

[MORAL.

By a colored citizen of Philadelphia.

[For the Liberator.]

ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE COLOR ED TEMPERANCE SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY 8, 1834.
BY WILLIAM WHIPPER.]

FELLOW MEMBERS:

Having been so highly honored by your suffrages, as to be elevated to the distinguished situation of presiding over this institution, the claims of duty require of me the arduous task of explaining the motives and considerations that should actuate us in promoting its objects.

Those who associate themselves for the improvement of their moral condition, are exercising the highest order of legislation. The present is an era for us to notice the evils, and mark the moral depravity, that have afflicted the human family since they have fallen from that holy estate that our first parents enjoyed.

Intemperance, that blighting monster, that extirpator of the human species, has slain mankind with a power that can only be likened unto the *axe*, which in the march of civilization is rapidly clearing our native forests. It is an evil for magnitude unexcelled, and in the history of the world must stand without a parallel. Even negro slavery, horrible as it is, painted in its most ignominious colors, and ferreted out in all its degrading consequences, is but a concomitant. Probably to no people on earth would this language be more objectionable than to the present audience; yet I firmly believe it to be strictly true. To a people like ours, whose whole history

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is wrapt in the most obsequious degradation, multiplied injuries and tyrannical barbarity, from the effects of domestic slavery, they might be inclined to suppose that no human scourge had ever surpassed it in the enormity of its inflictions. But a still greater tyrant reigns. It fills a more extensive range—it occupies a higher seat; and swells its influence over the dominions of our world. It is found in the palace; it exists in the forum; it mingles with society; its abode is by the fireside; it is felt in the sanctuary; it despises the prejudices of caste; it seeks its victims alike among the learned and ignorant, the poor and the rich; it confines itself neither to the geographical lines of state or territory, of nation or continent; but disdaining all local attachments, it claims for its domain the map of the universe.

It is not my intention, o the present occasion, to delineate its features. You all, probably, have seen the base original revelling in all its loathsomeness, defying alike the imagination of the poet, and the pencil of the artist, to describe its ghastly countenance and destructive mien. The time may come when my limits may allow me to enter into the economy of the subject; but for the present, I must only refer to the able speeches and writings of the temperance reformers, that are now so successfully revolutionizing public opinion on this important question. I could quote from ecclesiastical history, and prove that the voluntary use of 'ardent spirits' is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel and our holy religion. I could refer to medical authority to prove its deleterious effect on the human system. I claim not the high privilege of being a pioneer in this

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cause. But I hold it to be my duty to pass by all these, and approach the subject on new grounds; and I am proud to say that years have elapsed since I adopted the following sentiments, viz:

That the people of color, in these United States, (above any other class of citizens) are morally, politically and religiously bound to support the cause of temperance, as advocated and supported in our country.

We are indebted to the ingenuity of man for the two greatest evils that ever scourged the human family, viz. Intemperance and Slavery. I mean by the former, that intemperance which has arisen from the use of ardent spirits. By the latter, we are to consider that species of slavery, generally termed negro slavery. I cannot probably better call your attention to the subject, than by presenting for your consideration the comparative evils they inflict, and the forcible claims their very existence has upon the wise and good, for their total extirmination from the face of the earth. If I shall be able to convince those who hear me, that the former is as wicked and heinous as the latter, I feel confident that they will lend their influence to extirminate its roots from the soil of society.

The principal effects of these evils on the character and interests of mankind you are familiar with. I need only present you with a few facts, asking leave to place them in the scales of Justice, regulated by right and reason, and suffer you to form your own conclusions.

We shall begin with negro slavery.

What have been its effects on society and man-

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What have been its effects on society and man-

kind generally?

Why, it has made the master (though of human form, and bound by christian obligations to love and seek the welfare of himself and those around him) a tyrant—a murderer of his species—an earthly demon, pouring out his wrath on the innocent and unoffending, inflicting torments and stripes on the aged and infirm, separating husband and wife, parents and their offspring, like cattle and beasts of burden; and to communicate the same wicked lesson to his children and survivors who visit on unborn generations the same penalties; and society around him copies his example. Although born in the image of his Maker, his life and acts bear the impress of Satan. He dies, and leaves his country taxed with national cruelty—his heirs in the possession of God's creatures, with their multiplied increase.

Now, what are its effects on the slave? Why, the dense fog of slaveholding cruelty, falling like mildew, smites the earliest dawn of his intellect, and destroys it in the bud. His mind, that was formed to soar into infinite space, and there admire and explore the beauties of creation, and the splendor of worlds,—scarcely moves beyond the measure of his chains. His body, unlike the animals of the forest, is without the natural covering to shelter his person from the pitiless storm; yet, like them, he seldom receives protection from the burning suns and chilling snows. Though born and reared in the image of man, he walks to and fro with the taciturnity of the brute. His mind not being permitted to [expand,] he remains destitute of that compound that God intended for his creatures, viz. a union of soul and

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body; but in the stature of the latter he roams [over] the earth a walking animal.

It is of materials like these, that the ligaments of society in slaveholding countries are formed. [While] the oppressor deserves the condign punishment [of an] insulted Providence, and the just execration of the wise and good, the prayers of the righteous ought to ascend upwards, in torrents of supplication and appeal to Heaven for their deliverance. Who will charge me with injustice in this description?

But it now becomes our duty to describe the [ty-]
rant Intemperance—a *demon* more ferocious [in his] character and despotic in the cruelty of his infliction, and the destructiveness of his sway. All that I have said, or that can be said against slavery, is truly applicable to intemperance. It is happy for mankind and the glory of humanity, that the wickedness [of] the former is confined to Africa and her descendants; while the latter, abhorring all national [distinc-] tions, spreads its ‘wide wasting calamity’ over the great family of nations. It far surpasses the former in the cruelty of its depredations, the number of [its] victims, and its deathless ignominy. If their [inflic-] tions were equal, the ratio of numbers alone would turn the scale. But we shall exhibit some of its [de-] structive feats, that the former, with all its [atrocities,] is incapable of achieving. The slave is only [kept] in subjection because his mind remains [stupified;] for both the security of the master and contentment of the slave forbid its expansion, because no large number of intelligent beings can remain enslaved—for light and knowledge would dissolve the compact, melt the band, and burst the chains asunder. The

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tyrant Elrius makes no such limited pretensions [in] the perpetuity of his power; but, as if [determined] to keep mankind in awe, and subject the world to [his] control, he frequently reaches after the mightiest [in-] tellect, makes him bow his haughty head, bend his knee, fall down and worship the god Bacchus, and lay his trophies at his feet. So that in the [posses-] sion of intelligence and learning, there is no safe [re-] treat from his grasp. If the slave has wealth, he may purchase his freedom. But to the subject of intem- perance, wealth only strengthens his chains; for [it] furnishes him with materials to revel in his guilt, and fans the flame of his destruction. The slave [has] his situation, and only remains in it because [his] bonds are forcible. The other loves it, because [hav-] ing slain his reason and self-respect, it promotes [his] animal luxury.

The slaveholder dreads rebellion and insurrectionary movements; but the tyrant intemperance [fears] them not, for those whom he oppresses most, [love] him best. He is an able ruler, alike skillful in the cabinet and the field: though a murderer and a des- pot, he reigns in the hearts of his subjects. He is the prince of tacticians, heads a large army, and when he desires the acquisition of numbers to [pro-] cure new territory, he martials his soldiers, and stretches his magic wand, possessing in himself [the] power of the magnet. Thousands follow after [him,] and join the train; few desert his camp; and [when] arrayed for combat, are seemingly invulnerable; but *all fall in battle.*

The slave may escape from the rule and [presence] of his master, by flying to a land of freedom; but

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Whipper, William [J.]
Liberator

the subject of intemperance finds that *his* [master is] almost omnipresent. He may leave his state or country, and become adopted in another realm, but even there he finds that the omniscient eye of his master is upon him, and the same consequences await him. The odiousness of the traffic is far [more] desperate in its extent and cruelty, owing to the [lim-] ited value of the subject, and the protection [given] to the trade. Slaves generally command such a price, that none but capitalists can engage in [its] guilt, or reap its gains. But the intemperance [traffic] is so republican in its nature, that every person, [who] can buy a glass of liquid poison, can *purchase* a [sub-] ject—can rob and deprive a family of their [protect-] or, or slay on the funeral pyre some unguarded young man, or some unfortunate female. The [fed-] lities for its perpetuation are superior to that of either the slave trade or domestic slavery: for in [connect-] ion with the heavy purchases of the one, there is [to] be added the expense of rearing and supporting [the] slave—but the other, as the advocate of intemperance would say, ‘enjoying an uncontrollable liberty’ supports himself, and bestows his profits to the [cause,] and thus perpetuates the misery of millions.

I could extend the chain of comparison much further; but I am willing to submit it to your consideration without further comment, trusting that you [will] regulate your decision by the weight of evidence.

[To be continued.]

[By a colored citizen of Philadelphia.
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But have said that Negro Slavery is but a concomitant of Intemperance. Do you desire the proof? I refer you to Clarkson, and other historians on the slave trade, and you will discover that I am borne out in the assertion, that one of its earliest achievements (although then in its infant state)—like the tempter in Eden—was to secure the ‘slave trade,’ by inducing the native African[s] to sell their brethren while under its influence, and by that artifice it was effected. Is there a person of color in these United States, calling into recollection the features of that abominable trade—its murderous effect on our mother country, and our very existence in this country—our paternal relation to Africa, to humanity and religion—and its excruciating effects on upwards of two millions of our brethren in this our native land; is there one who is not equally ready to denounce the tyranny of the one, and the guilt of the other? Shall we, by the [flood] of our indignation, hear the names of the perpetrators of that trade into the pit of infamy, without accompanying with them the means by which their designs were executed? Is not ardent spirit susceptible of the same power in like hands? If our hostility to slavery arises, as it justly should, from its deleterious and demoralizing effects on the human family; ought not our hatred to intemperance to be founded on the same principles? Can we consistently support the vices of the one, while we detest the vices of the other? Are not both obnoxious in the sight of heaven? If the slaveholder merits the indignation of the christian public, for perpetuating his system of crime and oppression, is not the retailer of ardent spirits equally

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culpable? Are we prepared to send forth our denunciations against American slavery, while we are nurturing and supporting a like system, and one that I have said is pregnant with and inflicts greater evils on the human race?

But having already given you the paral[le]l, I ask you to draw your own conclusions. Have we not reason to fear that they will reflect back our language, and tell us 'to remove the mote from our own eyes?' Is not that system of society that justifies each, equally base? Are not the supporters of each individually guilty of a gross violation of public morals, nay, even virtue and religion? I propound these questions for your consideration: weigh them.

I will leave you in the possession of these facts, while I pass on to the consideration of the following question, viz. This being the present state of things, is not every man of color in these United States morally, politically and religiously bound to support the temperance reform; as advocated in our country?

To assert that we are morally bound to support the cause, is only to say that our obligations to one Maker and society impose upon us the duty of promoting the welfare of our species. Though the doctrine of the immorality of the 'traffic in ardent spirits' is of modern origin, yet its legality has been sanctioned by men we readily believe, when they place the same stigma on domestic slavery; and it is still advocated, and has become adopted into the creed of the ablest reformers of the age. That it promises the moral purity of society, all must admit. But what says the objector? Why, its laws are

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too binding. We want the liberty of drinking when we please, and then letting it alone. We want no control in this matter. We abhor binding force. But what is the amount of these objections? Why, uncontrollable liberty would be the most despotic tyrant that ever existed; it would gratify an absolute and unconditional lust of the human passions; [it] would dethrone all power, destroy our institutions, and overthrow the foundations of all government; it would leave mankind without protection for either their property or persons. It is a liberty that was never intended for man; it was forbidden by our Creator, when He pointed to the 'forbidden fruit' and said, 'in 'the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'

Ardent spirit is so fruitful in iniquity, that the reformers of the present day regard it as the forbidden fruit. But the doctrine of the objectors might be pursued still further. The primary object of this institution is to harmonize, bless and elevate mankind.

In all great causes, there must be pioneers,—who will breast the storm, and bear the burden. These have gone before, and it now becomes our duty to sustain them. The icy obstacles that have beset their path have been melted in the crucible of truth; and a glorious prospect is before us. Though a chance cloud may interpose itself, and darken our meridian way, it will be our duty *still to persevere*. It is our duty to inform and enlighten public opinion on this subject. Let us aim at a correct public opinion, and cease to regard who frames the laws; for it is on this basis that all laws are founded. Hence that legislation that fixes the morals, must ever be

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regarded supreme; and thus all ‘uncontrollable liberty’ is checked by governmental power.

But we are now particularly called upon to support the temperance cause, for the single reason that if we neglect it, the very temperance reformation in this country will prove to us the greatest curse. If it be left to the whites, we shall be as widely separated in morals as complexion; and then our elevation is scarcely to be hoped for. To succeed and be respected, we must be superior in morals, before the balance of power will allow us to be admitted as their equals.

Show me the man of color in this country who possesses an unquestionable character for piety, morality and probity, and I will point you to a truly noble being. He stands alone on his own merits, clothed, it is true, in the badge of complexional degradation—without the title of citizenship—without the enjoyment of a participation in the affairs of his government—without any share in the administration of its laws—without the hope of earthly reward or future fame; yet, under all these disadvantages, his virtues are seen embellishing his character, and encircling his name. He lives a model for the world—an honor to his country, but a slave to its laws.

Yet I firmly believe that if the three hundred thousand free colored people possessed such a character, the moral force and influence it would send forth would disperse slavery from our land. Yes, it would reverse the present order of things; it would reorganize public opinion, dissolve the calumnies of our enemies, and remove all the prejudices against our complexion; for there is nothing in the ordination of

regarded supreme; and thus all ‘uncontrollable liberty’ is checked by governmental power.

But we are now particularly called upon to support the temperance cause, for the single reason that if we neglect it, the very temperance reformation in this country will prove to us the greatest curse. If it be left to the whites, we shall be as widely separated in morals as complexion; and then our elevation is scarcely to be hoped for. To succeed and be respected, we must be superior in morals, before the balance of power will allow us to be admitted as their equals.

Show me the man of color in this country who possesses an unquestionable character for piety, morality and probity, and I will point you to a truly noble being. He stands alone on his own merits, clothed, it is true, in the badge of complexional degradation—without the title of citizenship—without the enjoyment of a participation in the affairs of his government—without any share in the administration of its laws—without the hope of earthly reward or future fame; yet, under all these disadvantages, his virtues are seen embellishing his character, and encircling his name. He lives a model for the world—an honor to his country, but a slave to its laws. Yet I firmly believe that if the three hundred thousand free colored people possessed such a character, the moral force and influence it would send forth would disperse slavery from our land. Yes, it would reverse the present order of things; it would reorganize public opinion, dissolve the calumnies of our enemies, and remove all the prejudices against our complexion; for there is nothing in the ordination of

Providence calculated to degrade us in the eyes of the world, or prevent our occupying the highest situation in the order of intellectual beings. And when the nations of the earth can point to our whole people, and find them possessing a character, the christian base of which is as broad and high as that of the individual I have exhibited in miniature, it will be then that they will regard us as virtuous ornaments—that our sable hue will be changed from a badge of degradation to a badge of honor—that the more dark the complexion, the more frizzled the hair, the more illustrious the personage. It will be then, even in this country, that that glorious achievement will be completed, which has been asserted by a distinguished divine to be beyond the powers of humanity, legislation or religion to control. It will be then that when our brethren are visiting our mother country on errands of mercy, to christianize and evangelize that benighted continent, they will carry with them the materials for rearing up free institutions and the blessings of civilization. It will be then that the whole christian world, disdaining to count what they now term a homely visage and black complexion, will rise up and call her blessed. Is there not chivalry enough in us to accomplish this moral enterprise? Let every one answer for himself—not for [another]. If our enemies should reply in the negative, we should [stot] the idea. Would it not be equally [ofensive,] coming from any other [source?] [Is there any too poor] to purchase it, any [too] rich to [enjoy] it, any too wise to apply it, [or any] [too ignorant] to [profit] by it? I [am positively] not aware of any method so well calculated to [effect this]

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desirable result as the *temperance reform*. I wish not to be understood to insinuate, that we are more intemperate than the whites, for I do not believe it; but that we must be more pure than they, before we can be duly respected, becomes self-evident from the situation we at present occupy in our country.

☞ By a colored citizen of Philadelphia.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE COLORED TEMPERANCE SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY 8, 1834.

BY WILLIAM WHIPPER.]

(Continued.)

But if we believe that there is no present necessity for this reform; that this ‘uncontrollable liberty,’ with regard to the voluntary use of ardent spirits, needs no check, let us go on and fill up the measure of our iniquity. Let us ask the monster to extend still further his blessings of human misery on our world—let us solicit him to add to his hundreds of millions of murdered victims, thousands of millions in order that our voracious appetites may be satisfied at the slaughter-house of his vengeance; hoping that the summit of his ambition maybe achieved, and the vortex of his misery filled. Let us view the present state of things and survey our peculiar situation; and then let me ask you, if the voice of public opinion was ever needed to sustain a reform; is it not now, and are we not bound, both by precept and example, to hasten the cause?

But the question may be asked, ‘Can a radical

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But the question may be asked, ‘Can a radical

change be achieved?" I answer in the affirmative. We must have our institution placed on a pure moral basis, and we must plead for the natural, moral and political elevation of our whole people. We must respectfully appeal to and beseech our brethren to join heart and hand in the measure. We must earnestly remonstrate against their present course; and then if there be those who are deaf to all the appeals of reason, our *institution* must rise in its power and denounce the traffic. The grog-shops and taverns must be termed nuisances and disturbers of public peace and private enjoyments. If we cannot invoke their reason, we must provoke their passions; and this will bring forth retort, and retort will lead to discussion; and discussion will elicit enquiry; and enquiry will beget truth; and truth will bring conviction; and thus the reform will be completed. It will never do to content ourselves with crying out against the taverns and grog-shops; that will never bring about a reform; their *political action* is too powerful to be overcome. If I wished to rule an intemperate community, powerful as the press is acknowledged to be, I would choose their influence as preferable; for they in part control the latter, and their power is strongly felt in our legislative assemblies; and they more than partially rule our government. They are founded on the faith of public immorality, and are suffered to exist only by the impurity of public opinion; and they flourish in proportion to the liquid cravings of the community. And it would be of little consequence to remove these while that opinion exists; because those whom they accommodate would be left to get the liquid poison elsewhere. They were erected to supply the

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public wants; and many of them by men; who, when separated from the traffic, are honorable and praiseworthy citizens. These, like other industrious men, have sought that employment which they consider most profitable. Therefore it becomes our duty to undermine the interests of this traffic by moral action; and then these will be induced to relinquish the trade and convert their establishments into merchandise more profitable to themselves and certainly less destructive to their fellow citizens. There must be inns, hotels and boarding-houses for the accommodation of travellers and the public; but these should not be suffered to sell 'ardent spirits.'

The time is already come when we should all stand united as one man in this great moral contest, holding the high and invincible ground, that intemperance is an enemy to our civil and political improvement; and that we must oppose its advocates and supporters, without distinction of color.

When the advocates of slavery cry out 'How is the evil to be removed?' we tell them to 'quit stealing'—'destroy the market, and render the whole system worthless.' Can we say otherwise to the advocates of intemperance than to quit 'poisoning,' and the trade will die of itself? There are probably no other two evils so closely allied, that the cure for the one is applicable to the other; and just so in their perpetuation. And the guilt of each is shrouded in the corruption of public opinion.

The slaveholder who says that he desires slavery to be abolished, and will not manumit his slaves; we doubt the sincerity of his assertion. The moderate drinker, who says he wishes drunkenness

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swept from the land, and still keeps on drinking—shall we believe him? He, like the former says, that 'I am strictly in favor of temperance, but I hate your fanatical denunciations, your cold water societies for reform. Let every man be his own guardian. I hate both drunkards and drunkenness. I like moderation in every thing.' So says the moderate drinker. But yet, under his very system of self-government, has the evil arisen with all its accumulated power. Will the same evil or the same legislation cure itself? Certainly not. And if this 'uncontrollable liberty' is to be the ruling monitor, it will be impossible to fix a moral boundary. The man who drinks his small glass of brandy in a day or a week, will infringe on another's rights, if he reproves him who drinks his quart a day or an hour—for each, in the exercise of his guaranteed liberty, only satisfied his own thirst. We should despise neither the drunkard nor those engaged in the traffic; we should hate their ways, and our admonitions should flow from a love to their welfare. These moderate men appear to be true *fac similes* of another class of citizens, called colonizationists. They both cry out against the evil, and propose their remedies; but figures, 'which cannot lie,' prove the inefficiency of their plans; for their application has only operated like extinguishing fire with oil; for both intemperance and slavery have flourished under their cure. The superiority of associated bodies over isolated individuals, in expressing their disapprobation of any measure, is so self-evident, that I would not insult your senses by adducing proof.

Mark the revolution in public opinion produced in

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the Eastern States, in regard to the use and sale of ardent spirits; and then mark the consequence. In that same region have risen up our most powerful friends, who wish to elevate our moral and political condition; and wherever we see what we term a true abolitionist, he is invariably a friend of the temperance cause. It is their enlightened views of human good that lead them to advocate the exalted principles of human rights. And shall we condemn their exertions by our principles and practices?

Can there be any of our people, who advocate our improvement, and view drunkenness as an evil, who will not lend their aid and influence to stay it?

Can they be so blind to their dearest interests, and those of posterity? Let their acts answer! We are certainly bound to prepare the way for the rising generation. No doubt the present race of drunkards will live out their days in their own way; but let us rescue posterity from the evils that intemperance inflicts on the present race.

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