From the Journal of the Am. Temperance Union.

Eleven o'clock Lunch.

At the request of a friend who wishes to see a little more variety in our Journal, and who believes there is an amount of intemperance in our city as well as Philadelphia, generated in the fashionable Lunches and Restaurateurs, of which we have little conception; we copy the following article, somewhat abridged, from the Philadelphia Sun. If the reading of it should induce one young man, or one father, to set his face steadfastly against the temptation to drink poisonous liquors as he goes for his lunch, we shall be richly compensated.

CHAPTER I.

"Eleven o'clock, Ned; don't you hear the State House clock striking?"

Thus spoke a young man, one of the junior partners of the house of Carton & Co., one of the wholesale house that line Market street. The person addressed as Ned was the head salesman of the establishment.

"Wait a moment, Thomas, I will be with you directly. I think the morning has passed very rapidly."

"Rapidly!" replied Thomas, "I have been thinking that eleven o'clock would never come. It appears to me the hours grow longer day by day."

Ned having got through with what he had been busy with, took the arm of Thomas, and together they proceeded to a neighboring tavern, kept by one Harry Blight. Harry was said to provide the best lunch of any landlord in the vicinity of Market street. In fact, as Thomas remarked, it was more like a regular dinner than a lunch. Stepping in at the door, they soon surrounded the well filled board.

Thomas, ravenous with hunger, soon had the carving knife in his had, cutting off a slice for Ned. He helped himself; laying it upon a piece of bread, he mustarded and peppered it to his satisfaction; and then was heard the accompanimeat of mastication, to the music of the brandy bottles, as they rattled upon the counter.

"Now, Neddy, my boy, what will you have?"

"I'll take a gin sling to-day, Thomas."

The sling and toddy were soon deposited beneath their waistcoats, and calling for segars, they lighted them and took a seat to regale themselves with their flavor.

"I say, Ned, this saloon of Harry's is a snug place to while away a half an hour in, before dinner. A more gentlemanly or clever fellow I never knew. He keeps the best liquors, segars, and lunch, of any landlord in town; and I am glad he is so well patronized."

"Well, Thomas, what will you have?—my treat, you know."

"I'll take brandy and sugar, Ned?"

"Here, waiter, bring us a gin sling and a brandy and sugar."

Thomas having prepared his brandy and sugar to his liking, sat sipping it and smacking his lips—a stranger to the glass would have smacked his lips too, if he had tasted it, not for its flavor, but for its fiery taste, no water having been mixed with them; Thomas having lately always asserted that water spoiled brandy and sugar.—Having finished their glasses, they returned to the store to attend to their regular business.

Thomas Marloe was a young man, whose energy had enabled him to reach the post of junior partner, in the house of Carton & Co. He had a young wife, and one child, a sweet little girl three years old. They lived in the upper part of the city, in a snug two-story house, and the comfort within was due to Mary, his wife. She was a lovely woman; one whose exemplary life, and sweet disposition, endeared her to all her acquaintances. Thomas fully appreciated her, and nought was left undone by him to contribute to her happiness.

Thomas, introduced by his companions to Harry Blight's eleven o'clock free lunch, soon became a regular attendant at it. He never dreamed of danger, but under the guise of seeking the lunch, he would seek the gratification of an appetite, that bade fair to prove his ruin. Eleven o'clock soon became too long to wait, and nine o'clock would find him at the bar, with a cracker in one hand and a glass of brandy in the other. He made many excuses to himself, and often tried to silence the accusing conscience within, when it spoke in thunder tones to his mind. Often the face of his sweet uncomplaining wife, would rise up before his mind, as he stepped upon the threshold of Harry's saloon. And often, his frenzied eye would fire with tears, as he felt the power of the tempter, like an anaconda, drawing its coils around him.

But what of Ned? Ah! Ned saw the fatal dart fixed in the shaft, ready to be sped into his heart, and like a prudent man, he forsook the eleven o'clock lunch, and tried all his powers of persuasion to induce Thomas to follow his example. It was, however, of no avail. Thomas had become spell-bound—the charmer knew his power, and well he used it. He visited regularly his old haunts, but, as he became seedy, or what is called a shabby genteel loafer, his former companions forsook him and declined his acquaintance.

CHAPTER II.

Five years passed away upon the wings of time. Thomas has waded through these years, days, and hours of sorrow; and his skirts have been defiled with the gutter and the kennel. He who had been so careful of his person and dress, has become a dirty sloven. Mary had often supped on blighted hopes, and departed joys—her uncomplaining was the wonder of her friends and neighbors. Oh! they knew not the depth of affection in that young heart! When expostulated with by her friends, for living with her husband; when told that nought had been left undone; that persuasion, kind admonition, friendly advice and entreaties had all failed; and there was no use in attempting his reformation, she would, with clasped hands and lifted eyes, bend to her knees, and taking her little daughter Clara's tiny fingers between her own, raise her voice in supplication to her God.

Long and patiently would she sit over her work to secure for her husband and little one a morsel to keep them from starving. Her labors at night affected her eyes—and her constant application to her needle, and want of exercise, had faded the rose from her cheeks, which had given place to the lilly. At this present time she was laboring under a cold, contracted in going out to a neighboring tavern, to seek for his insensible, bloated form. The cold grew worse, and soon the hectic flush upon her cheeks told the friends who visited her, that the worm which eateth into the vitals was at work upon her system.

Her disease had assumed a fatal character; and one evening as returning from the store where she procured work for her needle, she misstepped, and fell at full length upon the sharp cobble stones in the street. A stream of blood gushed from her mouth, and all she was able to inform the bystanders was of the place of her residence. They raised her gently and placed her in a carriage, and drove to her apology for a dwelling.

Bearing Mary gently, they laid her down upon a bed, and propped her head with some pillows her poor neighbors had brought in. Mary was beloved by all in the court; wherever the sick and the dying were, there was she found to comfort the mourner, and wipe the tear of sorrow from the eye.

The doctor soon came, and after attentively observing her, shook his head, with an involuntary motion, thus showing the thoughts within.

Dr. Graham spoke to her kindly, and asked if she had any friend she would like to see? She raised her glassy eyes to his face, and fixed them upon him with an earnest gaze—

"Doctor, I understand you—speak out plain, it will not affect me. Say, is my time of probation on earth drawing to a close?"

The Doctor, with tears flowing down his cheeks, assured her in the affirmative.

"Then, Doctor, all I ask is, that you will try and stimulate my body until my poor Thomas can be found."

"I will put forth all my skill, madam, to gratify your wishes."

CHAPTER III.

Thomas that morning had gone out sober, and with a determination to procure work, (if he could), to enable him to provide some food for his wife and child. He wanderrd up and down the street, endeavoring to obtain a job of work, but he walked in vain. Half famished, he sauntered down Market street, hoping to meet some familiar face and procure work sufficient to accomplish his object. There was one friend who had often assisted him; this was "Ned," the companion of beuer days. Slipping into the store of Carton & Co., he inquired if Edward Torbet was in? The porter replied that Edward had gone with a customer over to Harry Blight's to lunch.

To lunch! Eleven o'clock! And a series of years all shrouded in mourning, flashed across his brain! He staggered, and would have fallen, had not the porter sustained him. The porter placed Tom upon a chair, and procured a tumbler of water for him to drink. The cool beverage revived him, and visions of rounds of beef rose up before his view.

Thanking the porter for his kindness, he arose and took his way to Harry Blight's tavern. It was past eleven o'clock when he entered the bar-room. His appearance was shabby genteel.

Ned was sipping some Sherry wine, while conversing with his customer.

Harry Blight happened to cast his eyes towards the lunch table, and caught the form of Tom, as with vigorous jaws he packed away the lunch into his stomach. With one bound, Harry crossed the counter, and confronted Tom.

"Hey! you sponging, loafing rascal! what are you doing here? begone, or I will kick you into the street!"

For one moment Tom glared upon Harry, and then in a torrent of words thus addressed him:

"You kick me into the street? You call me a loafing sucker? Who made me what I am? Who spread the tempting bait? and silly was I to take it! Who brought upon my soul a curse? And who has barred my way to heaven with the poison of the still? Who has been the cause of making—what you now call sucker and loafer? Who? why you, Harry Blight. Your accursed eleven o'clock lunch first led me astray. Gentlemen," continued he turning and addressing the frequenters of the bar-room, "some years ago, I was one of the firm of Carton & Co., respected by all who knew me, beloved by my companions, and in the full confidence of my co-partners. In an evil day, Harry Blight opened this tavern, and spread what he calls a free lunch, at eleven o'clock in the day. I was induced to visit it, and the first silver I ever rung on the counter of a bar, I rung on that marble before you. I began with mineral water, then took wine, and at last, induced by the flaming encomiums heaped upon his fancy drinks, I took to drinking them. The temptation of the lunch was the first inducement to visit, and soon the thirst created by salted beef, salted pretzel, and sheep's tongues, was quenched in the liquid fire of the bar. I have spent money, health and peace of mind, in this accursed place. It has been the cause of sorrow to my noble-hearted wife. And to-day, sick, disheartened and half famished for food, I entered this house, with the ostensible object of seeking that gentleman; but also with the hope that I might cull some of the waste bits of the lunch, to which I am entitled. The landlord sets it out as a free lunch. Free, to be partaken of—and therefore, gentlemen, I appeal to your decision, whether I have committed a trespass, or have sponged upon the landlord? I know it is called a free lunch—but I also am aware, that Harry Blight laughs in his sleeve, when he retires at night to calculate what each man has paid for the slice of meat and bread he has partaken of. Gentlemen, I appeal to you."

"He is right," said they all.

"He is right," said Ned, "and Harry Blight, you are wrong for threatening to kick him into the street—and I for one will not see it done."

Here Tom's eyes, which had been flashing with anger—dropped their lids, and the tears fell pattering like rain drops at his feet. The fountain of his soul had been broken up by the friendly voice of Ned—and it melted his heart and he sobbed like a child.

"Come, none of your whining here,"—said the landlord—"you may thank your friend Edward, that your bloated carcass does not at this moment lie in the street."

As if stung by an adder—Tom sprang towards Harry, his eyes glaring with fury, and screaming at the top of his voice, exclaimed—

"Curse you! May God curse your body! May worms destroy it, ere the spirit leaves it! And may the fiends of hell wrap you in flames that shall burn but never kill! May the drunkard's curse lie on your soul."

The effort cost him what little strenght he had; and ere the bystanders were aware of Harry's purpose, he had caught Tom by the throat, and hurled him headlong into the street. They rushed out in a body, picked him up, and carried him to Carton & Co.'s store. The blood flowed in a stream from a deep wound in his head. Edward perceiving his lips move, placed his ear near his mouth and heard these words:

"Oh, God, have mercy on me, a sinner! Mary, Clara, wife, child!" and he ceased to breathe.

They procured a settee, and carried him towards his late home.

Mary had sent in every direction for her husband, but the messengers had returned without any tidings of him. Presently a number of footsteps were heard pattering over the pavement. In a moment, as if divining the cause, she raised herself upon her arm, and murmured, "Bring him up here; I know it all. Let me see his body before I die."

They brought his body up stairs. As a statue, with glazed eyes, she looked upon the corpse; then clasping her emaciated hands in supplication, she murmured, "Father, turn the drunkard maker from the error of his ways. Lord, help me to forgive!"

Edward approached her and said, "Forgiveness lies alone with God, it is God only who can forgive such iniquity! Mary, Clara shall be my child if you will give her to me, and she shall be the object of my heart's best affections."