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Selling sobriety : how temperance reshaped culture in antebellum America.

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SELLING SOBRIETY:
HOW TEMPERANCE RESHAPED CULTURE IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

To Jackie, Molly, and Casey. You were always there for me. I will always be there for you.

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ABSTRACT

SELLING SOBRIETY:
HOW TEMPERANCE RESHAPED CULTURE IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

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"Selling Sobriety" explores the uneasy symbiosis between the antebellum temperance movement and a distinctly American commercial culture. Entrepreneurs used the reform to reshape and legitimize public amusements, especially among those influenced by evangelical Protestantism who thought of themselves as the moral middle. Morally suspect forms of entertainment became the media through which temperance morality was inculcated. The dissertation examines three forms of commercial entertainments--temperance fiction, temperance speaking, and temperance theater.

"Selling Sobriety" uses George B. Cheever's 1835 story, "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery," to establish the sources of temperance imagery and the limits to clerical cultural authority. Cheever's story was part of a split between orthodoxy and Unitarianism in Salem, Massachusetts. The minister was tried for libel and gained

the support of Justin Edwards, a founder of the American Temperance Society, and William Lloyd Garrison.

The career of John Gough suggests the theatricalization of temperance and the popularity of the temperance narrative. The reformed drunkard Gough gained notoriety by relating his past at Washingtonian experience meetings, beginning in Worcester, Massachusetts. Wrenched by both the Market Revolution and delirium tremens, Gough was promoted by John Marsh of the American Temperance Union. In 1845, the National Police Gazette discovered an intoxicated Gough in a house of prostitution.

William H. Smith's temperance melodrama, The Drunkard, opened in 1844 at Moses Kimball's Boston Museum. The play defused the antitheatricalism of many Americans and was also presented in P.T. Barnum's dime museum. It appealed to middle-class women who had hitherto avoided theaters.

T.S. Arthur's career points to the links between temperance and a rapidly changing publishing industry. A fixture of domestic literature and Sarah Josepha Hale's Godey's Lady's Book, Arthur published the bestselling Ten Nights in a Bar-room in 1854. Arthur's novel sets up a Manichaean battle between Demon Rum and domesticity, between the bottle and the book. Alcohol was one means by which Americans formulated evil during a time of economic and theological optimism.

"Selling Sobriety" argues that antebellum temperance was popular culture. Entrepreneurs used the reform as a wedge to open up new public spaces in American cultural life.

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INTRODUCTION: TEMPERANCE AS A CULTURAL PRODUCT

As Americans ardently attempted to improve, even perfect, humanity during the first half of the nineteenth century, they busied themselves with a myriad of causes--antislavery, women's rights, hydropathy, spiritualism, labor reform, phrenology, the asylum movement, education reform, communitarianism, and others. Of the panoply of reforms energizing and captivating Americans in the mid-nineteenth century, temperance was the most popular. From today's perspective, it is difficult to visualize the depth and breadth of animosity toward Demon Rum held by large segments of the American people, especially in the North.

By the 1840s, temperance activities had expanded far beyond the efforts of a narrow cadre of elite ministers and merchant capitalists, the leaders of the first temperance organizations. Crossing class, racial, and gender boundaries, temperance became a veritable national obsession. Alongside this peculiar obsession rose a national commercial culture recognizably "modern." A large and mass-oriented publishing industry thrived with unprecedented vigor. Drama lost much of its aura of immorality and attracted ever larger numbers of theatergoers. Lecturers, some of them national

celebrities, toured from city to town to village and back again. The Age of Barnum had begun, and American culture was irrevocably changed.

Whereas earlier public entertainments encouraged the sale and consumption of alcohol, the newer commercialized leisure activities were distinguished by the absence of alcohol. This dissertation argues that the contemporaneity of a popular temperance movement and the rise of a popular commercial culture was no mere coincidence. At least by the 1840s and early 1850s, the two enjoyed an uneasy but essentially symbiotic relationship.

The ironies of this symbiotic relationship reveal a pervasive instability in American cultural identity during the years before the Civil War. Temperance was part of a popular culture in which protection of the home sanctioned ever wider activities outside the home. Capitalistic forms of amusement proliferated in the name of circumscribing the excesses of capitalism. Visions of hell were sold in the hope of creating heaven on earth. A therapeutics of individual conversion became a path to social transformation. Confidence men exploited fears of hypocrisy and hoaxes to embark on successful careers in which the exposure of hoaxes drew in paying audiences. Entertainers cultivated images of authenticity with the conventions of artifice. And stimulating, emotional, and

intoxicating performances became vehicles for the dissemination of sobriety and restraint.

Prior to 1840, temperance was largely the province of ministers such as Lyman Beecher and Justin Edwards. The American Temperance Society was an evangelical organization, and the temperance conversions it sought were defined by ordained ministers. By the 1850s, control of alcohol came increasingly under the purview of the state, and the organized temperance movement was dominated by arguments like those of Neal Dow, the author of the Maine Law, the first statewide ordinance for the prohibition of alcohol consumption. The temperance of the 1840s, however, was dominated by entertainment hucksters of various sorts. It is the temperance of the huckster, the peddlar of morality, upon which I focus.

The temperance hawker, almost always male, was engaged in no mere sideshow. He held a central position in the antebellum cultural landscape. John B. Gough, a product of the Washingtonian temperance movement, was among the most popular speakers of his day; in the span of a dozen years, his lectures, rooted in his personal experiences as a drunkard, enticed over 200,000 individuals to sign the pledge to abstain from alcoholic beverages. T.S. Arthur, the author of Ten Nights in a Bar-room, earned fame as a prodigious writer of temperance fiction as well as domestic stories and advice manuals. He was intimately connected

with both the book publishing industry and the new popular magazines, especially Sarah Josepha Hale's Godey's Lady's Book. W.H. Smith's The Drunkard; or The Fallen Saved was presented at both Moses Kimball's Boston Museum and P.T. Barnum's American Museum. It became the first American dramatic production to enjoy a consecutive run of over one hundred performances. Gough, Arthur, and Smith were hardly alone; many others launched similar careers. Thus, three important antebellum cultural forms, the lecture, the novel, and the play, became media for spreading the temperance message. The temperance message, in turn, served to legitimize the media and their new lurid, even voyeuristic, trappings, especially among a growing audience of middling men and women. The career of the temperance impresario rested on this happy confluence of interests.

The temperance entrepreneurs of the 1840s were engaged in two large "turf" battles. Temperance advocates employed commercial entertainments to advance their cause, but the cause was itself predicated upon an assault on that prototypical site of commercial entertainment--the tavern. By demonizing the rumseller, they were attacking, whether consciously or not, a primary competitor for entertainment dollars. At the same time, temperance advocates disagreed with one another as vociferously as they did with their reputed enemies in the liquor industry. Temperance entertainers competed with other temperance advocates,

especially ministers and politicians, for the authenticity and moral authority they needed to succeed. The machinations within the antebellum temperance movement were so venomous because the winner won a precious prize--an audience. Wooing audiences required the seductive powers of imaginative amusements, and competitors spread the temperance message with increasingly vociferous appeals that were themselves increasingly entertaining. This study focuses on the competition for temperance audiences between various sorts of temperance advocates and on the ways in which that competition served to expand the legitimate uses of public spaces and institutions. From this perspective, selling sobriety led less to repressive prohibitions and more to open-ended affirmations of sentimental pleasures.

In examining the troubled relationship between temperance and commercial culture in antebellum America, I am placing myself at the intersection of two large bodies of scholarly literature. One encompasses studies of the temperance movements of the nineteenth century.[1] The other explores reading, publishing, speaking, theater, and the rise of a distinctly American commercial culture during the same years.[2]

A great deal of thoughtful work has already been done by capable scholars on antebellum temperance and the rapidly changing culture in which it flourished.

Historians have hardly ignored the social and political importance of temperance reform in the years prior to the Civil War. Nor have they dismissed the significance of a rapidly expanding and diversifying commercial culture during those same years. What is missing is an understanding of how those two historical phenomena intertwined and reinforced one another.

The temperance entertainer of the 1840s denounced alcohol as the embodiment of evil, Demon Rum actively enslaving bodies and stealing souls. Puritan New Englanders had held a very different view of drink. Puritan ministers, as moral arbiters and enforcers, condemned habitual drunkenness as a sin and viewed the tavern, with its strangers and disconcerting worldliness, with particular trepidation. The tavern was a potential threat to community cohesion, but unlike later temperance reformers, Puritans never saw alcohol as inherently evil nor were tortured by a Demon Rum. In fact, Increase Mather considered rum "a good creature of God." Not drink per se but public drunkenness and public entertainments, disrupters of a God-given social hierarchy, disturbed Puritan leaders. Carnival, not drink, was the Puritan nemesis.

The antebellum temperance reformers with whom I am concerned, on the other hand, attacked the devil residing

in alcoholic drink by actually encouraging certain types of public commercial activities, all contained by a moralizing medium but imbued with the instability of the carnivalesque. As the reformer became a performer, temperance advocates helped to overturn older notions of an unyielding social hierarchy. They presented their activities as an inversion of the lowly grogshop. A moral aura replaced an immoral miasma, but a certain functional equivalence remained. Commercial temperance entertainers were engaged in a rather self-serving process of cultural legitimation and delegitimation. By attacking an antagonist in the marketplace of culture, temperance entertainers carved out a space in which they could mold new careers. The bane of Puritan culture critics, the theater and the novel, became a conduit for a moral condemnation of a competitor in the entertainment business --the barroom. By delegitimizing drinking, temperance helped to open up a whole new world of cultural activities.

These new activities were made possible by the many social, economic, technological, and demographic changes that radically transformed the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century.[3] Without the development of a relatively efficient national transportation system, books and periodicals could not be distributed nor could speakers tour. Without urbanization, it would be difficult

to fill large lecture halls and theaters. Without relative prosperity, large numbers of men and women would not have the disposable income to spend on moralizing amusements.

Of course, national economic development came at considerable costs. At the personal level, periodic economic depressions and the sundering of communal and familial ties could be wrenching experiences. Antebellum urban life was difficult in both financial and psychic terms. Out of struggles for survival and identity came new arrangements between social classes.[4] These difficulties found their way into the new cultural products of temperance. The same transformative forces--urbanization, technology, and economic growth--that made a commercial culture possible also created new pressures and uncertainties with which that culture had to deal--hypocrisy, vice, and economic instability, for example. Temperance reformers took advantage of the market but also were critical of the greed that drove many market relationships. The attitude may have been derived from experience. The temperance entertainers I have examined presented themselves as victims, especially as they meandered their way to a temperance calling. The experience of victimhood, whether at the hands of Demon Rum or an uncaring economic system, gave them voice and a marketable commodity, and some of them became successful

beneficiaries of the socio-economic uncertainties of the period.

Not the least of these uncertainties was the competitiveness of their chosen career. To be heard was the goal of any public life. Amid the growing cacophony of reform and entertainment voices, achieving success was no easy task. Such competition, especially in the wake of the deep national depression of 1837 to 1843, nourished the creativity and energy of both the temperance movement and commercial culture in the 1840s. For temperance entertainers, necessity was the mother of invention.

Temperance inventions operated in three distinct modes--the ways in which they were made and distributed, the ways in which they were consumed, and the ways in which they stood as separate worlds in themselves. Sometimes these operational modes reinforced one another. At other times, they contradicted one another. The production of temperance entertainments includes the lives and activities of not only the primary producers, a John Gough or T.S. Arthur for example, but also their relationships to the complex structures supporting their endeavors, from the publishing industry to formal temperance organizations. Consumption, morally suspect in the producer ethos of the nineteenth century, here refers to the reception of the temperance message by those both improved and amused by the entertainer. The role of the audience is crucial, and

discerning how audiences think presents all sorts of empirical hurdles. Finally, the rich internal symbolic world of temperance entertainments comes from a reading of the texts themselves. The most fruitful questions will involve the interplay of these three levels of inquiry. For example, how did the "real world" of economic competition, the milieu of temperance entertainment production, help create the internal discourses of temperance fictions? How did changing audiences alter the product or the producer?

In examining temperance as a commercial culture, one should pose the same sort of questions one might ask in studying, for example, the history of the rock music industry. From what sources does this cultural form borrow? Who benefits from the production and distribution of this intellectual property? With whom does it compete? Who loses in the marketplace of ideas and entertainments? To whom is the product marketed and how? Who are its promoters? How does one attain celebrity? What are the costs of fame?

The promoters of temperance entertainments were not necessarily the same people who produced the books, pamphlets, plays, engravings, and lectures. Behind a temperance novelist like T.S. Arthur stood a large and rapidly expanding publishing industry capable of producing printed material for a wide variety of targeted markets.

Vis-a-vis that complex apparatus, Arthur seems as much a pawn as a participant. Lecturer John Gough was shuttled from city to city by handlers, some of them representing temperance organizations, others more committed to personal profit than to the reform. Sometimes, the product seems to have been as much the celebrated Gough himself as it was the temperance message. The fact that Gough's efforts would today be deemed "non-profit" does not mean that his were not economic activities. A Gough lecture was a public event that brought money directly to the hosting organization and to John Gough, while a paying audience enjoyed a thrilling evening of entertainment as well as a healthy dose of self-improvement. Descriptions of delirium tremens became horrifying spectacle, and audiences loved it and demanded more. The exchange of money was legitimized by the many thousands of Americans who signed the pledge--the temperance meeting's version of audience participation --at Gough lectures in the 1840s and early 1850s.

Sometimes, the business of temperance entertainment was heartily endorsed, even launched, by formal temperance organizations, especially the Washingtonians who were renowned for their theatricality. But many temperance reformers, particularly those of relatively elite backgrounds, were dismayed by the formula that combined moral uplift with amusement. The result was a spirited, long-running debate in both the mainstream and temperance

presses on the tactical issues of selling temperance. That debate will provide a valuable source in outlining the major camps and their positions on the relationship between temperance and commercial culture.

Also important is the business side of temperance cultural production. What was the relationship between temperance writers and the large publishing firm? How did the relationship between temperance speakers and their sponsors suggest the methods and networks needed to achieve success? Did temperance theater grow out of traditional theater, or was it a reaction against it? The interconnectedness of temperance reform and pioneers in the new commercial culture are indicative of the mutual benefits for each. Temperance imagery provided a ready resource that some innovators readily exploited.

A key figure in this study of the webs linking temperance with commercialized entertainments was P.T. Barnum, the first American amusement magnate.[5] How did Barnum come upon temperance? How did he use temperance for his own ends, and what relationship did temperance have with his phenomenal success? That Barnum, a giant in the cultural transformations of nineteenth-century America, utilized temperance strategies suggests that temperance was significant in the evolution of such important American institutions as modern advertising.

The last but most important aspect of production involves the life stories of the creators of temperance entertainments. A number of the more famous temperance peddlars wrote autobiographies, often to advance their careers. These works were themselves commercial productions written with certain audiences in mind. Nevertheless, the lives they describe open up the world of the temperance career. Their self-depictions suggests two distinct categories based on differing foundations of moral authority. The Washingtonian speakers, such as John Gough or John Hawkins, projected an authority based on personal experience. They related to audiences their own degradation as drunkards and their oppression by alcohol up to the moment they were saved by temperance and underwent a conversion experience. The other career path, exemplified by T.S. Arthur and the early Walt Whitman, rested on the authority of the "artist." Arthur and Whitman were not drunkards nor were they affiliated with any formal temperance organizations. Their authority, their authorial voice, came from their ability to "pull the heartstrings" of an audience.

Who was the temperance audience? That a particular branch of the nineteenth-century temperance movement can be defined as commercial entertainment shows that all temperance reformers were not dour sermonizers. It also suggests that temperance was not force-fed to an unwilling

public. In the 1840s, the temperance audience was large and diverse. Most important, it included women. Newspaper articles frequently referred to the audiences at Gough lectures and temperance dramas as both respectable and mixed. The moralizing message legitimized the appearance of women in public. A "public woman" need no longer mean a prostitute, especially if audiences were then sent home with a message of the transcendent value of domesticity. And by enticing middling women to attend public amusements, a Barnum doubled the size of his potential audience.

What audiences received from temperance entertainments, aside from pleasurable sociability, was a map of the social ills that plagued their lives. Violence, poverty, insanity, and avarice could be attributed to alcohol. Instead of focusing on the structural transformations that radically uprooted older patterns of life, temperance audiences absorbed the idea that drinking, something that could be affected by an act of individual will, might explain all social problems. In addition, audiences tasted, with varying amounts of circumspection, forbidden fruit. Without actually participating in acts defined as immoral, even while recoiling from the real saloon, temperance audiences witnessed immorality and degradation. The assorted horrors of drinking attracted as well as repulsed the audience. What made Gough and Arthur successful was their ability to bring light to the unseen,

dark side of American social life. The act of exposure had real appeal to antebellum American audiences.

One major characteristic that differentiated the new temperance from the old was its tendency to invite the audience to identify with the drunkard by sharing his pain.[6] Lyman Beecher rationally explicated the evils and dangers of alcoholic drink, often condemning the morally bankrupt drunkard. John Gough asked the audience to relive, as he relived them on the platform each evening, his experiences as a drinker, especially the hellish nightmare of delirium tremens. Hallucinations represented the absolute loss of self-control and the complete victory of animality. The temperance hell, so vividly depicted by temperance entertainers, in print, from the platform, and on the stage, may have mediated the transformation of the fire and brimstone of the evangelist into modern secularized horror genres.

"Selling Sobriety" looks at six cultural "events." Each acted as a fulcrum on which various cultural interests are balanced. The results of each event suggests larger transformations of American public life and private proprieties. Each was bound up in the interests, outlooks, and identities of those involved.

First, Rev. George Cheever's publication in 1835 of "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" illustrates the

conventions of temperance imagery utilized by later reformers and establishes the demonic nature of alcohol. Second, the libel trial that story precipitated suggests the limits of clerical temperance as well as the reform possibilities of fictional appeals to a higher truth. Third, John Gough's Washingtonian temperance conversion in 1842 and his launching of a speaking career provides a way of looking at moral authority in a shifting cultural marketplace. Gough framed his past to create a paying audience. Fourth, Gough's disappearance in 1845--he was discovered after a week, intoxicated in a brothel--suggests the credulity of the temperance public, the costs of celebrity, and the temperance roots of tabloid journalism. Anti-temperance forces used the conventions of temperance to "expose" the immorality and hypocrisy of reformers. Fifth, the success of The Drunkard makes clear a redefinition of the American theater by means of temperance. When Moses Kimball first presented the play in his Boston Museum in 1844, the physical surroundings, the audience, and the performance itself effectively defused long-standing moral condemnations of the theater. Finally, the successful publication of T.S. Arthur's Ten Nights in a Bar-room in 1854 suggests the mutual benefits of a popular temperance movement and a rapidly growing publishing industry.

"Dark temperance," to use David Reynolds's term, had a bright side--the transformative conversion experience that marks the rebirth of the lowly drunkard as a respectable man. In temperance novels, plays, and lectures, the drunkard's story of redemption is the privileged narrative. When a man signed the pledge, he truly became a man--a self-possessing, independent, unitary actor. The drunkard was a fractured, almost schizophrenic soul, oscillating between frenzied violence, often against women, and repentant hangovers. Most of all, the drunkard was dependent--on the bottle, on charity, and ultimately on his appetites. In novels and on the stage, the moral authority of the reformed drunkard rested on his body's past oppressed condition and the struggle against that oppression. By winning the struggle with the bottle, the drunkard achieved manliness. Meanwhile, the temperance entertainer achieved manliness by struggling to a career relating that story, whether or not it reflected his own past.

Evangelical in form but secular in content, some temperance activities, facilitated not renewed religiosity but rather the accelerated secularization and commodification of American culture. More accurately, temperance encouraged the diffusion and embedding of religious themes in the leisure culture of an incipient American middle class. Religion as much as economics is

the base of much of American popular culture. To create public amusements, some Americans used temperance in ultimately subversive ways.[7]

The drunkard was no hero, only a potential one. In throwing off the shackles of drink, the drunkard achieved a completely new identity. In antebellum America, the drunkard of temperance discourse was a negative cultural image against which new identities could be constructed. How did this cultural signpost work in the decades prior to the Civil War? Why and how did it sell so well? Historians have looked at the postbellum development of a commercial culture of amusements but have for the most part ignored its antebellum roots.[8] Examining the temperance movement as a successful marketing campaign opens a new view on both reform and the rise of popular commercial culture in antebellum America.

Notes

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CHAPTER 2

THE DEVILS AND THE DISTILLERY:

THE SOURCES OF THE AMERICAN TEMPERANCE TRADITION

> "The distillery glowed with fires that burned hotter than ever before, and the figures of the demons passing to and fro, and leaping and yelling in the midst of their work, made it look like the entrance to the bottomless pit."[1]
>
> George B. Cheever, "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" (1835)

In Salem, Massachusetts, on January 30, 1835, a little story about a distillery and its harried owner made its way into print. A local newspaper, the Landmark, published "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery," purportedly a dream about Deacon Giles, "a man who loved money" more than conscience. "Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery" is a window into the world of temperance in the 1830s. This story of a Faustian bargain, made for the sake of pecuniary gain rather than knowledge, became a minor classic of the early temperance movement. An exploration of where it came from and where it went illustrates not only the changing tactical approaches of the temperance movement but also the coagulation of amorphous attitudes about alcohol into seemingly timeless temperance "truths." By 1835, about twenty years after the first steps toward an organized temperance movement were made, the link between alcohol and

evil solidified, and the mixing of deacons, demons, and distilleries made for a potent brew.

According to the story, the distillery Giles inherited contained "furnaces that never went out" as "tortured ingredients" were "ceaselessly converted into alcohol." "It was said that the worm of the still lay coiled in the bosom of his family": one member of his family had drowned himself in one of the vats of hot liquor. Deacon Giles was also the treasurer of a local Bible society, peddling Bibles from its counting-room even on the Sabbath. Given that his own rum-soaked "temper was none of the sweetest" and that he often paid his workers with "as much raw rum as they could drink," labor relations were hardly harmonious. One Saturday, his workmen stormed off in anger, leaving the Deacon "in much perplexity for want of hands to do the work of the devil on the Lord's day."

Saturday evening, Deacon Giles welcomed the unexpected arrival at his distillery of "a gang of singular looking fellows." With "wild and uncouth" dress, eyes that "glared," and "awful" speech, Giles deemed them an easily exploitable workforce. But when he offered drink in exchange for work, they abjured, saying with breath that seemed to "burn blue" that they "had enough of hot things where they came from." They laughed at the offer of money. They trembled at the offer of Bibles, "but whether it was with anger or delirium tremens, or something else, he could

not tell." Finally, with furtive winks exchanged between them, the strange men agreed to work for whatever the Deacon wanted to give them, as long as they could work at night.

With "a fresh cargo of molasses" and "a great many hogsheads" to be filled with rum for thirsty patrons in the hinterland, Deacon Giles felt compelled to leave his distillery in the hands of these new workers, who promptly danced with demonic delight. It was as if "one of the chambers of hell had been transported to earth, with all its inmates." With supernatural strength and speed, the band of demons manufactured an amount of rum usually requiring more than three weeks of intense labor. The next morning, Deacon Giles was so satisfied with the volume that "he thought he could afford to attend meeting." At church, he "heard his minister say that God could pardon sin without an atonement, that the words hell and devils were mere figures of speech, and that all men would certainly be saved." Giles found the sermon so compelling that he decided to give the clergyman a half cask of wine. Because "it happened to be communion Sabbath," he stayed at church all day. That night he again greeted the strange men, who once more worked themselves into a frenzy until all the molasses was converted into rum. Despite the Deacon's fervent entreaties of high wages if they remained, the workmen left town.

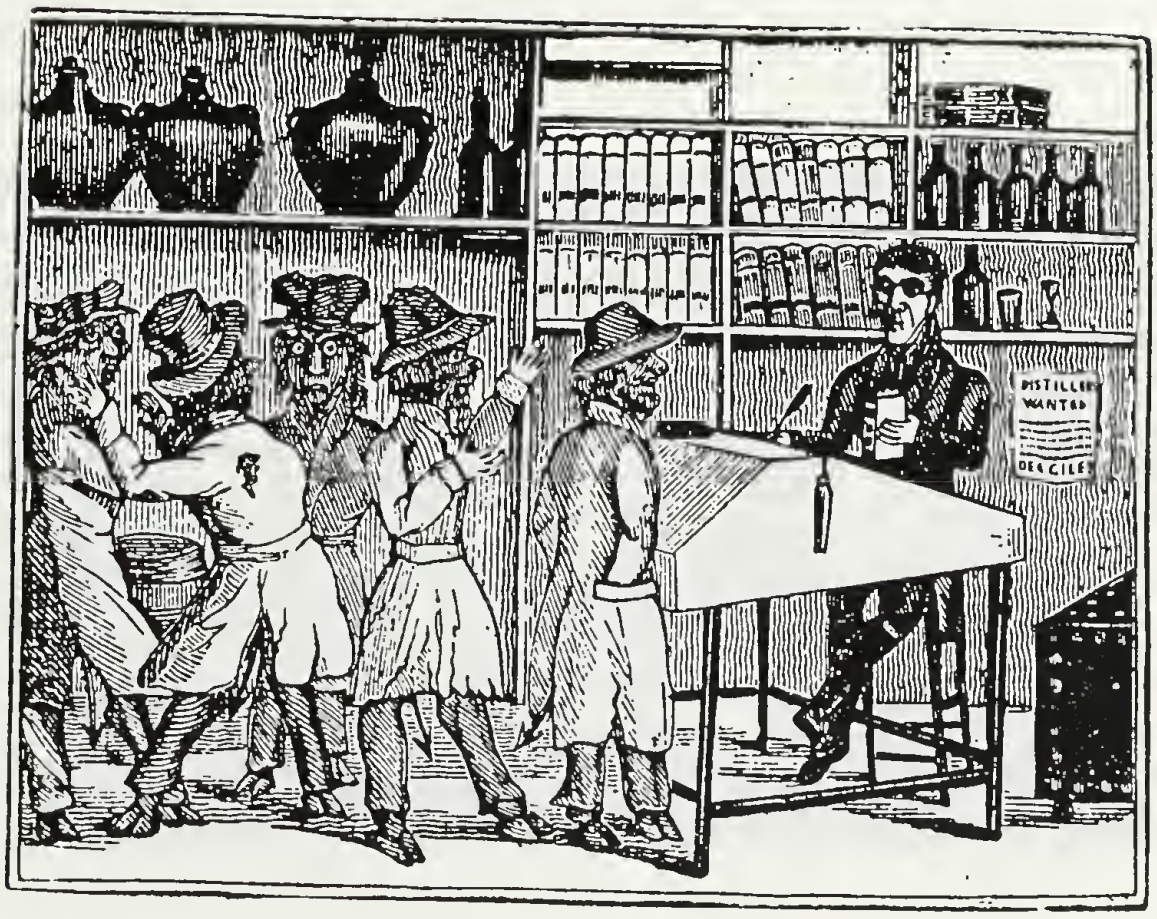

Figure 1: Deacon Giles finds his workforce. A woodcut from Cheever's story published as a pamphlet.

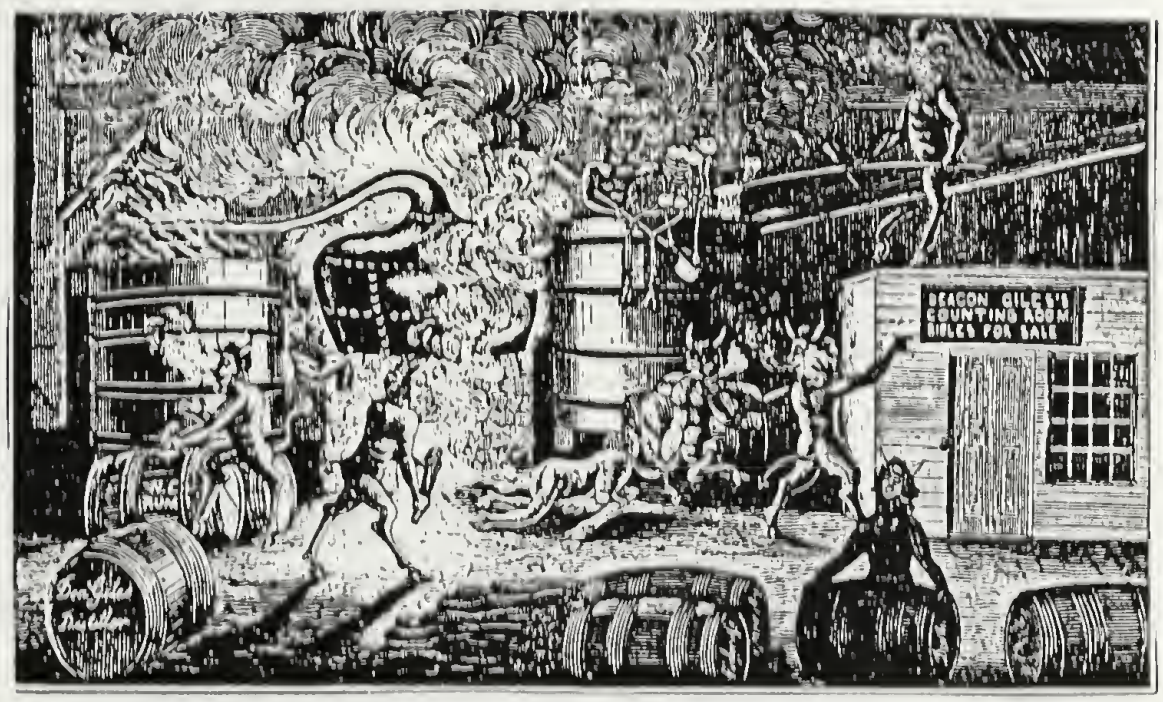

Figure 2: The frenetic climax of "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery."

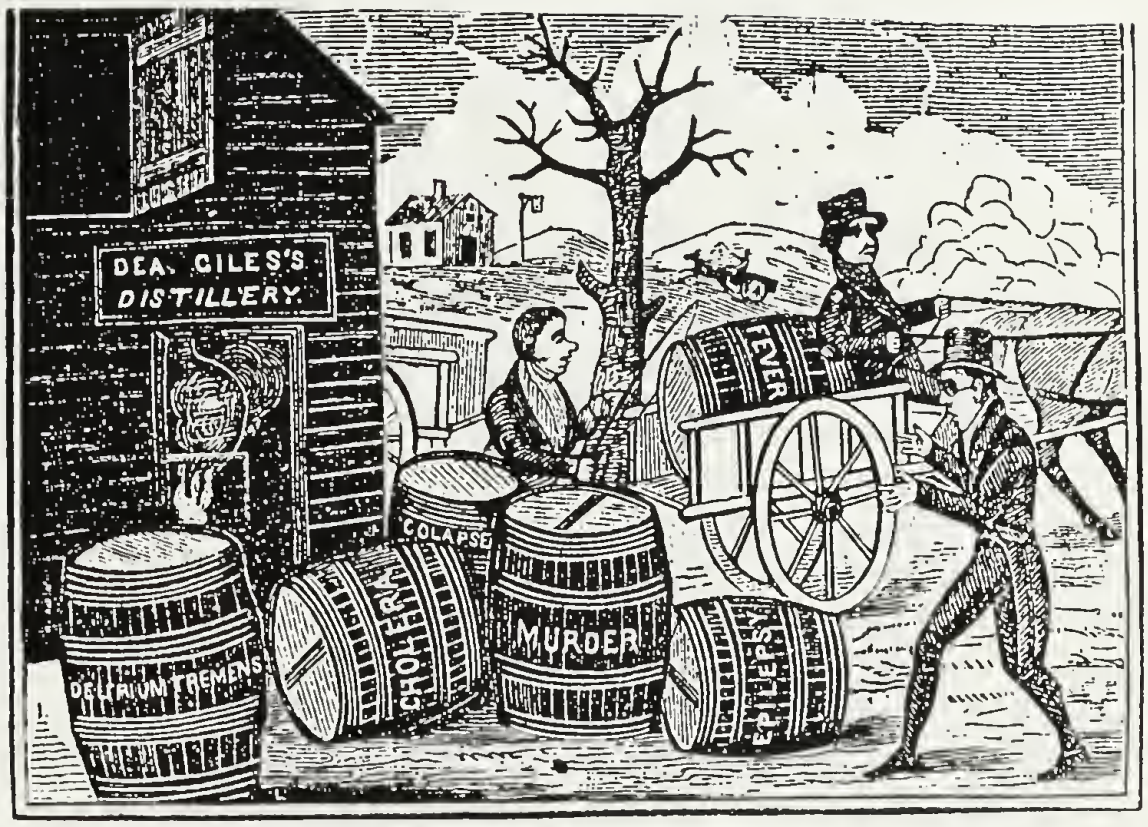

Figure 3: The truth revealed.

They also left a practical joke for the deacon-distiller. The demons had written "invisible inscriptions" on the casks that appeared in flame as soon as a drink was drawn from them:

> Most of the titles ran thus: "CONSUMPTION SOLD HERE. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." "CONVULSIONS AND EPILEPSIES. Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery." "INSANITY AND MURDER.--Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." "DROPSY AND RHEUMATISM." "PUTRID FEVER, AND CHOLERA IN THE COLAPSE. Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery." "DELIRIUM TREMENS. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery."
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> Many of the casks had on them inscriptions like the following: DISTILLED DEATH AND LIQUID DAMNATION. The elixir of Hell for the bodies of those whose souls are coming there. Some of the demons had even taken sentences from the Scriptures, and marked the hogsheads thus: "WHO HATH WOES? Inquires at Deacon Giles' Distillery." "WHO HATH REDNESS OF EYES? Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." Others had written sentences like the following: A POTION FROM THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery! All these inscriptions burned, when visible, "a still and awful red." One of the most terrible in its appearance was as follows: WEEPING AND WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery.[2]

Dramsellers and grocers angrily returned the casks. Giles dumped their contents into the street and burned the empty vessels. The "distillery has smelled of brimstone ever since; but he would not give up the trade." He would continue to make drunkards.

The author of this bizarre tale was a young Congregational minister, George Barrell Cheever. For his efforts, he was whipped in the streets of Salem, vilified in the local press, sued for libel, presented with a large fine, and sentenced to a month in the local jail. And yet he won. The story of the deacon who distilled with the aid of demons was published across the nation, either alongside newspaper stories about his trial for libel or as pamphlets widely disseminated by pro-temperance organizations. His case became a cause celebre in reform circles, launching Cheever on a long and successful career as a minister and firebrand for various reforms.

As a newly printed work, Cheever's story ignited a well-publicized controversy, but the principle ingredients of his "dream" were hardly original. They arose from the already established conventions of temperance culture. By 1835, alcohol held a special place and enacted a special role in what evangelical reformers deemed a "cosmic drama" between good and evil. The story Cheever created spoke to three interconnected realms in which good and evil struggled--the human body, social relations, and the spiritual realm. In each, alcohol was the means by which evil did its work. For some Americans, their relationships with their own bodies, their neighbors, and their God had come to depend on abstinence from alcoholic drink.[3]

From all accounts, drinking during the first decades of the nineteenth century was excessive, and temperance, outside scattered enclaves of Quakers, was unknown. Work and alcoholic drink, then considered an energizing stimulant, were intimately connected, and while outright intoxication was discouraged, workmen consumed startling amounts of alcohol on the job. Shortly after the War of 1812, for example, William Lloyd Garrison's brother found himself in Lynn, laboring with five other men at a productive shoe-making "mill," a shop marked by the deskilling and low wages of early industrialization. "We drank upon an everage [sic] a quart of rum a day apiece," wrote James Holley Garrison. "We were allways [sic] apparently sober and worked hard." W.J. Rorabaugh estimates the average annual consumption of spirits by Americans over the age of fifteen in 1830 at 5.2 gallons, the highest level ever in the United States. (By 1845, that figure had declined by more than half, to 2.1 gallons.) John Marsh, the influential corresponding secretary of the American Temperance Union, wrote, "At the commencement of the nineteenth century, the whole nation were sunk in Lethean slumber." The nondrinker was "an anomaly, a strange being." An employer who refused to give his workers strong drink was considered "a singular freak." Marsh may have stretched the truth, but the general view

that the United States was a nation of heavy drinkers, if not outright drunkards, seems accurate.[4]

Cheever's story emerged from two sources, one the sensational stories of popular fiction, the other the conventions of the temperance movement. Though by the 1830s the formal temperance movement dominated temperance discourse, another source of temperance imagery helped ensure the appeal of Cheever's story. This alternative stream bubbled up from the active imagination of a pioneer in the marketing of books. Mason Locke Weems was not a social reformer but a self-consciously commercial writer. Having failed as an Anglican minister in Virginia, Weems found his calling as a book peddlar, creating his own morally didactic tales. His most famous invention was the lesson of honesty in youthful George Washington's hatcheting of a cherry tree.

The Drunkard's Looking Glass, first published by Weems in 1813, was a series of stories, sometimes humorous, more often gory, about the things drunkards do, usually ending with their deaths. Hardly a book for children, it revelled in voyeuristic excess. It opened with a story of how Satan offered a young Spanish monk success in his order if he committed "any one of three little peccadilloes"--"Violate your sister," "Murder your father," or "Just get drunk." The monk got drunk, then proceeded to the first two crimes,

whereupon he committed suicide and went to hell. The connection between devils and drink was thus established early in the nineteenth century.

In sickening detail, murders, drownings, and fatal accidents abound, often with explicit appeals to the reader to fixate on the results. In a precursor to driver's education films, one drunken horserider hit a tree "with such violence. . .that his brains gushed out." Another, racing while drunk, struck the limbs of a tree, and a crowd gathered to view the

> lifeless lump, and so mangled that no friend on earth could have recognized a feature. There was not a sign of a nose remaining on his face, the violence of the blow had crushed it flat, miserably battering his mouth and teeth, and completely scalping the right side of his face and head--the flesh, skin, and ear, torn off to the back of his skull. One of his eyes, meeting a snag on the trunk of a tree, was clearly knocked out of its socket; and, held only by a string of skin, there it lay naked on his bloody cheek.

Weems told the tale of two "young masters" in a drunken torpor while their room burned around them. He described, "Owing to the rarefying effects of the violent heat, their STOMACHS being filled with rum and fixed air, were seen suddenly to rise to an enormous size, then bursting, with a noise loud as a musket, their bowels gushed out into the devouring flames."[5]

This was indeed, to use Karen Haltunnen's phrase, the "pornography of pain," and mainstream temperance organizations recoiled from Weems's work, perhaps from embarrassment, even though it was a popular success. According to R. Laurence Moore, Weems pioneered "moral sensationalism." His work, innovatively exploring methods of widening readership, led not to the increasingly popular domestic novels of the nineteenth century but to "moral pornography." Weems was a trailblazer for such products as George Lippard's salacious and anti-clerical The Quaker City; or the Monks of Monk Hall of 1844, the dime novels of Ned Buntline, whom Moore calls "a temperance lecturer and a drunk," and the anti-temperance National Police Gazette.[6] Nevertheless, later temperance writers, T.S. Arthur for example, would mimic Weems's predilection for graphic violence and voyeuristic appeals.

The other source of Cheever's tale, the formal temperance movement, did not initially demonize alcohol and its manufacture. For a time, distilleries and their prosperous owners avoided the wrath of reformers. As an aid to an established reform society, "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" would have been unthinkable just a few years prior to its publication in 1835. The Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (MSSI), founded in 1813 and the first important temperance organization in the United States, denounced drunkenness and the drunkard,

not alcohol itself and certainly not the elites connected with the drink trade. Instead of total abstinence, the MSSI promoted an end to excessive drinking, a goal that lacked the moral absolutism and perfectionism of later reformers like Cheever.

Prior to the equation of temperance and abstinence, the precise definition of intemperance was indeterminate. As one 1814 tract admitted, "To mark easily the line which separates sobriety from excess, is not easy." The tract goes on to promote the drinking of wine, but only enough to slake thirst. Prior to the mid-1820s, the word temperance maintained its older meaning of moderation, and activists only excoriated the development of "unnatural" appetites. The stated goal of a pamphlet from 1820 was not total abstinence but the restoration of moderate drinking. A "natural" appetite was a correct "monitor" of the body's needs, but frequent abuse rendered the appetite "vitiated and perverted"--"The appetite no longer performs the office which God and nature assigned it; but being oppressed and forced out of its natural course, it goes on its new direction, and drags its oppressor after it in chains." To bring back habits of moderate drinking, what the pamphlet termed "Self Government," the reader was asked to mail money to the author, a man with the curious name of "Bound," in exchange for a "cure."[7]

Temperance-minded ministers of the teens and early twenties looked backward to traditional local controls to prevent and punish excessive drinking. They especially sought to discourage drunkenness through the rules of patriarchal household production. The master had to be a model of rectitude. One minister thought "the path of sobriety" was best achieved "by personal example in our domestick economy." Another, addressing "ye, who have children, apprentices, or hired servants under your care," advised fathers and employers--the terms seem almost interchangeable--to supervise the recreation of their charges. The Rev. Joshua Bates of Dedham sermonized, "Leave them not to the capriciousness of youth--to the allurements of the world--to the propensities of depraved nature." The ideal for the young, however, was not total abstinence. According to Bates, vendors of ardent spirits, who were later thrust outside the pale of moral society, played a crucial role in preventing intemperance and upholding morality. By refusing to serve abusers, by following the old Puritan dictum against selling drink to publicly acknowledged drunkards, those in the drink trade would "render it a public blessing."[8]

With an acceptance of moderate drinking and the legitimacy of the drink trade, the reformer of the MSSI was hardly the uncompromising zealot of Cheever's mold. The MSSI looked backwards in time to a society where deference

guided conduct and where one's position in society was all that was needed to have an effective voice. These early temperance reformers alienated dissenting religious groups, introduced no persuasive innovations, and merely wanted stricter enforcement of existing laws against intoxication, ordinances first promulgated by Puritans. The organization was thus, in Ian Tyrrell's words, "a failure, a false start to the temperance agitation." The MSSI represented men of a feckless Federalist elite, "[d]ilatory in their approach to reform," strategically befuddled, and organizationally ineffective.[9]

The MSSI nevertheless provided Congregational ministers with their first reform experiences and established certain temperance conventions later adopted by Cheever. The society gave ministers a new outlet to influence the course of society even as they felt less able to dictate social norms from the pulpit. By the War of 1812, the monopoly clerics held over moral issues in colonial America had clearly eroded. The American Revolution helped multiply professionals, especially career politicians, who had a say over society. Ministers were losing their voice over "secular" issues, and temperance was a way to recover some of their diminished authority. At the same time, disestablishment proliferated religious voices.[10] Some ministers felt especially troubled by the growth of what seemed a theological cacophony. The

orthodox Congregationalists who preceded Cheever felt hemmed in on one side by the Unitarian rationalists and on the other by the charismatic Methodist and Baptist circuit riders of the backcountry. New institutions intended to reinvigorate Congregationalism further encouraged clerical activism. Amherst College and Andover Theological Seminary, for example, both became centers of temperance feeling. Hints of a rejuvenated ministry, one that would reassert its moral authority, were visible in the MSSI.

Like nearly all temperance reformers prior to 1840, the MSSI abandoned the drunkard as irredeemably lost. According to its Fourth Annual Report, the drunkard was "a loathsome object of disgust, a helpless burthen on society." Jesse Appleton, the President of Bowdoin College, Cheever's alma mater, told the MSSI that given the difficulty in retrieving drunkards, it was better "to operate on the sound parts of society, than on those, which are sickly and decaying."[11] Samuel Worcester, in an address to the MSSI called "The Drunkard a Destroyer," catalogued all that the drunkard annihilated in his sinful career--health, character, wealth, intelligence, and soul. The drunkard was literally a disease, "a noisesome pestilence, . . .(a) baleful contagion,. . .a corrupting influence on a circle around him."[12]

Worcester asked, "shall this favoured land be forever stigmatized as a land of drunkards?"[13] The MSSI, like

Cheever, saw excessive drinking as an obstacle to the special mission of the United States. In the tradition of the Puritan jeremiad, Benjamin Wadsworth, the minister of the First Church in Danvers, told the local branch of the MSSI that he feared the national "declension" that accompanied economic and demographic success. Intemperance, warned Wadsworth, "tarnishes the rising glory of our country." Intemperance destroyed and enslaved the body and "prostitutes what might have been a fit temple for the Holy Ghost into an awful spectacle of guilt and wretchedness." It was "a leading sin. It usually opens a door to a long train of evils." Distilled liquors were "a luxurious refinement," and their excessive use threatened America's role as a "virtuous exception" in a corrupt world.[14]

But how would Wadsworth deal with the profound threat posed by excessive drinking? Pointing to the social power of deference, he suggested, "Great is the influence of example, whether to vitiate or reform mankind."[15] For ministers like Wadsworth, society could not help but emulate an elite. Despite such attitudes, the organization printed temperance tracts, beginning what later became an avalanche of reform publications. The speeches of MSSI notables were printed and spread across the state. During the summer of 1823, the society distributed more than 10,000 copies of Benjamin Rush's Inquiry into the Effects

of Ardent Spirits in Boston alone. Notwithstanding these efforts, Henry Ware, Jr., the minister of the Second Church in Boston, lamented,

> Nothing has yet been found to reach the root of the evil. The multitude of tracts, which have been sent abroad, seem to have passed through the air like a thick flight of snow, which leaves no trace of its passage, and disappears where it falls. Sermons have been preached; but the exhortation of the pulpit sinks into drowsy ears. . . Associations have come forward. . .and found themselves at a loss how to assail the thousand-headed monster. The legislature has attempted to intervene. But laws are matter of derision; they cannot be strong enough to bind, where so few have courage to execute, and so many are interested to break them.[16]

The publication of rational arguments against intemperance proved ineffectual. To succeed, temperance advocates would need not only to convince but also to convert.

The American Temperance Society was founded in 1826 with such a mission in mind. The ATS especially wanted to convert the moderate drinker to a life of abstinence. Abstinence was far easier to define than moderation, and conversion was similarly an all-or-nothing decision. Temperance ministers had come to see drinking not only as a social problem but more pointedly as a barrier to human perfection and the Second Coming. The new organization wanted moral purity, not a marginally more orderly society but a regenerated one. To achieve this new goal, one that

melded with the millennial instrumentalities of the Second Great Awakening, reformers like Justin Edwards intensified the publication and distribution of temperance tracts. At its creation, the Executive Committee of the ATS held the power to "appoint agents in different parts of the country" and "to make it a serious object to introduce into the publications of the day, essays and addresses on the subject of intoxicating liquors."[17] If the nation was to be saved from the increasingly demonized drink, it would be through the printed word. Because of their special calling, Congregationalist ministers would take the lead. Eventually, pulpit storytelling mutated into temperance fiction.[18]

The ATS was an evangelical organization, and unlike the MSSI, it included the populist religious dissenters and excluded the elitist Unitarians. Nine of the sixteen founders of the ATS were ministers.[19] Edwards, probably the most important figure in the establishment of the ATS, was a Congregationalist minister in Andover, Massachusetts, and had helped found the New England Tract Society in 1815. In 1825, the New England group's publishing efforts, including its plates and engravings, were transferred to New York City as property of the newly organized American Tract Society.[20] Edwards maintained a mere "symbolic" role in the new national institution. "Casting about for a new sphere of usefulness," he embarked on a career in temperance

agitation with the already established tactics of tract publishing and distribution through churches.[21] Using new printing technologies and forecasting the perfection of humankind, the American Temperance Society (ATS) intended to print its way to the millennium. The year before Cheever published his story of the deacon and his distillery, the ATS declared its goal as nothing less inspiring than the Second Coming of Christ.

> The truth that the traffic is wicked, strikes the evil at its root; and with a blow so strong and deep, that it will inevitably destroy it. The reception of this truth, and its publication by the wise and good, with corresponding action, is the sure harbinger of Him, who is Lord over all, and who is coming to consume the evil with the breath of his mouth, and to destroy it with the brightness of his appearing.[22]

It is thus not surprising that the Rev. Cheever's blow for temperance took the form of a printed article and that in his defense he would appeal to "higher truths."

The ATS did not radically redefine the reform's understanding of the chronic inebriate. Drunkards, claimed the Executive Committee of the ATS in 1826, were "not only useless, but a burden and a nuisance to society." The roots of the evil, however, shifted away from the moral failings of the individual drinker. During the mid-1820s, temperance logic turned on the origins of drunkards. Who, the ATS asked, was responsible for the annual production of 30,000 dead and another 200,000 "diseased, distressed, and

impoverished?" Who was responsible for the fifty million dollars wasted each year on drink and the resulting pauperism?[23] Cheever struck most fcrcefully at the distiller, not the drunkard, whom he considered doomed and damned. Furthermore, the intensity of the attack was new. The rhetorical escalation that accompanied the expanding temperance movement widened the net to catch new "monsters," especially within the liquor trade. The new commitment to unveiling the origins of society's ills required new tactics. The resurgence of Arminian possibility and the rejection of a gloomy Calvinism created a clergy less accepting of the traffic in alcohol and more active in its elimination. Perfection demanded nothing less.

A Maine minister, whose address was published in 1827 at the request of the Temperate Society of Bowdoin College, asserted, "We live not for ourselves alone. Society, and each individual in it, have claims on us, and we cannot consult our own pleasure or interest alone, without partaking of the guilt of those who are naturally led by our examples, to do wrong." An ethos of communal responsibility extended to drinking habits. Even if you drink moderately, "remember you ruin others." In particular, religious leaders who drink increased "the torrent of fashion" that drew potential drunkards into the swirling vortex. Thus Deacon Giles presented a

particularly ghastly example for society to follow. Another Maine minister sermonized that it was a person's "duty to inquire, not only whether an action was lawful in itself, but whether it was expedient, taking into view its influence on the conduct of others." This duty fell not only on those who enjoyed social prominence but on everyone--"Almost every individual in the community has some influence." Whereas the MSSI mainly sought temperate elites whom the masses would naturally emulate, now anyone could either drink, and thereby encourage others to drink, or abstain, and help place the "mark of infamy" on all drinking. The ATS democratized the force of example.[24]

Cheever heaped opprobrium on Deacon Giles for engaging in activities that indirectly created disease and damnation. The story tries to reintegrate a community sundered by market forces. Capitalism disrupted the traditional ties of community by fostering rapid change and defining success only in financial terms. Neighbors became competitors and distant folk possible allies in trade. The moral dangers of greed intensified. Giles wanted profits, regardless of its effects on his neighbors.

Giles was not himself a drunkard but rather a moderate drinker. According to the new logic of total abstinence, moderate drinkers lent the liquor traffic an air of respectability and insured its profitability. With the advent of the American Temperance Society, even those who

had hitherto considered themselves "temperate" became morally responsible for the sufferings of inebriates and their families. They were examples to others as well as future drunkards. The free will of the moderate drinker lingered intact, but alcohol progressively damaged his conscience. In 1826, the ATS abandoned "those who have already, in different degrees, contracted habits of intemperance; the utility of the Institution must chiefly consist in guarding against danger those who are yet uncontaminated by this loathsome and fatal vice."[25] "Every glass" consumed by any moderately drinking Christian became "a warrant for his neighbor to do the like," and any producer, buyer, or seller became an "accessory to the crime of drunkenness." One speaker insisted that all moderate drinkers, unless they converted to abstinence, faced "the death of sots."[26]

Deacon Giles was not a besotted pauper but rather as a prosperous businessman who imbibed frequently. His greed for money more than his appetite for drink drew him to the demons. Nevertheless, his own drinking was part of his criminality, and the linkage between "moderate" drinking and an impaired conscience quickly became a temperance convention by the 1820s.

If any individual who engaged in the liquor trade was guilty of creating drunkards, wealthy large-scale distillers were special immoral pariahs. Distillers, once

considered respectable creators of the nation's wealth, were transformed into monstrous destroyers of prosperity. In 1834, the ATS declared, "Every dollar he receives, instead of being a certificate of the amount of good he has done, is a certificate of the misery and ruin he has spread around him."[27] That he did not directly intend to create drunkards did not matter. The results were the same. If it strives for anything, "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" seeks to deprive distillers of the label of respectability.

Temperance activists portrayed the distillery as a particularly loathsome institution. Two presidents of Amherst College, founded as an alternative to Unitarian Harvard, wrote scathing condemnations of the distillery as a bubbling well of evil. Heman Humphrey, president between 1823 and 1845, wrote a dialogue between a distiller and his conscience, published by the American Tract Society, in which the sin of greed battles the virtue of Christian sympathy. Humphrey's most famous temperance writing was an 1828 tract entitled Parallel Between Intemperance and the Slave Trade in which he argued that the trade in rum was worse than the transatlantic trade in human cargo. For Humphrey, intemperance instituted "a more brutifying and afflictive thraldom" because it "fetters the immortal mind as well as the dying body." Humphrey argued that intemperance was "a domestic tyrant" and denied those

exposed to Christianity the benefits of religion. The slave trade, continued Humphrey, oppressed Africans who could not expect the kingdom of God: "Diabolical as this traffic is, it does not deprive its victims of the means of grace, for they never enjoyed them." He predicted that "posterity will look back upon the present ravages and toleration of intemperance, with emotions of astonishment, grief and horror, similar to those which we now feel, in reading the most afflictive history of the Slave-trade." Responsible for the massive moral and spiritual depredations of intemperance was the "criminal apathy" of those who considered themselves temperate. They lent the distiller and purveyor an air of respectability.[28]

Succeeding Humphrey to the helm of Amherst was Edward Hitchcock, fascinating for his melding together of science and religion in a temperance cauldron. Hitchcock was the Congregational minister in Conway, Massachusetts, before attending Yale, where he studied geology. Returning to western Massachusetts, he served Amherst first as professor and then as president. He spent much of his career seeking evidence that geology revealed the will of God.

Hitchcock was a fervent proponent of temperance. He prayed in dormitory rooms with Amherst students who had not signed the teetotal pledge. In 1847, he published his own temperance book, History of a Zoological Temperance Convention, a "humble effort to make truth more attractive,

by clothing it in allegorical dress." Hitchcock's book was a debate between animals in central Africa over the merits of temperance.[29] More relevant here is his tract, Argument against the Manufacture of Ardent Spirits, published by the American Tract Society around 1830. Hitchcock asserted that distillation sinfully converted natural food into an artificial poison. He called on those who make drink to think of the consequences of their economic activities. Hitchcock plaintively urged distillers to save themselves "from the eternal agonies of conscience, the execrations of millions, and the wrath of Omnipotence." On the cover of the tract was an engraving of demons exhaled from the still busy in the creation of dead men and dilapidated houses. Meanwhile, women and children begged to the prosperous distiller with hat, coat, and cane. By 1850, the society had distributed 76,000 copies of Hitchcock's work throughout the nation. Cheever probably read the tract. It may have added to his understanding of the "tortured ingredients" that went into Amos Giles's distillery.[30]

For Hitchcock, alcohol was hardly Increase Mather's "good creature of God." Fermentation and distillation "operate in the production of the most hateful and dangerous gases." Geology and God provided a healthful substitute to alcohol: water, or "Amherst Tea," as he called it. In bodies, alcohol "rouses into action that which already exists in the constitution," creating

NO. 242.

ARGUMENT

AGAINST THE

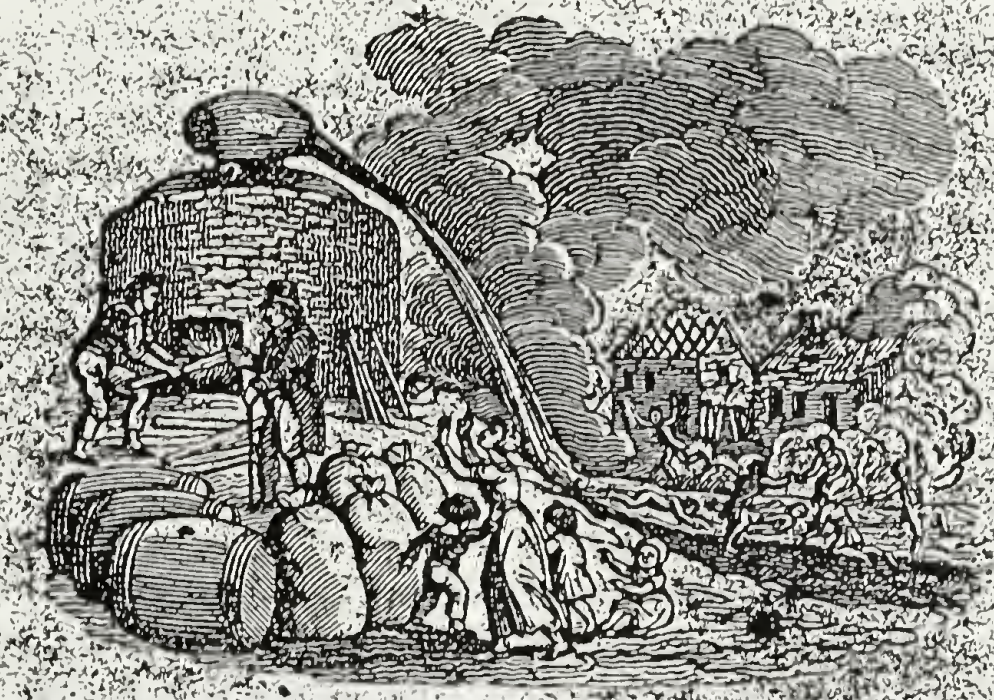
MANUFACTURE OF ARDENT SPIRITS.

ADDRESSED TO THE

DISTILLER AND THE FURNISHER

OF THE MATERIALS.

BY REV. EDWARD HITCHCOCK.



You stand at the fountain head of that fiery stream which is spreading volcanic desolation over the land. Oh, shut up the sluices before every verdant spot is buried beneath the inundation.—*Page 14.*

PUBLISHED BY THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

AND SOLD AT THEIR DEPOSITORY, NO. 144 NASSAU-STREET, NEAR THE CITY-HALL, NEW-YORK; AND BY AGENTS OF THE SOCIETY, ITS BRANCHES, AND AUXILIARIES, IN THE PRINCIPAL CITIES AND TOWNS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Figure 4: Edward Hitchcock's *Argument against the Manufacture of Ardent Spirits.*

"premature exhaustion," susceptibility to disease, and an early grave. Socially, the "drunkard does not merely die to society: he cleaves to it, like a gangrenous excrescence, poisoning and eating away the life of the community" through crime and pauperism. Finally, alcohol was part of, maybe the center of, a America's cosmic struggle between good and evil. In an unpublished temperance writing, Hitchcock averred that "until this hindrance be taken out of the way, the world cannot be converted." Only through temperance would humanity welcome "the opening glories of the millennial morning."[31]

While the foremost aim of the evangelicals of the American Temperance Society was universal temperance conversion and moral purification, they never abandoned appeals to temporal self-interest. As Hitchcock argued, the distiller created drunkards, and drunkards were paupers, an arduous burden on taxpayers. A speaker before the Kennebunk Temperance Society reformulated the usual view of lost freedom through habitual intemperance. For Burleigh Smart, alcohol enslaved abstinent middling taxpayers by forcing them to support the impoverished drunkard and his family. He offered his listeners a choice.

> Fellow citizens, one of two things you must do: you must toil, and tug, and economize, to enable you to meet the increasing demands of the idle, vicious and intemperate; or you must rise up

> and unitedly assert and maintain your own independence--counteract and do away these demands, which so long as yielded to, will bind you in a servitude whose chains will every year increase in number and strength.[32]

In 1828, the minister of the First Church in Portland called intemperance "the fruitful parent of all crime" and a "nuisance to the public as the chief and almost only source of mendicity and pauperism."[33]

The ATS systematically collected statistics on the financial and human costs of intemperance, to confirm their already formed views. One of Cheever's casks read "Insanity and Murder," and by 1835, the link between crime and intemperance had been firmly established, largely through the efforts of the ATS. The collection of statistics followed earlier anecdotal evidence of horrible murders, suicides, and accidents connected with drunkenness. Newspaper accounts made their way into the reports of the ATS. A common story told of a child who burns to death while the parents lie nearby, helplessly intoxicated.[34] These supposedly edifying temperance anecdotes were a short step from outright temperance fiction.

The American Temperance Society tried to be scientific, not sensational. It systematically reached out to Americans to collect and present facts about alcohol. Through its agents, local auxiliaries, and publications,

the national society was a clearinghouse for all sorts of information on the connection between social problems and intemperance. Speeches and writings drowned listeners and readers with numbers of paupers, wasted dollars, murders, inmates at insane asylums, orphans, and other social maladies that came from drinking.

Quantitative analysis lent the reform an air of objective truth, even though ingrained biases undoubtedly tainted the data. More important, temperance advocates read the information the ATS collected in the context of their millennial hopes. In colonial times, Puritan clerics would read problems, whether sickness, poverty, crime, Indian attacks, earthquakes, or bad weather, in one of two ways--either as God's wrathful punishment for sins or as trials to prove one's worthiness before God. The evangelicals of the American Temperance Society, in contrast, saw social problems as man-made affronts to perfectionist aspirations. God's will was curiously missing as an actor in this build up to the Second Coming of Christ. Social problems and the human solutions to them thus held cosmic significance. Anything could be changed by human efforts. As Hitchcock had suggested, temperance was both a social struggle and a cosmic battle, and America was the battlefield.

John Marsh simply said, "Satan is in Eden." If temperance is defeated, elaborated Marsh, "our bright hope

of the speedy approach of millennial glory will perish in the mad ravings of internal furies."[35] The stakes in Cheever's personal assault on distilleries were enormous. Cheever undoubtedly read Lyman Beecher's admonition to Americans that their freely chosen behavior portended either great good or great evil.

> We boast of our liberties, and rejoice in our prospective instrumentality in disenthralling the world. But our own foundations rest on the heaving sides of a burning mountain, through which, in thousands of places, the fire has burst out and is blazing around us. If they cannot be extinguished, we are undone; our sun is fast setting, and the darkness of an endless night is closing upon us.

From special mission to hell-fire and eternal darkness, the transition is abrupt and meant to compel decisive action. For Beecher, only through total abstinence might Americans "hem in the army of the destroyer and impede his march, and turn him back and redeem the land." For Beecher, intemperance was "the sin of our land."[36]

The First Annual Report of the American Temperance Society linked the imagery of fire with the "custom and fashion" of moderate drinking and its annual creation of 300,000 future drunkards. The respectability of moderate drinking and the greed of distillers provided

> the fuel that feeds the slow fires, which day and night are burning three hundred thousand human sacrifices. And are these fires `unquenchable,' like those of the under world? How long

> shall the smoke of these altars cover the whole land with darkness? Shall Moloch reign over us and our children forever? Mighty and Gracious Saviour! from whose presence foul spirits flee away, come and deliver us.[37]

The conflation of hell-fire and the fires that distilled alcohol put the devil in the distillery, and only cold water could quench the evil.

Alcohol's flames also raged within the human body. Temperance ministers like Cheever were fighting for bodies as well as minds and souls.[38] His demons left burning inscriptions on the casks of rum which suggested the various bodily disorders that result from drinking alcohol. Cheever's list was a long one--consumption, convulsions and epilepsy, dropsy, rheumatism, putrid fever, and cholera. The ATS and especially the New York State Temperance Society published statistics citing intemperance as a death warrant and abstinence from alcohol a veritable inoculation during the sporadic outbreaks of cholera in American cities during the first half of the nineteenth century. Almost all colonial Americans had believed ardent spirits to be beneficial to health, but beginning with the theories of Anthony Benezet and Benjamin Rush in the late eighteenth century, alcohol slowly became perceived as the root of most, if not all, disease.

In 1774, Anthony Benezet, from a French Huguenot family, published the first major medical work in favor of

temperance and was an important influence on the more popular Rush. Benezet denounced alcoholic drinks as poisons which "rot the entrails." For Benezet, alcohol had the strange power to create "an insensibility to the healing influence of religion." From the beginning of medical temperance, thus, the bodily and the religious were thoroughly mingled. Rush elaborated on this idea as well as the Benezet's understanding of disease as the literal "inflammation" of bodily functions.[39]

Benjamin Rush's Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits, published in 1785 and in many later editions, was one of the most influential works on temperance in antebellum America. Cheever's flaming inscriptions of diseases can be understood as an outgrowth of Rush's theories of how the human body worked and the pernicious effects of ardent spirits. Rush, imaginatively combining republican politics with evangelicalism, asked ministers to defeat intemperance and suggested religion as the surest cure for the malady. Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, offered a "radical challenge" to accepted ideas about drinking in the Early Republic.[40]

Following on Rush, the American Temperance Society and its adherents shaped a theory of addiction. "Excitement" was a curse for the human body. The Eighth Annual Report of the ATS, published the same year Cheever wrote his story, outlined how the human body became addicted to

alcohol. Alcohol stimulates the body, but "over-worked, without any new strength communicated," the bodily system "flags" and feels an "inexpressible uneasiness." The debilitated drinker's body led to ailments like those on the flaming casks. "A man cannot thus chafe, irritate and exhaust his system" and not feel pain. "To obtain the past pleasure" and "to remove the present pain," he drinks again.

> But as the system is unstrung and partly worn out, and is also lower down than it was before, the same quantity will not the next time, raise it up so high; nor cause the wearied organs to move so briskly. Of course it will not fully answer the purpose; will not give so much present pleasure, or produce so much effect, as before. Hence the motive to increase the quantity; and for the same reason, in future, to increase it more, and still more. As every repetition increases the difficulty, and also throws new obstacles in the way of its removal, the temptation to increase its removal, the temptation to increase the quantity, grows stronger and stronger. The natural life of the system constantly diminishes, and of course in order to seem to live, what there is, must be more and more highly roused, till, in one half, one quarter, or one eighth of the proper time, the whole is exhausted, and the man sinks prematurely to his grave.

In addition, the artificial appeal of "this unnatural, forbidden, and guilty pleasure" overwhelms interest in "natural and innocent pleasures" and "disinclines the mind to look at God."[41] Most likely written by Justin Edwards, a

Congregationalist minister, the foregoing equates sickness with sin, and debility with distilleries.

In temperance culture, clerics sounded like physicians and physicians sounded like clerics. As the writings of Justin Edwards suggest, much as a doctor like Rush might speak to the spiritual realm, so might the temperance minister speak of the human body. That they did so suggests the body as a primary location of all sorts of conversions. One evangelical minister called the drunkard "already a naked skeleton, or a bloated corpse; a walking mummy--when he can walk; a mass of semianimated putrefaction. He is dead while he lives."[42] With the conversion to temperance came a new body, one perfectible, free, and thoroughly alive. Temperance advocates made health a spiritual possession to be carefully cultivated as a moral imperative. Edward Hitchcock told his Amherst College students that attention to health was crucial because they would have "a solemn account to make to God" and on one's final ledger, bodily disorders might be accounted sin.[43]

The flaming inscriptions made Cheever's position clear --distillers sold cholera with their cordials. The temperance movement encouraged health reformers like Sylvester Graham to peddle theories on the sanctity of well-being. While Cheever's consumers of rum suffered debilitating diseases, Graham's followers sought health

through experiences modelled on the temperance conversion. As Stephen Nissenbaum's work shows, Graham's career itself began with temperance. Little more than a year before "Amos Giles' Distillery" appeared, Graham argued that all disease resulted "from the transgressions of mankind," particularly from dangerous "stimuli" like drinking. Moral purity would bring about bodily purity. Health came not from "the eternal and suicidal drugging! drugging! drugging! of mankind" but rather from the purifying power of cold water, a convention of temperance discourse if ever there was one. One Grahamite testified that excessive use of butter, tea, and coffee caused women in her family to display "every appearance of delirium tremens." Another recovered after adopting the Graham diet regimen, feeling "the romping buoyancy" of childhood while "darkness and despondency" disappeared. Another compared health problems to being "stranded amidst horrible breakers." Such bodily experiences were shaped by temperance understandings of the human body and the experience of conversion. In antebellum America, health was virtue. Disease, as Cheever understood it, was sin.[44]

In retrospect, the analogy temperance zealots like Cheever made was not quite the common one between body and body politic. More accurately, the analogy was between body and body economic. The body was a delivery system for healthful substances, but that system could be "overheated"

by unnatural stimulation and excitement. The effect of alcohol on the body was like that of inflationary overspeculation on the economy--the inevitable result was debility and collapse. The body of the confirmed inebriate would spiral out of control. Ultimately, the demons of drink would mine the body of all its precious resources. "Inflammation" was merely the first sign of eternal flames. For people who endured the frequent financial crises of the antebellum decades, stability seemed heavenly.

Religious leaders had a special duty to assault the bastions of illegitimate commerce, to put brakes on a capitalist system that seemed to eat its children, and thereby promote both health and Christianity. As one speaker told the ATS in 1829, it was "the duty of every professor of religion" to promote abstinence. "Here silence is crime; and inactivity treason;" there could be "no excuse in this war." Ministers presented the making and selling of alcoholic drink as an evil mirror image to the evangelical calling. The drink trade stood in the way of the proselytizer because intemperance "eradicates from the human heart every feeling and every principle which religion inspires, and it poisons the very soil in which it grows." It was a "monster" that could only be killed by "starvation," total abstinence. But bemoaned the speaker, "the church sleeps on this subject."[45] Especially galling

was the perceived hypocrisy of church leaders still connected with the drink trade.

Deacons, whose roles as church elders signalled a special status in the community, became a favorite target for temperance commentary. Temperance advocates, as ideologues for a broad middle, stressed the appetites of those both higher and lower on the social ladder. The year before Cheever's story appeared, Mary L. Fox published a novel, The Ruined Deacon, "a relation of facts themselves, literally and substantially true in all its details." Deacon S_____ was a "respectable" tanner and farmer living on the Connecticut River near Vermont's Mount Ascutney. Materially successful, he was elected deacon at the local Baptist church, but he drank moderately. Fifteen years later, his substantial home was all "ruin and desolation," his wife "raving crazy", and the deacon himself "one of the most beastly and degraded of sots." The author blamed the example of the local minister who had founded a society to suppress intemperance but also served wine and cider to guests.

Another temperance assault on deacons in the mid-1830s came from the pen of Lucius Manlius Sargent, the most successful writer of temperance fiction before T.S. Arthur. An uncompromising Brahmin, Sargent left Harvard in 1804 over a dispute about the quality of food served to students and then became a lawyer. Whether he was, as one biography

put it, "preeminently a good hater" or, as the ATS expressed, "a benefactor to his race," Sargent was undoubtedly popular. His Temperance Tales went through numerous editions and were well-known to antebellum readers. Like a good evangelist, Sargent asked readers of his first temperance story, "My Mother's Gold Ring," to either "present it to the first little boy you meet" or to "throw it in the street, as near to some dram-seller's door as you ever venture to go." The story would thus become "flying seed" that "may yet spring up and bear fruit." "My Mother's Gold Ring" is narrated by a woman who has endured two bitter years of marriage because of her husband's intemperance, but the villain of the story is not her unreliable, sometimes violent husband. More engulfed by sin is the deacon who plies him with drink. The woman goes to the deacon's store and begs him to stop selling to her husband, but neither words nor tears affect his "hardened" heart. The husband is ultimately saved by relying on the talismanic ring given his wife by her mother on her deathbed.[46]

In 1840, John Marsh listed all the obstacles to the ultimate victory of temperance. Despite the impediments created by such forces as "prejudice," "appetite," "interest," and "fashion," wrote Marsh, "the most serious obstacle to the progress and consummation of Temperance has been in the Church." Marsh was referring to the use of

communion wine, an intoxicant happily consumed by Cheever's miscreant deacon who allied himself with demons. During the 1830s, a bitter and prolonged controversy simmered over the wine sacrament. Marsh and other temperance purists distinguished between the Hebrew "Yayin," the fermented juice of the grape, and "Tirosh," the unfermented juice of the grape. Sargent chimed in on the debate, pronouncing wine offensive to God. In a review of a 1835 sermon at a Presbyterian church in Albany, Sargent wrote, "Grievous indeed will it be, if the communion board shall be the last stronghold of intoxicating liquor." He suggested that the views of a minister who supported the use of alcoholic communion wine must be tainted by his own habitual drinking.[47] Cheever agreed and had Deacon Giles drink communion wine as a sign of hypocritical and false religiosity.

The very name "Giles" denotes dishonesty. The etymology of the word "alcohol" was used to link the drink trade with deception. For John Marsh, alcohol came from Arabia, "the country of the false prophet." The Arabic "al-koh'l" referred to a fine metallic powder used to stain the eyelids, and by extension, was applied to the highly refined products of distillation. The word entered the English language during the sixteenth century. During the nineteenth century, temperance reformers imbued the word with a meaning other than refinement. In his Temperance

Manual, Justin Edwards wrote that alcohol in Arabic was "a fine impalpable powder, with which the women used to paint their faces in order to increase their beauty. Men, when drunk with Alcohol, have often thought they were more beautiful, or rich, or strong, or in some respects better than they were before. But they were deceived, utterly deceived."[48] Painted woman and drunken men were thus linguistically linked as duplicitous agents of moral mayhem. "Al'kohl" would be met with a temperance crusade.

The weapons in this holy war were words and images, products that others commodified. Ministers like Cheever were largely responsible for the incipient commercialization of the temperance message, but later sellers of sobriety employed temperance themes in forms these same ministers could have neither foreseen nor countenanced. The forces unleashed by ministers, forces they would prove unable to control, began as efforts to spread the temperance message. Tactically, the temperance movement in its first two decades shifted from the passive display of "example" to the more active use of "influence" and finally to the increasingly vociferous arts of "persuasion." Alongside these tactical shifts came a rhetorical escalation that made the war on alcohol the sine qua non of virtue. With "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery," the demonization of alcohol was complete, and persuasive fictions, however gilded by assertions of

"allegory" or appeals to "higher truths," were an accepted way to spread the message.

Notes

1. The story appeared in numerous sources. Quotes are from the New York Evangelist, July 4, 1835.

2. Ibid.

3. Robert H. Abzug, Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 30-56. Abzug writes that for millennialists like Lyman Beecher, "the cosmic drama lent a sacred framework to existence." I am indebted to Abzug for my interpretation of Cheever's temperance as both a social and religious endeavor, a Manichaean struggle between good and evil that blurred, even erased, the boundaries between what we understand as "social" and "religious."

4. James Holley Garrison, Behold Me Once More: The Confessions of James Holley Garrison, ed. by Walter McIntosh Merrill (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954): 20-21. W.J. Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979): 232. John Marsh, A Half Century Tribute to the Cause of Temperance (New York: American Temperance Union, 1851): 4, 9; Marsh, Temperance Recollections. Labors, Defeats, Triumphs. An Autobiography (New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1866): 16.

5. Mason L. Weems, "The Drunkard's Looking Glass," in Thee Discourses (New York: Random House, 1929): 55-136, stomach-turning quotes from 59, 72, 78, 110. In 1851, John Marsh omitted any mention of Weems in his extensive list of nineteenth-century publications with temperance themes. See Marsh, A Half Century Tribute to the Cause of Temperance: 33. On Weems, see Lewis Leary, The Book-Peddling Parson (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books, 1984).

6. Karen Halttunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," American Historical Review 100 (April 1995): 303-334. R. Laurence Moore, Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press): 20-31.

7. The Importance of Sobriety Illustrated by the Evils of Intemperance (Andover: New England Tract Society, 1814). John James Bound, The Means of Curing & Preventing Intemperance (New York: Charles N. Baldwin, 1820).

8. Abiel Abbot, An Address Delivered before the Massachusetts Society for Suppressing Intemperance at Their Anniversary Meeting, June 2, 1815 (Cambridge: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1815): 14. Joshua Bates, Two Sermons on

Intemperance, Delivered on the Day of the Annual Fats, April 8, 1813 (Dedham: Gazette, 1814): 28-9.

9. Ian R. Tyrrell, Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979): 33-53. On the workings and limitations of the MSSI, also see Joel Charles Bernard, "From Theodicy to Ideology: The Origins of the American Temperance Movement," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1983: 200-224. Robert L. Hampel, Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts, 1813-1852 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982): 11-24.

10. According to Moore in Selling God: 67, "A state church. . .relieves religion from market pressures, from the need to maintain its financial solvency through commercial self-promotion." Temperance activities can be seen as an means by which ministers could gain attention and leadership in a competitive atmosphere as American religion was becoming more "commercial" in form if not in explicit content. It was no coincidence that clerical temperance appeared as the crisis in religious authority was reaching a fevered pitch.

11. Jesse Appleton, An Address, Delivered before the Massachusetts Society for Suppressing Intemperance, at their Meeting, May 16, 1816 (Boston: John Eliot, 1816): 12, 26.

12. Samuel Worcester, The Drunkard a Destroyer (Boston: John Eliot, 1817): 4-6, 9.

13. Ibid.: 14.

14. Benjamin Wadsworth, Intemperance a National Evil (Salem: Thomas C. Cushing, 1815): 3-4, 7.

15. Ibid.: 16.

16. Henry Ware, Jr., The Criminality of Intemperance: An Address Delivered at the Eleventh Anniversary of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (Boston: Phelps and Farnham, 1823): 16-17.

17. First Annual Report of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1827): 5-6.

18. On the replacement of biblical exegesis by pulpit storytelling, see David S. Reynolds, "From Doctrine to Narrative: The Rise of Pulpit Storytelling in America," American Quarterly 32 (Winter 1980): 479-498.

19. Hampel: 25.

20. Recent scholarship has emphasized the pioneering role played by the American Tract Society in American publishing history. The production and distribution of tracts set precedents and techniques that were followed by later strictly commercial ventures. See, for example, David Paul Nord, "The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America, 1815-1835," Journalism Monographs 88 (May 1984): 1-30. Nord writes that "the missionary impulse--first in purely religious crusades and then in the more secular reform movements--lay at the popularization of print in the 19th century. For a textual analysis of how tracts addressed the market revolution of which they were a part, see Mark S. Schantz, "Religious Tracts, Evangelical Reform, and the Market Revolution in Antebellum America," Journal of the Early Republic: 17 (Fall 1997):425-66. On the larger context, see R. Laurence Moore, Selling God.

21. Tyrrell: 54-66, 126. Mark Lender, Dictionary of American Temperance Biography (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984): 149-51. William A. Hallock, "Light and Love." A Sketch of the Life and Labor of the Rev. Justin Edwards, D.D. (New York: American Tract Society, 1855): 182-3.

22. Justin Edwards, "Seventh Annual Report of the American Temperance Society," in Permanent Temperance Documents of the American Temperance Society (Boston: Seth Bliss, 1835): 13.

23. First Annual Report of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance: 8.

24. Asa Mead, A Sermon, Addressed to the Temperate (Portland: Shirley & Hyde, 1827): 5, 14, 20. Thomas Adams, A Sermon on Intemperance (Hallowell: Glazier & Co., 1827): 3, 19, 24.

25. Tyrrell: 71-2. First Annual Report of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance: 6.

26. Jonathan Kittredge, An Address. Delivered before the American Temperance Society at its Second Annual Meeting, Held in Boston, January 28, 1829 (Hartford: D.F. Robinson & Co., 1829): 4-5. Huntington Lyman, An Address Delivered before the Temperance Society of Franklinville at their Annual Meeting in September, 1830 (New York: Henry C. Sleight, 1830): 7.

27. Edwards, "Seventh Annual Report of the American Temperance Society," in Permanent Temperance Documents: 23.

28. Much of Humphrey's dialogue is republished in Edwards, "Seventh Annual Report of the American Temperance Society," in Permanent Temperance Documents: 28-33. Heman Humphrey, Parallel between Intemperance and the Slave Trade. An Address Delivered at Amherst College, July 4, 1828 (Amherst: J.S. and C. Adams, 1828): 4, 14, 25, 37, 40. On Humphrey, see Lender, Dictionary of American Temperance Biography: 246-7.

29. Edward Hitchcock, History of a Zoological Temperance Convention (Northampton: Butler & Bridgmen, 1850).

30. Marsh, A Half Century Tribute to the Cause of Temperance: 27. Edward Hitchcock, Argument against the Manufacture of Ardent Spirits. Addressed to the Distiller and the Furnisher of the Materials (New York: American Tract Society, 1830?).

31. Edward Hitchcock, An Essay on Alcoholic & Narcotic Substances, as Articles of Common Use (Amherst: American Temperance Society, 1830). Also lecture notes in Edward and Orra Hitchcock Papers, Amherst College, Box 22, folder 15.

32. Burleigh Smart, An Address Before the Kennebunk Temperance Society, delivered Christmas evening, Dec. 25th, 1829, at its First Annual Meeting, by its President (1830?): 4-5.

33. I. Nichols, Address Delivered before the Portland Association for the Promotion of Temperance. February 22, 1828 (Portland: Hill and Edwards, 1828): 5.

34. See for example, Edwards, "Fifth Annual Report of the American Temperance Society," in Permanent Temperance Documents.

35. John Marsh, Putnam and the Wolf; or, The Monster Destroyed. An Address at Pomfret, Con., October 28, 1829, Before the Windham Co. Temperance Society (Hartford: D.F. Robinson, 1829): 11.

36. Lyman Beecher, Six Sermons on the Nature, Occasions, Signs, Evils, and Remedy of Intemperance (New York: American Tract Society, 1827): 59-60.

37. First Report of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance: 25.

38. Sometimes in temperance fiction, bodies literally burned from the effects of alcohol. Spontaneous combustion

became one the more lurid conventions of temperance literature. See, for example, Pharcellus Church, Mapleton; or, More Work for the Maine Law (New York: Sheldon, Lamport and Blakeman, 1856): 307. The following is one of my favorite passages in all of antebellum temperance: "Douglass returned and forced the door; when, lo! out rushed a volley of fetid air, that well-nigh suffocated him. He stepped back a few paces, until the room was somewhat ventilated through the open door, when he returned, and, horrible to tell! there lay the charred and blackened remains of Dobson, manifestly dead by spontaneous combustion! The room, and all its furniture, were covered with a thick yellow substance, filthy and fetid, to shock every delicate sensibility. In another part of the room his wife also lay dead, as it appeared partly from suffocation from the exhaling fume of her burning husband, and partly from her own excessive drunkenness. The contents of the pail were all gone. Dobson probably drank more than his share of the liquor; and, as his constitution was already rendered combustible by previous drinking, this potation set it on fire; and it went off in a blue flame and exhaling fluid, extinguishing both his own life and that of his besotted companion." The author claims to be a Doctor of Divinity.

39. Lender: 41-2. Anthony Benezet, The Mighty Destroyer Displayed (Philadelphia: Joseph James, 1788): 3, 12.

40. Benjamin Rush, An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits, 8th ed. (Brookfield, Mass.: E. Merriam & Co., 1814), reprinted in Yandell Henderson, A New Deal in Liquor: A Plea for Dilution (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1934): 183-222. Lender: 421-4.

41. Edwards, "Eighth Annual Report of the American Temperance Society," in Permanent Temperance Documents: 7-8.

42. Nathan S.S. Beman, Beman on Intemperance. A Discourse delivered in Stephentown, Dec. 25, 1828, and in Troy, Sabbath evening, Jan. 11, 1829, before the temperance societies of those towns (New York: John P. Haven, 1829).

43. "Reasons for attention to health," Amherst College, Nov. 1, 1845, Edward and Orra Hitchcock Papers, Box 22, folder 13.

44. Sylvester Graham, The Aesculapian Tablets of the Nineteenth Century (Providence: Weeden and Cory, 1834): iii, 16, 18, 69. See Stephen Nissenbaum, Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health

Reform (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

45. Kittredge: 3-4, 11.

46. Lender: 432-4. Edwards, "Seventh Report of the American Temperance Society," (1834) in Permanent Temperance Documents: 19. Lucius Manlius Sargent, "My Mother's Gold Ring," in The Temperance Tales (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1853): 5-12.

47. John Marsh, introduction to B. Parsons, Anti-Bacchus: An Essay on the Evils Connected with the Use of Intoxicating Drinks (New York: Scofield and Voorhies, 1840): 9-24. L.M. Sargent, Letter on the "State of the Temperance Reform," to the Rev. Caleb Stetson, of Medford, Mass. (Boston: William S. Damrell, 1836): 5. L.M. Sargent, Review of Dr. Sprague's Sermon on the "Danger of Being Overwise" (Boston: William S. Damrell, 1842): iv, 7.

48. Marsh, Putnam and the Wolf: 4. The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), vol. 1: 300-1. Justin Edwards, The Temperance Manual (New York: American Tract Society, 1847?): 10. Also see Edwards, "Eighth Annual Report of the American Temperance Society, in Permanent Temperance Documents: 2.

CHAPTER 3

WOES, WOUNDS, AND WORDS: GEORGE B. CHEEVER AND THE LIMITS OF CLERICAL TEMPERANCE WRITING

> Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."
>
> Proverbs 23: 29-32

The Rev. Cheever's "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" makes for a fruitful opening into the world of antebellum temperance discourse, maybe most fruitful because it was not very original. Cheever borrowed heavily from the truths established by the rapidly advancing temperance movement. Explicit in his story were such common temperance beliefs as the greed of rum manufacturers, the hypocrisy of drinking Christians, the bodily disorders and eternal damnation of drunkards, the slippery slope by which moderate drinkers became drunkards, the alliance between distillers and Satan, and the inherent evil in alcohol. More implicit were the theoretical understandings that formed the antebellum temperance movement's views of the human body, the good society, and the approaching millennium.

But Cheever's "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" was not a mere compilation of the conventions of clerical

temperance antecedent to his efforts. Were that so, he never would have been sued for libel and the piece would never have attracted so much attention. To understand what happened, we must examine the specifics of Rev. Cheever's background and career as well as the Salem in which he lived, the micro- as well as the macroeconomics of selling sobriety. For it was in the details that Cheever, to borrow from Nathaniel Hawthorne, got himself into hot water while advocating cold.

George Barrell Cheever was born in 1807 in Hallowell, Maine, the son of a Jeffersonian father--a newspaper editor, publisher, and bookseller--and a Federalist mother. In 1825, he graduated from Bowdoin College in a class that included Hawthorne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Franklin Pierce. In 1830, he graduated from Andover Theological Seminary and began a career as a Congregationalist minister with his ordination as pastor of Salem's Howard Street Church in 1833. According to one historian, he was "almost the archetypical antebellum reformer;" few have "generated as much controversy in so many fields." Actively sectarian, he attacked Unitarians for their taste in literature, Episcopalians for their ritual, and Catholics for their opposition to teaching the Bible in public schools. In 1838, leaving Salem and his travails there, Cheever assumed leadership of the Allen

Street Presbyterian Church in New York City. Moving to the Church of the Puritans in 1844, he gained notoriety for his vocal advocacy of the death penalty. Cheever became a fervent abolitionist, and after the raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859, he was one of only two New York City ministers to openly support John Brown. At his death in 1890, he left his extensive library to Howard University. By then, he had himself written 23 volumes and about fifty shorter works.[1]

His intellectual influences made for a strange combination. According to an address given at the unveiling of a bust of Cheever at Howard, he admired Edmund Burke. The same speaker declared that Cheever was "much addicted to the philosophical and ethical writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge."[2] He also spoke and wrote extensively on John Bunyan. Political quirkiness, literary Romanticism, and allegorical Puritanism thus helped mold the man who created Deacon Giles.

Perhaps the best short description of Cheever came in a letter written to the minister almost exactly one year prior to the publication of "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery." Richard H. Dana jokingly asserted, "you are a considerable of a scold; & no one has a right to be a scold, except those creatures that wear petticoats." Dana, in reference to an earlier letter from Cheever, wrote, "Mr. Cheever, hard beset by enemies, & found fault with by cold

fiends, is depressed and discouraged." For hardly the last time in his career, Cheever was embroiled in a public controversy, and Dana suggested, "Try to obtain a feeling of good natured superiority over y'r opponents."[3]

The controversy to which Dana alluded did not center on Cheever's radically protemperance positions. The dispute was nonetheless critical in the publication of the story and the libel case it precipitated. Prior to his foray into temperance, Cheever engaged in a vociferous newspaper debate with a local Unitarian minister, Charles Upham. Cheever wrote his mother how Upham spread "lies" and "blasphemy" in the pages of the Salem Gazette. The dispute between Cheever and Upham reflected a local version of the longstanding orthodox-Unitarian imbroglio. As Salem's churches turned to Unitarianism, the dispute took on a personal and venomous quality. In his "dream," Cheever mentioned some theological positions pronounced by Deacon Giles's minister. The ideas were Unitarian. The attack on distillers, for Cheever, was also an attack on local Unitarians.[4]

The splintering of the Congregational Church into Unitarian and orthodox factions changed the world in which New England's ministers lived and worked. For two hundred years, the "Standing Order" informed the role of religion in the lives of New Englanders, who supported a highly educated clergy through public taxes. Ministers were

cultural authorities whose flocks deferred to their sermons on Biblical injunctions and mandates. Unitarianism arose in Boston in the late eighteenth century as a confluence of wealthy mercantile interests and Enlightenment thought. It merged class elitism with a sense of intellectual superiority. The new arrangement, more a tendency within Congregationalism than a formal sect, replaced a communal city upon a hill with an assumption of privilege by Boston's Brahmins. Unitarians were latudinarian rationalists while the orthodox stressed revelation and conversion. The rise of Unitarianism shaped orthodox institutions, including the founding in 1808 of Andover Theological Seminary by incensed orthodox ministers.

During the 1810s, the orthodox launched a sustained counterattack on the Brahmin churches of Boston, infused their own practices with those of the Second Great Awakening, and tried to reverse their declining social position in Massachusetts. By 1826, when Lyman Beecher arrived at Boston's Hanover Street Church, orthodoxy had partially rebounded, but it never recaptured support among Boston's upper crust. Beecher emphasized voluntarism and revivalism, not class superiority, and favored disestablishment, formally enacted in 1833. The battle between Unitarian rationalism and an increasingly evangelical orthodoxy was a long and bitter one. Though centered in Boston, it reverberated in places like Salem,

where elite merchants and distillers sided with the Unitarians.[5]

In 1834, Cheever apparently wanted to move beyond his personal feud with local Unitarians by encouraging revivals in the four orthodox churches of Salem. In letters to his mother and his sister in the spring, Cheever optimistically referred to the "pleasant auspices" and "interesting and favorable. . .results" of his efforts. During the summer and fall, he took an extended journey with his sickly brother to the "very romantic" White Mountains and then to Saratoga and New York City. When he returned to Salem, the sectarian dispute still on his mind, he penned "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery."[6]

The publication of the story in the Salem Landmark on January 30, 1835 ignited a firestorm of indignation. On February 6, 1835, the Salem Gazette, which tended to side with Unitarians and Salem's elite merchants, published an article entitled "Who is Safe?" under the pseudonym "SOCIAL ORDER." "Who is Safe?" turned the rhetoric of Cheever's work against its creator. A person who could write with "cruelty so fiendlike" must himself be intimate with creatures "breathing blue flames." Danger to the domestic sanctuary came less from distilleries than from extreme expressions of temperance. "What family can rest in peace or security, while such wicked spirits are permitted to roam at large, collecting all the misery that evil-eyed

calumny . . .can find, and pouring it into their cup?" The slanderous attacks of temperance fanatics should be condemned, wrote the Gazette, and fortunately, the "malignant individual who has thrown this firebrand into the bosom of innocent families, is universally reproached and abhorred."[7]

On February 7, 1835, Cheever wrote his mother, in what appears to be in a rather hurried hand, that the story "has excited a commotion here, of which I had not the least suspicion." Cheever wanted to see the story republished elsewhere "with some recommendatory remarks, for they hold every thing against it here, because they apply it to Deacon Stone." Despite the angry response in Salem and maybe because of it, Cheever wanted to see the story gain as wide a circulation as possible. John Stone, a prosperous distiller in Salem and a deacon at Charles Upham's Unitarian church, bore an uncanny resemblance to Amos Giles. In Salem, there was talk of libel charges against Cheever. Cheever's letter of February 7 to his mother continued, "I have been assaulted today in the street by a ruffian Irishman, supposed to have been hired for the purpose. But a gracious God was with me, and sheltered me from injury, though the blows he struck were many."[8]

In numerous letters, Cheever and his siblings curried their willful mother's favor. Often it was in vain.

Indicative of a generational split between the staid Federalist mother and her zealous, uncompromising, rabidly evangelical son, Charlotte Cheever discountenanced first the anti-Unitarian campaign her son launched in Salem in 1833 and even more so the uproar over "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery." In a letter to George, she referred to it as "the offensive article." She angrily wrote him, "may you never be so imprudent as to give occasion for such excitement again.. . .I regret you ever wrote it." She warned, "your reputation will suffer notwithstanding all your Christian forbearance and heavenly deportment." The young minister, still in his twenties, sheepishly thanked her for "truly maternal reproofs. . .Reproof with me can never be out of place."[9]

George Cheever's brothers were more supportive. Henry, then a student at Andover Theological Seminary, tried to defend George in a letter to their agitated mother. Describing the physical attack on the street, Henry lauded his brother's response to the beating, how he "offered no resistance, told the man after he had ceased striking him that he forgave him and hoped he would obtain forgiving of God." Furthermore, George's injuries were not serious, and despite the "four or five blows upon the head with the staff of the cow hide, he felt scarce any pain and the slight swellings soon subsided." The day after the attack, George was able to give his regular Sunday sermon

as well as another for children. He had the support of his congregation, and the sum of thirty dollars was collected to make him a lifetime member of the American Temperance Society. George's other brother, Nathaniel, wrote, "you are to be envied in every respect," in particular for "usefulness."[10]

From outside Salem came other expressions of support. A letter from Boston insightfully predicted, "Every blow you received increased the value & power of your Dream a hundred fold." The Rev. Cheever would become "a martyr to the cause." The press generally thought the events in Salem shameful, but interpretations of those events varied. The New York Evangelist, which had just published Charles Grandison Finney's admonition against trying to convert people with alcohol on their breath, was especially supportive of Cheever. The Evangelist thought the "Giles" story "very natural" and republished it in its entirety, first in February at the initial flurry of controversy and again in June during Cheever's trial for libel.[11]

The Lynn Record also republished the story and denounced the "ruffian--a giant in size and bodily strength" who conspired with a wealthy distiller, "with a weapon in hand, to attack a young and feeble minister." In a reference to Salem's past, the Record suggested that "the Deacon may have descended in a direct line from the very authors in witchcraft, and inherited many of its virtues."

William Lloyd Garrison's Liberator, reprinting "Giles" so "that the public may decide impartially and understandingly," also discussed the "[c]owardly and brutal assault" on Cheever. Garrison exhorted, as only he could, "An outrage so ferocious, so unparalleled, . . .ought to stir up the hot indignation of every lover of order, morality, and religion; for it is precedent pregnant with direful consequences to the advocates of temperance and righteousness." Garrison was especially outraged by the anti-Cheever position taken by the Salem newspapers, "criminally timorous and servile. . .through prejudice or fear of the mob."[12]

Other papers were lukewarm in their support for Cheever. At the request of its readers, the Worcester Palladium published "Inquire at Amos Giles's Distillery" even though it considered the story "extremely deficient on the score of good taste, and has no tendency to promote the cause of temperance." The Palladium nevertheless argued that the root cause of the disorder in Salem was distilling, not Cheever. The Boston Recorder defended a brother Congregationalist, opining that "a great deal, at least of the excitement, arises from the desire of Unitarians to drive him from the place." But the Recorder refused to republish Cheever's story out of fear of spreading a libel and the belief that the "distillery is

doubtless the more valuable, for being so thoroughly advertised."[13]

The Recorder's reticence in republishing "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" reflected a larger clerical concern over the propriety of fiction. Despite its active support of tract societies, the Recorder despised the mixing of religion and fiction:

> The filling up of a novel with religious truth, is most injurious to the cause of morals.. . .We regard religious novels, then, as much worse, in their moral effects, than other novels. They tend to familiarize the mind with divine truth in such connections as to weaken its force on the conscience.. . . [T]he danger is the greater, in proportion as the author's reputation for moral worth stands high.

"Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" dangerously bordered on improper fiction.

In the Salem of 1835, truth and fiction were equally strange. The "ruffian Irishman" who humiliated Cheever by whipping him in public was Elias Ham, a foreman at Deacon Stone's distillery. His action was not the only disorderly response to the publication of "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery." A few hours after the assault on Rev. Cheever, a group of about a dozen men approached the office of the Landmark "with designs of plunder and outrage." Despite some later accounts that the newspaper's press was destroyed in the attack, they never entered the office.

They broke through a lower panel of the door with an axe, but the commotion alerted neighbors and police, and the "rioters withdrew." Afterwards, three men were charged with the attack on the Landmark.[14]

The uproar suggests an alliance between workers and the elite Unitarians, some of whose fortunes were made from the Triangle Trade of rum, sugar, and slaves. Though the first families of Salem were embarrassed enough of this history to destroy records of the transatlantic slave trade, the distilleries remained as evidence of the tainted origins of their privileged positions. Employees like Ham, the "ruffian Irishman," sided with elites. They resented the creeping moralizing of an evangelical middle, represented by Cheever and the Landmark, that threatened their places of employment as well as their leisure activities. The events in Salem seem similar to the sources of antiabolitionist riots in the 1830s uncovered by Leonard Richards. "Gentleman of property and standing" in Salem encouraged an outpouring of wrath against the self-righteousness of middling (and meddling) intruders. For Cheever's supporters, the excesses of top and bottom, a longstanding tradition in temperance works, manifested themselves as violence in the streets of Salem.[15]

In the weeks following the brouhaha in Salem, the war of rhetoric escalated. The Salem Gazette called a writer in the Landmark "an ass, thrice-sodden, who cannot

understand,--or a knave who willfully perverts,--the truth." On February 20, 1835, the Gazette published "THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERATE WRITING," summing up the events following the appearance of Cheever's tale.

> The public peace violated; a clergyman chastised in the public streets; ten individuals arrested upon judicial process; the whole town in an uproar for days and weeks; divisions, jealousies, disputes, the effects of which will perhaps be visible for years to come. . . .the retrograde impetus to the cause of temperance; the opportunity afforded to ruffians of every grade to shelter themselves under the cloak of public indignation. . .the deplorable result of an intemperance which does not spring from alcohol.[16]

Nathaniel Hawthorne, coincidentally following Cheever's path from Bowdoin College, lived in Salem during the tumult. In all likelihood, it inspired him to write "A Rill from the Town Pump." The story, narrated by the water fountain at the center of town, placed the temperance movement in an ironic light.

> Is it decent, think you, to get tipsy with zeal for temperance, and take up the honorable cause of the Town Pump in the style of a toper fighting for his brandy bottle? Or, can the excellent qualities of cold water be not otherwise exemplified than by plunging, slapdash, into hot water, and woefully scalding yourselves and other people?"

Hawthorne was acquainted with Cheever, but the two were not really friends. Cheever nevertheless provided Hawthorne material for one of his stories.[17]

Whatever the literary merits and possibilities of Salem's ferment, it was the legal system that tried to sort out the various complaints that began with the publication of "Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." Bail was set at five hundred dollars for one of the men who had attempted to break into the Landmark office. Cheever had to present twice as much--one thousand dollars--before his trial for libel. Initial testimony established that Ham approached Cheever on the street, told him he worked at Deacon Giles's Distillery, and was one of the "devils." After being beaten with a cowhide about three feet long, Cheever said to Ham, "I forgive you from the bottom of my heart, and hope that God will forgive you for abusing one of his anointed ministers." The Gazette thereafter called Cheever "The Lord's Anointed."[18]

In late February, the Salem Gazette, under attack from ministers throughout Massachusetts and even itself threatened with a libel suit, went on the offensive. The paper warned, "The priestly office does not sanctify the man." Cheever seemed to make such an assertion, and "gownmen, of every grade, who are disposed to advance such pretensions," suggested the Gazette, "might do well to ponder the question, whether the laity are likely to endure them with patience." Religious newspapers that supported Cheever "display all the cunning of jesuits, the hypocrisy of pharisees, and the malice of monks." The "fanatical

reformers" of the Boston Recorder "seem determined to browbeat the community by swaggering and bullying." All the while, distilling was defended by the law.

> The Distilling of ardent spirits is a lawful vocation--as much as preaching. To attempt by violence to put down Distilling is unlawful; persuasion and argument are the only weapons that can lawfully be used to abolish it, until the Legislature shall choose to prohibit it.. . .As soon however as it is attempted by satirical writings to hold up any individual to public odium or contempt for pursuing distilling, or any other lawful business, a crime is committed.

The Gazette concluded, "Violence begets violence."[19]

In his trial for assault, Ham was fined $140. "This is what it costs to cowhide a clergyman in the streets, in old Massachusetts," fumed the New York Evangelist. About a month after the assault on Cheever, in an expression of the minister's unpopularity among a majority of Salemites, the assailant was elected constable. For William Lloyd Garrison, Ham had been "promoted by the inhabitants of Salem, to their own shame and condemnation." Despite these affronts, the unflappable minister remained poised and optimistic about the ultimate verdict in the libel case. In March, Cheever wrote his sister, "The bare reading of the indictment against me was as good as a Temperance Address." Distillers, thought Cheever, would "blush"--if they were capable of blushing.[20]

Cheever's trial for libel was in June. Joshua Leavitt, editor of the New York Evangelist, traveled to Salem and reported the entire proceedings.[21] Attorney General John T. Austin and Leverett Saltonstall represented the Commonwealth.[22] Peleg Sprague and Rufus Choate defended Cheever.[23] Choate attempted to delay the trial, arguing that "the excitement in this community is such as must influence the jurors and preclude all reasonable expectation of a fair trial." Judge Solomon Strong decided that the case had already been delayed long enough. The jury was empaneled and the indictment read. The Attorney General told the court he felt compelled to personally argue the case against such an "atrocious libel." He explained the crime of libel as "malicious defamation" with the purpose of exposing a citizen to "public hatred." Austin continued, "The law will never suffer itself to be defrauded by the artifice of a libeler who says one thing and means another." "Allegories" formed a class of libels, and though John Stone was never explicitly mentioned in "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery," he was nevertheless the intended victim. The surreptitious allegory, in fact, was "meaner and more cowardly than an open assault."

Austin then outlined the similarities between Amos Giles and John Stone. The prosecution's case rested on proving the intentional targeting of Stone, and the similarities between the two were readily apparent. Stone,

like Giles, was a deacon and a treasurer of a Bible society. He had a counting room at the northwest corner of his distillery from which Bibles were distributed. Caleb Dodge, Stone's brother-in-law, had been found years earlier drowned in a vat at a distillery, probably a suicide. Stone's son, it was testified, "had the reputation of being intemperate for the last four years." Caleb Foote, the editor of the Salem Gazette, testified that Stone had placed frequent advertisements in his paper which read, "Apply at John Stone's distillery, Front street." Stone was deacon at Charles Upham's Unitarian church, and Cheever, Austin asserted, retained malicious feelings from the earlier dispute, but the judge ruled the evidence inadmissible as "too remote altogether." The defense weakly established that Stone did not work on the Sabbath and did not quarrel with his workers.

An 1827 statute allowed defendants in libel cases to protect themselves by proving the truth of their statements and then establishing their own good motives and the justifiable ends of a publication. Cheever's defense would thus hinge on establishing a larger benevolent temperance "truth" as the inspiration for his story, while chipping away at the lesser truths that linked Giles with Stone. For Cheever and his lawyers, the "truth" that distilleries rained evil on the community was self-evident. Their opponent, Attorney General Austin, tried as best he could

to disassociate the case from the what he called "the great temperance reformation." The issue for him was that the defendant had broken the law.

Cheever's lawyer, Rufus Choate, told the jury the case revolved around the "means of usefulness" of "a laborious and faithful minister of the gospel." Temperance, not slander, was the minister's aim, argued Choate, and his opening remarks to the jury encapsulated the established conventions of temperance and argued that imaginative writing could be used to spread the reform:

> [T]he case presents the question now, whether the American press shall be free to discuss the great subject of temperance. It is whether an honest and good man, a philanthropist, a patriot, I do not care whether he is a minister or not, if burning with love for his fellow men, and thinking over the dreadful evils of intemperance, the property it has wasted, the hopes it has blighted, the hearts it has broken, the jails and poor-houses it has erected and filled, whether such a man, burning with desire to make men happier by making them better, may not stand up, and denounce and expose the evil; plainly, unsparingly, and generally.

Cheever, "burning" with temperance fervor and humanitarian sentiment, only sought to extinguish the hell-fires of the distillery.

A benevolent truth, posited Choate, could never be a libel, and no truth had ever been as benevolent as that of temperance. Cheever, "a man imaginative, ardent, imprudent

if you please, but with no more malice in his heart than a child four months old," wanted only to end the "great sin of national intemperance." That sin rested "on the opulent distiller, driven by no necessity, urged on by no uncontrollable appetite, but actuated only by the sordid love of gain, to make himself richer at the expense of the tears and misery of his fellow-men." Cheever wrote the article out of "duty."

The defense paraded a list of eminent character witnesses, including Leonard Woods, one of the founders of the ATS and a professor at Andover Theological Seminary, various orthodox ministers from around Massachusetts, and Dr. Reuben Mussey, professor of Anatomy and Surgery at Dartmouth College. In 1827, Mussey had written of the "witchery which strong drink exerts over the whole man," of the spontaneous combustion of inveterate drunkards, and of alcohol's strange "power of transforming character."[24] Mussey, establishing the truth of the inscriptions in the Cheever's story, testified at length that distillers produce a poison that "exhausts the principle of life." The prosecution tried to tarnish Mussey's testimony by ridiculing the physician's Grahamite vegetarianism.

Justin Edwards also testified on Cheever's behalf. Edwards told of his "investigations. . .as to the effects of ardent spirits on the bodies and souls of men," the results of which were published in the annual reports of

the ATS. Choate tried to have him labelled an expert witness, to "testify professionally from his authorities, as physicians do from medical authorities," but the judge denied the motion. Edwards testified, "I have not seen with my own eyes the connection between drinking and crime." He had noticed, however, that drinking rendered "men thoughtless and insensible to religious impressions." He had then directed the ATS to collect information on the connection between drinking and social ills. He also testified, over the prosecution's objection, that drinking was "highly destructive of men's souls."

John Tappan, the Boston-based wealthy evangelist and brother of the antislavery New York City Tappans, testified that Cheever had shown him the "Giles" article immediately after its publication. Tappan said he told Cheever that "he had inflicted a blow upon the temperance cause, by striking at Unitarianism," but he feared sectarian divisiveness would harm the cause. On hearing about the uproar in Salem and the assault on Cheever, Tappan "remarked that it would be very imprudent for any man in the community, to appropriate that piece as meaning himself, for it would probably be printed in a pamphlet, with cuts and engravings, and hand his name throughout the world and to all posterity." Tappan was correct; the libel suit insured a vastly enlarged readership for Cheever' story. As John Marsh would later write, "the whole

procedure gave wings to the production of his genius, and caused it to become one of the great instruments of opening the eyes of a suffering community to the true character of distillation."[25]

In summing up the defense's argument, Peleg Sprague emphasized that "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" was fiction, "one of the great departments of literature" that included Homer, Bunyan, Scott, and Peter Parley. He even pointed out that Christ, "the Author of Christianity himself," used fiction to spread his message. Sprague alluded to "My Mother's Gold Ring," "a beautiful tale written by Mr. Sargent. . .which I dare say you have all read," and its characterization of a deacon. All these works were written because "truth justified it." The successful fiction writer borrows from the surrounding world to create a character, in fact takes "all the parts of his character from nature, while as a whole no individual person can own the picture as descriptive of himself." The question remained--did Cheever intend "to stigmatize in a dastardly manner one of his fellow-citizens?" For Sprague, "the object was of a general nature; to show that the business of distilling was congenial to the character of a demon." An attack on any distillery could only be motivated by a desire to do a "public good." This was an established temperance truth.

In his closing argument against Cheever, Attorney General Austin maintained that Cheever meant to assail not the character of the distillery but rather that of one Unitarian deacon, John Stone. Temperance does not allow a minister like Cheever to "ridicule and disgrace" an opponent. Moral self-righteousness, argued Austin, was no replacement for the rule of law. Moral extremism would lead, for example, to caustic libels by vegetarians against butchers, and the libeler would be defended by sending "all the way up to Hanover and bring down Dr. Muzzey (sic) to prove that to kill a sheep is just as wicked as to kill a man." Austin argued against the guilt of those remotely connected with crimes. He asked,

> Will you visit upon the maker of an article all the evils which proceed from the abuse of it? Is the man who makes a pistol answerable for its abuse by the assassin? or the type-founder for the guilt of the libeler? or heaven itself, who gave man a tongue, answerable for the sin of the slanderer and the vilifier?

Austin undermined the logic of the temperance movement. For the Attorney General, libels, under the guise of moral certitude, would lead to mob violence, arson, and mayhem.

The judge, affirming the jury's "impartiality," delivered the case for a verdict. His directions to the jury placed the defense in jeopardy. Judge Strong said, "If you find that this article has its natural and proper tendency to expose any one to ridicule, contempt or hatred,

it is malicious in the eyes of the law." An intentional malice need not be proved, and any "single libelous sentence" was enough to require conviction. The jury deliberated for five hours and returned its verdict. Cheever was found guilty. Upon declaring his intention to appeal the verdict, Cheever was ordered to present a surety of one thousand dollars.

For Cheever, it was an "unrighteous verdict." He wrote his mother, "We had a jury almost as bad as they could be. Nine of them boarded in a victualling cellar, and seven were known to drink liquor at the bar. Beside this, the court was full of Unitarians, and Satan seemed to triumph." Religious error and perverted appetite conspired to find the minister guilty.

He was not alone in his assessment. The New York Evangelist and its editor were outraged by the trial. William Lloyd Garrison was especially moved by the conviction of "this excellent man." He thought the case "a novel one" and read reports from Salem "with care and deep interest." Garrison, who had launched his own reform career as a temperance advocate, agreed with Cheever that rum manufacturers were responsible for the effects of their products, and he believed that the Attorney General had been "influenced by a sectarian spirit." What most animated Garrison was Cheever's emotional appeal to higher laws and higher truths, an approach Garrison himself took

in his often dangerous struggle for abolition. He rejected the assertion that temperance "must diffuse information dispassionately." He condemned the Attorney General for maintaining "that there cannot be a wrong law, or, if such a law exist, it is in the highest degree criminal to declare it wrong, and it is right to obey it, and to take advantage of it, even to the ruin and degradation of our species!" Strictly following the law merely served the interests of distillers. As for temperance advocates like Cheever, who was not yet involved in abolitionism, "the weapons of their warfare are not carnal but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of distilleries, grog shops, and brothels!" For both Garrison and Cheever, morality superseded legality, and the proceedings against Cheever were "a trial which, in the eye of morality, is a farce, although in the eye of the Law it is a serious matter."[26]

Daniel Webster showed interest in working on Cheever's appeal but declined due to a busy schedule. He was nonetheless sent a check for one hundred dollars as a retainer. Choate advised settling the matter.[27] Meanwhile, Joshua Leavitt, editor of the New York Evangelist, tried to raise funds for Cheever's defense from New York's temperance reformers.[28] Cheever's appeal finally went before the Supreme Judicial Court, meeting in Salem, in December, 1835, but the minister, according to the Boston

Recorder, "said to His Honor that he despaired of having a fair trial in Salem" and went to begin serving a thirty-day jail term "followed by a collection of men and boys, who cheered his spirits by their huzzahs."[29]

Before surrendering to the mercy of the court, Cheever gave an hour-and-a-half presentation in his own defense. In New York City, Joshua Leavitt published his speech in "an elegant volume," costing fifty cents and sold for his benefit. As Leavitt's New York Evangelist advertised the book, "Those who sympathize with a faithful and pious minister thrust into jail for his zeal for truth and benevolence, will gladly possess themselves of the DEFENCE, as a tribute to him, as well as a memorial for the times." In Cheever's Defence, he maintained that his story was "never written or intended as an attack upon any individual." As for its characterizations, there was "nothing in them that is libellous, for there is nothing in them of untruth.. . .The liberty of the press is a mockery, if the truth may not be told of every man's occupation." If it was illegal to tell the truth about distilling, argued Cheever, then the annual reports of the American Temperance Society must also be libelous. His only crime was exposing the sinfulness of an activity that created all crime. Finally, he defended his tactics of writing a fictionalized account of a distiller.

> Your honor is aware that the causes of intemperance are so deep-rooted, that it requires strong and sharp instruments to come at them. The old ways are worn out. Addresses cease to have power. Tracts fly with the wind, thick as the autumnal leaves, but in many cases they do not touch the seat of the evil. These men continue to sell ardent spirit.. . .Before you condemn such means as I have employed, let the nature of the evil we wish to conquer be remembered, and let not individual energy be despised, or condemned as imprudent, because it does not travel in the beaten path of temperance addresses and temperance conventions.[30]

The religious press rallied to the support of the incarcerated cleric. The New-York Observer believed Cheever deserved the "most moderate fine." The Portland Mirror, surely pleasing Cheever, prayed, "The Lord visit thee, as he did John Bunyan in Bedford jail, and grant the dreams, as pleasant to thyself, and as instructive and beneficial to posterity" as "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery." The New-England Spectator asked legislatures to stop sanctioning "liquid damnation" and groaned, "O, justice, whither hast thou fled?" The Boston Herald's Zion wrote that Cheever was convicted with "evidence flimsy as gossamer," but no "iron fetters can chain his fearless mind." Garrison's Liberator suggested, "He will be happy in his incarceration, and I sympathize and rejoice with him, at the same time I pity the guilty man, who has

succeeded in thrusting a faithful servant of God into a common jail."[31]

To his mother, Cheever described the sentencing as "a happy decision. . .because great good will come out of it." In jail, he had "a multiplicity of callers" and "a study a prince might envy." He nevertheless asked for her prayers because he was in "such a position, with the eyes of all, as it were, for the time fastened on me, that I tremble lest my deportment should in any way be different from that which a servant of Christ ought to exhibit." To his sister, Cheever wrote, "oh that it might be the means of revival of religion among my own flock." To his brothers, on a journey to Europe, he wrote that "the Unitarian Court have sentenced me to an imprisonment of 30 days!" They, in turn, sent him a basket of pomegranates and grapes.[32]

Cheever hardly suffered through his imprisonment. In a letter from a family friend, Charlotte Cheever learned that her son resided in a carpeted cell, about fourteen by ten feet, lighted from the south and southwest. The minister had his books, desk, table, and chairs. He sawed wood for exercise and "preaches to the spirits in prison, who it is said are very much attached to him." He even had an "old sailor for a waiter who was once imprisoned for crime, committed under the influence of rum," and now sympathetic to the temperance cause.[33] The son of the Essex County sheriff later wrote that Cheever had so many callers

that he was forced to keep strict visiting hours and that the sheriff became a close friend.[34]

On January 5, 1836, Cheever wrote the New York Evangelist that he had come out of the jail at one o'clock that morning. "This hour was chosen for my enlargement, for fear of a rabble if I left my cage after dawn." Apparently, the folk of Salem were still not kindly disposed to the young reverend who had tarnished their distilleries. Before leaving, he sought one more hour to spend in "quiet communion with God." As he departed, he felt that the walls had become "endeared" and that his time in jail had been "a sweet retreat from the noisy winter and the angry world." Cheever looked back at the jail "as one waking in a dream."[35] He never mentioned whether it was a dream about demons and a distiller.

Little more than a year before "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" appeared in the Salem Landmark, another trial and another allegory appeared in a temperance publication. On September 3, 1833, the Temperance Recorder, the monthly of the New York State Temperance Society published "The Trial of Alcohol." Before judges with names like Candor, Impartiality, Patience, and Honesty, jurors such as Hatevice and Industry, and defense lawyers Animal Appetite and Self Interest, Alcohol was charged with murder, robbery, "swindling," making the young immoral, disturbing

families, and using "influence" to convince others to commit crimes. Typical testimony came from a man who spent a great deal of time with the prisoner.

> At last, sir, I not only lost my property, but my character also, for I became a vile drunkard, and I have often lodged all night in the open air when too much intoxicated to seek a shelter. I finally shook off the company of the prisoner, and refused to go any more to his haunts; and since that time I have been slowly regaining my health and character and property. I hope I shall never associate with him any more.

The witness told of "acts of seduction and villainy" committed by Alcohol. Another testified,

> I never have known a young man become a gambler, a jockey, a frequenter of lewd houses, a spendthrift, a counterfeiter, a forger, a thief, a robber, or a murderer, but I was able to trace his first departure from the paths of virtue, to an acquaintance with Alcohol, and a habit of frequenting his society.

A distiller, Mr. Lovegain, and Alcohol were old "school chums." The distiller was charged as an accomplice. Finally, Alcohol was sentenced to be "drowned in COLD WATER." The execution was "done in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators, though the water seemed reluctant to receive the criminal, who floated for a considerable time."[36]

George Cheever gained his own "immense concourse of spectators" because of his "crime." He enlarged his

audience far beyond his own congregation by bringing to life temperance truths like those in "The Trial of Alcohol." Temperance presented ministers like Cheever with enormous possibilities to expand their roles in American society at a time of change for the clerical profession. Temperance became a means by which ministers might compete with "secular" professions and with one another. The reform provided ministers a way to revitalize their traditional roles as custodians of public morality in new but unstable ways.

The temperance movement convicted Alcohol. The laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts convicted Cheever. But Cheever's conviction prefigured his ultimate vindication. John Marsh, always one to use a military metaphor, called Cheever's story the "one weapon yet untried" in the war on drink. At the time of its publication, according to Marsh, Salem had four distilleries producing 600,000 gallons of ardent spirits as well as a thousand paupers, four hundred deaths, and 2900 of the three thousand inmates in the work-house. Within a few years, the distilleries were closed, a development for which Marsh credited Cheever.

More likely, the distilleries closed because of declining revenues and the intrusion of formal politics into the business of distributing spirits. In 1835, the Massachusetts legislature made county commissioners, who

made decisions on liquor licensing, elected rather than appointed positions. The no-license movement at the county level as well as the statewide Fifteen Gallon Law of 1838 intruded on consumption levels for the laboring classes. Though voting returns from the late 1830s suggests no overwhelming mandate for formal prohibition, legal hurdles against the retail sale of alcohol were on the rise. Clearly an expression of class discrimination, the Fifteen Gallon Law prohibited the sale of small amounts of alcohol and thus permitted the legal sale of spirits only to the wealthy. Repealed in 1840, the law was frustrated by illicit sales and an unhappy public, but consumption of distilled liquors continued to fall. Temperance, if not necessarily prohibition, enjoyed wide popular support. The profitability of distilling declined, and the owners of distilleries, including those of Salem, slowly extinguished their fires.[37]

In 1838, Cheever left Salem for a far larger arena, New York City, and continued his career as radical reformer. In 1843, the Journal of the American Temperance Union reported that John Stone's distillery, the model for Cheever's tale of dancing demons, housed a very different type of celebration. According to the Journal, "This building of noted memory has recently been made the scene of a grand temperance tea party. Tempora mutantur. Every part, rafters and all, once covered by those strange beings

who came with cloven feet to the Bible room, was closely crowded with an assemblage of 1500 persons." Included in the festivities were temperance songs by the Hutchinson Family and a speech by Moses Grant, President of the Boston Temperance Society and patron of John Gough.[38] Charles Jewett, a widely known temperance speaker, later wrote that Cheever's story was "one of the most masterly, timely, and effective blows ever inflicted on the liquor system." His trial and incarceration for slander, suggested Jewett, aroused curiosity in temperance and obtained for the story far wider publication.[39]

But the temperance of ministers had its limits in the emerging cultural marketplace. Though they established the conventional imagery of the temperance movement, they were unable to compete with louder, more brazen voices appearing on the horizon. Though they advocated the doctrine of moral free agency, evangelical ministers were hardly "free agents." There were institutional brakes on the activities of a minister.

While Cheever was being tried for libel, a pamphlet was published in Boston condemning his activities. From a protemperance position, the writer expressed "sorrow and indignation" at Cheever's antics. Ministers should not engage in such controversies. According to the writer, "the performances in question seem. . .to have been conceived and executed in a manner unbecoming either a

prudent man or a christian minister." Ministers should act like ministers.

> [T]heir earnestness should be the unction of a pure, a holy and a gentle spirit; which pities while it reproves, and weeps over the sins which it cannot but condemn: which uses the ordinary methods of God's appointment for the moral elevation of the world, and patiently waits for their slow but certain operation: which leaves the governor of the universe in undisturbed possession of his throne of wisdom and power.[40]

As early as 1833, Cheever rejected "whinings about caution, sobriety, prudence, the danger of too much excitement."[41] He was in many ways an imprudent man, but he was still a minister, and the cloth placed limits on the writing of fiction. Ministers who wandered too far afield might be silenced. Cheever's activities in the name of temperance dangerously skirted the boundaries between the clerical and the explicitly commercial.

Moreover, the relative monopoly ministers held over cultural issues was rapidly eroding. The colonial order of New England ministers, in which men held a public office and a unique voice, by the middle of the nineteenth century became just another profession in search of an audience, surely important but hardly omnipotent.[42] Within the temperance movement, new voices, first heard in the early 1840s and based on altogether different sources of authority, stole the temperance thunder of ministers. New

settings would provide the temperance entertainments audiences were coming to expect. Ministers may have pioneered the way, but others would profit the most from the reform. Ministers continued to propel their own temperance truths, but they never would monopolize those truths the way they did in the 1830s. The reformed drunkard, who faced trials of a very different sort, introduced to temperance a theatricality ministers might find offensive but audiences loved.

Notes

1. Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1830): 48-9. Mark Edward Lender, Dictionary of American Temperance Biography: from Temperance Reform to Alcohol Research, the 1600s to the 1980s (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984): 95-6.

2. "Memorial Address," clipping, Cheever Family Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Box 21, folder 3.

3. Richard H. Dana to George B. Cheever, Jan. 13, 1834. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 1. A few months later, Dana embarked on the voyage that formed the basis of his Two Years Before the Mast.

4. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, Jan. 23, 1834. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 1. Margaret B. Moore, The Salem World of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998): 111-2.

5. On the split between orthodoxy and Unitarianism and its culmination in 1833 with disestablishment, see Peter S. Field, The Crisis of the Standing Order: Clerical Intellectuals and Cultural Authority in Massachusetts, 1780-1833 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998). On p.216, Field notes that Leverett Saltonstall, a wealthy Salem Unitarian and later a prosecutor in Cheever's libel trial, argued against disestablishment at the 1820 Massachusetts constitutional convention.

6. George B. Cheever to Elizabeth Cheever. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, April, 2, 1834. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, April 12, 1834. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, July 30, 1834. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 1.

7. Salem Gazette, Feb. 6, 1835.

8. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, Feb. 7, 1835, Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 2.

9. Charlotte B. Cheever to George B. Cheever, Feb. 15, 1835. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, Feb. 20, 1835. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 2.

10. Henry Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, Feb. 14, 1835. Nathaniel Cheever to George B. Cheever, Feb. 18, 1835. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 2.

11. H.C. Wright to George B. Cheever, Feb. 26, 1835. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 2. New York

Evangelist, Feb. 7 and Feb. 14, 1835.

12. The Liberator, Feb. 14, 1835. Garrison published the text of "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery" on Feb. 21, 1835. Later that year, Garrison was the victim of an antiabolitionist mob.

13. Worcester Palladium, Feb. 25 and March 18, 1835. Boston Recorder, Feb. 13 and Feb. 20, 1835.

14. Salem Gazette, Feb. 10 and Feb. 13, 1835. On the assertion that the mob destroyed a printing press in the incident, see, for example, Dictionary of American Biography (4): 49. Also, Lender: 96.

15. For a look at the class structure of Salem as it affected the career of Hawthorne, see Moore: 127-8, 136. Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing": Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America (New York: 1970).

16. Salem Gazette, Feb. 17 and Feb 20, 1835.

17. Margaret B. Moore, "Hawthorne and `The Lord's Anointed,'" in Studies in the American Renaissance, 1988, ed. by Joel Myerson (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1988): 27-36. Alfred H. Marks, "Hawthorne, G.B. Cheever, and Salem's Pump," Essex Institute Historical Collections 123 (July 1987): 260-77. Also see David S. Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988).

18. Salem Gazette, Feb. 17, 1835.

19. Salem Gazette, Feb. 24, 1835.

20. New York Evangelist, July 4, 1835. The Liberator, July 4, 1835. George B. Cheever to Elizabeth Cheever, March 20, 1835. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 2.

21. All the material on the trial itself comes from the New York Evangelist, July 4, 1835.

22. Austin was Attorney-General from 1832 to 1843. He was a proslavery Whig and in one speech in 1837 compared the Alton, Illinois, mob that killed Elijah Lovejoy to the patriots of the Boston Tea Party. See Dictionary of American Biography 1: 433-4.

23. Choate, valedictorian of the Dartmouth College class of 1819, had chosen the legal profession after

hearing Daniel Webster's argue the Dartmouth College Case of 1818 that helped establish the sanctity of contract. A consummate court-room attorney, Choate also dabbled in electoral politics and took part in the establishment of the Whig Party in Massachusetts. From 1841 to 1845, he served as United States Senator, replacing Webster who had been named Secretary of State. See Dictionary of American Biography 2: 86-90.

24. R.D. Mussey, An Address on Ardent Spirits, Read Before the New Hampshire Medical Society at their Annual Meeting, June 5, 1827 (Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1829): 3, 5, 8.

25. John Marsh, "History of Deacon Giles's Distillery," in George Barrell Cheever, The Dream; or The True History of Deacon Giles's Distillery and Deacon Jones's Brewery (New York: 1843?): 12.

26. The Liberator, July 4, 1835.

27. Edmund Monroe to George B. Cheever, Nov. 12, 1835. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 3.

28. Joshua Leavitt to George B. Cheever, Nov. 24, 1835. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 3.

29. Boston Recorder, Dec. 18, 1835.

30. George B. Cheever, Defence in Abatement of Judgment for an Alleged Libel in the Story Entitled "Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery. Addressed to the Hon. Chief Justice Shaw, at the Session of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts Held in Salem, Dec. 4, 1835 (New York: Leavitt, Lord, & Co., 1836): 7, 11, 27-28, 106-7.

31. New York Evangelist, Dec. 19, 1835.

32. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, Dec. 4, 1835. George B. Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, Dec. 6, 1835. George B. Cheever to Elizabeth Cheever, Dec. 15, 1835. George B. Cheever to Henry and Nathaniel Cheever, Dec. 24, 1835. Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 3.

33. Nehemiah Adams to Charlotte B. Cheever, Dec. 11, 1835, Cheever Family Papers, Box 4, folder 3.

34. Clippings, Cheever Family Papers, Box 21, folder 3.

35. New York Evangelist, Jan. 16, 1836.

36. Temperance Recorder, September 3, 1833: 49-56. The wealthy editor of the Temperance Recorder, Edward Cornelius Delavan, was a wine merchant who converted to temperance in the 1820s. For his expose of Albany brewers in 1835, he was sued for libel for $300,000, but he was acquitted at a trial five years later. A "critical force" in temperance publishing, Delavan was responsible for distributing over the course of twenty years 13.6 million pieces of literature. See Lender: 131-2.

37. Robert L. Hampel, Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts, 1813-1852 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982): 61-101. Long before the passage of Maine Laws in states such as Massachusetts, local communities had suppressed the liquor traffic, and such ordinances, even if flouted by some, undoubtedly contributed to the decline of consumption levels, especially of New England rum. See Ian R. Tyrrell, Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1869 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979): 225-51.

38. Journal of the American Temperance Union, June 1843.

39. Charles Jewett, Forty Years' Fight with the Drink Demon, or A History of the Temperance Reform as I Have Seen It, and of My Labor in Connection Therewith (New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1872): 219-21.

40. A Letter to the Author of "Deacon Jones's Brewery" (Boston: John H. Eastburn, 1835).

41. George B. Cheever, Some of the Principles according to which this World is Managed (Boston: 1833): 44, quoted in Hampel: 53-4.

42. Donald M. Scott, From Office to Profession: The New England Ministry, 1750-1850 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978). For a concise argument on the interplay between commercial culture and religion during the antebellum period, see R. Laurence Moore, "Religion, Secularization, and the Shaping of the Culture Industry in Antebellum America," American Quarterly 41 (June 1989): 216-42.

CHAPTER 4

"DELIRIUM'S DREAD CHAIN": THE DRUNKARD'S PAST UNBOUND, JOHN B. GOUGH'S VOICE FOUND

"In those dark days, when thou did'st bear
Delirium's dread chain,
Whose every link was made of sighs,
Of horror, shame, and pain.
Thy soul was sinking downward fast,
Thy guardian angel sigh'd;
Till new born hopes aroused thy zeal,
And crush'd thy drunken pride,
With pallid cheek, but sturdy heart,
The pledge thou boldly sign'd;
Emancipating from their thrall,
Thy heart, thy soul, and mind."[1]

poem welcoming John Gough to Kettering, Northamptonshire, England, March 31, 1858

"Mr. Gough is, himself, a reformed inebriate, and he thoroughly understands both the thraldom of drunkenness and the deliverance which total abstinence secures. He is a master of his subject; and apart from the moral influence of his addresses, they are a rich treat."[2]

Toronto Watchman, October 1850

Prior to 1840, the drunkard was a singularly degraded figure. From the forces of temperance, the best he could hope for was pity. More often, temperance advocates despised the drunkard as a damned, irredeemable, and parasitic blemish on their perfectionist projects. Typical was Justin Edwards's happy picture of temperance catharsis--all drunkards would die and the world would become a cleaner place. Drunkards, from the point of view of the American Temperance Society, even lacked the dignity devilish power bestowed. Enslaved by their unnatural

appetite for drink and bereft of all humanity, drunkards passively awaited death and damnation, while demons ravaged their purses, their bodies, and their souls. The active agents of the drunkard's degradation were the twin evils of the liquor traffic and drink itself.

The following illustration made clear the passivity of the drunkard before 1840. The helpless fellow, with bulbous, diseased nose, hugs the ground and grasps his bottle but shows no signs of animation. A large demon stokes the fires by which alcohol is created. Out the still fly numerous smaller demons that busily complete the destruction of the drunkard. The satanic distiller says, "Little dears! how they enjoy themselves! & how unconcious [sic] the poor wretch seems to be of all that's going on." As in Cheever's dream of 1835, the demons are hard at work. One warns, "Be careful how you dig or you'll startle the fellows [sic] soul which must not be disturbed until we get the body cleaned out." Out of the cranium comes "horrid smelling brains," while the demon scooping out the foul gray matter jokes, "Well I could make better brains out of a boiled turnip." Meanwhile, a demon relieves the drunkard of coins from his pocket, and another says, "Don't venture down into the bowels without this safety lamp." Gazing upon the contents of a wheelbarrow labeled "liver," a demon exclaims, "My eye! you've strucken a gold-mine haven't

you." A final demon worries, "Just as I expected, the fellow's stomach has set wheelbarrow on fire."

Such ridicule displays a sense of humor but hardly seems a viable basis for a regenerative movement led by reformed drunkards. The experiences of the drunkard could scarcely make a popular commercial product for reform-minded Americans. Nor would ministers have much to fear from former drunkards as independent voices in the temperance movement. The personal stories of these passive creatures could never drown out the pious sermons of the clergy. During the early 1840s, these things nonetheless happened.

In 1841, a temperance advocate in Boston published a pamphlet entitled The New Impulse, or Hawkins and Reform. The pamphlet announced the arrival of a new phenomenon both surprising and perplexing. "Nothing in the moral world, since the appearance of our Saviour on earth," it declared, was as wonderful and admirable "as the recent conversion of a world of drunkards, to men of sober life and conversation, and even to firm resolute, persevering, successful, temperance reformers." This quasi-religious conversion created an irresistible "impulse" that left "the old reformers and the world at large, lost in amazement, inquiring, `What do these things mean, and whence have these men their power.'" Suddenly, the drunkard seemed Christ-like.[3]

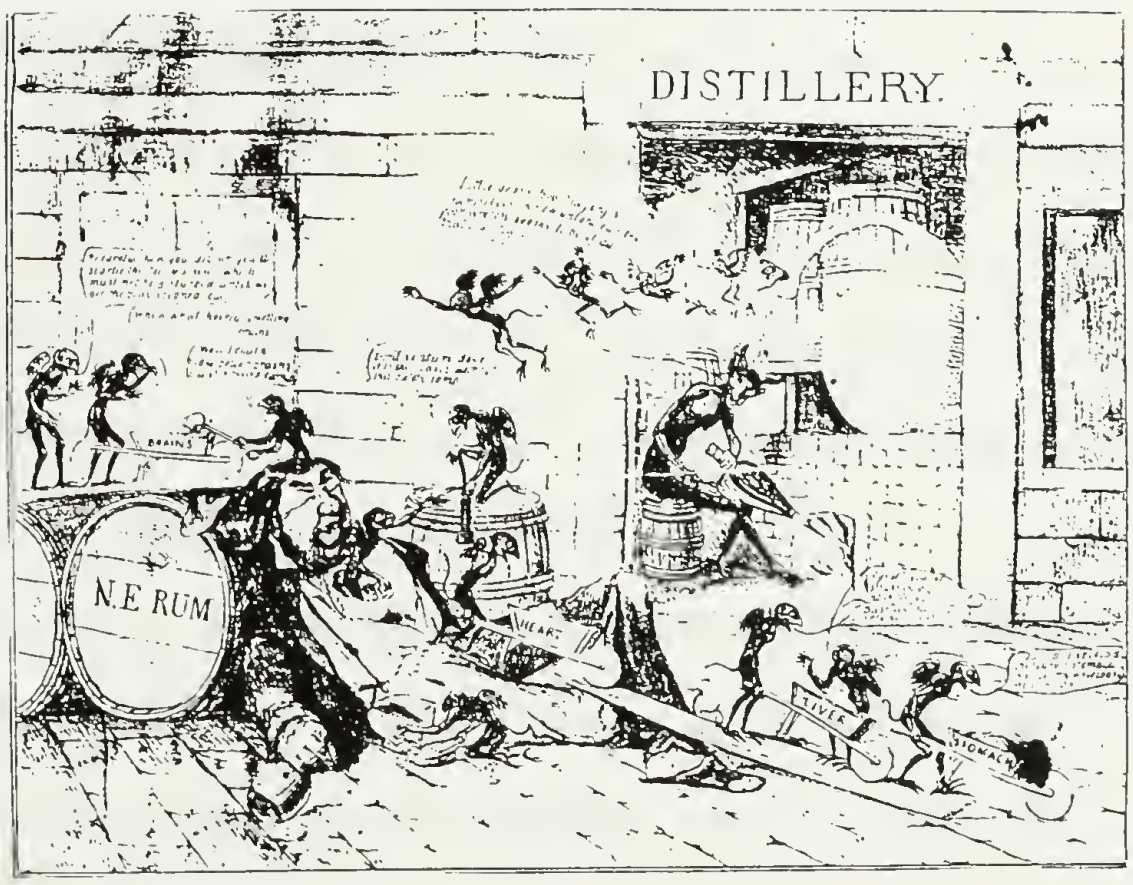


Figure 5: Hardly a picture of health. Much of the temperance movement viewed the drunkard as passive fodder for demons.[4]

This new type of temperance reformer spoke from neither paternalistic nor institutional authority but rather from the authority of personal experience. The Washingtonians, so named to connect personal independence from King Alcohol with political independence from King George, enhanced the position of temperance as the most widely accepted reform in America. It began in 1840 with a meeting of five drinkers at a Baltimore tavern and their decision to forego drink. The explosively popular movement, largely urban, artisanal, and mutualistic, provided safe haven from the storms of socioeconomic dislocation. Washingtonians also challenged the hegemony of ministers and their allies long accustomed to leadership within the temperance movement.[5]

As other historians have discovered, reformed drunkards acquired a moral authority and a popularity never achieved by temperance-minded ministers, mercantile elites, or medical professionals.[6] The Washingtonians also challenged existing cultural norms on the legitimacy of public entertainments. Though short-lived as a coherent organizational body, no group of temperance activists popularized an imaginative and expressive American commercial culture than did the Washingtonian "experience speakers." Washingtonian speakers, in their efforts to secure signatures to the total abstinence pledge, provided

entertaining, non-alcoholic "excitement" for a willing and paying public.

No individual temperance speaker achieved more success--in terms of number of pledges, fame, or pecuniary reward--than an itinerant bookbinder by the name of John Bartholomew Gough. Why was Gough successful? Who promoted and helped him to national and even international fame? How did he forge his pathetic past into a career in which he both did good and did well? Who opposed him and why? From what cultural materials did he borrow? An exploration of Gough's career--and other careers like his--reveals a great deal about temperance and the larger American culture in the 1840s. During that decade, Gough became a travelling temperance lecturer, thrilling, shocking, horrifying, and wooing live audiences of hundreds, night after night and year after year. A Gough speech was drama without actors, theater without stage scenery, and melodrama without the hisses. Theatrical representations, still morally suspect to large portions of the American population, were anathema to evangelical Protestants. Yet Gough's performances were acceptable, even applauded. With the rise of celebrities like John Gough, morally didactic amusements become the dominant form of American commercial culture. New concepts on the proper uses of public spaces gained legitimacy. The rapid expansion of commercial entertainments transformed American public culture. Gough,

like showman P.T. Barnum, succeeded in this new world of moral amusements.

Gough's success derived from his ability to mold his past into a melodramatic tale of suffering and redemption. In fact, his previous life as a wandering drunkard provided him with the material, the moral authority, and even the skills necessary for a highly successful career on the temperance stage. Gough sold his sordid past to audiences for whom the tribulations of life in antebellum America were familiar and emotionally powerful and whose own experiences made them receptive to forms of entertainment modelled on evangelical preaching. By successfully defeating Demon Rum--and by keeping alive the issue of whether he had in fact done so--Gough marketed himself as a fascinating character in a melodrama of "real life." In so doing, he also forged an audience of men and women for whom tearful emotional empathy and a night of amusement accompanied selling sobriety and buying respectability.

The crucial event in Gough's life took the form of a conversion. According to his autobiography, in the fall of 1842, John Gough was in a "pitiable state." As the nation began to emerge from the long depression that followed the Panic of 1837, Gough found himself in Worcester, Massachusetts, working fitfully and drinking heavily. He had suffered from delirium tremens, the hallucinations that

signalled withdrawal from alcohol. One night, a Washingtonian named Joel Stratton, a stranger to Gough, stopped him on the street and tapped his shoulder. Gough wrote in his autobiography, first published in 1845, "An unusual thing that, to occur to me; for no one cared to come in contact with the wretched, shabby-looking drunkard. I was a disgrace." Most temperance advocates--in fact any "respectable" individual-- avoided drunkards as moral plagues. The Washingtonians revolutionized the temperance movement by embracing the drunkard as a redeemable victim. Stratton offered Gough a new life, one with respect, decent clothes, and a circle of supportive friends--if only he'd come to a temperance meeting and sign the pledge. "A chord had been touched which vibrated to the tone of love," Gough later wrote.[7]

The next night, Gough attended a meeting of Washingtonians at Town Hall, at which he publicly spoke on the subject of intemperance for the first time. The gathering was one of many such Washingtonian public "experience meetings," founded on principles similar to today's Alcoholic's Anonymous, with its therapeutics of confession. Gough related his sordid past. He said he was once "respectable and happy, and had a home," but that now he had become "a houseless, miserable, scathed, diseased, and blighted outcast from society." With "palsied hand," he signed the pledge.[8]

For the Washingtonians, the pledge was no ordinary contract. Signing an agreement of total abstinence was a transcendent act, the temperance equivalent of a religious conversion. The New Impulse pointed to the "sacred fidelity" Washingtonians attached to the pledge as one of the "peculiarities" of the new movement.[9] Gough, who frequently lectured on how the breakdown of community affected him during his years as an abject drunkard, thereby was reintegrated into a community of teetotalers. The emotional commitment to Washingtonianism represented a redefinition of male identity and the entry into a new world of social commitments.

The night Gough signed the pledge also marked the beginning of a remarkable career that netted over 200,000 signatures to the total abstinence pledge during the next ten years. According to a nineteenth-century chronicler of the temperance movement, Gough was Washingtonianism's "chiefest trophy," "the Temperance Apostle. . .whose name is a household word throughout the English-speaking world."[10] He achieved fortune as well as fame. When he mysteriously disappeared for a week in New York City in 1845, handbills were distributed that described him in the accoutrements of a gentleman. He wore a "black dress coat, black satinet vest and black pants; wore gold watch, gold shirt-buttons, collar and wrist, marked J.B.G.; gold and porcelain studs, gold seal ring with white Carnelian; had

in his pockets about $230 in gold and notes."[11] In 1847, he built a large house outside Worcester, christened "Hillside," replete with a large library. Gough, though still a travelling lecturer, was no longer a homeless vagabond. He had become, in essence, a winner in the marketplace of nineteenth-century amusements.

In 1869, when he published another edition of his autobiography, Gough felt understandably alienated from his past. He wrote, "As I look back to 1842,--twenty seven years ago,--it seems almost a hideous dream; I can hardly realize my identity with the staggering, hopeless victim of the terrible vice of intemperance."[12] Temperance and the career of temperance speaking had created a new man. Part of his appeal lay in offering others a similar redemption, both spiritually and financially.[13] Gough's own body on the platform was evidence of a miraculous transformation from bondage to freedom. While audiences were accustomed by temperance conventions to view the drunkard as a passive victim of demonic forces, the sight of a respectable Gough lent credence to an ideology of infinite possibility. Through conversion, the reformed drunkard seemed a magical shape-shifter.

The life Gough recounted for his listeners was one of constant motion. Typical of geographically mobile Americans, Gough lacked the communal supports stable residence provided. He was born in the seaside town of

Sandgate, Kent, England in 1817, but the sea soon carried him away from his family. Melancholy departures form an ever-present theme in Gough's public presentation of his past, partly to explain his later self-immolation in rum. After a brief childhood of little schooling, fondly remembered country fairs and joyous Guy Fawkes' Day celebrations, Gough was torn from his family at the age of twelve. His father, a stern Methodist pensioner from the Napoleonic Wars, and his mother, a Baptist and sometime schoolmistress, lacked the financial resources to provide for John and therefore contracted with another village family, the Mannerings, to bring the youngster to America, teach him a trade, and care for him until the age of twenty-one, all in exchange for ten guineas--eleven pounds or about fifty-five dollars. The deal was a cold business transaction.

During the first few decades of the nineteenth century, such commercial transactions and familial separations in the United States became more frequent. Through the efforts of the federal and state governments, white encroachments on trans-Appalachian lands overwhelmed Indian resistance. High birthrates made the continued partitioning of patriarchally organized seaboard farmsteads difficult. Sons were quick to establish farms first in western New York and then in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Immigration from Europe also accelerated. From the

commercially unviable farms of innumerable hilltowns came migrants to the expanding commercial and manufacturing centers of the mid-Atlantic states and New England. Technological innovations--the steamboat, the flourishing networks of canals and then railroads, and the machinery of the burgeoning textile industry, for example--upset older subsistence patterns and traditional artisanal arrangements. Cyclical economic downturns made steady employment rare. In short, people were on the move. At the very time some Americans embarked on an unbridled celebration of the sanctity of the family, familial and communal bonds washed away before a torrent of market forces. The market revolution was a solvent of long-standing social bonds, and Gough's tale of nomadic anomie deeply resonated with the personal lives of his audiences, themselves either on the move or witnesses to the whirlwind.

As Gough recounted in his autobiography, his own separation from his biological family, which came on June 4, 1829, was a difficult one. His new caretakers provided no loving, maternal home. Their concerns were material, not familial. Gough resented the forced abandonment of blissful domestic life. He wrote, "As we voyaged on, I soon began to feel a difference in my new situation; and often did I bitterly contrast the treatment I received, with that to which I had been accustomed at home. I wished

myself back again; but the die was cast, and so I put up with disagreeables as well as I could."[14] The remainder of his life seemed like a constant effort to recapture the domestic solidity of his childhood.

He lived with the "disagreeables," the Mannerings, for the next two years, initially in New York City and then on a farm in Oneida County, "during which period," wrote Gough, "I was never sent to either a Sabbath or day school." Nor was he taught a trade. He did, however, attend revival meetings, learning the lessons of emotional oratory while breathing in the evangelical fervor that periodically swept through the "burned-over district" of western New York. Evangelical Protestantism offered a reconstitution of communal bonds sundered by market forces. Religion gave Gough images of enraptured audiences succumbing to the mesmerizing preacher. The emotional release of a camp meeting, like later tearful evenings with a capable experience speaker, eased the psychic pains of the Market Revolution. The lessons proved invaluable for Gough's later career.

Because Gough believed that his adoptive family failed to live up to their bargain, he wrote his father for permission to leave the Oneida farmstead. At the time, he considered himself no more than a laborer, a draft animal bound by a contract. Like his later habitual intoxication, the legal arrangement denied him his basic humanity. On

December 12, 1831, he embarked for New York City and obtained employment in a Methodist bookbindery. Although he portrayed the abject loneliness of his return to the metropolis, his job was waiting for him, arranged through connections made in Oneida County.[15]

Earning three dollars a week, Gough sent for his mother and sister, both of whom arrived in August, 1833. Though without his father, who remained in England, the family reunited in happy domesticity, but the good life proved all too vulnerable to the economic vagaries and instabilities of antebellum urban existence. Typical of the annual cycle of prosperity and depression at the time, joblessness and winter's cold arrived simultaneously. Gough wrote that in November, "owing to a want of business and the general pressures of the times, I was dismissed from my place of work." His sister, a straw-bonnet maker, also lost her job. "Winter in all its terrors, was coming on us, who were ill prepared for it," Gough remembered tremulously. Just as many an urban worker muddled through many a nineteenth-century winter, Gough found paid employment only intermittently. Though the situation brightened somewhat in the spring of 1834, by July Gough's mother sickened, died, and was buried in potter's field. It was an interment bitterly rued by her grieving and impoverished son. After a two-month visit to the Mannerings in Oneida County, Gough returned to New York

City and began, in the tradition of temperance narratives, an inexorable descent into the maelstrom of urban dissipation. From today's perspective, he became an alcoholic.[16]

True to temperance conventions, Gough's first drinking friends were not "shabby-looking drunkards" but rather respectable young men with a taste for the bottle. The very talents which later made Gough a renowned combatant against alcohol allowed him to enter into a life of carefree sociability. As Gough recounted in his autobiography,

> I possessed a tolerably good voice, and sang pretty well, having also the faculty of imitation rather strongly developed; and being well stocked with amusing stories, I was introduced into the society of thoughtless and dissipated young men, to whom my talents made me welcome. These companions were what is termed respectable, but they drank.[17]

In the conventions of temperance, respectability and drinking could not long coexist. After his mother's death, Gough encountered "a hitherto unfelt recklessness" that brought on mounting debt. He attended theaters and forgot his religious upbringing. Gough even sought to become an actor, an incomprehensible aspiration for a good Methodist. At the Bowery Theater, he wrote, "which I had, five years before, wished destroyed, as a temple of sin, I stood applying for a situation as actor and comic singer!" The theater ultimately survived and flourished. Instead, a

fire destroyed the bookbindery at which he worked. Gough left New York City and journeyed through urban New England. He worked as a bookbinder in Bristol, Rhode Island, and as an actor in Providence. He performed in a Boston play entitled Departed Spirits, or The Temperance Hoax that ridiculed mainstream temperance leaders like Moses Grant and Lyman Beecher. He made ends meet as a bookbinder and fisherman in Newburyport. In Lowell, he displayed a diorama of the Battle of Bunker Hill. In the early 1840s, he married and moved to Worcester, again working as a bookbinder. This re-established domestic stability, however, was short-lived. With the deaths of his wife and their infant, the pangs of grief and appetite coincided, and as he described it, he continued on his relentless descent.[18]

Conforming to the established temperance truth that alcohol vitiated conscience and will, Gough, bereft of feminine guidance, rapidly lost control of his life to an overweening appetite. He sought solace and fellowship by drinking, but in time, respectable acquaintances shunned him. He suffered the agonies of delirium tremens, and after recovering, he tried unsuccessfully to abstain from drinking. He heard a temperance lecture by the Washingtonian shoemaker J.J. Johnson but refused to sign the pledge. According to his autobiography, there was little in his life but "poverty, degradation, and misery."

For seven years, from the ages of eighteen to twenty-five, Gough, as he saw it, was under the moral and physical rule of Demon Rum. He was nevertheless, as he related in his autobiography, "a young man, whose energies, had they been rightly directed, might have enabled me to surmount difficulty, and command respect." His conversion to temperance, perhaps preventing his suicide, came with a simple tap on the shoulder.[19]

Through temperance Gough encountered a new circle of friends. The Washingtonians provided the familial nurturance he sorely missed. Though his first experience speech was unpaid, joining the Washingtonians quickly proved financially rewarding. The day after he signed the pledge, Jesse W. Goodrich, a temperance-minded lawyer and editor of the local Washingtonian paper, The Worcester County Cataract, visited Gough. The confirmed inebriate viewed Goodrich's appearance as a sign that he was rescued from "the slough of despond," where he had long been "floundering." Goodrich became Gough's first patron in the temperance movement, giving the young man employment as an agent for the Cataract and arranging for speaking engagements in Worcester and the surrounding towns. Worcester County proved to be the training grounds for a career in public speaking, a career that soon grew beyond the confines of a cultural backwater like central Massachusetts. With his popularity as a public lecturer

growing, Gough asked for a leave from his employer at a bookbindery. He never returned.[20]

Five months after first signing the pledge, Gough broke his oath. While visiting Boston, he encountered former companions from his days in the theater and thereby reentered a social world in which conviviality demanded drinking. Shamed by this recidivism, Gough publicly confessed his error, begged the pardon of his Washingtonian sponsors, and re-signed the pledge. He used the incident to argue the need for all Washingtonians "to abandon their old associates": friends, though certainly a necessity of life, could be dangerous. Gough was welcomed back at a meeting of the fraternal Worcester Washingtonians, evidence, according to The Worcester County Cataract, of the movement's "sympathy, kindness, and charity." Feeble and choked with emotion, Gough brought tears to the eyes of his audience. He "alluded to, and frankly acknowledged his late misfortune" and vowed to "prove himself, a more bitter and uncompromising foe to alcohol, than he had ever done before."[21] The "late misfortune" was not his last. Charges that Gough was a backslider haunted him his entire life. The unending controversy, however, continually kept his name before the public. In Barnumesque fashion, Gough kept his public guessing--did he or didn't he?

The local temperance press advertised the appearances of the erstwhile inebriate, now a professional temperance

lecturer. At the outset of his career, the Worcester County Waterfall announced Gough's intention "to commence the business of lecturer." The Waterfall expected him to be a popular speaker, because "[w]ith good powers of mind and a lively fancy added to wit and humor, he cannot fail to please and amuse with his bright and glowing pictures of things as they exist."[22] Word of Gough's prowess reached temperance advocates in Boston, and in fall 1843, the speaker addressed numerous audiences there, including the state legislature, at the behest of the president of the Boston Temperance Society, Moses Grant, Gough's second temperance patron. In effect, Grant absconded with a talented and well-received performer, and Goodrich lost a powerful draw to his meetings. In a letter dated January 20, 1844, Grant wrote to Goodrich, "Wherever he goes, they want him again, and so numerous are his engagements, extending already into February, and applications for his services, it is impossible for me to say when he will be able to visit you at Worcester." Young Gough discovered within the house of reform a stairway to success. On February 28, 1844, Grant wrote in the Cataract, perhaps with a twinge of bitterness, "Mr. Gough is still drawing crowded houses wherevre [sic] he goes. We see by our Exchanges that he is winning, in more senses than one, 'golden opinions' from the multitudes that rush to hear him." Though Gough was still wanted in Worcester, he was

destined for the larger venues in the world of reform and popular amusements.[23]

In Boston, the size of Gough's audiences grew. He took part in the massive temperance parade of sixty to seventy thousand participants on May 30, 1844 and spoke before the assembled crowd on Boston Common.[24] John Marsh, the Secretary of the American Temperance Union, became aware of his abilities and popularity. Marsh was to become Gough's last and most important temperance patron. Temperance advocates in the United States had created an intricate network of communication, exchanging letters and using the temperance press to keep abreast of the latest developments on the temperance front. Marsh, as editor of the Journal of the American Temperance Union, was at the center of this network, working to hold the disparate elements of the temperance movement in a tenuous alliance.

The former Congregational minister Marsh blew with the winds of temperance fashion. Typical of many older reformers in the 1840s, he sought to use the energy of the Washingtonian speakers without ceding leadership of the movement to the upstarts. Gough was a talented orator, and Marsh never saw him as a political threat to his mainstream leadership. Gough's abilities made him a potent weapon in Marsh's temperance crusade, and Marsh invited the young man back to New York City, the site of the lecturer's first drinking binges, to speak before temperance crowds in the

spring of 1844. During the following summer, Marsh accompanied Gough on an extended tour of western New York State, cementing Gough's standing as a national figure. Marsh's Journal promoted Gough at every opportunity and protected him from the invective his celebrity fostered. When a New York minister published a pamphlet entitled "The Echo of Truth" and charged Gough with hypocrisy and prevarications, Marsh declared, "all such things should be left to sink into merited contempt."[25]

By 1844, Gough was a new man, no longer the passive victim of diseased appetite. That year, he delivered 369 addresses, travelled 9731 miles, obtained 16,298 signatures to the total abstinence pledge, and pocketed $3409.[26] His success certainly depended on the sponsorship of temperance organizations, but his popularity rode mainly on the force of a melodramatic narrative that established his moral authority to speak out to a public willing to listen and to pay for admission. His life story started with nostalgic reveries of a blissful past that was stolen away by a villain. After a decisive confrontation with the villain, domestic happiness returns. The story of his life mirrored the melodramatic structural formula.[27]

At a Gough lecture, nostalgia often took the form of song, an important part of Gough's repertoire. According to the Journal of the American Temperance Union, the Washingtonians used "a mass of doggerel verse which should

chime with music already familiar to the multitude," including the "Tippecanoe songs" of the Election of 1840. For some temperance regulars, Washingtonian music was "too much like the grog-shop music for them and their children to hear." The preface of one collection of Washingtonian hymns turned that argument on its head.

> The dealers in alcohol have brought to their aid the power of song, and why should not we call upon the Muse and Lyre to assist us. Singing has become as necessary a part of the exercises at a Temperance meeting as speaking. The Ladies have been most properly called upon to aid in the advancement of this cause, and in no department of their labors have they been more successful than with their sweet songs, under whose influence, many a hard heart has been softened. We have seen the tear course down the careworn, furrowed cheek of the poor inebriate as the sweet tones of woman's voice have `swelled on the listening ear.'

The Unitarian minister John Pierpont collected together Washingtonian songs in a book assured "to contain nothing offensive to a religious spirit, or to good morals; and nothing so offensive to good taste, as not to be forgiven, in consideration of the holy cause which it is designed to promote." Included was one "Song for a Cold Water Army" to be sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne."[28]

Gough often sang verses derived from Methodist hymns:

> Days of my childhood,--sweet days of delight,--
> When I thought that the world would thus ever be bright;
> When the eyes of fond parents would light up with joy,

When they rested on me their innocent boy.[29]

If not regretting the loss of familial affections, songs bemoaned the loss of friends, including resting in a drunkard's grave. One of Gough's favorite songs was "The Inebriate's Lament."

> Where are the friends that to me were so dear,
> Long, long ago--long, long ago.
> Where are the hopes that my heart used to cheer?
> Long, long ago--long ago.
> Friends that I loved, in the grave are laid low--
> Hopes that I cherished have fled from me now --
> I am degraded, for rum was my foe,
> Long, long ago--long ago.[30]

The villain in this melodrama was no mustachioed figure in a cape; the villain was alcohol itself, exerting its diabolical influence on the protagonist and aided by unscrupulous rumsellers. Alcohol used a power not unlike that of animal magnetism to tempt, enslave, and degrade the drinker.[31] According to the conventions of the temperance narrative, redemption came only after great suffering, by the protagonist himself as well as by those, especially women, around him. Atonement took the form of the pledge. With this personal history behind him, made public at each lecture and through the press, the Washingtonian speaker established the moral authority to pillory the drink trade.

In the conventional temperance narrative, women were curiously unidimensional. Though women drunkards certainly existed, their plight was subsumed by other discourses, especially about prostitution. In the temperance

narrative, as in the temperance novel, women almost invariably appeared as victims of the inebriate's sordid habits and possibly as the suffering vehicles for redemption. Washingtonianism, as a vehicle for the careers of public speakers, left little or no space for female oratory but did provide women other paths to public activities. The Martha Washingtonians, a female auxiliary, was one of the first reform organizations in which women assumed a public role. They provided clothes to male reformed drunkards so that they could seek respectable employment and organized numerous non-alcoholic socializing events for dry family fun.[32]

Gough was hardly the only man to transform a past into a vehicle for moral reform. His Autobiography was one of a number of structurally similar temperance narratives published during the 1840s. Some autobiographical, some biographical, and others surely fictional, these narratives became a popular genre within what Karen Halttunen calls the "pornography of pain." According to Halttunen, detailed representations of pain were "obscenely titillating precisely because the humanitarian sensibility deemed it unacceptable, taboo." Haltunnen notes that much of the moral authority in reform literature accrued to writers by virtue of their positions as eyewitnesses to tortures of various sorts. As in Parson Weems's The

Drunkard's Looking Glass, the result was tendency to merge voyeurism and moralism.[33]

Gough positioned his later self--the converted, reformed, and self-possessed speaker--as an eyewitness to his earlier suffering, dipsomaniacal, demonically possessed self. In excruciating detail, the reformed drunkard painted a picture of psychic and physical agony. Audiences wallowed in these sentimental portraits of pathos.

The story Gough told about his past closely resembled the tales of other reformed drunkards. During the 1840s, the temperance narrative became commonplace. Typical of the genre was a bald assertion of realism. Alcohol, not the temperance tale, was the deceiver. For example, the Narrative of Charles T. Woodman begins with the disingenuous declaration, "Truth is strange--stranger than fiction," and proceeds to present a "narrative. . .divested of all romance but the romance of reality." Woodman blamed his habitual drinking on coercive social practices, from the apprentice system to the jailhouse.[34] Such narratives reformulated the drunkard's progress. They popularized the conventional notion of alcoholism as a descent but also introduced the possibility of salvation and escape by way of temperance. Structurally similar to the slave narratives, temperance narratives were themselves tales of liberation.[35] More distantly, they were related to the conversion narratives of early New England Puritans, the

public stories by which individuals proved their own grace and became full members of a church. Temperance narratives invariably mixed bodily and spiritual ingredients in entertaining ways.

Common to the temperance narratives, written or spoken, was a peripatetic existence, devoid of stable social connections. Sometimes, as with Gough's, these life stories emphasized the urban milieu of occupational dislocation in a cyclical economy. Woodman lived such a life in city after city in search of work. A Washingtonian from Hudson, New York, George Haydock, learned to drink as an apprentice weaver, became a day laborer during hard times, and lost a leg while blasting rocks. Such suffering helped explain his descent into alcoholism, which he blamed most on the heartlessness of elites.[36]

Some narratives related lives of distant travels and deep social descent. Joseph Gatchell was an Irish Quaker from a wealthy background, but his drinking fatally damaged his business aspirations. He emigrated to America, signed on with a whaler out of Mystic, Connecticut, was shipwrecked in Australia, and returned to New York City by way of France, only to be reclaimed by the Washingtonians of Hudson, New York, where he was working on a railroad. The metaphor of the sea as a heartless master was a common device. James Gale--a name too appropriate to be real--published "an account of [his] peregrinations through a

life of much trouble," entitled A Long Voyage in a Leaky Ship; or a Forty Years' Cruise on the Sea of Intemperance.[37]

Among the more lurid of these temperance narratives was The Horrors of Delirium Tremens by James Root. The entire book, over four-hundred pages in length, was an effort to prove the existence of demons by relating the experiences of delirium tremens. For Root, the d.t.'s brought a sort of religious conversion. As he wrote in the introduction to his narrative, "The sceptic thoroughly changes his faith, when he has an attack of Delirium Tremens, and he regards his scepticism only as one of his former follies, declaring most fully that he both sees and hears devils, and admitting that he was grossly mistaken."[38] Root made Cheever's allegorical demons real.

In these stories, it didn't really matter whether one drank because of poverty or was poor because of drinking. Both drinking and economic change were portrayed as outside the realm of individual human effort. In the tales of temperance conversion, helplessness itself was the point, not the causal links between poverty and drinking rationally explicated. Enslavement to one's economic and physical condition created the melodramatic environment in which experience was framed.

Second only to Gough in terms of celebrity and professional success in selling sobriety by confessing one's own drunken past was a former hatter from Baltimore

named John Henry Willis Hawkins. Hawkins, unlike Gough, left the publication of his life story to his son. His speeches nevertheless popularized his past life. He actually preceded Gough on the Washingtonian lecture circuit by two years, establishing a national reputation as a reformed drunkard who stirred audiences from Georgia to Maine. Hawkins, like Gough, related, and perhaps exaggerated, the experiences of a drunken past to forge a profitable career as a public speaker. Hawkins connected with audiences by sharing their unease with the arrival of market capitalism and geographical mobility. Whereas Gough was sundered from his family by transatlantic emigration, Hawkins was torn from the maternal bosom by westward migration. As a hatter, Hawkins learned not just a trade but also the habits of imbibing. As a child, Hawkins was, he stated in a lecture, "bound out to the hatting business, in as perfect a grog-shop as ever existed." The traditional practice of providing workers with stimulating drink, suggested Hawkins, was sinful. Most of his associates from those early days had long since entered a drunkard's grave.[39] While adhering to other aspects of artisanal culture, especially its mutualism, Washingtonians nevertheless chastised the traditional drinking practices of the artisanal shop. Many of them portrayed the shop was the place where they acquired inordinate habits, but in actual practice, the master's watchful eye insured that

drinking would not reach the level of impairment while on the job.

In temperance narratives, the "uncivilized" destinations of migrants, the frontier or the city, lacked the moral centers of their original village communities. In the west, Hawkins increasingly turned to alcohol and, according to The New Impulse, turned "away from friends and the restraints of religion [and] gave loose to his appetites and habits of dissipation for several years."[40] By successfully combatting these habits, Hawkins earned the right to speak publicly against intemperance.

The epistemological theory behind the reformed drunkard's tale was both experiential and revelatory. "The New Impulse" asked who can reform men. Its answer was, "It is he, who having known and felt the same miseries.. . .The practical christianity of these humble reformers may well put many of the pastors and churches of our land to the blush for their cold, formal religion, and dead faith."[41] Experience, not the patriarchal authority of the past, made the best teacher. The sermon, based on scriptural exegesis, lacked the immediacy of the reformed drunkard's harrowing tales. Even story telling, increasingly common in sermons, lacked the emotional power of temperance narratives.

Unlike ministers and doctors, reformed drunkards spoke on the evils of drink from the depths of personal

experience. To reach their audiences, they articulated their visions with metaphors as visceral as possible. Gough compared the experience of delirium tremens to that of amputation--such an experience was difficult to express in mere words. In his lectures, he would describe a young man telling a surgeon, "you could tell your class in a medical school all about it. You could tell them how you amputated a limb, but could you tell them how the man felt when the saw touched the marrow?"[42] Such approaches tweaked ministers' assumptions of hegemony over the temperance movement. Reformed drunkards had no need for ministers and doctors--experience alone mattered. And listeners came to hear them in droves. Victimhood at the hands of Demon Rum, if energetically portrayed by an able speaker, became a precious vehicle for a successful career. The leveling process begun by the "democratization" of American popular religion continued by way of identification with the reformed drunkard.

The unchaining of a drunkard's past even made for good advertising copy. Newspapers announcing the arrival of Gough or another Washingtonian event rarely failed to mention the speaker's sordid past, that the speaker had "felt the barbed wire in his own soul" or that the speaker was unable "to forget that he has drunk to the very dregs, in the debasing cup of intemperance and its concomitants--rags and misery."[43]

A newspaper in Northampton, Massachusetts, heralding the success of Washingtonianism, found the change from former conceptions of drunkenness remarkable: two years prior, "such a reformation was not dreamed of." Drunkards had been expected to die. Now, reformed drunkards, "coming up from the gutters and rum-holes, and putting on the garb and character of men," could "stand up to the sacred desk" with an "eloquence inspired by a dreadful experience."[44] Experience allowed reformed drunkards to seize the power of the spoken word--the Word--from ministerial control.

Washingtonians introduced into the temperance movement a new class-oriented critique of the older reformers, as historians such as Ian Tyrrell and Jed Dannenbaum show, but they also applied new techniques with entertainment value. Songs and stories made a temperance evening a pleasant night of amusement, not a dour sermon revisited. As a speaker to the Hingham Total Abstinence Society stated, prior to the Washingtonians, the "difficulty, nay, impossibility of saying anything new or striking upon the subject of Temperance [had] almost passe[d] into a Proverb." Noting the decline of older reform approaches, the speaker said, "few can now hope to hold the attention of an audience upon these themes, except those who are able to illustrate their discourse with some exciting history of their own personal experience."[45] The original temperance

sermon, largely based on logical argumentation and refutation, had little appeal. As one New Hampshire Washingtonian described the efforts of one of the preeminent temperance ministers in America, Lyman Beecher, "his sermons on intemperance were read and admired. But his influence was like that of the moon. He was too far off."[46] Beecher, his fiery rhetoric notwithstanding, spoke from on high and was not really heard. Washingtonians, as artisans, were closer in social distance to their audiences than were elite ministers and merchants. They encouraged further closeness by emphasizing themes, such as family life and work, with which members of almost any audience could identify.

The Washingtonian experience speakers utilized themes that underscored an unease with socioeconomic change in antebellum America--the fear of not simply falling down the socioeconomic ladder but actually falling off it. These themes of economic insecurity seemed outside the purview of formal clerics. Though ministers had launched the temperance movement as an effort to recapture a voice over "secular" affairs, others found new ways of wrestling with Demon Rum. In the narratives, the drunkard became a nomad, an Ishmael on a sea of psychic and economic instability. Ministers possessed neither the institutional means nor the personal experiences to tell such tales.

Ministers also lacked bodies that had dealt with the rigors of diseased appetite. With depictions of intense and individuated loneliness bordering on narcissism, temperance narratives focussed on one's own body as the primary site of struggle. Temperance advocates of the 1830s also spoke about the body, but it was always someone else's. The narratives of the reformed drunkards introduced a more intense and immediate physicality by the very presence of a redeemed man on the stage. By the new conventions of the 1840s, temperance speakers evoked from their listeners an empathetic response that had its own bodily reaction--tears.

References to the drunkard's body abound in the Washingtonian narratives. When Hawkins returned from a lengthy sojourn away from his home in Baltimore, drinking all too heartily the draughts of western individualism, his mother greeted him by saying, with a mixture of maternal solicitude and scolding, "John, I am afraid you are bloated."[47] He felt palpable shame, for his body betrayed his moral decline. Hawkins blamed his misfortune on drinking and the dissolution of parental bonds. Outside the home, the young man was an unwary victim of a nasty world. Poverty, degradation, and shameful bloating were the prices of carelessness.

The temperance movement criticized aspects of capitalism, particularly its dehumanizing tendencies, while

embracing its methods. Gough, for example, condemned the heartlessness of an economy he blamed for his mother's death. Even Cheever had criticized an amoral market system in which distillers gained respectability while family and community no longer protected the vulnerable young. Temperance offered new institutions, the Washingtonian mutual aid society for example, to ameliorate the worst excesses of capitalism, but the critique was cut short by how it defined salvation. Salvation was financial success, or at least stability. In addition, temperance speakers and other temperance advocates utilized the market to spread their views. Though they condemned the excesses of market life, they hardly rejected it in toto. The very changes they railed against--economic instability, the decline of community life, and the greed of a market-oriented worldview--allowed them to create careers on the lecture circuit.

For example, in their tales of suffering, Washingtonian speakers stressed the terrible pain of life as a nomad. In the west, Hawkins described himself as "vagabond," unconnected with human feeling. Gough, typically using biblical imagery to heighten the effect, said, as a drunkard "I walked God's beautiful earth like an unblest spirit wandering over a burning desert, digging deep wells for water to quench my thirst, and bringing up the dry, hot sand, with no human being to love me, no

living thing to cling to me."[48] He thus equated human affections, spiritual salvation, and cold water. Similarly, in an 1850 lecture, Gough said he had "wandered as an Ishmaelite with my hand against every man."[49] In his autobiography, he captured the helplessness and loneliness of the wandering life by calling himself "a waif on life's wave."[50]

The supreme irony of all this harping on the agony of nomadism was the fact that the careers chosen by Hawkins and Gough, peripatetic temperance lecturing, required constant motion, albeit often in the relative comfort of steamboats and locomotive cars. Without the revolution in transportation in the first half of the nineteenth century, Hawkins would not have had the opportunity to seek his fortunes in the west and enter a world of masculine drinking. Gough's ramblings around the northeast during his years of drinking would also have been unlikely. Neither would they have been able to establish careers as travelling lecturers.

Reformed drunkards contrasted wandering with stable family life. In their narratives, domestic happiness was the starting point and the conclusion, fulfilling the melodramatic formula. With the husband entrapped by alcohol, family life went terribly awry. The poverty created by intemperance threatened the family itself. The temperance conversion saved the family and was often

facilitated by its female members, especially daughters, a convention made most famous by T.S. Arthur's Ten Nights in a Bar-Room. In the case of Hawkins, his daughter, Hannah, became renowned as the savior of her father. The story suggests an acceptance by Washingtonians of the overturning of older patriarchal norms. Her efforts became the focus of an entire book written by John Marsh to publicize the Washingtonian movement, the title of which was Hannah Hawkins; or, The Reformed Drunkard's Daughter.

Marsh dedicated the book to Lucius Manlius Sargent, a writer of popular temperance fiction in the 1830s and 1840s. "Fiction has given place to strange reality," wrote Marsh in his dedication. Many of the themes of the Washingtonian speakers did indeed mirror those of earlier temperance writers. The threats to domestic happiness and to financial stability were constructed in especially similar ways, evidence that speakers may have been shaping their narratives with an eye to the already established market in temperance stories. Male alcoholism was--and is--a real threat to women within the family. What is striking about these personal autobiographies of reformed drunkards is their depiction of women as both victim and rescuer, a theme that dominated the later temperance movement.

Despite subliminal indications of incest and abuse, the story of John Hawkins highlights the role of his

daughter Hannah as "the instrument of her father's rescue." With Hannah's mother ill, the young girl's efforts, acting as a parent for her father, represent a curious sort of role reversal. Describing the nature of this relationship, Marsh wrote, "The firmness and love of a little daughter proved a father's rescue! And what a rescue! From a drunkard's grave."[51] Hannah provided a blanket for her unconscious father, incapacitated by drink on a foyer floor after a night's revelries, and lay down and slept beside him.

Washingtonian speakers never explicitly addressed sexual threats to the young, threats made clearer in novels like Ten Nights in a Bar-room. The theme points to the eroticization of the Victorian child, the Little Evas of America. Perhaps intentionally, the meanings disseminated by the reformed drunkards and their narratives were bivalent. The moral message of sobriety and proper parenting legitimized titillation. The protective garment of a moralizing message allowed the growth of a morally questionable commercial culture.[52]

Some audiences members apparently received the moralizing message with deep faith. The domestic blessings of temperance, the happy ending of many temperance tales, both fictional and autobiographical, awaited the temperance convert. Washingtonian speakers were so highly regarded as having expertise through experience in this area that they

were sometimes recruited as marriage counselors. According to his son's biography, Hawkins was sometimes "solicited to act as mediator between the wife and husband, to effect their reunion, and aid them in restoring them to their former social happiness."[53] Gough confronted similar situations in Boston. The Washingtonian speakers enjoyed reputations as healers, of the body and of social relationships in general, that augmented their popular appeal.

The temperance press compared the career of Hawkins to that of Christ, and his son unabashedly wrote, "in all his labors and self-denials, he did but follow in the footsteps of Him who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."[54] An anxious mother ascribed powers, almost supernatural and saintly, to John Gough by an anxious woman. In a letter written as her son, who had recently signed the pledge, was about to leave for college, she pleaded, "I beg the favour of you to send me one of those little medals, to place around his neck, that he may in the moment of temptation, look upon this little talisman, think of his pledge and remember the act which of all others, gave his Mother's heart most joy."[55]

Not only could Washingtonian speakers supposedly return families to their former contentment, they endeavored to create a new type of family in the form of the temperance society. Washingtonian groups lacked the

pompous formality and structural rigidity of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance and the American Temperance Society. When Gough was inducted into the Washingtonians of Worcester by signing the pledge, he felt as though he had been adopted into a caring family, something he had not experienced for many years. Hawkins called temperance societies "happy families" for the reformed.[56] Washingtonians, said Hawkins, "don't slight the drunkard; we love him, we nurse him, as a mother does her infant learning to walk."[57] Such an attitude could not be more distant from earlier views of the drunkard.

At least while Washingtonianism was a vibrant movement in the early 1840s, temperance societies did in fact act as adoptive families and, in particular, provided aid during times of stress and unemployment. A temperance society whose stated goal was support for the reformed drunkard contrasted starkly with earlier temperance societies. At the core of these new organizational forms was the revision of attitudes toward the drunkard. Supportive sympathy replaced prescribed loathing. As Hawkins said, "If there is a man on earth who deserves the sympathy of the world it is the poor drunkard; he is poisoned, degraded, cast out, knows not what to do, and must be helped or he is lost."[58]

This general attitude toward the reformed drunkard fostered an empathy for the Washingtonian experience speaker on the platform. Reforming other drunkards, or at least entertaining the sober, became a career opportunity for those, like Gough and Hawkins, who had been able storytellers while drinkers. If drunkards were inevitably and eternally lost, the career of temperance speaker would have been strictly circumscribed to harangues against ever starting the habit.

By bearing witness against drinking, reformed drunkards became entertaining storytellers who merged religious imagery with more secular subjects, continuing the trends begun by ministers but taking things further. In 1835, Cheever turned a distillery into an allegorical hell. For the Washingtonian temperance speakers, hell was a real, earthly experience. Delirium tremens best exemplified the alcoholic hell on earth and also made for a most entertaining horror show. A Pawtucket Washingtonian, a tailor by trade, wrote a temperance narrative in verse about his life as a wandering drunkard. He described an attack of the d.t.'s as follows:

> Demons surrounded me, black, white and grey,
> As writhing and twisting in agony I lay;
> There were snakes of all sizes, and crocodiles too,
> And devils with spears were running me through;
> Such awful sensations there's none can describe--
> No wonder so many with deliriums have died;
> 'Tis out of the power of man to express
> The horrible feelings, the pain, and distress,

That's experienced while laboring under the curse,
That was hid in the alcohol that was drank by us;
I cannot express it, but this I can tell,
Delirium tremens is the foretaste of hell![59]

Descriptions of hell had long been the province of clerics. The most famous such description was Jonathan Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," with its likening of humans to loathsome insects held by a single web over the raging fires of the pit. Washingtonian speakers used similar imagery to suggest the horrors of alcoholic addiction and the sufferings inflicted on drunkards by Demon Rum. Personalizing an established temperance convention, Gough compared the fires of hell with the fires in his own stomach.[60] Delirium tremens also provided temperance speakers an opportunity to explore madness, an opportunity not lost upon writers, such as Edgar Allan Poe, who were influenced by the darker side of temperance entertainments.[61]

Hallucinations opened up considerable imaginative space for temperance speakers and writers, allowing descriptions of all sorts of horrible creatures and situations without losing a claim to realism. Gough called delirium tremens "a species of insanity" and conflated the image of illness with that of a monster, calling it "the most terrible disease that can fasten its fangs on man."[62] Fantasies could be presented without discarding morally didactic messages, and audiences seemed to favor those most

able to present these horrors. If Gough called the experience of delirium tremens the low point of his life, the description of that experience formed the high point of his lectures. Hell and its entertaining portrayals were no longer the province solely of ministers.

That audiences responded so positively to Gough's ability to portray delirium tremens suggests that the popular appeal of temperance was not about enforcing order. Audiences came to see and hear an entertaining spectacle of psychic mayhem. Conventional attacks on drink did condemn the social disorders committed by young men bereft of parental or communal guidance, but the most popular forms of temperance activities stressed apocalyptic visions that operated like horror films. Early industrialization may have rationalized manufacturing processes, instituted new forms of labor controls, and banished alcohol from the workplace, but the commercialization of leisure reintroduced the appeals of the irrational. People's live were increasingly bifurcated between work and leisure. To compensate for the rationality and order of work, leisure spaces had to provide new outlets for the irrational imagination. The delirium tremens of a Gough gave audiences such an outlet. The mayhem may have been only in the mind's eye, but it was mayhem nonetheless.

According to eyewitness accounts, successful Washingtonian speakers always asserted emotion over

intellect in their performances. To reach those for whom alcohol addiction had been a daily burden, the ostensible purpose of Washingtonian oratory, rational and logical appeal seemed powerless. For those who did drink, probably the majority of most audiences, intellectual oratory smacked of elitism. Emotion seemed more democratic. Gough's head was interpreted phrenologically to give credence to the tendency in his speaking style. A Washingtonian journal wrote, "In person, he is below the common size, and he has none of that expansion of forehead, or wonderful development of the intellectual organs, which phrenologists would point out as evidence of genius."[63] The belittling of Gough's intellect extends to modern historians. Historian Ian Tyrrell writes that Gough's papers "revealed the essential banality of Gough's mind."[64]

Of course, Gough's intellectual prowess did not make him a success. His prowess as a performer, however, did. His role as an emotive, psychic contortionist and his ability to make his past pains come to life for a non-drinking audience made him a show alongside which the sermons of ministers paled.

Commentators noted Gough's energy. A western New York newspaper declared that Gough "throws his whole soul and body into the subject of his addresses." A paper in Ohio wrote, "Every fibre of his system is put to the best possible use in fulminating and fixing an impression upon

the minds of his audience" and that "his gestures are violent, outshaking Shakespeare."[65] An anonymous pamphlet published in 1845 to denounce Gough, entitled "Goffiana," disparaged his lack of intellect. "Of argumentative or logical power he has very little; he advances nothing new, he proves nothing, and he shows nothing already known in a stronger light; but, he pleases the ear, he stirs the feelings; he is just the man to produce a temporary effect upon females or a mob."[66] In "Goffiana," Gough bore the brunt of this assault not because of his stand on temperance but because his style appealed to "females" and the "mob." The Washingtonians were attacked from above for their lack of logic and intellect and for their surfeit of emotionalism. They were rejected by working-class traditionalists for their lack of alcohol. The formula, however, was a popular success, bringing in audiences of middling men and women for whom emotion was an important part of an evening's entertainment.

The emotions brought forth by the Washingtonian speaker were more than simply dismay at the drunkard's condition and joy at his reclamation. Reviewers noted the emotional range of a Washingtonian event, sometimes mocking the sudden shifts in the tone of a speaker. A Pittsburgh newspaper, even though calling Gough "the greatest natural orator that ever set foot on these shores," thought the speaker's gestures "by far too theatrical, and his

transitions from the deepest pathos, and most profound solemnity, to the highest ludicrous, far too hurried and rapid." His control over his audience was nevertheless "that of a Mesmerizer."[67]

Washingtonian speakers utilized the full range of human emotions to command audiences that might otherwise be boisterous and unruly or audiences for whom the only other event they might attend was a church service. Gough and Hawkins combined the tears of pathos, the hilarity of comedy, and the sublimity of conversion tales. Without the immediate and visible reaction of the audience, a Washingtonian speaker failed. According to an eyewitness, Hawkins spoke "in a vein of free-and-easy, off-hand, direct, manly, bang-up style." These speakers consciously rejected the detached and haughty airs of earlier temperance lecturers. By speaking with rather than to audiences, they increased audience identification with the reformed drunkard and attained a degree of control over the emotional responses of their audiences. After the tales were told, the ritual of bringing forth signers to the pledge legitimated the entertainment. An observer wrote that Hawkins was always successful "in `working up' his audience finely." The house could be as silent "as a deserted church" and suddenly the speaker would bring out laughter. Sometimes, Hawkins "assumed the melting mood, and pictured scenes of a drunkard's home,--and that home

his own,--and the fountains of generous feeling, in many hearts, gushed forth in tears; and again, in a moment as he related some ludicrous story, those tearful eyes glistened with delight," transforming deep sadness into shouts, grins, smiles, and bursts of laughter.[68] In these events, emotional response, not intellectual persuasion, counted.

The Washingtonian oratorical style has a number of roots. The most important of these sources was the preaching of the evangelical Protestants. Washingtonianism can be seen as a lingering echo of the Second Great Awakening. Gough was called "an orator of the school of John N. Maffit," an emotional Methodist preacher.[69] From today's perspective, these speakers appear intensely religious and their work simply an outgrowth of evangelical fervor. Such an interpretation, I would argue, is myopic and present-minded. From the perspective of earlier religious leaders, the Washingtonians were dangerously secular, competing directly with traditional authority, especially the pulpit, even as they borrowed stylistically from it. Their lectures legitimized emotional responses from audience members who were <u>not</u> experiencing religious conversions. The conversion to temperance, though modelled on the camp meeting variety, was ultimately a worldly one.

From the biographies of Hawkins and Gough, religious meetings apparently were not the only training grounds for

their careers as temperance speakers. The drinking life provided practice for storytelling, singing, and acting, skills invaluable on the temperance platform. Gough entered the society of fashionable drinkers because of his abilities to entertain through story and song. Similarly, Hawkins, according to his biography, was "exceedingly social," and "his company was much sought for by his fellow craftsmen, and many a pleasant story enlivened their evening gatherings. He was fond of a good joke, and possessing an exceedingly retentive memory he was never at a loss for entertaining topics of conversation."[70] In retrospect, their drinking days represent not lost time but, on the contrary, valuable training. By merging the primary sites of their earlier public lives, the church and the tavern, these reformed drunkards earned enough to escape the poverty that so defined and tormented their previous existences.

Hawkins and Gough prospered from their efforts. Financial success opened them, especially Gough, to charges of hypocrisy and greed, the very vices for which the rumseller was so vociferously condemned by the temperance movement. But money was what drove their careers, and raising money was an integral part of the Washingtonian mission. Referring to the Washingtonians, The New Impulse declared, "They are willing to do the drudgery if you will

provide the means for keeping the necessary machinery in motion. Money is indispensable." Donations from benefactors, individual dues as low as twelve and a half cents a month paid to local Washingtonian societies, and admission charges to Washingtonian events paid speakers but also created funds to support reformed drunkards as they made the transition to sobriety.[71] Money was also used to provide entertainments such as picnics and concerts, alternatives to alcohol-based amusements. The New Impulse stated that experience speakers received compensation in the form of "the delightful reflection, that they have raised [drunkards] from degradation and moral desolation to the condition of enlightened freemen" and "have consecrated their lives to the elevation of the unfortunate brethren and succeeded beyond expectation in their benevolent work of reforming others."[72]

That is, at best, only partly true. Temperance speaking quickly became a business, and no business exists without a profit motive. Money found its way into the pockets of the experience speakers themselves and in amounts that far surpassed their earlier earnings as artisans. At a Washington's Birthday celebration in 1842, John Marsh toasted the Washingtonians, with a nonalcoholic drink of course: "[t]hey opened a new mine of wealth, making many poor rich."[73] For Gough and Hawkins, this was especially true.

In 1841, Hawkins was beginning his career as a travelling lecturer. From Boston, he wrote his mother that he was thriving, despite the continuing bad economic times. He attained financial security for the first time in his life, proudly stating, "all expenses [are] paid, independent of my salary, which is one thousand dollars per year, besides the many gifts put into our hands." This was a comfortable income at a time when a skilled artisan, a hatter for example, might expect to earn five hundred dollars in a good year. In the same letter, Hawkins intimated that his portrait was being painted and that he was endeavoring to enter Hannah into one of the best schools in Boston.[74] Single tours, solicited and financed by state or local temperance organizations, could also be profitable; a series of engagements in South Carolina in 1844 netted Hawkins one thousand dollars.[75] When Hawkins toured the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts in late 1842, his terms were generally ten dollars per lecture, and he often spoke more than once during the course of a day.[76] When in 1843 Hawkins made public statements that he and his family had been poorly supported, the Boston Temperance Society organized a benefit concert for him that included the Hutchinsons, the famous temperance singers of New Hampshire.[77]

In 1845, the two-hundred-thirty dollars resting in Gough's pocket was a considerable sum. Pro-Washingtonian

papers were defensive about his newly acquired wealth. They compared his earnings to those of other popular entertainers and found his income acceptable because of its moral impact. Reporting that Gough received one thousand dollars for a five-week engagement in New York City in 1845, the Worcester Cataract argued that the social advantages far outweighed the money spent to hear Gough speak, doubting that "any community would reap more domestic, industrial, and moral benefit by paying such an able advocate of temperance, $1000, for five weeks, than by giving that, or ten times that sum, to Ole Bull, or Fanny Elsler for fiddling and dancing a whole year."[78] Similarly, an 1850 newspaper favorably compared Gough's career to that of the Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind, declaring, "[w]hile thousands and thousands are willing to give from $3 to 6.50 a night to hear a woman pour forth the melodies of song, we are glad there also thousands and thousands, willing to pay 12 1-2 cents a night to hear a man pour forth the truths of temperance."[79] To those for whom a night of commercial amusements was morally suspect, a temperance lecture seemed appropriate. For fence sitters on the issue of the propriety of commercial entertainments, a Gough speech was a comfortable--and a relatively inexpensive--choice.

Temperance activists also consciously promoted alternatives to the rowdy, masculine world of the tavern. In 1842, John Marsh, the most mainstream of temperance

reformers, looked favorably on the development "that Temperance Societies throughout the country are getting up concerts, lyceums, &c." Marsh stressed that temperance was a struggle about leisure. He recognized entertainment and amusement as primary human needs as basic as food. "The mind and heart must be fed with something good, or the adversary will get possession," Marsh wrote in his Journal of the American Temperance Union.[80] To Marsh, Demon Rum would gain control of commercial culture unless alternatives to the tavern were actively promoted. (Marsh included theaters in his catalogue of irredeemable social spaces.) Such ideas opened a large window of opportunity for the experience speakers.

A nineteenth-century American ethos prescribed a productive life and proscribed the squandering of precious time. The use of time therefore had to be justified; a night with Gough or Hawkins passed the moral litmus test. One newspaper commented on the symbiosis between temperance lectures and the millennial aspirations of many antebellum Americans:

> If any of our friends, temperate or intemperate, want to kill time, let them go and hear Hawkins and Gough whenever they have opportunity. As natural seed is quickened in the earth and made fruitful only by dying--so, by thus killing of time, moral seed may germinate, and the fruits of "righteousness and temperance" be matured for a happy "judgment to come" and for a glorious eternity.[81]

Wasting time, lounging in the bar-room and attending a play were morally suspect and dangerous to both individual and community, but an entertaining temperance speaker spread goodness.

"Temperance men like fun and frolic," once said Gough.[82] Such a statement seems almost ludicrous from a contemporary perspective, but from the 1840s, temperance could be and was amusing. Though coated with a moral message, temperance explored tragedy and comedy in innovative and entertaining ways, using the figure of the drunkard as a focal point for such issues as madness, social ills, crime, and illicit relationships, today's staples on television. For both men and women, temperance speeches provided an acceptable excuse for leaving the home, even in an age of emergent domesticity. At least for some people, temperance, unlike later prohibition, was fun.

Temperance audiences came to expect an interesting story and, like regular theater audiences, made demands on performers. They especially wanted to hear the harrowing tales of reformed drunkards.[83] At a Washington's Birthday celebration in Hadley, Massachusetts in 1842, an audience of three thousand people, including many women, congregated at a church to hear music, expecting to hear Hawkins. They left disappointed, forced to listen to the tired logic of a Colonel Dwight from Stockbridge. As a local newspaper judged, "The address was good--some parts of it were

beautiful--but if it had been a little less polished, and more filled up with fact, story, and anecdote, it would probably have pleased the mixed audience more."[84] Listeners wanted to be entertained, and had they been, there probably would have been more signatures to the pledge and more cash raised for the cause of temperance.

A successful experience speech brought forth an emotional response among members of any audience, no matter the class or gender of the listeners, reminiscent of the emotions of revivalist conversions. The Mercantile Journal of Boston reported an "unvarnished" 1841 Hawkins speech in Medford, "at which not only the tender female wept, but the rugged farmer, the hardy mechanic, the able lawyer, the learned divine, all sympathized and wept too." A more favorable review can hardly be imagined. Another newspaper tells of the reporter's own tears at hearing Hawkins tell his life story, confessing,

> we were brought to a very awkward condition. We gave ourselves up entirely to our feelings, and were crying with great relish, until he came to that scene where his young daughter covered him with her little bed-clothes, one night when he was thrust into his entry dead-drunk, and put a pillow under his head and then lay down by his side. This was narrated with such simplicity and touching feeling that we could only by violent effort refrain from a downright oriental lamentation.[85]

Weeping for the temperance speaker assured the victory of his position and became a visible sign that a temperance conversion was imminent. Hawkins told the story of a particularly hardened drunkard he counseled in Maine. Only when the speaker emotionally bonded with the man was a signature to the pledge likely. Hawkins said, "When I began to talk into him, and at last the tears began to flow, then I felt sure of him!" The man signed the total abstinence pledge.[86] The temperance conversion was an emotional experience, and according to the Washingtonians, the admonishments of a Lyman Beecher, laden with cosmological import, were completely inadequate to the task.

The reputations of the most successful experience speakers, men whose careers long outlasted the ephemeral Washingtonian societies, were built on their abilities to move audiences, no matter how cold to temperance they might seem. Favorite targets of both Hawkins and Gough were inmates of Northeast prisons. When Gough traveled through western New York with Marsh, Auburn Penitentiary was a required stop. Hawkins spoke at the Massachusetts State Prison at Charlestown, and the convicts "wept like children."[87] Few accomplishments made these speakers prouder that their ability to move the hardened criminal to tears. The effects of alcohol, understood as the crucial factor in almost all criminality, were thereby purged.

Likewise, the ability to convert a chronic inebriate confirmed a speaker's prowess. Religious conversions were seldom sought when a listener had been drinking, but temperance speakers enjoyed the challenge of a head-to-head battle with their opponent. (Some of these conversions are suspiciously similar to later miraculous recoveries at travelling medicine shows. Part of the drama perhaps lay in whether the transformations were authentic.) One of Hawkins's first missionary meetings in New England was punctuated by the conversion of an inebriated member of the audience. In Maine, when a temperance audience hissed at a supposed drunkard interrupting Hawkins, Hawkins himself admonished the audience to respect the man who deserved the sympathy and assistance of temperance people, not their opprobrium.[88]

Washingtonians viewed the degraded drunkard as a brother and potential convert to the temperance cause. Drunkards were victims of the true criminals, the distillers and rumsellers. They could thus be accepted into the family of temperance. By so doing, the drunkard abandoned his former self-definition as a man. Gough had himself undergone such a transformation. By becoming a Washingtonian, Gough's manliness rested not on drinking and treating but on a self-possessed renunciation of a demonic master.[89] John Gough was a celebrity, a public persona for whom many people held a deep affinity. His persona,

whether or not it reflected his own psychological reality, required a redefinition of what it meant to be a man. Alcohol was thus more than a barrier to success in the marketplace; it was also a barrier, in the eyes of antebellum temperance reformers, to true manhood. To become a true man, Gough had to achieve a victory over his innate appetites. His battle was one between a deranged appetite and a moral will, and the telling of that battle fought on a large field of imaginative space. To become a man, Gough had first to defeat his appetite for drink, but beyond that, he had to relate the story to the world. Only through the act of speaking could Gough achieve the public manliness that had been the exclusive preserve of the minister and the statesman. As the Buffalo Christian Advocate affirmed in 1850, his speaking was what "has made a MAN of Mr. GOUGH. It is this that has called forth and laid bare to the light of day, and the admiration of the world, those brilliant faculties which once lay dormant and were kept in check by the very vice against the spread of which he is so manfully combatting." His abilities as a storyteller were in the "bondage" of his "habit," and a miracle occurred when he "knocked off the chains which once enslaved his daring spirit."[90]

There may have been too much protest here. The masculinity espoused by temperance was so dangerously at odds with the masculine ideal of drinking cults.

Temperance leaders were ever vulnerable to charges of effeminacy from working-class traditionalists. As the Rev. Lyman Abbot wrote in the introduction of Gough's Platform Echoes, "The only final remedy for intemperance is manhood, with all which manhood involves and implies." Personal independence from alcohol, so stressed at Fourth of July temperance celebrations, was at the core of this definition of manhood.[91]

In the world he created for his audiences, Gough stood alone and therefore fulfilled the formulaic definition of the self-made man, but in the actual climb up the ladder of success and fame, the experience speaker was aided at every step of the way by temperance patrons. The "self-made man" was a commercially crafted persona made vivid with the language of religious conversion. One of the many ironies of temperance huckstering was that no matter how much a Gough stressed the psychological torments attendant to loneliness, he was hardly alone. No matter how constrained he portrayed the contractual bondage to the Mannerings in Oneida County, Gough was just as constrained by the demands of the temperance movement after he had achieved the "freedom" of a career. Without the patronage of temperance leaders and paying listeners, Gough would have continued as a failure in the marketplace, drink or no drink. The difference between the two lives of Gough, before and after his temperance conversion, was that as a speaker he had

money and the freedom money purchased. The schizophrenic tale of his life, however, may not have given him the freedom of knowing who he was. Such were the costs of his "liberty."

Gough's conversion story especially appealed to artisans and their families. He did not speak from a position of moral or social superiority.[92] A pro-Washingtonian pamphleteer wrote, "many persons of wealth impart aid as a condescension on their part,. . .expecting. . .simply to lay the receiver under some sort of obligation to the donor."[93] The Washingtonian speaker sought no paternal connection. A brotherly twelve-and-a-half cents at the door would do. This was a relationship based on entertainment value instead of paternal social obligation. The experience speakers, in fact, were part of a humanitarian reform from the lowest rungs of society. They were men who took special pleasure in blaming elites--and not just distillers--for society's ills. As The New Impulse declared, "Drinking began with the fashionable, at the top, and worked down to the bottom. This Reformation began at the bottom, as christianity in the first place began, and it must work up through the higher classes of society, till the whole lump leavened--the whole mass purified."[94] Such a view countered the American Temperance Society and its top-down view of moral purification by means of the drunkard's inevitable doom.

Perfectionist aspirations aside, what was Gough's appeal? Mainly, his popularity rested on his role as a cultural interlocutor. Gough stood between two worlds. For many in his audiences, he transposed a religious idiom into a commercial, "secular" setting. Gough sold sobriety with visions of hellish torture and heavenly redemption while rejecting the institutional constraints of a formal ministry. When audiences attended a Gough event, they too engaged in a cultural dialogue about a changing nation.

For Gough and the other Washingtonians, experience became a vehicle for a newfound sense of their own social authority. Partly, their power came from the way they encapsulated the experiences of many in their audiences, particularly the unsteadiness of life in the new era of market relations. Temperance was not a conspiratorial attack on working-class sovereignty. Temperance was popular among antebellum workers. Unless we foist upon these people the charge of false consciousness, antebellum temperance should be seen as rooted in a vibrant if besieged artisanal culture. Washingtonianism was the primary example of working-class temperance. Respectability and self-respect, though defined in various ways, was not the possession of a single social class. The "competence," the independence and financial security of self-employment sought by many male artisans, was increasingly out of reach for antebellum workers. That

many artisans saw temperance as a locus of self-control and freedom need not imply an abandonment and betrayal of class. Many Washingtonians maintained their artisanal identity without kowtowing to elites. The result was a tremendous infusion of imaginative energy into the temperance movement. The turn to prohibition in the 1850s represented a considerable abandonment of that energy and a turn to the coercive powers of the state. With legal suasion replacing moral suasion, the experience speakers were left with a quandary; for a time, prohibition was a popular political position, but its enactment was the death knell of temperance conversions based on emotional persuasion. The ambivalence of men like Gough toward prohibition rested on the Maine Law's clear danger to their chosen career.

Experience was a powerful vehicle for men like Gough because the malleability of storytelling served pleasurable emotions, emotions kept in check in day-to-day work. How one shaped experience shaped the reactions of audiences. In eliciting either torrents of tears or knee-slapping laughter, the experience speaker mediated the world of revival preaching and that of stage burlesque. And their efforts portended a world of endlessly morphing amusements, a commercial culture in which the seeming bedrock of experience actually rests on a quicksand of transient emotions and changing fashions.

Notes

1. Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, American Antiquarian Society.

2. Toronto Watchman, October 1850; in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

3. The New Impulse, or Hawkins and Reform (Boston: Samuel N. Dickson, 1841): 3.

4. American Antiquarian Society, reprinted in Gerald Carson, Rum and Reform in Old New England (Sturbridge, Mass.: Old Sturbridge Village, 1966): 6.

5. Ian R. Tyrrell, Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979): 159-190.

6. On the Washingtonians' uses of adversity to build their own moral authority, both inside and outside the family, see Teresa Anne Murphy, Ten Hours' Labor: Religion, Reform, and Gender in Early New England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992): 101-130.

7. John B. Gough, An Autobiography (Boston: 1845): 62-64.

8. Ibid.: 65-66.

9. The New Impulse: 17.

10. W.H. Daniels, The Temperance Reform and Its Great Reformers (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1878): 109, 113.

11. New York Tribune, Sept. 12, 1845.

12. John Bartholomew Gough, Autobiography and Personal Recollections of John B. Gough, with Twenty-Six Years' Experience as a Public Speaker (Springfield, Mass.: Bill, Nichols, 1869): 125.

13. Jed Dannenbaum, Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984): 32-68. Dannenbaum uses the phrase "worldly redemption" to describe the transformation offered by the Washingtonians, capturing the ambivalent attitudes of the Washingtonians toward religious and secular issues. Washingtonians generally employed a religious idiom to secure secular goals.

14. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 9-12; Gough, Autobiography (1869): 19-47.

15. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 13-16; Gough Autobiography (1869): 55-61.

16. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 16-28; Gough, Autobiography (1869): 62-79.

17. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 28.

18. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 28-52; Gough, Autobiography (1869): 81-106. In his autobiographies, Gough says very little about the woman he married, stressing his personal loneliness and anguish rather than her suffering. This curious omission may have been out of consideration for his second wife, or perhaps it was a function of the melodramatic narcissism of the reformed drunkard's narrative.

19. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 53-57.

20. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 69-75. Until January 31, 1844, The Worcester County Cataract listed Gough as an agent.

21. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 76-83; The Worcester County Cataract, April 19, 1843.

22. The Worcester County Waterfall, December 31, 1843, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

23. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 87-89; The Worcester County Cataract, January 24, 1844 and February 28, 1844. Father Theobald Mathew was an Irish priest who was credited with obtaining five million signatures to the pledge in Britain and Ireland from the late 1830s to the mid-1840s. From 1849 to 1851, he toured the United States, urging Irish immigrants to give up alcohol but refusing to actively support prohibition and its nativist advocates. See Mark Edward Lender, Dictionary of American Temperance Biography: From Temperance Reform to Alcohol Research, the 1600s to the 1980s (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984): 331-2.

24. Gough, Autobiography (1869): 174-82. See also the description of the parade in the Crystal Fount and Rechabite Recorder, June 15, 1844.

25. For an early paean to Gough in New York City, see New-York Daily Tribune, May 14, 1844. Journal of the American Temperance Union (hereafter JATU), May 1845.

26. John Gough's "Journal," Gough Papers, AAS.

27. David Grimsted, Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968): 171-203.

28. JATU, February 1843. James H. Aikman, The Washingtonian Harp, A Collection of Original Songs, Adapted to Familiar Airs (New York: Saxton and Miles, 1844): iii. John Pierpont, Cold Water Melodies, and Washingtonian Songster (Boston: Theodore Abbot, 1843): 4, 9-10.

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34. Charles T. Woodman, Narrative of Charles T. Woodman. A Reformed Inebriate. Written by Himself (Boston: Theodore Abbot, 1843).

35. See John W. Crowley, "Slaves to the Bottle: Gough's Autobiography and Douglass's Narrative," in David S. Reynolds and Debra J. Rosenthal, The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997): 115-135.

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37. Joseph Gatchell, The Disenthralled: Being Reminiscences in the Life of the Author; His Fall from Respectability by Intemperance--and Rescue by the Washingtonian Society (Troy, N.Y.: N. Tuttle, 1845). James Gale, A Long Voyage in a Leaky Ship; or a Forty Years' Cruise on the Sea of Intemperance, Being an Account of Some of the Principal Incidents in the Life of an Inebriate (Cambridgeport: P.L. & H.S. Cox, 1842).

38. James Root, The Horrors of Delirium Tremens (New York: Josiah Adams, 1844): iv.

39. George William Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1859): 5-6. This biography, which included many newspaper articles and private letters, was written by his son, a Methodist minister.

40. The New Impulse: 9.

41. Ibid.: 20.

42. A Gough speech in Boston in 1877, quoted in Daniels, The Temperance Reform: 151. Gough used roughly the same language in a speech from February 2, 1845 quoted in his autobiography of 1845: 128.

43. The News Letter, Westfield, Mass., July 10, 1850 and True Washingtonian, February 1844, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers.

44. Hampshire Gazette, July 30, 1841.

45. James L. Baker, The Washingtonian Reform (Hingham, Mass.: Jedidiah Farmer, 1844): 4.

46. White Mountain Torrent, Feb. 16, 1844, quoted in Teresa Anne Murphy, Ten hours' Labor: Religion, Reform, and Gender in Early New England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992): 119.

47. Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 40. The passage quotes a Hawkins speech at Faneuil Hall in April 1841.

48. John Gough, Platform Echoes: or, Leaves from My Notebook of Forty Years. Comprising Truth for Head and Heart (Hartford: A.D. Worthington & Co., 1886): 154.

49. A Niagara, New York newspaper in October of 1850, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

50. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 15.

51. Marsh, Hannah Hawkins; or, The Reformed Drunkard's Daughter: 9, 47. The story of the blanket appears on page 22. See also, Marsh, Temperance Recollections: 85.

52. Karen Sanchez-Eppler, "Temperance in the Bed of a Child: Incest and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century America," American Quarterly 47 (March 1995): 1-33.

53. Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 74.

54. Ibid.: 116.

55. Undated letter E.M. Hardy to John Gough, Gough Papers, AAS.

56. JATU, March 1842.

57. Hawkins quoted in Dannenbaum: 38.

58. Hawkins, Life of Hawkins: 71.

59. John L. Lecraw, A Sketch of the Life, Travels, and Sufferings of a Reformed Man. . .Written By Himself (Pawtucket, R.I.: B.W. Pierce, 1844): 25.

60. Gough, Autobiography (1845): 67.

61. David Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988).

62. Gough, Platform Echoes: 155.

63. Maine Washingtonian Journal, 1843, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

64. Tyrrell: 331.

65. 1850 newspapers in Gough Papers, Scrapbook Collection, AAS.

66. Goffiana: A Review of the Life and Writings of John B. Gough, by One Qualified (Boston: 1845): 8.

67. A Pittsburgh newspaper from January, 1851, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

68. Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 97. A number of newspaper accounts in the Gough Papers attest to this wide range of emotionally diverse audience responses.

69. Goffiana,: 7. According to The Family Favorite and Temperance Journal, May 1850, the Rev. John Newland Maffit pleased audiences more than intellectuals. He was eloquent, theatrical, imaginative, emotional, and popular. Among his abilities was "to arouse these tenderest sensibilities into a tempest of passion" in the form of tears of sympathy. Like Gough, he was also morally suspect; he was excommunicated by Methodists in the North for abandoning his wife in Brooklyn.

70. Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 45.

71. Johnson, Martha Washingtonianism.

72. The New Impulse: 21, 15.

73. JATU, March 1842.

74. Hawkins, Life of Hawkins: 117-118.

75. Crystal Fount and Rechabite Recorder, April 20, 1844.

76. Hampshire Gazette, December 27, 1842.

77. Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 254-255.

78. Worcester Cataract, 1845, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

79. 1850 newspaper in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

80. JATU, January 1842.

81. Unnamed newspaper quoted in Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 327.

82. Gough quoted in Daniels, The Temperance Reform: 169.

83. On the issue of audience sovereignty, see Peter G. Buckley, "To the Opera House: Culture and Society in New York City, 1820-1860," Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984.

84. Hampshire Gazette, March 1, 1842.

85. Mercantile Journal and unnamed newspaper quoted in Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 121, 328.

86. JATU, December 1842.

87. Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins: 95.

88. Ibid.: 128.

89. E. Anthony Rotundo, American Manhood: Transformation in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era (New York: BasicBooks, 1993): 3-5.

90. Buffalo Christian Advocate, 1850, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

91. Lyman Abbot in Gough, Platform Echoes: 42.

92. The level of identification with the drunkard varied. Hawkins sought an attitude of kind solicitude toward the inebriate. John Marsh, on the other hand, revealed his underlying disdain for the drunkard, even while admiring the transformative powers of the Washingtonians, in his Temperance Recollections: 82, writing, "Men, who would make their bed with the swine, who would lie and steal, and be the vilest of the vile, were seen well-dressed and taking a place among the respectable and good."

93. Johnson, Martha Washingtonianism: 31.

94. The New Impulse: 20.

CHAPTER 5

"THE MIRE OF HIS BASE DEBAUCH": THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF MUDSLINGING AND BACKSLIDING

> "I am not afraid of an open enemy, but I seem to have around me a host of secret assassins, but whom it is impossible to reach. Why such incessant efforts should be made to ruin me, by every species of falsehood, by plots and foul contrivances, I cannot conceive."[1]
>
> John Gough, 1845

> "He has been made the type of the temperance reform; an importance has been given to him; he does interest the public; he has made himself public property. There are some thousands of his fellow citizens keenly desirous of knowing all about him, and it is no more than right that they should be satisfied."[2]
>
> Goffiana, 1845

> "Life is a warfare."[3]
>
> John Gough

A Buffalo newspaper wrote in 1850 that John Gough produced "scenes founded on fact and forming a drama of intemperance enough to stagger the most sober."[4] For some temperance supporters, that ability was hardly an admirable one. For some anti-temperance forces, the Washingtonians were dangerous competitors for the time and money of their drinking clientele. The experience speakers, especially when they faltered in their pledge to total abstinence, became an appealing target for those unhappy, for whatever reasons, with their successes. Gough, in particular, was one to falter. "Delirium's dread chain" may have

mesmerized and captivated audiences, but the clanking rings of appetite never quite released their author.

John B. Gough equated life with battle, but what he had in mind seems more Freudian than Darwinian. For the temperance lecturer and reformed drunkard, struggle formed a man's inner life, not his social relations. Existence was "a warfare" between a righteous conscience and a depraved appetite. Conscience and will, according to Gough, could "conquer evil passions and appetites. . . despite all allurements and temptations." Such a victory insured a man's essential humanity. "Nothing reduces a man nearer to the level of the brute than indulgence," he wrote.[5] The conquest of appetites also made one free. Such sentiments were hardly original. They had long underlay temperance beliefs, but from the pen of a Gough, the words assumed a more immediate and personal air. As he retold it, Gough's life was a neverending battle between his appetite for drink and his conscientious efforts to abandon the sinful ways of his past. Succumbing to drink meant enslavement. "Beneath the allurements of passion there lurks a worse than Egyptian bondage," he argued.[6]

But Gough's life sparked another sort of battle as well. Throughout his career, he suffered vociferous criticism both within the temperance movement and outside it. According to his Autobiography of 1869, he endured "wholesale slandering" and wrote, "were I the consummate

scoundrel I have been represented, I should contaminate the inmates of any state prison in the country."[7] Rumsellers, orthodox temperance advocates, mainstream religious leaders, elite drinkers, and rowdy working-class traditionalists aimed rhetorical barbs or mounted physical attacks on experience speakers like Gough. Competitors for attention in the public realm seized upon any opportunity to pillory the reformed drunkards as either unsteady allies or as hypocritical charlatans. The Washingtonian insurgency, with Gough as its most prominent spokesman, had many enemies.

From the moment John Gough became a paid experience speaker, he could no longer be assured of his privacy. Whereas his ostensibly victorious battle over drink had granted him a measure of manly self-ownership, his career path had rendered him, in the words of the pamphlet Goffiana, "public property." The contradiction between his desire to maintain a self-directed private life and the dictates of a growing cultural marketplace placed profound burdens on a man like Gough, whose public persona rested on his ability to resist the devil in drink. During one eventful week in New York City, the two battles of John Gough's life converged.

If "a host of secret assassins" preyed on John Gough, he was not entirely bereft of friends. One of his most avid supporters in New York City was Horace Greeley, the

publisher of the New York Tribune. In 1844, the Tribune welcomed the young speaker from Massachusetts as a "devoted minister in the cause of Temperance, and one of the most eloquent orators of the day." The paper "advise[d] every man and woman to go and hear him," especially at a time when the city's leaders were "about to be besieged for a new batch of licenses to sell intoxicating liquors and fill our Alms House and Prisons with wretched victims, and increase the taxes of every property holder." The Tribune's reviews of Gough's speaking engagements always lauded the lecturer.[8]

The following year, the Tribune had a very different and far more interesting tale to tell. On September 12, 1845, the paper reported that the temperance lecturer was inexplicably missing for almost a week and handbills describing him were being circulated. With expensive attire and two-hundred-thirty dollars in pocket, Gough had vanished. With the ominous, yet titillating warning, "foul play is feared," a reader could easily imagine Gough at the bottom of the Hudson, a hapless victim of some faceless urban thug. The next day, the Tribune reported, "A great deal of excitement pervaded the city yesterday in regard to [Gough's] mysterious disappearance." The paper continued,

> The facts we believe at present to be that Gough met an old friend in Broadway, was persuaded by him to accompany him to drink some soda-water, which proved to have been drugged, and

> almost instantly deprived Mr. Gough of his reason. He was soon afterward decoyed into a vile house, where he remained unconscious or insane, and was probably plied with liquor, until he was discovered yesterday.

Gough passed the week intoxicated in a brothel. Of the two-hundred-thirty dollars, only sixty dollars were recovered. Foul play indeed.[9]

But who was playing and with whom? The Tribune portrayed Gough as the helpless victim of conspiratorial agents out to bring him into disrepute. The "drugged" and "decoyed" speaker remained above reproach. The lesson from Gough's embarrassment, the Tribune suggested, was that young men should not drink if they wish to escape the evil machinations of the rum cabal. Other papers were not so forgiving. The New York Herald lambasted Gough's behavior and the moral bankruptcy of the temperance cause. The Herald, fuming at the temperance steamroller, declared,

> Every mean means and length has been gone into, to shove it down the throats of those who ventured to oppose it. In many circles, for a person not to belong to a Temperance Society is a bar to his admission, and he has been looked on as an outcast and lost sheep, undeserving of notice.. . .[This] fanatical notion. . .has extended to bursting, and people will probably now look upon them with calmer views.. . . [T]hose who unfortunately are cursed with an innate appetite for stimulus of some kind, we are afraid will never be benefited by any pledge, oath, or bond.

Referring to the fact that Gough's lost week involved sins other than drunkenness, the Herald concluded, "if they do not indulge in liquor, they will in something else."[10]

Gough's disappearance provided an opportunity to comment on the changes wrought by popular temperance of the early 1840s. The speaker became an object of either celebration or derision, depending on one's view of the crusade against alcohol. Yet, whichever side one took, the language of exposure dominated. Temperance advocates saw an insidious plot to disgrace a successful temperance figure. And opponents employed the old temperance tactic of making public the truth, of exposing the hypocrisy of rum traffickers, this time to reveal the contrivances of a false prophet of abstinence. Either way, the story made for interesting reading. In 1845, Gough became the ball in a game of cultural politics. The speaker was public property, or more precisely, the property of various publics.

The established leaders of the temperance movement themselves feared the reformed drunkards. Washingtonians explicitly modelled themselves on the insurgent evangelists of the early Second Great Awakening, the circuit riders historian Nathan Hatch describes as "self-conscious outsiders" with "an ethic of unrelenting toil, a passion for expansion, a hostility to orthodox belief and style,. . .offer[ing] common people, especially the poor, compelling

visions of individual self-respect and collective self-confidence."[11] Since they represented a democratization and popularization of the temperance movement, the reformed drunkards threatened mainstream reformers.

From the beginning, the movement's regulars viewed Washingtonianism with either ambivalence or hostility. Ministers and merchants who wished to maintain their privileged position within the movement recoiled from these creatures newly emerged from the "gutter." Their opposition indicated both their own specific interests within the movement as well as a larger concern about public culture. Behind the struggle for political power lay a larger conflict over cultural changes that placed audience demands at the forefront of public amusements. For critics of the Washingtonian innovations, excitements of an entertaining sort produced an "unnatural appetite" for public stimulations among an unsuspecting populace. What Demon Rum inflicted on individual drinkers, temperance hucksters might inflict on society as a whole.

In May 1844, the Journal of the American Temperance Union declared that an underlying "misfortune of the temperance enterprise, is that it has been promoted too much by the irregular impulse of excitement, rather than by the abiding influence of settled principle." The Washingtonians, reformed drunkards ever on the edge of a fatal abyss, had appeared "like so many sheeted ghosts from

the sepulchre of drunkenness," but as the thrill subsided, the cause would decline. Excitement was a "whirlwind" that did little permanent good and potentially great harm. Similarly, a letter to the New-York Daily Tribune commented favorably on Gough's success in attracting large crowds but lamented "that mere excitement will avail little toward permanent reform." The writer observed, "Attracted by his impassioned manner, or easy flowing eloquence, or his power of imitation, or his affective spirit, thousands go to hear; and the heart moves and the intellect is charmed, and the imagination diverted, and the bosom throbs, and all go away delighted." Such entertainment, however, was no substitute for a steady organization by wards and the constant door-to-door recruitment of new signers to the pledge. For the temperance establishment, instruction of a more sober variety would build a sturdier movement.[12]

Washingtonianism ultimately foundered on the two issues of recidivism and religion. Washingtonians accused rumsellers of enticing reformed inebriates like Gough into their old haunts, and some reformers began to consider legal remedies against the traffic to prevent the irresistible temptation of "crossing the fatal threshold."[13] Opponents of temperance gleefully noted cases of renewed drinking by those who had taken the Washingtonian pledge. But equally destructive to Washingtonianism was the charge of irreligion.

Loud condemnations of the overly aggressive Washingtonians thundered from the pulpit. They often used churches because they were the largest spaces available but then ridiculed the temperance of ministers. At best, Washingtonian speakers were ungrateful; at worst, they were apostates foisting a surrogate religion on devout Christians. Washingtonians threatened the established hierarchy within the organized temperance movement but, more important, they injected themselves into a very public debate on moral authority and insisted on their own moral superiority. The result of this cultural threat was an alliance of ministers and other temperance reformers that sought to contain and co-opt the Washingtonian insurgency.

Among the temperance advocates disparaging both the tactics and social backgrounds of the Washingtonian upstarts was the temperance writer Lucius Manlius Sargent. In the introduction to his 1843 tale, "Temperance Meeting at Tattertown," published in the Boston Recorder and elsewhere, Sargent scathingly denounced the work of Washingtonians as counterproductive to the best interests of temperance and society. While the work of reformed drunkards, suggested Sargent, was a marginally "plausible" project and could do some good by saving their chronically inebriated brothers, the writer was concerned by the damage a short-lived flurry of excitement would inflict. "Hasty accumulations are proverbially liable to speedy

dissipation," wrote Sargent. He further noted "the gross ingratitude of those--and it is a common occurrence--who express the most perfect contempt for the labors of their predecessors." Theirs was the sin of "arrogance." The greatest danger to the temperance cause, according to Sargent, lay in the supposed Washingtonian "proposal to divorce the cause of religion from that of temperance. . . repeatedly and distinctly urged by speakers and writers." The proliferation of Washingtonian journals disseminated dangerously secular ideas. "Puny journals, of the new organizations," insisted Sargent, "like some ephemeral insects, born to inflict stings and die in the very effort, have arisen in various parts of the country, and lived long enough to promulgate irreligious and agrarian notions; but not long enough to repent, and correct their errors."[14] Washingtonians pestered Sargent like annoying bugs.

Washingtonians, in turn, blamed unsympathetic elites for the failure of the temperance movement to secure universal abstinence. Pompous social betters considered Washingtonianism "an insect of a day that flutters by excitement, soon to die and be forgotten," said one Washingtonian narrative, condemning the sin of "pride" of those who rejected the drunkard. The newly reformed naturally resented the haughty airs of men like Sargent. One reformed drunkard was initially drawn to a

Washingtonian revival in Hudson, New York, by its antipathy to elites.[15]

Some elite cultural critics saw the proliferation of any popular temperance as itself a sign of decline. B.R. Hall ridiculed the growing interest in fads such as mesmerism and phrenology in his Something for Every Body, published in 1846. The fashionable interest in reforming the human body, thought Hall, indicated the downward path of American society. Rabid temperance lecturers who "foam sometimes" in their denunciations of clergymen was one such fad. Clergymen could well fear such speakers. Ministers were "severely basted, lampooned, stigmatized and hooted at, by certain infidel lecturers, both local and circuitous in Sabbath day meetings." Outrageous lecturers were "intoxicated with fame," proof that "it is always perilous to elevate men suddenly above their former selves." Temperance speakers, according to Hall, "reap a goodly harvest of small coins by administering to our love of fun and frolic, and also to our vindictive propensities, by caricature and malediction," especially aimed at ministers.[16]

"Fun and frolic" had no place in Hall's solemn and sober temperance. In fact, he viewed frivolity "as subversive to the cause" and looked with disdain on the ubiquity of commercially based temperance activities. Hall wrote that with "Sunday lectures,. . .temperance and negro

opera; temperance tableaux; temperance theatres; temperance eating-houses, and temperance every thing,. . .our whole population, in places, is soused head-over-ears in temperance." Popular itinerants dislodged the standing of local ministers within their communities--"what clergyman but would be endangered by a popularity and applause and adulation, so sudden and universal as often surrounds an itinerant lecturer." In particular, "itinerants, who wander about in very eccentric orbits and narrate their rum days at so much per diem," damaged the credibility of the movement by "their almost unavoidable backslidings."[17]

How did Washingtonians come to be charged with irreligion? Early Washingtonians sought to be as inclusive as possible, and sectarian squabbles of the sort engaged in by George Cheever would alienate potential converts to temperance. Therefore, despite their conscious reliance on evangelical language and rituals, some Washingtonian leaders vigorously prohibited any specifically religious services at their meetings, thereby attracting the ire of temperance-minded ministers. In addition, the rhetoric of the Washingtonians sometimes exceeded the simple separation of church and temperance and began to embrace a more active anticlericalism. As one Washingtonian stated at a Washington's Birthday celebration, "Is not the mission of the Washingtonians divine? Are they not the heaven-ordained ministers of temperance?" Ministers feared that

the comparison of reformed inebriated to apostles and saints was more than a trope. They worried that organized Christianity was in danger from a ragged army of sudden teetotalers. Washingtonians like Hawkins blamed ministers for their past degradation--the churches failed in their duty to eradicate intemperance because they evinced no sympathy for the drunkard. The insurgents ridiculed and rejected the leadership of ministers, and many asserted the preeminence of reformed drunkards in the larger temperance movement.[18]

The original six Baltimore Washingtonians believed that neither religion nor political party should enter the Washingtonian society. Abstinence should be the only requirement for membership. Though hardly averse to Christianity, they were nevertheless uninterested in the religious beliefs of their members. Washingtonians usually allowed an opening prayer when their meetings were held in church buildings, but they countenanced no other openly religious ceremony to impinge upon their primary mission of fostering experience speeches and signatures to the pledge. In general, Washingtonians believed earlier temperance to be far too controlled by ministers whose life experiences little prepared them to be sympathetic to drunkards.[19] Yet religiosity virtually oozed from the tales of woe told by experience speakers. Christian themes connected them firmly to their audiences.

Leaders of the established temperance movement often thought Washingtonians rejected formal religion. John Marsh, the Congregational minister and secretary of the American Temperance Union, recalled the appearance in early 1843 of a young man, an aspiring temperance lecturer, at his New York City office seeking material for his speeches. The young man, noted Marsh with dismay, "wanted nothing of a sombre and religious character, for nothing was surer to kill the cause of Temperance." The bane of the drinker, dependence on an ever accelerating excitement, seemed to have infected temperance audiences. Marsh, trying to balance the disparate elements of a fragmented temperance movement, also criticized those who refused any association with the Washingtonians. Not about to dismiss the potential of mobilizing the public through entertainments, Marsh ridiculed those who had "apprehended that by wit and drollery and song and hurrah, the whole would be frittered away and come to nothing." By arguing that the principle of total abstinence from intoxicating beverages was "simple and wide enough to embrace a world," Marsh sought a mutually beneficial alliance between religious leaders and the entertaining experience speakers as a way to protect the considerable progress already made toward a sober society.[20] Such a reconciliation, however, was unlikely given the intense competition over public turf.

The charge that Washingtonians sought to displace Christianity, or at least Christian leaders, presented the temperance establishment, including Marsh, with a quandary. How was it possible to balance the desire for utilizing the energy and popularity of the new innovations with the dread of alienating the already strong temperance of ministers? In a review of the Washingtonian pamphlet, The New Impulse, or Hawkins and Reform, the Journal of the American Temperance Union feared "in this little work a disposition, which we have noticed elsewhere, to make this wonderful reform, not merely the work of God, this we fully believe, but a religious reform in itself, and something superior to the piety found in ministers and churches." The New Impulse argued that the essence of Washingtonianism was a "practical Christianity," the work of lay people in bringing Christian love to the streets. For a clergy already disrupted by disestablishment and the upheavals of revivalism, the claims by some Washingtonians for temperance as a sort of surrogate religion were deeply threatening and deserved an active counterattack.[21]

A few conservative religious leaders rejected temperance in any form outside the churches. For example, Bishop Hopkins, the Episcopalian prelate of Vermont, published The Triumph of Temperance the Victory of Infidelity, asserting that the temperance movement of the 1840s saw Christianity as useless. Hopkins rejected

Arminian aspirations and accused the temperance movement of sinful pride in believing heaven on earth was possible. Marsh rejected Hopkins's argument, later writing that "the work only provoked the smiles and pity of all good men." Lucius Manlius Sargent expressed "mortification and surprise" that Hopkins thought temperance would overwhelm religious concerns. Sargent, a fellow Episcopalian, wanted an alliance, not a battle, between ministers and reformers in the drive for moral improvement. Neither all ministers nor all reformers agreed.[22]

For ministers, one of the most objectionable Washingtonian practices was lecturing on the Sabbath. The Congregationalist Boston Recorder, huffily declaring Washingtonianism "not quite in accordance with our taste," waxed apoplectic over "the growing practice of Lay lecturing on the Lord's day, upon subjects of `moral reform,' so called." Sunday lecturing, asserted the Recorder, was a case of doing evil in order to do good. By disrupting the focus of audiences on purely religious concerns, temperance lecturing on the Sabbath, for some within the Congregational church at least, represented a rising "spirit of worldliness."[23]

The Boston Recorder viewed the reformed inebriates through a lens of old-fashioned paternalism. While the rescue of drunkards undoubtedly improved society and churches could fruitfully supply space for temperance

meetings, the Recorder worried lest all older temperance organizations be abandoned like so much detritus. The Recorder was unwilling to relinquish the reins of reform. Congregationalist leaders would "hold out every encouragement to the reformed, and take hold and assist in lifting him up to a station of respectability and usefulness," but they "would not by any means yield to his exclusive guidance the car of temperance." Such a course could only lead to ruin and more rum. Reformed drunkards were, at best, unsteady partners in the drive for social perfection.[24]

The Boston Recorder acknowledged the usefulness of offering church space to temperance groups, as long as they avoided Sabbath meetings, maybe as a way of controlling Washingtonian excesses. But some ministers even refused to offer their buildings for any meetings. Washingtonians bitterly pointed to such denials as evidence of bad faith on the part of ministers. Churches, however, may have felt put upon by the constant requests for their buildings by reformers of various sorts. The Hampshire Gazette, for example, reported in 1842 that a Belchertown, Massachusetts, church had begun examining travelling agents and lecturers to determine whether they deserved the use of church property. Parishioners gave money to potential confidence men. Itinerant speakers, declared the Gazette, "have become exceedingly numerous, and some of their

objects may be of doubtful utility. No doubt our Religious communities are sometimes imposed upon." Some churches felt a need to "check a kind of fashionable mendicity" that took money from the coffers of religious institutions and placed it in the hands of unscrupulous reformers. In essence, reform entertainments stole from the collection plate.[25]

Washingtonians, in turn, accused ministers of pilfering the proceeds from appearances of popular temperance speakers. One Washingtonian paper announced an appearance of Gough in early 1845, noting that "the admission is free, and that our citizens will have the privilege of hearing Mr. Gough without paying their money into the pockets of some clerical `money digger,' who seeks more for the gold than the good of the cause."[26] Gough, whose appearances were sponsored by either ministers or Washingtonian societies, offered a product, his experiences as a drunkard. The commercialization of Gough's past fostered charges of greed against all parties involved, including ministers.

In the face of constant demands and denunciations from Washingtonians, some ministers simply abandoned temperance activism. Others including John Marsh, redoubled their efforts to build a clearer alliance between religion and temperance. Without the support of churches, wrote Marsh,

temperance was "a mere philanthropic or dietetic movement" that would prove to be "evanescent, without binding force."

Albert Barnes, the Presbyterian minister from Philadelphia, wrote several essays outlining the evangelical position in favor of a strong connection between religious institutions and reform. According to Barnes, the church should remain the paramount voice for reform. While drinking by ministers and the involvement of church officers in the rum trade was an egregious blot on Christianity, Barnes maintained that "the Church has a power for reforming mankind which no other institution has or can have; and that in all works of moral reform it should stand foremost." Barnes, though a proponent of a theatrical style of preaching, wanted ministers to safeguard the movement from the even more theatrical and undependable Washingtonians. Despite the struggle between those and outside the churches, Barnes located "common ground" in the old belief that intemperance blocked the spread of religion and that irreligion blocked the spread of temperance. Barnes expressed a well-founded anxiety over the position of ministers in American society. Ministers wanted temperance to utilize the zeal of the reformed drunkards without ceding any of their already depleted cultural authority.[27]

Opinions like those of Barnes appeared frequently in the pages of the Journal of the American Temperance Union.

The older temperance advocates sought to build a "natural alliance" between churches and the new, more secular organizations. As one letter to the Journal argued, "If the old Temperance men have too little zeal, and the Washingtonians too much of some kind,. . .the evil cannot be eradicated by keeping aloof from each other." Similarly, John Marsh criticized the "leading minds in the church [who] are standing aloof from the cause of temperance," believing it is "usurping the work of religion, or unscriptural or becoming a dangerous substitute for piety." Meanwhile, some Washingtonians made "the senseless cry. . .that temperance must be kept aloof from religion, lest by mingling the two, we gain no access to the poor drunkard, or become involved in the quarrels which belong to sects and parties." Marsh tried to keep the Washingtonians and the temperance regulars together, but both sides conspired to vitiate his efforts. A Washingtonian society in Pennsylvania excluded clergymen from their group the way older societies had denied membership to those involved in the drink trade. Without churches, however, Washingtonians were left without adequate spaces from their meetings. Marsh wrote, "To our reformed brethren just out of the gutter, and wishing to take revenge on King Alcohol for all the injury done them, it is exceedingly annoying that some churches are closed against them."[28]

For Marsh, the summer of 1842 was a pivotal time for the movement. He discerned a "depression in the moral state of the reformed; a lack of readiness on their part to acknowledge their dependence on God, no small desecration of the Sabbath, and a painful unwillingness, in not a few professed Christians, to connect the temperance cause. . .with religion." In the incessant squabbles between the new activists and their more established counterparts, according to Marsh, "Satan was let loose."[29]

Ultimately, aloofness was an inevitable result of the social distance between the Washingtonians and the traditional leaders of the temperance movement. As the rationalist, Unitarian, and temperance-minded William Ellery Channing bemoaned in 1841, the present was an age "without reverence" in which the "blind multitude are forsaking their natural leaders." Channing believed in a temperance noblesse oblige--that it was the duty of the wealthy to teach the poor "that human happiness lies in the triumphs of the mind over the body, in inward force and life."[30] Such attitudes rankled the egalitarian Washingtonians, who thought that the poor could teach themselves. As one Washingtonian told an audience, "in this enterprise, the poorest may be the greatest philanthropist."[31] Social divisions made for a fractured temperance movement, while the career opportunities created

by popular temperance elevated the competitive fevers of temperance leaders, both inside and outside churches.

Religious leaders seemed unable to abandon the view that the drunkard was a singularly degraded and irredeemable figure. As one Methodist journal put it in 1844, it was the duty of "the religious part of the community, the judicious, the wise, and good" not to surrender control of the temperance movement to reformed drunkards because many a new convert returned to the intoxicating cup "like a dog to his vomit."[32] For ministers, the reformed drunkard was an unfaithful ally because his appetite for drink would surely awaken and disgrace the cause. Charges of backsliding became a weapon in the rhetorical fusillades aimed at the Washingtonians by proponent of clerical temperance.

Even long after the decline of Washingtonianism, ministers continued to denounce the tactics of the reformed drunkards. Writing in the Centennial Temperance Volume, published in 1877, the Rev. J.B. Dunn criticized the Washingtonians for refusing to support prohibition and for denying the importance of religion. Dunn, looking back at a hundred years of temperance history, regretted that

> those who had no thrilling personal history to narrate in the matter of intemperance were pushed aside in the advocacy of the reform, and were thereby constrained to withdraw from active participation in the movement; and such was the treatment which

> ministers and officers of churches often received at the hands of some of the most forward of the Washingtonians, because they did not open their churches and vestries to every itinerant lecturer who came along, and make all their religious services secondary to his meetings, that numbers of ministers and Christian men felt compelled to withhold their co-operation.[33]

For many ministers, the Washingtonians were ingrates who did not know their place in society.

In 1864, Leonard Woolsey Bacon, a Brooklyn minister, published The Mistakes and Failures of the Temperance Union. Although premature in his evaluation, given the meteoric rise of the Women's Christian Temperance Union just a few years later, Bacon announced that temperance was "now, decaying and waxing old" and ready for an "epitaph." In the midst of the bloody Civil War, he compared his task to an autopsy--he evaluated the corpse of temperance. Bacon bitterly argued that temperance lost its moral righteousness the moment "it passed under the control of specialists, of professional reformers, of stipendiary agitators, of men who, bringing to the exclusive consideration of a somewhat exciting subject the sort of mental predisposition which is common to the riders of hobbies [who] gradually develop a monomania." These included a "scurrilous army of ditch-delivered lecturing reformed drunkards. . .whose glory was in their shame" and for whom moderate drinking was a far greater sin than

habitual drunkenness. Such spokesmen and attitudes had "sundered the natural alliance" between moral reform and the Christian church. Having broken with the churches, temperance had "set up its own sacrament, or pledge, teetotalism." The turn to prohibitory legislation was no better, according to Bacon, for it prevented free acts of virtue by coercively abolishing vice. True goodness required freedom of choice. Bacon wanted a return to the older style of social and moral authority, in which ministers exclusively propounded moral truths within houses of worship. Much of the new moral agitation, ruefully noted Bacon, was commercially driven.

Ministers were not alone in their dislike for the Washingtonians. One of the most vociferous critics of the Washingtonian approach was Charles Jewett, himself a professional temperance lecturer. Jewett achieved notice as a speaker on the eve of the Washingtonian upheaval. His activities represent a transitional type of temperance lecture, one which included some theatrics but without the melodrama of a Gough or other Washingtonian experience speaker. Jewett's career as a temperance lecturer ran aground on the rocks of the Washingtonian excitement, and his memoirs expressed little but bitterness toward the experience speakers who had terminated his early success in

the field. He had nothing but disdain for drunkards, reformed or otherwise.

Trained as a doctor, Jewett began practicing medicine in Rhode Island, but gradually, his activities drew him into temperance circles. During the 1830s, he spoke out more and more against the drink trade, cataloguing local examples of major tragedies and minor annoyances inspired by intemperance, using any such incidents "to interest the popular mind in favor of temperance, and make a little capital against a ruinous system." In 1837, Jewett abandoned medicine and became a full-time agent for the Rhode Island Temperance Society. The career change was ill-timed, for the Panic of 1837 rendered the society financially insolvent, and Jewett's salary went unpaid. Undaunted, Jewett continued his work and developed a style of speaking that included comedy as well as conventional descriptions of the costs of drunkenness, aiming his temperance salvos not at drunkards, who he believed had too damaged their intellects to be retrieved, but at the temperate, particularly "the rising race" of young men. Gradually, he achieved a modicum of financial success.[34]

At a large temperance convention in Boston in 1839, Jewett acted out a "recitation" entitled "The Dream, or The Rumseller's and Rumdrinker's Lamentation," a sort of one-man temperance play. Even though most clergymen at the time considered drama an abyss of sinfulness, three-hundred

ministers in attendance enjoyed Jewett's performance. Because, as Jewett later put it, "the notion was becoming prevalent that to those not especially engaged in the enterprise, temperance conventions were very dull, necessarily so," the doctor thought it crucial to introduce innovations so as not "to lose the public ear." Jewett's recital, described in the Boston press, was, according to a Rev. A.W. M'Clure, "uproarious," creating an "ecstatical burst" of laughter and "shrieks of orgastic merriment." Proudly alluding to his ability to feign drunkenness, Jewett wrote, "The imitation is so accurate that the most practiced eye cannot detect the counterfeit." Jewett's performance was comedy. Instead of giving a sympathetic rendering of the drunkard's plight, he laughed at the fallen sot. More concerned with impressing "notables" in his audience than with converting drunkards, Jewett was invited to become a lecturing agent for the Massachusetts Temperance Union. Initially, he declined out of financial concerns but accepted once he was offered an annual salary of twelve-hundred dollars plus expenses.[35]

With the arrival of Washingtonianism, Jewett's prospects plummeted. He never forgave them. He sided with temperance ministers, "often grossly imposed upon by unworthy men, who, taking advantage of the new order of things, assumed the role of public lecturers, often from love of notoriety, and the small gain of `a collection.'"

In 1844, Jewett listed the formidable obstacles to temperance in the United States, including the usual list of rumsellers, merchants who indirectly profited from the traffic in intoxicants, and the indifference of the respectable portions of society. Jewett, however, also denounced Washingtonians as among the most criminal supporters of intemperance. They were "disorganizers" who attacked older temperance leaders, institutions, and ministers, thereby deceiving and misleading the newly reformed converts to the cause. Exemplifying the "disorganizers" was H. Clapp, Jr., editor of the Essex County Washingtonian, who had written that a "viler tyrant never crushed the spirit of man than that of the American priesthood" and that Protestant sects "will be blown to the moon" when temperance had defeated the churches of America.[36]

By 1840, Jewett's professional standing rested on the seemingly firm foundation of the Massachusetts Temperance Union. As a paid agent of the MTU, Jewett travelled throughout the Bay State. He earnestly organized local auxiliaries, collected donations, regularly reported to the parent society, and just as regularly ridiculed drunkards.[37] The continuation of his "plan", he later stated, would have annihilated the traffic within a few decades. The Washingtonian insurrection, however, scuttled his grandiose vision, as Washingtonian experience speakers "began to

divert attention from our efforts, to a novel and more exciting mode of operation." Jewett condemned "unworthy" speakers and "the pertinacity with which some mercenary characters press their services upon our local societies." The public's "love of the new, and the sensational" led to financial ruin for the MTU. Undependable reformed drunkards established local temperance societies independent of the MTU. Without local bases of support, agents for the state society lost their jobs. Wrote Jewett, "Oh! it was a stunning blow to the most effective temperance organization which ever existed in this country" when the people of Massachusetts chose to follow "a popular but necessarily partial and ephemeral movement" led by the recently reformed.[38]

Behind Jewett's vendetta against the Washingtonians was a physiological understanding of the effects of alcohol on the human mind. The doctor believed that alcohol permanently destroyed human reason and that it was foolhardy to cede leadership of the movement to former drunkards. Washingtonians like Hawkins and George Haydock had permanently hurt their intellects since alcohol destroyed the "internal government" of men. They had neither reason, conscience, nor will.[39] Jewett, like other older temperance reformers, thought drunkards irredeemable. Even worse, the Washingtonians were impudent. Mitchell, one of the original six Baltimore Washingtonians, rejected

temperance sermons, prayers, arguments, and exhortations in favor of experience speeches alone. Such tales of past tribulations, though entertaining, were not educational for the reasoning minds Jewett sought to reach. While drunkards had destroyed their "higher faculties" and therefore needed emotional appeals, nondrinkers could only be harmed by an unhealthy dependence on such forms of entertainment.

Jewett objected to the style and content of Washingtonian speeches as if engaged in a theological dispute. He accused the new reformers of "false doctrine." Much in their discourses was "calculated to corrupt the public taste, and render excitable men, accustomed to listen to them, intolerant, afterwards, of more sober instruction." The practice of relating past experiences without shame "sometimes degenerated into license." Speakers, for the love of fame and lucre, imposed unreasonable demands on ministers, while rejecting prayer or any other religious exercises at their meetings. Even though Jewett was among the first to make temperance entertaining with his comedic "recitations," he maintained that education by reason was more effective than amusement by emotion. The alternative entertainments offered by Washingtonian societies were no replacement for the earnest education of the sober on the evils of intemperance.

> Steamboat excursions, oyster suppers, comic songs, or dramatic readings may contribute to present enjoyment and answer, therefore, useful ends; but woe--a thousand woes to our blessed enterprise, if these are to be mistaken for the means of converting the masses, or substituted for hard, self-denying, continuous, educational efforts.[40]

Jewett believed that Washingtonianism had rendered temperance entertainment as an end in itself rather than a means to a sober society.

The Sons of Temperance, the fraternal organizations that succeeded the Washingtonians in the late 1840s, offered Jewett little solace. The closed meetings and elaborate regalia were not educational in the sense desired by Jewett, and Jewett's style of speaking was not welcome in their clubs. The Sons of Temperance were of little use in propagandizing temperance principles, for they were founded after a "want of a financial basis and the Washingtonian tornado had sadly demoralized the movement."[41] In the wake of Washingtonianism came a drive for legal prohibition, not a renewed popularity in Jewett's style of temperance speaking. Speakers found themselves swallowed by the controversy over the Maine Law. By the early 1850s, disputes over the legal suppression of the traffic came to dominate the temperance movement.

By 1844, even the compromising Marsh tired of the Washingtonians. His Journal of the American Temperance Union indicated that many Washingtonian newspapers had

expired "from the defect of good taste. They have partaken more of the low wit of the bar-room, than of the purity and dignity of moral reform." Marsh likewise admonished the proliferation of professional experience speakers.

> We feel constrained, for the good of our great cause, to make a single remark on the fulsome panegyric which has been bestowed upon temperance lecturers throughout the country. It is not in good taste (though we may have fallen into it ourselves), and is enough to ruin any man, whoever he may be. We should be thankful that we have so many good business-like speakers, but it is not necessary to say that every reformed man who tells a melting story, or makes a strong appeal, is a Garrick, or a Cicero, or Demosthenes. We only spoil the men, disappoint the public, and ruin the cause; for the people have common sense in the matter after all, and will exercise it.[42]

Marsh, the voice of the American Temperance Union, thought the proliferation of experience speakers should end.

Yet Gough marched on. By avoiding explicit battles over religious issues, Gough cultivated large audiences among the middling classes of the Northeast. He employed Washingtonian tactics without alienating his elite patrons within the movement, including Marsh. Gough's longevity and popularity required a careful maneuvering through highly politicized cultural minefields. Gough's missteps usually involved not the animosity of clergymen but rather exaggerating a degraded past life or succumbing to drink.

As Gough became a celebrity by speaking of his drunken past to assorted audiences, opponents charged him with charlatanism. The way he framed his past for dramatic effect indeed stretched the truth. A particularly embarrassing episode occurred in Brooklyn as he described his arduous journey to America with the "disagreeables" to whom he had been contracted. Gough noted the heartlessness, even drunkenness of the Mannerings, the family paid by Gough's father to escort the boy across the Atlantic and start him off on a new life. One evening, though the lecturer was unaware, the daughter of David Mannering, married to a Rev. J.D. Torry, was in attendance. She became indignant as her parents were defamed in public and contacted a minister, Jesse Pound, to assert their respectability. Pound wrote The Echo of Truth to the Voice of Slander, condemning Gough as "a vile slanderer." According to the Gough, it was "industriously circulated" by his enemies. The pamphlet described the woman listening to "her parents stigmatized as brutal, hard-drinking persons, who had treated him with cruelty, corrupted his morals both by precept and example, purloined money given to place him out respectably, and sent him off nearly penniless, to become a wanderer on the earth." Pound demanded a retraction from Gough. In all likelihood, Gough had exaggerated his travails. The elder Mannering testified that Gough's father "thought me his best friend."

Furthermore, Mannering treated the boy, who was fourteen years old--not twelve as Gough had asserted--with loving care. The young Gough had received religious training in western New York State, and his adoptive family had paid his way to New York City. They had also arranged a position for him in a Methodist bookbindery. Gough had not entered the bustling metropolis as a completely self-sufficient young Ben Franklin nor as an abandoned waif. Although he refused to offer an official retraction after the controversy, Gough toned down his portrait of the Mannerings. He no longer, for example, described them as heavy drinkers.[43]

In 1845, Gough was in a precarious public position. The details of his past life were cast in doubt, and it was known that he had fallen off the temperance wagon during the first months of his speaking career in Massachusetts. What other embarrassing foibles might yet be revealed about the popular speaker? Revelation--and not of the biblical sort--was the task of temperance advocates. George Cheever had revealed the truths of deacons and distilling. Charles Jewett, in a speech entitled "Props of the Rum Traffic, and Weapons of the Enemy," described secrecy as the indispensable ally of the powerful liquor system.

> Pull off the disguises that are thrown around it--tear down the curtains, and push aside the screens, and let the blessed light of the sun, and the eyes of men, look in upon the doings within

> those hells upon earth, and they would be closed within a month, or the earth, which they pollute and curse, would be strewn with their fragments, by an injured an indignant community.[44]

This explicit call to peer inside the formerly secret and shrouded, whether commercial or domestic, was common in much of antebellum temperance. The theme of bringing light to hitherto darkened areas of social life not for rational "enlightenment" but voyeuristic pleasure was a popular one. Enemies of temperance were not beyond utilizing such appeals, even against such moral leaders as Gough.

When he disappeared in September of 1845, Gough was a well-known figure. The story of the battle between his will to be sober and his appetite for drink, a battle which purportedly ended with the victory of his will, was familiar to many Americans. But in New York, Gough's bodily appetites enjoyed one more well-documented triumph. In early September, Gough came to New York on a speaking tour. He registered at the Croton Hotel, a temperance house named after the water system newly arrived in the city.[45] Then Gough simply vanished. As the National Police Gazette later described it, "The whole city was in a fever, and the press and the public made up their minds at once for an interesting horror." Instead, one of the founders of the Police Gazette, Enoch Camp, discovered Gough in a brothel in a drunken stupor.[46]

Along with the Tribune, temperance newspapers rallied to Gough's aid, believing him the victim of a cruel attack by the liquor power monster. Gough's story of events paralleled initial reports in the Tribune. According to his "confession," issued several weeks after the incident, a man approached him on the street, asserted that he was an old acquaintance, and offered to buy him a drink. Entering a grocery, Gough stoutly declined any alcohol and wanted something less exhilarating. When handed a glass of strong liquor, he swallowing unknowingly and became, as he wrote in his 1869 autobiography, "bewildered and stupid." What followed was a weeklong bender, a time he recalled as "a horrible dream--a nightmare."

Many believed that Gough had been poisoned by an agent of the rum cabal to tarnish the cause and one of its most popular proponents. The Boston Recorder could "think of no punishment short of death too severe for those who drugged him, with a view to ruin so estimible and useful a man." Furthermore, papers like the Police Gazette were accomplices in "this most villainous attempt." The Recorder believed Gough a victim of his enemies and urged him to continue his temperance career. The pro-temperance Hampshire Gazette somehow knew of "furtive glances exchanged between the young man and the shopkeeper" who together plied Gough with liquor. The Gazette called the

speaker a "victim of a systematic effort to ruin him" and published Gough's firsthand account of what had happened.[47]

Both sides of the temperance debate published pamphlets on Gough's fall, an anti-Gough account entitled Goffiana and a pro-Gough account entitled A Minute and Authentic Narrative of the Conduct and Conversation of John B. Gough, During Each Day of His Late Absence. The printing press was kept busy describing--in very different ways--Gough's weeklong sojourn at a house in New York City.

In A Minute and Authentic Narrative, Gough was an unfortunate victim of powerful, conspiratorial forces, while the house in which he reposed was a respectable one, not a brothel. The charge that he spent time with prostitutes was "false and unjust." According to the pro-Gough pamphlet, the house on Walker Street was inhabited by a "middle-aged intelligent widow, who has been accustomed to move in the highest circle of society," her young daughter, and two seamstresses. Gough, having been hoodwinked by a stranger into breaking his pledge of total abstinence and thus given over to his appetite and Demon Rum, did drink during his weeklong absence. But his drinking was not an act of free will--Gough was in fact innocent of breaking the pledge. He was furthermore innocent of charges that he solicited prostitutes. He generously gave money to the women in the house not in exchange for sexual favors but rather out of simple

charity, and some of the money was used to purchase "a handsome black suit."[48]

In contrast, Goffiana outlined three "principal charges" against the temperance speaker. First, due to his own "appetites and lusts," he had made "a beast" of himself. Unable to moderate his actions, he was thoroughly dehumanized. Second, Gough, during his prolonged period of adultery and debauchery, was "fully conscious of the crime and folly" he was committing. There was no hiding behind the hoary visage of Demon Rum for his actions. Lastly, and most damnably, he "fabricated a fable, devised twenty deliberate falsehood, and swore to all, to shift responsibility" to others for his own crimes. This third offense revealed "a leprosy of the soul," and only by manfully telling the truth could Gough hope to be forgiven for the first two, which only "betray a frailty of the flesh."

The author of Goffiana justified its close examination of a distasteful incident by alluding to a clamorous public fascinated with the speaker. In the eyes of his many fans, Gough was a pseudo-religious figure: "there are not lacking hundreds, nay thousands, whose faith in Mr. Gough, real or pretended, is quite as lively as in the Father and the Son." According to the pamphlet, "he has been made the type of the temperance reform; an importance has been given to him; he does interest the public; he has made himself

public property." John Bartholomew Gough was something intermediate between a spiritual leader and a modern celebrity, and if vitriol was heaped on the poor man, it was only because he had made himself "public property." He deserved opprobrium. Drink and drugs had too long been used as an excuse for reprehensible crimes. Goffiana regretted that "this convenient way of throwing off moral responsibility has, of late, become very prevalent in this community."[49]

With Gough's fall and its attendant publicity, the contradictory figure of the intemperate temperance speaker became a symbol for hypocrisy in antebellum America. Melville employed the character in his novel Mardi, creating Donjalolo, the Prince of Juam. Anti-temperance forces of various sorts skewered the hapless Gough for the imbroglio in New York City. A poem was published in the literary journal, Diogenes, hys Lantern, about Satan fishing for temperance speakers with a bottle of rum.

> Then, with a sly wink and dry cough,
> A temp'rance air to himself did hum,
> While he drew from the hook G-OFF.

The most significant published account of Gough's fall, however, came not from elite critics but rather from the pages of the working-class National Police Gazette, mercilessly pillorying the speaker for hypocrisy and lewd behavior.[50]

Temperance advocates, including entertainers such as Gough, had long prided themselves on their ability to reveal the sordid practices of an urban underclass lacking self-control. They also encouraged audiences to gaze at the lurid practices of hypocritical elites debauched by luxury. The National Police Gazette, setting a formula that made the publication a working-class favorite for decades, used these techniques for decidedly anti-reform purposes. The newspaper embarked on a fabled career of publishing crime stories and semi-pornographic accounts of violence against women. It was popular with working-class men, many of whom read the paper in taverns and saloons.

Although Gough disappeared in September, 1845, the editors of the National Police Gazette waited until December to publish its story on the temperance speaker. After their discovery of the speaker in a brothel on Walker Street, Gough, reported to be dangerously ill, had gone into seclusion, first with a friendly minister in Brooklyn and then at his home in Roxbury, Massachusetts. After Gough made a tentative comeback to the temperance platform in December, the Gazette struck with all its fury.

The Police Gazette began with an exposition on the hypocrisy of the reformer.

> When a man assumes the position of a public reformer, he makes a tacit pledge of his own exemption of the special evil he denounces.. . .[E]very derelict apostle, must appear before

> the same tribunal to which he has the audacity to summon others. We use the word "audacity," for it fall naturally and forcefully in connection with John B. Gough.. . .Our readers, in common with the whole country, are conversant with the main features of this man's recent conduct in this city.. . .They are likewise aware that it was ourselves who plucked him from the mire of his base debauch.

The Police Gazette, wanting "a bold and manly confession of his fault," had withheld a detailed story because of his protracted illness, but now Gough had begun to "sneak" into lecture halls to "whine forth a pitiful appeal." Outlining a faltering speech Gough had made in early December at Faneuil Hall, the Police Gazette noted, "Liars are apt to falter, and we should not look for manliness or sincerity from hypocrites." The story implied that Gough's sexual misadventures continued, noticing that "Mr. Gough travels quite en suite, deacons and their daughters being considered as necessary appendages to his state. How fortunate it is for such a fellow as Gough that the world is full of fools."[51]

Asserting that Gough had visited the same brothel twice during the past year, the editors described how they discovered the speaker as he "lay in a house of prostitution in Walker street, in complete mental and physical prostration from the effects of excessive and beastly intoxication." Furthermore, "the woman, whose

chamber and whose bed he shared, had possession of all his money." The drunken Gough was

> [s]urprised in his shame, and trembling at the terrible revelation that awaited him, he clasped his hands and begged us most piteously not to expose him.. . . Innocence has no need to call upon the rocks and mountains for concealment, and that petition read the verdict of his guilt [of] revelling with drunken harlots in a house of death.[52]

Gough had evidently been in control of his faculties. During his absence he got his possessions from the Croton Hotel after the first day at the house on Walker Street. When he was discovered, he immediately ordered a carriage to bring him to his protective friends. The National Police Gazette called Gough's "Confession" an "insolent imposture." With sensationalist emphasis, the paper wrote that Gough "affects to doubt the character of a house where he could share the sleeping chamber of a woman for a week, and where he could riot in drunkenness with dishelled harlots from meridian to midnight."

Gough came to hate the city where he achieved such unwanted notoriety. He wrote in his diary, "I do not seem to breathe freely in its atmosphere, probably the severe trials I have met with in [sic] the city, and the knowledge that I have very many enemies, here, affect me considerably --I am always glad when I get out of it and nervous, and unhappy when I am in it. Mary [his wife] feels as I do."[53] In his personal journal, Gough called the events "a fiery

trial indeed." He dismissed Goffiana as "full of falsehood and misstatements." His only entry between September 5 and 11, 1845--"was poisoned and kept from my friends for a week, see my statement." Apparently, he did not consider the good women of Walker Street his friends. When he finally addressed between two and three-thousand people at the Tabernacle on January 20, he wrote that he "felt solemn." His journal continued, "I felt that I was in a great degree in the power of those who had been foiled in their attempt to blast and crush me.. . .[W]hen I stood up to speak, a storm of hisses were heard, which were soon drowned by demonstrations of a very different character." The crowd cheered, and Gough's career was saved. The pro-temperance press never abandoned the speaker. The Hampshire Gazette, for example, wrote, "The story in the Police Gazette was trumped up, after the publication of Gough's confession, to gratify the malice of the editors of that paper."[54]

In his Autobiography of 1869, Gough wrote that he remembered very little from the missing week of 1845. Gough wrote, "The time I spent in that place seems to me like a horrible dream,--a nightmare,--something that I cannot describe." The man who made a living describing nightmares from a platform could not describe that particular one. He apologized but only to the temperance movement.

> I have fallen! and, keenly feeling this, I am willing to lie prostrate in the dust, where this fall has put me.. . .To the temperance friends I am willing to bow; I am willing to be called the meanest of all engaged in a great cause; I am willing to bear with meekness their censure.[55]

In the episode on Walker Street, Gough learned the difficult lesson that publicity was a double-edged sword. In the first edition of Gough's autobiography, written in early 1845, he had stated, "To the Press of Boston, and of the country generally, I am under large and lasting obligations, for the kind and indulgent manner in which my name has been so often mentioned."[56] A few months later, Gough may not have been so universally thankful for the press.

A late nineteenth-century biography of Gough called him "a king of hearts as well as of the platform" and "a human cyclone, with tornado sauce." But his "enemies were among the bitterest of their ilk, and from the outset, detractors made him a target to practice at."[57] Gough's career was not over. In the years after he was "plucked from the mire of his base debauch," his success, especially measured in dollars, in fact increased. By the middle of the 1850s, he was earning over ten-thousand dollars a year lecturing on both sides of the Atlantic. Despite all that had happened, Gough's lecturing continued unimpeded. In

antebellum America, white men could fall and fall again. They could also be reborn again and again. It is difficult to imagine a Frederick Douglass or Susan B. Anthony, both temperance activists, engaging in behavior like that of Gough, but were they to have done so, their public careers would certainly have been finished.

Does that make Gough a hypocrite? In 1858, Walter Channing wrote the son of John Hawkins of his amazement that the "drunkard became a moral teacher." The Washingtonians "told of their sins, their crimes, making the nation--the world, their confessional!" The letter continued

> You know that questions have been asked as to the expediency of the intemperate appealing to the public, in the way of relating experiences, revealing their delinquencies, sins, crimes, in public assemblies. It is bad taste we are told; it comes of some form of vanity; it is very apt to be exaggerated, on the ground that the greater the crime the more merit in the reformation; it may be done to make money, and the imagination may be taxed to make the confession more telling. We hear all sorts of objections made to this feature of the Washingtonian movement, as you doubtless know. I do not mean to argue these points, but I will say to you, that I have known no genuine, true member of this body, who has ever for a moment led me to question his sincerity. There may have been, and there may be, men who have entered into the public service for lucre; but I have known no such hypocritical disciples in this great work, and I trust I never may.[50]

To charge Gough with hypocrisy is too easy. Whoever the "real" private Gough was, his significance lay in his ability to negotiate a public realm of conflicting forces. He mediated the evangelical pulpit and the theatrical stage, and if he suffered the slings and arrows of public enmity, he did so in the name of success. With his fine clothes, elegant home, and large library, Gough embraced success the way he had formerly embraced the bottle.

Temperance historians often highlight the "rationalizing" aspects of American temperance, arguing that temperance represents the victory of a modern worldview of progress and social order. What Gough portrayed, however, was the irrational--the violent, brutal, nightmarish world of drunkenness. Despite the attraction of abstinence and the repulsion of bodily and social disintegration portrayed in many temperance representations, audiences could not help being drawn to the horrors related on the platform. That pull helps explain the popularity of temperance entertainments in antebellum America and how a man like John Gough could be made "public property." More and more, people in antebellum America, in one way or another, were making livings by selling their selves--or at least molding their selves to be sold. The retelling of one's life became a commodity.

In the emerging culture of commercial amusements, the fear of hypocrisy was defused by commodifying it. Gough's career continued unabated because his "fall" did not diminish his commercial value. Audiences wanted a moral freak show, and with Gough's portrayals of his past, that is what they got. Like a Barnum display, the drunkard Gough was a "living curiosity," and part of the curiosity he aroused was whether or not he had in fact controlled his appetites. A visit to a brothel in 1845 merely kept that curiosity alive.

Notes

1. Goffiana: A Review of the Life and Writings of John B. Gough, by One Qualified (Boston: 1845): title page.

2. Ibid.: iii. The anonymous author of Goffiana is explaining why Gough was worthy of further public discussion.

3. John Gough, Platform Echoes: or, Leaves from My Notebook of Forty Years. Comprising Living Truths for Head and Heart (Hartford: A.D. Worthington & Co., 1886): 91.

4. A Buffalo, New York, newspaper, March 14, 1850, in Scrapbook Collection, Gough Papers, AAS.

5. Ibid.

6. John Bartholomew Gough, Sunlight and Shadow; or, Gleanings from My Life Work (Hartford: A.D. Worthington & Co., 1882): 188.

7. John Bartholomew Gough, Autobiography and Personal Recollections of John B. Gough, with Twenty-Six Years' Experience as a Public Speaker (Springfield, Mass.: Bill, Nichols, 1869): 197-8, 200.

8. New-York Daily Tribune, Nov. 23, 1844, May 14, 1844, and Nov. 26, 1844.

9. New York Tribune, Sept. 12 and 13, 1845.

10. Ibid., Sept. 15, 1845. The Tribune quoted the Herald story from Sept. 14 at length.

11. Nathan O. Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 4.

12. Journal of the American Temperance Union (hereafter JATU), May 1844. New-York Daily Tribune, Dec., 24, 1844.

13. James L. Baker, The Washingtonian Reform (Hingham: Jedidiah Farmer, 1844): 17.

14. Boston Recorder, June 29, 1843.

15. Charles T. Woodman, Narrative of Charles T. Woodman. A Reformed Inebriate (Boston: Theodore Abbot, 1843): 131-2. George Haydock, Incidents in the Life of George Haydock, Ex-Professional Wood-Sawyer, of Hudson (Hudson, N.Y.: Columbia Washingtonian, 1845): 7.

16. B.R. Hall, Something for Every Body: Gleaned in the Old Purchase, from Fields Often Reaped (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1846): 119-22, 127.

17. Ibid.: 122-26.

18. John Allen, An Address, Delivered Before the Washington Total Abstinence Society of Rockport, February 22d, 1842 (Salem: Salem Gazette, 1842): 8. Hawkins quoted on p.14. Hawkins, around whom swirled rumors that he would become a Methodist minister, was not one of the more anticlerical Washingtonians. He sought prayer and the reading of scripture at meetings, nevertheless made fun of ministers who imbibed to make themselves more eloquent and forceful from the pulpit. When he stayed at the Temperance House in Gardner, Massachusetts, he wrote in his journal that "it was formerly a dram-shop, kept by a CLERGYMAN." The Washingtonian competition with ministers extended the older temperance convention that trafficking ministers were especially sinful. See Hampshire Gazette, April 12, 1842. George William Hawkins, Life of John H.W. Hawkins (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1859): 218-9, 252.

19. John Zug, The Foundation, Progress and Principles of the Washington Temperance Society of Baltimore, and the Influence It Has Had on the Temperance Movement in the United States (Baltimore: John D, Toy, 1842): 13, 59-61.

20. JATU, February 1843 and June 1842.

21. JATU, January 1842. John Marsh himself feared the "irreligion" of some Washingtonians and in reaction wrote a pamphlet entitled God's Hand in the Reformation of Drunkards.

22. John Marsh, Temperance Recollections. Labors, Defeats, Triumphs. An Autobiography (New York: C. Scribner & Co., 1866): 42. Lucius Manlius Sargent, Letters to John H. Hopkins, D.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the Diocese of Vermont: Occasioned by His Lecture in Opposition to the Temperance Society (Windsor, Vt.: Chronicle Press, 1836). On earlier attempts to strictly contain temperance within the churches, see, for example, the Congregationalist journal out of Hartford, Conn., The Evangelist, April 1824.

23. Boston Recorder, October 15, October 1, 1841.

24. Ibid., July 23, 1841.

25. Hampshire Gazette, January 11, 1842. On the increasing friction between ministers and Washingtonians,

see also JATU, June 1842.

26. Crystal Fount, and Rechabite Recorder, April 19, 1845.

27. John Marsh, A Half Century Tribute to the Cause of Temperance (New York: American Temperance Union, 1851): 17. Albert Barnes, "Connection between Temperance and Religion," JATU, August 1842; Barnes, "The Power and Responsibilities of the Church in the Temperance Reformation," JATU, May 1842. On the role of Washingtonianism in splitting churches away from temperance and the part played by Barnes, see Richard J. Carwardine, Evangelicals and Politics in Evangelical America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 204.

28. JATU, August 1842.

29. Marsh, Temperance Recollections: 95.

30. William Ellery Channing, "The Present Age," in The Works of William Ellery Channing (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1903) 6: 169. Channing, "An Address on Temperance," in The Works of William Ellery Channing 2: 314.

31. Allen: 19.

32. Christian Advocate and Journal, August 21, 1844. JATU, June 1842.

33. Rev. J.B. Dunn, "History of the Temperance Movement," Centennial Temperance Volume (New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1877): 462-3.

34. Charles Jewett, A Forty Years' Fight with the Drink Demon, or A History of the Temperance Reform as I Have Seen It, and of My Labor in Connection Therewith (New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1872): 22-67, 143, quote from 54.

35. Ibid.: 69-71, 88. On the comparison in the speaking styles of Jewett and Gough, also see, Robert L. Hampel, Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts, 1813-1852 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982): 103.

36. Jewett, A Forty Years' Fight: 146. Boston Recorder, March 28, 1844.

37. Jewett's plan for the systematic encouragement of temperance closely echoed the earlier efforts of the American Temperance Society in the late 1820s and early

1830s but with one exception--Jewett emphasized the value of travelling speakers like himself over simply the dissemination of printed materials. Prior to the ATS, the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance had encouraged speeches on temperance but only from members of local elites. See Ian R. Tyrrell, Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979): 67.

38. Jewett, A Forty Years' Fight: 130-136, 266.

39. Charles Jewett, Speeches, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings: On Subjects Connected with Temperance and the Liquor Traffic (Boston: J.P. Jewett, 1849): 74, 91.

40. Jewett, Forty Years' Fight: 258, 142-146, 137, 246-248.

41. Ibid.: 146-171, quote from 147.

42. JATU, January 1844.

43. Jesse Pound, The Echo of Truth to the Voice of Slander, or, John B. Gough's Early History (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1845). Gough, Autobiography (1869): 199.

44. Jewett, Speeches, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings: 97.

45. The flow of Croton water began on October 14, 1842 and was heralded as a sign of the imminent victory of universal temperance. The event occasioned a large temperance celebration in the city.

46. National Police Gazette, December 13, 1845.

47. Gough, Autobiography (1869): 203-4. Boston Recorder, September 8 and October 2, 1845. Hampshire Gazette, September 16 and 30, 1845. Also see pro-Gough accounts in the New York Tribune, September 13 and 15, 1845.

48. A Minute and Authentic Narrative of the Conduct and Conversation of John B. Gough, During Each Day of His Late Absence, As Related by the Inmates at the House at which He Stopped (New York: Lewis C. Donald, 1845). The style of the pamphlet, in which conversations between the characters at the house are re-created verbatim, seems disingenuous. Gough failed to mention the pamphlet in his 1869 autobiography, perhaps because it was little believed.

49. Goffiana: 31, 22, iii, 33.

50. On the uses made of Gough's debauch by literary figures, see David S. Renolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988): 142, 473. On the obsessive concern over hypocrisy in antebellum American culture, see Karen Halttunen, Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). For opponents of Gough and other experience speakers, backsliding represented not an unfortunate victory of appetite over a victimized individual but a case of self-indulgent hypocrisy by confidence men.

51. National Police Gazette, December 13, 1845.

52. Ibid.

53. "Record JBG," May 2, 1847, Gough Papers, AAS.

54. "Journal" and "Record J.B.G.," Gough Papers, AAS. Hampshire Gazette, Dec. 30, 1845.

55. Gough, Autobiography (1869): 204-5.

56. John B. Gough, An Autobiography (Boston: 1845): 122.

57. Carlos Martyn, John B. Gough: The Apostle of Cold Water (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1893): 119, 127, 110.

58. Walter Channing to W.G. Hawkins, September 25, 1858, quoted in Hawkins, Life of Hawkins: 108-9.

CHAPTER 6

PITS AND PENDULUMS: THE DRUNKARD AND THE THEATER OF MORALITY

> "[T]he low, unsatisfactory, and demoralizing character of popular amusements is painful to me. Only by cultivation of the higher qualities of our nature, can sensual stimulus and fierce excitement be rendered unattractive.. . .In those places so appropriately called pits, there are terrible unwritten epics of sin and sorrow,--sin and sorrow growing out of the very passions and energies, which, in a right order of things, might have made those men kings and priests of humanity."[1]
>
> Lydia Maria Child, 1846

On February 25, 1844, William H. Smith's melodrama The Drunkard: or, The Fallen Saved! opened at Moses Kimball's Boston Museum. During the next few months, the play was performed 144 times before large crowds and went on to become one of the most popular plays of the 1840s and 1850s. Its initial success highlighted a moment in American cultural history when entrepreneurs of various guises vied for public spaces and paying audiences by utilizing temperance themes. This struggle for audiences led to profound changes in public entertainments. Decried by evangelical ministers as morally toxic terrain, theater itself became a vehicle for a sort of evangelical temperance message. The fallen could rise; the drunkard could be saved.

As with the protagonist of the drama, so with the theater itself. With plays like The Drunkard and theater promoters like Kimball, theaters were reborn--domesticated, feminized, and cleansed by a moral message and religious idiom. Temperance culture and theatrical entrepreneurship converged to create a new world of "moral amusements" for the broad middle of American society. The Boston Museum helped realize the Washingtonian dream of alcohol-free leisure spaces. Its presentation of The Drunkard represents an important turning point in the history of the American theater.

The performance space in Kimball's dime museum scrupulously avoided the name theater because much of the American public associated theater with vice. Both his building and his play were intended to dispel such associations. The formula drew large audiences and therefore frequent imitators, the most notable of whom was P.T. Barnum, whose production of The Drunkard was the first instance in the United States of a theatrical run of one-hundred consecutive performances. The Drunkard was the first of a number of successful temperance dramas. Another was Hot Corn, the tearful tale of a girl selling corn on the street to support her alcoholic mother; during the 1853-1854 New York City stage season, three versions of the play ran concurrently. William Pratt's version of Ten Nights in a Bar-room, first produced in 1857, was popular

throughout the nineteenth century, enhancing sales of T.S. Arthur's novel. For these plays and others, The Drunkard set the standard for temperance drama.[2]

Temperance-minded theatergoers themselves shaped the meaning of spectatorship to legitimize their participation in what many had recently condemned as a morally tainted practice. Audiences got what they wanted. The ultimate aim of temperance drama was less the strict self-control of a disciplined workforce, less the producerist ethic associated with Benjamin Franklin's dicta to succeed in the marketplace, and more the development and legitimacy of a new type of entertainment publicly viewed but soaked in the values of evangelical Protestantism and domestic virtue. By viewing The Drunkard, audiences, however passively they seemed to sit in their seats, steeped themselves not in an ethic of restraint, frugality, and rationality but rather in the pleasures of emotional release, commercialized leisure, and compensatory fantasy, purified by evangelical trappings.

The title character of the play is Edward Middleton, a tragically flawed but ultimately decent man. As his name suggests, his character embodies both the values and the anxieties of the middle ranks of society. Like much of antebellum American culture, The Drunkard conflates socioeconomic, theological, and biological influences. Middleton descends from village prosperity into urban

alcoholism, poverty, and vice. His diseased body denotes a tortured soul. His tattered clothes reveal a crisis of character. The dramatic tension of the play centers around the question of his redemption from the bottle and the defeat of the villainous lawyer Cribbs who manipulates Middleton into his life of drinking. Middleton's moral descent is thus excusable, for his choices, unlike those of Cribbs, are not freely made. No matter how beclouded by drink, Middleton's moral sensibilities never waver when confronted with obvious choices between good and evil. He is a middle-class hero. Ultimately, the play appealed neither to traditional elites who viewed themselves as more refined than Middleton nor to traditional workers who viewed themselves as tougher. The Drunkard aimed its message directly at the heart of an emerging middle class of vulnerable self-improvers who considered themselves more moral than the rest of society.

Shamed by his surrender to appetite, Edward flees both his home and his sturdy New England village and descends into an urban underworld of dissipation and penury. Through the suffering of his devoted wife Mary and the intervention of the benevolent philanthropist Rencelaw, Edward is reclaimed from Demon Rum and returned to his domestic comforts. The villainous lawyer is branded a criminal, and the proper order of life is restored. The play concludes with the cast coming together in the parlor

of Edward and Mary for a rendition of "Home, Sweet Home." Of course, the actors and the audience were not home. They were in a theater.

American theaters had long struggled for an accepted place in national life. A vibrant, self-sustaining theater culture in American cities did not arise until the nineteenth century. It was delayed for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the overwhelmingly rural character of American society. In addition, by the late eighteenth century, the old Puritan theological brake on the theater was replaced by an ideological one, republicanism. Despite some efforts to induce government to build a virtuous theater, republicans associated theater with luxury. Alongside ideological reasons lay economic ones. Both the Revolution and the War of 1812 disrupted the urban mercantile economies that could support theaters, as well as the flow of actors and managers from England. American nationalism meanwhile embargoed an avowedly English institution. Between 1815 and 1840, the American stage spread, but its success was sporadic and uneasy. Antebellum Americans proved resistant to theatergoing. Somehow, it was not "respectable." Many Americans, especially those who had been touched by evangelical Protestantism, maintained their antitheatrical bias, believing, in Jonas Barish's words, "the stage to be a

vessel of depravity, haunted in the most literal sense by . . .devils," in other words, a Demon Rum of social space. Such Americans would never willingly enter a theater.[3]

Attending a theater during the Jacksonian period was not for the timid. An infamous picture of early American theaters appeared in the travel journal of the Englishwoman Frances Trollope, published in 1832. Domestic Manners of the Americans vilified the personal habits of the American men who attended theaters. Trollope ridiculed the lack of amusements in Cincinnati and its poorly attended theater.

> Ladies are rarely seen there, and by far the larger proportion of females deem it an offence against religion to witness the representation of a play. It is in the churches and chapels of the town that the ladies are to be seen in full costume; and I am tempted to believe that a stranger from the continent of Europe would be inclined . . .to suppose that the places of worship were the theatres and cafes of the place.. . . Were it not for the churches, indeed, I think there might be a general bonfire of best bonnets, for I never could discover any other use for them.[4]

For American women, churches replaced theaters, and theaters were the poorer for it.

Trollope loathed the overwhelmingly male audiences at theaters in the United States. They seemed never to have experienced what Norbert Elias called "the civilizing process." Lacking any decent control over their bodily functions, they constantly shattered the boundary between

their physical selves and the world around them. At every theater Trollope attended, spitting was "incessant." Men lounged in their seats, feet up in the air. During her stay in Cincinnati, she endured an audience chewing tobacco, reeking of whiskey, and producing noises "of the most unpleasant kind." In a Washington theater, she witnessed a "man in the pit. . .seized with a violent fit of vomiting, which appeared not in the least to annoy or surprise his neighbours." And if American men seemed to lack control over what came out of their bodies, they also lacked control over what went into them. "Whiskey," wrote Trollope, "flows every where at the same fatally cheap rate of twenty cents. . .the gallon, and its hideous effects are visible on the countenance of every man you meet." As another English traveller, Richard Cobden, noted in his 1835 diary, "wherever there is a concourse of Americans you will find a bar."[5]

Especially at theaters. Prior to 1840, American theaters invariably included a space for the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The sale of alcohol provided owners additional revenues from their patrons. Some of these patrons may have been more focussed on drink than on the performances presented on the stage. Charles Dickens, in his American Notes of 1842, noticed that the two theaters of Boston, the Tremont and the National, were "of good size and construction, but sadly in want of

patronage. The few ladies who resort to them sit, as of right, in the front rows of boxes." At one of the Boston theaters, wrote Dickens, the bar was large, and "there people stand and smoke, and lounge about, all the evening," ignoring the happenings on the stage.[6]

Privileged observers of American theater audiences such as Trollope and Dickens stressed the relative paucity of "ladies" at theaters. Prior to the transformation of theater culture during the 1840s, theater was "a male club," and drinking was an indispensable part of the homosocial conviviality at theaters. "Respectable" middling women did not feel safe amidst boisterous audiences loudly and even violently proclaiming their sovereignty over the house and the stage. The stage itself stressed masculinity. The popular heroes of the stage were manly Shakespearean leads and such historical expressions of machismo as Metamora and Spartacus. Any "ladies" who did attend urban theaters were carefully cordoned off in the boxes, never in the pit or the gallery. Jacksonian theater was part of an urban male sporting life of dueling, racing, gambling, and prostitution. Traditionalist working-class men of the 1830's loved urban theaters and, because of relatively high wages, could enjoy its presentations. For a time, elites supported such a theater.[7]

If women deemed "respectable" were scarce at theaters, another category of women apparently was not. As historian Claudia Johnson puts it, "Theaters in most American cities were designed expressly to house prostitutes in the third tier, but as quietly as possible," by providing a separate entrance to the third tier and its connected bar. Theater managers often relied on financial dividends directly from the bar and indirectly from the sales to prostitutes and their patrons. In her memoir, the actress Olive Logan remembered "the hideous abomination" of the third tier. As a child in antebellum Cincinnati, she would look up to see "the brutal exhibition of faces in the gallery, with something such a feeling as one might have in looking over into pandemonium." The Cincinnati Daily Enquirer declared that "drunken cyprians. . .drive the more respectable and order-loving portion of the lovers of the drama from the house."[8]

The third tier was countenanced as a financial necessity. Managers faced a dilemma--they needed the income from the gallery to survive, but opposition to the theater centered on the commerce in sex and drink that took place there.

Prostitution had long been recognized as a barrier to the wider acceptance of theater and also to drama's potential for creating a more moral society. At the conclusion of his influential 1797 history of the early

American theater, William Dunlap asked why drama was not prospering in the United States and offered solutions to its problems. Neither ideological nor economic factors stunted the growth of American theater. Rather, prostitution was to blame for the sorry condition of the dramatic arts in the new nation. Dunlap suggested that direct state regulation of the theater had "propriety, utility, and necessity." Enlightened self-interest dictated that theater managers eliminate theater prostitution. Dunlap argued, "the prohibition of the immoral display would remove a just stigma from the theatre, and would further the views of managers by increasing their receipts." Tacitly allowing the presence of prostitutes encouraged antitheatrical forces to deny drama's moral "utility" and to render it illegitimate as a form of public amusement. Dunlap wanted to end the blurring of playhouse and bawdy house. Only then could drama be used for national uplift.

> The improper, indecent, and scandalous practice of setting apart a portion of the boxes for this most disgusting display of shameless vice, has no connexion with the question of the utility of theatres. The prostitution of the pencil, the graver, or that mighty engine, the press, to the purposes of vice, immorality, or irreligion, might with equal propriety be charged against those modes of ameliorating or instructing society.

Dunlap's answer was a rule that no unescorted women, unless

clearly upper-class, be allowed to enter theaters.

> If a regulation was enforced, that no female should come to a theater unattended by a protector of the other sex, except such whose standing in society is a passport to every place, the evil would be effectively remedied. The moral would not be deterred from a rational amusement, and the public and the manager would both be benefited.

The "unholy alliance" between theater and prostitution, wrote Dunlap, needed to be abrogated, and if managers failed to see their own self-interest in the change, then state legislatures should intervene. Fifty years later, theatrical entrepreneurs, not the law, enacted Dunlap's reforms.[9]

Changing dramatic performances was not enough. George Foster's sensationalistic New York by Gas-Light, published in 1850, portrayed the Broadway Theater as a site of debauchery despite the presentation of plays that sought to inculcate morality. The theater building and especially its morally pestilential audience itself needed purification. Entering through a separate portal were "[p]ainted, diseased, drunken women, bargaining themselves away to obscene and foul-faced ruffians, for so much an hour--drinking, blasphemy, fighting, rioting--such are the accompaniments, the antithesis, would we might add, to what is transpiring on the stage." The moral distance between the plays and their physical surroundings was hypocritical. Such a situation was an "outrage to public sense and public

decency" and could not remain. But by 1850, the old theater culture was dying, wrote Foster, because "public opinion has at last felt and determined to resent the insult. This is the reason why our theaters are nearly deserted on ordinary occasions, save by dead-heads, rowdies and whoremongers."[10] According to historian Timothy Gilfoyle, Broadway, today synonymous with legitimate theater, was itself "a mart for prostitutes."[11]

According to the conventions of the antebellum temperance movement, alcohol and prostitution were causally linked. Both represented a surrender to appetite. William Sanger and others blamed prostitution not on the financial necessities of unemployed women but on the debilitating effects of liquor on the moral sensibilities of patron and purveyor alike. The commercial sale of both drink and sex represented a fall into the depths of self-degradation and brutality.

Some historians suspect that moral outrage over prostitution in and around theaters actually camouflaged other social transformations, for example, the increasing segmentation of culture and city space by class. If Foster saw Bowery theatergoers as "dead-heads, rowdies and whoremongers," others might see a working class struggling for existence and voice in the rapidly growing urban maelstrom. Rosemarie K. Bank writes, "Rather than viewing the presence of prostitutes in Jacksonian theatre as a

moral 'problem,'. . .we will profit by seeing the moral as a cloaked reading of social transformations taking place in these decades." Similarly, Christine Stansell describes bourgeois reformers, proselytizers of separate-spheres ideology, who invariably equated the sexuality of working-class women with prostitution.[12]

In the minds of many Americans, especially evangelicals with newly disposable income, alcohol, prostitution, and theater formed an appalling triad of vice. To counter this attitude, theater owners redesigned their buildings and set new rules for audience behavior. Meanwhile, dramatists wrote plays about prostitution and drinking, about fallen women and fallen men. Such themes could provide powerful, topical products to sell to middle-class audiences, certain of their own moral rectitude. Prostitutes and drinkers could be socially marginalized, in fact, abolished from theaters, while their symbolic importance could be center stage.[13]

By drawing spectators across class boundaries, the urban theater of the first decades of the nineteenth century has been described as "popular." Ironically, so was antitheatricalism. Antipathy to theaters was rooted in a religious heritage that juxtaposed the house of God to the playhouse. Rural Americans, including those who joined

the accelerating stream of migrants into the cities, viewed theaters with suspicion.

Boston, the site of the first performances of The Drunkard, was the historical center of antitheatricalism. One seventeenth-century Puritan minister said of the theater, "Plays were sucked out of the Devil's teats to nourish us in idolatrie, heathenrie, and sinne." Not surprisingly, plays were banned in colonial Boston. Puritan antitheatricalism was both political and theological in nature. Anglicans and monarchists tended to support theater, and theater tended to subvert the Puritan God's order of things. Puritan antitheatricalism reached its pinnacle around the time of the Great Migration to New England in the 1630s and carried over into the cultural practices of colonial New England.[14]

In 1633, Puritan William Prynne condemned acting as lying. Performing a role meant being someone you were not and thus was an insult to God's hierarchical ordering of the universe. The mere act of dramatic representation was sin, a subversion of the covenant between God and humankind. Prynne, writes Barish in his expansive study of what he calls "the antitheatrical prejudice," exemplified "the fears of impurity, of contamination, of `mixture,' of the blurring of strict boundaries" common to all who attack theatrical institutions.[15] Despite the myriad changes that came to American Christianity during the ensuing two

centuries, a deeply ingrained clerical antitheatricalism persisted. Ministers, including those who launched the American temperance movement, never trusted theaters.

During the years prior to the production of The Drunkard, clerical antitheatricalism persisted. Rhetorical assaults on the theater allowed ministers to reassert the cultural authority that was rapidly slipping through their fingers as public voices multiplied. Ministers who denounced drama as inherently evil emphasized the role of the theater in corrupting the nation's youth. The Christian Review, summarizing a book that chastised the theater by Robert Turnbull, the pastor of the South Baptist Church in Hartford, called the theater "a fountain of evil" and "uncongenial with the feelings of a pure heart." Theater had its roots in the Bacchanalian festivals of ancient Greece, replete with "drunkenness and debauchery." The players invariably lacked good character. Audiences, with "lewd women. . .in large numbers," were even more dangerous than actors. Theaters also seduced young men to "habits of intemperate drinking."[16] Such language encouraged a foreboding of urban spaces.

For some antebellum church leaders, viewing a play was itself analogous to the dangerous exhilaration of drinking. At the theater, warned The Christian Review, "[v]icious principles are. . .instilled into the mind with fatal celerity, the passions are easily kindled, the imagination

is inflamed, and the spectator is prepared 'to be what he beholds,'--to practice himself the actions which he sees exhibited on the stage." In a similar vein, the Rev. Samuel Gover Winchester, in his 1840 diatribe against the idea that theater could serve as "public school of virtue," declared that the theatergoer "lives in a world of fancy, and sips the cup of sensual pleasure." Theater was a dangerous stimulant. Winchester described the experience of theater spectatorship:

> Villainy, artifice, intrigue, and lewdness, now dance before his heated and corrupted imagination, decked with the plumes of honour, bravery, magnanimity, and renown.. . .Vice and virtue are but unmeaning names. Their substance has vanished, and a new quality compounded of the two, has appeared, and is worshipped as the standard of morals. Such is this enchanted mirror! Such is the power of that magic sceptre, which is swayed in this school of virtue![17]

Money spent to attend the theater would be used to make the experience more appealing and thus more dangerous and popular. According to The Christian Observatory, an organ of orthodox Congregationalism, the money raised by theaters was "a vast system of voluntary taxation." An "immense revenue is raised and squandered to increase the allurements of these flowery gate-ways to pollution and the pit." Christians "should execrate the stage as a hot-bed of luxuriant vices."[18]

In a fundamental way, ministers who considered the theater irreparably immoral went against the widespread notion among Americans that human nature was basically good. Following the religion of Calvin and the politics of Hobbes, those who called for the elimination of the theater tended to see human beings as intrinsically depraved. Commentators like Winchester asserted that drama by definition was vicious because it reflected human rather than heavenly existence. Nature produces more vice than virtue, and the theater was "a mirror of nature." Viewers could only be morally wounded by plays. The "abuses" of theater culture were inseparable from theater itself, and thus theater could not reform. The gloomy pessimism of antitheatrical ministers was captured by an actor who wrote in his memoirs that "[m]any well meaning, sincere christians, have waged war against the enjoyment of pleasure, as if it were the will of GOD that we should go weeping and sorrowing through life."[19]

Some New England intellectuals held out hope for a theater that could somehow transcend its own history. For example, the liberal Unitarian William Ellery Channing considered alternative amusements in a speech on temperance delivered in 1838. For him, the theater was not a legitimate replacement for the grog-shop because it had so long been connected with vice. But Channing, unlike other clerics, left open a glimmer of hope for a moral stage.

The theater required a radical reformation to be acceptable. Declared Channing,

> In its present state, the theatre deserves no encouragement. It is an accumulation of immoral influences. It has nourished intemperance and all vice. In saying this, I do not say that the amusement is radically, essentially evil. I can conceive of a theatre, which would be the noblest of all amusements, and would take a high rank among the means of refining the taste and elevating the character of a people.[20]

Even those who vehemently supported the theater defensively decried its "abuses." A long letter, published in the Southern Literary Messenger in 1841, began apologetically. "Notwithstanding the manifold corruptions and abuses by which theatrical exhibitions are now unhappily disgraced,. . .I cannot but think that, under proper regulation, they might be made subsidiary to the great objects of moral and literary instruction." The writer suggested that supporters of theater persuade moral leaders to attend. Bathed in their moralizing light, audiences, actors, and dramatic representations would purify themselves. The letter stood the usual argument about immoral infection in theater audiences on its head. Virtue rather than vice was the stronger contagion. Strict moralists who simply condemned the theater abandoned a potentially powerful force for good and "allow[ed] it to be perverted into an engine of mischief, a potent instrument

for the dissemination of vice." The letter called for the end of "indelicate allusions" in works of drama out of fear that immorality on the stage keeps "modest women from the theatre." Without "the salutary restraint imposed by the presence of respectable females," the drama necessarily descends into "a state of grossness and depravity." Such debates over the problems of theater life molded the intellectual environment in which theater reformers operated.[21]

Ultimately, the transformation of theater culture emerged from a new spirit of entrepreneurialism in amusements. Theater owners like Kimball and Barnum eliminated both prostitutes and drinkers from their buildings. These changes were instituted because of the demands of the marketplace, especially the need to overcome the traditional antitheatricalism of large portions of the American public. The moral messages from the stage could then resonate with the self-image of the audience. A significant portion of the potential audience, evangelical Protestants and especially evangelical women of moderate means and rural backgrounds, wanted it that way. The cultural changes exemplified by new audience behaviors and expectations was thus neither top-down nor bottom-up. The pressure for changes in theaters came from the middle, from those who conditionally wanted access to the world of

theatrical amusements, from people who thought of themselves as the moral middle.

Drama might seem an effective tool in propagandizing the intemperate, but the mainstream temperance movement remained profoundly suspicious. In 1843, the Boston Recorder dismissed "a theatrical representation of the Temperance reform" as a satanic plot to "seduce the friends of morality and order into support of the stage,. . . contributing to feed the worst passions of human nature." As late as 1842, the Journal of the American Temperance Union condemned even temperance dialogues in which boys acted out the part of drunkards. They feared that practicing the part of drunkard would might prepare the young for a real life of excessive drinking. In 1843, the Journal applauded the Worcester Board of Selectmen for halting a temperance drama performed by a Doctor Robinson and some New Hampshire Washingtonians entitled "The Moral Exhibition of the Reformed Drunkard." John Marsh's Journal warned, "When temperance is made subservient to the theatre, the`devil's trap' for the youth of our country, it is time the civil authorities laid their hands upon it. We are amazed that any in the temperance community should sanction such things." Temperance was the holiest of causes and "needs not the aid of buffoonery, mountebanks, and theatrical exhibitions, which are, after all, money-making affairs." Marsh refused to cede his voice to those

he considered mongrel charlatans. Not unlike the Puritan William Prynne, the Journal equated fools, frauds, and dramatists. Temperance theater was dismissed as sham commercialism, devoid of all authentic moral authority. Marsh, a Congregationalist minister, was a professional temperance reformer and an avid advocate of John Gough, but the leap from the theatricality of a temperance lecturer to an actual work of drama was too great. Gough needed no stage scenery, no supporting actresses. He offered his story, not matter how dramatized, inflated, or even concocted, as unvarnished truth. For Marsh and other temperance leaders, some places could not be cleansed with evangelical temperance. The theater, with its actors, prostitutes, and drinkers, remained a moral wasteland.[22]

In 1844, Marsh published a letter by a writer who refused to go to theaters, preferring "to learn what we could of drunkenness and the temperance reform from Hawkins, Gough, and others."

> Should the drama be countenanced and sanctioned as part of the means for the promotion of temperance? Can theatrical exhibitions be safely and consistently employed to aid the temperance reform? The writer advocates the negative.

The writer, possibly a cleric himself, dismissed the possible alliance between temperance and theater as a deal between sheep and wolves. Temperance drama would introduce into the movement an element with which ministers, the

traditional temperance leaders, could not compete. He enumerated the following reasons why temperance theater should be rejected:

> 1st. Because the theatre never has aided moral reform. 2nd. Because the theatre rightfully belongs to the devil, and therefore never can be lawfully employed in the service of morality and religion. 3rd. Because the object of the theatre and every theatrical company is money, and not moral reform. 4th. Because the obvious tendency of such exhibitions is to create a taste which will paralyze the ordinary means in use for the promotion of the temperance cause. 5th. Because the theatre is indecent and unscriptural, since it universally puts up women to act upon the stage and to speak in public.[23]

In the wake of very popular temperance dramas like The Drunkard, the presentation of which could hardly have escaped the notice of temperance leaders, the mainstream temperance press was remarkably quiet. Despite their antipathy, these leaders were loathe to attack the popular new theater of morality for fear of further eroding their social and political relevance. That temperance leaders chose silence signalled weakness. In the new marketplace of amusements, they were paralyzed.[24]

Temperance drama was thus not a direct product of the formal temperance movement and its leaders. Rather, temperance imagery and conventions provided a ready resource for those who sought to remedy the perceived problems of the American theater. The careers of those

associated with temperance drama, Moses Kimball and William H. Smith for example, would have been inconceivable without the prior activities of the temperance movement. Temperance dramatists wanted to expand beyond the limits placed on theatergoing by its historical connection with vice. If too much of their potential audience believed that theater life was rife with illicit sexuality, irreligion, nomadic rootlessness, riotous violence, and drunken debauchery, temperance themes and strategies offered a way out. If theatergoers seemed either too high or too low on the social scale to display the self-control over their appetites required by a new cultural mainstream, a radical reorganization of theater was needed. Overcoming entrenched perceptions required drastic changes in theater audiences, dramatic representations, and even the very buildings in which theaters were housed. To encourage those obsessed with their own respectability to enter a theater would require stealthy manipulation of public opinion, a monumental public relations gambit, the type of activity that has come to be associated with Phineas T. Barnum.

The first successful temperance drama appeared in a dime museum. In P.T. Barnum's world, didacticism and moralism went hand in hand. The dime museum encouraged men, women, and children to leave their homes in search of

moral enlightenment and amusement. Barnum and his Bostonian parallel and friend, Moses Kimball, perfected the institution.

Today, the dime museum seems a bizarre amalgam of different, even contradictory cultural forms. It was a scientific natural history museum. It was an art museum. It was a museum of anthropology. It was a circus freak show. It was a lecture hall and concert auditorium. And it was, despite the terminology used by its early progenitors, a theater. Behind the gloss of education and enlightenment lay a new world of entertainments. The didactic surface of the museum gilded clearly pleasurable, commercial, and hitherto morally questionable amusements. During the 1840s and 1850s, the major draw of the dime museum was not the permanent collections of art, artifacts, and specimens but rather live performances, including the presentation of formal plays.[25]

Most of the scholarship on nineteenth-century dime museums focusses on P.T. Barnum and his American Museum in New York City, but Moses Kimball, not Barnum, first turned the dime museum into a respectable theater. Kimball sought to remedy the perceived ills of theater culture by subsuming it within the museum. Dime museums, writes Bruce McConachie, "seduce[d] the audience gradually, transforming the space into a true theater without diminishing the aura of respectability established by the somber decor and

pseudo-scientific atmosphere of the museum itself."[26] The actor Harry Watkins, later to play the lead in The Drunkard in various theaters across the country, wrote in his journal during the 1840s that Kimball was

> reaping a golden harvest by his skill in management.. . .He gives theatrical performances in what he calls the Exhibition Room, which is a theatre in every sense of the word. That is, if parquette boxes, orchestra, scenery, actors, prompter, wardrobe keepers constitute one. But it is called a Museum, and under that title is visited by members of the church, who would not enter its walls if it was called by its right name--Theatre. Such conduct they call religion. I call it hypocrisy.[27]

What Watkins called hypocrisy was actually a carefully crafted marketing campaign to circumvent the ideological wall between the male turf of commercial public entertainments and the feminine world of domestic respectability.

Kimball opened his Boston Museum on June 14, 1841 on the corner of Tremont and Bromfield Streets, and, according to a remembrance published after his death, spent the next "fifty years a familiar and picturesque figure in the life of Boston." Born in 1809 in Newburyport, Kimball moved to Boston at the age of fifteen to work in his brother's dry-goods store. Like Barnum, who worked as a youth in a family store in rural Connecticut, the pedestrian selling of goods to customers provided little outlet for his energetic imagination. During the 1830s, Kimball embarked

on a number of precarious business ventures. In 1833, he bought the New England Galaxy, a weekly newspaper, but it soon failed. In 1836, he established the New England Printing Company and sold historical engravings, but this operation also went bankrupt. Finally, with financial assistance from his brother David, Kimball purchased the New England Museum, augmented its holdings with other regional collections, and founded the Boston Museum in a new building in 1841.[28]

An actress who worked at the Boston Museum after the Civil War described this building as "modest," with a theater of "rude benches" that was "reached by two flights of rickety, break-neck stairs."[29] In 1846, following the profitable run of The Drunkard, a statelier edifice replaced the original building. The institution proved remarkably successful and durable. The Boston Museum was the longest lasting Boston theater of the nineteenth century.

Before entering the theater, patrons passed through various natural history displays and portrait galleries. The actor Otis Skinner remembered how a "visit there was most instructive." He observed, "In the orderly alcoves, shelves of minerals, cases of stuffed birds, fossil remains, and curiosities from various parts of the world formed a collection that was presided over by busts and portraits of gentlemen whose respectability no one could

doubt." The collections also included wax figures with "blood, lots of it." Skinner, who first visited the Museum from his home in Cambridge at the age of five, vividly remembered the "particular terror" of the wax "Three Scenes in a Drunkard's Life." He recalled that it "haunted my waking and sleeping hours, lurked for me in dark corners and hovered around my childish bed until I shook with fear." The series of wax figures retraced the downward steps of the drunkard's progress and the accompanying destruction of his family. The first scene Skinner described was the domestic sanctuary into which evil had crawled.

> The DRUNKARD and his family had begun their pestilential career pleasantly and prosperously. Father, Mother, Son and Daughter were seated about the festal board, the expression of their faces fixed in a beatific trance, and the gorgeousness of their raiment only matched by that of the wall-paper and the tablecloth. They were drinking champagne, the cotton wool foam of which was greatly in need of dusting.

The second scene illustrated the physical and moral degradation brought about by drink and the surrender to appetite.

> The second house, meaner--much meaner; furniture and tablecloth shabby and the drink RUM--labeled in bold letters on the family bottle. The fashionable garments of the first scene were things of the past. Son and Daughter were degenerate and obviously bilious; Mother's rum had not agreed with her;

> and Father was truly not fit company for any one.

The third scene displayed the logical culmination of the process, violence, madness, and, particularly significant or those fearful of the traditional theater, prostitution.

> [T]he family had moved up to the garret and again changed their clothes to their disadvantage, except Daughter who had found profitable employment in the streets and had blossomed into colors like the butterfly. The others were sad sights. Father, shrunken and haggard, a sore in the corner of his mouth, had just dealt Mother a blow with the gin bottle, and the poor soul lay prone in her dingy calico dress, rivers of blood ebbing from a hole in her waxen head. Son had become a moron, and Father was being arrested by a policeman at the very moment of murder.

In antebellum Boston, temperance horror took many forms, each reinforcing the other. Viewers could gaze upon the wax figures, safe in the knowledge they would encounter no real drunkards or whores. They watched, certain of their own moral superiority. Only then could they enter a theater.[30]

For twenty-five cents, one gained admission to the Museum and its various displays. No additional fee was charged for entrance into what was called an Exhibition Room. In the early years, there was no reserved seating. The space, soon known as "the deacon's theatre" for its ability to attract religious leaders, held up to 1200 viewers. To enhance its moral ambience, Kimball gave free

tickets to ministers. Otis Skinner believed his parents allowed him to attend the Museum's theater, at an age "when the play was a mixture of things too vast for my infantile mind," because of the presence of ministers. As one actress noted, the theater was a "meeting-place where those who did not wish to be regarded as theatergoers could visit without a blush,--many of the regular habitues of the Boston Museum, even after it had become much more of a theater than a museum, fondly believed they were not attending a regular playhouse." In his history of the Boston stage, published in 1853, William Clapp suggested that the Museum even augmented patronage to other Boston theaters. Calling the Boston Museum a "popular place of amusement" with an "enviable" reputation, Clapp noticed that it was "patronized by a large class who do not frequent theatres" and "that many who make a first attempt at countenancing theatricals at the Museum, may shortly after be found at the regular theatres, and the Museum has thus done much towards increasing the lovers of the drama." He also wrote that The Drunkard, a financial windfall for Kimball, was responsible for deciding "the fate of the Museum, for it attracted to the house an unprecedented number of visitors."[31]

According to Bruce McConachie, "by paying money to enter a museum," audiences "washed clean the sin of going to the theatre inside." In addition, the experience

temporarily "erase[d] the traditional markers of class distinction."[32] Kimball wanted to attract as wide an audience as possible, and he achieved this by managing the museum in a way that effectively defused antebellum condemnations of the theater. At a time when Boston's National Theatre charged from one dollar for private boxes to twelve and a half cents for the gallery, the Boston Museum charged an egalitarian twenty-five cents for anyone to enter the building. The excesses associated with the highest and lowest in society were thereby ameliorated. Kimball presented Saturday matinees to encourage attendance by families on afternoons when middle-class children were not in school. Respectable women, even those unaccompanied by men, could replace femmes du pave trolling for customers. No bar serving alcohol tainted this public mirror of domestic virtue. And until 1871, no Saturday evening performances were given. This concession to Sabbatarianism, wrote a theater critic looking back from 1900, was "an eloquent appeal to the patronage of sober persons, affected with scruples against the godless theatre. The appeal was as successful as it was shrewd."[33]

The press of Boston generally supported Kimball's enterprise. For example, the Boston Transcript announced the opening of "by far the best collection of curiosities we have ever seen" and saluted the price of admission, "which brings it within the means of all." The Boston

Evening Gazette lauded the museum's "commodious accommodations," the oil paintings that "afford agreeable relief in intervals of time between the performances," and "the most perfect decorum" of the audiences. There was no threat of theater riots here. The Boston Museum was a safe social space for the self-consciously respectable.[34]

When it first opened, the theater at the Boston Museum at presented a "melange" of entertainments. Kimball had to convince the public that his establishment was morally different from a regular theater. He therefore refused to present full-length plays. During the first season, the lecture room displayed comic songs, impersonations, a group of American Indians, and gymnastics demonstrations. In the second season, operetta and minstrelsy were added to the fare. Slowly, audiences became enamored of theatrical events. Meanwhile, the Museum proper added a large diorama of the Battle of Bunker Hill, exotic animals, the "Fejee Mermaid," and in June 1843, by way of Barnum, Tom Thumb.[35]

In 1843, Kimball formed his own stock company, a sign of the increasing theatricalization of the Boston Museum. The stock company allowed Kimball, recognized as "one of the shrewdest managers in this country," to avoid relying solely on the expensive practice of importing popular stars to attract patrons.[36] The first performance of the stock company came on September 4, 1843. The company survived without interruption for the next fifty years. Its fifteen

to twenty regular members required versatility and stamina; sometimes two or three different plays were shown in a single night. William Warren, a leading actor at the Museum, performed a total 206 separate roles between 1847 and 1851. Despite the arduous workload, members of the stock company were paid salaries somewhat less than at comparable theaters in New York City. During the 1850s, leading actors received from thirty to fifty dollars a week, while other players earned from two to twenty dollars. Actors at the Museum augmented their salaries with periodic "benefits," often on Friday nights, when receipts would go directly to a publicly designated actor.[37]

During the 1840s, the performer who received the most benefits also served as the stage manager, William H. Smith. He wrote the script for The Drunkard. Known by his fellow actors as "an able, scholarly, and sterling actor" and "the ruling spirit" of the stock company who "knew every in and out of his business," Smith was born in 1806 in North Wales, the son of a British officer killed in the Peninsular War. Born William H. Sedley, he assumed the name Smith, according to a brief sketch of his life published in 1856, "from a desire to preserve inviolate the family appellation."[38]

After working in theaters across Britain, Smith emigrated to the United States in 1827 and performed at theaters in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington.

During the 1830s, he served as stage manager at both of Boston's theaters, the Tremont and the National. He was also active in the Boston Fire Companies, an institution usually associated with male drinking. In 1840, he became co-manager of the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia before returning to Boston as Kimball's stage manager. He was described as "a good musician, and at one time was celebrated as an excellent flutist, is a master of fencing, a fine sparrer, and was, in former years, an excellent singer and dancer; he is well versed in history and well read in the English classics." But he made his most lasting mark as a "drunkard," playing Edward Middleton in the Boston Museum version of the play.[39]

The first draft of The Drunkard was written for Kimball by a Unitarian minister, John Pierpont, an active temperance advocate and grandfather of John Pierpont Morgan. In 1845, Pierpont, whose family suffered from alcoholism and mental instability, lost his pulpit at the Hollis Street Church in Boston, ousted by liquor dealers in his congregation. Pierpont's version of The Drunkard, according to the preface the play, "was, from want of theatrical experience, merely a story in dialogue, entirely deficient in stage tact and dramatic effect." Smith radically changed what Pierpont had written, adding all the urban scenes, including the attack of delirium tremens. Smith, who undoubtedly knew of John Gough's renowned tales

of past alcoholic hallucination, understood what provided dramatic flair.[40]

In 1844, temperance was at the center of popular amusements in Boston. On June 22, The Spirit of the Times, New York City's journal of theater and the sporting life declared, "Theatricals in Boston seem to be in a queer state." In Boston that spring and early summer, one could listen to the temperance singers, the Hutchinson Family, perform at the Melodeon. One could hear Gough deliver his harrowing recollections of a degraded past life at the Tremont Temple, the Tremont Theatre renamed, cleansed of its sinful associations, and transformed into a lecture hall. And one could enter the Boston Museum and see William H. Smith's The Drunkard. The culmination of the public's embrace of temperance that year was the Grand Total Abstinence Celebration held on Boston Common in May. According to a Washingtonian journal, the best banner unfurled at that celebration was by Moses Kimball and featured scenes from The Drunkard.[41]

The passion for temperance that was sweeping Boston encouraged changes in its theater life. On January 18, 1844, William Pelby, the manager of the National Theatre, announced in the Daily Evening Transcript that "no intoxicating liquors will be kept within the walls of the establishment." The abrupt change in policy was designed "to relieve the Theatre from the exaggerated attacks which

have lately been made on it" by temperance advocates. But Pelby conceded the difficulty in so suddenly and profoundly changing the theater and declared that he "deems it his duty to say that he cannot hold himself accountable for the conduct of those who gratify their appetites at resorts in the immediate neighborhood of his premises."[42] The old theater was under attack, as were the vices that flourished in its vicinity. Meanwhile, the Boston Museum announced it was preparing "an original domestic drama. . .of great local interest" that would take advantage of the new moral order.

The preface to the printed version of Smith's play promoted theatergoing as a moral pastime by making a bald assertion of realism. The Drunkard was

> the cause of much moral good, and materially aided the Temperance movement it was meant to advocate. In the representation it was a powerful and living picture, and all that saw it, felt it, for IT WAS TRUE.. . .it was no uncommon thing to see scores of men and women in the audience weeping like children.

One condemnation of drama, as old as Puritanism, was that it lied; by assuming characters they were not, actors invariably dissembled before their audiences. Smith, undoubtedly with Kimball's blessing, partially circumvented the problem of truthfulness by letting it be known that he was himself a reformed drinker. The actor Harry Watkins

wrote of Smith's play that audiences "looked upon it as a portrait of himself. He was playing his own life." By both writing the play and acting the title character, Smith produced a truly representational version of the Washingtonian experience meeting, or at least an audience wary of theaters might so suppose. The Drunkard was just another drama of real life.[43]

Despite the assertion made in the preface to the play, truth has not been a word usually associated with The Drunkard during the twentieth century. The drama critic Henry Austin Clapp, taken as a child to see The Drunkard "for ethical reasons, no doubt," remembered in 1902 its characters as "unimportant" and "unnatural." Most twentieth-century theater historians, who have tended to equate truth with realism, dismiss the play. Typical is Garff B. Wilson's finding that The Drunkard "has come to epitomize for the modern playgoer the height of absurdity reached by melodrama in the nineteenth century." Wilson writes, "Every character in the play is a caricature, every line banal, every sentiment false, every scene manipulated to squeeze out the maximum horror or sentimentality." Melodrama was a "blight that perverted American dramaturgy." In this interpretation, the shift from melodrama to realism represents a welcome maturation of theater in the United States.[44] Such an attitude devalues the historical setting in which melodrama flourished,

especially the expectations of audiences for a truth based on emotional experience, probably shaped by revivalism, rather than the truth espoused by later realism.

When temperance was added to theater, the melodramatic formula remained untouched. According to David Grimsted, nineteenth-century melodrama displayed a remarkable consistency. Behind the superficial variety of time and place "lay a heart, like that of its heroines, of undeviating character, purpose, and purity." In addition to their sheer ubiquity in nineteenth-century America, melodrama and temperance had much in common. Both saw the world in Manichaean terms. They carved the world into clear good and evil. Evil tended to manifest itself as an abuse of power, whether the tyranny of a spirited potentate or of a potent spirit. Melodrama and temperance placed the center of authentic existence within the family, and threats to the sanctity of the family and the home were clear markers of evil. Women in both antebellum melodrama and antebellum temperance usually appear as both victims and paragons of virtue. According to Grimsted, serious villains in melodrama acted mainly as a threat to women, and danger to women, often sexual danger, formed the core of melodramatic action. Comic villains tended to be fops, slaves to fashion. Finally, both temperance and melodrama saw emotion, especially sympathy, as the height of

humanity.[45] Heroes of melodrama and temperance sympathized with those suffering.

But The Drunkard is more than genre. The play should be viewed in terms of the needs, desires, and expectations of theater managers and audiences alike. The uses and meanings of actual physical spaces--theaters--were crucial in the presentation of the play. How did The Drunkard operate as an answer to the various aspects of the debate over the propriety and legitimacy of theater itself?

In many ways, the text of The Drunkard defused anxieties about witnessing a drama. Just as the Boston Museum itself contained numerous edifying exhibits to distract from the fact that it also housed a theater, embedded within the action of the play were answers to antitheatricalism. The physical site, the promotion, and the actual text of The Drunkard all conspired to alleviate unease over attending a drama. Temperance provided strategies for releasing the theater from charges of impropriety. Temperance could purify and domesticate the theater.

The play opens with a scene of domestic innocence into which the harsh outside world makes an unwelcome appearance. From a "pretty rural cottage," replete with two markers of feminine morality, a Bible and an embroidery frame, Mrs. Wilson and her daughter Mary are about to be evicted by Lawyer Cribbs. Edward Middleton, twenty-three

years old and on the cusp of manhood, has inherited the cottage and castigates the lawyer for such heartlessness. Edward immediately expresses his love for Mary, noting her "mental excellence, noble sentiment, filial piety." They marry. Meanwhile, Cribbs, who held a grudge against Edward's family despite his long-term employment by them, plots Edward's downfall by introducing him to tavern life. Edward feels helpless before the demon of appetite. The cottage and Mary's dress deteriorate apace and soon Edward is a "drunken vagrant." When Mary's mother dies while Edward is on a drinking binge, he blames himself, deserts his family, and escapes to Boston. In the city, Cribbs tries to pay Edward to forge the signature of Arden Rencelaw, a wealthy merchant of impeccable reputation. Edward, destitute and in need of a drink, refuses to sell his last shred of dignity even though it leads to an attack of delirium tremens. Edward's downward slide, physical and financial, is summed up by a tavernkeeper, "You were respectable once, and so was Lucifer." But here "Lucifer" is saved. Edward tries to swallow poison but is halted by the suddenly appearing Rencelaw. In a scene reminiscent of Gough's conversion to temperance, Rencelaw declares, "we will restore you to society." Rencelaw tells Edward, "enroll your name among the free, the disenthralled, and be a man again."

The criminality of Cribbs is uncovered as the lawyer confesses his motivations, "[r]evenge and avarice, the master passions of my nature." The last scene brings the story full circle and represents the apotheosis of domestic virtue as well as domestic consumption. The stage directions describe the interior of the cottage--"Everything denoting domestic peace, and tranquil happiness." On the table are displayed lamps, flowers, a Bible, and other books. Mary is again sewing, Edward plays the flute, and their daughter sings "Home, Sweet Home."

In The Drunkard are various devices for softening the antitheatricalism of the audience. The oft repeated denunciation of the theater as a haven for prostitution, for example, melts away with the character of Miss Spindle, a humorous figure who--both vainly and in vain--schemes to attract Edward. She is a figure of comic relief from the tearful miseries of the main characters. Miss Spindle lays out her character with following monologue:

> Time is money, then money is time, and we bring back by aid of money, the times of youth. I value my beauty at fifty dollars a year, as that is about the sum it costs me for keeping it in repair year by year.. . .But the heart can be regulated by money, too. I buy all the affecting novels, and all the terrible romances, and read them till my heart has become soft as maiden wax, to receive the impression of that cherished image I adore.[46]

The painted woman, whether the prostitute in the third tier or the actress on the stage, becomes less fearful and more laughable. Her attire does not suggest the rules set out by Godey's but instead "a ridiculous compound of by-gone days and present fashions."

The villain of The Drunkard is Demon Rum, and his primary henchman is a lawyer, Cribbs. Cribbs generally fits Grimsted's understanding of a real melodramatic villain. He is a dangerous threat to virtuous women and utterly irredeemable. At the conclusion, he is arrested for fraud and announces to the audience, "I have lived a villain--a villain let me die." He rejects a chance at redemption offered by the implacable Rencelaw. For much of the play, the vengeful and greedy Cribbs manipulates Edward deeper into a life of drinking to destroy his pure wife and steal his money. Middleton's father discovered him in some unnamed "act of vile atrocity," and because of the pardon and pity he then received, Cribbs "hated with a feeling of intensity that has existed beyond the grave, descending unimpaired to his noble son. By cunning means, which you would call hypocrisy," he befriended the family, better to destroy it. Cribbs is a confidence man of the worst sort.

At the beginning of the play, when Mrs. Wilson and Mary are about to be evicted from their cottage, Edward and Cribbs engage in a comic misunderstanding.

> Cribbs. I now understand you better. You are right; the daughter--fine girl--eh! sparkling eyes, eh! dimples, roguish glances! Ah, when I was young, eh, ha! Well, never mind; you have seen her, eh?
>
> Edward. Never; explain yourself, Mr. Cribbs.
>
> Cribbs. If you have not seen her, you will, you know, eh! I understand. Traps for wild fowl; mother and daughter grateful; love-passion; free access to the cottage at all hours--
>
> Edward. Cribbs, do you know this girl has no father?
>
> Cribbs. That's it; a very wild flower growing on the open heath.
>
> Edward. Have you forgotten that this poor girl has not a brother.
>
> Cribbs. A garden without a fence, not a stake standing. You have nothing to do but step into it.

Middleton indignantly rejects Cribbs and his inducements to sexual wrongdoing, just as patrons of the Boston Museum spurned a theater culture tainted by the charge of prostitution.

> Edward. Leave me, old man, begone; your hot lascivious breath cannot mingle with the sweet odor of these essenced wild flowers. Your raven-voice will not harmonize with the warblings of these heavenly songsters, pouring forth their praises to that Almighty power, who looks with horror on your brutal crime.

Thus are the moral positions of the characters established. Cribbs is a pimp, Middleton a man of integrity, and Mary a virtuous denizen of a domestic Eden. Mary has charms as well as the vulnerability of not knowing "the cold forms of

the fashionable miscalled world." The audience identified with Edward and Mary.

Cribbs delineates himself as an actor of the old, depraved theater. Following a scene early in the play in which Cribbs, like Spindle, puts on a facade of sentimental sympathy, the lawyer announces to the audience, "Well, that interview of mock sympathy and charity is over, and I flatter myself pretty well acted too, ha! ha!" Again, antitheatrical anxieties take a comedic turn, and the taint of lying and hypocrisy is aimed only at the villain, not the theater as an institution.

Cribbs, temporarily out of the young man's graces, hatches a plan to destroy Middleton through drink, declaring, "I will do him some unexpected favor, worm myself into his good graces, invite him to the village Bar Room, and if he falls, then, ha! ha!" The link between fraud and alcohol are made clear, as when William, Edward's Yankee sidekick, tells Cribbs, "when your uncle Belzebub wants to bribe an honest fellow, he'd better hire a pettifogging bad lawyer to tempt him, with a counterfeit dollar in one hand, and a bottle of rum in the other." A sure sign of moral danger, Edward stops going to church. Instead, he spends his Sundays migrating from tavern to tavern. At one tavern, Cribbs introduces Edward, a brandy drinker, to whiskey, and the intoxicated Edward brawls with tavern "loafers." Rescued by William, Edward moans,

"Drunk! fighting! Oh, shame! shame!" Audiences, identifying with Edward and his vulnerability, could feel superior to the violent loafers soused with alcohol, the type of men they associated with urban theaters.

The suffering Mary exerts a powerful force for good, flattering the self-image of middling women in the audience. Cribbs sees Mary as his principal adversary in his plot to ruin Edward. The villain reveals, "I mostly fear his wife, she has great influence over him." Meanwhile, Edward asks, "Is this to be the issue of my life? Oh, must I ever yield to the fell tempter, and bending like a weak bulrush to the blast, still bow my manhood lower than the brute?. . .[T]he best gifts of heaven I abuse." Edward wavers in the face of appetite for drink, his manhood in question. Mary's true womanhood, on the other hand, is firm.

When Edward abandons his family and escapes to Boston, the birdlike Mary is left with lines like "Oh, RELIGION! Sweet solace of the wretched heart! Support me! aid me, in this dreadful trial." She goes to Boston, along with her child, to save her husband from the "pit" of hell. Cribbs continues his false charity by giving Edward just enough money to drink. "Clothes torn and very shabby," Edward looks like a late stage from "Three Scenes in a Drunkard's Life," but he still clings to a moral center. When Cribbs tries to induce Edward to forge the signature of Arden

Rencelaw on a five-thousand-dollar check, Edward gives the following tirade:

> What! forgery? and on whom? The princely merchant! the noble philanthropist! the poor man's friend! the orphan's benefactor!. . . Wretch as I am, by the world despised, shunned and neglected by those who would save and succour me, I would sooner perish on the first dunghill--than that my dear child should blush for her father's crimes. Take back your base bribe, miscalled charity; the maddening drink that I should purchase with it, would be redolant of sin, and rendered still more poisonous by your foul hypocrisy.

To undermine their marriage, Cribbs suggests to Mary that Edward "has others to console him, whose soft attentions he prefers.. . .[T]here are plenty of women, not of the most respectable class, who are always ready to receive presents from wild young men like him, and are not very particular in the liberties that may be taken in exchange." The audience knows the lie. Edward's only weakness is appetite for drink.

The Drunkard, like a John Gough lecture, climaxed with the nadir of delirium tremens. Middleton writhes on the ground and exclaims

> Here, here, friend, take it off, will you--these snakes, how they coil round you. Oh! how strong they are--there, don't kill it, give it brandy, poison it with rum, that will be a judicious punishment, that would be justice, ha, ha! justice! ha! ha!

Even in a state of utter delirium, Middleton expresses love for his wife.

> Hush! gently--gently, while she's
> asleep. I'll kiss her. She would
> reject me, did she know it, hush!
> there, heaven bless my Mary, bless her
> and her child--hush! if the globe turns
> round once more, we shall slide from
> its surface into eternity. Ha! ha!
> great idea. A boiling sea of wine,
> fired by the torch of fiends! ha! ha!

Middleton pulls from his coat a vial of poison and is about to swallow it when Rencelaw, "a friend to the unfortunate" and literally the voice of reason, stops him with an appeal, "Nay, friend, take not your life, but mend it." The spectacle of gothic horror, apparently what many in the audience remembered most about the play, comes to an abrupt end. Converted to temperance, he successfully becomes "a man once more."

The concluding scene looks backward in nostalgic revery. "Home, Sweet Home" reestablishes the familial and communal coherence that many audience members may have remembered about their rural childhoods. Moreover, the song emphasizes the moral safety of this theater. The purity of "home" shines within the Boston Museum as well. A commercialized cult of domesticity, allied with temperance, increased the scope of public life by legitimizing activities previously deemed unacceptable. Like Kimball's formula for the Museum and its concealed

theater, ending The Drunkard with "Home, Sweet Home" was both shrewd and successful.[47]

Others took advantage of Kimball's success. In 1850, it was P.T. Barnum's turn to exploit the popularity of The Drunkard, and the play enjoyed a second, stronger wave of notoriety. Two years earlier, Barnum had written Kimball that he was embracing temperance by "going the Teetotal & Sons of Temperance strong & believe it the most glorious cause on earth." He further declared that temperance "shall not be hampered by priestcraft without a fuss. . . Would your piece of The Drunkard do here by changing localities a bit?"[48] After renovating and significantly expanding the lecture room at the American Museum, Barnum, who lectured on temperance between performances during the famous Jenny Lind tour, announced the reopening for June 17, 1850 with the following flyer:

> My whole aim and effort is to make my museums totally unobjectionable to the religious, and at the same time combined sufficient amusement with instruction to please all proper tastes and to train the mind of youth to reject as repugnant anything inconsistent with moral and refined tastes.
>
> Every vulgar or profane allusion and gesture is scrupulously avoided, and nearly every person in my employment, both in Philadelphia and New York, is a teetotaller.
>
> No intoxicating beverages are allowed on my premises, and all

> improper characters, male and female, are excluded.

Barnum, like Kimball before him, profited by banishing the prostitute and the drinker. Both the stage and the audience were sanitized in the name of protecting young people. He also announced his intention of showing The Drunkard and explained why the play was appropriate:

> My plan is to introduce into the lecture room highly moral and instructive domestic dramas, written expressly for my establishments and so constructed as to please and edify, while they possess a powerful reformatory tendency. The moral domestic drama of The Drunkard, or The Fallen Reclaimed has been represented over eighty times at my Philadelphia museum, and it is universally conceded to be one of the most powerful auxiliaries that the temperance cause has ever received in this country. Incorrigible inebriates have been brought by their friends a distance of forty miles to witness this drama, and never, to my knowledge, has this been done without resulting in their signing the temperance pledge; and I am personally cognizant of the fact that thousands have been induced by this drama to renounce intoxicating drinks in toto.[49]

The actor who played Edward Middleton in Barnum's production, W.R. Goodall, never personally renounced drink. Goodall was remembered by a fellow actor as "a young man of great promise, personally very handsome, and possessing remarkable versatility." His performance of Middleton, "almost painful, in its startling truth to nature," may have blurred the boundary between stage and life. Goodall,

a "delicate young man" whose appearance in The Drunkard had created a "marked sensation," according to Olive Logan, died at the age of twenty-six, allegedly from the effects of habitual intoxication. His imitative powers had, perhaps, been too great.[50]

The responses of viewers of the play were overwhelmingly favorable. Part of the initial success of The Drunkard rested on Kimball's close association with the Boston press. In the early 1840s, the Daily Evening Transcript called the Boston Museum "the `greatest place' for cheap, varied, and harmless amusement, in the country." The newspaper continued to "puff" for Kimball as The Drunkard was first presented on February 24, 1844. That day's Transcript announced "an original domestic drama" that had "been for some time in preparation" and was "of great local interest." The following day, the newspaper offered a glowing assessment of the play. Edward Middleton was "delineated with great truthfulness and power" by Smith, and the music and the local scenery was "worth more than the price of admission." The Transcript predicted that "this exciting and affecting moral drama is destined to have a `tremendous run.'" On March 1, it announced, Shakespeare notwithstanding, that "Tetotallers [sic] all declare that the new drama of `The Drunkard,' which is now drawing such crowds at the Boston Museum, is the very best

play that ever was written." After ten successful nights, announcements for the Boston Museum simply stated that the play was to be "repeated every evening till further notice!"[51] The play insured the survivability of the Boston Museum and established itself as a classic of American melodrama.

Audiences expected much from an actor portraying Middleton, especially during the delirium tremens scene. The first time Harry Watkins portrayed Middleton in 1849, the actor experienced trepidation that he would not live up to the expectations of the pit.

> I felt inadequate to the task assigned me.. . .I felt nervous--I knew that many in the audience had seen the play and comparisons, I felt, would be made.. . . At the end of the second act applause grew louder--in the third I had the audience with me. The first scene of the fourth act I was discovered lying in the street, a miserable wretch with the delirium tremens. The scene progressed until, through my ravings I fell upon the stage in convulsions. Then--they shouted! At the fall of the curtain, I was called out, received nine cheers and made a speech. Congratulations poured in upon me from friends and enemies. Old actors shed tears over it--but why dwell on it? In another week they may hiss me.

Performing as Middleton could take a physical toll on an actor. After one night, Watkins wrote in his journal, "My body is very sore from the effect of the delirium tremens in the scenes of `The Drunkard.'" After appearing as

Middleton at the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia, Watkins was cheered and called upon to make a speech. Such adulation was not necessarily welcome. The actor wrote, "I must labor hard to keep the impression I made.. . .Fifth night of `The Drunkard.' I wish they would discontinue it--my body is sore enough."[52] That acting the d.t.'s scene could take such a toll suggests the spectacle Middleton's hallucinations provided the audience. The visual thrill of convulsive horrors appealed to an audience demurely sitting in their seats. The mayhem upon the stage contrasted with--and maybe compensated for--the orderliness of the audience.

The scene was intense. Even audience members themselves were not immune to physical danger. Watkins wrote of how one woman reacted to his performance.

> During my delirium tremens scene, a lady in the box fell fainting from her seat. Her husband came to me afterwards and warned me not to play that part again. I have since understood that he wasn't the most sober of men. May this night's incident prove a warning.[53]

Others were not nearly as certain about the salubrious didacticism of a night at The Drunkard. Olive Logan did not see temperance drama as an effective warning to the young and cited the actor Goodall's early death as evidence. Writing soon after the Civil War, Logan believed that the term "moral drama" was "ridiculous" and "born of

cant," in part because it "implies that the drama proper is immoral." Wrote Logan,

> The Drunken Drama has two branches. One branch is illustrated by the actor who represents drunkenness on the stage, as he might represent thievery, murder, or any other wickedness. The other branch is illustrated by the actor who gets drunk. Not infrequently, the two are combined.

Despite Barnum's assertions that the play brought signatures to the pledge, Logan argued that The Drunkard did not induce many to forego drink. In fact, the genre was subversive of moral living. Logan wrote that "horrible representations of vice. . .do harm," and the new risque burlesque, the "leg-business," "is trivial in comparison with the `moral drama,' so far as its bad influence upon auditors is concerned."[54]

Some supporters of regular theater despised the formula of tricking the public into thinking that a museum swept away the sins associated with the old theater. New Yorker William Knight Northall ridiculed Barnum for hoodwinking the public; he wanted theaters "untainted by the sin of hypocrisy." Barnum would shamelessly use his temperance lectures to advertise The Drunkard. Stages should be a mirrors of society, not "schools of ethics," and to present the dramatist as a dubious moral teacher was a moneymaking sham.

> If the stage be distasteful, in [Barnum's] judgment, to the habits and

> morals of the audiences who visit his establishment, why not eschew them altogether, not wheedle the public into his trap, and thus oblige them to patch up their damaged consciences with the paltry excuse that it was the museum and not the play they went to see. The miserable trick is adopted of calling each play and farce represented, a moral affair.[55]

For Barnum, and apparently for his audiences, "humbug" was not fraud but rather entertainment. The showman received his profits, and audiences enjoyed a guiltless evening at a theater.

A theater of morality ultimately rose from neither an imposition from above nor an upwelling from below. The popularity of The Drunkard emerged from the deep theatricality of American public life itself. Between audience and promoter were exchanged innumerable winks, and in the process each got what they wanted. Theater entrepreneurs like Kimball and Barnum sought profits, and they were richly rewarded. Audiences wanted to go to theaters but were reluctant to be associated with a morally questionable institution. The result was a debate over the morality of theaters that was itself theatrical. When audiences attended the theater of the Boston Museum, they "acted" as if it were not really a theater. Their performances opened up new public spaces for Americans.

Middling audiences for commercial performances multiplied. As John Kasson puts it, by the late nineteenth-century performances were often "disciplined, passive, and segmented gatherings in which middle-class women figured prominently."[56] That was new. Temperance drama was one means by which changes in private values transformed public practices. The domestic was publicized by theater managers who sought to expand their potential audience beyond the limits imposed by traditional antitheatricalism. Their solution was to make the theater a happy home. The unrestrained consumer of alcohol became a dramatic character on the stage instead of a member of the audience. The "low" drinker, like the prostitute, was socially marginalized while symbolically central. In this process of making theater more acceptable, temperance was a wedge to literally open up new public spaces. Middling people were the antebellum group that most lastingly shaped popular commercial culture in the United States.[57] Through temperance dramas like The Drunkard, they negotiated with amusement entrepreneurs for their fun. "Family entertainment," with its pathos, moralizing dicta, well-behaved audiences, and non-alcoholic drinks, had been born.

Notes

1. L. Maria Child, Letters from New York, Second Series (New York: C.S. Francis & Co., 1846): 175-6.

2. Judith N. McArthur, "Demon on the Boards: Temperance Melodrama and the Tradition of Antebellum Reform," Journal of the Early Republic 9 (Winter 1989): 517-540. For other temperance plays, see Ann Louise Ferguson, "Beyond `The Drunkard': American Temperance Drama Reexamined," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1991. The text of Hot Corn; or Little Katy no longer exists.

3. Robert G. Allen, Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991): 46-51. Jonas Barish, The Antitheatrical Prejudice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981): 116, 256-294. For argument that republican virtue and theater could mesh, see William Haliburton, The Effects of the Stage on the Manners of People (Boston: Young & Etheridge, 1792).

4. Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans, ed. by Donald Smalley (New York: Vintage Books, 1949): 74-75, 81.

5. Ibid.: 133, 233-4, 271, 340, 241. When American theater audiences sought to discipline one of their number engaged in offensive behavior, they took to yelling "Trollope." Norbert Elias, The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen Books, 1978). Richard Cobden, The American Diaries of Richard Cobden, ed. by Elizabeth Hoon Cawley (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969): 126.

6. Charles Dickens, American Notes (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968): 77.

7. Richard Butsch, "Bowery B'hoys and Matinee Ladies: The Re-Gendering of Nineteenth-Century American Theater Audiences,"
American Quarterly 46 (September 1994): 374-379. Butsch argues that respectability is "at its core a gendered concept." Class interests and gendered understandings of theater life transformed audiences around 1850. Butsch places the changes in audience make-up in the context of reforms instituted "from entrepreneurs' search for new markets by making theater respectable" and connects the process with the domestication of other public spaces like department stores. New areas of the city were being made "safe" for middle-class women, and the result was a new ethic of consumption. For an examination of theater in

working-class life, see Richard B. Stott, Workers in the Metropolis: Class, Ethnicity and Youth in Antebellum New York City (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990): 222-9. Stott sees the creation of the "Mose" character for the Bowery Theater in 1848 a key event in the development of a distinctly working-class culture during the 1840s and 1850s. Also, see Faye E. Dudden, Women in the American Theatre: Actresses & Audiences, 1790-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994): 78-82, 104-22.

8. Olive Logan, Before the Footlights and Behind the Scenes (Philadelphia: Parmelee & Co., 1870): 537-8. The term "cyprians" comes from the belief that Aphrodite was born on Cyprus.

9. William Dunlap, History of the American Theatre (New York: Burt Franklin, 1963): 407-412.

10. George G. Foster, New York by Gas-Light and Other Urban Sketches, ed. by Stuart M. Blumin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990): 154-5. For a very different picture of New York theater, see James McCabe's similarly sensational account of urban life published after the Civil War. McCabe, like Foster, rests his literary gaze for pages on prostitutes, but never connects them with the theater. The sixteen theaters of New York were "well patronized," and even the Bowery Theatre provides wholesome amusement for "the ragged newsboy." Prostitutes had moved to other institutions, the concert saloons and dance halls. James D. McCabe, Jr., Lights and Shadows of New York Life; or, The Sights and Sensations of the Great City (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1872): 470, 483.

11. Timothy J. Gilfoyle, City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992): 30. See pages 27-178 on the larger phenomenon of antebellum urban prostitution.

12. Rosemarie K. Bank, "Hustlers in the House: the Bowery Theater as a Mode of Historical Information," in The American Stage: Social and Economic Issues from the Colonial Period to the Present, ed. by Ron Engle and Tice L. Miller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 47-64. Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

13. For a theoretical understanding on how social marginalization often accompanies symbolic focus, see Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of

Transgression (London: Methuen, 1986): 5. They write, "A recurrent pattern emerges: the `top' attempts to reject and eliminate the `bottom' for reasons of prestige and status, only to discover, not only that it is in some way frequently dependent upon that low-Other (in the classic way that Hegel describes in the master-slave section of the Phenomenology), but also that the top includes that low symbolically, as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life. The result is a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity: a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level. It is for this reason that what is socially peripheral is so frequently symbolically central."

14. Bruce C. Daniels, Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995): 66-8.

15. Barish: 83-88.

16. Robert Turnbull, "The Theatre," Christian Review, September 1837: 393-405. The Baptist journal even suggested that "Mr. Sargent do a good service, by making the seductions of the theatre the topic of a Temperance Tale."

17. Samuel Gover Winchester, The Theater (Philadelphia: W.S. Martien, 1840): 177.

18. The Christian Observatory: A Religious and Literary Magazine, November 1847.

19. Henry Dickinson Stone, Personal Recollections of the Drama; or, Theatrical Reminiscences (Albany: Charles van Benthuysen & Sons, 1873): 2.

20. William Ellery Channing, "An Address on Temperance," in The Works of William Ellery Channing (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1903) 2: 332.

21. The letter is reprinted in James E. Murdoch, The Stage; or Recollections of Actors and Acting from an Experience of Fifty Years (Philadelphia: J.M. Stoddart & Co., 1880): 423-39.

22. Boston Recorder, May 25, 1843. Journal of the American Temperance Union (hereafter JATU), August 1842 and August 1843. For another denunciation of Dr. Robinson's temperance theatricals and his arguments with clergymen,

see JATU, June 1845.

23. JATU, July 1844.

24. Jeffrey D. Mason, Melodrama and the Myth of America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993): 61. Mason writes of the "resolute neglect" of temperance drama by the temperance movement; "the social and moral abyss that separated theatre from the movement was nearly insuperable."

25. Neil Harris, Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973): 31-57. Andrea Stulman Dennett, Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997): 23-40.

26. Ibid.: 87-9.

27. Maud and Otis Skinner, One Man in his Time: The Adventures of H. Watkins, Strolling Player, 1845-1863 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1938): 67-8.

28. Charles A. Cummings, "Memoir of Moses Kimball," New-England Historical and Genealogical Register 56 (June 1903): 335-40.

29. Kate Ryan, Old Boston Museum Days (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1915): 2-3.

30. Skinner and Skinner: 68. Otis Skinner, Footlights and Spotlights (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1924): 13-16; quoted in Documents of American Theater History, ed. by William C. Young, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973): 105-6.

31. Howard Malcom Ticknor, "The Passing of the Boston Museum," The New England Magazine 28 (June 1903): 382-5. Skinner, Footlights and Spotlights: 16, in Documents of American Theater History: 106. Ryan: 4-5. William W. Clapp, Jr., A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1853): 469, 471.

32. Bruce McConachie, "Museum Theater and the Problem of Respectability for Mid-Century Urban Americans," in Engle and Miller: 76-7.

33. For theater prices in Boston in 1844, see advertisements in the Daily Evening Transcript. Henry Austin Clapp, Reminiscences of a Dramatic Critic (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1902): 51.

34. Boston Transcript, June 14, 1841, in Documents of American Theater History: 106. Boston Evening Gazette, June 12, 1845, quoted in Claire McGlinchee, The First Decade of the Boston Museum (Boston: Bruce Humphries, 1940): 48-9. On efforts to draw middle-class women to theaters in the 1840s and 1850s, see Faye E. Dudden, Women in the American Theatre: Actresses & Audiences, 1790-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994): 78-82. On antebellum theater riots, see Peter Buckley, "To the Opera House: Culture and Society in New York City, 1820-1860," Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984. Also Lawrence W. Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988): 60-69.

35. McGlinchee: 30-44.

36. Clapp: 472.

37. McGlinchee: 58-86. Weldon B. Durham, American Theatre Companies, 1749-1887 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 68-75. For more on the stock company after the Civil War, see Ryan. Also, for a look at how the Boston Museum company trained actors, see Edward William Mammen, The Old Stock Company School of Acting: A Study of the Boston Museum (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1945).

38. Ryan: 5. William Warren in the Boston Herald, June 11, 1893, quoted in McGlinchee: 63. "Memoir of William H. (Sedley) Smith," in John Howard Payne, Clari; or, The Maid of Milan (Boston: William V. Spencer, 1856): 6-7.

39. Ibid., 7-8.

40. On John Pierpont's role in the temperance movement, see Mark Edward Lender, Dictionary of American Temperance Biography: From Temperance Reform to Alcohol Research, the 1600s to the 1980s (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984): 395-7.

41. Crystal Fount and Rechabite Recorder, June 15, 1844.

42. Daily Evening Transcript, January 5, 12, 18, 1844.

43. Mason: 77. Skinner and Skinner: 70.

44. Clapp: 9. Garff B. Wilson, Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:

Prentice-Hall, 1973): 122, 104. Thomas Postlewait, "From Melodrama to Realism: The Suspect History of American Drama," in Melodrama: the Cultural Emergence of a Genre, ed. by Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulou (New York: St. Martien's Press, 1996): 39-60.

45. On the structure of melodrama, see Grimsted: 171-203.

46. All quotes from the play are from The Drunkard: or, The Fallen Saved (Boston: Jones's Publishing House, 1847); reprinted (Boston: Literature House, 1972).

47. For a different interpretation of The Drunkard, see McConachie, Melodramatic Formations: 185.

48. Barnum to Kimball, Feb. 2, 1848, Selected Letters of P.T. Barnum, ed. by A.H. Saxon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983): 39.

49. Circular letter, circa June 17, 1850, Selected Letters of P.T. Barnum: 43.

50. Walter M. Leman, Memories of an Old Actor (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1886, reprinted 1969): 223. Olive Logan, Apropos of Women and Theatres (New York: Carleton, 1869): 90.

51. Daily Evening Transcript, January 22, February 26, February 27, March 1, March 11, 1844.

52. Watkins journal, quoted in Skinner: 70-1, 82.

53. Ibid.: 82.

54. Logan, Apropos of Women and Theatres: 89-109.

55. William Knight Northall, Before and Behind the Curtain; or Fifteen Years' Observations among the Theatres of New York (New York: W.F. Burgess, 1851): 166-9.

56. John F. Kasson, Rudeness & Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990): 215. On the transformation of spectatorship, see pp.215-256.

57. On the bifurcation of public culture in the nineteenth-century United States between "Bowery b'hoys" and "nabobs," see Buckley and Levine. Buckley has come to recognize the importance of middling audiences in antebellum America, writing, "in retrospect, the development of a middle ground of leisure activities,

neither overly refined nor rowdy, is the perhaps most significant development in entertainment over the antebellum period.. . .The social parameters of this middle ground of popular entertainment can be expressed in a simple formula: the absence of alcohol and the presence of families." See his entry "Popular Entertainment before the Civil War," in Encyclopedia of American Social History, ed. by Mary Kupiec Clayton, Elliot J. Gorn, and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993): 1611-12.

CHAPTER 7

LOADED WITH MEANING: DRUNKARDS, READERS, AND THE LITERARY CAREER OF T.S. ARTHUR

> "Men look close to the money result; women to the moral consequences."[1]
>
> T.S. Arthur, Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, 1854

On the evening of September 27, 1855, the Book Publishers' Association of New York City celebrated the rise of American publishing with a banquet. This "Complimentary Fruit Festival" attracted seven hundred authors and booksellers. Held in the Crystal Palace and illuminated by gaslight, the festivities included toasts to technological progress, to the newfound international respect for American literature, and to Benjamin Franklin. The President of the Publishers' Association took pride in the accomplishments of writers and publishers. He asserted that the publishing industry had "done more for our country than a dozen societies for the suppression of vice and immorality can ever do" by allowing "genius, guided by virtue and sanctified by religion, to struggle into the sunshine of public favor."

Newspaper accounts of the dinner emphasized two things --the presence of women and the absence of alcohol. As a teetotal toast by the Rev. Dr. Osgood announced,

> Let us have a truer festivity that shall alike rebuke churlish selfishness and degrading dissipation. Banishing strong drink and welcoming ladies with less gormandizing and more good taste, our festive entertainments may be cheering as well as elevating and help the social education of the people.

With the banquet, the temperance reform and the publishing industry were wed.[2]

One attendee, Timothy Shay Arthur, must have especially applauded the toast. His own career depended upon the banishment of alcohol and the welcoming of middle-class women. Arthur was an incredibly prolific writer of domestic fiction and had published his Ten Nights in a Bar-Room the year before. He discussed the celebration at length in his own publication, Arthur's Home Magazine. For Arthur, the banquet affirmed the artistic power of American writers, himself included. As a feted guest, he must have been flattered by the marble statue of Clio, the muse of history, and the words above her, written in gas flame, "HONOR TO GENIUS." But what most struck Arthur was his membership in a special but strangely invisible community of authors. Arthur relished the "brilliant affair" and found it "tantalizing to be moving among friends and compeers, and yet seeing all as strangers." Literary production made possible a community of interests but one lacking in direct human contact. He wanted the banquet to

become an annual event so that there would be more face-to-face encounters between writers and their publishers.

> Toilers in the same fields, why should not authors meet occasionally, mingle, with one another, and sit down in familiar intercourse. And how much better will it be for authors and publishers to meet, now and then, on a different plain from that of business, and in pleasant, social intercourse, come to know each other more intimately, and have the feelings stirred with a mutual, personal interest.

Recognized as a literary celebrity, Arthur expressed deep satisfaction that he was at last counted among the renowned writers of American fiction, but he also was uneasily aware that the creation of books was a business. For Arthur, books and their creators had mystic connections and communal sympathy. If books had transcendent meaning, authors must also emerge from the mire of quotidian market exchanges. Despite the impersonal nature of the publishing industry, he imagined a real community of book producers. Cold financial calculations sullied aspirations to an ethereal "genius," ironically celebrated by the businessmen present.

Nonetheless, Arthur was a commercial success, especially when his pen turned to the world of temperance. In his career, he ably fused the religion of domesticity, the mass production of print, and the conventions of the temperance movement. Arthur's literary production suggests

the intersecting interests of an expanding publishing industry and the crusade against liquor. Arthur's stance on the meaning of authorship--that it lay outside the market--was itself emblematic of an ingenious marketing strategy.[3]

During the decade and a half that followed the Washingtonian uprising of the early 1840s, temperance activities became a common feature in the American cultural landscape. Freed from the formal temperance movement and its ministers, representations of drinking and drunkards achieved a commercial legitimacy far beyond the desires of the staid reformers of the American Temperance Society. Experience speakers and dramatists exploited the popularity of temperance imagery and its potential for strong emotional responses. Writers and publishers similarly capitalized on the popularity of temperance. Temperance promoted the consumption of books as much as books promoted the practice of temperance. Arthur exploited the confluence of interests to make him a victor in a competitive literary marketplace.

Within temperance novels and short stories, American readers and writers worked their way through potent cultural controversies. Temperance fiction dealt with the nature of evil in a time of seemingly boundless theological optimism. Writers like Arthur took on the role of preacher as the authority on perfectionist goals. By wresting evil

from the Calvinist confines of human nature and installing it in that voluminous repository for all things bad, Demon Rum, temperance writers popularized perfectionist aspirations and increasingly centered them on the home. To do this, they explicitly focused the gaze of the domestic reader on the social and moral degradation of drinkers. Drinkers and readers became binary opposites. By exploiting the popular trope of Demon Rum, temperance fiction of the 1840s and 1850s externalized the slavery of drinking and internalized the freedom of reading, all in very personal terms. Temperance and publishing worked in tandem to denounce the consumption of a self-evidently evil commodity, drink, by promoting the consumption of an ostensibly moral one, books.[4]

The classic temperance novel of the nineteenth century was T.S. Arthur's Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, and What I Saw There. Published in 1854, the novel exploited two quite different enthusiasms. One was the phenomenal success of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, the 1852 antislavery novel on which Arthur's work was loosely modelled. The other was the controversial implementation of statewide prohibition legislation, called Maine Laws, throughout most of the northern United States during the early 1850s.

But temperance fiction was not Arthur's only claim to fame. By the time Ten Nights was published, T.S. Arthur was an established popular writer. Temperance fit neatly into his already formulated symbolic universe. His didactic tales, either in the form of short stories or novels, invariably took place at the intersection of the personal and the monetary.[5] In Arthur's fictional world, the self did not exist in isolation. Neither the self-made man nor the self-made woman was alone. A young person's journey through life depended on familial and communal relationships, but the trip was dangerous. The happy reconstruction of violently shattered families and communities concluded almost all of his tales. Arthur's utopian vision of domestic comfort required men to have the sense to make financially sound decisions and the sensibility to avoid the heartlessness that might accompany those decisions. For women, respectability meant carefully steering men in moral directions, all in the name of protecting the sacred home. And nothing was more dangerous to the home than alcoholic drink.

Ultimately, the temperance message attracted Arthur because of its commercial popularity and adaptability. He had never been a drunkard. Unlike John Gough, Arthur left no carefully crafted narrative of his redemption from the bottle. Apparently, he never felt ensnared by the allure of the deceiving cup and the grog shop. He never referred

to a magical conversion to temperance because, in terms of the persona he projected, there was no need. John Gough's moral authority rested on his personal experience of escape from the thralldom of a common drunkard and his liberation by the Washingtonians. His life story was thus the product he presented to the public. Arthur, on the other hand, did not obtain his moral authority from an inward temperance miracle but rather by his manifest ability to play the emotions of his readers, to "pull their heartstrings," to become a vehicle for middle-brow romantic release. His personal experiences mattered little, and he felt no need to outline them in detail for the public. Persona, on the other hand, mattered a great deal.

Arthur did publish an account of his life in a "Brief Autobiography" as an introduction to a collection of his stories entitled The Lights and Shadows of Real Life, first appearing in 1851. Even this he presented with "reluctance." Revealing the contradictory demands of the literary marketplace for both artistic authenticity and commercial viability, Arthur confessed how "before the public" he was despite his own natural shyness. He also admitted the "necessity to write as means of livelihood, and to write a great deal." He felt a "natural sensitiveness" about publicity, adding, perhaps disingenuously, "I have lost none of that shrinking from notoriety and observation which made me timid and retiring

when a boy." The demands of publicity may have been the underlying meaning of an unattributed poem that appeared in the first edition of Arthur's Magazine in 1844 entitled "The Poet's Lot."

> His lot may be a heavy lot,
> His thrall a heavy thrall,
> And cares and griefs the crowd knows not,
> His heart may know them all.[6]

The tortured artist, enslaved by his faith in beauty, was a romantic icon but hardly an accurate reflection of the career of a man like T.S. Arthur.[7] Despite romanticism's idealization of the lonely artist smitten by his own genius, Arthur had to cater to popular tastes and may have felt ensnared by the demands of commerce.

Arthur's "Brief Autobiography" illustrated his persona without providing a sense of who he really was. Born in Newburgh, New York, in 1809, Arthur moved with his family to Baltimore in 1817. He received little formal education, finding math difficult and grammar "completely unintelligible." Instead of the tender nurturing his mind required, he was "scolded and whipped" by harsh teachers. Echoing Ben Franklin's assertion of self-made manhood, albeit of a far more sentimental sort, Arthur presented himself as an autodidact, "preferring to grope about in the dark. . .while other boys were seeking pleasure and recreation." The repeated self-denigration of his intellect emphasized the intensity of his feelings. As

with Gough, heart mattered more than mind. After an apprenticeship, Arthur worked briefly as a tailor, curiously--given his later career--abandoning the trade due to defective eyesight. He then became a clerk in a counting house.

Economic instability steered Arthur in a new direction. Like John Gough, the defining experience in his life was sudden poverty, but alcoholism did not cause the joblessness Arthur experienced. In search of a larger income, he gained a position as a travelling agent for the Susquehanna Bridge and Banking Company, but his employers suddenly went bankrupt in 1833 while he was somewhere in the "West." The event was pivotal. Jobless, Arthur returned to Baltimore.

Sudden unemployment forced Arthur to turn to writing for a livelihood, and his stories frequently stressed financial insecurity and its moral implications. As he later explained, "During all this time, I was devoting my leisure moments to writing, not that I looked forward to authorship as a trade--nothing could have been more foreign to my thoughts;--I continued to write, as I had begun, prompted by an impulse that I felt little inclination to resist." Whether due to the irresistible muse within or the prodding market without, he became the co-editor of one of Baltimore's numerous and ephemeral literary journals, the Athenaeum. Arthur joined a small literary group that

included Edgar Allan Poe, meeting in an establishment called the Seven Stars Tavern. Whether he was touched by any sort of immoral miasma there and how much he drank, he never intimated.[8] By 1836, he was editing the Baltimore Monument, a "weekly journal, devoted to polite literature, science, and the fine arts."

As early as 1838, Arthur wrote stories with clear temperance themes. His interest in the literary potential of the reform thus predated his introduction to Washingtonianism. For example, for The Baltimore Literary Monument, now a monthly he both published and edited, Arthur wrote "The Orphan," a story about a young girl's suffering. The narrator, returning from a business trip in the West, overheard the story of an orphan girl of six put to work in a grog shop. Her mistress pitilessly beat her, but the orphan only responded with prayer. Eventually, the brutal woman's heart softens. She becomes motherly and allows the orphan to go to church and learn to read. The theme of the transformative, redemptive, even miraculous powers of suffering girls exposed to the intemperate, a dominant theme in Ten Nights, thus appears quite early in Arthur's career as a writer.[9]

Arthur entered the world of publishing through magazines. His first efforts in magazines during the early 1830s seem more expressions of literary pomposity than of lachrymose and lurid melodrama, hinting little of future

works like Ten Nights. As might be expected, his first magazines were commercial failures. One chronicler of Baltimore's cultural life in the mid-nineteenth century wrote, "no strictly literary journal published in the city of Baltimore will pay."[10] Slowly, he was drawn into the vortex of commerce, ably rode the wave of literary fashion, and became "an indefatigable contributor" to the increasingly popular domestic magazines of the antebellum period.[11]

His stories appeared frequently in the most popular antebellum domestic magazine, Godey's Lady's Book, and he enjoyed a close friendship with its editor, Sarah Josepha Hale. In the early 1840s, Arthur wrote didactic tales for women with such titles as "Hiring a Servant," "Marrying a Merchant," and "Paying the Doctor." Between July 1840 and December 1844, a total of thirty-three stories appeared in Godey's under Arthur's name.

If Arthur's collaboration with Hale was by design, his association with the temperance movement was almost accidental. As he wrote in his "Brief Autobiography," "My choice of temperance themes has not arisen from any experience in my own person of the evils of intemperance, but from having been an eye and ear witness to some of the first results of Washingtonianism, and seeing, in the cause, one worthy the best efforts of my pen."[12] He happened to be in Baltimore when the first Washingtonian

meetings were noticed by the local press. Though nominally a member of a temperance society as early as 1833, Arthur was less a temperance zealot than a literary opportunist and entrepreneur whose espousal of domestic morality was inseparable from the pursuit of commercial success. For his efforts, he gained an exceptionally large readership, especially among middle-class women.[13]

Arthur rewarded loyal readers with a tremendous amount of material. Timothy Shay Arthur's pen never seemed to stop. Though largely remembered today for a single novel, Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, a cursory examination of his publication history reveals an amazing volume of literary production. He achieved this productivity in part by writing formulaic plots and in part by recycling stories that had previously appeared in magazines and other books into new collections. He was a regular contributor to numerous magazines as well as to at least eighty gift books, the ornate collections of stories popular in antebellum America. Given the recycling of his writings, the appearance of pirated editions, and as well as his use of pseudonyms, a complete bibliography of Arthur's works is probably impossible. The National Union Catalogue of Pre-1856 Imprints attributes over two hundred titles to Timothy Shay Arthur, and many of these books appeared in numerous editions.

Prior to the publication of Ten Nights, Arthur's first full-length temperance novel, only about one fifth of his writings could be described as temperance fiction.[14] But his temperance fiction never abandoned his early themes. For example, he consistently denounced the idea that wealth should be seen as an end in itself and opposed speculation and credit. The theme of unrestrained greed was central in Ten Nights in a Bar-room.[15] His discussion of evil influences extended far beyond those of the bottle. In novels like Agnes, or The Possessed. A Revelation of Mesmerism, Arthur condemned those trained in the sexually charged arts of "animal magnetism" and their tendency to bring evil into the world. Arthur concluded the book with a clear message--"Beware of mesmerism! Its origin is in perverted order, and it cannot, therefore, have a good influence."

In Riches Have Wings, Arthur tried to encourage readers, especially women readers, to prepare for the financial perturbations of the increasingly volatile market economy. The frenzy of speculation, like the excitement of the tavern, was an immoral contagion and ended in debilitating its participants. At one point in Riches Have Wings, Arthur described an economic boom in the language the temperance movement presented the grog shop--"The whole commercial atmosphere was filled with the miasmata of speculation, and all men who inhaled it became more or less

infected with the disease." In the novel, the part of savior is played by a daughter who alone keeps perfectionist aspirations alive. Ironically, material wealth flies away but spiritual riches, especially feminine ones, remain to sustain an essentially good man.[16]

In all his writings, Arthur stressed the gendered duties of the domestic sanctuary. In 1847, Arthur published two advice books, one for women and one for men. This kind of literature, common during the antebellum period, allowed authors to assume the parental role.[17] In Advice to Young Ladies on Their Duties and Conduct in Life, Arthur urged women to cultivate a quiet inner piety rather than make outward expressions of religiosity. Furthermore, women should avoid gossip, overdressing, and stimulating food. He also warned women of "a great danger of enervating the mind by improper reading." Works of high intellect would render a woman cold and thus unwomanly, while "frivolous" novel-reading made a woman self-indulgent. When Arthur cited the "humanizing tendency" of "well-wrought fiction," he was undoubtedly alluding to his own creations, pleasurable yet morally didactic stories. An advice book thus became an implicit advertisement for books.

In Advice to Young Men, Arthur described two types of men, those ruled by "the thinking faculty" and those driven by "impulses, passions, and selfish interests." Much of

his advice to young men consisted of rules for success in the economic world while simultaneously maintaining the precept "that man has a destiny beyond the attainment of real wealth," that morality mattered. Young men, Arthur wrote, spend too freely, easily get into debt, and often "overreach" in business. In contrast to his suggestions to young women, he urged men to "study," a pursuit far more important than "mere reading." In a chapter on "bad habits," Arthur condemned tobacco for pages as "a vile and offensive weed" but expends one mere paragraph to denounce drinking, an argument with which he assumed his readers were already familiar. He wrote, "little more is necessary than to condemn it as a very bad habit. There has been so much said and written on the subject within the last few years, that every one must understand its merits by this time."

Arthur's readers were familiar with his stance on temperance. Six Nights with the Washingtonians, a collection of temperance tales published in 1842, was his first best-selling volume. Washingtonianism and the emotionally expressive experience meetings proved a fertile source of material for Arthur's rapidly expanding imaginary world of good and evil, male and female. In 1840, Arthur was in Baltimore, the site of the first Washingtonian conversions among artisans, and he claimed to have observed some of their first meetings. Six Nights was a collection

of fictionalized accounts of Washingtonian travails and redemptions. The book presaged much of Ten Nights in a Bar-room. Even the prefaces of the two temperance volumes were similar. Both happily accepted commercial success while denying that commercial gain was Arthur's motive in writing them. In Six Nights, the preface asserted the importance of stories as "powerful auxiliaries in that noble cause," temperance, while denying that the tales were really creations of Arthur's mind, "not mere fictions of his own imagination." Instead, the temperance tales in Six Nights revealed the underlying truths of Washingtonianism. The author's unique faculties of description and sympathy upon observing Washingtonian meetings made the writings possible. Suggested the preface to Six Nights, "[a]t every step of his progress in these tales, the writer has felt with the actors--sympathising with them in their heart-aching sorrow, and rejoicing with them the morning after a long night of affliction."[18]

The first of the tales, "The Broken Merchant," began with an old man signing the pledge at a Washingtonian meeting--"As he lifted his pen, a tear fell upon his name." He then related his past as a businessman whose "attachment to his glass of wine had . . .increased to a passion." He and his daughter descended into abject poverty, but the caring and solicitous young woman remained by his side. She even whispered "O Father! Dear Father!," the temperance

mantra later made popular in a song from the theatrical version of Ten Nights in a Bar-room. Her devotion was ultimately rewarded when the Washingtonians resurrected her father's self-respect. The tale concluded with a paean to the hidden but powerful spirituality of the Washingtonian reform--"The present wonderful reform is not the mere work of man, nor altogether under the control of man. Its causes lie deeply hidden in that invisible world of causes, whose mysterious action upon this visible world of effects, is so often incomprehensible."

The second "night," "The Experience Meeting" parallels the biography of John Gough. An artisan lost all self-control, and violently beat his wife who later died "from the agonies of a wounded spirit," but the young man was saved and given employment by the Washingtonians. Exactly like Gough, he was a bookbinder who suffered delirium tremens on the job. The narrator related how "in reaching out my hand for a small iron bar, it assumed the form of a serpent, while I was seized with the most horrible fear that the mind can imagine." He then remarried; his second wife provided the companionship he had earlier received from bar-room carousers.

Other themes from Six Nights with the Washingtonians reappear in Ten Nights in a Bar-room. "The Tavern-Keeper" introduced the figure of the selfish rumseller, greedily bringing young men to perdition for the sake of

contaminated lucre.[19] The cost of his occupation was his family. His crippled son drank himself to death, and his daughter married a violent drunkard. "The Drunkard's Wife" was the story of a self-denying woman who lost her husband to nocturnal revelries. The marriage was saved by the pledge. "The Moderate Drinker" outlined the inevitable decline into habitual drunkenness of a man who believed he was immune to the "subtle enticements of the circean draught" but was later saved by the Washingtonians. Finally, "The Widow's Son" focussed on the impact of Demon Rum on the relationship between mother and son. The mother tried to protect the young man from danger, but he became engaged in competitive drinking with friends, duelling, gambling, and political campaigns akin to "the Bacchanalian orgies of old." He too found new and truer friends among the Washingtonians, achieved financial success, and married the woman who had earlier rejected him.[20]

Six Nights with the Washingtonians was well received by the critics. Arthur, as always, benefited from positive reviews in Godey's. Connecting the books with the Washingtonian experience speakers so popular at the time, Godey's declared, "His narratives have all the potency of lectures." So familiar was his name to its readers that one review began by stating that it was "scarcely necessary to say, that Mr. T.S. Arthur is a writer of peculiar and superior abilities." Six Nights was evidence of Arthur's

acuity of perception in presenting realistic pictures of life while engaging in "lessons of practical utility." Similarly, Brother Jonathan commended Arthur for "a practical truthfulness" in Six Nights, "six of the best stories in aid of Temperance ever written. As mere ministers to amusement, too, they will be very acceptable." Arthur had come upon a winning formula, one to which he would return with even greater success a dozen years later.[21]

Six Nights appeared at a time when the American book trade was in a state of both self-destructive disarray and unprecedented promise. The depression that swamped the American economy between 1837 and 1843 was a decisive turning point in the history of American publishing. As one historian writes of the period, "A mania for cheapness had descended upon the trade, and things would never be the same." Plummeting prices allowed more readers access to literature but threatened established publishing houses like Harper's. In New York City, a virtual war over the twin issues of cheapness and copyright infringement erupted between Harper's and upstarts like The New World and Brother Jonathan, periodicals that serialized pirated novels or published "mammoth" supplements of entire novels for a mere six cents. During the 1820s, books on average cost two dollars. By the early 1840s, in a counterattack

against the cheap periodicals, established publishing firms had lowered their prices to around fifty cents per book. Meanwhile, established publishers urged a sharp increase in postal rates as a powerful and ultimately successful weapon against the new competitors.[22]

To protect his "cheap" realm, Park Benjamin, editor of The New World, argued against legal protections for intellectual property. For Benjamin, copyrights delayed perfection by obstructing the people's access to moral instruction. Moral uplift required the widest possible dissemination of moral literature. About the same time Six Nights appeared, he wrote that he was "sorry" about the animosity from book publishers, "but the milk is spilled and there is no use crying about it." The community could only benefit, posited Benjamin, from the reduced prices of literature. Thus began "a great literary revolution, which will result in enlarging the understandings of the masses. It is truly democratic--utterly subversive of that intellectual aristocracy which has hitherto controlled the energies of the nation."[23]

Benjamin similarly argued that authors should sacrifice personal gain in the name of a more moral society. It might be financially "hard" on authors, wrote Benjamin,

> but when we see the mechanic and the laborer hurrying home to his family after daily toil, with a bundle of

> publications which would otherwise have cost him a month's wages, we feel that the injustice done the individual, is merged in the benefit done thousands.

He then linked the augmentation of readership made possible by lower prices with the promise of the temperance movement.

> Besides, this influence of the press is a powerful auxiliary to the great temperance movement. Joined with them, it is fast robbing the rum-palace of its victims; it renders the neglected home pleasant; restores to the dejected inebriate a true sense of his own real worth; and is, in fact, the very essence of civilization. The seed thus unwittingly scattered by the way-side, will bring forth a thousand fold, and the harvest will be--the human mind redeemed, regenerated, disenthralled![24]

The ministry saw matters differently. The Congregationalist Boston Recorder condemned the cheap press as a purveyor of immorality and competitor to the religious press, the true guardian of society. In 1844, the Recorder wrote,

> A cheap press, if not a positive evil, is at least an equivocal blessing. A vast majority of its productions are of a vicious character. It is the depraved appetite which is so craving as to create the demand which a cheap press is designed to supply.. . .What a torrent of contaminating influences is now flowing over the land from the fountain of the cheap press. We are almost tempted sometimes to wish that a censorship of the press could be established, or that it were the province of some Pope to anathematize and annihilate the worthless and corrupting issues which are pouring

> like a continual rain from the cheap press.

The Recorder added that the religious press "affords ready and efficient means of counteracting these pernicious influences, of creating a healthful literary ta[s]te, of enlightening the mass of mind, and of promoting sound morality and true religion." The Baptist Christian Secretary similarly rued the popularity of light reading and indecent pictures and stories, including in Brother Jonathan. Especially disheartening was the appearance of the same stories, published "to satisfy the morbid appetite of their readers," in "literary" or "family" journals read by the religious. Some readers were even pleading poverty and refusing to buy religious papers.[25]

Arthur positioned himself in the literary marketplace somewhere between the Boston Recorder and Brother Jonathan. Even though Park Benjamin applauded Arthur as someone who "writes with singular force and skill," Arthur found Benjamin's views on cheap publishing and copyright laws troubling.[26] After all, Arthur's financial well-being rested on the reputation of his works as promoting society's moral well-being, and he did not want the cheap press hoarding profits he felt were his. He was horrified by the lack of an international copyright agreement and the "international freebooting" of British publishers who reproduced his works on the other side of the Atlantic.

Arthur wanted to insure the financial position of the primary producer of literature, the author. Benjamin's efforts to spread cheap moral literature as widely as possible damaged Arthur's career interests. Benjamin wanted no copyright protection for authors because copyrights infringed on society's need for moral instruction. Arthur's own argument to legitimize the reading of fiction was rebounding against him.

On the issues of both cheapness and copyright, Arthur occupied a middle position. One could gain readers through cheapness but protect the author's interests by enforcing copyright laws. Ultimately, Arthur offered his books in multiple formats to maximize profits. He seemed to understand that the book trade was in the process of market segmentation and that books as material possessions could be put to different uses. Thus, his writings appeared in various guises, from the dime novel to the gilded gift book.

Just prior to the publication of Six Nights, Arthur and his family moved to Philadelphia, a desirable move for an ambitious literary entrepreneur. By the early 1840s, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City were rapidly consolidating their positions as the leading entrepots of literary distribution. Baltimore's cachet as a center for letters was in eclipse.[27]

Arthur's career bridged the worlds of magazine and book publishing. In Philadelphia, Arthur continued his prodigious production of bound fiction but also launched his own domestic magazine, an imitation of Godey's Lady's Book. Arthur's Ladies Magazine first appeared in 1845, lasted three years, and boasted "Cheapness, Elegance and Excellence Combined!" with "48 pages Reading Matter, besides two elegant Steel Plates, and fine Wood Engravings in Each Number!" Fashion plates were soon discontinued, perhaps as a cost-cutting measure. Arthur's own reputation as a didactic moralist was the primary marketing tool for the magazine. As a way to induce gift subscriptions for women, one notice implored men with assurances of propriety.

> Parents, brothers, guardians, and others may introduce our Magazine to those whose interests lie near their hearts, with perfect confidence. We pledge ourselves, on the faith of our Editor, to its moral purity. No improper sentiment--no insidious assault upon virtue--no immodest allusion will ever be found upon its pages. But, instead, every incentive to virtuous actions.[28]

Arthur's Ladies Magazine, at two dollars per year, tried to undersell Godey's, but the venture ultimately failed.

Arthur's next attempt at magazine publishing was more durable. Arthur's Home Gazette commenced publication in 1850 as a weekly and was transformed into Arthur's Home Magazine, a monthly, in 1852. The Home Magazine outlasted

Arthur himself, who died in 1885. He used his magazine to press for an international copyright agreement and to condemn those journals that procured foreign literature at no cost. Arthur, who had long promoted American writers, suggested that American readers would become more nationalistic in their literary tastes. He argued that "the public mind cannot be satisfied with such [foreign] mental aliment, and will come back to more genial home repasts." In launching his Home Magazine, Arthur again stressed his moral reputation. The magazine would enter the home "as a valued friend and pleasant visitor, and leave the minds of all who read refreshed and strengthened." One advertisement announced that "T.S. ARTHUR, THE EDITOR, has entire control of the paper.. . .[N]ot a line goes in without his supervision." Parents need not have feared a subversive home intruder in print.[29]

While Arthur was promoting his new magazine venture, he was writing his first full-length temperance novel. According to the "Publisher's Preface" to the first edition of Ten Nights in a Bar-Room,

> This new temperance volume, by Mr. Arthur, comes in just at the right time, when the subject of restrictive laws is agitating the whole country, and good and true men everywhere are gathering up their strength for a prolonged and unflinching contest. It will prove a powerful auxiliary to the cause.

> "Ten Nights in a Bar-Room" gives a series of sharply drawn sketches, some of them touching in the extreme, and some dark and terrible. Step by step the author traces the downward course of the tempting vender and his infatuated victims, until both are involved in hopeless ruin. The book is marred by no exaggeration, but exhibits the actualities of bar-room life, and the consequences flowing therefrom, with a severe simplicity, and adherence to truth, that gives to every picture a Daguerrean vividness.

The preface renders the novel, ostensibly a work of fiction and thus to be read for pleasure, more acceptable and utilitarian by promoting a political program, the prohibition of alcohol in the various states of the Union. Unlike the pro-Washingtonian Six Nights, Ten Nights advocated state intervention to achieve social perfection. Political mobilization and pleasurable reading were not necessarily mutually reinforcing. The result was a novel structurally bifurcated between political advocacy and emotionally evocative imagery, particularly of familial and communal suffering, violence, and insanity, "some touching" and "some dark and terrible." The last scene of the book, in which the men of Cedarville gather to pass a resolution calling for the prohibition of alcohol within their town, lacks the sensitivity and "heart" so dominant in the earlier, tear-drenched pages decrying the community's moral and physical devastation. In other words, the conclusion replaces the invisible institutionalism of sentimental

fiction with the "overt institutionalism" of law. But first comes a besotted apocalypse.[30]

Warding off the potential criticism that Ten Nights was a prurient work of voyeuristic excess, the "Publisher's Preface" further protected the novel from attack by asserting that it realistically described life in the taverns. That drinkers were embarked on a "downward course," presented so vividly in the Currier and Ives lithograph of "The Drunkard's Progress" and repeated so often by various temperance media, seemed a stark truth. The novel contains "sketches," a common literary device in antebellum literature, that accurately portray reality with "a Daguerrean vividness." The work connected the literary with the visual arts and thus made a bald assertion of truth. Just as the daguerreotype captured a sort of hyperreality, so would the novel.

For antebellum middle-class readers, the bar-room was a morally poisonous place, and the author faced a dilemma similar to that faced by many moral reformers. How does one bear witness to immorality without being contaminated by the lethal miasma of degradation? T.S. Arthur's narrator, some sort of philanthropic traveler and businessman, spends time, ten nights spread out over several years, in the bar-room only as a by-product of his need for lodging. Arthur's narrator attempts to elude the double bind of gazing upon irresistible immorality while

asserting his own moral cleanliness by periodically passing through the village of Cedarville, not participating in its sordid events. At times, he even literally peers over a shielding newspaper as events unfold. Arthur's narrator is a spectator in a forum of drunken folly. He passes moral judgment but does little else. He is also a voyeur, as the subtitle--"and What I Saw There"--makes clear.[31]

In his observations, the narrator scans faces for hints of character. He notes the commercial surroundings with an eye to immoral influences and provides an almost phrenological reading of the entire community of Cedarville. Cedarville, its name suggestive of agrarian solidity, has been besmirched by the construction of a tavern, the aptly named "Sickle and Sheaf." By the conclusion of the novel, it is clear what this particular institution harvests. The "man-trap" harvests souls.

At the heart of the novel lies the conflict between two characters, Simon Slade, the proprietor of the "Sickle and Sheaf," his name evocative of Simon LeGree, and Joe Morgan, erstwhile miller who has slowly but inexorably descended into a life of habitual drunkenness. Over their lives rule spiritual forces of good and evil. Alcohol guides the two men on a downward path, Slade as a purveyor and tempter, Morgan as a consumer and victim. Evil "resides" in the tavern, a commercialized male space that flourishes under the protection of darkness.[32] Good, on the

other hand, "resides" in the home, a private female space lighted and enlightened by womanly morality. The collision of these forces, in the context and peculiar understandings of antebellum American culture, drives the novel's plot.

Ten Nights in a Bar-room tells two parallel tales, one following Joe Morgan and the other tracing Cedarville. Both require apocalyptic violence and the sacrifice of young people in order to achieve regeneration. Both body and body politic require the same cure, the elimination of alcohol, and thus of evil, from their boundaries. With the banishment of drink comes a reconfigured outlook and appearance--stable, prosperous, and domesticated.

The tale opens with the arrival of the narrator at the "Sickle and Sheaf," welcomed by "the good-natured face of Simon Slade" whose handshake is "like that of a true fiend." His children Frank and Flora, twelve and sixteen years old, work in the tavern. The allegorical nature of their names is self evident. The narrator inquires, "are you not a little afraid of placing one so young in the way of temptation." The narrator assumes that this is a place of danger, malevolence lurking in every tumbler and decanter. Frank may loses his earnest honesty, and Flora may somehow be deflowered. Slade dismisses such concerns. His primary concern is his standard of living. Although a successful miller of flour, he launched the tavern as a more profitable enterprise, "thus materially advancing the

interests of Cedarville" as well as his own. Slade's wife, on the other hand, seems "both worried and fatigued."

The reader also meets Willy Hammond, a young man of a prominent family, and Harvey Green, his "tempter" whose "sinister countenance" was inscribed with "[u]nscrupulous selfishness." At the bar sits Joe Morgan, "a poor, broken-down inebriate, with the inward power of resistance gone." After spending his last few pennies on drink, Joe is retrieved by his daughter, Little Mary, for whom the narrator declares "Poor child! Darkly shadowed was the sky that bent gloomily over thy young life." Morgan worked for Slade at the mill but slipped into the life of a ragged drunkard after Slade opened the tavern. At his side remained Fanny, who has never "been any thing but a loving, forbearing, self-denying wife."

After a year, the narrator returns to the Sickle and Sheaf. Slade's flour mill is to be converted by Willy Hammond's father into a distillery. The moral threats to Frank and Flora have increased in the intervening year. Frank exhibits the heightened ruddiness of the tippler, while Flora's work exposes her to the familiar banter and sexual innuendo of such malicious characters as Harvey Green. During this "second" night, Slade and Morgan get into a ferocious argument, in which Morgan declares, "As if it were any more decent to sell rum than to drink it." This climactic scene continues,

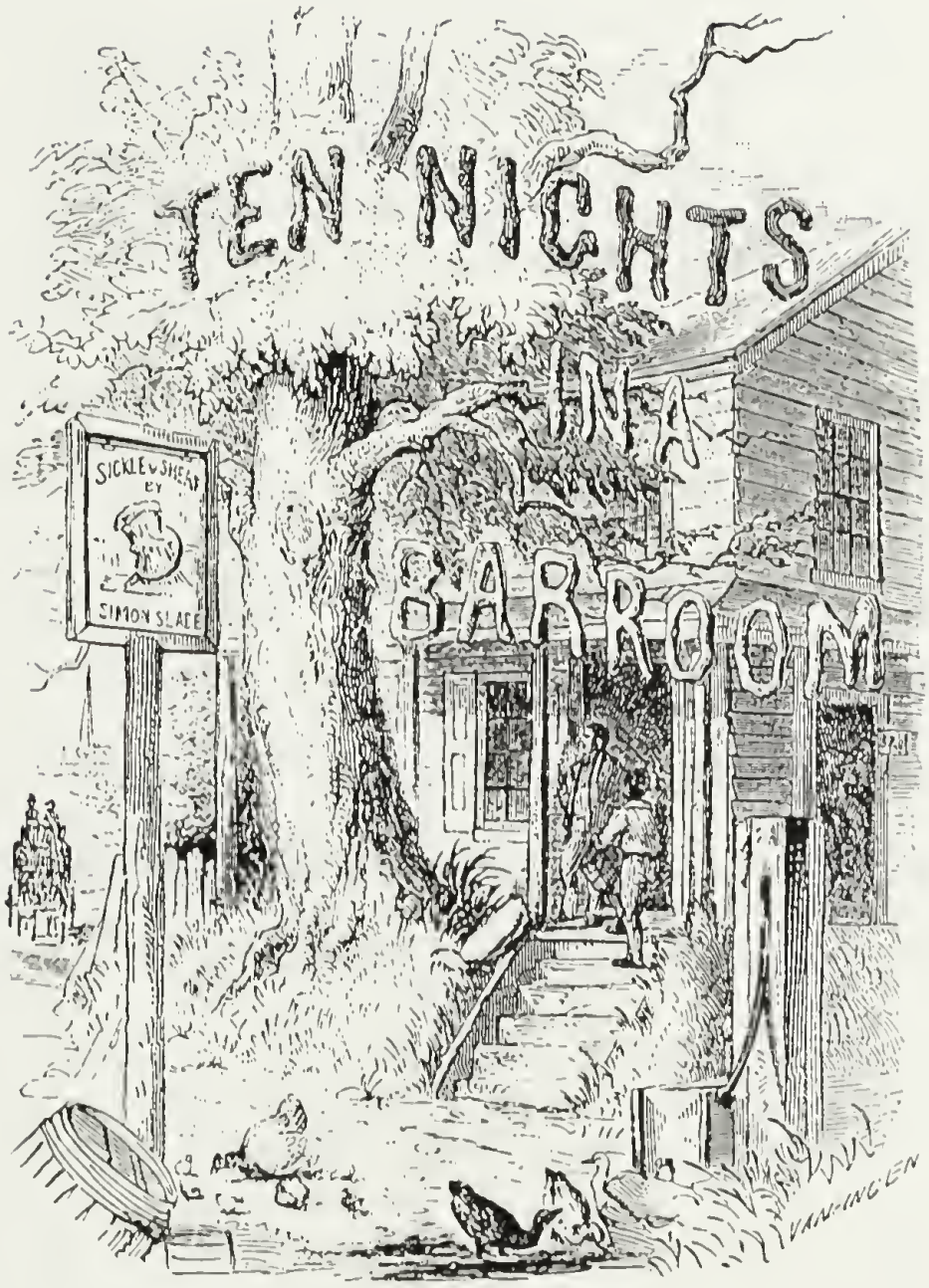

Figure 6: Welcome to the Sickle and Sheaf.[33]

> There was so much of biting contempt in the tones, as well as the words of the half intoxicated man, that Slade, who had himself been drinking rather more freely than usual, was angered beyond self-control. Catching up an empty glass from the counter, he hurled it with all his strength at the head of Joe Morgan. The missive just grazed one of his temples, and flew by on its dangerous course. The quick sharp cry of a child startled the air, followed by exclamations of alarm and horror from many voices.

Little Mary, in the doorway to once again retrieve her father from the scene of his degradation, lay unconscious on the floor. Carried home, she makes her father promise not to go out again until she gets well, then whispers in his ear, "I shall not get well father; I'm going to die." Before she dies, however, she shelters her father in her bed from the hallucinated monsters brought forth by his delirium tremens. Mary has become Joe's protector. She relates a dream in which Joe Morgan becomes "Mr. Morgan," the owner of "a store full of goods" that has replaced the Sickle and Sheaf. Immediately after securing from her father a pledge never again to drink, Mary dies.[34]

Five years intervene before the narrator's next visit to Cedarville. Slade was indicted for manslaughter, but an influential friend succeeded in having the indictment quashed. Slade is now "a rotund, coarse, red-faced man." The Sickle and Sheaf "had grown coarser in growing larger."

Two "greasy-looking Irish girls" work at the tavern, and an overpowering stench leaves the narrator with little appetite for his dinner.[35] Green, a professional gambler, ensnares young men as the thirst for alcohol makes them less capable of resisting his exciting enticements. As one Cedarville gentleman, in a common temperance cliche, notes, "our promising young men are being drawn into the whirling circles that narrow toward a vortex of ruin." The narrator sums up the effects of the Sickle and Sheaf upon the village:

> An eating cancer was on the community, and so far as the eye could mark its destructive progress, the ravages were fearful. That its roots were striking deep, and penetrating, concealed from view, in many unsuspected directions, there could be no doubt. What appeared on the surface was but a milder form of the disease, compared with its hidden, more vital, and more dangerous advances.

Willy Hammond, despite the efforts of his mother to save him, was especially harmed by the moral cancer metastasizing throughout the community. During an argument over a card game, Green stabs the young man, who dies in his mother's arms. She immediately dies from grief upon the corpse of her son. Green is arrested for murder but is killed by a besotted mob, who then turns its fury upon the Sickle and Sheaf and its proprietor, Simon Slade. In an act of frontier ruffianism, someone gouges out Slade's eye.

Figure 7: "Father, dear father. Come home with me now."[36]

Two years later, the narrator returns to the Sickle and Sheaf to witness a violent culmination that brings an end to both the tavern and the tavernkeeper. Slade's wife has long since been a resident of an insane asylum and is assisted by her now almost monastic daughter, Flora. The son, Frank, is a victim of "the work of moral deterioration" and a habitual inebriate. During an argument with his father, Frank kills him with a decanter. After a failed attempt at suicide, Frank is hauled off to the county jail. The narrator asks, "Does the reader need a word of comment of this fearful consummation? No: and we will offer none."

On the tenth night, ten years after the first, the townsmen of Cedarville come together and rationally decide to close down the Sickle and Sheaf. Joe Morgan, long sober and prosperous, argues, "Evil is strong, wily, fierce, and active in the pursuit of its ends. The young, the weak, and the innocent can no more resist its assaults, than the lamb can resist the wolf." As he boarded the stage from Cedarville, the narrator sees a man take an axe to the sign that advertised the tavern, "and just as the driver gave word to his horses, the false emblem which had invited so many to enter the way of destruction, fell crashing to the earth."[37]

By the conventions of temperance discourse, both the conversion of Joe Morgan and the destruction of the Sickle and Sheaf represented utopian alternatives to a degraded present. If, as Karl Mannheim asserted, utopias are profoundly delegitimizing, what was being delegitimized by Ten Nights in a Bar-room and its fictional account of an individual and a communal conversion to sobriety? How does one interpret this popular novel in a way that make it historically meaningful?[38] Jane Tompkins suggests that literary texts are "attempts to redefine the social order" and that readers obtain from texts ways "of ordering the world." What kind of new order was Arthur proffering in Ten Nights in a Bar-room? What did characters like Joe Morgan, Simon Slade, and Little Mary mean to antebellum American readers? How did this didactic, sentimental temperance novel operate in nineteenth-century American culture?[39] The historian needs to resuscitate a moribund cultural product.[40]

As author, Arthur usurped the minister's traditional role of interpreting and inculcating morality. As Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing admitted in 1841, "The press is a mightier power than the pulpit."[41] As a purveyor of a particular kind of print, the novelist attempted "to redefine the social order" by dictating that leisure be enjoyed at home. Arthur was no ascetic--he offered no "puritanical" rejection of all pleasure. Nor

was he a Social Darwinist who advocated unrestrained fulfillment through unlimited accumulation. His values were petty bourgeois. Arthur's characters craved middle-class respectability, but even the drive for a modicum of economic security was fraught with moral land mines. Little Mary's utopian vision for her father, seen during a dream, was a dry goods store. Her father's dystopian present was marked by alcohol, ragged clothes, and Simon Slade's spurious prosperity.

The novel redefined "true manliness" as owning a dry goods store. Traditionalists among antebellum working-class males would assert that masculinity required homosocial enjoyments as expressed through ritualistic treating and the sporting life. According to T.S. Arthur and other middle-class temperance advocates, drink made men "bestial," "sensual," and "selfish." Women, as wives, daughters, and mothers, suffered as a direct result. Little Mary suffered, but her pain was ultimately Christ-like and redemptive, parallel to the "beautiful death" of Little Eva in Uncle Tom's Cabin. Mary's mother, whose selfless loyalty to her fallen husband was ultimately rewarded with his conversion, achieves victory through victimhood. The victim had profoundly powerful moral authority, resting on a spiritual plane. Joe Morgan's redemption required that he stay at home at night, and with Little Mary's cleansing death, he did. In antebellum

American popular literature, the feminine home became the vehicle for middle-class millennial aspirations. That it did suggests not a "secularization" of culture but rather a diffusion of religious meaning. Ten Nights sacralized the American home, and Joe Morgan was saved by his domestication.[42]

Simon Slade, whose tavern Ten Nights demonized, was irredeemable because he is maddened not just by drink but also by greed. Slade's greed would send an entire community to a violent, anarchic netherworld of cutthroats and scam artists. Slade strove for respectability and, like an upstanding member of the community, believed in the merits of economic development. But the Sickle and Sheaf provided no safe passage through the Market Revolution. At the other side of an attempt at economic development lay the mayhem of frontier murder, dissipation, and insanity. Slade's unrestrained efforts to climb the social ladder brought both him and his family to destruction. His desire for wealth, unencumbered by morality and effective feminine influences, was as addictive and vile as his patrons' thirst for rum.

Historian Jackson Lears explains the antebellum obsession with transformations of identity in terms of economic unease over periodic downturns and the unreliability of paper money. The notion of magical self-transformation, long a feature of "animistic modes of

thought," itself became a marketable commodity. T.S. Arthur was a particularly adept purveyor of images of self-transformation. Like the evangelical revival and the medicine show, the temperance novel offered a world of second chances. People not only reformed but also re-formed. In Cedarville, stability was elusive but ultimately attained through temperance principles. Morgan became a man; he was no longer torn apart by the monster. According to Lears, the bourgeoisie "created an ideal of unified, controlled, sincere selfhood--a bourgeois self--as a counterweight to the centrifugal tendencies unleashed by market exchange." Ten Nights in a Bar-room outlined the creation of that self.[43]

The novel offered more. Because the plot creates a clear parallel between Joe Morgan and Cedarville, between body and body politic, individual goodness and social goodness are achieved in the same way. Both self and community strive for stability, a stability undermined by the intertwined economic and moral dangers of the antebellum era. In the grip of moral monsters, Cedarville is itself a drunkard, hurtling toward destruction and chaos. The town is like a storm-tossed ship, utterly impotent in the face of such malevolent forces. Salvation comes by what Joseph Gusfield terms "benevolent repression," the cleansing of the community through prohibition. But a Maine Law is enacted only after

apocalyptic fires engulfed Cedarville, just as intense suffering cleansed Joe Morgan. Conversion follows mayhem.[44]

Joe was at heart a good man. In antebellum America, Demon Rum was the ultimate trickster, the quintessential confidence man. There could be no rational argument with the forces of the rum power conspiracy. A Manichean struggle brooked no compromise. Drunkenness was a direct attack on the unified male self, a Jekyll-and-Hyde nightmare of the most fearful sort. In a pre-Freudian world devoid of id, ego, and superego, a unitary self became a refuge from a dangerously unstable world, especially the dangers and uncertainties of market exchange. The Sickle and Sheaf was evil because it introduced into Cedarville the means by which individual men would be torn asunder and destroyed. Alcohol itself held a magical, diabolical, magnetic attraction--men did not seek it from genetic predisposition or some other medical reason. It actively sought them with demonic power.[45] Evil, here defined as bifurcated selfhood, entered the community through market relations, the buying and selling of drink. The temperance novel was thus a powerful indictment of illegitimate forms of capitalism and especially the greed of traffickers in "sin."

In Ten Nights, as in so much antebellum melodrama, while men contested with evil, women suffered. In domestic fiction, women, often through the flaws of the men in their

families, were especially vulnerable to wasting diseases. The consumptive female became a stock character in nineteenth-century popular fiction, and her appeal, according to Roy Porter, suggests that tuberculosis acted as a metaphor for the cultural, intellectual, and moral wasting that accompanied the consumption of goods.[46]

The nineteenth-century literary focus on tuberculosis in women may have had a male equivalent. The image of the reeling drunkard parallels concerns with a society and an economy out of control. For single men left adrift by social and geographical mobility, the excessive excitement of drink rendered their systems debilitated and enervated. Similarly, the stimulation of rapid economic expansion might leave society weakened and prey to social diseases like crime, prostitution, and penury.

Alcoholism as understood today did not exist in antebellum America. A John Gough or Frank Slade became drunkards after being "seduced" by "a deluding Syren" and were ruined by the innate evil of alcohol itself. Evil entered the community because of the purveyor's greed. Cheever's demons had returned. Without Simon Slade's unrestrained and insatiable greed, Cedarville would have remained tranquil and contented. Other men might similarly surrender to the love of lucre and thereby induce the young to "fall." No longer under the stern moral guidance of patriarchal guardians, a young man could easily fall prey

to a spectacularly dangerous "consumer good," readily available in the thriving commercial cities of antebellum America. Demon Rum was not simply evil. It was an evil commodity.

Temperance, as exemplified by Ten Nights in a Barroom, helped make possible the growth of modern consumerism even as it condemned the excesses of unrestrained capitalism. At first glance, the temperance movement and consumer culture seem contradictory. Temperance is usually associated with Victorian repression. The movement certainly rejected the classical hedonistic practices of Bacchanalian revelry, and the modern pleasures of consumption are usually considered hedonistic. But temperance exalted one type of hedonistic excess, the pleasures of projected emotion. That novels were pleasurable made them morally suspect. Reading a novel is an exercise in the manipulation of emotion and imagination, a helpful skill if one is to attach pleasurable meanings to consumer goods. The pleasure comes from emotional response, not direct sensation as in classical hedonism. Temperance writers exploited the enshrinement of emotion by evangelical Protestantism, repackaged it, and sold it as books. Temperance themes, morally safe, were particularly effective tools in making novels legitimate objects to buy, own, and pine over.[47]

Novels taught readers how to behave. For antebellum Americans passing through the Market Revolution, the lessons of generations past seemed increasingly inappropriate. Didactic writers like T.S. Arthur made livings dispensing new truths to help the young make their way through this transformed and uncertain world. Merged with social instability was the theological instability of the era. The "democratization of American Christianity" made theology not the inherited preserve of an educated elite but rather something to be sold to an audience. Rejecting the predestination of their Puritan forbearers, Americans in the antebellum North gave credence to a veritable cornucopia of theological systems.[48] With the banishment of Calvinistic gloom and doom came a profound dilemma about the nature of evil. According to vociferous advocates of perfectionism like Charles Grandison Finney, every individual could be saved through free acts of goodness. Given such theological optimism, what was evil? The answer of T.S. Arthur was clear--it was drink.

The monster loosened men's self-control and harmed the innocent. Alcohol carried evil by its very nature; the liquid corresponded to an immoral spiritual force intent on bringing mischief into the world. Significantly, in Ten Nights, both Little Mary and Frank Slade are killed by containers used to dispense alcohol. Those containers, the tumbler and the decanter, made evil manifest in the world,

and the men who used them in violence were the unfree pawns of a malevolent force.

T.S. Arthur was a prominent member of the Swedenborgian Church in Philadelphia. He popularized the views of Immanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century Swedish mystic who believed the material world "corresponds" to the spiritual realm.[49] This theological perspective appealed to many antebellum reformers, Ralph Waldo Emerson for example. Since good and evil have their physical manifestations, perfection could be attained by ridding the world of the various embodiments of evil. The bottle of the drunkard and the chains of the slave conducted evil into the world. Bordering on a Manichean outlook, the temperance of T.S. Arthur rejected the Augustinian definition of evil as a negation. It would not be a great leap for a reader to believe that goodness was also active in the world and made manifest by the temperance novel.[50]

The world of Ten Nights was textual, not real in any conventional sense. What was real was a printer using stereotype plates to produce innumerable copies of text, a bookbinder collecting those pages inside a machine-produced binding of apparent luxury and artisanal skill, a bookseller exchanging the book for seventy-five cents, a reader sitting in an armchair poring over its pages, and a volume gathering dust on a shelf. How did the textual

world of Ten Nights connect to the "real" world of production, exchange, and consumption? How were Arthur's writings received by his many readers?

Arthur offered his own understanding of reception in one of his earlier stories written for Godey's, entitled "That Vile Book." The story encapsulated the fetishism surrounding book ownership among the emerging American middle class. For the protagonist, the ideal book is "not only beautiful without, but, like a casket, contains precious jewels within." The woman loans the books to "a narrow-minded, sectarian bigot" who figures to discern the character and religious affiliation of the book's owner. Finding "vile and miserable heresy" rather than "precious truth," the sectarian exclaims, "Why this book is enough to corrupt a whole community.. . .The floodgates of infidelity might just as well be opened at once." She is outraged that the book's owner "should not only imbibe such horrible doctrines, but present them to others in the hope of corrupting them likewise." Like a copy editor gone mad, she defaces the book with scrawled condemnations in the margins and even rips out parts of several pages. The book, a cherished gift from a sister in England, is "rendered utterly valueless." The owner is appalled and reduced to tears. For Arthur, the "sectarian" is guilty of an unforgivable crime. Clerical debates over specific religious tenets are irrelevant in this milieu. What

matters is the meanings of the little volume as a gift from a loved one and the personal relationship between the author and the reader. The "sectarian" is shown to be lacking in any sense of propriety and respectability. With the story, Arthur cultivates among his readers a faith in the sanctity of books and places them at the very center of middle-class existence.[51]

His sentiments seemed to resonate with middle-class readers. Godey's in 1853 described Arthur as "a good man":

> He puts no idea upon paper, he adopts no precept, he advocates no maxim, he favors no theory that may not safely be connected with the highest and purest interest of society.[52]

Earlier, in 1844, Godey's had published a "sketch" of Arthur, including a full-page etching of his almost boyish likeness. Lauding Arthur as a moral proselytizer, Godey's emphasized his ability to spread the gospel of domesticity. The magazine did not mention his temperance themes even though he had already published Six Nights with the Washingtonians. Instead, Godey's alluded to "a number of nouvelettes which were published in the cheap form and diffused over every part of the country, greatly to the advantage of social happiness and the cultivation of elevated moral feeling in the people." The article concluded, "It is fortunate that, in the present instance, the feelings appealed to are the best which belong to our nature, and the popular favorite is one who

will never abuse his advantages to the detriment of human virtue and happiness."[53]

Godey's would never have suggested that Arthur's popularity may have rested on prurient interest, on the conventions of what Karen Haltunnen calls "the pornography of pain" and David Reynolds calls "immoral reform." Both Godey's and Arthur himself carefully cultivated the image of moral guardian. Despite the violence and voyeuristic excesses of much of Arthur's fiction, his moral message made him a "safe" writer, especially for middle-class women. Reviews often described Arthur's stories as "unexceptionable."

Competitors in the literary marketplace could be less kind. For example, Poe, who probably resented Arthur's commercial success the way Hawthorne resented the popularity of "the damn'd scribbling mob," wrote in "A Chapter on Autography" for Graham's Magazine in 1841:

> Mr. ARTHUR is not without a rich talent for description of scenes in low life, but is uneducated, and too fond of mere vulgarities to please a refined taste. . . .His hand is common-place clerk's hand, such as we might expect him to write. The signature is much better than the general MS.[54]

Poe, who benefited from Arthur's assistance in getting some of his stories published, simply saw Arthur as a hack.[55]

On the publication of Ten Nights, Godey's offered more ebullient praise for T.S. Arthur. The "practical

teachings" of Arthur's many works "have restored so many erring hearts and wandering footsteps to the sanctities and comforts of desecrated and deserted homes." According to the editor of Godey's, Sarah Josepha Hale, the novel was "written in the author's best vein" and "abounds in vivid portraiture and scenes of powerful and touching interest." Hale was sure a temperance novel by Arthur while the controversy over Maine Laws roared would "create a sensation." Hale offered the prediction that Ten Nights would be a best-seller, with six thousand copies of the book ordered within two weeks of its announcement, even before it had gone to press. If sales failed to reach fifty thousand within six months, wrote Hale, "we shall be very much mistaken." Two months later, she exclaimed what a "wonderful. . .sale there is for every work emanating from the pen of this gifted author. The sale of the last of his productions has far exceeded the most sanguine hopes of the publisher." Meanwhile, Godey's acted as an agent for Arthur's books, selling sixteen of his titles by mail, including Ten Nights for seventy-five cents. The following year, Godey's was also offering combined subscriptions to The Lady's Book and Arthur's own domestic literary magazine.[56]

Ten Nights enjoyed hearty sales, but according to Frank Luther Mott, assertions that the book enjoyed sales approaching those of Uncle Tom's Cabin were

Figure 8: Timothy Shay Arthur--safe visitor to the homes of respectable women.[57]

"exaggerations." Still, Mott lists the novel as one of the top thirty-two sellers of the 1850s, with at least 225,000 copies sold by the end of the decade. Sales during the 1850s were certainly aided by the "puffing" of Godey's. Many more were sold after the Civil War; cheap editions proliferated after the copyright expired in the 1890s.[58]

Hale found it a "pleasure to publish anything favorable to this just man," adding that she had "never seen anything unfavorable to him yet in print." Godey's published excerpts from various positive reviews of Ten Nights. For example, the Germantown Telegraph called Arthur "one of the most successful writers in the United States" and asserted that

> in every one of the numerous productions emanating from his pen, there is a vein of elevating, refreshing thought running through it, that fastens itself upon the heart of the reader, producing an impression which, in many instances has no doubt been the groundwork of many a permanent ennobling moral structure.[59]

Godey's was not always so exuberant in its reviews of temperance fiction. On a book entitled Fashionable Dissipation by Metta V. Fuller, Hale wrote, also in 1854,

> There is but little entertainment to be found in the records of vice and intemperance, and but little instruction to be drawn from the details of dissipation, whether it be fashionable or unfashionable.. . .[S]ome of our female writers--women of literary reputations, of refined sentiments and delicate nerves--are

> employing their talents in describing minutely the scenes of drunkenness which are said to occur at public hotels.

Even though the book was written to inculcate morality, it was morally suspect. Would it be "safe," asked Hale, for a mother to show a daughter places of sin even if the intentions were good. "Would not the experiment be dangerous, we ask, and the good effect doubtful, to say the least?"[60] Godey's condemned Fuller but lauded Arthur for exactly the same type of writing. The gender of the writer may have played a part, but the more likely reason was that Arthur was an established Godey's "product" while Fuller was not.

Arthur's writings explained the moral implications of the new market economy for a large audience of young men and women, many of whom lacked effective parental guidance. Between Arthur's readers and their parents lay a gaping generational divide, and consumers of domestic literature replaced parents with books. Alongside the economic prosperity of the antebellum decades came unprecedented instability, both in terms of economic fluctuations and the uncertainty of identity itself. According to prescriptive literature like that of Arthur, only a consciously refashioned identity could cope with the vagaries of social and economic change.

Arthur gave lessons in the cultivation of character. His fiction explored the self as it was assaulted by invisible influences. Both the magnetic pull of Demon Rum and the invisible hand of market relations merged material and spiritual forces. For Arthur, influences that eroded spiritual health impacted on one's financial well-being. Even unrestrained greed, a character flaw, would ultimately result in penury--of self, family, and community. The most inward questions of moral essence thus had enormous social consequences. Books became active agents for moral improvement.

Arthur and temperance writers like him presented the book as the antithesis of alcohol. The temperance novel was a talisman against Demon Rum. Illustrations accompanying temperance fiction often represented the miracle of temperance conversion in terms of material possessions, the most important of which were books. Prior to an acceptance of temperance principles, the husband was violent, clothed in tattered rags, and clutching--and in the clutches of--a bottle, glass, or cask. With temperance comes a new life. The man, now placid and dressed respectably, pours over the pages of a book. Contentment replaces fear on the faces of his wife and children.

Books were a new kind of product. The illusion that the author was speaking directly and privately with the

reader was carefully cultivated by the conventions of sentimental fiction. Thus, books maintained an aura of marketlessness even as they were more intensely marketed. In fact, books were marketed by the aura of marketlessness. The democratization of reading did not come about solely through cheapness, availability, and mass production. Resistance to printed works other than the Bible needed to be overcome, and the re-creation of feelings of community through books was a powerful tool in that effort.

For middling readers, books seemed to make possible self-actualization without dependence. Liberating rather than confining, encouraging rather than disheartening, books became the perfect teacher and parent for the new American middle class, uneasy about, yet materially benefitting from market forces. As a journal for publishers and booksellers articulated in 1855,

> BOOKS.--A learned writer says of books: --They are masters who instruct us without rods or ferules, without words of anger, without bread or money. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if you seek them, they do not hide; if you blunder, they do not scold; if you are ignorant, they do not laugh at you. Few things are more entertaining than to pore over a book-stall.[61]

The illusion of marketlessness was complete.

The novel was a commodity that denied its own commodification. It was consumed in the privacy of one's own home long after an exchange of money had been made. It

pretended to be a friend. A reform novel asked only to do good, not to be a good. But in the years prior to the Civil War, the book was an increasingly popular commodity, and temperance fed that hidden commodification.

By the time Ten Nights was published, the American book trade was stable and prosperous. The price wars of the early 1840s had destabilized the publishing industry, but the efforts of the cheap press opened a huge and relatively unexploited market for the established firms. The period between 1845 and 1857 has been called "the greatest boom the book business had ever witnessed." A new cohort of readers had been introduced to fiction in the days of the cheap press. Along with the new nationalistic appetite for American authors, the increasing popularity of fiction reading made Arthur especially successful. With the middle-class home as the target of publishers in the 1850s, Arthur was well-positioned to thrive. He was particularly adept at maintaining control of the financial benefits from his writing. For example, he personally held the copyright to Ten Nights and initially offered the novel through three separate publishers.[62]

Arthur's temperance fiction operated in a culture in which much of life was being commodified. Its appeal rested on how it dealt with the issues raised by that process. Within works of temperance fiction were vigorous debates on the legitimacy of leisure, production,

Figure 9: The home of the drunkard.

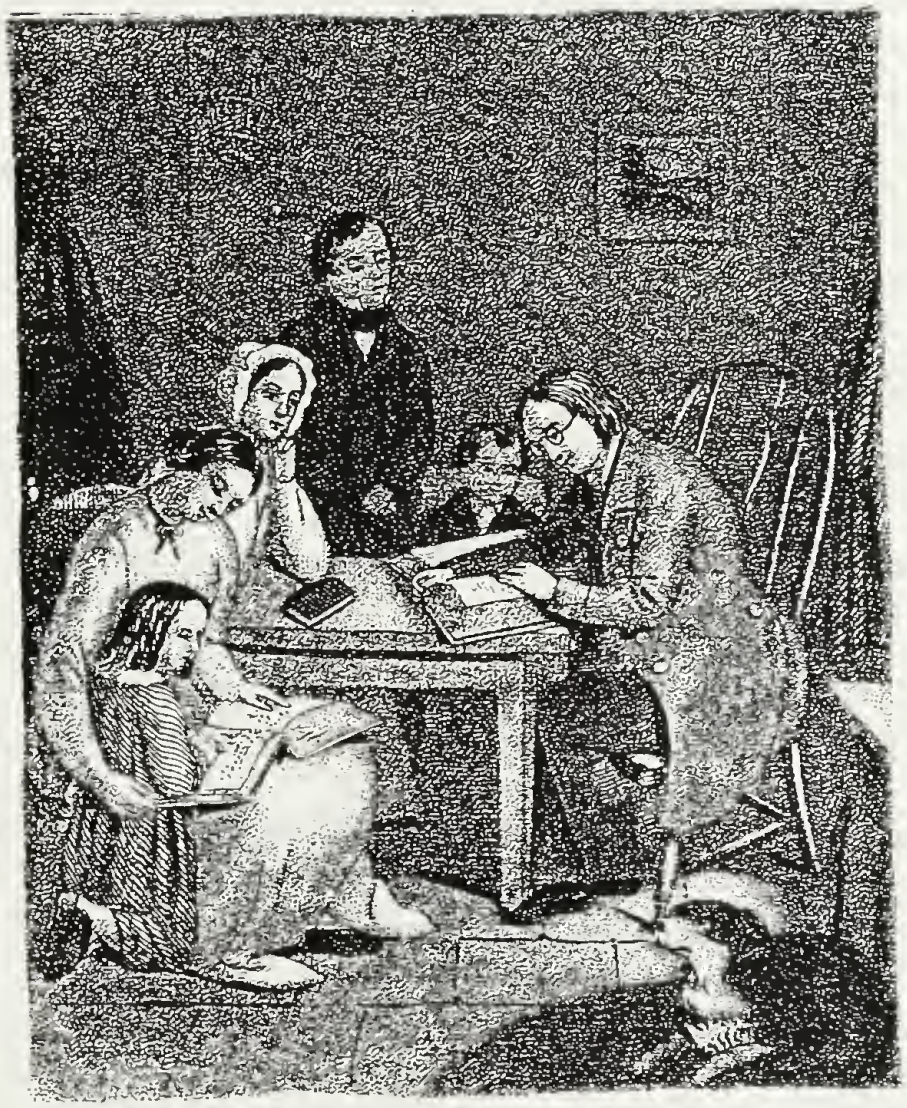

Figure 10: "The Home Circle" of the temperate reader.[63]

consumption, public spaces, and social relationships. In such works, alcohol itself became part of those debates. A storehouse of semiotic messages, Demon Rum was truly loaded with meaning, and the manner in which fictionalized accounts of drinking incorporated those messages increased the commercial viability of temperance literature.[64]

During the antebellum temperance movement, Americans published not just their first "high" literature--later called the American Renaissance--but also their first flood of middlebrow books. After the Civil War, publishing and the older temperance movement fused. In 1865, the American Temperance Union became the National Temperance Society and Publication House and resembled a publishing firm more than a moral reform society. During the 1840s and 1850s, the temperance movement's emphasis on reading was meant to displace alcohol with print. Books, signifiers of respectability, would subsume drinks, markers of degradation. For some Americans, the ploy was successful. The consumption of spirits fell as the consumption of books exploded. As that happened, temperance accelerated the commodification of culture. Arthur and others like him railed against the trickster that was Demon Rum. Ultimately, Timothy Shay Arthur, who so carefully and craftily cultivated the illusion of literary marketlessness, was the more successful businessman.

The confusing cup or the illuminating volume, the deluding siren or the goddess of truth, T.S. Arthur told the consumer to choose. The "real" drunkard of the street, the man whom the Washingtonians sought to save, disappeared in a flurry of print as imaginary brethren like Joe Morgan struggled onward into bourgeois respectability. The conflation between the literary drunkard and the urban underworld became so pronounced that William Sanger could cite as evidence for the link between prostitution and the rum trade a passage from a temperance novel.[65] Books became a sign of an increasing cultural gulf between drinkers and non-drinkers, a chasm that widened as new waves of imbibing immigrants washed upon American shores.

Notes

1. T.S. Arthur, Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, and What I Saw There, ed. by Donald A. Koch (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1964): 55-56.

2. American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette, September 29, 1855. The banquet is discussed in Ronald J. Zboray, "Antebellum Reading and the Ironies of Technological Innovation," American Quarterly 40 (March 1988): 65-82. Zboray examines the publishers whose self-image embodied traditional relationships but whose technological innovations radically transformed the printing trade. Similarly, Arthur nostalgically harkens back to a community of letters while taking part in a restructuring and commercialization of literary production.

3. Arthur's Home Magazine, November 1855. Also see Warren Graham French, "Timothy Shay Arthur Views His Times," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1954: 28.

4. David S. Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988).

5. One dissertation credits Arthur as a founder of genre termed the "marketplace romance" and places him at the center of a study of the literary implications of anxieties over political economy and identity. See Francis Timothy Ruppel, "Marketplace Romances: Elusive Ambitions in the Fiction of T.S. Arthur, Edgar Allan Poe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne," Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland College Park, 1997.

6. "The Poet's Lot," Arthur's Magazine, January 1844.

7. T.S. Arthur, "Brief Autobiography," The Lights and Shadows of Real Life (Boston: L.P. Crown & Co., 1853): 5. The outline of his life is suspiciously similar to that presented in Godey's Lady's Book in 1844, suggesting that he also wrote the 1844 "Sketch," as well as an example of his frequent recycling of written material. On the "projective idealizations, creations of a writerly `voice' speaking to in an imagined capacity, a `supposed person' addressing an equally supposed audience" in antebellum America, see R. Jackson Wilson, Figures of Speech: American Writers and the Literary Marketplace, from Benjamin Franklin to Emily Dickinson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), quote from p.14. Also, on the particular demands on female writers, caught in their contradictory role as public advocates of the private

sphere, see Mary Kelley, Private Women, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

8. Arthur, "Brief Autobiography,": 7-8. For more on Arthur's early life, see French, "Timothy Shay Arthur Views His Times,": 3-5, and Donald A. Koch, introduction to Arthur, Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, and What I Saw There: xii-xviii. On how Edgar Allan Poe may have been touched by the conventions of dark temperance, see David Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance, and Reynolds, "Black Cats and Delirium Tremens: Temperance and the American Renaissance," in Reynolds and Debra J. Rosenthal,eds., The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997): 32-35. For a somewhat different interpretation of the relationship between temperance, especially Arthur's view that evil resides in drink itself rather than in the individual, and Poe's writings, see T.J. Matheson, "Poe's 'The Black Cat' as a Critique of Temperance Literature," Mosaic 19 (Summer 1986): 69-81.

9. T.S. Arthur, "The Orphan," The Baltimore Literary Monument, November 1838. French, "Timothy Shay Arthur Views His Times,": 85, considers "The Orphan" as the first condemnation of the sale of alcohol in his writings.

10. John H. Hewitt, Shadows on the Wall, or Glimpses of the Past (Baltimore: Turnbull Brothers, 1877): 56.

11. Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930): 499. Mott called Arthur "one of the most prolific authors in the history of American literature."

12. Arthur, "Brief Autobiography,": 9.

13. "Only three men before the Civil War enjoyed widespread success with women--Timothy Shay Arthur, Nathaniel P. Willis, and George Mitchell," writes Nina Baym, Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978): 13.

14. French, "Timothy Shay Views His Times,": 88.

15. Warren G. French, "Timothy Shay Arthur: Pioneer Business Novelist," American Quarterly 10 (Spring 1958): 55-65.

16. T.S. Arthur, Agnes, or The Possessed. A Revelation of Mesmerism (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson,

1848). T.S. Arthur, Riches Have Wings: or, A Tale for the Rich and Poor (New York: Charles Scribner, 1851) (American Fiction Reprint Series, Books for Libraries Series, Freeport, New York, 1970), quote from p.29.

17. Karen Haltunnen uses a number of these advice books in Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

18. Frank Luther Mott, Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947): 319. Mott places Six Nights among the second tier of bestsellers during the 1840s. Preface to T.S. Arthur, Six Nights with the Washingtonians (Philadelphia: L.A. Godey and Morton McMichael, 1842). Also see note "To the Reader," in a twenty-five-cent edition of Six Nights in which the author is described as writing "without any aim at artificial effect, but simply with a view to let truth and nature speak forth in their legitimate power and pathos." T.S. Arthur, Six Nights with the Washingtonians: A Series of Temperance Tales (Philadelphia: R.G. Berford, 1843).

19. For a very different picture of the tavernkeeper, see the diary of William Otter. His journal wonderfully shows the permeability between work and play--and the role of alcohol in both spheres--during the Early Republic. William Otter, History of My Own Times, ed. by Richard B. Stott (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

20. T.S. Arthur, Six Nights with the Washingtonians (1842).

21. Godey's Lady's Book, January 1843 and June 1842. Brother Jonathan, April 30, 1842.

22. James J. Barnes, Authors, Publishers and Politicians: The Quest for an Anglo-American Copyright Agreement 1815-1854 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974): 1-29. John Tebbel, Between Covers: The Rise and Transformation of Book Publishing in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987): 64-76.

23. The New World, August 13, 1843.

24. Ibid., August 6, 1842.

25. Boston Recorder, July 11, 1844. Christian Secretary, August 19, 1842.

26. Ibid., December 31, 1842.

27. William Charvat, Literary Publishing in America, 1790-1850 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959): 17-37.

28. Arthur's Ladies Magazine, January 1845.

29. Arthur's Home Magazine, December 1852, September 1852, November 1852.

30. The term "overt institutionalism" to describe Arthur's support for the Maine Law in Ten Nights is from Francis Lauricella, Jr., "The Devil in Drink: Swedenborgianism in T.S. Arthur's Ten Nights in a Bar-room (1854)," Perspectives in American History 12 (1979): 377.

31. Karen Haltunnen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," American Historical Review, vol.100 (April 1995): 303-334.

32. With the separation of drink and labor during the antebellum period, the consumption of alcohol was increasingly associated with nocturnal pleasures, a relationship that exists to this day. As sociologist Joseph Gusfield writes, alcohol in America consistently "exists as a sign. Already segregated and separated from work, it is an index to the appearance of a nighttime attitude." A great deal of antebellum reform literature sought to reveal the hidden activities of the night. On the cultural tendency to equate night, leisure, and alcohol, see Joseph Gusfield, Contested Meanings: The Construction of Alcohol Problems (Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996): 57-74.

33. T.S. Arthur, Ten Nights in a Bar-room: frontispiece.

34. Indicative of the disdain some historians have held for temperance novels, one history of the role of women in the temperance movement has Joe die along with Mary in Ten Nights in a Bar-room. Had he died, the entire meaning of the novel changes from one of purging transformation through feminine sacrifice to the inevitable death of drunkards. See Barbara Leslie Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981): 105-6.

35. Arthur was at times a virulent nativist. In Arthur's Home Magazine, November 1853, for example, he wrote, "We offer Europeans an asylum, and they turn our country into a common sewer."

36. Ibid.

37. The conclusion encapsulates Frederic Jameson's view of mass culture and modernism working together to "repress" social problems. According to Jameson, mass culture compensated for the costs of modernity by providing ". . .imaginary resolutions and by the projection of an optical illusion of social harmony." Temperance novels such as Ten Nights in a Bar-room, coming at the birth of modernity, created a utopian space for the restoration of community by destroying the evil of alcoholic drink, albeit at a fearful cost. Frederic Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," Social Text 1 (Winter 1979): 141.

38. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1936): 192-3.

39. Jane Tompkins, Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987): xiii-xvi, 123.

40. Herbert Ross Brown wrote that "the temperance novel is dead, and, unlike John Barleycorn, whose demise they so confidently anticipated, these doubly dry pages are without that lusty gentleman's surprising power of resurrection." The Sentimental Novel in America 1789-1860 (Durham: North Carolina Press, 1940): 240.

41. William Ellery Channing, "The Present Age," in The Works of William Ellery Channing (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1903) 6: 162.

42. On an interpretation of Uncle Tom's Cabin that mirrors this view of Ten Nights, see Tompkins: 122-146.

43. Jackson Lears, Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America (New York: BasicBooks, 1994): 54-75.

44. Gusfield, Contested Meanings: 75-100.

45. A theory of addiction was discernible as early as the writings on alcohol by Benjamin Rush, but the antebellum understanding of addiction was in one respect very different from the thoroughly medicalized modern one. Temperance advocates understood addiction as originating in alcohol itself rather than in some genetic predisposition in the individual. The drink and drinker were thus mutually attractive. See Harry Gene Levine, "The Discovery of Addiction: Changing Concepts of Habitual Drunkenness in America," Journal of Studies on Alcohol 39 (1978): 159. On

the impact of the market revolution on how Americans rejected Calvinist dogma and changed their thinking on the relationship between self and evil, see Andrew Delbanco, The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995).

46. Roy Porter, "Consumption: Disease of the Consumer Society," in John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds. Consumption and the World of Goods (New York: Routledge, 1993): 58-81. Stephen Nissenbaum, Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health Reform (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

47. Colin Campbell links the creation of modern consumerism with a "romantic ethic" by which material goods acquired almost mystical powers of reverence and transcendence. Campbell argues that "materialism" of the culture of consumption is ironically deeply anti-materialist, that what counts to a consumer is not the good itself but rather symbolically loaded meanings attached to a good. Colin Campbell, The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

48. See, for example, Nathan Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New York: Yale University Press, 1989) and R. Laurence Moore, Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

49. For a detailed exposition on the relationship of Swedenborgian and Ten Nights, see Lauricella. In Arthur's Baltimore Literary Monument for February 1839 appeared an article entitled "Swedenborg" which included "propriety of behavior" and social usefulness as among the mystic's tenets.

50. Lauricella.

51. T.S. Arthur, "That Vile Book; or, By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them," Godey's Lady's Book, October 1842. Historians have recently explored the importance of books as gifts in maintaining social bonds among antebellum Americans. See, for example, Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, "Books, Reading, and the World of Goods," American Quarterly 48 (December 1996):595-598; and Stephen Nissenbaum, The Battle for Christmas (New York: Vintage Books, 1996): 140-50.

52. Godey's Lady's Book, March 1853; quoted in Nina Baym, Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984): 193.

53. Ibid.

54. Graham's Magazine, December 1841.

55. Koch: xxv-xxxi.

56. Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book, August 1854.

57. Godey's Lady's Book, November 1844.

58. Mott, Golden Multitudes: 129-130, 308. In the Dictionary of American Biography, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928) 1: 378, the sales for Ten Nights during the 1850s is described as second only to Uncle Tom's Cabin.

59. Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book, November 1854.

60. Ibid., September 1854.

61. American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette, November 10, 1855.

62. Tebbel: 71. Mott, Golden Multitudes: 122, 129. Barnes: 29.

63. T.S. Arthur, Golden Grains from Life's Harvest Field (Philadelphia: J.W. Bradley, 1859): frontispiece.

64. In its ability to absorb, organize, and reorganize various meaning-laden social anxieties, the discursive "alcohol" is similar to Jameson's readings of the novel Moby Dick and the film "Jaws." Of course, in terms of its commercial successes, Ten Nights in a Bar-room more closely parallels the latter than the former.

65. Sanger, whose book is filled with statistical analysis and at least the appearance of scientific rigor, quotes the novel Mary Barton by a Mrs. Gaskell (London: 1848) to illustrate the connection between drinking and prostitution: "`If I go without food and without shelter, I must have my dram. Oh! what awful nights I have had in prison for want of it.' She glared round with terrifies eyes as if dreading to see some supernatural creature near her." William W. Sanger, The History of Prostitution (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859): 542-3.

CHAPTER 8

THE DISENTHRALLED: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON TEMPERANCE CULTURE, PROHIBITION POLITICS, AND AMERICAN DEMONS

"Rum did that."
Neal Dow

On June 2, 1855, Mayor Neal Dow, known throughout the United States as the author the Maine Law, ordered the militia to fire upon a crowd of laborers and seamen protesting the state's prohibition on the sale of alcohol, the mainstay of their leisure. John Robbins of Deer Isle was killed and many others wounded.[1] Robbins was part of a crowd attempting to break into a storeroom in Portland's City Hall. Within that storeroom was the alcohol reserved for the legal medicinal and industrial uses designated by Dow's own legislation. The crowd apparently wanted to pour the city's liquor into the streets, a symbolic act usually reserved for temperance advocates but here used to protest the "Father of Prohibition." With the "Rum Riot," as the events on June 2 were called, the apocalyptic violence of Ten Nights in a Bar-room seemed to become real. In Portland, however, the zealous assault on Demon Rum, not drink itself, fostered the tumult. What was the mayor thinking?

Neal Dow was thinking about freedom. Mainstream reformers welcomed the Maine Law of 1851 as a legitimate extension of state authority to prevent the self-degradation of some of its citizens. If some drinkers chose their shackles, if some purveyors profited from the trade in chains, the machinery of government had to intervene. The message of temperance redemption was out, but the dry millennium remained beyond the horizon. The rum power conspiracy had proven resilient to moral appeals. Frustrated reformers turned to the state. At a banquet in 1852, Horace Mann toasted Dow as "the moral Columbus," the discoverer of a route to a new and better world. The same year, John Marsh published a pamphlet with the laudatory title The Napoleon of Temperance. Marsh presciently described how Dow's Maine Law dealt "with the rum traffic as Napoleon did with the mob at Paris, round-shot and grape and no ammunition wasted."[2] The Maine Law would finally annihilate the demons from American society.

Unfortunately for John Robbins, Dow saw the battle in apocalyptic terms. After the violent events, Dow reported,

> If that infuriated mob had accomplished their first object, they would have become mad on the liquors of the Agency, then setting fire to the remainder would have destroyed the City Hall, for that purpose was avowed--then, none but God can know how far their passions would have driven them. I regarded it as the duty of the authorities to uphold the majesty of law, and to suppress at any hazard, the

> ferocious mob which sought to overthrow law and order, and to let loose upon us all the horrors of anarchy and riot.[3]

According to Dow, his order to fire upon the crowd narrowly averted a nightmarish revolution fueled by alcoholic drink. Besotted passions threatened the freedom of Americans.

Dow acted on the ideas advanced by the antebellum temperance movement. Like Cheever, he battled the demons of greed and appetite. Unlike Cheever, he was armed with muskets and the law rather than words. And that made all the difference. Prohibition on the state level was popular throughout the Northeast and Midwest in the 1850s, and most northern states followed Maine's example. For Dow, the symbolic leader of the movement to outlaw alcohol, prohibition formalized the achievements of the temperance movement by codifying its moral dictates. The Maine Law suppressed the urban amusements of traditionalist working-class men through what Joseph Gusfield calls "benevolent repression"--the imposition of draconian measures for the good of all people, including drinkers. The power of the state would free citizens from their own appetites and the devious schemes of their enslavers. In Dow's mind, the rumseller was an unmitigated villain, and alcohol was the root of all social ills. In his memoirs, Dow's son recalled how his family would ride in their carriage in the environs of Portland. Whenever they came upon a decrepit house or impoverished farm, the mayor would simply say,

"Rum did that."[4] Rum stole men's freedom as well as their money, and Dow refused to compromise with such evil.

Dow's critics thought freedom was on their side. An anonymous poem published in Portland as a pamphlet just before the Rum Riot pilloried Dow's abuse of municipal power and his own narcissistic drive for fame.

> Mighty reformer! Oft the trump of Fame,
> Blown by thyself, has sent abroad thy name!
> Sublime Fanatic! who to aid thy cause,
> Slights trifles such as Constitutions, Laws!
> O pimp Majestic! whose sharp gimlet eye.
> All jugs conceal'd and demijohns can spy!
> Astute Smell-fungus! Striving as a goal,
> To poke thy nose in every dirty hole!
> Pimp, Spy, Fanatic! arrogant at heart!
> Language would fail to draw thee as thou art![5]

The poem attacks Dow as an fanatical voyeur whose legislation deprived citizens of their legitimate rights.

John Stuart Mill agreed with Dow's opponents. Mill met Dow in 1857 while the prohibitionist was lecturing in Great Britain. In On Liberty, published in 1859, Mill asserted that the individual could be coerced by the state only to protect others. "His own good," wrote Mill, "either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.. . .Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign." Since a prohibition on the sale of a substance was tantamount to a prohibition on its use, Mill denounced the Maine Law as an illegitimate intrusion on the individual. Dow replied that the drunkard was beyond the pale of a "civilized community," having already surrendered

his freedom to act rationally, with an unimpaired conscience.[6]

In antebellum America, freedom was in the air--in more ways than one. But the practical meanings of the concept were hardly settled. Temperance expressed one concept of freedom concretely and directly. The war on drink temperance personalized the freedom by making it a direct bodily experience. Gough's conversion to temperance was liberating, and thousands vicariously shared that feeling of personal liberty. The way in which temperance authorities popularized habitual drunkenness as enslavement made northern public opinion more receptive to antislavery and even abolitionism. Especially for white men of the North, temperance brought the burdens of bodily bondage closer to home.

The mid-1850s saw the decline of temperance and prohibition as salient public issues partly because events like the Rum Riot belied the utopian visions of temperance advocates. The larger reason for the decline was that the attention of the North turned to the great issues of slavery and its extension in the West. I would argue that the rise of that issue did not overwhelm temperance agitation as much as it continued it in altered form. That a Cheever turned from radical temperance advocacy to

radical abolitionism was no coincidence. Antislavery was the logical extension of temperance ferment.

Of course, the focus here has been on the rise of a distinctive American commercial culture, not the politics of reform. When the temperance message was explicitly politicized, its moral fervor burned itself out. Prohibition de-personalized the temperance message. The impersonal state and its police enforced law; prohibitionists wanted to arrest criminals, not convert victims. Though the forces of 1850s prohibition maintained a worldview centered on the evils of drink, it radically transformed temperance by taking away individual choice. Prohibition thereby put a brake on the commercial viability of temperance themes. One does not "sell" prohibition to paying audiences.

Once explicitly thrust into the political realm, utopian visions of social harmony evaporated before the realities of urban life. With statutes against drink, energetic attempts at individual temperance conversions seemed pointless. By the Civil War, the Washingtonian approach and its cultural manifestations seemed anachronistic and ineffective in the cities of the North. In the end, what was left from the rousing temperance celebrations and their millennial promises?

The most important legacy of the popular temperance movement of the 1840s was not the Maine Law but rather a

fundamental change in the way Americans thought. Temperance converts enhanced the scale of American public life by commodifying the private. Bodily experience enhanced moral authority if a victim could somehow overcome the assaults of alcoholic demons. Careers like those of Gough rested on a moral universe in which the key battles were inner but where each individual's character affected the entire society's perfectionist hopes. Life for men like Gough was a moral pressure cooker. Other careers drew upon the moral authority of personal experience by fictionalizing it. The emotional impact of temperance conversion tales on readers and theatergoers drew them into a marketplace in which emotion itself was for sale. Sentimentalism was an artful way of commodifying the private sphere and glossing pleasure with a religiously rooted moralism.

The most lasting impact of such commercial entertainment was a transformed public realm. Temperance themes opened up spaces for a range of new amusements, apparently cleansed of classical hedonism, the pleasures of direct sensation instead of sentiment. "Moral pleasures" was no longer an oxymoron. At the heart of the new amusements was an ethos developed during the frenzied religiosity of the Second Great Awakening. The crucial role of temperance in the creation of new uses of the public realm was its ability to diffuse religiosity in

areas previously considered tainted, or at least worldly. Temperance advocates sacralized the secular.

Temperance freedom required conversion. Freedom from the bottle was akin to freedom from Satan, and temperance entertainers took advantage of their audiences' familiarity with revivalism. Freedom from alcohol was bodily but it was also economic. The careers of temperance advocates sought freedom from the vagaries of their own personal financial instability. For them, the temperance movement took the edge off the Market Revolution. Audiences also profited from their consumption of temperance culture. Temperance societies provided mutual aid to its members, but much of the activities I have discussed had little to do with formal membership in temperance organizations. Temperance amusements like experience lectures, plays, and novels gave feelings of community more than they created real communal endeavors.

Sentimental pleasures were a consolation prize for those passing through the psychically wrenching Market Revolution. Temperance advocates condemned the destruction of older communities by the new capitalism and created imaginative communities instead. The pleasures associated with imaginative communities were sentimental and ultimately voyeuristic rather than participatory. Like so much of American popular culture, the focus was on spectatorship.

The Maine Law and the Rum Riot developed out of the Manichaean rhetoric of the antebellum temperance movement. The desire to uncover and reveal the hidden places of illicit activities--the charge that Neal Dow was a "smell-fungus"--was not new. The unprecedented use of state power, however, made entertaining temperance productions superfluous. The search for audiences depended on moral suasionist tactics. If drinkers were forced by the state to choose freedom, the moral urgency of a Gough's appeals abated. The Maine Law took the wind out of the sails of temperance hawkers. It was easier to vote for prohibition than to convert to temperance. What remained was entertainment with a sense of its own moral superiority.

In other words, the commercialization of temperance was one means by which the generation of Lyman Beecher became the generation of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Both were temperance advocates. Both denounced slavery. But their methods were world's apart. Lyman Beecher used his privileged position as a prominent minister to voice his concerns about the moral condition of the nation. He offered sermons to an anxious flock. He offered visions of heaven and hell. His daughter wrote a best-seller laden with emotionally powerful religious imagery, but whose readers could look upon suffering from the comforts of home and a position of moral superiority. Her heavens and hells were decidedly earthly. The drive to convert the world and

bring about the Second Coming transmuted into domestic sentimentalism and the utopianism of an imagined home. Most of all, it became explicitly commercial. Without focusing upon these two well-known figures, this study of antebellum temperance seeks to explain that profound generational shift.

That reform was commercialized does not imply that it was fraudulent. Reformers who made a profit could still be true believers. But they were not the last critics of American greed who were themselves consumed by the great gobbler of dissent, the American marketplace. The historical significance of the commercialization of antebellum reform, however, may be Marshall McLuhan's simple dictum--the medium is the message. By removing reform energies from the church and replacing the pulpit with platform, stage, and novel, commercial media in the United States enjoyed expansive successes. American popular culture, so thoroughly commercialized, still needs its demons, its conspiratorial foils, its hells on earth, just as temperance entertainers needed Demon Rum.

Notes

1. The Death of John Robbins of Deer Isle, who was shot in the Streets of Portland by the order of Neal Dow, Mayor, June 2d, 1855: A Full Report of the Testimony Taken before the Coroner's Inquest, as Published in the "State of Maine" Newspaper (Portland: Bearce, Starbird, Rich & Co., 1855).

2. John Kobler, Ardent Spirits: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973): 87. John Marsh, The Napoleon of Temperance. Sketches of the Life and Character of the Hon. Neal Dow, Mayor of Portland, and Author of the Maine Liquor Law (New York: American Temperance Union, 1852).

3. Neal Dow, "Message on the Riot to the Board of Aldermen, June 9, 1855," in Death of John Robbins: 109-12.

4. Frederick Neal Dow, Prohibition: Why--How--Then--Now (Portland: Maine Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1931): 6.

5. Know Nothingism: Illustrated with "Cuts": The Portraits Drawn from Life. By I Don't Know (Portland: Hornby, Porcupine and Co., 1855).

6. John Stuart Mill, On Liberty. Neal Dow, "Prohibition and Persuasion," North American Review: 133 (August 1884): 182.

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