Worthington Advance.

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 1874.

WHAT'S IN AN ATMOSPHERE?

A Paper Read at the Union Temperance Meeting, Sunday Evening, Dec. 27, 1874.

BY DR. GEO. O. MOORE.

By the atmosphere, we understand the agent or aerial fluid which *surrounds* us, in which we *live, move* and act; it is *practically* omnipresent; we breathe it with every breath, and the relative proportion of its constituent parts, causes a feeling of exhilaration and cheerfulness, and an appearance of animation, or a feeling of depression and lassitude, and an appearance of dullness, according to the greater or less abundance of the life giving oxygen. This atmosphere of ours permeates our houses, creeps into the pantry, occupies the bedroom and plays hide and seek in the closet and bureau drawers; it envelopes us like a shroud, and assiduously attends us wherever we go. Chemically speaking, it is composed of nitrogen, oxygen, carbonic acid, ammonia and watery vapor; these are the same in every part of the earth; whether in Minnesota or Texas, from the head waters of the Mississippi to the Mexican Gulf, in the United States, Europe, Asia or Africa, we yet find incorporated in the atmosphere these same elements. The proportion is usually found to be 1-10,000,000 part of ammonia, 1-2,500 part of carbonic acid, 1-5 oxygen and nearly 4-5 nitrogen. The proportion of nitrogen and oxygen is always the same in any part of the world; the proportion of carbonic acid varies according to circumstances. When the amount is much *above* the proper proportion, it becomes unhealthy and unsafe. There is an ancient legend that the atmosphere of a room, full of people and poorly ventilated, will soon become corrupt and unfit to breathe; I presume you have all heard this story before. The impurity arises from the superabundance of carbonic acid, which carbonic acid is exhaled from the lungs of the said people. We sit and breathe this putrid, unwholesome air, coming through bad teeth, diseased gooms and inflamed throats, when we would be shocked at the idea of eating with the same knife and fork, or from the same plate with others. Now while this polluted atmosphere is not immediately *fatal*, it *is* unhealthy, and shows its effects by making us dull and sleepy, and finally makes us *sick* as we say, gives us a *headache*. *Pure* air is *necessary* to the enjoyment of health, and the smooth working of the human machine.

There is another sense in which the word atmosphere is used, i. e. in regard to mental and moral states of society. We speak of a political atmosphere, a moral or religious atmosphere, an atmosphere of evil, etc. The atmosphere with which we have to do this evening is a *temperance atmosphere*; what it is, how to create one, how to perpetuate it, why its necessity, what its effect.

What *is* a temperance atmosphere? It is a condition of things existing in a community, represented by people who do not buy, sell, use, or in any way encourage the sale or use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage. I speak of intemperance in the matter of liquors, as the kind which produces the most *noticeable* effects, although there is, of course, intemperance in food and dress, and in the use of that most disgusting thing—tobacco. How shall we create this atmosphere? First, remove the beams out of our own eyes; let us examine our own lives and carefully purge ourselves of even the *suspicion* of evil in this respect. Refrain from using the accursed stuff in any way, shape or manner, and be *honest* with ourselves in the search and in answering the question as to whether it *is* necessary. When we debate the question as to whether castor oil is necessary, we are honestly and thoroughly convinced that it *is* so before we open our mouths to admit the nauseous dose, and then shut our eyes and grit our teeth when we take it; are we thus honest in the matter of liquor? When I am sent for in the middle of a dark, stormy night to visit a patient five miles off, I go; but it is like having a tooth extracted to think of it, and only because I am firmly persuaded after thoroughly questioning the messenger, that it is necessary; am I thus careful as to the sale or use of intoxicating drinks? Do we, each one, bring the same arguments to bear upon this question of the necessary use of liquor, that we do upon anything very repugnant to our senses?

Having picked the mud out of our own eyes, and being enabled to see the specks in our neighbors eyes, we should by words fitly spoken, show that the sale and use of intoxicating drinks is contrary to our ideas of respectability and honesty, and the results thereof repugnant to our sense of decency and morality. The young ladies are responsible for their share in the creation of this atmosphere; if they discountenance the use of liquor and decline to associate with a young man who drinks (the only safe way for them to do), I tell you there would be a rattling among the dry bones and a speedy abandoning of the habit. We should not allow ourselves to make sport of drinking, as we are all apt to do. What, I ask in the name of God and humanity, is there to laugh at in the sight of a creature, made after the image of God, under the influence of liquor, his natural powers, mental and physical, prostrated, and himself degraded below the brute level? What is there to boast of or chuckle over, in the act of drinking liquor? Whose applause do we gain, that of the best men in the community? Not by any means. Whose respect do we secure? None, not even that of the lowest and most fawning creature in the community. Would you boast of the fact that you could drink more water, more milk or coffee than any one? or that you could drink any at all? Why not? Must it be something that puts you upon the level of the brute (I ask pardon of the poor brute) in order to be a fit subject for boasting? Away then with the nonsensical idea that it is manly or looks smart to drink liquor. How can we perpetuate this atmosphere? By constant vigilance; by precept and example; by a constant use of the means whereby we have created it; by *moral* suasion when practicable, by *legal* suasion when necessary; by discountenancing its use in *mince pies* or in the form of *cider*, as well as in the more common ways. You like cider, do you? Brandy adds to the flavor of the pies, does it? and you say it does not hurt you, and yet, by tampering with the demon in the least particular, you render the atmosphere impure and poisonous to a greater or less degree; and shame upon the citizen who lacks the stamina or the disposition to deny himself or herself in so small a matter, in order that the whole family may dwell in an atmosphere of purity. Then we perpetuate this atmosphere by selecting for our law makers, men who are *opposed* to the traffic, and too honest to be bribed, and by fostering temperance principles in our own minds, and not being *ashamed* of them or afraid to *carry them out* regardless of any consideration of worldly policy.

Why the necessity of a temperance atmosphere? First, for the benefit of our children growing up in our midst; your child and mine is not *safe* in a community where strong drink is an article of common merchandise, where the Devil is licensed to kill both body and soul. Our children need to be thoroughly impregnated with the *notion* that the use of intoxicants is subversive of all the best interests of the community; ruining families, destroying property, increasing taxes, militating in numberless ways against the peace, quietness, happiness and prosperity of the people, and, in return for all these evils, furnishing not one iota of good. Living in such an atmosphere, there is little danger that they will become drunkards or drunkard makers.

Then the breathing of this atmosphere is of great benefit to those who are or have been addicted to the use of strong drink, removing them from the temptation to a greater or less degree according as the atmosphere is more or less pure. The effect of an air of this kind is, as all are aware, to furnish immunity from all the evils caused by strong drink; from brawlings, fightings, incendiaryism, from jails, poor houses, etc. It attracts people of refinement, intelligence and business integrity, who have become thoroughly disgusted with the polluted atmosphere of intemperance, and seek to escape its baneful influence, and it effectually excludes rowdys, liquor sellers, and their class. As a pure, natural atmosphere promotes healthfulness, energy and activity of body, so a temperance atmosphere promotes moral purity, cheerful and contented minds, and a temporal and spiritual prosperity.

As we have such an atmosphere in our county, let us seek to perpetuate it, and hope that, at no distant day, it may, like the material air, envelope all nations, tribes and tongues.

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