

# TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

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ADDRESS OF THE STATE TEMPERANCE SOCIETY TO THE FREEMEN OF VERMONT.

(From the Vermont Herald.)

Fellow-Citizens of Vermont,—By a law of the last session of the Legislature, it is provided, that on the first Tuesday of March town meetings shall be held in every town in this state, at which the votes of the Freemen, inscribed either *License*, or *No License*, shall be received by the proper authority, and “if a majority of the votes returned throughout the entire state shall be *License*, it shall be the duty of the assistant Judges of the several County Courts to grant licenses, in accordance with the provisions of the act, to all such persons as shall make application therefor, and who sustain good moral characters.”

If the majority of the votes shall be *No License*, the assistant Judges shall have power to grant licenses only for medicinal, chemical, and mechanical purposes, to such persons only as shall have been approbated for such purpose by the civil authority of the town.

Such is the momentous question which is soon to be submitted to your decision; a question of deeper and more thrilling interest to the people of the state than any other that has come before them since the adoption of their constitution. The issue to be made is, whether intoxicating liquors shall be confined to legitimate and useful purposes, or shall flow, unrestrained, with a tide of desolation, over the length and breadth of the state. This is a subject of vital importance to every portion of the community, affecting, as it does, the civil, social, and moral prosperity and happiness of the people, and the character of our commonwealth.

In this crisis, we deem it appropriate to address to you some considerations, which may tend to prepare you for right action on this subject, and we beg you to give them your candid attention.

That intoxicating drinks are neither necessary nor useful

to persons in health is now generally admitted. The fact is established beyond a doubt by the testimony of physicians, and by the experience of multitudes who have discontinued the use of them. Nor can it be denied that they are prolific of evil. Their deadly influence is matter of constant observation, and new and varied forms of wretchedness, attributable solely to them, are daily brought to our notice. But familiar as you may be with the sad details of intemperance, it is impossible to form an adequate conception of its dreadful evils; much less is it possible fully to portray them. Not only is language inadequate to set forth their enormity, but the mind itself cannot grasp the multiplied forms of anguish and distress of which they are the cause.

Consider their effects upon the unhappy subjects of their immediate influence.

In a New England village in the course of forty years, 80 farms were squandered and alienated from the families which had possessed them, from this cause.

*They impair the health.* The intoxicating principle is a poison; it conveys no nourishment to the body; the stomach rejects it; it inflames the nerves, goes into the blood, and passes through the system, sometimes wasting and again bloating it, till it settles in the brain; and thus, by a process more or less rapid, destroys the functions of life.

*They weaken, derange, and destroy the reason.* Of 880 maniacs in various asylums, 400 owed their loss of reason to intoxicating drinks. “Intemperance,” said Dr. Woodward in 1841, “still takes the first rank among the causes of insanity.” Esquirol, who is celebrated for his researches into the statistics of madness, was of opinion that intemperance gives rise to one half of the cases of insanity in Great Britain.

*They destroy life.* In 1845, the coroner of the city of New York held inquests on the bodies of 634 persons. Of these 3-5ths died of intemperance. It is estimated that this cause cuts off 30,000 persons annually in the United States, and 60,000 in England. And what a death!

*They unfit men for heaven.* Scripture says, “No drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Nor are the evils occasioned by intoxicating drinks confined to those who use them. No; they fall with oppressive weight upon their innocent and unprotected families. The impaired earnings of the intemperate husband and father are often squandered for drink, while the affectionate wife and helpless children are left to starve. He who, it may be, was once a provident and tender father, is transformed by alcohol to a demon, and vents his passion, maddened to fury, on his unoffending and unresisting family. The scenes of cruelty and outrage which are frequently enacted under the drunkard’s roof, are enough to shock every sensibility of the soul, and to rouse every friend of humanity to energetic effort to stay the desolating evil. The drunkard’s wife often goes down broken hearted to an untimely grave; his children participate in their father’s shame, and grow up in ignorance, vice, and wretchedness. In one poor house in the state of New York, out of 190 inmates were 19 wives of drunken husbands, and 71 children of drunken fathers. Who can estimate the sufferings inflicted on these unhappy victims of