
177 1/11/1850 *From:* Peleg S Perley

To: O O Howard

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Portland

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Dear Chum,

Your letter came to hand to night and was not due me I am almost ashamed to own. I told your brother to tell you that I was going to answer your letter which he probably mistook. This letter has been lying on my mind harassing me night and day for two months and now I am going to have it off. Not that I deem it a bore or a burden to write to you but the fact is I have not been well for some time and when I get home from school I am so perfectly wearied out that it seems just as though I couldn't write. I have neglected Perry, Jackson, Townsend, Jennings and others and have them lying over still on the docket so you must give me the credit of giving you the preference after all. I have had over forty letters to answer within the last three months and I can tell you it took no small part of my time at first as I wrote pretty long ones and having as I thought at first rather overtasked myself I concluded I would have a short respite which from indolence and indisposition (not such as we used to have at College) resulted in a long one. I will close my introduction by thanking you for yours and proceed.

And as you inquired about Miss Knight and her "sister" and especially about her sister I will give you a slight College reminiscence which occurred after your leave and which I believe I promised to narrate to you with which the "sister" was connected though not one of the principal actors.

Nune aures ami regite
Dum ego resinam
Quod accidit in volle
Brunsvici dum eram

for I am going to give you a real Temperance Tale not "founded on fact" but the real essence of fact - the very truth pure and undiluted as the Muse that gave rise to it. The facts are these. I made an agreement with Jewett before I left to return a fortnight before Com. so as to make some calls, attend the Exhibition, concert &c with the ladies. I got back Thursday and was to call there Sat. Eve. (that was a favorite night with Jewett you will remember). Meanwhile old Wilson arrived having come for the laudable purpose of seeing his old classmates graduate and being pretty flush invited me to take a ride with him out to Freeport. Imagine us with a fast team speeding over the road and I keeping old Wilson leaning over and laughing in his old way, all the time by my method of driving, talking and swearing and you will see at once that we did not care much for anything nor anybody. In process of time we reached Freeport and as Wilson kept school there we called at his old boarding place which by the way was the tavern and knowing where <no O> was he invited me to take some wine. We went in and took a little Port. It so chanced that Miss Springer's brother was there. He knew me without my knowing him. After I went out he goes to the barkeeper and asks if I took any. Receiving an affirmative answer he out and into his wagon and put for <Bruno> Village hell-bent as though the destiny of the "Sister" and the whole family hung on the decision of the hour. This took place about ten o'clock in the forenoon and that evening Jewett and myself called. Amanda appeared and ushered us into the parlor - the "Sister" was not visible and as we seated ourselves Amanda turning to me said that Eliza would have to be excused from seeing me for reasons which she would explain hereafter. Amanda appeared strangely and I thought Eliza must be sick. We sat about a quarter of an hour when Amanda telling Mr Jewett she should like to talk with me alone for a few minutes he took his hat leaving awaiting something I knew not what. She then commenced by asking me what my principles were in regard to Temperance. I saw at once that she had got me where "the hair was brief" and I told her at once just how the case was. I told her that I did not call myself a drunkard - that I was not in the habit of drinking but that I had taken some at Class Supper and several other times not more than half a dozen during the summer. She asked my why? I told her for the devil of it, softening the words somewhat. I made a clean breast of it, told her just as it was and awaited the issue. She after reading me a damned long homily on temperance which I cut short by telling her I had heard the same arguments used before, told me she must request me in her mother's name not to call there again.

Not that they wished to cut my acquaintance altogether. No. If in after years I should show that I had reformed her sister would be happy to renew my acquaintance. I told her to tell her sister that I was very sorry that I had been the means of terminating our acquaintance so abruptly. (She had expressed to me not long before on a

certain walk "by the light of the moon" her sorrow that I must leave just when she had become acquainted with me) took my hat and departed for College swearing all the way up the mall and so almighty mad, that I couldn't help laughing and not exactly mad either. I posted up to Jewett's room and he wanted to know what in thunder she stopped me for. I told him and he was slightly considerable mad. You must remember I called to invite Eliza to go to exhibition Mon. night. Jewett thought they ought to have consulted him before kicking me out of doors. He thought it rather reflected on him inasmuch as he introduced me. However they made it all right with him when they saw him. So Jewett waited on them both to Ex. and concert and I was there alone. So matters went on for about a week till one day about a week before Com. Jewett came up and slapped me on the shoulder and said Amanda wished me to call up there that evening as she wished to talk with me. I insisted upon knowing what she wanted. Jewett would not tell, but one thing was he said they were expecting Mrs Waite and Lizzie and they would think strange if I did not come there. I told him at once that I should not go - that they might tell Mrs Waite & "Liz" and be damned - that I was not very much ashamed - at any rate if I could not call there to see them I should not call there to see anybody else. "Night came with her pomp of light and shade" and Jewett came rushing up about calling time and wanted to know if I went going. I told him no and that he wouldn't if he were in like circumstances. He admitted it but declared if I knew what they wanted, why they did so and what they thought of me I should go. At last just as I always do I gave in and went. I found Amanda writing me a letter. She wrote l'amende honorable - that they were <> that her mother was the cause of it - that they were all sorry that it had been so. In short I was satisfied as well as I could be (<> well satisfied at least that they meant to hook me on) called again <> waited on her to Com. She praised my performance told me I did beautifully" - called down there the night before Jewett and I <> introduced to Mr Geo Springer the informer (whom I heard declared he would never tell of anyone again under any circumstances amid the smiles of the whole company - held my countenance till I got seated and looked to Jewett who had on a look showing that he enjoyed it when I could not help roaring which brought down the house. Amanda wrote me a very polite invitation to come down there to thanksgiving with Mr Jewett but I couldn't or didn't. This story if you could read it as it was, would be interesting for it was rich in its ramifications and incidents. As it is it can only interest you as you know the persons. I am well aware of your notions on temperance, as you probably are of mine but still I say damn such a creed as led to the above. Of course this story must rest with you.

Here I am 5 minutes past ten. Have been at lecture, could not hear the lecture and came home. Lizzie is at the fair (a fair given by her church) where she tends a table. She has this moment returned and who do you suppose came with her. She goes to Packard's school this winter. She has generally attended Lyceum Wednesday evening with me.

GPR James (the English author) Horace Greely of the Tribune. Ware (author of Zenobia) <> Mr Squier Loomis of Waterville and others have lectured before the Lyceum and none of them have given a first rate Lecture. There has not been but one that would begin to compare with Prex. Wood's Ancient Republics and I believe I actually learned more in hearing Chas Dibdin Pitt act Richard III than in all the lectures put together.

Thursday Eve

Last I heard from Old Jennings was that he was going to get married if he could - of course marry rich. Tom Smith has got a situation somewhere in Tennessee at 1000 per year in an Academy. I have not heard that But. has got a place yet. Old Adams is hammering Blackstone and Gravestones at B. and Townsend is luxuriating at the metropolis on 1400 a year lucky he is anyhow. Old Jewett swears he leaves this state next fall. Perley is in Portland with an income of 500 - don't know whether he is satisfied or not - sometimes thinks he is doing pretty well and then again is pretty damned sure he isn't - has a boarding place that is just like home to him <> has a pretty aye very pretty girl to wait upon and get mad. <> with him occasionally - likes his landlady half as well as his mother and her daughter almost as well as his sister - keeps his hair cut short and well oiled and also his whiskers - keeps most of the time pretty "mum" what you always used to call mad - generally sports a clean dickey - part of the time thinks he is a damned fool and it is no use for him to try to work his way to <> and then again that he is about as big as anybody after all - who looks forward to a damned unhappy life and does not expect to meet with any great success - who will deem himself fortunate if he meet with moderate.

As for Miss G. I can write about her without my hands trembling. I have been looking to see her marriage every week and as each week I read the list <&> thank God the worst has not yet come. Do not mistake me here Howard I have no expectation - no hope she will ever be mine. I do hope for her own sake she may never have <>. Your proposition in regard to a journal I will comply with cheerfully as far as I can. I must stop here and go to the fair and come home with Lizzie so that <> Hicks who went after her last night won't have to.

Friday Eve. Went to "fair" last eve, stayed till eleven o'clock, saw an array of beauty, vanity and pride. Saw a girl that looked very much like Miss Green - the same eyes, cheeks and whole contour of the head only taller and somewhat prettier, which waked again old feelings that had hardly slumbered - came home and never slept

a damned wink. Liz is kneeling on a stool by my side now fixing her neck-ribbon to go to night and I know Chum it would do your soul good to see her. She is pretty and no mistake and if ever I feel proud tis when I am rushing round with her on my arm.

Know Howard the rustle of her silk dress would sound pleasantly in your ears and I wish you <could> be here an hour or two this evening so that your ears might be thus greeted. As for myself Howard it is no use for me to try to do anything with the women. There are young ladies here I would give anything to be acquainted with but it is impossible for me to be. And why in the devil it is so with me I don't see. It is not because I am boorish and I don't know how to appear for I believe I appear as well as the general run nor because I am inferior in talents or education for I see others whom I know are not my equals in this respect go where they please and acquainted far and wide. It is not because I don't want to be for I swear I do - tis not from bashfulness and I'll be cussed if I know why it is - but so it is anyhow.

My Grandfather died a little more than a week since - was not sick - so as to be about - dropped away calmly (as the letter informing me of it said) without a struggle or a groan.

I must close so here's to your success and remember that I am now as ever your more than friend.

Peleg S. Perley