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## Address on the Effects of Ardent Spirits.

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Fellow-Citizens.—That intemperance, in our country, is a great and growing evil, all are ready to admit.—When we look abroad, and examine into the state of society, we find the number of those who are in the constant and habitual practice of an excessive use of ardent spirits to be alarming. We see the effects that they produce among our friends and our neighbours, but the evil is so common, and it is so fashionable to drink, and I had almost said, to drink to excess, that the sight of it has lost half its terror, and we look upon an intemperate man without those feelings of disgust and abhorrence which his real situation and character are calculated to produce. This is the natural result of things. The mind becomes familiar with the contemplation, the eye accustomed to the sight; we pay but little attention to the object—he passes on—we laugh at the exhibition, and grow callous and indifferent to the guilt. Our pity is not excited, our hearts do not ache, at the scenes of intoxication that are almost daily exhibited around us. But, if for a moment we seriously reflect upon the real situation of the habitually intemperate; if we call to mind what they have been—what they now are; if we cast our eye to the future, and realize what, in a few years, they will be; if we go further, and examine into the state of their families, of their wives and their children, we shall discover a scene of misery and wretchedness that will not long suffer us to remain cold, and indifferent, and unfeeling.

This examination we can all make for ourselves. We can all call to mind the case of some individual, whom we have known for years, perhaps from his infancy, who is now a poor, miserable drunkard. In early life his hopes and prospects were as fair as ours. His family was respectable, and he received all those advantages which are necessary, and which were calculated to make him a useful and respectable member of society. Perhaps he was our school-fellow, and our boyhood may have been passed in his company. We witnessed the first buddings of his mental powers, and know that he possessed an active, enterprising mind. He grew up into life with every prospect of usefulness. He entered into business, and for a while, did well. His parents looked to him for support in old age, and he was capable of affording it. He accumulated property, and, in a few years, with ordinary prudence and industry, would have been independent. He married and became the head of a family, and the father of children, and all was prosperous and happy around him. Had he continued as he began, he would now have been a comfort to his friends, and an honor to the community. But the scene quickly changed. He grew fond of ardent spirits. He was seen at the store and the tavern. By degrees he became intemperate. He neglected his business, and his affairs went to gradual decay. He is now a drunkard, his property is wasted, his parents have died of broken hearts, his wife is pale and emaciated, his children ragged, and squalid, and ignorant. He is the tenant of some little cabin that poverty has erected to house him from the storm and the tempest. He is useless, and worse than useless: he is a pest to all around him. All the feelings of his nature are blunted; he has lost all shame; he procures his

accustomed supply of the poison that consumes him, he staggers through mud and through filth, to his hut; he meets a weeping wife and starving children—he abuses them, he tumbles into his straw, and he rolls and foams like a mad brute, till he is able to go again. He calls for more rum—he repeats the scene from time to time, and from day to day, till soon his nature faints, and he becomes sober in death.

Let us reflect, that this guilty, wretched creature, had an immortal mind—he was like us, of the same flesh and blood—he was our brother, destined to the same eternity, created by, and accountable to, the same God; and will, at last, stand at the same judgment bar; and who, amid such reflections, will not weep at his fate—whose eye can remain dry, and whose heart unmoved?

This is no picture of the imagination. It is a common and sober reality. It is what we see almost every day of our lives; and we live in the midst of such scenes and such events. With the addition or subtraction of a few circumstances, it is the case of every one of the common drunkards around us. They have not completed the drama—they are alive—but they are going to death with rapid strides, as their predecessors have already gone. Another company of immortal minds are coming on to fill their places, as they have filled others. The number is kept good, and increasing. Shops, as nurseries, are established in every town and neighbourhood, and drunkards are raised up by the score. They are made—they are formed—for no man was ever born a drunkard—and, I may say, no man was ever born with a taste for ardent spirits. They are not the food which nature has provided. The infant may cry for its mother's milk, and for nourishing food, but none was ever heard to cry for ardent spirits. The taste is created, and in some instances may be created so young, that, perhaps, many cannot remember the time when they were not fond of them.

And here permit me to make a few remarks upon the *formation or creation of this taste*. I will begin with the infant, and I may say that he is born into rum. At his birth, according to custom, a quantity of ardent spirits is provided; they are thought to be as necessary as anything else. They are considered as indispensable as if the child could not be born without them. The father treats his friends and his household, and the mother partakes with the rest. The infant is fed with them, as if he could not know the good things he is heir to without a taste of ardent spirits. They are kept on hand, and often given to him as medicine, especially where the parents are fond of them themselves. By this practice, even in the cradle, his disrelish for ardent spirits is done away. He grows up, and during the first months or years of his existence, his taste and his appetite are formed. As he runs about, and begins to take notice of passing events, he sees his father and friends drink; he partakes, and grows fond of them. In most families, ardent spirits are introduced and used on every extraordinary occasion. Without mentioning many, that the knowledge and experience of every man can supply, I will instance only the case of visitors. A gentleman's friends and acquaintances call on him. He is glad to see them, and fashion and custom make it necessary for him to invite them to the sideboard. This is all done in his best style, in his most easy and affable manner. The best set of drinking-