



Transcription of *The Free Thinker*, a manuscript newspaper, 1862.

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The Free Thinker: South Weare Jan. 18 – 62

Free thought, free expression, and free reception.

This paper is to be published semi monthly by the members of the South Weare Lyceum.

It is an able body and will doubtless make it a worthy journal. There will be plenty of printing matter as contributions are pouring in from all quarters.

For want of space we shall be obliged to lay aside some of the least important untill [i.e., until] a later date hoping that no correspondant [i.e., correspondent] will think themselves slighted, for they are all noticed and shall appear in due season.

The "No Cross, No Crown" by J.W.D. is a well written artical [i.e., article] and shall appear in our next. Also the clear & logical views of W.T. entitled "Our National Sins."

All correspondants [i.e., correspondents] wishing their articles appear early should be prompt in sending them in as our "printing press" is sadly out of repair.

Franconia Notch January 15 1862

To the paper called The Free Thinker in South Weare

It has accorded to me that you might like to hear from the old man of the mountain, as he feels a deep interest in all passing events. Well then here I am as firm and immovable as our granite hills.

The hurricane and the tempest are as powerless with me as the calm serene temperature that generally prevails at South Weare. During the cold months of winter I am rather lonely [i.e., lonely], as but few give me a call, but when the warm summer months come then the old and young flee from the pent up city to do me homage. Let me tell you I have many curious thoughts to hear the many observations made about me as I stand proud monarch of all I survey. I am much pleased with the name of your paper, for I may truly say that I am a free-thinker in the

true sense of the word. Shall I give you a few of my free thoughts and if not found worthy place in your paper cast them in your waste basket. I can give you but thoughts now, as I have calls for correspondence in all parts of the country. The question, discussed at your last Lyceum was an interesting one to me. First then the use of tobacco, none of which ever entered my nose or mouth nor ever shall so long as I retain my reason, but I have witnessed its sad effects upon others in all its ruinous forms. I can truly say that it is a filthy practice to use it in form except perhaps it may be used by the farmers, to kill the ticks on their sheep and the lice on their cattle. The poet has well said of it,

Tobacco is an noxious [i.e., noxious] weed,
The devil he did sow the seed;
It drains your pockets, scents your clothes,
And makes a chimney of your nose.

I feel sad to see young men and even children around puffing their cigars or pipes in imitation of older men and women. Then more filthy still to see the quid going in to the mouth, where wholesome food is wont to go. Look at the corners of the mouth & see the juice running down on the chin & shirt bosom, see the nice white floors & carpets stained up with the wile stuff, and old quids laid away for future use. Shall I say a word of the snuff taken, but I must tread lightly as I find that delicate woman indulges in this practice. How nice must be the bread & butter saturated with snuff well mixed with the moisture from the nose! But enough of this, a word to the wise is sufficient in some things, would that it were in this. Now I have a word to say about ardent spirits, the other branch of the question for discussion. As I said of tobacco my lips were never polluted with any thing that can intoxicate and here I have stood the extremes of heat and cold these long years. But I have seen the effects of it upon others and but deplore its sad effects. In every town and place its progress is marked with sorrow and desolation and I am grieved to see young men falling on the right hand and on the left victims to this fell destroyer. How many families are made miserable by its use. How many permanently go to the grace subjects of this demon. [Illegible] then in your career, and, resolve at once to slay this pesky serpent that has bitten so many & brough disease & death upon them. Now you will see that I speak freely for I am a free thinker, but intend to speak in kindness & love. I will speak of one thing more before I

close this hasty letter, I dear you have some of those busybodies down in South Weare, whose tongues are hung in the middle and flap both ways. The tongue was given us for a good purpose, mine is kept in close quarters, and thus saved me a great deal of trouble. But how many use their tongues to slander their neighbors, beware of such creatures as you would the worst demons, for they are miserable imps and deserve the execration of all who wish to live in peace and harmony. How many neighborhoods are [kept?] turmoil & confusion by these vile creatures, with their marvelous eyes stare wide they will approach you and want to know if you have heard the news? Then they propose to tell you something wonderful, but "you must not tell any living soul." Poor creatures let them get a kick from every cripple in the vicinity till they learn to mind their own business and let others attend to theirs. But I am spinning out too long a yarn, for I must attend to other calls in other places. Free Thinker, go on let the sword of truth cut to the right and left, and may you do good in South Weare. I shall keep a lookout to your columns and want the paper mailed to me regular at this place. I wish to be remembered to all my kind friends hope they will give me a call at their earliest convenience while I remain their and your friend,

The old man of the mountain.

P.S. Perhaps I ought to have noticed the messages in So. Weare since the new year, but I will only say good luck to them and happy days is the wish of their old friend who has so long lived a life of single blessedness.

Tobacco and Rum

Resolved—That tobacco has a worse influence upon mankind than intoxicating liquors.

The above resolution, having been discussed by the Lyceum, and laid upon the table, I will venture to take it up and amend it as follows:

Resolved—That tobacco and rum are twin demons, destroyers of health, happiness and life, the common useage [i.e., usage] of which should be protested against by all thinking men and women. And take it for a subject for pen. I think the question was run over too lightly, there was not feeling enough manifest, it is a subject of great importance, the evils of which not only effect

[i.e., affect] the present generation but those yet to come. I wish not to present my views with monarchial force, or the usurpe [i.e., usurp] authority over any ones rights. I wish my thoughts to be received as they are given, with a wish to lead young men, from the tempting wine-cup, from the juicy tobacco-quid, and from the low and filthy places of resort, to strength of wisdom, to purity and the fireside alter [i.e., altar]. Look to the homes made dessolate [i.e., desolate] hearts seard [seared?] and all hope of peace or happiness crushed out forever, by that fearful enemy rum. Youthful buoyancy, early manhood, nobleness of soul are all exchanged for rum and tobacco. Young men why will you go father [farther?] on to ruin you who have every advantage to persue [i.e., pursue] whatever occupation you may chose you who have every intellectual talent, you to whom nature has given mans best gifts staking them all; for what; only to satisfy the appetite for a time, the cravings of a viciated and unwholesome appetite and Oh! Woman for you are not free from the satanic grasp of those demons, you who should be the savior of man, you to whom in one sense [man?] is responsable [i.e., responsible] for the sins of which he may be guilty. It is to you, and through your influence that man shall look for redemption from this folly and vice, from the slavery, slavery, yes it fetters mans best faculties and dooms him to darkness, despair and worse than death it kills the souls keenest aspirations. Mothers ye who have sons and daughters; will you allow yourselves to polute [i.e., pollute] their infant innocence by tainting the air they breath with the poisonous vapor of that vile weed tobacco. Young ladies will you not exert a saving influence over the young men of your time. You may perhaps think the fragrance of a perfumed cigar is very pleasant and agreeable but consider will the effect upon him from whose mouth proceeds to smoke of torment, perhaps by close observation there might be disease an irritable [i.e., irritable] spirit moroseness loss of energy, lack of vital force—and is the idea of attributing all this to tobacco an absurdity? Not by any means.

If you wish to see the two greatest tyrants ever abroad behold alcohol and tobacco. The bear [i.e., bare?] thought of misery caused by the king of all crimes makes me faint with fear. How saddening is all this, then reflect you who have knowledge let it ripen into wisdom and by wisdom strive to save those who are yet weak, pittying [i.e., pitying] rather than condemning their weakness.

Departure of the 7th Reg. N.H. Volunteers.

In response to the call of our country these noble and patriotic sons of the old Granite State, have amid the chilling storms of autumn and the more piercing winds of winter, come together from our cities, towns and hamlets, and organized themselves as a regiment inferior to none of which that have preceded [i.e., preceded] them, and gone to win laurels which will be an honor to themselves and to generations yet to come.

These patriots and soldiers (unlike many they have left behind) considered well the advantages of our beloved government, which their fathers who lived before them fought to sustain and perpetuate to their posterity forever. And thus for the veneration of those noble sires of the Revolution, who left their work-shops, farms and firesides and fought those long and bloody battles in defence [i.e., defense] of free institutions and free men, have they left their fathers, and mothers, brothers, sisters and their little ones whom they loved as they loved as they did their lives, and gone to defend their country's flag, and to sustain the best government in the known world, which those traitors and black-hearted villains of the Southern states are trying to overthrow, the object of which is to perpetuate the most inhuman traffic that God ever suffered to exist American slavery.

Now let us all cheer these patriots on their godly mission for the protection and honor of our country. Who have left their homes and fire-sides behind them to fight and die if need be to protect the stars and stripes, and to bring traitors to know that such enormous crimes as these cannot go unpunished, and give them such an example of Northern courage and valor, such as they will be bound to respect and acknowledge for time to come.

And now that they have gone we wish them health and fraternal feelings one with another, assuring them that they have the sympathys [i.e., sympathies] of all they have left behind them; and hope the battles of freedom (if they have got to be fought) will be victories for the right, and if they fall they die for their country's good, and those that come back will be revered as the fathers and benefactors of this our glorious Republic.

Boston Jan. 4 1862

Miss Editor,

Wishing to see some of my South Weare friends I just stepped in Prof. Sunderland's and was mesmerized and sent on a trance journey instanter.

And called on Uncle Mosses
That patriarch and sage,
He waxes strong in faith as he
Walks on in wisdom's ages.

Aunt Betsey too the best of wives
Grows good as she grows older

As I went in to Uncle John's
Tis true, I am not joking
Before the blazing barroom fire
There sat Tom Lull a smoking

Next called at Deacon Nichols house
To see now who was there,
They'd just been eating supper too
Perhaps he'd been at prayer.

If so we'll not disturb him now,
It surely is not best sir
I merely wished to see some how
His younger son Sylvester.

I found him dressed in broadcloth fin
And cramed [i.e., crammed?] all full of life
In joy his building "air castles"
To cage a bran new wife.

And now for Uncle Peter's
Who lives up by the hill
A light good jovial creature
As a ever [damed?] a rill.

His "gude" wife Hannah's sitting
Close by the great log fire,
Wondering while she's knitting
How she can get up nigher.

They're free from every want sure
From cold they sit securely,
While George with book and slate
"Multum imparus" surely.

Poor Laura, sick, distressed
Vain seeking for her health.
That boon she once possessed [i.e., possessed]
More precious than all wealth.

Elvira watching by her side
Her every wish supplies
A sister worth her wight in gold
With love that never dies.

I passed up by friend Jabez
To Uncle Hiram's, bold,
I found him like the morning
He never will grow old.

Romayn remains there with them
To cheer his after life,
Elvira do God bless her soul

Will make an angel wife.

And there's my old friend Rosa

In deepest black is dressed

Her children are her solace

In them she's truly blest

And there's our neighbor Humphrey

Whose peaches in the fall

Give taste to real friendship

Wherever we may call.

And Fifield with his tin cart

With tin pans, and brooms and mops

To cooking all our dinners

And wiping up our slops.

There's Johnny Buxton Miller

Who tolls your corn and rye

And Lonzo Hadley Tradir

Who knew just when to buy.

They're honest in their calling

As all of you may find

If you will only give to each

Of them a chance to grind.

To be continued G.S.

Ship news

The neat little craft Rebecca ready to sail. She is fitted out in the best of style. But who is to be commander is causing much excitement—for whoever gets the situation will have much to be

proud of. She is not so slenderly built yet graceful as a "swan" [swan?]. we hope whoever shall be the favored one, will conduct her manfully over the rough billows, and, ride out each storm In safty [i.e., safety].

The steam ship Catharine Lane came into port last night, bringing news of great importance. She spoke the Brig Jacob on her homeward trip who appeared to be in great distress, it seemed that he had been engaged in a "Chase," he appeared to be badly damaged, and, will have to put into port for repairs. The Catharine might have rendered him much assistance had she not had the Brig Luther in "tow" and was obliged to keep directly on her way. She also brings the startling rumor that the proprietors of the Mary Ann for some reason unknown have been obliged to superseed [i.e., supersede] her young commander, who shows strong symtoms [i.e., symptoms] of insanity caused by these proceedings.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the Catharine Lane. She may will be called the "Queen of the Sea."

So. Weare Jan. 17 1862

Cousin John,

Many, many thanks for your kind letter which was duly received and I hasten to answer.

I was very glad to hear that you were so pleasantly situated and so well cared for in your encampment on the Potomac, and am also pleased to learn that you still like your occupation as a soldier.

You express a great desire to hear the news from South Weare and what has transpired since you left.

I never was very good at news telling but as you are relying upon me for news you shall not be disappointed.

The first thing of any account that happened after your departure that I recollect, was the change in the store. Now I happen to know the whole secret of that affair. Buxton you know always took

to politics as natural as a duck to the water and he could not stand it any longer to play on both sides in order to get the custom of both parties, for you know that we never could tell which side he did really belong to as he did not vote. Well after it began to leak out a little that Hadley talked some of buying out and going in as trader, there was no [ho?] to the affair for the women set upon him as ferocious as a pack of wolves, and go in he mist. You know he is a great favorite of the women for he is very gentled [i.e., gentled?] and withal handsome and ever since he commenced he has been overrun with women customers. The men do not pretend to go to the store much for there is such a rush of crinoline as to make it very uncomfortable.

George Colby has done but little this winter actually got himself nominated for representative to General Court. I think he will be elected for he will spend all the money he has got rather than fail. He has shaved his whiskers off and now makes a fine appearance.

White that used to be in the store has removed with his wife and little ones to Africa to which place he had the appointment as minister from this county by Old Abe. I think here could not have been a better appointment.

Rev. Samuel Sargent still preaches at this place as usual, but I think his salary will be reduced, this year.

Mayor Dunlap still discharges his official duties as faithfully as ever.

David Buxton has really taken to talking politics and he holds forth every night in the store to the great edification and delight of the Democrats whose cause he espouses.

I will write you again soon and keep you posted on our affairs.

Yours respectfully,
Avon