of Secession was waged at the time, and many of the drawings were political. John Bull was represented in one about to fight a duel with Brother Jonathan. They stood boldly confronting each other, according to the code, until Brother Jonathan pointed his pistol, when J. B.'s countenance fell, and he raised his right leg in an attempt to leave. A "Magic Mirror" excited much amusement; it had the quality, according to the lecturer, of reflecting upon the character instead of the face of the in-looker. Some dozen figures presented themselves. "Brother J. saw some pumpkins." J. B. very small potatoes indeed, and Jeff Davis no less a personage than Old Nick himself.

A menagerie was shown, which numbered among its inmates all known animals, and included the far-famed Gyascutas. All the specimens passed through a cage on the curtain, the giraffe with great difficulty. The female elephant was only got through by means of pulleys and the forcible endeavors of three men, but when the turn of the monster male elephant, "Atlas," came, it was found only his head would enter the cage. The lecturer then announced that, unwilling to disappoint the spectators, he would have the animal cut up and his vast proportions be shown them in parts. Accordingly a procession appeared, which a hyena led, drawing in a cart a tusk; a musk-rat with his cart brought up the rear in more than one sense, conveying as he did the tail of Atlas! There was also a "Magic Microscope," in which a feather in a young lady's cap, properly magnified, exhibited a number of young men on a string—the limits of a magazine article forbid me to mention more. A fine pianist, who had been a patient, accompanied the pictures; and a solo player on the cornet-a-piston added to the delight. Vocal music also found skillful exponents.

A complete minstrel band at one period

pertained to the island, with its bones and tambourine, giving concerts on the holidays. Gentlemen from the city used to favor the Asylum with sacred music every Sabbath, but of late have discontinued the practice.

On the last Fourth of July a novelty was inaugurated. a ball was given in the large hall of the Retreat, and certain male and female patients intermingled in the mazy dance. An athletic Irishman distinguished himself by his pigeon-wings and extraordinary agility. Norah was there, hopping up and down as though pins were in each shoe. And Jimmy the fiddler was lost in ecstasy: a perpetual smile oozed through his bristly mustache; and his left leg beat time extravagantly to the wheezings and shriekings of his instrument. But the ball was a success—no accident occurred—patients, physicians, and visitors were equally delighted.

A comic lecturer and ventriloquist well known to the public has not infrequently given performances in the Institution, and they were of a character exceedingly acceptable to the inmates. His fate was most sad. He died the terrible death of a hypochondriacal maniac; not a single pleasing fancy illumined his piteous confinement. He was an illustration of the danger of allowing an active intellect to run into aimlessness. He obtained a competence, retired from business, and went mad. He voluntarily committed himself to the Asylum two years ago, and his story ran thus:

"I bought me a house; ordered and paid for furniture to be put therein; arrived at it one night and found it empty; slept on the floor; became disgusted and sold it next day for a mere song. I then reflected; found I had lost a large sum of money; knew I ought to be under care; and came here for it."

From the deepest melancholy he rapidly sank into hypochondria of the most extravagant character. He was living in the midst of putrefaction; he could eat nothing; his meat was decomposed; milk was a mass of gangrene. He became a walking skeleton, and would unmistakably have starved himself to death had not food been forced upon him. His shrieks as the detested viands entered his mouth were appalling. Opium may be named as another cause of his madness. He had addicted himself to the habitual use of that drug. Such got to be the unhealthy state of his constitution that a slight scratch on one of his feet caused it to swell inordinately. He would point to it with despair. "That foot is dead! Look at it! Isn't it horrible? It is all gangrene. Pah! how it —! I shall die of cholera

from that foot." He finally imagined himself a corpse. Passing his door one afternoon the writer heard a cry (as he understood it) for coffee.

"Bring me my coffee, my coffee!"

"What do you want coffee for, Doctor?—haven't you had your dinner?"

"Coffee!" exclaimed the poor man, testily; "I didn't say coffee. I said coffin. I am dead. I won't keep long. I ought to have been buried two days ago."

Clinging to this delusion he had to be dressed and undressed by the attendants, for he would do nothing for himself. He was a corpse; no such thing could be expected of him. Out of this living death he soon now passed into the reality. A case of more unmitigated woe I have never seen, before or since; yet the sufferer was one who had convulsed large audiences with laughter at his finished imitations of a hypochondriac!

Shortly after his decease another miserable man breathed his last within the walls of the Asylum. An educated Hungarian exile, he practiced law in the city even while a patient. His death was caused by consumption. He was ever talking of his position in his native land—how he was wealthy and noble. Some of his



THE PREACHER.



PADDY DISCOURING.

hallucinations while upon his sick bed were amusing. Two holes for ventilation were in the wall near the ceiling, and through them he imagined the Doctor was playing upon him with a large magnetic battery in the room above. I tried in vain to disabuse him of this belief, employing incontestible arguments, but to no purpose.

We want fresh air after contemplating these cases of extreme wretchedness. A stroll about the grounds will recreate our sickened souls. Coming up the pathway toward us is a form I recognize; the placid countenance of Black Charley is about to pass.

"How are you, Charley?"

"Quite well, tank you, massa."

"In a hurry?"

"No, no great, massa."

"I have here some friends who lack instruction. Will you not edify them by a discourse?"

"Can't preach widout notes, Sah."

I know Charley's peculiarity, and at once hand him a scrap of blank paper. He surveyed it for a few moments, and then rapidly enunciated the following:

"Bredren, de Queen of Sheba, Moses and

de prophets, de New Jerus'lem for eberlasting. Yea, berily, eben so, now and foreber. Selah. In de beginning was de word, and de word was made in six days out ob nothing. Paul an apostle to dem dat am wid Nebuchadnezzar—peace. Blessed am de merciful, for dey shall pluck corn on de Sabba' day," etc.

Charley speaks as if reading from a book. There is no question but that the piece of paper is of service to him; he never was known to preach without it. His is certainly a Scriptural discourse, and delivered with earnest purpose, yet we are not sorry when he commences singing, in his weak, lackadaisical way, the words of an old Methodist hymn.

While he is so occupied let us talk with "Paddy," who is hitching desperately at his trowsers in the potato-patch yonder. He picks up his hoe as we approach and vindictively lacerates the ground.

"Paddy!"

"Ah, go long wid ye; I'm busy."

Then a sudden idea strikes him; he rushes up to us, thrusts his bleared eyes and haggard, twitching mouth into my face, and catching me by the lappel of my coat propounds the question:

"D'ye remimber the ponies I gave your fater—three colts and a bay mare—beauties, every son of 'em?"

"No, Paddy, you never gave them; they were bought at a good price."

"D'ye mind that, now? Wasn't I the largest land-owner in the County Killarney? D'ye know Tim O'Brien's tavern? He was next door to me. Take this." He puts in my hand a bit of broken crockery, and closes my fingers upon it, "Keep that, now. D'ye mind? D'ye mind that?"

He hitches his trowsers again and is off, with a painful, nervous step. I turn my back, wondering, as I move away, if he were not a horse-jockey at one period, when my sleeve is pulled, and lo! Paddy once more. He motions me to extreme caution, slips another bit of an old plate into my hand, "D'ye mind that, now?" and is gone.

As the artist is putting the finishing touches to a likeness of him he has picked up during the adventure just related an attenuated and spectacled figure looks over his shoulder at the drawing, and then, with irrepressible indignation gleaming in his eyes and quivering in every word, declares that he will have no such work done in the land.

"'Thou shalt not make to thyself the likeness of any thing in the heavens above or in the earth beneath.' Dare ye disobey the Second Commandment?"

The artist, in despair with the portrait he

has obtained with such difficulty, mildly suggests that it can hardly be considered the likeness of any thing.

"New Jerusalem" looks puzzled, but solves the question by asking for some tobacco, which is given.

"It is mine," he returns, as he pockets it. "All you have is mine."

We look our gratitude for the use of his property and retire from the presence of the "Special Messenger."

Continuing our walk we soon reach the entrance of the main Asylum; and there before it, comfortably smoking under a large willow-tree, we descry two individuals that deserve notice.



OLD TONY.

The little, bent old man with the long white beard is the oldest resident of the Institution, having been a patient some thirty years. An amiable Frenchman, it is one of his boasts that he once served under Napoleon the First. Devoted to his pipe, he raises all his own tobacco; and as he cures it, it would prove innocuous to a babe. He may be subject to aberration occasionally, but strongly-marked symptoms of insanity have not been manifested by him for a long time. He is very useful in his way, having a great liking for the medical officers, and doing them many services.

His companion is M——, an Irishman, who, without any peculiar delusion, is certainly daft. He talks sense much of the time, but is also an utterer of the most "highfalutin" nonsense. He has a learned friend among the patients,

with whom he is fond of discoursing ethics and politics, and a more amusing dialogue than theirs it would be difficult to conceive. One utters his tirade against the Government, with a voluble intermingling of things in the heavens above, on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth; then the other with the utmost solemnity will reply, and, evidently thinking he is rebutting his friend's arguments, talks upon an entirely diverse theme with endless pertinacity and confusion. A more ridiculous caricature of a debate was never imagined. M—— ran away from the Asylum not long since and entered the army, securing no inconsiderable bounty-money. The state of his mind was, however, soon discovered, and he was sent to his former abode, declaiming against "sycophancy and conspiracy."

As we turn from him there enters the Asylum an active figure carrying a pail of white-wash with its proper brushes. His whole person from his hat to his shoes is ornamented with the chalky fluid. His features exhibit shrewdness which their owner does not possess. Cassidy is a billionaire in imagination. He lords the whole island. He lives but to amass money, and hence we always see him in a working dress. He superintends and repairs the Institution, declaring that if he relaxed his vigilance for a single day the whole place would go to ruin. He is really worth to the Commissioners seven or eight hundred dollars a year; being in masonry and other mechanical pursuits a valuable assistant. He is a miser with no real wealth; the interest accruing from his vast possessions being paid in notes of one hundred dollars on the "Bank of Love." One of the watchmen officiates as his man of business, and delights him weekly with an account of his accumulations. Cassidy will not, however, part with twenty-five cents in charity. His fancied treasures are without doubt as much enjoyed by him as the real fortunes of many men of his cast of mind. What a striking satire is his history upon the lives of some called sane!

A yell from the yard opposite us attracts our attention. It proceeds from the throat of that dismal being rapidly making the circuit of the inclosure. He seems to consider himself a vocal newspaper; his cries day after day being, as it were, the headings to sensation items.

"Arrival of the *Great Eastern*!—Queen Victoria has a set-to with the Prince of Wales!—A Priest-Ridden Community!—Cholera Morbus!—Grand smash up of the European Congress!—Horace Greeley swallowed by the monster Miscegenation," etc.

All of these disjointed sentences are jerked out at the top of his voice. Of vast importance, too, he deems them, repeating them with emphasis to every stranger he may happen to see.

A conversation with "John Brown" in the same yard would give birth to the strangest ideas ever entertained by the fancy. He will inform his auditor that a large nest of snakes

resides in his stomach which ought to be extracted.

"Now, doctor, there is only one place from which they can be taken; under this rib. Sec. Insert a knife—magnetized, you know—then it won't hurt me at all. There is a boa constrictor among them. I know by his twisting."

He also says he would have been President long ago, if it were not for, for—but his reasons are more numerous than excellent.

"Dobler's" eccentricities are shown by action rather than speech; he seems unable to do any thing without reference to mathematical rules. If he sees a stone at some distance from him which he wishes, he is impelled to approach it by a series of zigzag movements. He first gazes at it, makes some abstruse calculation, and then with regular paces marches away to the west of it. Here, meditating a moment, he proceeds at a right angle. Having thereafter described with his steps a series of triangles, equilateral and isosceles, he is perhaps within a few feet of it. This is an awful moment, and demands much thought. Finally a rapid advance, a sudden putting out of his arm, and the stone is his.

Another individual not far off is either engaged in the cultivation of acrobatic powers or has inaugurated some new religious ceremony. Ever and anon he stoops and kisses with solemnity the ground between his feet.

A patient is dead; there passes us in the road yonder a rough pine coffin on a trestle carried by two lunatics. The first of these is "John Dunn," an inmate of the Lodge. His appearance is that of a savage beast; a brutal, sensual mouth is ill-concealed by his bristly beard, and two swinish eyes illumine his swarthy countenance. The conception formed of his character is not exceeded by the reality. Cruel as he may be, he is harmless unless provoked; and again John's ferocity seems rather the work of idiocy than aught else. I should judge him absolutely ignorant of what would produce a feeling of pain in others. A playful blow from him intended to testify to his good-humor will as likely as not be administered to a part of the body that will feel the injury for a month.

I hope to be pardoned for giving a striking illustration of his selfish instincts, his total want of humanity. A patient in the sick-room was given up by the doctors, and his demise being every minute expected John was told to get a coffin ready. He mistook the order for an announcement that the man was dead, and soon appeared by the bedside with his "red box." To his disgust the patient was still breathing. He was summoned then for nothing, and his anger burst forth in an exclamation to the sufferer, intermingled with oaths, "M-m-m! Why don't you die? Why don't you die?"

As we follow the coffin on its way to the Dead House we descry, standing in the centre of the island, with one hand upon a tree and anxiously surveying the water upon all sides



RAFFERTY.

of him, an example of heroic perseverance that deserves better success than he has met with. "Rafferty" (with some degree of education and born in the Middle Ages) would have rivaled all brother alchemists in perseverance in the chase after the philosopher's stone. For the past five or six years he has stood morning and afternoon in that same position awaiting the drying up of the East River. His bosom is depressed or elated by the rising or the falling of the tide; occasionally the water is very low and then Rafferty trembles with delighted anticipation. The spirits, however, sadly interfere with his plans. Marine, mundane, and aerial, they are all opposed to him. He fights against hope, encouraged only by visions in his dreams. Latterly he has come early into the office before setting forth on his protracted watch, and solicits a pass to the city from the attendants. He is usually told he must procure a beaver hat of the latest Parisian style and a standing collar before the document can be granted him.

While we gaze upon him the doctor's small boat, laden with officers, nears its landing. Erect in the prow, and brandishing a boat-hook, is the famous "Admiral." He is adorned, as usual, by a battered old silk hat profusely ornamented with tags of string and colored cloths, a clay pipe showing its bowl among them. His ragged blue coat displays an extravagant amount of buttons of various patterns. Slightly bent by his eighty years, the Admiral yet exhibits an elasticity of muscle that is wonderful. His head in both its facial and cranial



THE ADMIRAL.

formation is a puzzle to the man of science. It would appear that once, when somewhat of the consistency of soft gutta-percha, it had been caught between two heavy rocks and thereby lost its pristine regularity. One eye is much lower than the other, and over it his forehead projects, a beetling mass of bone. Remove his hat, look upon him from every point, similar abnormal developments present them-

selves. A curiosity in mind, manner, and person, his like dwells not on the globe. A story runs that he was once a pirate. No question exists that he has been a sailor, and he doubtless once served on a privateer. Much coaxing will at times induce him to sing a nautical song in which a sea-fight is represented as crowning with success the efforts of the narrator's party. He then appears a veteran relating his experience, his excitement waxing intense as he approaches the climax, his arms and features, nay, his whole body illustrating every phase of the conflict. The Admiral is much teased by his fellow-oarsmen, but though his imprecations are of a fearful nature, his bark is far worse than his bite. He seems to have an idea that he is a wit, and his attempts at it are of a most ludicrous character. His manner is abrupt and his sentences hurried and broken.

But we have arrived at the Dead House, and "Mr. Quigley," opening the door, presents himself to receive the deceased. A saturnine smile enlivens his cynical aspect, though he proceeds in a business-like way to deposit the coffin in its proper place and discharge its bearers. Mr. Quigley is happy; he is of a social nature, and has now an addition to his company. A corpse is to him a gleam of sunshine permeating his abode. When one is beside him he is in his normal condition, two or three enable him to forget every trouble, but should five honor at the same time his humble habitation Quigley is exalted to the tenth heaven of serene bliss. The occasional *post-mortem* examination made by the physicians are by him attended with professional enthusiasm.

Having promised him my skeleton after my decease, I am an esteemed and valued friend of his, and we shall be allowed to examine at our leisure the dwelling in which he passes



QUIGLEY.

most of his time. It consists of two apartments in a small low-roofed wooden building, the first we enter being merely an unfurnished receptacle for coffins with their occupants. The second is the dissecting-room and Quigley's snuggery. Six months ago this would have delighted the soul of Dickens; a rusty, musty, dusty spectacle, it abounded on all sides with strange sights. A witch's cavern or a magician's work-shop were suggested to the mind of the beholder; an artist saw in reality the conventional den of an alchemist. Strange looking instruments lay on the floor, bits of old iron and broken plates intermingled with a miscellaneous collection of pots and pans. In the middle of the room stood a table with hollowed and metal covered surface, adorned with rags, knives, and edibles. Overhead hung the stuffed skin of an alligator, and other nondescripts in sad want of repair were on the walls; with them antiquated prints, a cracked and fanciful mirror, dried herbs, a rat-trap, a curious fish, a bird-cage smothered in dirt and feathers, ragged garments, a Japanese hat. A large stove, filling the imagination with thoughts of red-hot irons and boiling oil, gloomily rested in one corner. A whizzing above him and the visitor instinctively dodged; no, it was not the expected bat—a couple of harmless pigeons merely have flown over, and then a glance near the ceiling discovered a dove-cote with some dozen dingy denizens. One bird sits on an old-fashioned lantern rustling with a bough of withered leaves, and several cats jump over the floor to their hiding-places. The room has since been cleaned, the trumpery taken out, and now presents the appearance which our sketch indicates.

Mr. Quigley can not, perhaps, be called crazy; but, as will have been seen, his characteristics are not those of a natural man.

And now let us end our journeyings with an excursion to "Fort Maxey." At the farthest extremity of the Island the ground on which it stands has been rescued from the grasp of Neptune by the indefatigable endeavors only of its proprietor, whose name is given to the structure—Thomas Maxey, Esq., architect, mason, carpenter, civil engineer, philosopher, and philanthropist.

The fort is a circular mound of earth, on which stands a wall some four feet high, built of blocks of clay and grass dug from the marsh behind it. Through the wall project the mouths of several large wooden cannon, which, when presented to him by the Commissioners during the past war, Thomas accepted with many thanks, declaring they would be a great protection to the Island and city in frightening off rebel privateers. He has erected a house of novel appearance within this parapet containing two sleeping apartments, a kitchen, and sitting-room, together comprising a space less than twelve feet by eight. His garden shows a taste for the sublime, none but the tallest flowers being therein admitted. The hollyhock and sunflowers sadly interfere with a view of his interesting domicile. He is now building a stone magazine back of this to contain his ammunition, which exists in vast quantities—in his imagination. The whole structure, together with the long embanked road leading to it, is the work of his own hands, and has occupied more than three years of what he deems his valuable time. Nor is the work without value to the Commissioners, for in the process of construction he has, in order to render it accessible, dug several ditches through the marsh, and thus drained and rendered useful a great part of it. The extent of his labors and of the work may be understood when it is said that at least sixteen square rods have been



WITHIN FORT MAXEY.



GATEWAY TO FORT MAXEY.

raised from eight to ten feet, and that a great part of the material was carried a considerable distance.

He has also ornamented the causeway leading to the fort by a stone gate, the erection of which would seem to mark an era in architecture, as it is not built according to the rules of any ancient or modern school. A great incentive to his labor has been that, deeming the proprietorship vested in himself, he indulged the fond hope that the Corporation of the city would appreciate the importance of the situation and purchase the whole for the advantage of the metropolis. The engraving exhibits two large openings near the top of the gate; these, Thomas says, are to accommodate wild geese, who will deposit eggs therein and raise their progeny. As will be surmised, it is not the first time he has been after wild geese.

Passing under this gate we proceed along the embankment until we come to a bridge. This we stand admiring, for its oddities are worthy of some little attention, when there rushes up to us from the fort beyond an excited figure crowned with a woman's bonnet of antique date.

"Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to present

to you Mr. Thomas Maxey. These distinguished guests of the Commissioners, Sir, have admired all your workmanship that they have seen, but desire you will favor them with deeper insight into your domain."

"Yes, yes, it isn't done yet; when the magazine and other improvements are finished, then—"

"It is a wonderful performance, Mr. Maxey."

"Yes, it will be valuable to Government, no doubt of it; but my gains are small. Is this a good bill?" He exhibits an undeniable five-dollar greenback.

"First-rate!"

"Dr. —'s son gave it to me. Many gentlemen pay me well for my trouble in showing the improvements."

"Why, yes, your pocket-book seems bursting."

"Oh it's not all money. I wish to keep some root-beer and gingerbread for visitors; but it is hard to get them."

"Ah, this is the house. May we go in?"

"Certainly." And he pushes open the door. We enter one at a time, the building will not hold more than three (and they knock one against the other), so filled is it with woodwork and the masonry of an oven. The furniture consists of the refuse of the Institution. The proprietor is sorry he has nothing to offer us.

"By-the-by, Mr. Maxey, you have not yet given me the solution of that problem I once proposed to you."

"What problem?"

I enunciate the old college question for debate: "Can a Chimera, ruminating in vacuum, disseminate second intentions?"

Mr. M. looks puzzled: "I hardly understand, Sir."

"Pshaw! a man of your intellect! It is plain enough."

I repeat the formula, emphasizing each word.

"Well, Sir, it is doubtful if Apollo and the Nine Muses ever sowed seeds in Uruguay. The moon and the stars now revolve in their orbits; electricity and the printing-machine have worked wonders, but—"

"Do you think, Sir," I seriously ask, "that Briareus has any thing to do with it?"

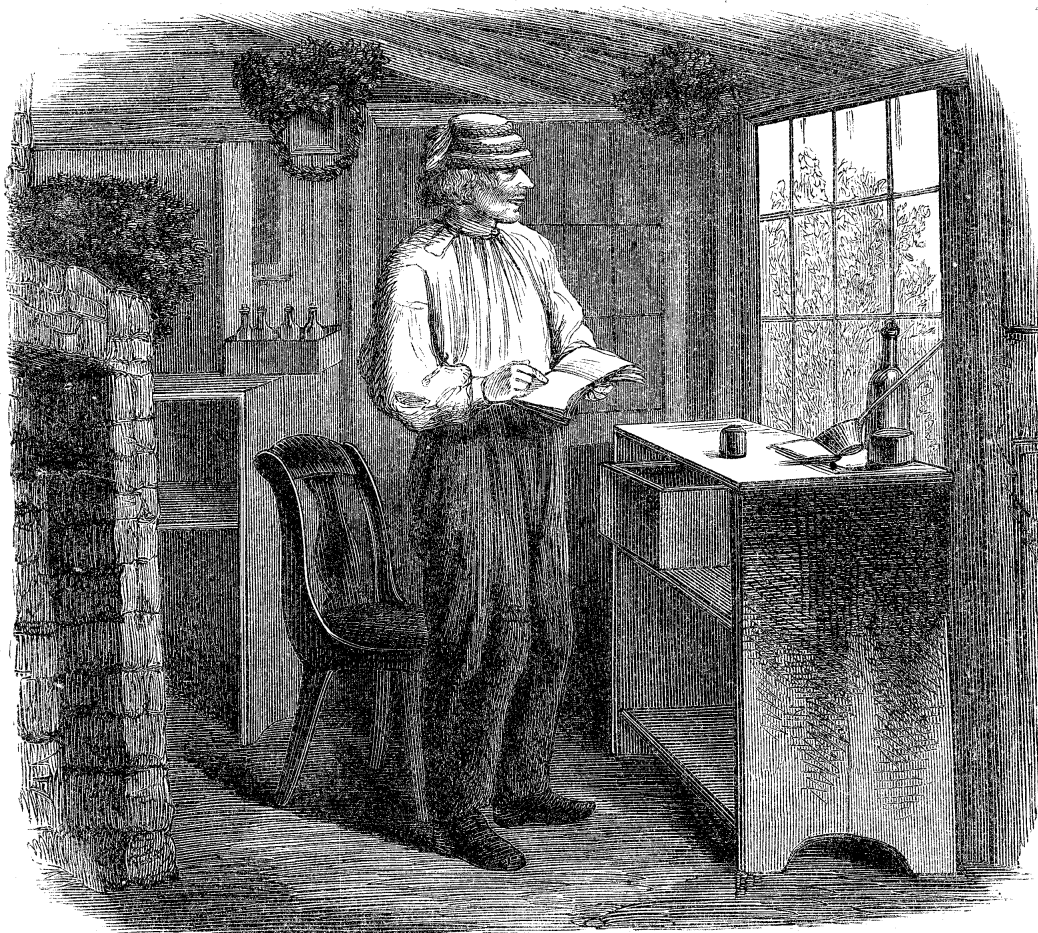
"Brirus? Well, it is perhaps probable. What did you say—the Crimea?"

"Yes."

"Diana and mythology."

"Pshaw! Mr. Maxey, you're a man of genius; but you can't have carefully studied the question I propounded. You are straying from it. Hadn't you better think it over?"

Tom's jaw hangs in a vacant expression as



THOMAS MAXEY AT HOME.

he replies: "Perhaps I had. My larnin', Sir, may not be equal to yours, but—"

"Of course you'll master it; and now good-day, Sir."

Hands are shaken around the circle, and leaving Tom jabbering at us from behind his parapet about the duties of Government until we are out of his sight. After pausing to take a sketch of "Black Jimmy," whom I see on the dock, busy at his piscatorial occupation, I take my leave, having closed my sketches of the lunatics on Blackwell's Island.

Visitors are usually eager to know the cause of this or that case of insanity, and pleasure undoubtedly would be conferred by the gratification of their curiosity. Romance upon romance lies in the past of the unfortunate patients (though occasionally they are demented through reasons too vile to mention), but it is impossible as a general rule to arrive at the facts. A large proportion of those confined here being foreigners, poverty, with its attendant ills, the want of friends, despair have driven them mad. Cultivation of one mental faculty to the exclusion of others is also a frequent promoter of hallucination.

The public mind, filled with the fictions of novel writers, indulges the notion that in all insane asylums persons of perfect sanity are unjustly imprisoned against their will. What-

ever may be the state of certain private establishments, I am confident that no instance of the kind exists in the Institution of which I have treated; none at least without good excuse. Sometimes, as has been shown, improper cases are consigned to the resident physician's care, who keeps them of course for a short period, until assured of their sound mental condition, when they are discharged. The certificates of two physicians testifying to the derangement of a patient upon entrance compels this course of conduct.

There are within the walls, it is true, a few no more crazy than many outsiders; but they are destitute of friends, and a passage to the world at large would intensify their idiosyncrasies and finally compel their return to the Asylum. Any person able and willing to take them out and try them in their respective professions would be gladly welcomed by the resident physician. They excite pity which to a certain extent can not be shown them.

The public ear would listen with credulity, I suspect, to dire tales of cruelty practiced by the officers. I can not honestly oblige it. Abuses to a limited degree unquestionably exist, and ever must, in this Institution and others of like character. While human nature is as it is, provocations of an exasperating description can not be overlooked at all times without a strength

of intellect that is rare. Patients are occasionally struck by the attendants, but the head physician and his educated assistants do their utmost to prevent all such manifestations of impa-

tience. They are gentlemen of heart and mind, and their subordinates, beneath them in cultivation, have the kindness of disposition, the compassionate feelings of the ordinary man.



BLACK JIMMY.

EUTHANASY.

COME gently, Death, when, at the close of Life,
Worn with the march and weary of the strife,
I draw my latest breath;
Like some kind friend, who, with a noiseless tread
And silent voice, draws nigh unto my bed,
So come thou gently, Death.

Oh, let me close my eyes like one who sleeps
While o'er my sense thy dreamless slumber creeps,
And let me softly lie
With calmly folded hands upon my breast,
Like one who after labor takes his rest,
So let me gently die.

Oh, may my end like that of some sweet day,
When the red sunset pales and fades away,
Be tranquil, calm, and still;
And may a feeling of serene repose
With gentle radiance soften Life's sad close,
And peace my bosom fill.

May kindly faces gather round my bed,
The cherished friends with whom my heart is wed;
And gently, softly fall
Death's twilight shadow; may I, listening, hear
Like silver harp-strings, sounding sweet and clear,
Angelic voices call.

Whether it be when summer skies are fair,
And summer birds make music in the air,
Oh, gently time my breath;
Or in the winter when the chilly snow
Wraps, like a shroud, the cold, dead earth below,
Oh, gentle be my death.

Come like the change which paints the autumn leaf,
And let the parting hour on earth be brief,
The last beneath the skies;
Come gently, Death, when my Life's race is run,
When I the victor's fadeless wreath have won,
And close my weary eyes.