

RESPECTED FRIENDS:

We are engaged in a good work, and to accomplish it, we need your aid in extending the principle of total abstinence from the use of all intoxicating liquors as a drink. The suppression of intemperance and its kindred vices was the object for which the New England Temperance Society was formed in 1836, composed of members from different parts of the country, of talents and influence, recommending the organization of auxiliary associations to co-operate in giving system and efficiency to such measures as might be deemed expedient to be adopted.

We doubt not we express the views and feelings of every good colored person in the city, when we say, that we have each and all a personal interest, as well as a duty, in exerting our influence towards the promotion of our welfare. There are no individuals among us who are wealthy, or have the means of making a fortune: however, we all have a comfortable subsistence, and if we make a judicious use of the means we possess, we may become a useful, prosperous, united and happy people.

I do not believe that the evils of intemperance prevail among us as a people, to any greater extent than among the white class of the community: in fact, I believe that we are less addicted to the use of strong drink. Still, we need a reformation, in this particular; and we ought to be careful to abandon those vices which are ruinous to virtue, to the improve-

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ment of the mind, and the progressive elevation of character.

Intemperance is a leading sin: it opens the door to a train of evils, the neglect of the Sabbath, inattention to temporal affairs—it leads man to squander away that property which ought to be applied to useful purposes, and prevents him from discharging honest debts, and also deprives society of a useful man. The direct tendency of intemperance is to indolence, poverty and ruin; and those who practise the evil know not what crimes they shall be left to perpetrate. Intemperance is a violation of the laws of nature, and of nature's God; for it sinks human nature below the brute, and man becomes an enemy to himself. It leads to practical impiety, sows the seeds of infidelity, and sets at defiance all religious principles. The sin of intemperance is not a sin of ignorance, and those who practise it must feel themselves to be transgressors. It is ruinous to bodily health; and if the intellectual powers are seated in the head, we need not be surprised that they suffer from the effects of stimulating liquors upon the brain. Intemperate persons are lost to all sense of decency, and become the sport of the rabble: they do not live out half their days. Would to God that females were never found enrolled among this number; but they, too, often serve to swell the list of victims.

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word of God contains many solemn warnings and express prohibitions against this sin. It was the custom of the Spartans, in order to show their utter detestation of this vice, to expose their slaves in a state of beastly intoxication, so that they might deter the youth from such a scandalous vice. The religion of Mahomet utterly forbids the use of intoxicating liquors; and that wise king, Solomon, says, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. The drunkard shall come to poverty.' We are assured in the sacred writings, that a drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; and we are commanded not to keep company or eat with such an one. But I [... tenor] of holy writ are in opposition to this evil, and every other sinful indulgence.

The only sure remedy and preservative is comprised in these laconic words of the apostle: 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.'

My brethren, you will perceive that, according to our Constitution, we have pledged ourselves upon the high ground of total abstinence: hence we are bound to do all we can to discourage the use of intoxicating liquor as a drink. Many reasons suggest themselves, why we, as a people, should zealously engage in all the moral improvements of the age. We must carefully abstain from all appearance of evil—then our example will tell upon the consciences of our enemies; for our reputations and rights are at stake, and a good name is

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rather to be chosen than great riches. We ought to feel the importance of sustaining a good character, and esteem it dearer than life. Come up, then, manfully to the work of reform, and adopt the principle of entire abstinence; and we shall save our money and p[r]operty, gain health and respectability, and improve our morals. We shall add speed to the car of abolition, and sustain those mighty advocates who are agitating the country in behalf of the down-trodden slave and the rights of humanity; and demonstrate to the world that we have intellectual faculties capable of the highest cultivation, and progressive improvement in all the arts and sciences, and polite literature of the age—as has been proved already in many instances that might be adduced. Mankind, however they may differ in complexion or features, are precisely alike in that immortal part which alone distinguishes them from the animal creation.

If we hope for any permanent benefit from our exertions, we must form ourselves into education societies, moral reform societies, and religious societies, all which have a common object—that is, to meliorate and elevate our condition. Much good has been done among us to check the evils resulting from intemperance; for when I was a boy, it was quite a common thing to get a little ‘boozy’—but now ardent spirit is not used at weddings, parties, or balls, (with some exceptions,) nor taken even for the stomach’s sake—neither is it absolutely needed in case of sickness.

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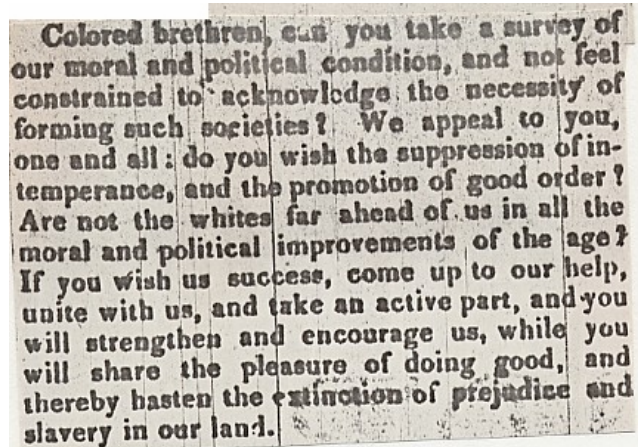
By the blessing of the Lord, the nineteenth century opens on the world bright and promising. Christians are awaking to acts of benevolence and mercy; and our truly noble anti-slavery friends are successfully maintaining the rights of all mankind, and advancing the great cause of universal emancipation. We have nothing to fear, if we unite to advance our own happiness with those noble minds, who are proclaiming this sacred truth, that 'all men are born free and equal.'

The formation of a moral reform society at Philadelphia is a favorable sign of the times, and the increasing number of auxiliaries, in several of the States, will greatly aid in the suppression of intemperance, and promote general morality; and if they should not hereafter be influenced by party spirit or sinister views, but be disinterestedly pledged to this common object, prudence will mark their steps, and union and harmony attend their consultations and measures. The organizing of an annual colored temperance convention in Connecticut promises great good. By frequent meetings and mutual communications, we assist and strengthen each other. The communications we have already received are truly encouraging, as they evince a growing concurrence and increasing success in checking the evils of intemperance. May the good Spirit always animate its members to persevering exertion.

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Colored brethren, can you take a survey of our moral and political condition, and not feel constrained to acknowledge the necessity of forming such societies? We appeal to you, one and all: do you wish the suppression of intemperance, and the promotion of good order? Are not the whites far ahead of us in all the moral and political improvements of the age? If you wish us success, come up to our help, unite with us, and take an active part, and you will strengthen and encourage us, while you will share the pleasure of doing good, and thereby hasten the extinction of prejudice and slavery in our land.



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