

The Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Beverly for the municipal year ending in March 1846 submit to the Inhabitants at their annual Town Meeting the following report

The number of persons who have been in the Work House from March 1 1845 to March 1 1846 is fifty nine viz, twenty one men, twenty women and eighteen children and there were in the House on the first day of March current forty persons, viz, thirteen men, fourteen women and thirteen children. The average number for the year has been about thirty nine. Three aged persons, have died within the year and there has been one birth. There has been three commitments of common drunkards.

The amount of orders drawn on the Town Treasurer by the Overseers of the Poor from March 1 1845 to March 1 1846 is fifteen hundred and eighty three dollars and sixty three cents. Of this amount three hundred and eighty one dollars and one cent has been expended out of the Work House.

It will be perceived by the foregoing statement that the expense of the poor for the year has been considerably increased and that the number of persons who have been in the House is larger than has been usual for several years.

A part of the additional expense should be charged to the loss of about two hundred and forty bushels of potatoes by the rot and the remainder of this expense and the unusual number of subjects in the House is to be attributed altogether to the very extraordinary occurrence of a single family connec

tion (including members by affinity) numbering
nineteen having been in the Work House in the course
of the year, and coming there in the most destitute
state, in regard to necessary clothing; sixteen
of whom still remain ~~there~~, comprising a grand
parent, her children and grand children, of various
ages from a single month to more than three score
years and ten.

The vices that have brought this sudden and unusually
large influx of paupers upon the town are the same
which furnish the largest proportion of the subjects of our
penitentiaries, prisons, houses of correction and almshouses. — And of all these vices intemperance is the
most fruitful in its victims of poverty, suffering,
wretchedness and pauperism. — The history of our Work
House, for the forty two years since its erection, shows
clearly, that three fourths ~~parts~~ of all its subjects have
been brought there, directly or indirectly, by intemperance.
One half of all the adult persons by its direct influence
and one half of all the children, aged persons, sick
and infirm, composing that half of the subjects who
have not contracted habits of intemperance, by its
indirect influence, that is, by the inability of intem-
perate persons to provide for their children, their parents
and others, ^{for} whom by the obligations of religion or the laws
of social ^{to organization} ~~obligation~~ they are in duty bound to provide
comfortable maintenance. A still greater evil result-
ing from the intemperance of parents, is, that their example
contaminates their offspring and that a succession of
generations grow up, more or less of whom become, very
early in life, corrupt, addicted to vicious courses and
intemperate or idle and improvident.

A fact verifying this remark is found in the history of pauperism in this town. - It is well known to those conversant with the subject of pauperism that for more than a century last part a single family has constantly ~~had~~ ^{had} one or more of its members chargeable to this town as paupers. - This single fact as well as that before stated, ^{of three} generations of another family being now chargeable, shows that means ought to be devised for separating children ^{from their vicious parents} when young and before they have become contaminated with the evil habits of their parents. - This reparation is made by the Overseers of the Poor when ever it is practicable but it is but rarely that they are enabled to bind out children when they are so young as not to have suffered from the corrupting influence of their vicious parents. - Other means than the legal authority of the Overseers of the Poor ^{are} requisite to effect much good in this respect.

In regard to intemperance much has been accomplished in this town in diminishing the temptations to the drinking of intoxicating liquors by suppressing the open, public sale of such liquors, but there is a loud call for effort on the part of ^{the} inhabitants and of the municipal officers of the town to suppress the more private sale. - It is generally believed that there are several places in this town, and that in the more central and compact part of the town too, where these liquors are sold, drank and used and these places are not merely resorted ^{to} by the hard drinkers, the confirmed sot and the common drunkard, but also by the young, ^{thoughtless} and inconsiderate for the purposes of drinking, gaming, rabbits breaking and other dissipation.

Something should be done to restrain these mischievous practices. - We choose and pay an Inspector to observe "all nuisances" to the end that they may be removed or prosecuted according to law, yet these moral nuisances while they are manifest to almost every other person, seem to have escaped his vigilance. - It is made his duty to obey the orders of the Selectmen in relation to any matter or thing in which the town shall be in any way concerned or ~~not~~ interested, and is there any other matter or thing which more pressingly demands the intervention of the Selectmen, and that they should give such orders as will cause all such places of resort to be suppressed so far as a faithful execution of the laws of the Commonwealth can effect this desirable end?

Proveny March 9th 1846

Robt Barlow
 John Safford
 Amos Olen
 Henry Larcom
 Stephens Pecker

Overseers of the Poor

Copy of the original of the Overseers of the Poor March 9th 1846