

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN THE
COURT HOUSE AT PARIS,
JANUARY 28, 1834, BEFORE THE
UNION TEMPERANCE SOCIETY
OF OXFORD COUNTY**

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An address delivered in the court house at Paris, January 28, 1834, before the Union Temperance Society of Oxford County by Stephen Emery

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STEPHEN EMERY

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AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE COURT HOUSE

At Paris, January 28, 1824,

BEFORE THE

UNION TEMPERANCE SOCIETY

OF OXFORD COUNTY.

—
BY STEPHEN EMERY.
—

Published at the request of and by the Union Temperance
Society of Oxford County.

PORTLAND:

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ADDRESS.

MY RESPECTED FRIENDS:

IN appearing before you on the present occasion, I bring with me a desire to speak, not so much to you, as with you. I wish to hold communion with your hearts and consciences. Time has taken from our subject the grace of novelty, but has left its importance unimpaired. In common with many greater and better men, I claim to be a friend of my species, solicitous, though in ever so humble a way, to add something to the stock of human happiness. If in placing before you the convictions of my own understanding and the feelings of my heart, in the most plain and simple manner, I can but inspire one virtuous sentiment, or strengthen such as you already cherish, I shall be richly rewarded for the poor services I have consented to render you on the present occasion. Come then with me, and for a few moments let us enquire, *what temperance has done, what it seeks to do, and what means it should employ to promote its objects.* It is obvious that any one of these topics would furnish matter for a long address. I am therefore compelled to remark briefly on each, leaving it for your own knowledge to fill up the outline which I shall attempt to draw.

First then let us enquire, what has temperance done? Different persons give different answers, for the world are not all agreed on this subject. The friends of temperance say, it has done good, while others assert, it has done evil. I will endeavor to set before you some good, that it has done, about which, it appears to me, there can be no diversity of opinion.

In the first place, among those, who have embraced the cause of temperance and obeyed its injunctions, it has done good by diminishing the expenses of living and preventing a waste of the means of life. Have you ever calculated the amount thrown away to support the habit of intemperance? However undignified it may be to introduce the subject of dollars and cents into an address, it is an important subject of consideration in the common concerns of life. Permit me to speak with the utmost plainness, in the language of that invaluable science, arithmetic. Do you not perceive, that a small sum daily, becomes one of magnitude in the progress of time? A farmer or mechanic would feel a little reluctant to pay over at once at the end of the year in one gross sum ten dollars and ninety five cents, to defray the expense incurred by the use of ardent spirit; and yet this is the amount at the small rate of three cents per day. He would be apt to reflect, 'how many good things might I have purchased even with this—clothing and comforts for wife and children—or I might have more than paid my taxes with it.' At the rate of six cents per day, the annual amount is twenty one dollars and ninety cents, a sum sufficient to furnish a small and prudent family, not only with considerable clothing, but many other substantial articles of living. Look at the result of twenty years—*four hundred and thirty eight dollars!* If to this you add the annual interest as it accrues on the expenses of each year by itself, which is certainly fair to do, the sum total amounts *to something more than eight hundred dollars!* a sum that would purchase a snug farm and provide a comfortable home for the father and his family, or for his son, who may have just arrived at the age of one and twenty. I have been thus particular, because few

take the pains to calculate the depredations thus made upon their property. Intemperance is indeed an infamous depredator—the king of beggars; cunning, artful, importunate; always asking, never satisfied—an arrant cheat, filching away by little and little the hard earnings of community—a matchless spendthrift, rioting on the treasures, that industry would accumulate. I leave it for you to compute the frightful aggregate thus drawn from the vast multitudes of society, not merely wasted but actively employed in sapping the foundations of human happiness. What admonition does temperance here give, especially to every man in moderate circumstances? Save this sum for yourself and your children; save it to supply yourself and them with the substantial means of prosperity; save it for the enjoyments of a happy fireside, for education, for all that can make life respectable and of any worth. If in casting your eye on the world around you, it should chance to fall upon an individual who deems himself unable to purchase a pair of shoes or a new book for his little son or daughter, do you find him among the temperate poor; those who practice entire abstinence? No—He is the man who spends dollars and dollars in rum. Temperance has interposed. She has spoken in the public ear and found her way to the understanding and the heart. Many have heard her gentle admonition, nor have they heard in vain. In no very restricted sense may they say to the tyrant of the world, “we have millions for defence, not one cent for tribute.”

In addition to the benefit already mentioned, temperance has rescued from waste and redeemed in the lives of her votaries much valuable time. It would be easy to demonstrate, that the intemperate man sustains an injury in the actual loss of time by no means inferior to

his actual expenditure in money. When you ask him to labor for you a day, he understands well the worth of time; but with singular forgetfulness he makes no account of the time he spends in idle and worse than idle habits of dissipation. If he have the misfortune to live amidst facilities for indulgence, a single hour in each half day is not considered too long to lay aside his business concerns. Thus a full sixth part of the time for active industry is thrown away. In some cases less time may be lost, but in many cases, more. The admonition of temperance has brought home to many, a knowledge of this startling fact, attended with the happiest practical results. The reveller has heard a voice, vibrating in accents of solemn entreaty upon his ear: "Save these hours, and days, and months and years for better purposes; save them for the labors of the field and the workshop; save them for intellectual and moral pleasures, for books, for the discharge of personal and social duty, for the instruction, benefit and happiness of a rising family."

Why should I enumerate and enlarge upon the benefits, which follow in the train of temperance? Why should I harrow up your feelings and my own by contrasting them with the dangers we have escaped? Well might I point you to the losses sustained by the intemperate man in the neglect of business, in the numerous and unnecessary debts he contracts under the influence of ardent spirit; the thousand advantages taken of him in his contracts; his exposures in life and in limb; his decay of health, his temptations to crime, and the wreck of all that is noble, high-minded and great. Well might I point you to the effect of his example; the blighting influence he exerts upon his neighborhood and society; to the desolation that reigns at home, the

scene of suffering, mortification and misery, cheered by scarce one ray of comfort; where an amiable wife and her innocent brood of little ones around her, pained and heart broken, pine and bleed amidst want, cruelty and shame; with nothing but poverty, distress and degradation in prospect. Do our souls shudder and recoil at the contemplation? Look then at a brighter picture, drawn still by the pencil of truth. What has temperance done? She has spread her bright wings and gone forth, shedding light and hope and happiness over many who sat in darkness. She has spoken to *the man* and reminded him of the nature and end of his being; appealing not merely to his interests; demonstrating not only the expense, but the slavery and degradation of intemperance; placing directly before his eyes the desolation it has made in the moral and intellectual world, at the same time elevating his eye to objects of more than transient, earthly excellence, to which he may justly aspire. She has spoken to *the citizen*, calling his attention to his duties and obligations as a member of society—teaching him to throw around the liberties of his country, the ramparts of private, social and public virtue, without which none but an unrelenting despotism is safe. She has spoken to *the husband*, and entreated him in the eloquence of suffering virtue, to leave the haunts of dissipation; to cheer the solitude of a neglected wife; to exchange noise and riot for the peaceful, sacred enjoyments of home; to restore the smile which once played on one lovely countenance, when life was full of hope and joy and expectation. She has spoken to *the father*, and conjured him, if he would no longer doom the offspring of his love to penury and vice, to let love and duty consecrate the parental character, and by his example, his instructions, his

parental affection and solicitude to train up his children to usefulness and honor. Husband, father, home. What heart does not warm at these sounds? What joyful associations do they not awaken? If in this world of ours there be aught of the purity and happiness of heaven, it is to be found in the conjugal and parental relations, by the silent and sacred retreats of domestic life, whither the virtues and the graces delight to repair, and moral and intellectual fruits hang in rich clusters on every side. Many a husband and father; many a mother and wife and child; many a home, the garden of moral and intellectual excellency, can demonstrate to you, that temperance has been at work. Thousands in our country have heard her voice and are now enjoying the rich blessings she invariably bestows. A great change has been wrought. It meets us all around. We see it in the altered countenance, the improved health, the greater fruits of a more careful and continued industry; in the diminution of debts, litigation and crime; in improvements in education, science, literature and the arts; in private and public morals, and in an ardent lofty spirit of philanthropy. The present age is emphatically an age of improvement. "The school-master is abroad," said Lord Brougham. Temperance is abroad; a spirit of enterprise is abroad; juster views of human nature, of human hopes and happiness are abroad; and however slow the progress, a stronger impulse has been given to the march of private and public prosperity; and it will go on, carried forward as it is, by the irresistible force of public sentiment. I do not ascribe all this to the triumphs of temperance alone, but no single cause has operated more powerfully. Whence is it, that our farmers are greeted with a message from the lawyer more seldom, than formerly? It is because