

Literature, &c.

A LESSON DRAWN FROM LIFE.

BY LAMAN BLANCHARD, ESQ.

LITTLE Johnny Stint was said to have been born with a wooden ladle in his mouth. The mouth was a wide one, to be sure, but he was always as chary and economical of the words that came out of it, as he was scant of good things to put into it.

The silver spoons of the world did not treat their brother of a less fortunate destiny with much consideration. As a child he was a mere picker up of scraps from the nurseries of the well-fed; as a boy he was kicked upon errands rather than sent upon them; and as a young man, the utmost favor he ever obtained from the fair, was the permission graciously accorded him by the maid-of-all-work at a school, to come and clean the shoes and boots for her on a Saturday—to which were subsequently added, as a voluntary token that her heart was softening, the knives and forks.

A ray of hope once shot across his mind, as standing under a parlour-window in a quiet suburb, he heard a young lady singing to the dislocated remains of a piano, the touching ballad,

She loved him because he was poor.

"Because he was poor!" mentally ejaculated the neglected Stint. "Well that is an odd reason. How fond she would have been of me! She would have loved me better at night than at morning, and more on Wednesday than on Tuesday."

But Johnny, though so poor and hopeless, was an upright little fellow. His wants were few, and his wishes were not much more numerous. He never flinched from a little sharp work if it brought him in anything; and if he disliked his lot, he had too scanty a supply of words to indulge in long complaints. He went on his way, not rejoicing, but whistling moodily; much happier than people thought him, if they thought about him at all; and infinitely more honest than folks ever had any notion of, when they carelessly said of him—

"You may trust Johnny; he is too humble for temptation, and too insignificant to be a rogue."

When he had less to eat than usual, he curtailed his appetite, as he best could; and when he had a little extra supply, he stored it in a right saving spirit against the next necessitous season. But never was he known to break off the loose corner of a loaf which he was sent to purchase; or to pocket a single potato out of the eight and twenty pounds which he was always ready to bring from the next market on the chance of getting a penny or two for his pains.

In this creeping existence, he continued for some time after he had arrived at those years of discretion, at which discreetness is so scarce; growing more indifferent to privation, but somewhat less used to it; as honest as at first, and a little more contented than ever, when one day, in a lonely spot—nobody near, and his pockets almost empty—Johnny Stint found a purse.

Having picked it up and examined the prize—having with trembling and with dim, straining, disbelieving eyes, counted the gold and silver it contained—Johnny looked all around, as if in expectation of seeing the frantic owner of the treasure ready to rush upon him, and screaming "That's mine!" But not a creature was within sight. Johnny then looked up to heaven, as though means might be miraculously supplied of depositing the purse there, until the true claimant should appear; and then again he gazed all around him, examined the bright contents once more, exercised his little powers of arithmetic with the same result as at first; and then returned the pieces one by one, closed his hand as tightly as he could upon the precious store, and buried both hand and purse in the depth of a capacious ragged breeches pocket.

On he walked, looking very often on the ground, glancing here and there, as though other purses might be scattered about—and not unfrequently he looked at the sky, as though the treasure could only have dropped thence—with a notion, too, in his mind, that somebody there had already made a note of the amount, as well as of the name of the finder.

On he walked still, with varying feelings, but one uppermost of all—the feeling of a man who has done a good day's work for himself.

"He ought to give me a half a crown out of this," said Johnny Stint to himself, as he trudged along, squeezing the solid purse in his hand, as if he never could be sure enough that he held it at the very bottom of his pocket in delightful security.

"Two shillings, or even half a crown," repeated John, a little misgivingly, but inwardly sure of a reward of some magnitude.

But other thoughts presently succeeded to these calculations of reward founded on the loser's gratitude. Johnny Stint thought of the loser's present feelings—of his despair, his agony; of the purpose to which he might have been about to apply the money; of the debt he might have contemplated paying; of the wife and children who might be doomed to misery for the want of it;—but then his thoughts as speedily recurred to the joy which the new unhappy loser would experience on the restoration of his treasure, not a farthing missing. And lastly, his silent meditations wandered back, (selfishness is the universal vice, and Johnny must be pardoned) to the old point—the reward.

"At least," was his modest reflection, "he can hardly do less than give me a shilling, for this is a long walk."

Just as he arrived at this comforting conclu-

sion, he arrived also at a wayside public-house. His heart felt as warm within him as the hand that burned with the clutch of the gold; and he paused, inspired with the novel idea of cooling both with a small draught of the smallest ale was to be had for money. He had a few half-pence left, and was confident of a grand supply soon.

Boldly therefore he approached, perhaps with something of a little swagger, but this may be imaginary, to make the unusual call, when around the door of the beer shop he found a small party of persons aiding in the search for a sixpence which had been dropped by a tiny urchin who could not look about for it for crying.

"Father'll give anybody a half-penny who'll find it for me, that he will," sobbed out the boy.

"Will he?" broke in a harsh voice from a corner of the settle at the door of the house; "then he'll give more than I got when I found a purse all full of gold and silver in the field yonder."

The little assembly, all except the broken hearted urchin, turned to look at the speaker; and Johnny Stint in particular riveted his eyes upon him.

The man had on a laborer's dress, much the worse for wear; he had a sullen face which drink had not improved; and there was about him, a reckless and disorderly air, which was anything but prepossessing.

"Ay," said he, between the puffs of his tobacco smoke, observing that the remark had drawn inquiring looks upon him, "more than I ever got when I picked up Squire Goulson's purse two year ago. He never handed out a ha'penny, though I found off the Squire's property, tramped w' it four miles to the hall, and g'ed it into his own hand. Blisters be it with the hot gold! All I got was to be told I had stolen some on it, for there was more in't when 'twas lost,—and instead of coming here w' the reward o' honesty, I went w' constable to jail, till they liked to let me out. That comes o' poor men in a finding rich men's money."

Johnny Stint was all ear; yet his eyes were by no means idle. They searched the face of the speaker, as if by close looking his eyes could hear too. But as the man's voice ceased, the countenance resumed its expression of sullen indifference, not unmixed with savage scorn and a thicker cloud of tobacco smoke was the only sign of further emotion visible.

John, who had at first been rudely moved, in his way, by the boy's trouble, now stood looking on while others were searching about without feeling the slightest interest in their success. His glances fell carelessly round, and settled again upon the face of the smoker, who was at least equally indifferent to all that was going on. Then did John Stint turn his steps down the lane, he stopped and looked back, but again went on; and then presently, after a second pause, he turned back, and came up the lane at a much quicker pace, as if with the intention of returning to the beer shop, or of making his way into the town. But he once more stopped, looking neither up at the sky or the path before him, but intently at the distant houses; then glancing about him, he drew his right hand from his pocket, and gazed keenly at it without unclosing it. It was slowly returned, and with the action his face was again turned towards the fields, which he approached with seeming irresolute steps. One final pause he made at the end of the lane, and then he hurried onwards across the grass, and was seen no more.

What were the meditations of poor Johnny Stint as he hastened on his devious and solitary course across country—what were his speculations concerning Squire Goulson, and the probabilities of his being the owner of a second purse—what his fears of being accused of theft because unable to prove that the money given up was exactly the amount of the money found—what his new born and intoxicating ideas of another kind of life from that moment to be commenced by himself under the spur of a terrible temptation—nobody ever knew, or ever will know.

But this is known to many: that in a noted city some hundred miles away from the scene we have just quitted, little Johnny Stint was greatly esteemed and patronized, about three years afterwards, as Mr John Stint, landlord of the Crown hotel. The surrounding gentry nodded, and the best of tradespeople shook hands. He was a flourishing and highly respectable member of society, and seemed to know it.

Stint belied his name, for profusion was the order of the day at the crack hotel. Customers who ran a long score, would sometimes gratefully wonder whence their prosperous host had sprung—how, from opening a little daily eating house for mechanics, he had leaped into the proprietorship of the famous Crown,—but on this subject as on everything that related to the past, there was one explanatory monosyllable employed as a wind up by all—landlord as well as guests—and it was made much impressive by the forefinger being placed upon the lip, a knowing and completing the mysterious emphasis.

Of the future, Mr Stint was less shy of talking—although, as of old, he never talked too much. His doings, however; unfortunately for him, outstripped his sayings. He promised to erect a new billiard room—but he betook himself to hazard of an afternoon. He engaged to keep an excellent stable, suited to a splendid establishment—but he was seduced into the glory of breeding racers—and what was worse, of betting upon them.

At length—or rather after no great lapse of time—when the dice were in his hand, and a trusty partner at his elbow, "mum" became the favorite word of Mr John Stint, and sadly to his loss of credit, he forgot that so small a mo-

nosyllable might possibly be overheard—the admonition to silence, thus acting as the precursor to detection. So, too, however cleverly the loss of a race might be projected, the magic phrase "mum," which had power to seal a jockey's lips to day, had no effect in stopping his ears to the offer of a better bribe to-morrow; and by such gaps in his system of secrecy was our miserable little hero somewhat rapidly reduced from respectable John Stint to roguish little Johnny.

It was in this latter character that he was one day transported for stealing a silver teaspoon which had lately been his own property.

Alas! for the wooden ladle with which he was born. Had he kept it yet a little longer, held it fast when sorely tempted to fling it away, it would have fed him after some fashion and been changed in the end to an inheritance, richer than plates and dishes of purest gold.

From the Halifax Novascotian.

THE WITHERED TREE.

There is a voice of sadness,
Amid the summer bowers,
Where late the song of gladness
Gave music to the hours.
The wild wood haunts that oft have heard
The spring, note of the merry bird,
No more with glancing wings are gay,
Nor echo more the warbled lay.

The summer's bloom is passing,
Like evening tints away,
And every brook is glancing
Some picture of decay.
What seest thou, rambler, in yon tide
O'er which the maple's blooming pride
Waved like a warrior's crest?
A mimic show of shriveled leaves
Is all that mournful stream receives
Upon its limped breast.

Gone in the imperial glory
Which graced that monarch stem,
Crushed and defiled before thee
Now lies its diadem.
Long had its towering grandeur stood
In palmy state above the flood,
Its bright shaft glittering through the shade
By its thick woven branches made.

The breeze of morn stirr'd lightly
Its boughs imperial with dew,
The evening sun glanced rightly
Its emerald foliage through;
And the wild brook, whose fairy feet
Tripped by in measures gay and fleet,
Looked upward with a smile of love,
To catch the verdant pomp above.

The moonbeams softly straying
Amid its leaves of green,
The chequered shadows playing
Beneath its waving screen.
How soothing did they make the hour,
Sacred to pensive Fancy's power,
When happy thoughts came wild and free
Beneath the proud old forest tree.

The twilight gently trailing
Her robe of dusky grey,
And with soft shadows veiling
The fading hues of day,
Comes o'er the senses with a calm,
So fraught with quietude and peace,
It fell upon the heart like balm,
And bade each gush of sorrow cease.

The moments fled unnoted
Within that haunted grove,
When tenderest thought devoted
Thy vigil hours to love.
One loveliest image well defined,
Lived in the mirror of the mind,
O'er voice of music's sweetest tone
Was present in that arbour lone.

The winds flow murmurs creeping
Amid the leafy shade,
The moon gleams calmly sleeping
Along the mossy glade;
The purling stream that onward swept
Kissing the wild-flowers as they slept,
Each, in its song, or loving smile,
Spoke of my Mary's name the while.

Alas! that spot so holy,
No longer such remains,
The voice of melancholy
Around it sadly plains;
I start to hear the winds' deep sighs,
Like one in grief, come sobbing by,
As if with me it mourned,
The summer's doom of widowed woe,
The bright looks shorn and fallen low,
That late her brow adorned.

O Tree of glorious beauty!
Thy day of praise is o'er!
Mine is the saddening duty
Thy ruin to deplore.

Like a warrior, all unhelmeted
Thou liftest now thy leafless head,
With plume of nodding grandeur thinned,
And scattered by the lawless wind,

But grandly yet uprearing
Thy rifted front on high,
To meet the storm careering
Along the mid way sky,
Thy pillared strength the onset braves—
Thou wilt the scowling tempest raves—
Firm as the wave defying rock
That dares the gathering ocean's shock.

The searing blast of winter
Thy latest leaf shall blanch,

And many an icy splinter
Shall wreath each naked branch,
But thou in slumbering might shalt stand,
Though sceptreless thy kingly hand,
Till summer's prime restore again
The scattered symbols of thy reign.

ANTI-MATHEW; OR, A CASE OF HYDROPHOBIA.

BY T. HOOD.

It is utterly in vain to think of stemming the tide of opinion—*taste* it cannot be well called—which in these our days is running, gushing, streaming, and roaring in favour of cold water. Aquarius is the sign of the times. The world is all abroad on an universal aquatic excursion; ducking, dabbling, drenching, soaking, and sousing being the order or the day, which is the wettest day ever known even in the history of this wet climate, thanks to a Mathew and glory to a Priessnitz! Voices now there are heard gone, save there of the teetotaler and the hydropathist, which are as the roar of many waters, and comparable to no mortal eloquence.

The waters are out with a vengeance; and what is more, they will soon be out in the sense of exhaustion, if the water drinkers are not more abstemious, or if the pleasures of the pump are not to be enjoyed in moderation. It is evident from the enthusiasm of the Mathew-wites (who are not Luke warm,) that men may be intoxicated with water as well as with wine, and that sobriety is by no means necessarily one of the virtues of *aqua pura*. The father of temperance himself must clearly have been more than half seas over before he landed on the British shores. We can only compare his visit to an inundation; and we felt, when we heard of his coming, as if the river Shannon had announced his intention to make the tour of England, and wait on the Thames.

It is comfortable to think that his reverence can only work wonders, and has not the gift of working miracles; otherwise he would turn all our own wine into water,—a transmutation decidedly contrary to sacred precedent, and infinitely more worthy of a Mahomedan divine than a Christian minister.

We have no antipathy to water, although we have the vile taste to prefer claret; we think as the proverb goes, there is a place for every thing, and of course there is a place for water; there is, for instance, the sea, where there is ample room for it; the beds of rivers, where we engage never to disturb its repose; ponds, where it is a great convenience and satisfaction to fish; tanks in which we promise never to dip our tankard; and the tea kettle, with which we would gladly live upon terms of good fellowship, only stipulating that it is not, like an insolent usurper to push the decanter off the table. But water is just now the most intolerant, domineering, intrusive, and encroaching of all the elements. Instead of standing quietly in our ewers and vases, it insists on usurping our glasses, and endeavours to wash the wise out of our cellars.

Having long been dipped figuratively, we are now on the point of being dipped in fact, and besides being over head and ears in debt, we shall very soon be over head and ears in water. While politicians apprehend a national decline, our fear is, that we shall perish of a national dropy. Britannia rules the waves no more; the waves now rule Britannia, and Mathew "wields his little trident" as viceroy of the waters. These affusions, effusions, and infusions, will infallibly terminate in confusion; the only statesman capable of helping us in this "rainy day" is mackintosh; and, unless the waters speedily abate, we can only be saved like Dutchmen, by being damned. Theologians assure us men are to be saved, not only by works yet here is a school of divinity, of which Father Mathew is the principal, which maintains that men are to be saved, not only by works, but by water works! The doctors of this school ought to settle at Chelsea, and open their academy in a reservoir. As in a conflagration, people cry—"Fire! fire! fire!" So the shout should now be—"Water! water! water!"

There ought to be formed a Water Assurance Company without delay, and instead of fire-engines charged with water, there ought to be water engines provided with all manner of combustibles, to be used at temperance festivals, and in all cases of the like inundations.

Holloah!—there is water at Mr. Dribble's—Water!—water!—water!

"No fire to be had, as usual.—Water!—water!—water! Where is Dribble insured?"

"In the Dolphin—send for the Dolphin water-engine.—Water!—water!—water!"

"Where did the water break out?"

"At the pump."

"No, it was in the cistern.—Water!—water!"

"Not a spark of fire to be got!"

"Save me!—save me!—I am drowning!"

"I know that voice. It's poor Mrs. Brook; her husband is Secretary of the St. Dunstan's Total Abstinence Society."

"Which meets at Mr Dribble's?"

"That explains all; Brook and Dribble are lost; I have no doubt they were irreclaimable; I prophesied their fate six months ago."

"No, no! poor Brook has escaped this time; but with such a drenching as will be a lesson to him while he lives."

"Brook, where's Ford?"

"Decked."

"And Dribble?"

"Dribble's drowned."

The thought has occurred to us that the late dreadful ravages occasioned by fire in the metropolis may be accounted for by the natural spleen of that destructive element at witnessing the triumphs of its ancient rival, water, in the