# A N <br> ESSAY 

PUBLIC EVILS OF THE DAY AS PERTAINING TO OUR LOCAL AND GENERAL WELFARE,

## THEODORE O. BATES,

BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF

NORTH BROOKFIELD, MASS.,
$-\mathrm{ON}-$

THURSINAY EVENING. FEB. $14,1878$.

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## PUBLIC EVILS OF THE DAY aS PERTAINING TO OUR LOCAL and General welfare,

——READ BY

## THEODORE C. BATES,

before the citizens of

NORTH BROOKFIELD, MASS.,

THURSDAY EVENING, FEB. 14, 1878.

MR. T. C. BATES,

## Dear Sir:-

The undersigned, citizens of North Brookfield, who with many others had the pleasure of listening to the Paper read by you in the Town Hall, on the evening of February 14th, in the Course of Lectures before the people, appreciating the value of the facts and statistics there given, and the suggestions therein made; and believing that it would be greatly for the good of the people if those facts could be more generally known and understood, and the suggestions acted upon ; and feeling also that this end might be, in a measure, reached if the paper could be generally circulated among us; we do hereby respectfully request a copy of the same for the purpose of being printed and circulated, under the direction of the Lecture Committee.

Hoping that it will be in accordance with your wishes to accede to our request, we remain,

Very truly yours,
G. H. DeBEVoise,
G. H. WILSON, GEORGE T. LINCOLN, NAT. H. FOSTER, H. P. BARTLETT, J. M. AVANN.

Сомmittee,
AND
72 OTHERS.


At the meeting of the Committee of Arrangements having in charge the Lectures, Discussions, \&c., for this winter, it was voted to have ten Entertainments in the Course, which entertainments, so nearly as might be consistent with our funds, were to be divided as follows: four lectures, two readings, two musical entertainments, and two discussions ; and if you will consider that given by Miss Davis and Mrs. Ames, both a reading and musical entertainment, you will have had all that your Committee thought it probable they could provide, and therefore conditionally promised at the beginning of the course, with the exception of the two discussions which they intended you should surely have.

At the last meeting of the Committee of Arrangements, the question arose as to how we could avoid, or provide, the second discussion, it being evident the first one had not met your expectations. No one of your Committee seeming willing to present a question for discussion which he could and would himself support or argue, it was thought by some that if we only held it over your heads and threatened you with another debate, you would willingly excuse us from the performance of this part of your partially promised programme rather than be afflicted with another such torture, feeling that as we had given you five lectures when only four had been announced, you would feel well satisfied to call it an even
thing and cheerfully consent to omit the second discussion. But others thought differently, and after much deliberation as to the way we could best get out of our dilemma, the Committee voted to extend an invitation to your humble servant to prepare an Essay on the Public Evils of the Day, as pertaining to our local and general welfare, with such recommendations as he might choose to embody, which should be the subject of criticism and discussion at your will and pleasure ; and in accepting this invitation, I beg of you to be as charitable as possible, remembering how many, many other duties I have to perform, and how nearly impossible it is for me to take from my business, sufficient time to do even partial justice to such a theme, even were I able to do it under the most favorable circumstances.

In the first place let us consider the cause of all our great public afflictions and observe the many and great inconsistences on the part of our people connected therewith. Why so much said about the "hard times?" Is it true that we are suffering from such general business depression as is often asserted by irresponsible parties? No! I claim that business is better by far than before the war, and very much better here than in other countries. Then what is the cause of so much discontent among certain classes in this and other communities? Let us examine the existing state of affairs and see if you agree with me in the inferences and probabilities, if not facts and demonstrations, presented. Have you not often observed how much easier it is for some people to find fault with their fortune, their neighbors, or their public servants, than it is for them to realize how much better off they are than thousands of others whom they personally know ; or how many of their personal friends have more disagreeable neighbors; or how much better public servants or officers we have than some of our neighboring towns?

You are all familiar with the saying "To err is human; to forgive, divine." But I sometimes think that for the first part
of that declaration might very properly be substituted, the words: "To find fault is human." Let it be distinctly understood that objection is not made to honest criticism ; for consistent, honest criticism is productive of good results almost invariably, but the disposition some people have to always see -in everything and everybody something to condemn and censure, is deplorable, and an earnest, persistent effort on the part of some should be made to correct or remedy this unfortunate propensity.

We hear men complaining of their taxes as being enormous and unendurable, and, generally, it is the class of people who have been the most favored in their abundance of this world's goods, who snarl and bark the most vehemently, forgetting how few there are as well off as themselves, or how few there are with whom they would exchange places. Their children are generally grown up and are away from home, and now, to them, there is no further use of the town's appropriating such enormous sums for schools; and that they must help pay for the support of such institutions when they have no children to be benefitted seems to some sufficient excuse for hiding all their property that they possibly can from the assessor's knowledge, forgetting that it is but a short reckoning on the dial of time, back to the days when their children received the benefits of our public schools which were provided largely at the expense of other men's property, and also failing to appreciate how few people in the constant changes, failures and vicissitudes of this life have been guided by the unseen hand clear of the shoals and commercial wrecks and enabled to save for themselves such a plentiful supply of this world's possessions as they themselves enjoy.

It seems to me, as a rule, men ought to be thankful they have been so bountifully prospered as to have sufficient property to make their taxes so enormous. If their property is unproductive, that is their fault, but they should be thankful for the possession of that with which they obtained the property taxed,
and if yielding them little or no income, they should be careful and avoid injudicious investments in the future.
Again, how few people study and give the attention to the cause of what they consider such extortionate taxes. How many men go on year after year, paying their assessments to the tax collector without ever inquiring into the cause, of to them, seemingly, so great and unnecessary burdens. How many men realise that the Curse of Rum is the cause of four fifths of our State and County taxes. And how many people realize that this gigantic and monster evil is sucking the very life-blood of the nation. Our public schools must be maintained, our town's poor must be provided for, and our town's portion of the State and County expenses must be paid. By whom are our schools supported, our poor provided for, our highways kept in repair, our streets lighted, and our State and County taxes paid? By those who have by economy, frugality, temperate habits and industry been fortunate enough to have saved a few hundred or thousand dollars, and provided a home and secured thereby taxable property.
But why not all pay equally for what all enjoy equally? This is the stand taken by some men. Some people are unfortunate; while honest, temperate and industrious, they are prevented by sickness of themselves or some members of their family from accumulating wealth or property, and the State cannot afford, as it has well learned, to let the children of such grow up in ignorance ; and such unfortunate men should be pittied and excused. Such men should have our sincere sympathy. I know of no more sad spectacle than an honest, hard working man unable to educate his family. And now do not misunderstand me,-I do not wish to be understood as censuring the honest, industrious, temperate, frugal poor man-for they are the very men of all others in every community that deserve, and should have, our sympathy. There is no danger but that our rich men will take care of themselves ; but our ambitious, praiseworthy, hard-working mechanics need all the encourage-
ment any and all of us can extend to them. Many of them, sensitive in their nature, proud and ambitious, with great hopes centering in their children; year after year working hard and continuously to establish a home for their family, to provide the comforts of life and educate them as well as their circumstances will possibly allow,-THIS is the class that makes up the true noblemen of our country, and where the majority of this class of mechanics are found in a community you will invariably find there your best schools, churches well maintained, excellent social advantages, and all that goes to make up the desirable qualities and ways of life with which we all wish to be surrounded - and which we should all zealously aid and encourage by every means we can possibly command.

But what shall we say of that innumerable class who lack all pride and shame about applying to the Town's Overseers of the Poor for aid; who are strong, physically, enjoying good health, and in the harvest time or threefourths of the year can make good wages at their trade, and who spend every dollar as fast as they get it, or even faster ; running livery bills which they forget to pay unless cut off from again being able to hire ; neglecting their store bills; permitting their children to be provided with school books by the Town's Committee, at the Town's expense, simply because they know the Committee will do it if they do not; with no sense of feeling or mortification for their children-who often betray ten times the sensitiveness the parent does; dodging all bills he can escape paying; contracting all bills his cheek and his worthless promises to pay can secure him; and then, when work in the shop is temporarily suspended and his earnings cut off, what then? Why, you say, if he has had work during the summer months, he must have laid by enough to bridge him over the short time he is out of work. Yes, well, we would think so, but we have not told you of one account he has had to keep paid - his beer bill - yes, his whiskey account.

Do you not suppose if the money that has been spent for beer and whiskey in North Brookfield this past year had been saved by those who spent it (I do not refer to such as was used medicinally and by doctors' advice), your Overseers of the Poor would not have had to exceed their appropriation by as much as the appropriation itself? Are you aware how, annually, our School Committee are compelled to furnish the scholars their school books because so many parents camnot or will not do it; and are you aware that all this comes out of your pockets and is a lien and attachment on your property as tax payers ?

Why, gentlemen, how long are you going to submit to this? Is it a wonder that, under such unwarrantable provocation, our tax payers cannot help grumbling? Have they not a right to complain? No, none whatever-no man has a right to complain, nor is deserving help, who will not first try to remove the cause of the complaint, and to help himself. Well, how shall he remedy this evil? By ascertaining the cause thereof and effecting, or doing all he can to effect, its removal. The beer and whiskey drank in North Brookfield the past year has cost the consumers more money, in my opinion, than all the money raised for the support of schools and support of poor, and the class who have consumed it were those who could least afford it. Men without homes of their own, men who own no taxable property, who ought to save their money thus expended to provide school books for their children, bread and meat for their families, and a margin to carry them over a dull time in the shops in the winter. We cannot see them-especially their innocent children-suffer when cold winter and hunger knocks at their door. What then ? why, the town must help them, of course. And has it not occurred to you that the prohibition of the sale of rum would remedy this evil in a great degree? But this is not all, this is only on home matters. See the County Jails and Houses of Correction, full to overflowing, swelling our County and State expenses every year.

By the Report of the Board of State Charities for 1877, it appears that the cost to the State by taxation for maintaining our various State, County and Town Institutions of crime, pauperism, etc., last year were as follows:

| The State Prison Expenses, | - | - | $\$ 126,978$ | 38 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | ---: | :--- |
| State Institutions besides the State Prisons, | - | 892,725 | 00 |  |
| Town Support and Relief of Paupers, |  | - | $1,450,624$ | 26 |
| Vagrants or Travelers relieved, |  | 54,468 | 35 |  |
| County Jails and Houses of Correction, |  | 274,965 | 53 |  |

To this add interest on valuation of State Institutions Prisons, Asylums, as appears by Report of Board of State Charities, just published for 1877, making $\$ 3,715,64442$
And valuation of County Jails and Houses of Correction, as appears by the Commissioners of Prisons Reports January 1, 1878, viz: $\$ 3,699,42150$, making the total valuation $\$ 7,415,06592$.

The interest on this sum at 6 per cent. 444,905 52
$\$ 3,244,667 \quad 05$
This does not take into account the great number of charitable societies or associations all over the state, many of which are situated in cities and large towns, and cost many, many thousands annually, to support.

The Board of State Charities, in their Report in 1866, estimated the amount of private charities that year at $\$ 1,500,000$ and said that " at least two thirds was applied to the relief of pauperism.

The expenses of these Institutions could not have been less in 1877 than in 1866, with the great increase of intemperance throughout the state during the last few years. But assuming that the expenses of private charities were no more in 1877 than in 1866, and add to this sum the figures just quoted from the Report of the Board of State Charities for 1877 and we have the enormous amount of four millions seven hundred and forty-four thousand six hundred and sixty-seven dollars and five cents $(\$ 4,744,66705)$ as the cost of crime, pauperism etc.,
with their accompanying evils to this State under a License Law, for the year ending September 30, 1877. Nor does this include the expenses of the courts and other legal expenses, loss of time, and innumerable other incidental items that would swell the amount enormously. And all this under a License Law.

And how much of this great burden upon tax payers is caused by intoxicating liquors? A former Report of the Board of State Charities states that (1868, page 145,) " the proportion of crime traceable to this great vice (intemperance) must be set down, as heretofore, AT NOT LESS THAN FOUR-FIFTHS;" so that "four-fifths" or eighty per cent of the foregoing expenses are the direct tax or result of alcohol in its various forms upon our people. Four-fifths of $\$ 4,744,66705$ are $\$ 3,795,53300$, the actual tax which the dealers in intoxicating drinks levied upon the people of Massachusetts last year. Consider this, and, by comparisons, note its true significance. The total valuation of all the real estate and all the personal property in all the Brookfields, as shown by the assessors' valuation of North Brookfield, Brookfield (including East Brookfield,) and West Brookfield, as taken from the Report of the Tax Commissioners of the State published last year, aggregate in all these towns $\$ 3,770,09100$, or $\$ 974,57600$ less than the state, county, city and town institutions of crime, pauperism, etc., cost the people for one single year ; and the total valuation of all the property in all the Brookfields is actually $\$ 25,44200$ less than the rum tax on the people of the State, as shown heretofore, (four-fifths of $\$ 4,744,66705$, or $\$ 3,795,53300$.) Do you realize the magnitude of these figures? That the tax paid by the people of this state last year, imposed by rum and its attendant evils, has been $\$ 25,44200$ more than the entire valuation of all the real estate and personal property of all the Brookfields.

Is it strange that our tax payers complain? Our honest, frugal and temperate citizens struggle to support themselves

## 13

and the victims of this traffic, while the dealers in the intox icating drinks laugh at your indifference and continue to bring misery, want and pauperism upon the people, whom, after they have secured their money, you must then support either in your almshouses or criminal institutions.

This Rum Tax upon the state last year, (\$3,795533 00,) would build 379 churches costing $\$ 10,000$ each, or one for every town and city in the state; or 750 school houses costing $\$ 5,000$ each, or Two for every town in the state - or it would build one school house costing $\$ 5,000$ and furnish ten teachers at a salary of $\$ 500$ each for every town in the state. It would considerably more than pay the salaries of all the clergymen, of every denomination, and all the school teachers of Massachusetts ; or construct 4500 cottages or houses for the poor at a cost of over $\$ 800$ each. How does this impress you for one year's (1877) record?

And this is only the money side of the terrible question which we are considering. The domestic and social miseries and tribulations caused by throwing the shield of the law over this terrible traffic, and under our State law licensing the sale of liquors, can never be fully computed or known. The terrible miseries it brings with it can never begin to be described -but it is daily forcing the people to consider what is before them, and what they have got to face and hurl back, not by any sentimental throb of moral suasion, but by the strongest kind of a Prohibitory Law being substituted for our preseut License or Free Rum Law.

Have you any idea of the amount of beer consumed in this town annually? Well, I have been to considerable trouble to collect the facts and show you the statistics.

There have been shipped to North Brookfield, by the B. \& A. R. R., between Jan. 1st, 1877, and Dec. 31st, 1877, 336 barrels of beer, which cost at wholesale about $\$ 9.00$ a barrel ; but which, according to the authority of one of our very oldest saloon men, and largest dealer in the town, retails by the glass and quart for fully $\$ 25.00$ a barrel.

Probably there has been full as much more brought in by the two expresses and the private conveyances. And if so, how much, then, has it cost the town of North Brookfield for beer alone, for 1877 ? The enormous sum of $\$ 16,80000$.

One express agent informs me he has brought in not less than $\$ 5,00000$ worth of whiskey and other distilled liquors; and another says, the whiskey he has brought in amounts to a good deal more money than the beer he has carried. But suppose we assume, to be within bounds and avoid all possible indications of exaggeration, that there has only been one-half as much whiskey as beer-though I have no doubt the cost of whiskey has really been more than the beer - but we will call it one-half, $\$ 8,40000$, and it makes the total $\$ 25,20000$ for the year 1877, for beer and whiskey, without including the amount sold by the druggist, your only licensed party in town. What portion of our town's taxes would that pay? Let us examine this: The town of North Brookfield appropriated, at our last annual meeting, for schools, $\$ 7,000$; support of poor, $\$ 1,500$; highways, bridges and sidewalks, $\$ 2,000$; railroad debt, $\$ 9,000$; contingent expenses, including the expense of maintaining the street lamps, paying fire department, etc., etc., $\$ 2,000$; improvements on cemeteries, $\$ 500$; draining Forest street, $\$ 500$; old town debt, $\$ 2,000$. Well, how much does all this amount to? Only $\$ 24,500$,-or nearly $\$ 1,000$ less than the estimated value of the beer and whiskey consumed in our town last year, outside of what may have been bought for medicinal purposes, legitimately, of the druggist.

Is it possible that the amount of money expended for beer and whiskey, in one year, in our town, could have amounted to more than your town appropriations for the year 1877, as named ; and yet you wink at it and fret about your taxes as being burdensome! Why, gentlemen, as long as you do nothing to prevent this terrible, blighting curse, and will use your endeavors to support the continuance of such a license, or free rum law, on our Statute books, as now exists, don't ever again
complain of your taxes. Your State taxes this last year were $\$ 1,56000$, and your County, $\$ 2,01700$; and four-fifths of this amount, too, let it be remembered, is levied upon us by rum. Then don't be so inconsistent as to fret about taxes, when you make no effort to reduce them.

But aside from taxation and dollars and cents, in the light of humanity view this subject. How I pity these unfortunate men who thus waste their earnings,-many of them the most noble men in our community. When sober, they are kind hearted, cheerful and generous ; but, unfortunately, unable to resist thealluring temptations so numerously set around them. Eleven saloons running full blast in North Brookfield, (so Mr. Bothwell informs me). If these were shut up, many of our good natured, genial lads, would not be going down hill as they are to-day-wasting their money, destroying their health, and making many a fond mother and father heart-broken and sad, and regretting the day their child was born. How long will you stand it?

What is the use of trying to aid our Reform Club, while such glaring temptations are on every hand? Remove the possibility or convenience of these noble men getting the poison, and then will our reform efforts avail much. Had this reform movement been started under our old prohibitory law, the present license law would never have been enacted, in my opinion ; but it seems to me absolutely essential that reformation for our intemperate men and prohibition as our statute law, should go hand in hand, and that the former will ever be comparatively worthless without the latter-moral suasion alone can never do it.

The man who has brought a good share of the liquor into town, told me recently that there was no doubt in his mind, after careful consideration, that the cost of the beer drank here was twice as much as the cost of all our public schools. And that the additional amount of miserable whiskey was enor-mous-that the cheapest, hottest kind was almost universally
preferred; to use his expression, "something that will cut its way or burn its way right down through." And how long shall these beer shops and dens of iniquity be left open in our midst? To-day, the Selectmen are being importuned for licenses to run Billiard Halls, when the applicants for the license themselves acknowledge it would not pay without the chance to sell beer.

Under the present license law, which is virtually a free-rum law, there is not a County in the State with sufficient jail room to accommodate its criminals, but men are let go before their term of sentence has expired, to make room for new convicts that must then be locked up. The Report of the Board of State Charities for 1877 , (pages $212-213$,) after speaking of the near completion of the new State Prison at Concord, Mass., which it has been generally understood was being constructed sufficiently commodious to furnish ample quarters for all our state prison convicts, so that the state could sell or dispose of the prison property at Charlestown, says: "It has accommodations for 775 prisoners. Unless there is soon a very considerable falling off in the number sentenced by the courts to confinement in the State Prison, it is doubtful if the Concord buildings will properly provide for the convicts of this class whom we shall have on our hands next June. Just now it seems probable that the state will be obliged to partially occupy the Charlestown prison for a time after opening the new one."

See our annually increasing expenses to build new and enlarge our old State and County institutions for criminals. Is it a wonder our taxes are increasing, when we think of the increased number of criminals we are compelled from year to year to provide for? And when shall it be remedied? I say when men become honest-when men will vote according to the dictates of their consciences and judgment, and get out from under the party whip. Our local officers can do little to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors under our present law. 'Tis true, our Selectmen have not licensed one-tenth the rum-
sellers in our town, but is it not as true that those not licensed are just as well satisfied with their present state of being let alone? I think the time is coming when hard times will compel men who have got the taxes to pay to consider this thing more than they have, from a sense of public economy if not from a sense of humanity. And this, aided by a constantly growing and deep seated conviction of duty, will bring about the desired and long hoped for result.

Why, what caused so many of our soldiers to leave their homes and families, lucrative positions in business, and risk their lives in our late war-was it for honor, or the bounty offered? No, if ever men engaged in any calling from a pure sense of duty, these men surely did, and let us hope a similar sense of duty will soon prompt all good men to openly fight this demon Alcohol, until the poor man's wife and children shall, by the father's inability to get the poison, know less of the horror and suffering occasioned by it. And let us hope the day is not far distant when the laboring men, and all our people, will realize that prohibition of the sale of intoxicating drinks is a preventive of high taxes, of misery and untold suffering, and sadness and want.
The following statistics are quoted from "Our Wasted Resources," by Hargreaves :
Among the many evils resulting from the use of intoxicating drinks is the immense waste of money expended for them. The exact annual cost of these drinks in the United States can only be approximated, not ascertained.
The tax collected by the Internal Revenue Department in 1870 was upon $72,425,353$ gallons of proof spirits, and $6,081,520$ barrels of fermented liquors.

## CONSUMPTION OF LIQUORS.

Commissioner Delano, in his Internal Revenue Report for 1869 says : "In the absence of reliable data to fix the annual consumption of distilled spirits, we are left to conjecture. Were I to express an opinion on this subject, I should place the amount at not less than eighty million gallons."

This estimate of Commissioner Delano is corroborated by the Census Bureau, which reported ten years previous that there were produced in the United States, for the year ending June 1, 1860, 90,412,581 gal-

## 18

lons of domestic spirits. It is therefore safe to assume that the consumption of distilled spirits in the United States, in the form of beverages, is not less than the taxable quantity of spirits reported by the Internal Revenue Department in 1870, viz: 72,425,353 gallons.

The difference between the above $72,425,353$ gallons, which is proof spirits, and the diluted or increased quantity, which, when dealt out to the drinker is on an average not over 40 per cent. of alcohol, or 10 below proof, is equal to the addition of at least $7,500,000$ gallons. By the Report of Internal Revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1871, the tax was paid on $7,159,333$ barrels of ale, beer, etc.

Dr. Young, Chief of the Bureau of Statistics, in a letter to Rev. Wm. M. Thayer, of Boston, said: "In the absence of accurate data, the following is an estimate of the sales of liquors in the United States during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1871:


As a proof of the correctness of the above, it may be stated that during the last fiscal year the receipts from retail liquor-dealers, who paid $\$ 25$ each for licenses, amounted to $\$ 3,650,000$, indicating that there were 146,000 retailers of liquors in the United States. By including those who escaped paying license fees, estimated at 4,000 , the number is increased to 150,000 , who, on an average, sold at least $\$ 4,000$ worth of liquors each, making $\$ 600,000,000$ as above stated.

It must be clear that the above estimated cost of intoxicating beverages in the United States for 1870 is below the actual amount paid for them. This cost for drinks is nearly one-sixth of the value of the man ufactures of the United States in that year, which was $\$ 4,232,325,442$, and more than one-fourth of the value of all the "farm productions, betterments and additions of stock," valued at $\$ 2,447,538,658$. By the census returns of 1870 , the value of


Thus we find that the value of all the slaughtered animals, home manufactures, forest products, market garden products and orchard products was $\$ 92,182,707$ less than the cost of our nation's drink-bill for the same period.

Again, by the census returns of 1870 , the value of

which is $\$ 145,621,273$ less than the cost of liquors for the same time.
Thus in 1870 our nation's drink-bill was one hundred and forty-six million dollars more than the estimated value at the place of manufacture of all the furniture and house-fixtures (except stoves and hollowware) ; all the boots and shoes, men's, women's, and children's clothing ; all the collars, cuffs, gloves, mittens, hats, caps, hosiery, etc., etc., that were in that year manufactured in the United States.

Again, the value of all the food and food preparations of 1870 was $\$ 600,365,571$, or $\$ 19,059,539$ less in value at the place of manufacture than the cost of drinks.

If to the above value of food and food preparations be added 30 per cent. for profits of dealers, etc., before they reach the consumers, it will be $\$ 780,475,242$. Then the food and food preparations consumed by the people of the United States in 1870 cost only $\$ 161,050.132$ more than the cost of the liquors drunk that year; and if we include all the liquors consumed for which no tax or duty was collected, it will be safe to say that more money is annually expended in the United States for intoxicating drinks than for all kinds of food consumed by the people.

Is it any wonder that tens of thousands of our people are in want of food and clothing, when there is expended annually for poisonous drinks as much as, or more than, is spent for food, and nearly twice as much as is spent for clothing?

This needless waste is not for one year merely; for our drink-bill increases and keeps pace with our population and productions, as will hereafter be more fully shown. The drink-bill of the United States for 1871 may be stated thus:


The drink-bill for 1871 was $\$ 680,036,042$, being an increase of $\$ 60,610,932$ in one year.

## THE QUANTITY OF LIQUORS AND THEIR COST IN 1872.

The reports of the Treasury Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1872, show that there were manufactured and imported into
the United States alcoholic liquors as follows :


Thus in the year 1872 there were consumed in the United States $337,288,066$ gallons of distilled spirits and fermented liquors, costing $\$ 735,720,048$, being an increased consumption in one year of $34,878,473$ and an increase in their cost of $\$ 55,684,006$.
quantity and cost of liquors for 13 years in the united states.
Having seen the approximated cost of liquors for the years 1870, 1871-72, we will now endeavor to ascertain our nation's liquor-bill for the thirteen years between 1860 and 1872, inclusive. The following is an exhibit of the liquors reported to United States officials; also, an estimate of their cost, at the rates already given for the years 1870, 1871 and 1872.

| Year. |  |  |  |  | Liquors paying Tax. |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Retail cost to |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Consumers. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The quantity of liquors reported for the 13 years ending June 30 , 1872 , is much less than was consumed; for not more than one-third of the liquors manufactured in the United States during the years 1865-66-67 and 1868 were reported and paid duty to the government, as the examination of the following table will fully establish :

| Year. | Spirits. | Year. | Spirits. |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1860 | 88,003,089 gallons\|| | 18679 | 14,575,168 | llons. |
| 1861 | No report of Inter Rev. | 18689 | 7,231,814 |  |
| 1862 | " ${ }^{\text {" }}$ | 18699 | 62,092,417 | " |
| 18639 | 16,149,954 gallons, | 1870 | 72,425,353 | " |
|  | (for 10 months.) | 18719 | 56,776,179 | '6 |
| 1864 T | 85,295,391 gallons | 1872 ¢ | 69,033,533 | " |
| 1865¢ | 16,936,778 " | 1873 | 71,151,367 | " |
| 1866 ${ }^{\text {T }}$ | 14,599,274 " | 1874 | 69,572,062 | '6 |

[^0]In 1864 , when the tax to March 7 was 20 cents, after that date 60 cents per gallon, $85,295,391$ gallons were reported; but when the tax was $\$ 2$ a gallon there were reported in 1865 only $16,936,778$ gallons ; in 1866, 14,599,274 gallons; in 1867, 14,575,168 gallons; and in 1868 but 7,231,814 gallons.

In 1869 the tax was reduced to 50 cents per gallon, when there were reported $62,092,417$ gallons, or $54,860,603$ gallons more than in the previous year ; in 1870 there were reported $72,425,353$; in 1871, $56,776,179$; and in 1872, $69,033,533$. Every one must feel certain that more liquors were manufactured and consumed than paid the tax of 1865-66-67 and 1868. It would be absurd to suppose that there was so great a falling off in the manufacture and consumption of spirits; for in the very years when the greatest falling off of revenue occurred there was the greatest amount of drunkenness in our country. Every one knows that in 1865-66 and 1867 there was more intemperance than in any other years in the history of the country.

Dr. Young, chief of the Bureau of Statistics, estimates the annual consumption (1867) to be about $221,200,000$ gallons, and the cost $\$ 600,000,000$. He says: "These figures are sufficiently startling and need no exaggeration. Six hundred million dollars! The minds of few persons can comprehend this vast sum, which is worse than wasted every ycar. It would pay for $100,000,000$ barrels of flour, averaging $2 \frac{1}{2}$ barrels of flour to every man, woman and child in the country. This flour, if placed in wagons, ten barrels in each, would require $10,000,000$ teams, which, allowing eight yards to each, would extend 45,455 miles-nearly twice round the earth, or half-way to the moon. If the sum were in one-dollar notes, it would take one hundred persons one year to count them. If spread on the surface of the ground, so that no spaces should be left between the notes, the area covered would be 20,466 acres, forming a parallelogram of 6 by a little over $5 \frac{1}{2}$ miles, the walk around it being more than $22 \frac{1}{2}$ miles."

The truth, as the doctor says, will better serve the cause of temperance than any amount of exaggeration. The statements made by Dr. Young will greatly serve the cause of truth by enabling us to approach nearer to the true cost than we might otherwise dare to do.

There is certainly a defect in the social system, something radically wrong in our government, that such fruits should be produced. Thirtyfour thousand drunken persons arrested in one year for that vice in one city alone, with tens of thousands wandering about the streets with no place to rest their weary heads, which must keep an army of upward of three thousand poliee to look after these poor victims of the rum traffic, for which are paid nearly three and a half millions of dollars a year! And still the cry is for more hoases to shelter the homeless. Two million dollars are spent annually hy the State Board of Charities and Correction. Of the 24,166 persons relieved out of the streets of New York, sixteen thousand were children. The average population of the New York hospitals, asylums, nurseries, prisons, re-
formatories, etc., is 8,840 . Nor do matters grow better in this respect, as is evidenced by report of Commissioner Stearn, which was adopted January, 1874, by the Board of Charities and Correction of New York. By this report we are informed that the number of persons committed to the workhouse on Blackwell's Island more than five times for intoxication, from January 1, 1870 to January 1, 1874, was as follows :

| Males Committed. |  |  |  | Males Committed. |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 108 | - - | 6 | times before. | 1 | - | 30 | times | before. |
| 28 | - - | 7 | " " | 2 | - | 50 | " |  |
| 162 | - - | 8 | " 6 | 1 | - | 40 | " | " |
| 5 | - - | 9 | " 6 | 1 | - | 70 | " | " |
| 181 | - - | 10 | " 6 | 1 | - | 75 | " | " |
| 16 | - - | 12 | " 6 | 1 | - | 80 | " | " |
| 21 | - - | 15 | " " | 1 | - | - 100 | " | " |
| 27 | - - | 20 | " ${ }^{\text {a }}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | - | 25 | " " | 560 | Total. |  |  |  |



Meyer Stearn, the commissioner, says:
"That account speaks volumes for itself. The tale it tells of male drunkards being recommitted to prison from one hundred times down to six times, of whom one hundred and eighty-one offenders were recommitted ten times, is dreadful to contemplate. But this tale of horror is put entirely in the shade-it is lost sight of-if placed side by side with the statistics of female arrests. While 560 male persons were committed for intoxication during the past three years, there were arrested 9,006 temales-sixteen times as many. Of the former, one was rearrested one hundred times for the same offence; of the female drunkards, twenty-nine had to be rearrested one hundred times, and this fearful proportion is observed all through. Is not this sufficient evidence of a deplorable defect in the present law, and which we

## 23

must by all means try to remedy? Fellow-citizens, it is by your will these things exist. You are the sovereigns; the power is in your hands to remove or still keep this terrible drink-shop system, that may make your sons, your daughters, and your wives, ay, yourselves, equal to the worst of the poor victims of the poisonous cup that were brought down to occupy the cells of Blackwell's Island workhouse for the hundredth time. Think of New York City alone, with its 5,203 licensed liquor-dens, and perhaps as many more unlicensed; also of its 40,000 destitute, outcast, homeless children ; of its 647 houses of ill-fame; its 6,920 cases of assault and battery by men and women ; of the 98,861 arrests, nine-tenths of which are the result of drink.

This crime and degradation is not confined to New York alone or Philadelphia; all over our fair land intoxicating drinks are breathing their terrible upas breath, blasting all that is fair or lovely. Ninetenths of all the crime, the vice and degradation of our country are chargeable to strong drink. Bronning, the Boston wife-murderer confessed that he beat his wife to death because she would not give him her hard earnings to spend for drink. Mr. Edmund, warden of New York City prison, said three-fourths of all offences are directly or indirectly caused by intoxicating drinks. Oscar Tyler, sheriff of Albany, said eight-tenths of persons committed to Albany county jail were in consequence of the use of liquors. Seth Clarks, jailer of Buffalo, said nine-tenths of the crime in that county had its origin in intemperance. J. C. Cole and S. H. H. Parsons, police justices of Albany, said that three-fourths of all offences are the result of the use of liquors. So we may pass from county to county, from state to state, and the answer from all will be that from four-fifths to nine-tenths of all criminal and other offences are caused by strong drink.

This relation of the use of intoxicating drinks to the production of crime is not accidental, but the direct and essential result of their nature and inevitable tendency. The mass of crime produced by the use of drink was not committed by persons in a positive state of drunkenness, but by far the greater part when the person was just sufficiently under its influence to arouse the lower passions and propensities to the degree when men are easily tempted to do evil and readily provoked to acts of violence, who, but for the excitement of the liquor, would have been able to resist the impulse to do wrong.

It is in the blunting of the mental and moral faculties of man, and in exciting the passions, that the triumphs of drink consist. Burke, the notorious murderer, said he never felt remorse of conscience but once ; when about to kill an infant it smiled in his face. That smile of innocence touched his stony heart. He could not perpetrate the cruel act. But he drank a glass of brandy. That one glass stifled his conscience and blunted all feelings of pity; he then committed the cruel act without pity, without remorse.'

Most truthfully has Hon. Henry Wilson said of the liquor traffic (in the N. Y. Independent, March 24, 1870). "There is to-day a larger army under its control than went to the war, while those mourning over the vassalage and fall of loved ones exceed in numbers and in the bitterness of their woe the millions who were made childless and widows by the casualties of that fierce and sanguinary strife. And the terrible disease, like a cancer, is eating into the very vitals of the nation, destroying the mental and moral, as well as the physical fiber of the people. The liquor interest controls the cities, and largely influences State legislation and the local politics of the country. And all this has come to pass notwithstanding the temperance efforts of half a century, the preaching of the sanctuary, the presence and power of the Christian church."

Col. Robert G. Ingersoll says: "I believe, gentlemen, alcohol to a certain degree demoralizes those who make it, those who sell it, and those who drink it. I believe that from the time that it issues from the coiled and poisoned worm of the distillery until it empties into the hell of crime, dishonor and death, it demoralizes everybody that touches it from its source to its ends. I do not believe that anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against the liquid crime. All we have to do, gentlemen, is to think of the wrecks upon either bank of the stream of death - of the su-icides-of the insanity-of the poverty-of the ignorance-of the destitution-of the little children tugging at faded dresses of weeping and despairing wives asking for bread-of the millions struggling with imaginary serpents produced by this devilish thing ; and when you think of the jails, of the almshouses, of the asylums, of the prisons, and of scaffolds upon either bank, I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against that $d-d$ stuff called alcohol."

The people must think and study more our political system and political economy. Why the wail to-day from so many laboring men all over the country? Is it because labor com-
mands less pay now than before the war? No, you all know a laboring man gets better pay now than before that period. Are the necessaries of life higher now than then? No. Cotton goods and Woolen goods are cheaper to-day than they were ever sold in this country before; provisions no higher than prior to 1860 ; lumber for building cheaper than ever; hardware cheaper than ever; everything cheaper-then why should not the laboring man be better off?

He is as well off if he would only think so, because he earns more and his living costs him less ; but since the war there has been a period of great inflation ; materials went up very high and labor followed. When men earned large wages, it begot methods of extravagance and lack of economy that pervaded all classes of the community, the laboring man as well as all others. Those laboring men who were frugal, thoughtful, temperate and saving, laid by sums sufficient to provide little homes for themselves, and now are enjoying the comforts of them, and are contented and happy; while those who were less inclined to provide for a rainy day, who lived every day for that day, letting to-morrow take care of itself, now find their sweetest satisfaction in upbraiding capitalists and following the lead of demagogues, who only magnify their apparent wrongs, and use the laboring man and his vote to hoist themselves into office or notoriety, without ever doing the poor man the least degree of benefit whatever. Therefore, I say the laboring man must read and study for himself, and when he thinks legislation can be of any use to him, let him be prepared to state how, for thus far nearly all our labor reform prophets and teachers have been theorists, and nothing of much practicable benefit regarding the price of labor has ever been reached. through them, by legislation. I have given this subject very much study and thought, and my full sympathy is with those honest, industrious, hard working men, who desire to better the condition of themselves and their families; and why should they not have the sympathy and hearty aid of all of us. They wish to educate their families; want them to have the com-
forts of life, and these they should have; but when the family of the poor tries to mimic the style of extravagance pursued by so many of his neighbors; and his children are taught to think they must have just as nice things to wear as their associates, in order to avoid old Mother Grundy's back talk, then it is the father's energies are taxed to their utmost to keep up appearances, and his Savings Bank deposit is not allowed to increase. This, too, is an outgrowth of our war inflation period. The word "millions" and "thousands" are so common now-a-days, when connected with money matters, " a dollar" seems an insignificant affair to many people, and they fail to appreciate its worth, but the time is near at hand when men will remember a dollar is the better part of a day's work, and think twice before they spend it once.

And in this connection let me say, it is for every young or middle aged man, here to-night, or in our town, to decide for himself whether he will have all the luxuries and comforts his income will possibly afford him now, or each day as he goes along; or, whether he will deny himself some of them now, that he may have them in old age. The price of a comfortable, well-to-do old age, in a pecuniary point of view, is the self-denial a man will exercise in his younger days; and it is for every young man here to decide for himself, whether he will have all his pleasures in this life as it goes along, or reserve some of them to purchase the comforts of later years.

It is said upon authority of our State Board of Charities, page 145,1868 Report, that four-fifths of our criminals are brought to the jails and prisons by rum. Well, now, my friends, have you ever thought how this affected you? Have any of your labor reform advocates ever shown you what the direct effect of this rum has upon you, even though you never touch a drop, and are industrious and economical, and every day laying by something? If it has ever been made a matter of publicity, I have never seen it. But let me show it to you. We have in our States Prison and Houses of Correction several
thousand convicts, which you and all of us are taxed to support, and four-fifths of these criminals are brought there by rum. Now the State authorities feel as though they must, by some means, get some work out of these men, and how do they do it? They advertise for bids for the labor of these thousands of men. Well, it is not every concern who has the means that has the disposition to have anything to do with this class of labor, but of course the probability of having to pay but a very small daily compensation, tempts some men to bid. What is the result? In one of our States Prisons, one heavy shoe manufacturer bid 40 cents a day for the services of the men. Now how does that effect you and your interests, you say? Well, let us see. His bid is accepted: he immediately puts in machinery of the most approved patterns, and puts a foreman from outside in each department, as this he is permitted to do, the prison authorities having to guarantee the good behavior of the prisoners and their steady labor; and now what are they doing? These convicts-made convicts four-fifths of them by rum-are dictating to you what you shall receive over here in this shop for your labor; for the manufacturers who pay but 40 cents a day for their labor get just as good shoes, after their men have been at work a while, as any of their competitors can produce, and they can sell a case of boots at a handsome profit-even if they sell it for just what other manufacturer's cost them, with even vast advantages for manufacturing cheap goods. I opened this subject to Mr. Alfred Batcheller the last time I happened to meet him on the train, and he said it was the greatest curse of the day that honest labor and toil was compelled to compete with convict labor, and he said it was to him so strange some of the labor reform agitators did not show it up and correct it.

One of the large shoe manufacturers, of Chicago, have the contract for the convicts of the State Prison, at Joliet, Illinois, and they not only can command the trade of that mar-

## 28

ket and the northwest, but drive back any eastern competitor at their pleasure, and still they have amassed a large fortune. They make their prices just as they please, and other manufacturers must get down to them in figures, and then must cut down the wages of their men from time to time to get out of the field of competition with even a very small profit on their sales.

Of course there can not be shoes enough made in our prisons to supply all the demand, but there can be enough made to terribly demoralize the market in prices, and the prison contractor can, if he chooses, drive any competitor to the wall. But this convict labor is not confined to boots and shoes alone. For instance, Worcester County convicts are let out to the great chair manufacturers, for a mere nothing per day; and what is the result? The men who have the services of these convicts have acquired large fortunes.

How long will your honest mechanics stand this? If your State Officers tell you, as they do, that four-fifths of these convicts are there by rum, how long before you will do what you can to prohibit the sale of your worst enemy and thus tend to diminish the number of convicts so that their labor can no longer be used to establish so directly a price for your labor.

Where are your labor reform agitators that they have never shown you this picture? Why are there not petitions a mile long pouring into our legislature, signed by hundreds of thousands of honest laborers, demanding the cancellation of such contracts, and if necessary, the convicts put at work preparing granite for our many public buildings being erected all over the State. Better let the State build all our school-houses and public buildings of granite and iron, and the convicts prepare the material in the yards and shops of our prisons, than to have the State furnishing convict labor to compete against our honest, hard working mechanics in North Brookfield and elsewhere. Our people must study these questions more and be prepared to act more understandingly.

How shall the laboring man learn his duty ? - Where shall he go to obtain this desired information on these many interesting questions of the day? And this brings me to a point I have been a long time reaching, and that is, one of the great needs in this town and community: I refer to a good Free Public Library, and a Free Public Reading RoomNot where alone may be found collections of popular authors and sentimental love stories, and the ocean of cheap, blood and thunder, yellow covered literature of the day, but books of reference and statistics, containing all our State and National statistics on various subjects. Our State Senators and Representatives would see it supplied with all our State publications, and our Representative and Senators in Congress, would gladly furnish all the works and statistics pertaining to the Government interests, and then with full files of daily papers constantly at the service of our people, who can estimate the good which might, and undoubtedly would, come from it? The active members of our Ladies' Library association are certainly entitled to a great deal of credit for their very earnest continuous efforts to sustain and enlarge their very praiseworthy object, but it is not considered by the people at large as a Public Library, and cannot have the good results that those same parties might bring about under more favorable auspices. All oufr people, and especially our reformed men should have a centrally located, quiet and attractive place, to spend their leisure evenings and certain hours of the day, to read and study.

How, now, shall this Free Public Reading Room and Public Library be secured? Brookfield has a library of many thousand volumes, and so has West Brookfield ; and how did they get them? Judge Myrick, of Brookfield, (or that being the place of his birth,) in his Will left $\$ 10,000$ to the Town of Brookfield, the income of which was to supply books, periodicals and papers for a Free Public Library and Reading Room, on condition the Town should furnish a suitable Room and Librarian. This, the town readily assented to, and now they
have a most valuable Free Public Library and Reading Room. West Brookfield was treated in a similar manner by one of her old citizens, and they are now gradually getting quite a valuable library.

The interest money of the Myrick Fund for Brookfield, is $\$ 600$ a year, and this annually procures a great many valuable publications which, with what is given them by public officials, is rapidly making it a most desirable place of resort for reference and recreation; but our town is unfortunate in not having such a class of men, or not having had them might more properly be said. There were some of us who expected from some of our venerable and well-to-do fellow townsmen, owing to their well known liberality, and peculiar and intimate connection with the growth and prosperity of this town, something of this kind would be done by them ; but for good and sufficient reasons to them, undoubtedly, it was not done. And now what may those reasons have been? It could not have been because they did not realize and recognize the usefulness of such an institution here, for no men in this County would have used and appropriated such public advantages more than some of our public spirited fellow townsmen who have gone; nor would they have withheld their material support to such a public good; influencing (as their sagacity must have freely understood it would) so favorably, the habits and general chanacter and intelligence of the hundreds of young men in our community. Then what may we presume was the cause of our town, as such, not being remembered by any of these men who loved North Brookfield as much as any of us, and who were so abundantly able to do for her. My theory regarding the matter is, that our people had never given any intimation that such an institution was needed or would be appreciated and used if provided.

But whatever may have been, we cannot longer afford to let our people, especially our young people, grow up without the educating and beneficial influences of a Free Public Library and Reading Room.

Now, how shall it be provided? We all know of the great liberality of the people of North Brookfield. I make bold to assert that there is not another town of so much public spirit in Worcester County, if there is her equal in this respect in the State. You would have looked a long time for a people or community, who, in the face of and eyes of the threatening indications of our commercial depression immediately following the great financial panic of 1873 , would have placed upon their necks such a yoke to bear as our $\$ 90,000$ railroad debt, and yet observe the vote-323 in favor, to 44 against it. It was surely an experiment, and to many of our most careful citizens, a dangerous one. This had to be accompanied by a $\$ 10,000$ subscription by individuals, but it was subscribed although considered then by every man who subscribed, as nothing more or less than a donation to the public good of North Brookfield. And by whom was this $\$ 10,000$ subscribed? Was it by our wealthiest and most prospered men? No! not by any means. These men are seldom foremost in any such public enterprise. Have you never observed that these men who have accumulated the most money, have also acquired a deep-seated love for keeping it after they get it, and are also the men who are afraid to take any great commercial or financial risk, but are perfectly willing to receive, as citizens, the public benefits obtained by their neighbors' investment. They usually like to live in a nice house themselves; have for their own use all the comforts of this world ; enjoy the benefits of all the great public conveniences and boons, but are perfectly willing to get rid of paying for any and all of them just so far as they can. But somehow, there is a disposition on the part of our people of more ordinary means, to make up for what their more abundantly able neighbors decline doing, and perhaps it is all for the best that it is so. If you want to raise $\$ 20,000$ for repairing churches, where is there another community in Massachusetts with so few rich men in it, that could do as our people have done in this respect, and are doing. One society alone has,
besides raising money very liberally to pay its own current expenses, contributed over $\$ 2,000$ a year to go out of town to help various religious associations, and has done it for many years.

When the Southbridge and Brookfield Railroad project was agitated, our people actually subscribed $\$ 27,000$ to aid in building a railroad that was not to come within four miles of us, and there is not another community in the State, under the present business depression and under the circumstances of our yet unpaid town railroad debt, whe would have begun to show such a record. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I say all these things should make us proud of our towns-people. I am just as proud of the record of my native town as any old Roman was of his native city. Off from the railroad for fifty years, laboring under the most adverse circumstances and conditions, no water power, and only by most enormous expense can water be secured and retained sufficient to make steam, with all these disadvantages-bad roads, expensive to keep in repair, with only very ordinary farming lands-yet has ever maintained a good name, and to-day is accredited by her neighboring towns with being one of the most enterprising, publicspirited towns in the County. But the energies of our people have always tended to the acquiring of money-to commercial development-leaving the town and seeking their fortunes in the cities, and we should take measures to provide some means to make it pleasant and profitable for our young men to remain at home, instead of so early in life seeking the great commercial centres. The successful merchants in our great cities, who have gone out from our town, have been numerous. Now our prosperous neighbor, Spencer, keeps her young men at home and encourages them to engage in business at home, and you must hold out similar inducements here. Establish a good, Free Public Library and Reading Room, for one thing, and thus have always a place of interest open to them, so they may not get impatient and uneasy to get where there is more going on evenings, and something to do, as they will tell you.

Well, how shall we begin this ?
Here is my plan. If we can raise $\$ 10,000$ by subscription towards the North Brookfield Railroad, and $\$ 30,000$ towards the Southbridge \& Brookfield Railroad, and $\$ 20,000$ to repair churches in one year, as an out and out donation, we ought to raise $\$ 10,000$ by subscription towards a Free Public Library and Reading Room. Yes, but I think I hear some one saying: "But we get a certificate of stock for that Railroad subscription." But, my friend, you never expected any direct benefit from that subscription when you made it, did you? Did you ever expect any direct benefit when you subscribed $\$ 100$, $\$ 200, \$ 300$ or $\$ 500$ towards repairing and refurnishing the church? Our citizens can never begin to estimate the benefits the people of Brookfield are enjoying from the income of their $\$ 10,000$ donation, expended in their Free Reading Room and Public Library. There are ten men in our town who could give $\$ 1,000$ each and would never be any poorer for it. But if these men would raise one-half of this amount, no doubt but that there are fifty other men in town who would raise the other $\$ 5,000$. As a very prominent politician once said to an opponent to whom he sent a long letter, which he simultaneously had published in several newspapers: "Now, Judge, I want to whisper a word or two in your ear." Did it ever occur to you that you cannot take one dollar of money with you from this world? Did you ever observe how much unhappiness the leaving of even moderate fortunes sometimes occasions in families? Do you ever think you are better off to-day than as though your father had left you $\$ 10,000$ or $\$ 20,000$ ? Well, you are better off, every one of you-almost without exception. And to you who have money to leave, did it never occur to you that all you leave your sons in cash may be a detriment rather than a blessing ?

I like to see a man who has been prospered and saved money make ample provision for his wife and daughters, father, mother and sisters, for they are unable to fight the world as
their sons and brothers can, and if necessary, should do. But I believe the men who are the most useful to society, to the world at large and to themselves, are those who had to learn the worth of a dollar by earning it. They are more economical in public expenditures, as well as their individual, and hence tend to keep taxes down and vote away your money judiciously, because they do know just what a dollar is worth. Then you who have such an abundance of this world's goods, why not yourselves contribute to establish these public institutions that you know and fully realize are productive of so much good to others and yourselves? Do you think you are to-day any poorer for any money you ever gave to help any worthy object? I do not believe I am-I do not think any man is. I do not want to appear egotistical, or give any occasion for unwarrantable criticism for the bad taste I may now display, but I have for a long time keenly felt the need and importance of such an institution in our town, and I will pledge myself to be one of 100 , or 50 , or 20 , or 10 men, to donate $\$ 10,000$ or $\$ 5,000$, to the town of North Brookfield for a Free Public Library and Reading Room.

Another thing we ought to do at once, and that is to carry out a proposed plan for the improvement of our business. There should be a general association of business men, to take into consideration the wants of our town, and improvise a method to supply them.

A few years ago there was much interest taken in regard to planting shade trees in our village streets and highways, and this should be revived. Measures need very much to be taken to provide resources for water in case of fires in our compactly built wooden village. I fear our people do not sufficiently realize how dependent and weak we are in our village in case of a large fire. Suppose any of the buildings near the Summer street reservoir should burn: it would be impossible to keep an engine at that reservoir, and then the one near the
old cemetery would be the only one available. Yes, but you say we have the Batcheller Hydrant-but it must be remembered that in case of a great fire that would of course be used to protect Mr. Batcheller's property. But suppose anything should happen to the machinery used in running the steam pump at the "shop," what could be done? We might ask aid, and engines might come from all the adjoining towns, but what could they do without water? I assure you this is a very serious question, and deserves your most careful consideration. It would not be a strange thing to have a conflagration here in our compactly built wooden village that in a few hours would destroy one hundred times the cost of three or four good reservoirs to hold water, and after such a misfortune had overtaken us you would wonder how you could have been indifferent to such a state of affairs. It is so easy and natural for some people to think to lock the barn after the colt has been stolen. There are many men who think the town better get along with some degree of inconvenience in more school accommodations, a year or two longer, and at once construct three or four good reservoirs, and purchase a good steam fire engine, to save the town's property in case of fire, than to build a school house, and the possibility constantly before us of having it (even before it might be occupied) and hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of other property destroyed for the want of what a few hundred dollars might have prevented. It may not be generally known that several very large insurance companies have refused, at any rate, to insure some of our most valuable buildings here, but such is the case I am informed by one of the agents representing many of the largest and best companies writing policies in this State. The rate now paid by many people in the centre of the town is very much higher than it would be if there were better facilities for extinguishing fires. I believe the increased annual rate now demanded by underwriters taking risks here in our village, would in five years construct five good reservoirs, and furnish
a good steam engine and an engine house. Nor should the former complain at such an expenditure by the town, because the loss or destruction of a large amount of property in the village will necessitate the levying of a larger amount of taxes on the outside property, to meet the town's current expenses. The interests of the village and town are all one, and whatever is done to improve or preserve property in the village, benefits the whole town, or any loss or destruction of property in the village affects unfavorably the taxes levied on all remaining property in the town. This subject is worthy your most careful study.

And now regarding plans and estimates for the new School House, which it is claimed must another year be erected. I have a suggestion of my own about this, which may be briefly stated at this time.

When we voted to put $\$ 9,000$, as a town, into the North Brookfield Railroad, it was universally understood by our people that all the dividends or earnings we can get from the investment would be only the indirect benefits; no one supposing or daring ever to presume there would be any direct cash income; but we have received the first years it was in operation about 21-2 per cent. cash dividend, and about 3 per cent. this year from the B. \& A. R. R. The first one will have been nearly all consumed in finishing up our railroad, paying for law suits, etc., etc., but we shall have fully $\$ 3,000$ in the treasurer's hands at the time of our annual town meeting, April 1, 1878, after all claims of any and every nature against our N . B. R. R. Co. shall have been paid. Now as this is a happy disappointment to everybody, I propose that we, as a town, make use of this, with the earnings this present year, to build us a new school house, and let the first earnings of the N. B. R. R. be devoted to a purpose that shall be distinct and definite. Another reason why I would recommend this measure is because we are, by law, forbid increasing our indebtedness, and must, by law, pay for a school house or any other obliga-
tion incurred by the town the very same year such indebtedness may be incurred. In this way we shall get a new school house without the town's being obliged to raise a dollar by taxation for that purpose, and it will come from a source we never expected anything, and what better monument can we erect to the great success of our railroad enterprise ?

Then let's have our teachers from home talent. If our high school in all these years has not educated teachers for our grammar or primary schools, we better discontinue it; and if it has qualified them, as we all know it has scores of them, then let's employ our own young ladies to teach our schools, and keep our money as much as possible here in town. Our high school has to-day a class of young ladies who will make as thorough, first-class teachers for our schools, as can be found in the State, and let us furnish such as may want to teach an opportunity to do so here at home.

I can conceive of great benefits to come to our people by forming such an association as has been suggested. You may call it theVillage Improvement Association, or whatever else you may choose to designate it, and it may be made practically what a Board of Trade is for our cities. Suppose there were an hundred men interested in the prosperity of our town, who met once in two weeks and had sub-committees-to study and inform themselves on certain particular topics, and make written reports to the full association,-a committee, for instance, on Shade Trees and Reservoirs, and let them meet and faithfully consider the particular subjects assigned them, making a written report at a regular meeting of the association. Another committee consider the question, site, plan, expense, etc., etc., of a new school house, and make written recommendation thereon. Another committee ascertain what they can do about raising subscriptions to establish a Free Public Library and Reading Room. Another committee consider the feasibility of a change in the method of how our money on highways shall be expended. Another properly qualified committee to take
into consideration and carefully prepare historical sketches of the men, business and incidents of our town,-which sketches might serve as a foundation for our long proposed Town History. There are many reasons why this should not be deferred. We have to-day among us many old gentlemen whose memory and recollection of events and incidents would be of incalculable benefit to us in preparing a History of our Town, and as it is not presumable these persons will much longer be spared to us, I have often thought this subject deserved the earnest and immediate attention of our younger men, that all we could thus acquire might be written and put in definite shape for future use ; and we have about $\$ 200$ on deposit in the North Brookfield Savings Bank now for this purpose, from the contributions to the Fourth of July celebration in 1876.

Another committee to take into consideration the subject of inducing business men to come into town and occupy our vacant shoe factories, or bring in any other line of business. Who doubts but what if we were thoroughly organized to-day, and knew just what we could offer to men, but that we might induce some of the many manufacturers about Marlboro, Lynn or Beverly, to move their business here. There is no doubt of it, and such an association or organization should be at once formed and put into operation, and great results for our Town may grow from it, if judiciously and properly managed.

It is the source of much satisfaction to our people, and the subject of much favorable comment, so see the shoe shop now going up. We all wish the young proprietor the best of success, and it is hoped many other of our young men may feel inclined to do as he has done and is doing. In all our neighboring manufacturing towns the large manufacturers extend every aid and encouragement to the young men who dare to venture out for themselves, and let the people show their appreciation of the motive that prompts our young men to risk their money and do business in their native town. The advantages to the Town of North Brookfield by such enterprises are
numerous and direct. All the money that has been made by the manufacturers of Spencer for the past forty years, has been kept in the town, and it is owing largely to this fact that Spencer is thriving and doing so well to-day; but how is it with the money made from the labor of the 1500 mechanics in this town? Where has it gone for fifty years, and where is it to-day? It goes to Boston, there to be invested, and our town gets little benefit from the gains or earnings of the labor of its mechanics. Then it is much better to encourage and aid many smaller enterprises, than to have all our business concentrated in one vast mammoth institution, with not an owner living in the town, and but little of the profits of this vast business remaining here for the public good, or for taxation. Then, my friends, don't let this gigantic shop throw a shadow over every other enterprise that may seem small, and remember that ten manufacturers, who do each but a little business when compared with the big shop, may be ultimately of more benefit to the town, than the one that leaves none of its profits here where they are made.

There is another subject that is often mentioned by our people that should, if possible, be remedied. There are scores of men who own real estate in our town, and have for years worked in the shop, who often complain that so many men " out of town" get work at the shop, while they are compelled to stand idle on the street corners, and see the work they ought to have being taken into other towns. These men cannot help feeling that as long as they own real estate, they are considered as fixtures, and their services obtainable at any time, while these outside men must be retained during dull season, to insure their work when business is driving everywhere in boots. Whether this is true or not, there are many who think it so, and if true, it should be remedied, so far as is consistent and for the best interest of all concerned. Men with families to support and educate, partially owning homesteads, perhaps which they are striving hard to pay for, cannot help
feeling keenly the loss of several weeks' labor, when they know that meantime men without families and without taxable property are furnished employment. But there is another side to this picture. Very many times men are careless about their work, and not naturally of a mechanical turn of mind, and their labor not valuable, or even desirable, and really not wanted under any circumstances. I know that men who did not give satisfaction have been employed in our shoe shops, very often, simply because they had tied themselves down in our community and were fixtures, and hence were employed, when really the manufacturers would much preferred to have had their room than their labor. Put yourself in the manufacturer's place. Would you not hire that man who made the best boots for you if you paid him no more than you would have to pay the careless and indifferent laborer? The mechanic must remember that there are two parties interested, and he must do his work so well when he has plenty to do, to insure him labor when the dull season sets in, for these points are not forgotten or overlooked by manufacturers.

Did it ever occur to you what a number of earnest, experienced, excellent manufacturers could be turned out of this big shop, if the silver chain, by which certain men have for years been held, was broken? Now they are offered such salaries to act as foremen that they are content not to engage in business for themselves; but remove the price put upon their heads and we should have within six months a half dozen new firms manufacturing boots and shoes, and North Brookfield would perhaps in time be much better off,-because what money was made by those half dozen firms would be kept at home here; whereas, the product of all our laborers now takes unto itself the wings of the morning, and flies-if not " unto the innermost parts of the earth," it certainly goes out of North Brookfield.

Then encourage small projects even. Any new enterprise that will employ a half dozen men should be encouraged to come into our village; and by a combined effort of all our

## 41

people, very many small but promising concerns may be induced to pitch their tent in our town, and ultimately any one of them may be of great advantage to our community, as it may develop and extend itself. Look upon no business, however small, as of but little importance, but use your constant endeavors to secure all the benefits for our people that you possibly can.

And how much benefit to our town at large would come from such an association? The various committees would acquire much valuable information by investigating their particular subjects, and the whole association and town would be correspondingly benefitted. How often it comes up now in town meeting to raise committees for this or that purpose-like building a school house for instance-the moderator is called upon to nominate a committee ; from the nature of the circumstances he must act hurriedly and at once. He nominates A. B., C. D., and E. F. as a committee, without thinking particularly of the individual merits of each one for a position on that committee, and the result is a comparatively inefficient committee is given a duty to perform that should have a builder, an architect and a mason upon it, and you find when too late to remedy it, you have got neither one. And much of this could and would be avoided by the influence and action of such an association in our community, for a committee would probably be nominated who had given the matter consideration on a sub-committee of the association.

And now let's all agree we will keep down our town appropriations to the lowest possible figure in our power, and while we have seven more railroad notes of $\$ 9000$ each to pay, let's not indulge in any unnecessary expenditure of any nature whatever, and let us criticise our Town officers who exceed their respective appropriations any year. There is no use electing men to office who are indifferent about this matter. If we raise $\$ 7,000$ for schools, and $\$ 9,000$ or more is expended ; or if we raise $\$ 1,500$ for support of Poor, and $\$ 4,000$ or more is
expended; or our Highway Surveyors exceed their appropriations by any considerable amount, though I do not say they have, then let us not passively acquiesce in such expenditures, but insist upon the most explicit explanation of such overdrafts, and, if not entirely satisfactory - I repeat it, if their respective explanations are not clear and explicit, showing beyond a doubt that such overdrafts were unavoidable, then give all such officers the cold shoulder next year.

I think when the Overseers of the Poor, or the School Committee, or any other set of Town Officers see that the amount of the town's appropriation will not suffice to go through until the next annual meeting, they should have the Selectmen call a town meeting to consider the matter, and let our taxpayers know why it is and for what such large sums of money are needed in excess of the regular annual appropriations; for, perhaps, by the discussion incident to such a meeting, the various town officers might learn of some points that would put them on their guard and thus be of great benefit to the town in a financial point of view. The town might, to be sure, condemn some measures and restrict what our taxpayers might seem to be injudicious expenditures on the part of some of our various officers and committees, but surely none of our committees should feel above being advised by the same power that placed them in their respective positions. If it was known that publicity was to be made of the applications for town aid, so numerously pouring in, I have no doubt but some men would sbrink from having the record of their year's work and doings made so notoriously public, and would hereafter economize in good times to have a dollar laid by to carry them over the dull times of a few weeks, instead of so freely coming on the town as they now do. All our neighboring towns have more or less special town meetings during the year, at which these various items of public interest are discussed-particularly is this true of Spencer, Brookfield and Southbridge, and I think such meetings when necessary, are always, and in many ways, productive of much good.

We have much we should be thankful for, and let us not forget that, as I am afraid too many of us are inclined to do. It must be remembered that while our taxes are running heavy, that a large part of this outlay is being distributed by what we gain by our North Brookfield Railroad.

The average tax throughout all the towns and cities in the Commonwealth, for 1877 , as reported by the Secretary of State in his report just out, is $\$ 13.14$ on $\$ 1000$. This, to be sure, is $\$ 3.36$ on $\$ 1000$ less than our tax here last year. But were it not for our railroad debt which we are paying off, our taxes would have been only $\$ 9.50$ on $\$ 1000$ this past year, or $\$ 4.64$ on $\$ 1000$ less than the average of the towns throughout the Commonwealth, And who would wish to be free from our railroad taxes if thereby we were to be deprived of our railroad. Let us examine and see if this has proved a judicious investment on the part of our town. Last year we paid in taxes on account of our railroad, one note of $\$ 9000$ and $\$ 4200$ interest, but the amount saved to our people by our railroad, was $\$ 20,600$ to offset the $\$ 13,200$ taxes, or an actual net gain by our railroad of $\$ 7,400$, above the $\$ 9,000$ railroad note and the $\$ 4,200$ interest on all the unpaid notes. And now this year it is still better. A great many predicted that our first year would be our best in several years, as it was a new thing with us, but I am just in receipt of our annual statement from the B. \& A. R. R. Co., by which it appears there has been a very marked gain this year-in both passenger and freight. In 1876, the number of passengers carried was 39,790 , and in 1877 the number carried was 40,950 -a gain of 1,160 for 1877 ; and the number tons of freight carried in 1876 was 11,668 , and in 1877 the number of tons carried was 13,498 -or a gain of 1,830 tons, which demonstrates the amount saved to our people this year by our railroad as $\$ 22,91750$, against $\$ 20$,600 last year ; and this gain of $\$ 22,91750$ cost you in taxes, one $\$ 9,000$ railroad note, and $\$ 3,780$ interest on the remaining unpaid notes, or $\$ 12,780$ this year ; or $\$ 10,13750$ actu-
ally gained above taxes and interest this last year. And this gain, it must be remembered, is distributed over the whole town, affecting favorably the price of every ton of coal, every barrel of flour, every dollars' worth of groceries, or merchandise, and certainly is no drawback or hindrance to our having new business here sometime.

Then let us all constantly endeavor to remove existing abuses and wrongs in our midst, being charitable to all such as have been unfortunate, and fearlessly demand what is right of those who are doing, or would do wrong, remembering that "justice should ever be tempered with mercy." And with a united effort on our part, let us hope that under His guidance who doeth all things well, there is yet a bright future for our people.


[^0]:    * Census Report and returns of Custom House for 1860.
    + Domestic liquors estimated; imported from returns of Custom House for 1861.
    Reports of Internal Revenue and Commerce and Navigation for the years given.
    The estimate of Dr. Young, Chief of the Bureau of Statistics.
    From Census Report, 1860 , IVrom Internal Revenue Report of that year,

