



**ARMED FORCES MEDICAL LIBRARY**

Washington, D. C.





AN

**ADDRESS,**

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

**MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY**

FOR

**SUPPRESSING INTEMPERANCE,**

AT THEIR ANNIVERSARY MEETING

JUNE 2, 1815,

ON THE OBJECTS OF THEIR INSTITUTION.

---

**BY ABIEL ABBOT, A. M.**

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN BEVERLY.

---

**CAMBRIDGE :**

PRINTED BY HILLIARD AND METCALF.

1815.



## ADDRESS.

---

THE object for which this association was formed, as stated in its constitution, is to *suppress intemperance and its kindred vices*; an object as important to individual happiness and the publick welfare as it is arduous. It implies the *cure* and the *prevention* of the evil; the redemption of the bounden victims of this vice, and the preservation of the yet uncontaminated. The task demands the most generous benevolence and the best exertion of those talents, and of that prudence, patience, and perseverance, which we may hope to find in this society and its auxiliaries.

I hope to be employed agreeably to your expectations, while I attempt to discuss the two-fold subject, the *cure* and the *prevention* of this physical and moral evil, and suggest as they occur such hints as may apprise us of our difficulties, fortify our resolution, and encourage our efforts.

Notwithstanding the despairing language commonly heard on the subject, I would ask—Are persons, in the fixed and acknowledged *habit* of intemperance to be utterly abandoned to their fate? For them, is there no hope, no resource in the wisdom and humanity of their fellow men?

There is much wrong thinking on this subject. Many regard the wretched victims of this disease with a con-

*tempt*, which freezes their compassion. They fix their eye upon the *guilt* of the vice; they mark the havoc it is making in the health and property, the intellect and moral qualities of the criminal, and more especially the shame and misery it is imposing upon his innocent connections, and pronounce his crime *inexpiable*—declare him an outlaw, a man no longer entitled to pity, showing none. It might soften this rigorous decision, if the temptations he feels were known and considered, and the gradual and insidious manner in which the chains were drawn over the unhappy man and riveted upon him. Were the *remote* causes of his ruin better understood, the predisposition in some cases derived from *faulty parents*,\* peculiar temperament of body or mind, situation and employment in life, accidental association, misfortunes, the ill-judged customs of temperate people concurring to insinuate and strengthen the relish, and unsuspectedly to form the habit of the dangerous potation; these things considered, though they can never justify the vice, nor diminish the horror with which it ought to be regarded, might dispose us to feel less of contempt and more of pity.

Others neglect the proper methods of reclaiming the intemperate through a *sickly delicacy*. They are reluctant to give offence—they cannot think of wounding the feel-

\* In a representation of the College of Physicians in London to the House of Commons, we find the following passage.—“ We have with concern observed, for some years past, the FATAL EFFECTS of the frequent use of several sorts of distilled spirituous liquors, upon great numbers of both sexes, rendering them diseased, not fit for business, poor, a burthen to themselves and neighbours, and *too often the cause of weak, feeble, and distempered children*, who must be, instead of an advantage and strength, a charge to their country.”

ings of a neighbour ; nor of proffering kindness and counsel, certain to be rejected and despised. They cannot meet the reproach of intermeddling in the affairs of others, and the retort, however undeserved, *Physician, heal thyself*. They shrink back, like the sensitive plant, with the first appearance of disgust taken at their interference ; and, rather than wound the feelings of a distempered man, coolly consign him to infamy and despair. Is it thus we dare to do, when we see a fellow creature destroying himself in a different manner ? Do we ask his leave to snatch him from death ? No ; we wrest from him the knife, raised to shed his blood—we dash from his hand the poisoned bowl, however much he may covet it—rudely we pluck him back from the gulf of destruction, into which we see him eager to leap.

Still, however, will it be objected—“ What avails our pity or our zeal ? The drunkard is *morally dead*—has past the *bourne* from which *there is no return*. The common principles, on which we hope to operate, in him are lost. The *body* is become a mass of disease, bloated with unnatural corpulency, and crowded with vitiated blood and humours, and ready to fall by the slightest touch, though the shock will be called by the *honest* names of palsy or apoplexy, fever or dropsy.\* The intellect too is in ruins ;

\* “ A train of complaints of the most dangerous nature, at once destroying the body, and depraving the mind, are the certain followers of habitual ebriety. Amidst all the evils of human life, no cause of disease has so wide a range, or so large a share, as the use of spiritous liquors. When we see dropsies, apoplexies, palsies, &c. multiplying in the bills of mortality, we must look to hard-drinking as the principal agent in bringing on these maladies. More than one half of all the sudden deaths which happen are in a fit of

so that you cannot approach him through his understanding. Every thing appears to him inverted; *evil is good and good evil; light is put for darkness, and darkness for light; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* The poet describes him—

—“ Such a dim delirium, such a dream,  
Involves you; such a dastardly despair  
Unmans your soul, as madd’ning Pentheus felt,  
When, baited round Cithæron’s cruel sides,  
He saw two suns, and double Thebes ascend.”

His affections are quenched; shame has lost its blush; resolution is dead. The conscience too is seared, and the warnings of faith and the promises of hope are unheard or unheeded.”

Too just, my friends, I concede, is this description of the intemperate in the latter stages of their course. But—O tell me—are they lost, past redemption?—sunk, sunk below the reach of a saving hand? The hand of God can save them—*all things are possible with God.* And, as it is the plan of his providence to attain ends by means, there is something for men to do. Deplorable as are the circumstances of the drunkard, he lives within the precincts of hope. And if wretchedness and helplessness have claims upon humanity, with an emphasis they concur in his case. Let him not be deserted—He wears the human form, though it has *lost much of its original brightness*—He is a brother, *bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.* There is *life*, though almost smothered, and *intellect*, though almost destroyed; and perhaps too the relicks of

intoxication; softened into some milder name, not to ruffle the feelings of relations, in laying them before the publick.” *Dr. Trotter.*

virtuous principles, and occassionally a conscious horreur from the sense of his situation, and a despairing sigh to regain the honourable standing from which he has fallen. It concerns us to cherish these fitful remains of principle, and to watch over him with fraternal solicitude, as we watch the flame of life, quivering in the socket; and, in circumstances little short of despair, we may be blest with success, and save **A MAN** from everlasting destruction.

Let it not be said that the case of the inebriate is so nearly hopeless, that we have no encouragement for exertion. The utmost pains are richly compensated by the recovery of one lost man in a thousand. But, blessed be God, returning prodigals are not so rare as seems to be thought. In the several circles of our acquaintance, I presume to say, instances are known to us all, some of *effectual cure*, and some of temporary resolution and self-denial, which seemed only to need the countenance and aid of judicious friends to become permanent. *The force of resolution in a drunkard*, taken up in a moment of terrour and feeling, was well known, and excited much interest in the neighbourhood of my own residence. The man was a miller; and in a paroxysm of intemperance fell into the stream, and with difficulty was recovered. The first moment of sanity he improved in pertinent reflection upon his danger and deliverance, and in a solemn oath not to taste of spirit for *forty years*. The oath was sacredly kept. It is painful to add, that he relapsed on the day of his jubilee, and died a sot between eighty and ninety years of age. Had the resolution taken a more fortunate, yet scarcely a more self-denying form, had it been for life, and not for a limited period of time, he might have been saved.

I perfectly well remember a venerable man in a town

of New Hampshire, whose head was white with the snows of fourscore winters, his countenance fresh and placid, and his whole form and appearance that of a man favoured with health and vigour, and peace beyond the lot of other men at his age. In his youth this man had been dissipated; at thirty (I do not remember the precise age) a sot. In a lucid interval, he awoke to his misery and danger, and had the resolution to dedicate the rest of his days to the simplest diet, the liquids of which were *water and milk*. Hence *his hoary head—his crown of glory*.

Other instances have fallen under my observation, of men in humble walks of life, labourers, not endued with any remarkable force of mind, nor apt to reflect or anticipate, who have been surprizing subjects of recovery from the latter stages of this dreadful vice. Some awakening dispensation of providence, sickness and recovery, the gentle and faithful warnings of a friend, ecclesiastical monition or censure, their own reflections in a season of abstinence from their bane—one or other of these, with the divine blessing, has saved them. Is there no encouragement, then, that something may be done for the relief even of the *bondmen* of intemperance? *There is encouragement.*

In any attempts which may be made in our private or social capacity, let the inebriates be treated with respectful tenderness, forbearing contemptuous reproaches and sarcastic reviling, while at the same time we are cautious of sinking our tenderness into that false compassion, which in sparing them from present pain exposes them to endless destruction. At prudent seasons let them be apprized of their dangers; persuaded from the company and occasions of special temptation; reasoned out of their false pleas; fortified with arguments; convinced, instead

of being the *cure*, that ardent spirits are the *cause* of der-  
 jection and melancholy, of debility and a faltering consti-  
 tution ; that instead of being a security against cold, they  
 arm it with special dangers, giving to the body “ a tem-  
 porary glow only to render the effects of cold more speedi-  
 ly hurtful,” and, in extreme cases, more suddenly fatal.  
 At the select moment, when it can be endured, let the mir-  
 ror be held up to reflect the deformity of their conduct,  
 and let them see “ the incurable maladies, which flow from  
 perseverance in a course of intemperance.” While to  
 alarm, the picture of their situation must be drawn to the  
 life, there must be caution, since the feeling of despair is  
 the death of exertion, not to urge it too long. The buoy-  
 ant consolation of hope must be suggested ; the possibili-  
 ty, the honour, the joy of recovery stated—The returning  
 caresses of the estranged family, the recovered, the aug-  
 mented esteem and respect of the community, the joy of  
 angels, and, through Christ, the mercy and favour of God,  
 must be presented and amplified to their imagination.

The great point to be urged with the intemperate is,  
*to give no quarter to their enemy*—to attempt no compro-  
 mise—no truce on any terms. If this point be carried, the  
 day is won. But, the plea of the drunkard is, that his ar-  
 dent potation is *become necessary*—that sickness, that *death*  
 would ensue upon *entire abstinence*. “ I am convinced,”  
 he will readily say, “ that a reform is necessary, and by the  
 help of God am determined upon it. But my plan is a  
 gradual retreat—by fewer and less copious potations.” It  
 needs only a *sober* eye to see that this resolution contains  
 the principle of its destruction ; and it invariably develops  
 itself. It is made—it is broken. With great self-compla-

gency and *in all the magnanimity of thought he resolves, and re-resolves, and lives and dies the same.*

“But death would ensue upon total abstinence, rigorously and at once adopted. Must I die a *martyr* to temperance?”—The moralist shall be silent; let the physician speak.

Dr. Trotter, who had occupied “the first medical station in the publick service of Great Britain,” and whose range of practice had been greater than that of any physician of his day, remarks—“With drunkards my opinion is, and confirmed by much experience, that spirits in every form *ought at once* to be taken from them.—Wherever I have known the drunkard effectually reformed, he has *at once* abandoned his potation. That dangerous degree of debility, which has been said to follow the subtraction of vinous stimulus, I have never met with, however universal the cry has been in its favour; it is the war-whoop of alarmists; the idle cant of arch theorists.”\*

Let an intemperate man then, be persuaded that this

\* In another part of his interesting essay, this eminent physician contends, “that such long continued stimuli (meaning ardent spirits) as have a tendency to destroy the functions of the body, ought, *all at once*, to be laid aside. Let us suppose a person for years living in a dungeon, unwholesome and unventilated, till diseases appear from these causes; would any rational being hesitate a moment to bring forth the squalid sufferer into the light of day, that he might have the full benefit of pure atmosphere? The case is exactly in point; the confined person has been breathing poison, and the drunkard has been swallowing it; he has drank poisonous spirit till it has brought him to the verge of the grave, and yet it is held dangerous to take it away.”

is his *only* safe course, and, if sincere in his resolution, he will enter it. A gentleman, whose talents placed him at the head of his profession and the publick confidence in an elevated station in the national government, in the midst of his honours, became a settled inebriate. Stung at length with the disgrace and neglect into which he had fallen, he exiled himself to a private retreat, gave orders that, on no pretence whatsoever, should any thing spiritous be brought to it, persevered for a year in total abstinence, and returned to society and his professional occupations and honours, a reformed and temperate man.\*

This noble resolution is perhaps too much to be generally expected. From the purest motives of kindness, then, and from the solemn conviction that nothing else can save him, let the intemperate man be laid under the *merciful necessity* of total abstinence from his bane. The law delivers his property into the hands of guardians; why shall it not deliver his person? When all other means have failed, is it not time to regard him as a subject of habitual phrenzy? The paroxysm of drunkenness is tem-

\* This instance of greatness, rescued from almost hopeless ruin, is not *solitary*. Another very eminent professional character, lost in the view of the publick and of his friends, was saved by the resolution of *total abstinence*. Such, for a season, were his feelings from the suspension of the customary stimulus, that he remarked to a friend, he verily thought he should *die* in the experiment. He lived, however, by his example not less perhaps, than by his admirable talents, a blessing to mankind. Let the inebriate calculate upon these feelings as the necessary pain in the way of cure; and with determined fortitude submit, as other unhappy persons do to the amputation of a mortified limb, or the extermination of a cancer by the knife or caustic, to *save life*.

porary madness, and insanity and idiotism are gradually induced by the habit of intoxication. Has he too little reason to be trusted with property? Then he cannot safely be trusted with himself. Can humane legislators consistently spare his liberty, when the only use he will make of it is to destroy his life; to insure upon himself the guilt and the misery of a lingering, perhaps of a sudden suicide.\* The Athenian Legislator provided the punishment of death for a drunken magistrate; and the stern Spartan proscribed the base vice. It was odious among the Romans; and their women, if found guilty, were punished *capitally*. Christian legislators can never adopt their *sanguinary* code; it is their business *not to destroy men's lives, but to save*. This very object, however, demands that they so far abridge abused liberty, as is necessary to prolong life—so far disfranchise a citizen, as is necessary to redeem him from worse than Turkish bondage.

I have done with this branch of the subject, the *cure* of intemperance. Probably beyond your expectation, I have enlarged upon it. It has been from the apprehension that the cure of intemperance is too generally given

\* "I have classed *death* among the consequences of hard-drinking. But it is not death from the immediate hand of the Deity, nor from any of the instruments of it which were created by him. It is death from *SUICIDE*. Yes—thou poor, degraded creature, who art daily lifting the poisoned bowl to thy lips—cease to avoid the unhallowed ground, in which the self-murderer is interred, and wonder no longer that the sun should shine, and the rain fall, and the grass look green upon his grave. Thou art perpetrating gradually, by the use of ardent spirits, what he has effected suddenly by opium—or a halter."

*Dr. Rush.*

up as impracticable even by the friends of this institution, and by others ridiculed as quixotic. But, considering the magnitude of the evil, involving the physical, intellectual, and moral ruin of the subject, have we the feelings of humanity, if we indolently or despairingly neglect those means of his rescue, which promise any degree of success? The drunkard is gliding upon the bosom of the rapid stream, and slumbers while approaching the fatal precipice. Can we do less than cry to him from the shore with pity and terrour? If he hears, he is saved; if he perish, we have delivered our skirts from his blood.

The remaining branch of my plan, the prevention of intemperance, is by no means a secondary object with this society. The time proper to this exercise, however, has been nearly occupied, and this topick is inexhaustible. For a discussion suited to its importance, I shall leave it to my successors.

In a summary way indulge me to remark, that it is with the community, as with many individuals, *it has gone into bad habits*. Not that ebriety, palpable and scandalous, is become general. But thousands, who would be incensed to have it hinted that they were intemperate, are undoubtedly *hard-drinkers*. For the last twenty years there has been a most unquestionable deterioration of *sober habits* extensively. I appeal to glaring facts in publick records, to the immense importation and distillation of ardent spirits, to authentick reports of physicians and other enlightened philanthropists in different parts of the country, in a word, to the observation of every thinking man, engaged in mercantile, agricultural, or manufacturing pursuits. This fact is known in Europe, and somewhat inflamed in

the representation. A distinguished writer would have it understood, that the new world has quite outstripped the old in this vice.

Beyond doubt there is enough of the evil in both continents; but it is beside my purpose to say any thing with respect to the comparative temperance of the old and new world, or to inquire whether our native or imported citizens be most sober. But—if statements such as I refer to can be gravely made in Europe, and half the charge be true, it is high time to attempt alteration in our general habits.

In the time of our late publick distress hope was entertained that through the dearness of spirits and the penury of many of the labouring class, abstinence would become necessary and habitual. Some moral benefit we hope has resulted from the sufferings of the country. But reform must rest on a basis, not subject to fluctuate with our publick relations—upon an enlightened view of the necessity of reform—upon a general conviction that very many of the *reputed sober* use a dangerous and injurious quantity of ardent spirits—that in many of those forms, in which it has been regarded as medicinal,\* it is unsafe and pernicious—that many of those occasions, on which it has come to be regarded as necessary, are really occasions for carefully avoiding it—that it is an improper companion of committees on business, and a *dangerous*, if the *usual* treat in friendly visits—is indecent at funerals, and to be

\* “Cordials—deceive the unwary: for I am sure that many who drink of the *liqueurs* would blush to taste brandy, yet they are nothing more than brandy disguised. Many of these cordials are impregnated with narcotic substances, which add to the noxious qualities of the spirit.”

*Dr. Trotter.*

admitted with jealous caution, if admitted at all, at convivial parties—is undignified, in candidates for office, and disorganizing from an officer to his soldiers—and alarming and ominous of ruin, when become a *stated* and *daily* potation—

“ I would not *daily* taste,

“ Except when life declines, even sober cups.” *Arm.*

These are convictions to be produced in the mind of the community, and which will be followed by a visible diminution of the evils, which menace it with premature old age. If we can successfully combat those treacherous customs, which have crept in without exciting alarm, and which with unsuspecting simplicity have been countenanced by the temperate, the moral, and even the pious, we remove the stumbling block out of the way, and prevent the early causes of deflection from the path of sobriety; and, in effect, crush the cockatrice in the egg.

This, gentlemen, is our object, our disinterested object; and with confidence we claim the favour and the aid of the enlightened and the liberal men of the community. Countenanced and in part organized by the highest civil and professional characters in the Commonwealth, by men of talent, worth, and zeal; in correspondence with auxiliaries, annually increasing in numbers and activity in all parts of the State, we stand on high ground, and have facilities for exciting and directing attention to the object of our philanthropic institution, which we cannot too highly prize, nor too faithfully improve. By zeal enlightened and benevolent, by circulars, reports, and tracts, by personal example in our domestick economy, the regulation of our servants and children in diet and manners, by caution to the young and innocent, the earliest warning to the incau-

tious, the most pathetic expostulation with the *lost*, and a humane and legal violence to save them, when other means are ineffectual, we shall be employed agreeably to our professions, and, I firmly believe, in a way to insinuate a reform, gradual, but sure.

I felicitate you, gentlemen, on the interest, at so early a moment, extensively excited in the Commonwealth and neighbouring States, and the degree of salutary influence already confessedly felt from your operations; and exhort you *not to be weary in well doing, for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not.*

The hand of death has removed from us an early and constant and invaluable friend in one of our Vice Presidents, the humane and illustrious Warren. One of the last acts of his life, beyond the limits of his sick chamber, was to preside in the last meeting of your Board of Council. The wide range of his medical practice in the metropolis and surrounding country, and his acuteness in tracing diseases to their causes, gave to him a very affecting view of the evils we aim to correct; and he felt a deep interest in the measures of the society to arrest them. We will cherish his memory—*it is blest*—and in imitating his benignant zeal, we will remember the sacred monition—*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might—The night cometh, in which no man can work.*

May the Eternal Father, who sent his Son to *seek and save the lost*, animate your benevolence and prosper your exertions, and cause *the blessing of many ready to perish to come upon you.*

## THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

*Of the Massachusetts Society for suppressing Intemperance.*

THE Board of Council of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, present the following as their annual Report to the Society, for 1815.

It has been hitherto a leading object with the Board, to excite and engage attention extensively to the excessive and alarming use of spirituous liquors, to the deplorable consequences flowing from this source, and to the importance of uniting the sober, virtuous, and influential part of the community, in mild and prudent, but firm and persevering measures, for checking and suppressing the abounding evil. For this purpose an address, drawn up by a committee of the Board, was published the year before the last, and extensively circulated; and for the same purpose the excellent sermon preached before the society on their second anniversary, together with the annual report of the board, was published and distributed during the last year. The success has been highly encouraging. Ten auxiliary societies, formed in different parts of the commonwealth, were reported at the last annual meeting; we have now the satisfaction to report the formation of twenty three more. Something of the views, the spirit, and the prospects of these societies will appear in the following recitals and extracts.

In the last report of the Concord Auxiliary Society, it is stated, that "the Board have great satisfaction in being able to report real success and happy effects to the benevolent efforts of the society. They have the pleasure of seeing the numbers of the society considerably increased. They consider it of no small importance that the custom of giving and receiving ardent spirits and wine at funerals is discontinued through the town. The practice of treating at the election of civil officers is also nearly laid aside, and generally deemed very improper. And they perceive grounds for believing that at a period not far distant, the giving of spirituous liquors in any way that can operate as a personal injury, or as a burdensome tax upon individuals, or as a bribe to influence the conduct of any class of people, will be wholly out of use and credit." They represent, moreover, that not only "the needless expense and use of ardent spirits have been considerably diminished in that town, and intemperance lessened, but also that idleness, profaneness, and sabbath breaking are on the decline, and that gaming is very seldom practised. They are happy," they add, "in discovering substantial evidence of some real improvement in virtue and correct principles, in things praise worthy and useful in society. And considering this amendment in disposition and manners, as, at least in part, the first fruits of their association and united efforts, they feel encouraged, and earnestly recommend to the society mild, firm, and persevering exertions to carry into full effect the benevolent design of the disinterested institution."

The Portland Society have had their attention more especially turned to the license law; and have suggested for consideration, the presenting of a petition or petitions

to the Legislature, that something may be done respecting this subject, similar to what was done the last year in regard to the sabbath, as particularly enjoining selectmen to be more careful and cautious as to the moral character of those whom they approbate—restraining retailers from selling in small quantities, &c. It is also stated by the President of that society, that a reformation is in successful progress in that quarter, in regard to the sabbath.

At the first annual meeting of the Dedham Auxiliary Society, it is stated, “that an appropriate, spirited, and well received address was delivered by the President, and a report was made by the Board of Council, proposing some alterations and additions to their constitution, and recommending certain measures to be pursued towards the accomplishment of the objects of the society, all which were adopted with great unanimity and apparent interest.” The articles newly introduced into their constitution are these: “That we will exert our influence to effect a change in the fashion of entertaining friends and visitors; and for ardent spirits will emulate each other in presenting mild and safe substitutes, where any thing is requisite.”—“That we will use our influence to discourage the practice of giving ardent spirits, or even wine at funerals, as not only being attended with unnecessary expense, which many are unable to bear, but as tending to interrupt the solemnity which should prevail on such occasions, and throwing out a temptation to the hurtful and excessive use of spirituous liquors.” “That we consider the practice of distributing spirituous liquors at publick vendues as leading to intemperate drinking and other evil consequences; we therefore agree that we will avoid and discountenance that practice, as far as we are concerned or have opportunity.” A principal meas-

are recommended to the society and adopted by them, and which in the opinion of this Board is a very important one, and worthy of extensive imitation, is expressed in the following terms: "As it is to be feared that loose and incorrect ideas and practices have very generally prevailed respecting the regulation of licensed houses and shops, although there may be some instances of conformity to the law; and as the society should avoid every appearance of partiality in all their proceedings, and as it is in the power of these licensed persons, who are well disposed, very much to aid the society in their views, it is recommended that a large and respectable committee be appointed to hold a friendly conference with all the taverners and retailers in the town, and invite them to concur with us in our attempts to check the progress of intemperance and its kindred vices. If any should be found not thus disposed, and there is reason to conclude they are not attentive to the provisions of the law relating to them, let the committee expostulate with them on the importance of the due regulation of their houses and shops, representing to them the vast evils individuals and the community suffer for the want of such regulations, and the little benefit the violation can be to themselves in any point of view, &c. Should the committee find any instances of obstinate perseverance in error, after notice and warning, let them make representations thereof to the selectmen, and use their exertions to prevent such persons being recommended to the court for a renewal of their licenses. These measures, it is hoped and expected, would be effectual; if not let the committee report their proceedings to the society, and take further instructions."

The Bradford society, at their first annual meeting

in August, voted to become auxiliary to this society. They have also expressed a wish to receive from us any communications, which may conduce to the furtherance of our common design.

In April, 1814, a "Society for the suppression of vice" was formed in Gorham, (which contains members also from Windham.) "The *object* of this society, (says the constitution,) shall be, to prevent intemperate drinking, profaneness, sabbath-breaking, gaming, and the vending of liquors contrary to law.—The *means* to be used, shall be example, advice, persuasion, reproof, and, (when necessary,) executing the laws of the Commonwealth." It is added, "all things, if possible, shall be conducted in such a manner, as to evince to the world, that in these exertions, we are influenced by a disinterested desire to promote the public good."

The Secretary, in his letter of February last, after communicating much valuable information in answer to the queries of our Circular, says, "It has been an exceedingly important question with us 'What can be done to give the laws greater efficiency?' And a primary object to induce retailers to conform to them. We are happy to state that all the traders (four or five) in Windham, have been induced, through our influence, to cease vending liquors to be drunken in their stores. Two in this town have ceased, and become members of the society."

Soon after our last annual meeting a number of very respectable gentlemen convened at Rehoboth, and associated themselves "in aid" of the parent institution, of whose "objects and measures" they expressed the highest approbation.

About the same time, "the Berkshire association of ministers, anxious to promote the best interests of the community, and deeply concerned for the welfare of that part of Zion which is more particularly under their care—earnestly recommended, united and general efforts for the reformation of manners. For the accomplishment of this object," they nominated a committee of eleven persons, high in the estimation of the literary and religious public, "to investigate the subject, and to mature some plan" of operation. By the appointment also of this association a meeting was held at Lenox, on the third Tuesday of August; when an appropriate sermon was delivered by the Rev. President Fitch, to a large and respectable assembly, convened from the several towns in the county. At the conclusion of the service, the committee before appointed made report, that in their opinion "the encroachments of irreligion and vice upon the fair inheritance bequeathed to us by our fathers had been already too long regarded with supineness," and that the call for united, systematic, and strenuous efforts to save what remained, and regain, if possible, what was lost of this precious legacy, should be immediately heard and complied with. Upwards of a hundred persons then formed themselves into a "society for promoting good morals."

At the same time, a very luminous and impressive "address to the friends of order, morality, and religion, in the county of Berkshire, was read, and ordered to be printed, with the proceedings of the meeting." The principal design of this address was to induce characters of the above description, "to unite in their respective towns in organized societies, for promoting good morals and increasing a reverence for the venerable institutions of religion." This

design, we are happy to state, has been already in a good measure answered. By a communication from the Secretary, of the 13th of March, it appears, that seventeen branch societies had then been formed in the county.

The proposal of an auxiliary society having been made in New Bedford to “a number of respectable and influential gentlemen, such was the zeal manifested on the occasion, that a society was immediately organized, consisting of about 100 members.”

The great *objects* of this society, and the *methods* proposed for attaining them, are similar to those of the other associations, which have already been noticed. From the very judicious, spirited, and eloquent *address* which accompanies the constitution, it would be gratifying to our feelings, and we doubt not subservient to the common cause, to make copious extracts. But our limits forbid.—And as we could not do justice to the document without, we will only express a hope, that it may be extensively circulated and read.

A society consisting of nearly 200 members has recently been formed in Ipswich, “denominated the Ipswich Evangelical Tract Society.” Though the primary design of this society, as expressed in the constitution, is, “to promote vital and practical religion, by the circulation of such *tracts*, as are calculated to receive the approbation of serious christians of all denominations;”—yet “the members mutually agree to use their influence to discountenance prevailing vices, and to endeavour *by all* gentle and persuasive means as well, as by the tracts they circulate, to promote those virtues, which conduce to the respectability and happiness of man.” The cause, therefore, in which we are embarked, is one, and we are happy to find

by a communication from the Secretary that it is the wish of that association, "to confer with other moral as well as tract societies on its general object."

From a review of the whole therefore, the Board feel warranted in the very pleasing and animating conclusion, that much good has already resulted to individuals, and to the community, from the incipient exertions which have been made; that a very considerable change has already been wrought in the publick mind favourable to the momentous object of our institution; that measures are in train upon an extended and continually extending scale for still greater effects; and that there is every encouragement to proceed with perseverance and increasing activity in this great and good work,









Med. Hist.

WZ

270

A1262

1815

c.1

