

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

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A D D R E S S .

THIS is a memorable day in the history of our country. It is the birth-day of our nation ;—a day in which civil rights and equal rights began to be seen, to be felt, and to be defended. So long had the popular mass of body and of mind been controled by usurped authority, that a sense of individual rights was almost obliterated from the human soul. But in this part of the world, comparatively new, and far from the morbid atmosphere of thrones and tyranny, the human mind retained its original formation, health and vigor. Neglect and oppression had thrown it upon its own resources, and prepared it for action. You know what were the exactions of the British government from the colonies of America ; and you know that they were unjust and oppressive. You know, too, that ~~what~~^{then} an endurance of wrongs would itself have been wrong, and would have invited an endless series of grievances, our fathers were moved at the same time by one and the same principle,—a sense of injuries, a sense of rights, a sense of civil liberty ; a principle, which could no more be expunged from their bosoms by a tyrant's arms than the laws of nature could be controled by the laws of the State. This principle not only united them in sentiment and in feeling, but it united them in their counsels, in their decisions ; collected them into one body, and brought all their powers to bear against one common object,—the

oppression of their country ; and He, who governs the world by righteous laws, gave success to their combined and well directed efforts ; and by his power and grace we are this day what we are. We love to dwell on the history of our country. We admire the spirit of our fathers, which fired their souls, called forth all their energies, and led them to achievements of the highest order. We would most gladly gather up some shreds of the mantles they threw back when they left the world.

But the world is destined to revolution and change ; and our part of it is under the same destiny. When our fathers had delivered themselves, through the goodness of God, from foreign tyranny ; had freed themselves from tea acts and stamp acts, they were prepared, it would seem, to enjoy all the blessings of the land of promise. But like the Israelites who, when they were delivered from the rigors of Egypt, longed for the leeks and the onions they had nurtured in their bondage, they hankered after a *species of tyranny* a hundred fold more oppressive than the one they had thrown off. They chose that the legitimate son of an Arabian chemist should be their leader ; and not a few subjected themselves to his absolute dominion. Though he was not like any thing in heaven above or in earth beneath, yet they fell down before him, and worshipped him in spirit and in truth. While suffering degradation and ruin, they congratulated themselves that he was ~~one of~~ ^{one of} their own choice, and that they felt little or no restraint under his control.

But to speak without a figure ; our countrymen, after the American revolution, brought themselves, by the use of ardent spirits, under a dominion more expensive, more oppressive, and more debasing, than the English government, which they had manfully and gloriously thrown off. Their

taxes they had to pay to the British crown without their consent by representation were small, compared with the sums they afterward paid for distilled spirits. They hardly bore the proportion of cents to dollars. But what they did in the latter case, they did of choice, and therefore they believed they were free, and not in bondage to any man. But there is a *voluntary* servitude, and it may not be less oppressive and destructive than that which is imposed by the arbitrary will of another. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" What is the difference in the result, whether another extorts from you a certain sum without your consent, or you voluntarily give the same sum for *that* which profits you nothing? What is the difference whether another by superior force compels you to swallow a poisonous draught, which deprives you of your life, or you of choice take the same draught and experience the same effect? What is the great advantage of taking the work of your oppression or destruction out of the hands of others, and doing the same yourselves? I say nothing to the disparagement of our glorious revolution, nor of the worth of our national independence, when I assert that the taxes paid by our nation to that *fiery king, the still*, were incomparably greater than those which had been paid to the king of England; and that the servitude under the former was a hundred times more oppressive than that under the latter. The one was a chastisement of whips, the other of scorpions. What inconsistency, what contradiction, there is in man! He vibrates from one extreme to the other. He flies from one evil, and with eyes wide open plunges into a greater.

I cannot but allude to the manner in which this day *has been* celebrated, and by some *is still* celebrated. The

morning was ushered in by the thunders of Mars, as if the tidings of our independence were to be proclaimed to other nations and to other worlds. Agreeably to appointment, the people of their respective towns, in no small numbers, assembled in the house of God, and with united hearts offered up thanks to the Sovereign of nations for their national blessings ; and presented supplications for his continued support and direction. Their rights and wrongs were discussed, the spirit of '75 vividly portrayed, and other topics presented suited to the occasion. These religious exercises were appropriate, and adapted to produce happy results. Had the assemblies, at the close of these services, dispersed, and retired to their homes, their hearts might have been improved, and they might have felt fresh impulse to serve their country and their God. But this was not half the business of the day. A *drink offering* must next be poured out, and a copious one too ; not in ancient heathen style, *upon* the head of the victim, but in modern style, poured *into* the head ; and how many victims have here commenced and continued their preparations for the sacrifice of themselves ! In these scenes of revelry and confusion, an imaginary right must be defended, insulted honor must be retrieved, and a knock down argument or two must sometimes be applied, before questions were settled and conflicting parties were satisfied. How lamentable it is,—how debasing to human nature and to our country, that any should be found in this enlightened period who thus desecrate the day !

We look back a few years, and we see a flood spreading over the face of our country ; not a flood of water, like that which drowned the old world, but a flood, I had almost said, of liquid flame, issuing from the still, and spreading with amazing rapidity. The instinctive brute turned from

it, and was safe. But man, endued with reason and immortality, more heedless than the beast, *faced* it, fell before it, and was swept away. A vast proportion of our population were in the habit of using ardent spirits to slake their thirst or to gratify their taste. No age, nor grade, nor department of society, was exempt from this practice. The infant could hardly be ushered into the world, and the dead could hardly be carried from it, without its aid. The evil was rapidly increasing—spreading wider, working deeper, and threatening general ruin. At this awful juncture, when life and death, the salvation and destruction of our country, were equipoised, and the scale was just ready to be turned, an impulse was given at the same time to the different parts of our country; and some choice spirits in every department of society awoke from their slumbers; and when they awoke, they saw and felt the danger. The chemist found that alcohol was not one of the works of God; and that it had no more right among them than Satan had in Eden; that it afforded no nutriment to the human system; that it would not incorporate with it, and that it produced disorder wherever it went. The physician, who had luckily found that he could live without ardent spirits, found also that others could do the same. He found that medicine could be prepared and administered without it; that the article which had occasioned so much disease, was not necessary to its removal; that what had destroyed so much life was not essential to its preservation. The jurist and the judge saw, from living witnesses, that crime was the natural offspring of strong drink; and as its parentage was legion, so was its progeny. They found that of those who were arraigned before them for crime, the principal part were sons of the cup; and they inferred, and justly too, that intoxi-

eating drink is a copious source of injustice and cruelty ; that men only need to be deranged by alcoholic power to be prepared for the most daring outrage. The civil guardians of our towns, who superintend their general morals, were curious enough to discover by what means the poor-house was more fully occupied, and the poor-farm sought and found by more persons than any other house and farm in the town. The cause was too apparent to be mistaken ; and it is now too universally known to be named.

The man who ministered at the altar, and had drank of the water of life, found that he needed no other spirit to excite his mind, to warm his heart, to inspire him with the holy feelings of devotion, or to move his hands to the work of the Lord. He found that animal stimulants where used were hostile to religion, dissipated serious thought, corrupted the heart, occasioned levity of deportment, kept many out of the fold of Christ, and tarnished the Christian character more than every thing else. He knew there was no communion between Christ and Beliel, nor between the influence of the Holy Spirit and the excitement of the spirits of men's invention ; that religion was in a sickly state, if it lived at all, in the atmosphere of alcohol. The farmer, too, plodding along slowly, but surely, and turning every thing to account, could not account for the magnitude of his rum account ; and at length counted it the worst of all his accounts. He found that his physical power and steam power were entirely unlike ; and though they made pretension of great friendship, and formed strong attachments, they were always at variance, and frequently in the most serious conflicts ; and though he had ever been worsted, he was willing to renew the combat. At this time he made the great discovery,—and let it stand on the page

of history forever, for it is the greatest discovery of the age—he made the discovery, I say, that the products of the field would grow without rum; that a gill of ashes was better for a hill of corn than a gill of rum; that mown grass would become hay under a clear sky without the heat of rum; that the patient ox would work all day uniformly and faithfully without rum to make the driver mad and abuse his team. He found that a July's sun made him hot enough in the field without making his cistern a boiler to give steam impulse to his powers, which the God of nature had regulated; that tools and implements of husbandry could be kept unbroken, in their place, and at work; that men could labor together all day in good humor and faithfully, without a legion of evil spirits to usurp control. Other classes of laborers found out the same principle—that the God of nature had so constituted their physical system that it needed no human invention for its improvement.

These were discoveries more important than those made by the great Newton in the solar system; for they were made for the immediate necessities of men. These discoverers, like ministering spirits sent of God to this world, were anxious to save a country, almost overwhelmed with rum and delusion. They were in haste for the rescue. Each in his own department, and in his own way, taxed his head and his hands for the great work of reform,—the suppression of intemperance. The press threw light upon the subject, and scattered its beams over the country. Here and there an individual exerted the power of temperance example. Some from all the learned professions, from the medical department, from the bar and the bench, from the church and the altar, from the farm and the workshop, volunteered their

services against the common enemy. They went forward like the stripling of Israel against the champion of the Philistines; or like the disciples of Christ to convert a world. They did much; their labor prospered; individuals were seen continually falling into their ranks. They have already made vast conquests; and the work is still in progress. I am ready to say that the revolution in public sentiment and practice, as far as it has gone, on the subject of intemperance, has produced greater and better results than any other revolution which has ever taken place in our world.

Though *much* has been done for the cause of temperance, and great success has attended it, yet much remains to be done. The Anakim and the sons of the Anakim are still in the land. They are in *voluntary* bondage, and this makes their case the more desperate. They avoid the light which shines on the subject. Their consciences have been too long seared by the fires of the still to be convinced by the most weighty arguments. They still make vast expenditures for that which satisfieth not; which preys upon their health, their life, and unfits their soul for every thing for which it was designed. I know they maintain that they have a right to do as they please on this subject; that they have a right to do what they will with their own. But we maintain that a man has not a right to do wrong; that he has not a right to waste his property, and by that means make himself or his family a burden on the community. He has no right to destroy his health and hasten his death; to debilitate those exalted faculties which the Author of his being has given him; to withhold from the social body that service, and from God that honor, to which he was destined. He contends for the liberty and independence which were gained by the conflict of the revolution. Let him have

them. They are his right by inheritance. But it is not freedom to be enslaved by animal appetites. It is not freedom to be thrown into the poor-house by reason of intemperance, or to be cast into prison and be confined there, for the same cause. It is not independence to be obliged to lean on a neighbor's arm while going home from a fourth of July celebration, or to be scraped up from the road and be carried he knows not where.

It is said by the moderate, a little does no hurt. A little what? A little rum. I answer, a little, every body knows, does no good; and a little, added to a little and multiplied by a little, becomes a great deal; and it produces a visible, a destructive effect. Avoid the beginning of evil, and there is safety.

By another class it is said, they cannot live without it. It is fact, *such cannot live long without it*. When one's constitution is so far changed that it has become a rum constitution, and it requires rum to keep it along from day to day, that constitution has in itself the elements of its own destruction. If it is not consumed by spontaneous combustion, the effect is no less certain. If in this age of innovation and experiment, when men scorn to step where their fathers trod, they would make the bold experiment, and refrain entirely from ardent spirits, they would then see and see clearly. They would then hear and hear distinctly. They would weigh an argument correctly, and they would soon resolve, that as for them and their house they would no longer serve rum. All who have made a fair experiment have come to the same result. What has been done can be done again.

I know a town where the current of rum which runs into the place and about the place bears some comparison with

the current of the Merrimack. If all the little streams which gurgle on hill and dale were turned into one channel, and were made to empty into this river, it might well be traced on the map of the State as a tributary stream to its mighty waters. There is in that place a regular gradation in society, and that gradation is very accurately marked by the quality and dimensions of the vessels they carry to the great reservoirs to be replenished with ardent spirits. You see them repair daily to these pools of stagnation and death, and you wish to know something of their comparative standing in the place. There comes a man with a two-quart, brown, earthen jug, suspended on a string by the neck, as if it had been guilty of some capital misdemeanour in the service of his master. That man lives from hand to mouth. He stands at cypher, or below. He cannot carry a vessel of a higher class, for neither his funds nor his credit would enable him to fill it.

There goes another to the same depôt with a vessel of the same capacity, but of better material and aspect. He is one touch above his fellow. In him you see something of the pride of character, for he looks *edge-wise* at the poor jug-bearer. *He* just makes the two ends of the year meet, and he cares not for any man.

Who comes next? A man of no mean habit, nor of *pale* countenance, bearing a jar of double dimensions. He has been through a regular course of discipline. He knows what he wants as well as any man. He can drink on his money, or on his credit, neither asked nor asking any questions. This man belongs to the middle class; and a numerous class it is.

You look again and you see another rolling along on wheels, moved by horse-power, and freighted with something I should

call a stone boiler, capacious enough, when raised to its highest pressure, to carry the machinery of a cotton-mill, or a steam-boat. He looks on the small-fry around him as a great man looks on little men. He is *first rate ; fourth proof ;* and fit for any office in the town. Can any thing be done for such a place? Sow your seed in the boiling lava, and when it will vegetate, spring up and mature its kind, you may take courage,—you may make effort. Stop up the crater, and there is hope.

Nothing, perhaps, is better calculated to throw light upon a subject, and carry conviction to the understanding, than facts, relevant facts. I will state a case or two from my own personal knowledge, which have a connexion with the subject before us. I had a next door neighbour, by the side of whom I lived more than thirty years. He was a man of moral and religious character. He was a man of *correct habits*. By this I mean he was uniform in the use of ardent spirits. He took it daily and at stated times in the day. This course he pursued about forty years, and was what was then called a temperate man ; that is, he never became intoxicated. Conversing with him a few years ago on the subject of total abstinence from ardent spirits (though he had *partially* stopped up the sluice-way) he was not willing to refrain wholly from his accustomed beverage. I applied a series of arguments, but without effect. I would not leave him without one word more. Deacon, said I, you know your drunken neighbor, a few houses above this, calling him by name. I have labored with that man repeatedly to dissuade him from his intemperate habits. But he retorts upon me, and says, “ your deacon drinks rum, and he is a very likely man. It is no worse for me to drink rum than it is for him.” This was a harpoon thrown at a good time, and it found a

spot at which it entered. I saw that he was moved. Every muscle seemed to be affected. He is now on temperance ground, and his name is where it should be. But, unfortunate man, perhaps I ought to say, fortunate, for of four sons whom he brought up in his own correct habits of regular drinking, one, and *only one* is a drunkard! What a vast responsibility rests on parents! *They* may float on the current, and perhaps reach the opposite shore, which their children attempting to do, go down, not to rise again. The power of example, of wrong example, of parental example, is incalculable. The case just stated shews what a pernicious influence moderate drinkers exert on those around them. Retaining their health, their capabilities and their *standing*, they give credit to the use of distilled spirits. Others drink upon their credit, make advances on their moderate practices, and before they are aware they are carried down the current.

I had another neighbour more remote, and of low character. He belonged to the black two-quart jug class. At a certain time he went to a neighbouring store. He first filled himself, and then his jug. Being equipoised, and feeling about right, he started for home. On his way he lost his equilibrium, and there being more than usual attraction between his head and the ground, he fell. The jug broke. His neck came athwart the broken pieces, one of which pierced his jugular vein. Here was a most tragic scene. Here was the wreck of jug and the loss of its freight. Here was the ruptured tube leading to the heart, from which the life blood was flowing. But he, more lucky than the vessel he carried, survived the shock. But the scar still remains, and points out to the observer what a loaded *jug* can do to the *jugular vein*. Alas, how many are destroyed by this

great destroyer, and how many have made but hair breadth escapes!

When I was first settled in the ministry, there was a young man in the place who had just commenced business as a merchant. He was a man of promise, of good talents, well educated, of correct morals, pleasing manners and constant and upright in his business. He prospered. He won the esteem and affection of all in the town. They promoted him to the best offices they had to bestow; and they were not disappointed. He was admitted into the church, and soon was made an officer. Years passed away, and his sun shone bright. But at length a worm found its way to the root of the gourd. He used ardent spirits, at first very cautiously. But the practice imperceptibly grew upon him. After he had accumulated a handsome property and his intemperate habits had become stronger, he became more lax in business, and at length failed. Though he was in the midst of life, and with a constitution not broken down, he made no attempt to rise. Having but little means of support, and of procuring ardent spirits, and having lost his standing in society, he coolly and deliberately destroyed his own life. If such a man fell before the delusion and the power of strong drink, who may not fear the same effect, if he begins with the same cause? and who will not stand back from danger, when so many beacons (and deacons too) warn him of the same destruction!

There is much temperance work yet to be done; and it is extremely hard to be accomplished. It is as difficult, it is more difficult, than to collect the last ten per cent. of taxes in any of our towns. What shall temperance men *now* do? Say no hard or bitter things to, or about your deluded, self-destroying fellow-beings. Shew your solicitude for their

safety by words of kindness, and by timely arguments and persuasions. Let your industry and management be marked with exemplary precision. Let your farms be models of order and regularity. Prove to your neighbours that the products of your fields will flourish better under the pure elements of nature, than under the exciting influence of artificial stimulants. Let your morals, let all your deportment, be more correct than theirs. Let your scrupulous regard for divine institutions prove that you are actuated by a spirit more uniform, more holy than theirs. Let your persons, your whole demeanour and every thing pertaining to you be such, that it will be known, as far as you are seen, that you are *temperance men*. This will give credit, this will give influence to the cause, which cannot be wholly resisted. Be of one mind and of one heart; let your names stand together, and your hands work together; and you will form a current which will carry many along with it.

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