

MEN, WOMEN AND THE BOTTLE:

**GENDER RELATIONS AND ALCOHOL IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN
TEMPERANCE DRAMA**

by

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Introduction

‘The woman, we say, is not to guide, nor even to think for herself. The man is always to be the wiser; he is to be the thinker, the ruler, the superior in knowledge and discretion, as in power.’

-- John Ruskin (*Of Queen's Gardens*, 64)

When the first American temperance dramas came to the stage in the nineteenth century, they reflected an increasing social awareness of the dangers of drink. As a genre, temperance drama is fascinating in its dedication to one single principle: that alcohol, in all its forms, will be the downfall of traditional values and gender roles. However, in their apparently conservative structure, many of these plays show evidence of progressive ideas that theatre historians have been reluctant to acknowledge up until recent times (Frick 2003, 7). While the temperance movement supported Victorian ideals of the woman as virtuous home-maker and the man as the head of the household, the actors on the stage were allowed to show a skewed vision of these roles, even going so far as to reverse them. A man who ended up exposed to the bottle faced a risk of being emasculated, forcing women or children to become heads of the household; this ‘drunkard narrative’ showed a perverse vision of the domestic space.

(Parsons 2003, 163)

The appeal of temperance drama in its time is well documented: both Okrent (2010, 11) and Hixon and Hennessee (1977, 566-568) show that not only was there a wealth of written material being published, but also that stage performances were extremely successful as they could attract crowds in the thousands. While the template of melodrama was the one preferred by most writers of temperance plays, they did not utilise the excessive action or elements of grandeur that usually dressed the stage. Instead, they appealed to their audience

by showing them characters they could relate to: modest people whose ‘aspirations and fears’ resembled their own. (Frick 2003, 62) The tragic progression of events in the drunkard narrative is one that many viewers and readers might recognise, as drinking was prevalent in their society and alcoholism still misunderstood. With the bottle depicted as a constant danger to the domestic sphere, it represented a villain that could attack any person without discrimination -- and while the home of sobriety is productive and peaceful, the home of drunkenness is one of despair, where the lines between male power and female submissiveness become blurred. I am hoping to demonstrate that through an analysis of the complex gender roles in temperance drama, and the effect that alcohol has on these, we can gain a better understanding of the relationship theatre had with the social and cultural changes that occurred in the United States during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In addition to that, I also hope that this study will show how the theatricalisation of the social issue of drinking helped support a movement of temperance whose spread was unrivalled at the time. Other issues which affected nineteenth-century America, such as the Civil War and abolitionism, are remarkably absent in temperance drama, despite otherwise being hugely popular on stage. Overall, temperance drama seems mostly pre-occupied with its own politics, which create a detailed insight into the perceptions of women, men and domesticity that dominated the century.

In the twenty-first century there has been a growing interest in temperance drama, a subject previously overshadowed by analyses of other styles of melodrama. The most detailed guide to date, which includes a comprehensive list of known temperance dramas, is John W. Frick’s *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America*. Frick examines in particular the role that this genre played in the context of American theatre history, and demonstrates that through an aggressive campaign, temperance theatre helped legitimise the cause of the temperance movement itself by appealing to the public (2003, 13).

Another study, *Manhood Lost: Fallen Drunkards and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth-Century United States* by Elaine Frantz Parsons, addresses the way in which the drunkard narrative became embedded in American culture, and its effect on perceptions of masculinity. Although Parsons does not specifically outline the way in which theatre helped shape these ideas, she gives a detailed history on the development of the ‘drunkard’, and how alcohol affected public and private gender relations at the time. Both Frick and Parsons will be referenced frequently throughout this study, as they have provided the most detailed descriptions of temperance drama and the drunkard narrative respectively in what is still a fairly small field of interest. Also touching on dichotomies of gender is *The Melodramatic Imagination* by Peter Brooks, where he describes how the excesses of melodrama become ‘the very means by which integral ethical conditions are identified and shaped’ (Brooks 1985, 36). *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America* by Karen Halttunen examines the way in which the concept of ‘insincerity’ was embedded in nineteenth-century society in the United States. The prevalence of the ‘confidence man’ in contemporary literature and art connects with the nineteenth-century fear of the Bottle as a deceiver, or the hidden dangers of drinking. Again, neither Brooks nor Halttunen cover the subject of temperance drama, but their arguments are still useful for contextualizing the ideas surrounding the fear of alcohol that was a driving force for temperance reform.

The main body of this study will be divided into four chapters: the first chapter will give a cultural context for temperance drama, as well as introduce some of the literature and authors who will be used in my analysis. Following on, it will outline what is meant by ‘character’ and ‘the Bottle’, and nineteenth-century ideas on gender. The second chapter continues the subject of gender roles by analysing the placement of women in the domestic sphere, moving from the idea of woman as object, to looking at the way in which domesticity is used as a symbol of virtue. Chapter three focuses on the relationship between male and

female spaces, and the placement of the saloon in as a contrast to the home. Moving away from the analysis of dramatic texts, chapter four will instead look at other sources for evidence of the drunkard narrative in real life, the surrounding culture of theatre, and the way in which they influenced each other.

One of the main limitations affecting this study is the lack of temperance dramas that have survived to the modern day, as well as any extensive knowledge of which were performed and when. A lack of interest in the subject by theatre historians, combined with the informal way in which some plays were published in the first place, result in a relatively small canon of available works. A portion of the plays I've used were intended primarily for home entertainment, such as the ones by George M. Baker, and some are of unknown dates. Although the public interest in temperance theatre persisted up until prohibition and beyond, it is very much a nineteenth-century phenomenon, and as such the materials included in this study will mostly cover the decades 1860-1900. Some plays were printed earlier, but continued being used for the stage in later years. The texts covered are not exclusively temperance dramas, but also dramas where alcohol or drinking is referenced, as well as poetry. For the purposes of analysis, the main focus will be on the dramas which personify the traditional drunkard narrative; the inclusion of other materials is, among other things, to suggest how drinking could be utilised as a dramaturgical tool even when it is not the focus.

Chapter 1: Temperance Drama and Character

Of all the cultural reforms that occurred in America during the nineteenth century, perhaps the one which attracted the most attention at the time was temperance (Frick 2003, 2). From the founding of the American Temperance Society in 1826, the focus of the temperance movement was on reforming the drinker and influencing the younger part of the population. The American Temperance Society relied heavily on written materials and deliberately targeted women, resulting in a disproportionately large female membership, and at its height, boasted nearly 12% of the population as members (Blocker, Fahey and Tyrrell 2003, 40). In 1844, The Boston Museum produced W.H. Smith's adaption of *The Drunkard* for the first time, under the author's direction, and was widely considered to be the most popular play that had ever been staged in the city (Smith, *The Drunkard; or, the Fallen Saved* 1850, vi). The extensive appeal of temperance narratives did not decline, as T. S. Arthur's 1854 novel *Ten Nights in a Bar-room and What I Saw There* went on to become second only to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in popularity during the century (Chrzan 2013, 76) and a playbill in 1866 claimed over 100,000 people had viewed the stage adaption (Frick 2003, 13). As already shown, both *The Drunkard* and *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* were widely known, but playwrights such as George M. Baker and S. N. Cook also demonstrated a large output of temperance dramas which were released for publication. As many of these were intended for the amateur dramatics market, such as entertainment in sitting rooms and church halls, it is difficult to indicate the extent to which they were staged; however, the texts can still be analysed as part of the larger canon of literature on the subject of temperance. Any intent for a play to be an active part of the political temperance movement is hard to ascertain; with the exception of Timothy S. Arthur and William H. Smith, there is not much biographical information on the authors' personal inclinations towards abstinence from drink. As such it would be misleading

to presume the majority of temperance drama to have been written from an activist standpoint, even if they were distributed for those purposes later on.

Although most of *The Drunkard* was written by an unnamed gentleman believed by many to be the reformer John Pierpoint, the main writing credits are given to William H. Smith who adapted the rough draft for the stage. A manager and actor, Smith was also a recovering alcoholic who had signed a vow of temperance (*The Drunkard: Author's Preface* (1850 edition) n.d.). The 38-year old Smith himself played the main character of Edward Middleton, and the force of his performance caused speculation that he was drawing his interpretation of the character based on his own experiences. The popularity of the play seemed to inspire the wave of popular temperance dramas that followed for most of the nineteenth century (Richards 1997, 243-244). T. S. Arthur's novel *Ten Nights In a Bar-room and What I Saw There* and his play *Three Years In a Man-Trap* were both household names throughout the century (*Death of T.S. Arthur* 1885) and although he was not considered a great writer, he published a wide range of novels and periodicals, often giving advice on morality and family life. As a result of his extraordinarily popular works of fiction as well as his articles for the Washingtonian Temperance Society (T. S. Arthur 1999), he has become firmly connected with the temperance movement as a whole.

Born some 25 years after W.H. Smith and T.S. Arthur, George M. Baker was a Boston-based playwright and publisher with a formidable output of temperance dramas and farces. Unlike playwrights who wrote for theatrical companies, he published collections of smaller plays that could be performed at home or by amateur groups; as such, many of them survive today. On the other hand, it's hard to estimate how frequently they were executed on the stage, or how popular they were. Aside from his frequent use of temperance themes in his publications, there isn't a record of Baker being involved in any political or social movement against the perils of drinking; as such, his works could say more about his intended audience

than himself. Most of Baker's plays are small, domestic dramas, focusing on one or two families. Relationships and marriage is a common theme, and there is rarely violence or death on stage, which may be related to the fact that his plays were labelled as suitable for 'home and school entertainment' in the title (*Temperance Drama: A Series of Dramas, Comedies, and Farces, for Temperance Exhibitions and Home and School Entertainment, 1874*). Although they are less graphic than other temperance dramas, the characters still display similar roles and inhabit the same gendered spaces that we see in more famous texts. Aside from their classification as drama or farce, there aren't many superficial features to distinguish his works from each other; names and music can be re-used in the same collection. Although this formula appears frequently in plays by his contemporaries, Baker produced a much larger output of material that survive today, making his systematically structured works a noticeable presence in our knowledge of the temperance dramas of that time. They were, if we are in this case to judge them by the title of the volume where they appear, intended for a largely amateur audience, preferably one focused on the teachings of sobriety. Whether short or long, the plot is moving towards the end result -- a happy family -- at a rapid pace, not overly concerned with complex characters or scenes that would be difficult to execute.

Although they share many characteristics, there are also significant differences between the definitions of temperance drama, drama featuring drinking, and the drunkard narrative. The first two are exclusively for the stage whereas the latter can appear in a wide range of contexts including art, music and journalism. Temperance drama heavily relies on the drunkard narrative for its primary subject matter; the inevitable downfall of a drinker is essential for the plot development which usually requires a fallen man to be saved. In both, 'The Bottle' is not just a prop, but a dramaturgical tool. As an individual entity, The Bottle in the drunkard narrative frequently receives the blame for the downfall of a good man, much in the same way that a 'Confidence Man', or an experienced trickster living in the city, might be

blamed for the wrongdoings of a country boy after exerting his influence. In this sense, alcohol serves not just as a plot device, but becomes a character of sorts, often included in the title. Frick (Frick 2003, 247-256) lists several plays and articles with such names:

- *Basil and Barbara: Children of the Bottle; or, the Curse Entailed*
- *The Bottle*
- *Grappling with the Monster; or, the Curse and Cure of Strong Drink*
- *The Social Glass; or, Victims of The Bottle*
- *The Wine-Cup; or, the Tempter and the Tempted*

So what is a ‘character’, in the context of melodrama? As Brooks outlines,

What we most retain from any consideration of melodramatic structures is the sense of fundamental bipolar contrast and clash. The world according to melodrama is built on an irreducible manichaeism, the conflict of good and evil as opposites not subject to compromise. [...] Characters represent extremes, and they undergo extremes, passing from heights to depths, or the reverse. [...] Characters are notable for their integrity, their thorough exploitation of a way of being, or of a critical conjecture. They exist at a moment of crisis as exemplary destinies. (Brooks 1985, 36)

Notable in this paragraph is the emphasis of characters as an expression of the good/evil paradigm; rather than as three-dimensional beings, they exist to express one or the other. By necessity, characters are pre-determined and can be used as a means to an end, a way of expressing a worldly conflict. In this sense, nothing stops an object such as the bottle from becoming a ‘character’ of sorts, expressing an extreme evil to counteract the good. The

central domestic characters in Temperance Drama, despite their actions, remain good, only warped by the presence of evil alcohol. ‘The Bottle’, like other villains, is wholly evil and incapable of redemption – it even goes so far as to seek out its victims to destroy them. Like a Confidence Man, it can appear sophisticated, even innocent, until it has caught the protagonist and seeks to bring about his downfall:

T. Trask Woodward’s protagonist-drunkard in *The Social Glass; or Victims of The Bottle* [...] in a fit of Delerium Tremens believes his wife to be a monster, kills her with a liquor bottle and then laces his drink with poison to kill himself. As indicated by Woodward’s title, in his narrative it was the bottle, rather than the drinker’s moral weakness, that victimized and destroyed husband and wife. (Frick 2003, 69)

That a protagonist can go so far as to kill his wife in cold blood, only for the author (and in turn, the viewer) to conclude that the Bottle was to blame, shows the power alcohol holds in Temperance Drama. In this sense, it exists beyond other objects, as it cannot truly change a character, merely affect his actions. Although it is an inanimate object, ‘The Bottle’ fulfils the same role as the melodramatic villain, as once alcohol is defeated, the drinker is completely reformed and domestic harmony can return. The relationship between the feminine domestic environment and the masculine city in temperance drama are constantly threatened by the perils of drink. According to Carrol Smith-Rosenberg,

The ideal female in nineteenth-century America was expected to be gentle and refined, sensitive and loving. She was the guardian of religion and spokeswoman for morality. Hers was the task of guiding the more worldly and more frequently tempted male. (1972, p. 655-656)

In temperance drama, although the woman might fulfil her role as a moral person, she can also be forced into the worldly spaces normally inhabited by her male counterpart.

In regards to contemporary views on femininity, masculinity and gendered spaces in the nineteenth century, John Ruskin wrote:

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle,—and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise: she enters into no contest, but infallibly judges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial: to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offense, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled; and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offense. This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home: so far as these anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in.

(Ruskin 1909-1914, original 1865, 68)

What Ruskin describes seems to be an example of how melodramatic rhetoric could be applied to real life; just like melodrama insists of dealing with pure concepts and absolutes (Brooks 1985, 40), so does Ruskin's ideas on gender make the male and the female polar opposites, who inhabit different worlds. He succinctly outlines the strict gender roles that Victorians were expected to adhere to, but also brings up a subject central to temperance drama: that of the ideal home as a 'place of peace,' in contrast to the rough 'open world'. Although Ruskin was a British scholar, his views resonate with the 'ideal female' that Smith-Rosenberg identifies in American culture of the same time. (1972, 655-656) Nineteenth-century Americans were attached to the domestic space as an epicentre of happiness and contentment, but as far as the temperance movement was concerned, this was dependent on it remaining free from drink. Meanwhile, an expanding urban sprawl with its male spaces was feared to be detrimental to a man if he did not have the positive influence of a woman (Frick 2003, 58). This melodramatic discourse on the dangers of alcohol cemented the idea of domesticated women as upholders of morality, whose space would be disrupted if drink was brought home. Although women's duties were still within the walls of her house, temperance women in fiction and real life could move beyond the confines of the domestic sphere if it was to restore the virtue of her male counterpart (Parsons, p.90, 177).

One of the texts which most strongly address the subject of masculinity and manhood (as well as femininity) is *The Drunkard* by W. H. Smith. From the onset, Edward Middleton's character is discussed – set forth as a reckless young man, unlike his deceased father. The image turns out to be false, but Edward himself arrives later, with a speech to the antagonist Mr. Cribbs:

Old man! I respect your grey hairs. I knew an old man once, peace to his ashes, whose hair was as grey as yours; but beneath that aged breast there beat a heart.

(236) (Act I, Scene II)

The virtual presence of the father gives credibility to Edward, and contrasted with Mr. Cribbs threatens his masculinity. This strikes a nerve; the source of Cribbs' anger is that he had a deep-rooted jealousy of the elder Middleton, and wishes to exact a sort of revenge upon the son. The contrast between good and evil is frequently expressed literally as two men, not just through the actions of the characters (and speeches such as the one above), but also through philosophical points made in passing:

There are two sorts of men [...] some are susceptible to the charms of women [...] while others are *cold* and insensible to our beauties.

(Miss Spindle, 259) (Act I, Scene III)

Although this is said in a humorous context, the implication is clearly to highlight one of the central ideas of the play; that there are two men, in conflict.

After being given drink, Edward has a brief monologue as he staggers around drunk. He describes himself as 'bending like a weak bulrush to the blast', and wonders if he will always 'bow my manhood lower than the brute' (275). After the death of his mother-in-law, he declares 'do not call me husband', relinquishing his manly role and leaving for the city. Through driving Edward to drink and attempting to take his wife, Cribbs has continuously hoped to gain the upper hand through reducing Edward's manhood. In the end, it is William Middleton who has to stand in for his brother's honour, saving Mary and declaring to Cribbs: 'You a man? Nature made a blunder' (287).

An analysis of the drunkard's character is made in a review of *Old Lavender* performed at Mr. Harrigan's Park Theatre on the 1st of September, 1885. In *The New York Times* the article makes a detailed account of the character of George Cogswell, who falls from grace due to drinking for thirty years; through alcohol he loses 'his brother's esteem... his reputation' and he becomes a 'tool for scoundrels'. However, this analysis also makes a point of how George himself remains an agreeable person, as he never loses his 'good-fellowship', which is in stark contrast to other drunken male characters (Review of '*Old Lavender*' at Mr. Harrigan's Park Theatre 1885). The title of *Out in the Streets* (n.d.) by S. N. Cook is a reference to the homeless situation Mrs. Bradford and her angelic daughter is put in when they are abandoned by her violent drunken husband, who himself never appears in the play, but is alluded to. If a man's role is to provide for his wife and children, Mrs. Bradford's husband failed in his duties. Although the play is declared a 'temperance play', drinking does not occur, nor are drinking characters introduced. Mrs. Bradford declares that she believed her husband to be 'all that was good and noble' (Cook, *Out in the Streets: A Temperance Play in Three Acts* n.d., 17) (Act II, Scene II) and did not trust her family's opinion that he was a drunkard. Upon the discovery that he was a drinker and gambler, she reversed her opinion of him as 'good', thus leading to the downfall of their marriage. Whereas most 'moral women' in temperance drama work to keep the family together, in *Grace Huntley* by Henry Holl, the title character gives up her drunken husband Joseph in court in order to save her child, resulting in Joseph going to prison for robbery and the family being broken up. Grace makes the sacrifice for the greater good and through her (honourable) betrayal, she proves her own strength and firm morals, to the demise of her husband. As Mattingly (1998) points out,

In the final decades of the [nineteenth] century, writers are often more explicit in the issues they address and are less likely to present women as victims, offering strong women role models instead. (133)

Wives and daughters, in many temperance plays, were expected to uphold morality even if the man of the house didn't, and as a result could take charge of the family when he became detrimental to her home through drinking. Although, as Mattingly points out, this provided a role model for the viewers, the ability of a woman to take control could just as easily be a source of horror and drama (137).

The issue of moral responsibility, although essential for the family man, was regarded as a woman's vocation. John Tosh argues that although both genders were in agreement that the onus of morality lay on the woman, this was only the case if it was a 'private morality, confined to the home' (47). The issue with this, however, is that the demands made within the home also apply to the outside world; if drinking is an immoral act which threatens domestic life even when it's not consumed within the home, then the outside world also becomes the responsibility of a moral woman. In temperance theatre, mothers and daughters are forced to step outside of their traditional domain to regain the order of family life, a reflection of the American women who rallied for change. The women's crusades that invaded taverns and saloons in 1873 and 1874 were later instrumental to the ideology of the Women's Christian Temperance Union: that women should leave the confines of their homes to fight intemperance on the street and in the places where drinking occurred, a masculine domain. Perhaps it is no coincidence that James M'Closkey wrote *The Fatal Glass; or, the Curse of Drink* the year before.

The Fatal Glass follows an unusual timeline, as the majority of the action is a feverish dream, foretelling the demise of the main characters if they continue drinking. M'Closkey

takes liberty with this, allowing for graphic violence and death that otherwise is relatively limited in temperance theatre. The women who have been wronged by their drinking husbands, many of them victims of domestic violence, invade the saloon where the men are drinking. Upon being told to leave, admonished for their 'shameful' act of being in a saloon, they set fire to the alcohol and assault the drinkers (20-22). After a string of violent attacks and retaliations, the main character Ambrose is brought to the gallows. It is at this point that the scenery changes and it was all revealed to be a dream, brought on by a drink poisoned with opium. After the men promise to never touch alcohol again, they can proceed to marry their sweethearts.

Broken Promises by S.N. Cook has a particularly interesting set of relationships between characters. There is not just a feminine/masculine power structure at the centre, but also a great deal of confrontations and struggles between characters of the same sex. Drinking is used as a particular tool for expressing dominance, as Mrs. Fields intends to destroy her new step-daughter's life, saying that 'to make a drunkard of her father and to ruin her betrothed shall be a work which I'll devote my best energies to accomplish'. When her husband refuses drink on account of his daughter's wishes, she then retorts 'I'd be a man if I were you, and not yield my liberty to take a second glass' (14). The indication is made that by listening to his daughter, Mark Fields has become less of a man; however, through taking instruction from his wife, he faces the same predicament. The perceived 'manliness', or lack thereof, of Mark Fields becomes a running theme throughout the play; he says himself, while sat in the saloon, that he longs 'to be a man once more' (25), equating his drinking habit to a loss of masculinity. The saloon is a contentious subject in nineteenth-century America. On one hand, it had a strong tradition as a gathering point for men; a place where they conduct business away from the disturbances of family life. On the other hand, temperance reformers were insistent that the very locale itself could rob them of their manhood. Spending time

away from their wives meant they may not be fulfilling their husbandly duties, and being under the influence of alcohol they may also be susceptible to influence from dishonest people (Parsons 2003, 64-65). As we can see, when Mark Fields retreats to the saloon, it is not just to enjoy a drink, but also to childishly escape his inability to control the chaotic family life at home. As is stated in *Three Years in a Man-Trap*, 'A man's home must be dreary enough if he doesn't prefer staying there to going out to-night'. (8) That she should create a good domestic environment was a vital component of the woman's role, as a home that did not provide 'cheer' might cause husbands and sons to seek entertainment elsewhere. (Welter, 1966, 162)

Richard Stott describes at length the environments of what he calls 'jolly fellows', men who gathered together to drink, gamble, talk, play pranks and fight. He concludes that 'the main business for taverns was their regular customers, and these seem to have been virtually all male'. Outlining the tavern as one of their central homes, he then goes on to clarify that 'not all men, of course, were jolly fellows. Rather they formed [...] a discreet subset of the male population' (2009, 11). *The Drunkard's* depiction of the title character and his family is in stark contrast to the 'jolly fellows' that appear in earlier descriptions of tavern crowds and society. Where men congregated, they would easily drink and associate with friends and strangers through the afternoon and into the evening (R. Stott 2009, 10-11); the first-hand accounts that remain do not seem to have much in common with the drunkard's narrative we encounter in temperance drama, despite sharing the same milieu. One noticeable discrepancy is the lack of female presence in the lives of these men, because as Stott points out, 'Wives are very rarely referred to in accounts by and about jolly men, and their marital relations remain largely a mystery' (2009, 25). Apparently, a look at contemporary drinkers does not necessarily demonstrate to us the same narrative structure of moral decline and breakdown of familial relationships that we find in temperance drama. Although the

‘drunkard narrative’ permeated society by the end of the nineteenth century, and despite its appearance in real-life affairs, we can in this sense still regard it as a work of fiction that influenced the world it came from, as much as it took influence itself.

As nineteenth-century rural Americans were not accustomed to integrating with immigrants, this was reflected in the stage dramas of the time. The characters in temperance drama are almost exclusively English American, with the exception of Irish-Americans who appear for the purpose of comedy (Frick 2003, 165). George M. Baker’s *Seeing The Elephant* (1874) and *A Drop Too Much* (1866), as well as Dion Boucicault’s *The Shauraughn* (date unknown) all feature the ‘drunken Paddy’ stereotype, a pervasive view on the Irish immigrants who drank proportionately more than their English counterparts. Conn, or The Shauraughn, is the title character in the play of the same name by Boucicault. As an Irish-themed farce it does not strictly fall under the genre of temperance drama, but still contains some scenes of interest. The female character Moya laments that there is no more tea in the house for Father Dolan to drink, prompting Conn to therefore pour whiskey into it instead (p. 184). The discussions in the room focus on Conn’s failure to be temperate, and the humour is largely drawn from the fact that Father Dolan thinks the tea has ‘a curious taste’ and smells of whiskey, while Conn convinces him that it’s the weather that has made the tea bad, offering the explanation that the whiskey smell comes from himself (184-5) (Act I, Scene VIII). The exchange may seem trivial to the modern reader, but the idea of Irish-Americans as drunkards was a common stereotype in the nineteenth-century; Conn’s insistence on providing alcohol in every situation is a running theme through the play. Another play by Boucicault that features a ‘foreigner’ in a pivotal role is *The Octoroon* (1861-2). Like the villain of the piece, Wahnotee the Indian also drinks; however, he remains honourable throughout. He does not require the intervention of another person, nor does he lose the essence of his character as a result of drinking; after being framed for murder, he’s found innocent through some

remarkable circumstances. Although Wahnotee exhibits violent actions, his honourable conduct redeems him to the other characters when he is found innocent of murder (Boucicault, 484-5) (Act V, Scene III). Both Wahnotee and Conn are outsiders to the audience; their ethnicities come before their masculinity, and as such their stories do not develop in the same way the drunkard's narrative does. There is no reform, no attaining virtue, because that is not the purpose of their character.

M'Closky, the villain in *The Octoroon*, states that "a julep, gal, that's my breakfast, and a bit of cheese". (Boucicault, 456) (Act I, Scene I) George immediately thus dismisses him as a 'vulgar ruffian', but it is explained that M'Closky is welcome at the table whether he is a gentleman or not, as per American courtesy. Alcohol, when it makes an appearance in *The Octoroon*, becomes the bringer of bad events, whether they are death, fraud or the foreclosing on the family property. The auction opens up with each potential buyer being offered a range of drinks (470) (Act III, Scene I), and while this could be seen as insignificant, Richards points out Boucicault's insistence on the solidity of character:

Most characters stay the same from beginning to end. Villains are rotten at the start and remain rotten throughout, sometimes undergoing a radical transformation in the very last scene that only makes more apparent how little such characters resist type. Good people also stay primarily good but often must undergo a transformation through others' perceptions. (Richards 1997, xxx)

This solidity of character can equally be applied to conventional temperance drama, where a good man will not become evil through drinking, but rather he will fall from grace only to later be redeemed once he turns away from alcohol. The villains of temperance drama are the fraudsters, the amoral drinkers, and not least the Bottle, who remains evil throughout. In

contrast to this, the drunkard himself always has the potential to become a man of morality at the end, especially if he has the faith of a woman who can see his true worth. It is not his soul that is affected by alcohol, but rather his masculinity.

Chapter 2: Women, Children and the Domestic Sphere

When looking at male gender ideology in nineteenth-century society, it's worth considering the contradictions inherent in its structure. In the literature of the mid- to late-nineteenth-century United States, we can see how manliness, and its inherent morality, is frequently defined by the ability to bring in an income and protect the family through maintaining authority in the household; as such, the work sphere is his exclusive domain. *Washington Square* (1880) by Henry James and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) by William Dean Howells both feature men whose morality is directly related to his income. In the case of Morris Townsend in *Washington Square* it also affects his eligibility for marriage, However, the definition of what the work sphere entails is not given a clear definition in the way that the domestic sphere is, and even less so in temperance theatre. Specifics of money and professional pursuits are rarely discussed between characters. On the other hand, Victorian imagery which surrounds the home is engraved with the presence of women and children, and it is precisely this imagery which John Tosh places as the root of women's central role in our understanding of nineteenth-century domesticity. According to him, 'our retrospective picture [of the Victorian home] is dominated by the hearth and its female votaries' (Tosh 2008, 48). However, this still leaves the particulars of the male sphere undefined. Martin Danahay regards the image of the home as feminine to be essential for the construction of maleness:

I suggest that men represented the ideological contradictions in their own subject positions by using women as 'objects' who expressed contradictions for 'men at work' in the domestic sphere. (Danahay 2005, 17)

In temperance theatre, this 'subject-object' relationship can be observed in the balance of the family home and the outside world as a place for the man. When the domestic space is lost through the choices made by the drunkard, he can only regain his masculinity through its restoration, along with the presence of a family circle including a woman. The identity of the male can thus be seen as nonexistent without a female counterpart, her 'object' being the focus upon which he can build Danahay's 'subject' position. Between each other, women were much more real, according to John Gillis: although daughters were drawn to the iconography of their mother, they saw her in a different light to their male counterparts, experiencing her 'as a real person rather than as an icon' (Gillis 1997, 176). The placement of a wife as 'object' to the husband in the gender dichotomies of Victorian society is reflected in Fanny's statement to her fellow women in *The Fatal Glass* (1872): 'Are we not neglected, abused, treated more like brutes than the helpmates of that thing called man?' (20). She remains disdainful of her husband and places herself not as a woman standing alone, but rather as a 'helpmate' of the male; nevertheless, in female company she can shift the focus away from her own marriage, onto the collective experiences of women.

The domestic scene is central to many temperance dramas, but should the domestic home fail in providing warmth and comfort, the presumption is that the man will seek it elsewhere. Saloons are also made to be cosy and homely to attract customers; in this sense, the saloonkeeper is in competition with the wife for a man's affections. The man, who should be providing for his wife, instead seeks comfort in another 'home'. Through providing a good home and instilling a sense of morality in her husband (and choosing the right, temperate man to marry), women are presumed to have power over her husband's drinking habits. When Fanny in *The Fatal Glass* feels her patience wearing thin with her husband Bob's drinking habits, she declares that she will rally two hundred women to clear out a local gin mill. Bob is appalled that she would 'bring disgrace' on her husband with such an 'unwomanly' act, but

she quickly responds by pointing out that she is the breadwinner in the house, and he's drinking up her earnings. She then assaults him. After Fanny leaves, Bob declares he will regain his manhood by beating her up (13). Although the traditional gender roles have been completely skewed, the actions of the women in the play are largely celebrated, with their husbands continually depicted as foul drunkards. Once someone has been established as a drinker, they have no chance of regaining a moral stance until they adopt sobriety. The violence in *The Fatal Glass* is an aggressive representation of the length that women started to go to for the sake of temperance in the home. As the country moved towards the turn of the century, a woman who could not control a man's behaviour with force might still enforce her moral stance through the courtroom: *The New York Times* reported in 1894 that the wife of Peter C. Asten went to court to have him 'legally adjudged an habitual drunkard', supported by a statement from her mother-in-law Mary. Mrs. Asten complained of her husband having 'done no work' in their three years of marriage, and that he is 'easily imposed upon', worrying that he would end up defrauded. Though not as dramatic as the women in *The Fatal Glass*, the actions of Mr. Asten's wife and mother show how female morality could challenge drunkenness even in real life.

As part of the domestic environment, children can fulfil the same role as the gentle mother, encouraging homely bliss, by asking their father to stay. Little Mary in *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room*, after being assaulted by a drunkard in one of the most dramatic scenes of the play, later begs her father Morgan 'that you never go into Simon Slade's bar-room anymore' (10). He promises to not go that night, with the added encouragement from his wife: 'you feel better for the promise you have given our darling child'. Meanwhile, Slade discusses with Green the tendency of Mary to come to the bar-room to get her father to come home: 'She must have a queer kind of a mother'. The responsibility for the child, and the household, falls

entirely on Fanny. According to David Morgan, one of the key themes when discussing gender and domestic space,

Is that of 'responsibility', in the dual sense of having responsibilities for others (a wife and children, possibly employees as well) and being a responsible person. There are strong links, it would seem, to be made between these domestic ideas of responsibility and ideas of self-control, discipline and sober rationality. Masculinities and their constructions do not exist without femininities and their constructions. (1992, 62)

The abilities of the mother to care for her child here is questioned, as the child is allowed to leave the home; however, the theatrical use of children as a 'redeemer' of sorts for a father, was frequently used. Karen Sanchez-Eppler emphasises that the female child is frequently used for this purpose in literature, stating that only 'female submissiveness' can discipline the father, as opposed to what she calls 'masculine honesty' (Sanchez-Eppler 1997, 78).

However, if we contrast the assumptions made by Morgan and Sanchez-Eppler, there is an argument to be made that the rational, sober mother, although she is in the domestic sphere, holds the more 'male' role of responsibility. If only 'female submissiveness' can convince the father to return home, and indeed if a male child would seem too masculine, then the appearance of the father as an idol of manliness is not a strong one.

The female submissiveness demonstrated in the exclusion of women from business and politics rendered them, usually, dependent on either a father or a spouse for protection. Elaine Frantz Parsons asserts that adult women were not only leaving the charge of their physical well-being to their male counterparts, but that their 'thoughts and actions were to some extent controlled' (Parsons 2003, 55). The control that men hold over women is addressed in a very frank manner throughout *Broken Promises* (1892), where Nell Larkin is manipulated into lying. Ned McCall is given the job of convincing his old friend Nell to help

in a scheme to break up the engagement between Larry Bailey and Kittie Fields by convincing Kittie that her fiancé is prone to drink. Upon her resistance to the idea, he tells her she must do as he says, only for her to reply: 'I must? Are you my master?' (29). He does not answer the question, but instead pleads for her to not get angry. Nell faces a moral dilemma where she herself feels what she is being told to do is wrong, but in the end she submits to Ned's wishes, mostly because she's not aware of money being involved. Her consciousness of being treated as an inferior later comes out in her speech to Larry, when she says 'I suppose you imagined you would find Nell Larkin... would seek to kiss your hand as a token of your power over her.' (30) Later in the play, Nell's mistakes are corrected, and she regains her status as an upholder of morality when she tells Kittie the truth. The reconciliation between the two women is a significant part of the ending, as Kittie states Nell was the one she 'blamed most' (39). This interaction becomes significant, if we are to consider Smith-Rosenberg's notion of women's reaction:

If women – bourgeois or working-class, agrarian or urban – lacked power, did it follow that women were only actors in a male play? We are used to thinking of women as victims or as co-opted spokespersons for male power relations. This view of women focus primarily on the impact of male gender definitions and of economic and political power upon women. [...] It fails to look for evidence of women's reaction, of the ways women manipulated men and events to create new fields of power or to assert female autonomy. (Smith-Rosenberg 1985, 17)

Nell's reaction creates a new field of power through not only speaking out about Larry and Ned's assumptions of her as inferior, but also through isolating herself and Kittie to reach an understanding of each other, separate from the previous power struggles in the play. Their reconciliation is intimate, and unaffected by the men in their lives.

In *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* (1858), Morgan admits to feeling the draw of alcohol, and says his 'constitution is broken' after five hours without drink (10). Having been a heavy drinker for so long, he struggles without alcohol -- and at this point his wife Fanny gives him a cup of coffee, refusing him rum even if he were dying. In this exchange, the man admits his weakness and becomes feeble and childlike. It is the strength and determination of his wife and daughter that keeps him home. Later, the domestic space becomes a safe haven for Morgan when he has a delirious fit; his daughter assures him nothing can harm him at home and he declares the snakes he has hallucinations about 'can't come in here, for this is your room. Yes; this is my Mary's room, and she is an angel' (11). Similar to Fanny, Slade's wife is his own moral compass. When she has been to see the ill Mary Morgan, she declares she has been

Where I wish you had been with me... Simon, if you don't have this child's blood clinging through life to your garments you may be thankful!

(*Ten Nights*, 12).

After her death, the bar-room Sickle and Sheaf falls into a dilapidated state, dirty and sad. Romaine, initially intending to lodge there for a few days, declares he will never return to that part of the country again after seeing the trouble in the bar-room. On his way, he decides to go to the Morgan household, where, after Mary's death, Morgan has kept his promise of temperance. The home is warm and welcoming, and they ask Romaine to stay there as it is preferable to the bar-room. Karen Sanchez-Eppler (1997) comments on the literary use of the female child as a redeemer of the alcoholic father, concluding that 'it is feminine submissiveness, not masculine honesty, that can most effectively discipline the father' (60-92).

George M. Baker has a consistent template for the dynamics between his characters. Although it might seem temperance dramas should focus on the drunkard, the rest of the family are, in fact, the backbone of Baker's works; daughters and sons are attached to their parents and distraught when suffering a loss, while the mothers uphold morality in the household. The drunkard himself is fallen, but always repentant in the end; his family is loyal and never loses hope even when they face hardship. The main character Harry in Baker's *The Tempter; or, The Sailor's Return* (1866), a play acted out in a single scene, faces the predicament of losing the family home due to his drunkenness (152-3), but is saved from drinking by Agnes Stanley when he stumbles upon her father's house. Hearing her sing 'Home Sweet Home', he remembers it as a melody his sister Mary used to sing (156-7). Although he swears off alcohol, he is eventually only able to resist it when he thinks of Agnes and Mary singing (161). A piece of music of the same name is played in the opening scene of Baker's *The Last Loaf* (1874) to express domestic bliss, and show a contrast to Harry's house which is 'gloomy' and has been 'like a prison' since his mother died. (182,185) By removing the evils of the outside world in favour of introspection, Baker's drunkard can be reformed with something as simple as a song or a dream. It is only when he becomes sober again that the man (for he is then a man, not a drunkard) can become a provider for his wife and family, taking up his role as head of the household. Nevertheless, he will rely on the women in his life to save him through their goodness before it is too late, and use their influence to keep him from drinking. The stability of the home, in the form of women, is essential to reforming the drunkard, but his reformation is equally vital in preserving the household.

The Last Loaf (1874) features some of Baker's most prominent female characters, who aside from maintaining a strong sense of morals, are also proactive in making decisions for their family. Kate is fiercely protective of her daughter Lilly when it comes to men

approaching her. Knowing that Caleb is planning to foil his own son's plans for marriage, Kate is determined to stop it, asserting she will 'battle' for her child. (Baker 1874, 200) Five years after the beginning of the play, the family has lost their house as a result of the father/husband drinking. It has been their downfall, the furniture is cheap and their new house is bleak. Worst of all, Lilly is now trying to be the breadwinner by offering piano lessons and Patty determines to go out and find food for the family – together, the women of the household try to make up for the shortcomings of the husband/father while he is unable to fulfil his roles. If a woman isn't present in the home, her absence creates a different environment: the gloomy atmosphere in the house that Harry calls a 'prison' in the very first scene is attributed to the death of his mother. His father is free to be a villain, not having the influence of a wife anymore. With Mark's family down to their last dime to buy the loaf of bread referenced in the title, poverty becomes the turning point for Mark as he realises he has failed his family, and blames himself for everyone suffering, calling himself a 'mockery of God's image'. (212-13) (Act II, Scene I) Once sober in the very final scene, he declares he shall protect his child from now onwards, re-establishing his authority as a parent. He does however acknowledge that he will 'gather courage' from his wife and children when tempted by alcohol. (Baker 1874, 224)

With women depicted as a moral compass for the household, it's no surprise that acquiring a wife quickly becomes a central plot point. The comedy *Seeing The Elephant* (1874) by George M. Baker opens with a domestic scene, extolling the virtues of Sally Somerby as a home-maker. Harry regards himself a saved man already, having given up 'suppers, fine wine and gambling' to marry and own a farm. (70-71) However, Sally hasn't married him yet as her father has not given her permission and she doesn't want to disobey him. Meanwhile, her parents have their own marriage grievances as Mr. Somerby is prone to drinking and comes home penniless to his furious wife. (74-75) His drinking causes her to

ask, ‘Are you a man or a monster?’, a question he quickly deflects. (78) He is eventually reformed by his family, with the help of Harry, who has proved himself worthy of marriage through being temperate. Even in a short comedy, the relative moral stance is apparent from the beginning; that the drinking man is a monster, and the sober man is an object of affection. The fact that Harry used to drink is also significant, as it shows he has the ability to abstain from alcohol despite what he has done in the past.

The *refusal* to drink held as great a deal of significance to the nineteenth-century audience as the act of drinking did, and both could be used as a device to define a character’s moral strength. Many plays that are not strictly ‘temperance’ plays still feature alcohol frequently as a method of communication to the audience. Physical and emotional self-restraint was the very definition of gentility in the Victorian male (Halttunen 1986, 96), and willingly taking to drink could therefore sully a character intended to be seen as well-mannered, even though alcohol is a vital plot device. To solve this problem temperance plays made it common for the drinker to first refuse alcohol, or in the case of *The Drunkard* (1844) or *A Little More Cider* (1870) hesitate to drink, only to later be unfairly coerced or tricked. In *The Rent Day* (1832) by Douglas Jerrold, where the protagonist has made a point of being teetotal, this declaration is made:

He bade me take a glass of wine [...] I took the glass of wine, and pouring it upon the floor, wished that my blood might be so poured out from my heart if ever again I stood beneath his roof.

(13)

His staunch refusal clearly defines him as a strong male, one who is not going to give in to temptation. In *The Sea* (n.d.) by C. A. Somerset, Mary, in a similar scene, refuses wine from

the antagonistic Captain, thus preventing his plan of drugging her with opiates (19). Despite her social standing, she retains her moral virtue and value as a woman by refusing to drink. Conversely, for a male protagonist, being forced into consuming more alcohol than intended can serve as a way of demeaning his character and weakening him; he becomes powerless and his masculinity may be questioned. In *A Little More Cider* (1870) by George Melville Baker the drunkard is one of these unintentional drinkers. Applejack, a cider producer down South, uses old whiskey barrels with a third of the whiskey left in, which is illegal. His cider becomes popular as many recognise the smell; unfortunately, the Deacon does not recognise it when given a mug by Applejack's innocent sister Patience (*A Little More Cider*, p. 256). Intending to propose to her, he instead gets drunk and attempts to assault her. It is at this point, while he is senseless, that she shouts 'A man! A man!' and the Deacon's temperate son Isaac appears. Patience didn't dislike the Deacon, but rather seemed keen on the proposal if he had been sober. However, when the drink took hold he changed, and it is the 'man' -- the sober Isaac -- who resolves the situation. Through acting honourably he maintains his masculinity, and becomes engaged to Polly Applejack. Also demonstrated in *The Fatal Glass* (1872) and *Broken Promises* (1892), the act of spiking a beverage or tricking an individual into thinking they were drinking something non-alcoholic, allowed authors of temperance drama to introduce alcohol to an otherwise moral character.

In the way that melodrama relies, as Peter Brooks argues, on 'the conflict of good and evil as opposites not subject to compromise' (1985, 36), so does temperance drama rely on the relationship between male and female spaces for its conflict. Of the many changes that occurred in America after the civil war, one of the most visible was the growth of the city and the spread of urbanisation. With the factories came workers, the farmhouses that had previously been the home to so many people was replaced with tenement buildings and dormitory living, and drinking became a common past-time, as 'saloons both reflected and

enhanced the lifestyle of young, male workers.’ (R. B. Stott 1990, 218) Stott also points out that ‘one of the most striking features of workers’ institutions is their masculine quality – women were excluded from almost all of them.’ (213) Contemporary moralists subsequently became worried that the young workers could be vulnerable to negative influences as they were straying far away from the constraints of the domestic sphere, a fear directly reflected in temperance drama (Halttunen 1982, 1). When the representatives of the ‘outside world’ disrupt the home, it opens up the potential for a shift in gender roles; if a man is overpowered by drink or other forces which render him unable to take care of his own business, his place may be taken by a woman.

Chapter 3: Men, Women and Spaces

In *The Drunkard* (1844), the saloonkeeper is immediately introduced as a trickster; although Edward is fully aware he is drinking – and orders too much each time – the landlord serves him his most expensive brandy before saying the price:

A six-pence sir. This is something ‘sperior; a bottle I keep for those who are willing to pay a little more. (271)

Edward is initially treated well due to his financial situation, however, upon becoming drunk, the landlord watches him get assaulted and only shows regret (over the unconscious body) that it will be a problem to get him home as he lives far away. The two-faced callousness is a central aspect to the character of the landlord and serves to highlight how it is the honourable Middletons who are the true ‘men’ of the play.

The Bartender does not feature as a central character in *Broken Promises* (1892), but does engage in some conversation with Mark Fields when he enters the Liquor Saloon:

MARK: Yes, here I am, and a pretty place it is for me.

BARTENDER: You were not obliged to come here, I suppose.

MARK: No, but you are glad to get my money anyway.

BARTENDER: Your money is as good as any one’s, sir.

MARK: It don’t matter to you whose heart is broken by it.

BARTENDER: That is not in my line. I am selling drinks now. You will have to look out for the heart business yourself. (p. 24) (Act II, Scene I)

In contrast to the personal and comforting home environment, the Bartender is an anonymous figure who has no concern for others. He is not in the 'heart business' (24), because his only concern is money, unlike Mark Field's daughter, who has concern only for her father.

Richard B. Stott outlines the correlation between workers in New York City, particularly those residing in boarding-houses (who are generally unmarried), and their past-time activities, including going to the theatre and saloons (1990, 195-225). Although the data mostly tells us how many people lived in what parts of the city, and what they did for a living, this information gives valuable clues as to their class and age. Of the social norms that Stott writes about, perhaps the most detailed is the bar culture, including the importance of meeting new people, moving from venue to venue as opposed to sitting in one place all night, and buying drinks for other 'good fellows' one could come across (219-221). These are all characteristics lacking in the plays studied here; the drinking father rarely moves between different taverns unless as a plot device to lead a young child out to find him, rarely socialises -- and if he does, it is with people who do not hold him in high regard -- and is more often than not the person *asking* for drinks, rather than treating others, although he may share. This instantly puts a distinction between the young man who is starting to drink, and the fearful character they may become -- a clear narrative of drunkenness, as indicated by the manners of the drinker in the play. The drinker himself, however, rarely introduces drink to others; that role is left to the seducing man, usually a villain with a wish for revenge or someone wanting to gain money out of the drinker. This fear existed outside of the theatre as well, as Karen Halttunen points out:

As thousands of young Americans broke away from traditional restraints on their conduct, middle-class moralists began to grown alarmed. Who would guide the

conduct of America's rising generation as they wandered far beyond the surveillance of their families, their towns, and their churches? (Halttunen 1986, 1)

In drunkard narratives, the drinking man frequently started his alcoholic habits through acts of coercion or deception, sometimes even in violent scenes that reflect sexual assault or rape. The innocent man could be physically forced to drink by a group of men, tricked by a shrewd saloonkeeper to think he is having water or lemonade (Parsons 2003, 139). The dangers of associating with strangers could be downfall of the young man:

The youth's character has been destroyed, step by fatal step, because he has been tricked into offering his confidence to a man without principle. (Halttunen 1986, 2)

Although usually a serious matter, the same theme easily gained a humorous twist in farces such as *A Little More Cider* (1870), where the act of the Deacon accidentally drinking whiskey ends well, and once he sobers up the mistake is accepted by the other characters, including his new fiancée Patience (262). This fear of corruption, in turn, made the mother a central, if absent, character in the lives of the workers in the city, as John Gillis outlines:

Mother's voice, mother's smile, and mother's love first became symbols in the Victorian period... It was then that mothers first became the objects of intense nostalgia, particularly among sons who were forced to leave family behind in their quest for success in an uncertain, fragmented world that made the wholeness and certainty mothers stood for so unattainable and therefore so attractive. (1997, 175-176)

Young men were already encouraged to admire the purity and innocence of women (Welter, 1966, 157); the change in how people lived and worked and the distance between young men

and their mothers only came to re-enforce the image the Victorians already had of the suffering mother as a moral compass for the male. In this sense, the layout of the City, the contrast between the domestic and the outside world, including the ‘un-homely’ boarding-house, is closely related to the gender roles expressed in temperance drama, as they are the result of very real-life fears of the people who lived and worked in the cities they were performed.

Karen Halttunen describes how in the new, horizontal American society one man could seize control over another, in the sense that there was a perceived lack of restraints on social mobility. In this sense men could adopt the ability to influence others without social status; for young men who have left the protection of the home, their only hope is to take command of his own ‘moral destiny’ (1982, 25). In *The Last Loaf* (1874), this dynamic is played out between Caleb and his son Harry, where Caleb is certain he has the power to make Mark -- a respectable man -- turn to drink:

I told you I had great influence with him; that, in the old days, I could lead him as I pleased. You see I still have the power.

(Baker, 206-7)

As a result of this, Harry disavows his father. While Caleb wishes to gain money by assuming authority over another man, Harry is the one with the upper hand; he already holds the power of self-control and temperance, a sign of morality. In *Seeing The Elephant* (1874), another character by the name of Harry uses his influence to reform people rather than lead them to temptation, making the young Johnny Somerby promise he will never touch liquor in his life. Johnny expresses disappointment in his own father who is prone to drinking, but Harry vows to change the older Somerby’s ways (76). After succeeding, he declares ‘You are now the

slave of an old custom, 'more honoured in the breach than the observance'. Don't let it master you again', in reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* declaring the Danes stand to gain more by neglecting their drinking habits than following them. (87) The conviction to show self-restraint for the sake of morality will always win in the world of temperance drama. Incidentally, both Harry's are motivated by their wish to marry a woman they love, and in both cases a flawed father is standing in their way. The lack of moral fibre in the older men will ultimately result in them being overpowered, as their questionable behaviour has alienated them from their standing in society.

Herbert Sussman argues that as the nineteenth century moved towards a commercial and industrialised society, money became the driving force of male competition. In the world of work, one man's ability to compete with others was intrinsically linked to his masculinity. In turn, this meant that previous male sexual ideals such as the 'predatory warrior' would be replaced with one of the monogamous family man (Sussman 2012, 82). The chance to rise above others in this environment, according to Anthony Rotundo, was dependent not only on a man being decisive in his actions; it was also essential for him to have 'the freedom from emotional dependence on others, freedom to be clear-headed and rational' (1987, 37). Inevitably, this would also involve being free from a dependency on alcohol. The act of drinking separates the ideal Victorian husband from the fallen man who cannot provide for his family, reflecting on the manner in which the conduct of an individual was understood to affect a wider circle. In turn, a focus on social responsibility affects the structure of society itself as Richard Barnett argues that it helped shift the centre ground of politics:

Towards the more paternalistic, socially conscious ideology of the early twentieth century – a movement which, amongst other things, sowed the seed of the welfare state, and, in the US, prepared the ground for prohibition. (2011, 92)

When drinking men in temperance dramas are shown to be failing their responsibilities, sober men like Harry in *Seeing The Elephant* (1874) and Larry in *Broken Promises* (1892) retain their ability to control the situation and achieve the ultimate goal: to marry and settle into a home. In this sense, they can achieve the contemporary idea of personal liberty as outlined by Elaine Frantz Parsons:

The temperance movement, throughout the nineteenth century, had been gradually using the term 'liberty' to mean not 'freedom from governmental interference' but rather 'freedom to enslavement from alcohol'. (2003, 46)

The dramatisation of family members choosing their drinking-hole over their home had strong roots in reality, as the living conditions of the urban poor made social environments the most pleasant place to be for many citizens. According to Richard Stott,

The saloon was immensely important in the lives of city workers and became the characteristic working-class institution. Both boarding-house residents and those who boarded with families had few options but to spend most evenings in the saloon. (217)

The saloonkeeper functions as a seducer through the competition between the saloon and house as the primary domestic space of the drinker; by creating a homely decor, warmth and lighting, the saloon ends up being viewed as a space made deliberately more appealing than the home. The saloonkeeper, through building a relationship with his customers, can also be seen as expressing a form of sexual competition with the wife and therefore challenging the role of family in the drinker's life (Parsons 2003, p. 122). Temperance activists were concerned, for this reason, that while money was spent on alcohol, the home environment would be neglected, thus reinforcing the appeal of the saloon. Reverend Sidney Dyer in 1865

describes in his lengthy poem *The Drunkard's Child* (1865) the draw of the saloon, and the effect this has on the home life of the family:

Tw'as seldom now that father sought
The home he had so wretched made;
And long the day since he had brought
A single comfort to their aid.
[...]
If friendly hand or their poor thrift
Had brought a comfort to their door,
Which he for rum could pawn or shift,
To dram-shops straight the prize he bore.

(17)

The women suffer as the 'prizes' referenced in the last line intended to adorn the home are instead used to purchase alcohol. Not only is the absence of the father, and his neglect of his family, a heinous crime, but his drinking prevents the mother and daughter from sustaining domestic comforts. Although the mother is usually responsible for keeping the home, temperance literature nevertheless makes a clear connection between household income and a comfortable domestic environment, where the father is expected to provide. *Broken Promises* (1892) by S. N. Cook instantly opens up with a commentary on this when Ned McCall contemplates on how his new step-father's home is much more agreeable than his previous residence (7), suggesting that his mother is not responsible for much homeliness; it has all been provided by her new husband and his money.

While economic stability in the home was the primary support for domesticity in the nineteenth century, much of the contemporary views on fatherhood and masculinity took money as being the result of a strong moral constitution rather than vice versa. In the

literature of the time, the man of the home became a central figure, who, when exemplifying moral conduct, had a thriving family and home environment (Guest 2007, 641). Although temperance narratives of the same time agreed that morality was a vital part of the father's role, it could just as easily be accepted that providing an income was just as important for domestic bliss. Of course, there is no possibility for the drunkard to ever bring in money to his family as whatever income he has will inevitably be squandered. Parsons outlines how the idea of taking care of one's own financial stability, an essential part of being a man, can be controlled by alcohol as if it were a person: 'According to one contemporary popular theory, then, alcohol itself could 'mind the business' of a drinker and cast his manhood into doubt' (62). Without full control of his own affairs, the nineteenth century man would be at a competitive disadvantage:

For a man to rise above others in this competitive world, he needed more than independent thought and action; he also had to have the freedom from emotional dependence on others, freedom to be clear-headed and rational. (Rotundo 1987, 37)

The ending scene in *The Little Brown Jug* (1874) is a strong example of how the domestic space can be invaded by the bottle -- in this case, a jug -- but subsequently conquered with a parent's love:

WILL: Mother, you don't know how happy I feel to be with you again, to see the old home, everything about the room so familiar; even the little brown jug has a familiar look. It was my first temptation.

JARIUS: Yes, boy, it was a family temptation. I knew it would work trouble. Ah, if the liquid poison that slays was never allowed to show itself in the home, there would be forever desolate hearthstones, fewer blighted lives.

JOHN: You're right, Jarius. When that boy fell, it opened my eyes, and not a drop of liquor shall ever enter my doors.

(Baker, 68)

Baker shows that alcohol is most evil when it enters the home, a sacred space. Everything in this scene focuses on the safety of the family domicile, which is familiar and intimate, and the jug is allowed to remain as a tantalising reminder of the dangers of drink, now that it is no longer a threat. Alcohol itself is confined to the outside world, while John's final line implies that the walls may be enough to keep his son safe.

While 'wife' and 'husband' are roles familiar to the audience, with a clear understanding of their basic characteristics, the Saloonkeeper is a far more flexible term. By name, his only identification is the space he inhabits, the saloon or tavern. He has the capability of being friendly and familiar, such as the optimistic Simon Slade in *Ten Nights In a Bar-Room* (1858), or he can be cold and hardened such as is the case with Tom Lloyd in *Three Years in a Man-Trap* (1888) and the bartender in *The Drunkard* (1844). While the first two texts open in the tavern, Slade's is a fairly new establishment and he is pleased to see a new customer; Lloyd on the other hand has a wide circle of regulars who infamously drink too much and would rather not see them. In these texts, the saloonkeeper, although different in temperament, fulfils a role of a somewhat responsible server; it is the drunkards and hot-headed young men who drink too much and the saloonkeeper is helpless. Contrasting this with Sidney Dyer's *The Drunkard's Child* (1865), where the readers are encouraged to curse

‘the vile rum-selling brood’ (37) -- implying the saloonkeepers are a race in their own right -- other temperance literature was clearly not so forgiving of those who sold alcohol.

In real life, a saloonkeeper could easily become a villain through providing alcohol to their customers, as *The New York Times* reported:

In the Circuit Court to-day a jury rendered a verdict against saloon keepers in favor of the wife of a habitual drunkard for \$1000 damages for selling liquor to her husband after being warned not to do so. The verdict is the largest ever given in a case of this kind in the State. Two saloon keepers were on the jury.

(*Verdict For A Drunkard's Wife*, April 29th 1885)

The phrase ‘case of this kind’ used above would indicate that it was not a unique occurrence to hold saloonkeepers responsible for the drinking habits of their customers. In *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* (1858), the relationship between Simon Slade and Joe Morgan is particularly tense, as both blames the other for the problems caused. Morgan may be a troublesome alcoholic, but Slade serves a range of drunkards, one of whom attacks Morgan’s young daughter. In both real life and fiction, it is the innocent who are regarded as suffering, but also responsibility seems to lie with the one who serves alcohol, not necessarily the one who drinks it. An aspect unique to nineteenth-century temperance literature is the focus on drink itself, as opposed to the act of consuming it. Alcohol, in the guise of a demon, is to be cast out of the lives of moral citizens – in this manner, it is not the *act* of drinking that needs to be abstained from, but the bottle needs to be removed altogether. As a moral evil to all who touch it, including abstainers such as innkeeper Slade in *Ten Nights*, the bottle can bring its ruin to anyone regardless of whether they consume the contents (McArthur 1989, 527-8).

The Drunkard (1844) by W. H Smith uses the domestic space as a frame for the play, where the opening scene is in an idyllic country cottage. The man of the house has died, and the wife and daughter lament at their financial situation. A large portion of the plot centres on the cottage and whether they will stay there. In the end, through a series of fortunate circumstances and the strong morals of the central characters, the daughter moves back with her new husband and child. The mother has died, but the idyllic domestic sphere is undisturbed. Kristen Guest's study of male identity and money in melodrama briefly touches on the apparent simplicity of temperance plays, where the moral dilemmas and conflicts can often be resolved entirely through giving up drink (Guest 2007, 636). The implication here is that the male character, ultimately, has complete power over his own fate. There are no external factors affecting him within this world; lack of money or social standing is only the result of drink, the effect of which is reversible. *The Drunkard* typifies this attitude through its simple, blissful ending: regardless of the pain, death or heartbreak caused by drinking, mere abstinence is enough to allow the return of domestic harmony, and, of course, financial stability.

The saloon features twice in *The Drunkard*: once in the rural village, once in the city. Although the interior is not described as fancy or even cosy, the saloon functions as a sort of 'home' for the drunkard. When Edward Middleton meets the landlord who first served him, declaring his bar 'a poison shop' and 'loathsome den', the landlord replies:

Well, what brought you to my house? You had your senses, I did not invite you, did I?
(289-90) (Act IV, Scene I)

This exchange firmly places the saloon not as merely a business, but as the 'house' of the landlord, a second home in the play, competing with the domestic space, which is fragile and

uncertain. The outside influence on the home can come from casual drinkers as well as landlords. Douglas Jerrold's *The Rent Day* (1832), similarly to *The Drunkard*, concerns the repossession of the family home due to poverty. In this case, alcohol has not been the downfall of the family man, but rather the vice of the men repossessing the house. Therefore, drinking serves here as an outside threat by invading the family sphere in a physical manner, and 'the bottle', in a metaphorical sense, enters the home:

There are dangerous social forces of various kinds (crime groups, prostitutes, meddling middle-class reformers) who threaten the heroine's purity and goodness. In a sense, this latter type embodies the Thoreauvian notion of the city or the 'crowd' as leading to evils like poverty, crime, dishonesty, moral corruption. (Kaplan 1992, 99)

One of the signifying elements of moral reform drama is the use of written (and sometimes verbal) contracts as a plot device. *The Drunkard* in particular relies heavily on various property contracts as well as Edward's grandfather's will to create or resolve conflicts. 'Abstract categories of moral behaviour' widely appear in melodrama as 'endurance', 'temptation', 'judgement', 'forgiveness', and so on (McConachie 1992, 189). With the urban expansion, increasing population of slums and new waves of immigration, urbanites risked ending up in situations which labelled them as socially or morally deviant. Drinking was one of these (187).

In *Fashion* (1845) the character of Mr. Tiffany commits fraud in order to support his extravagant wife's habits, yet his otherwise respectable demeanour puts him above the drunken Mr. Snobson. As Jeffrey H. Richards explains:

Tiffany commits forgery in the name of domestic felicity, but is saved in the eyes of the audience by himself being the object of a more hateful crime, blackmail.

(1997, xxx)

The focus here is on the comparison of the two crimes, but his comment on ‘domestic felicity’ is also a key point in Richards’ introduction; although Tiffany may have acquired money in a dishonest manner, he did so for the sake of harmony in the home. Meanwhile, Snobson continues his dishonesty by continually preaching temperance despite being drunk. The inability of the drunkard to conduct honest business is intrinsically linked to his manhood in nineteenth-century society. Through not being in charge of his own will, first by being susceptible to drink, and then being under the influence of it, the ability of a man to fulfil a role of responsibility is cast into doubt. In *Fashion* this is used for humour, as the audience understands that Snobson’s grandiose ideas will not come to fruition. In standard temperance drama, this principle is instead used to show how a father or husband will fail to uphold his role in the home; after all, a drunkard’s manhood would inevitably be in question, ‘because he was unable to exert his will over his own body and interests’ (Parsons 2003, 55). This is what makes the drinking character so malleable: alcohol opens up endless possibilities to have him manipulated by other people.

As Larry Bailey in *Broken Promises* (1892) is teetotal, it causes a problem when his saboteurs require him to be drunk in order to break up his engagement; anticipating that he will not drink, it is decided they will use drugs instead. Larry’s enemies and the audience share the understanding that a man with a strong moral constitution will not simply take one drink when he has made a vow of sobriety, and in the style of temperance reformers, his fiancée Kittie will not marry someone who consumes alcohol because she knows that it would endanger his manhood (Parsons 2003, 64). Her father’s alcoholism is impairing his

ability to care for her, leaving his new wife in charge of the household. When Kittie and Mrs. Fields in *Broken Promises* argue, the latter refers to herself as ‘the mistress of this house’ and states that she herself sets the rules to live by. Kittie retorts that it is in fact her father’s house and calls Mrs. Fields an ‘intruder’ (20). From this point onwards, the domestic space becomes the centre of an ongoing struggle for power in the play. The tension reaches breaking point when Kittie refuses to go to her room (thus being banished from the communal space), and Mrs. Fields tries to get Jim to take her there by force. This violent act, of a man forcing a young woman, is interrupted by Mark Fields but unfortunately he is drunk. Drinking, then, demonstrably imparts his ability to protect his daughter. He is ridiculed by Mrs. Fields and Jim, and accosted by Kittie, who exclaims ‘They are laughing to think what a wreck they have made you, laughing at my misery, laughing to think that you are no longer man enough to protect your daughter’ (p. 21). In the end, it is Larry Bailey who has to come to the rescue.

In *The Little Brown Jug* (1874) by George Melville Baker, Ned declares that he never drinks, because his mother’s last request was that he should never touch it, and that a mother’s word is sacred. While everyone discusses the merits of their hard-working mothers over a jug of grog, Hannah burns the pies in the oven, in a symbolic act of neglect. Karen Halttunen regards the domestic sphere as ‘closed off, hermetically sealed from the poisonous air of the world outside’ (1986, 59). In *The Little Brown Jug*, the introduction of alcohol to the parlour has caused a disturbance; the domestic sphere has been invaded, and the fact that Ned’s mother is deceased has set the stage for a chaotic home. Victorian culture emphasised frequently that it was the mother who upheld Christian morality in the home, showing their husbands and children how to live a temperate life by example (Barnett 2011, 120). The absence of the mother in the home of *The Little Brown Jug*, despite her dying wish,

leads at first to hilarious consequence; the implication being that morality inevitably has started to slide without her motherly guidance.

Fashion by Anna Cora Mowatt (1845) is acted out entirely within the domestic space, particularly interesting to note as the author is female. The author inhabited this space herself, not only in real life as a middle-class woman, but also on stage as she played the motherless heroine Gertrude (Manuel, 34). Carme Manuel reads the play as a social commentary, arguing that ‘Mowatt transforms the conventional drawing room comedy of manners into a satire on the influence of mothers’, in a society where ‘men should control the institutions of worldly power while women exercised their more spiritual expertise in home and family matters’. (2000, p. 37-38) The female characters of the play are capable of causing havoc in their home, either through valuing fashion over sensibility (Manuel, 38), compromising their common sense, or making blunders in the name of love. Earlier than the majority of temperance dramas, *Fashion* nevertheless uses alcohol for comedic effect, as well as a marker of character for the villain. Mr. Snobson, described as ‘a rare species of Confidential Clerk’ (Mowatt, 311), appears ‘somewhat intoxicated’ during the finale, and after wrongly accusing other characters of themselves being drunk, makes an attempt at blackmailing Mr. Tiffany. After realising that he is himself an accessory to the crime of fraud, Snobson proceeds to suggest that he and Tiffany run away to California, exclaiming, ‘You can set up for a writing master [...] and I – I’ll give lectures on temperance!’ (365). *Fashion* is a play primarily about the falsehoods that people adopt for the sake of societal roles; no-one is truthful about their own past, or they attempt to attain a new role for themselves. Snobson becomes guilty of this himself when he runs off, still under the influence of alcohol, to become a temperance speaker on the West Coast. Unlike the female characters who remain within the walls of the house, he is free to leave and enter the world outside, drunk or not.

The ending of *Fashion* sees the return to domestic bliss, much like the ending of *The Drunkard* (1844). Although the men and women of temperance drama inhabit fundamentally different spaces, there is still opportunity for the women to cross over into the Saloon or the City, in order to restore the conflict that has arisen through a man's drinking. The aim, however, is always to return to the domestic home, the 'proper sphere' of nineteenth-century womanhood (Welter, 1966, 153). While alcohol creates the conflicts that drive temperance drama, it is nearly always a woman who must set the situation right through her own agency.

Chapter 4: Morality, Society and the Drunkard

An odd example of the significance of alcohol in late nineteenth-century drama is *Out in the Streets* (n.d.) by S. N. Cook, where the full title declares it a ‘temperance drama’, despite drinking not occurring anywhere in the script. The mere mention of an absent husband being a drinker (17) is enough to warrant this description, and demonstrates how heavily the mention of alcohol can influence a plot. From our contemporary perspective, drinking can appear initially to be a superficial activity, and alcohol a simple prop. When Geoffrey Proehl raises this issue, he concludes that it has far too much significance to be overlooked (1997, 23). The immediacy of such acts of drinking, he argues, can end up ignored in drama criticism, as it conflicts with what he calls a traditional ‘metaphor of surface and depth’, where the critic seeks a ‘hidden meaning’ to decode. He continues to state that instead of searching for anything hidden, the critic should rather embrace what is visible in temperance drama, in order to analyse the theatrical meaning of alcohol as a device, not just in the era of the temperance play, but ‘as a series of functions available for ready use by anyone within the culture who makes plays’ (Proehl 1997, 20). In addition to this, the use of temperance ideology could become a marketing strategy, as Julia Ward Howe points out in an article for the *New York Times* regarding a performance of *The Drunkard*:

People from the surrounding country, I was told, would come in town to see the exhibit at [The Odeon, Boston]... and would stay to witness this highly moral drama without feeling obliged to accuse themselves of having entered ‘a wicked theatre’. An almost similar state of things existed in New York.

(Howe 1901)

The issue of drinking resonated with people, and as such it became acceptable to attend performances in places that respectable people otherwise wouldn't attend.

With the addition of these people, the audience numbers were staggering and the popularity of temperance drama became firmly established in American society; although Daniel Okrent dismisses *The Drunkard* (1844) as 'an overripe melodrama', he also accepts that 'it drew as many as three thousand people to a single performance' (2010, 11). Some theatres might still insist that allowing prostitutes to operate in their venue was crucial to business, but P.T. Barnum banned them outright. Unlike other family-friendly establishments, he implemented a wide-scale cleanup of immoral activities that normally took place in theatres, banning alcohol, prostitution, and promoting moral acts for the stage. *The Drunkard* broke New York records by running for over 100 performances, indicating that morality in the theatre actually worked when it came to attracting an audience (Burrows and Wallace 1999, 815). Theatre managers in the latter part of the nineteenth century came to widely accept that attracting women to the theatre meant also attracting their children, increasing their overall revenue; according to Gunther Barth, this 'required not only staging a clean and entertaining bill but also upgrading the audience.' (1980, 213-14)

The widespread popularity of family-friendly temperance drama was not just observed in Boston and New York City; in Chicago, one reviewer determined that none of the new plays would 'outlast a single season', except Hoyt's *A Temperance Town* which would remain 'indefinitely' (New York Times 1892). When Hoyt's play came to New York the next year, the reception was not as great as in Chicago, as one reviewer points out, 'perhaps because too much was expected' (New York Times 1893). Although the play was a farce, the critic retained the view that it also appeared too similar to the 'once familiar' *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room*. If nothing else, this indicates that although *Ten Nights* was no longer a popular drama, its themes and narrative was fairly well-known to the theatre audiences; no

surprise, if we are to consider the findings that over one hundred plays specifically devoted to temperance were published during the century (Hixon and Hennessee 1977, 566-8). The argument, therefore, is that the connection between popular theatre and pre-prohibition thought on alcohol in America can be useful in an analysis of how drama related to public opinion and politics.

The focus of temperance plays changed during the 1870s as a result of the increasing number of texts and plays written by female playwrights, both professional and amateur. Increasingly, temperance plays expressed the view that women ultimately held the power to persuade a husband not to drink, or to refuse marriage to a man unless he were to sign the pledge (Frick, 2003, 164-5). Contrast this with John W. Crowley (1997), who argues that *male* authorship of temperance literature firmly places women as helpless victims, and that ‘Victorian ideology of intemperance perceived it as a male problem in which women [...] figured only as bystanders’ (132, n.16). Playing the role of a bystander, however, did not necessarily reduce the extent to which women could utilise the medium of fiction to explore issues central to themselves. On the contrary, their status as victim instead opened up dialogue for women’s rights. As a life of drink was considered to be a primarily male vocation, women were readily accepted as temperance activists, and in turn created a framework for women to express their own concerns and issues beyond temperance. When they experience great hardship despite depicting morality and courage, the perpetual victimisation of female characters in temperance drama, rather than weakening the position of women, instead could create discussion and a greater understanding of their needs (Mattingly, 124, 129).

Social, cultural and economic changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution also came with new ideas regarding the balance of work and home, including that of the responsibilities taken on by husband and wife. Women now became the moral heart of the

home, responsible not just for general domestic matters, but the moral behaviour of the members of her household, something which had previously not been the case (McArthur 1989, 533-534). Many of the themes of temperance drama, when taken in this context, can be seen as specific of their era:

Women retaliated [against patriarchy] by trying to restrain the power of men within boundaries that would curb its destructiveness. In attempting to control male behaviour through temperance, Mary Middleton [in *The Drunkard*] and Fanny Morgan[in *Ten Nights*] acted out the same option on stage that the legion of antebellum women who opposed liquor exercised in real life. (McArthur 1989, 535)

As we can see, Mary and Fanny were not alone in trying to limit the drinking behaviours of their loved ones. The moral influence of women upon men is a common reoccurrence in temperance drama, including Kittie's refusal to marry Larry if he drinks in *Broken Promises* (1892), and the vow of sobriety that Ned has made to his late mother in *The Little Brown Jug* (1874). The power of these women to influence others is a reflection of society's understanding of them as moral homemakers; but later in the nineteenth century it could also reflect the increasing presence of female activists in the temperance movement. Temperance literature was of course not limited to the theatre, but expanded to include poetry, leaflets, books and speeches, authored by men as well as women. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was one of many societies that sought to bring change to alcohol legislation in the latter part of the century, in order to protect women and children from the dangers of drink, but Carol Mattingly suggests that this kind of involvement developed into campaigns for wider social change:

Since women were dependent on men, both legally and economically they were, indeed, the victims of intemperance. But problems associated with alcohol might readily be generalized beyond the specific circumstances involving the drunkard. Much of the fiction labelled 'temperance' actually addresses the issue of alcohol only superficially, primarily offering advice for women, presenting role models for them, or indicating unequal legal and social treatment of the sexes. (Mattingly, 126)

The extent to which women controlled temperance fiction in relation to the theatre is hard to ascertain, not just because American theatre lacks a comprehensive study of female authorship (Bennett 2010, 65), but also because so many performances were most likely of the amateur kind. George M. Baker's prolific volumes of temperance dramas which he titled as being 'intended for the home' indicates a market whose participants have been lost in history.

Although women outnumbered men in temperance circles, their presence as playwrights were uncommon prior to the 1870s. This relative lack of female authorship creates a problematic situation when studying temperance drama from a standpoint on gender, as it might seem the perspective will be overwhelmingly male-led. However, the female authors that did provide a significant output of temperance materials in the late nineteenth century are still able to inform our understanding of women's concerns at the time. Most notable is Nellie Bradley, who aside from producing large volumes of plays, poetry and music, was also a reformer. Her career spanned two decades, but in addition to the nine temperance dramas that we know of, she also wrote materials for the education of children. Similarly, Ida Buxton aimed *On To Victory* towards a young audience, allowing for a chorus of children to sing the praises of temperance. Many of the materials produced by women were seemingly intended for amateur performances in meeting halls and clubs (Frick 2003,

162-164). The positive influence of amateur theatricals on the people involved was preached by a vast selection of instruction books, making claims such as ‘few amusements yield more genuine pleasure and instruction’ and insisting that ‘among the refined and cultivated none are more popular’ (Howard 1870, p. 7). These ‘how-to’ books and theatrical manuals promised ‘the actualisation of newer, better selves’, establishing the values that one’s family could gain from private theatricals (Chapman 1996, p. 29). For the temperance movement, the hope was that through such performances children could be led away from the influence of drink. Smith-Rosenberg discusses the need to look for ‘evidence of women’s reaction’ to study a female historical perspective, and suggests that we should instead analyse the way women manipulated their surrounding environment (1985, 17). Although, as Elaine Hadley argues, ‘the melodramatic mode incorporated that male-oriented culture, embodying its competitiveness, its insatiable desires, its manias’, at the same time ‘the feminine voice [...] could be seen to be militantly masculine’. (1995, 186) Through women like Ida Buxton and Nellie Bradley, we see how women could take the role they had been given as caregivers, and use it to reach a new audience. In the late nineteenth century, children could watch dramas intended just for them; in 1920 a constitutional ban on alcohol was signed.

The importance of the drunkard’s narrative in real life appears in many places. Sources suggest that the theatricalisation of drinkers occur in news reporting, amateur dramatics, and social behaviour. Physical appearance is of utmost importance in the nineteenth-century American City, where new people meet every day and judgements have to be made quickly of a person character, as ‘whenever daily social life is characterised by face-to-face contact with strangers, the fleeting impressions made by surface appearances become of great importance’ (Halttunen 1986, 39). These fleeting impressions, however, risk being based on theatrical ideas of character. Halttunen later explains the use of stage makeup in

parlour dramatics, where stock characters have specific appearances to make themselves easily recognisable even when the actor or actress is inexperienced:

The stage drunkard's face was given a flushed cast, with a few purplish spots on the cheeks and nose, while his emaciated wife and children had gaunt faces with dark shadows. (1986, 178)

It's worthwhile noting that it is presumed the drunkard must have a wife and children -- they are an essential part of the narrative.

If the drunkard and his family have a set appearance, does this reinforce a public view of their character in real life? Certainly the report of a domestic disturbance where the abuse of a woman and her children by her drunken husband, Mr. George Bechtel, titled *The Old Story of the Drunkard's Wife* (1878) suggests that fiction can be applied seamlessly to reality. Real life becomes an 'old story' where it is inevitable that such a man will behave a certain way, and that his wife (who is not named) can expect nothing more. The damage to women done through their husbands and sons drinking was seen as a very real threat to domestic life:

Middle-class reformers urged that intemperance injured all women in some way [and] they emphasized certain images of victimized woman more than others. [...] "Alcohol, the foe of humanity, is the demon curse of the domestic sphere", asserted Lorenzo Dow Johnson, "the murderer of countless thousands of wives and mothers". (Martin 2008, 40)

Elaine Frantz Parsons describes an account of the effect alcohol had on Andrew Faivre, a tailor residing in Iowa in the late nineteenth century. His story, although true, bears similarities to fictional accounts of drunkards, and Parsons outlines the issue:

[Faivre] represented the two aspects that temperance reformers believed to be the essence of the national drinking problem. Because of drink, he was unable to fulfil his gendered role as head of household, and he was rendered utterly helpless, seemingly unable to take responsibility for his actions. His failure forced the women of his household to assume culturally inappropriate roles, both as heads of household and as litigants in a suit against his saloonkeepers. [...] Somehow, many speculated, the alcohol Faivre drank must have fundamentally transformed him, his values, his desires. (2003, 3)

The issue of gendered roles, alcohol and morality in the drunkard's narrative are interesting in themselves; however, this does not clarify whether the realities of people like Faivre were repeated in fictional accounts, or whether the public depiction of men such as himself were merely smaller parts of a larger narrative. This distinction also makes the difference between whether temperance theatre was a reflection of real-life struggles, or whether perceptions of the reality of drinking and alcohol was formed, and then amplified, through fictional narratives.

The private lives of people, previously not available for wider public scrutiny, in the mid- to late nineteenth-century media became a new fascination. With a larger variety of readers, combined with the inherent isolation of the metropolitan city, reporters began to search for controversial topics to cover. Events that happened behind closed doors, such as rape, adultery or domestic abuse, became sensational events that thousands of readers could

view from a distance, like an audience. In the same way that the real-life horrors of alcoholism were represented in the theatre, news reports used fictional elements to bring interest to their stories (Barth 1980, 65, 74). The connection between real life and theatre is made as early as 1865 in the *New York Times*. The writer states:

BARNUM's temperance drama is very good in its way, but it is all tame recital when compared with our daily morning reports from the police stations... in it, all the actors are up in their parts. (*New York Times* 1865)

He then goes on to claim that 'nearly every applicant is a victim of the wine-cup' and lists statistics for the number of jailed individuals across the station-houses in the city. Here, crime is theatricalised; on one hand, the article may seek to highlight that real crime exists outside of the moral dilemmas of theatre, but on the other, it creates characters of the people who commit crimes under the influence of alcohol (albeit also recognising them as 'victims'). A few years later, a review of *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* performed at Barnum's Museum found that although it could want no more to 'awaken public morality', a criticism was nevertheless made of the 'thoroughly imaginary [*sic*] representation of complete intoxication' by Mr. Yankee Locke (*The New York Times* 1867). While actual drunken criminality is treated as a performance, the theatre was subsequently criticised for its shortcomings in portraying drunkenness; clearly, it could not live up to the graphic expectations that real life had created.

Conclusion

John Ruskin's speech on the relationship between men and women in Victorian culture, and the concept of *home* and *outside* as strict gendered spaces, demonstrates a parallel to the staged dichotomy of good and evil in temperance drama. Peter Brooks argues that 'what we most retain from any consideration of melodramatic structures is the sense of fundamental bipolar contrast and clash... The conflict of good and evil as opposites'. The virtue, or innocence, that melodrama is based on, must be disturbed by what Brooks calls the 'troubler': an intruder whose fall will allow for the proof of virtue at the end (Brooks 1985, 29, 36). The signifier of temperance drama is where drinking becomes this catalyst for the disturbance of innocence; like a classic villain, alcohol itself takes on the role of 'troubler of innocence', often disguised as a friend. The other stock characters often found in Victorian melodrama are present (Booth 1991, 126), but unlike texts where a hero fights his physical foe, the drunkard is more often fighting an internal struggle with his addition to the bottle. If the characters on the stage adopt the 'primary psychic roles' of 'father, mother, child' that Brooks consider to be part of the expressions of melodrama (Brooks 1985, 4), the drinking father here takes on the role of a child – fundamentally disturbing the order of virtuous gender roles.

The spaces that women inhabit at the beginning of *The Drunkard*, *Ten Nights*, and *Broken Promises*, are disrupted by the introduction of alcohol to family life. John Ruskin's notion of the home as ruled by the wife, where there 'need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offense', cannot be sustained when the husband takes to drinking; with the intrusion of an outside evil force, the domestic sphere will decay. Ruskin also notes that although a man should face strife and hardship in the outside world which he will overcome, he must guard the woman from this, but that is precisely where the drunkard fails: by taking

his struggles into the home, his manhood is lost. When the father/husband adopts the psychological 'child' role, it is usually a female character who becomes his protector and saviour, whether she is his wife, daughter or beloved. Temperance drama relies on the woman to be a representation of virtue, even if that means she has to defy Ruskin's idea that she is 'not for battle'. In both fictional and real-life accounts of temperate women, they are not averse to fighting for their own cause.

The introduction of alcohol to the plot of a temperance drama becomes a driving force for the play by radically altering the lives and relationships of the characters, as we can see by the actions they take in response. When a woman has to become the breadwinner for the family, or a child takes on the responsibility of carer for the drunken father, the traditional roles of nineteenth-century society become skewed as the women are removed from the domestic sphere and the men lose their parental authority. *The Fatal Glass*, *The Drunkard*, and *The Last Loaf* all feature women who have had to seek employment to maintain the home, undermining any economic power their husbands might previously have had. Even more radically, in *The Fatal Glass* (1872), Fanny humiliates her husband Bob as well as his drinking friends by assaulting them. The act of invading the male space, storming into the Saloon with a crowd of angry wives and setting fire to the inventory, is in radical contrast to the idea that women only control the domestic space. While nineteenth-century thought encouraged women to engage in spiritual and religious pursuits alongside their domestic duties (Welter, 1966, 153), these actions, although they come from a moral standpoint, are still in stark contrast to the values of piety and submissiveness that Barbara Welter (1966, 152) and John Ruskin consider essential to the female ideal of the time.

Contradicting Ruskin's view of woman as someone who does not enter conflict or confrontation, *The Last Loaf* (1874) shows Kate as the one who makes decisions for her daughter by trying to prevent the wrong man from proposing to her, deciding that she will

‘battle’ for her child (200). Similarly, the man’s role as defender is challenged when Mark Fields in *Broken Promises* (1892) fails to protect Kittie from being attacked, his drunkenness mocked by a controlling wife. Mrs. Fields crowns herself head of the household, and he is powerless to do anything about it – a reversal of Victorian gender norms. Alcohol has the ability to strip a character of their virtue: in *The Drunkard* (1844), Edward’s parting words to Mary involves him begging her, ‘do not call me husband’. To Edward, his role as husband is not just a legal/practical one, but symbolic of manhood itself. Failing at one is failing at the other.

Edward’s interactions with Mr. Cribbs show the tense relationships that men could have between each other as a result of the man’s role in conquest. The latter holds resentment because of his jealousy over Edward’s late father, which in turn spurs him to ruin Edward’s finances and family any way he can. Temperance drama often features men competing with one another over money and women, as demonstrated in *Broken Promises* and *The Last Loaf* by George M. Baker, as well as *The Fatal Glass* by James M’Closkey and, of course, *The Drunkard*. Much of the tragedy is a result of deceit between men, often involving matters such as the sale of a house, or a wish to impede wedding plans. Contemporary thought considered the ability of a man to conduct business was hampered while drinking, through allowing alcohol to take over his rational thought (Parsons 2003, 62). It should follow on from this that the saloon is detrimental to any man needing to provide for his family, as it is not only a place where drink can be found in abundance, but a venue for villainous characters to take advantage of others.

Parsons states that one of the reasons why temperance literature was so overtly gendered was due to the importance of ‘interiority’ in nineteenth century thought, meaning that the domestic space was considered a place protected from outside forces of corruption (Parsons 2003, 55). Still, an intrinsic part of the narrative of most temperance plays is

precisely that alcohol *does* invade the home, either in the form of the disruptive bottle, or in the shape of a man who has been drinking. Another important aspect is the appearance of the saloon as a second domestic environment, a pseudo-home that the drinker can turn to, like Edward does in *The Drunkard*. Both Parsons (122) and Richard Stott (R. B. Stott 1990, 217) argue that a saloon could have the aesthetic and social appeal of an intimate home, especially for people in the city who otherwise may have been living in cramped, unpleasant housing. However, as far as temperance drama is concerned, any affection shown in such a place by the saloonkeeper and the patrons is false and temporary; as Edward discovers when he's ejected from the premises after running out of money. In this sense, what is considered a 'male' space in the gender dichotomy of temperance drama is actually a falsehood attempting to impersonate the domestic sphere.

The saloon invasion that Fanny leads in *The Fatal Glass* (1872) shows a distinct parallel with the crusades led by the Women's Christian Temperance Union in the two years that followed the publishing of the play. If the female spaces of interiority should be protected from outside forces of corruption, the saloons in this case were not given the same privilege. Similarly, real life was not protected from the kind of drama unfolding on the temperance stage, and the drunkard narrative is frequently reflected in contemporary accounts of American life. The way in which lurid details of private life could be discussed in public is outlined by both Scott C. Martin and Gunther Barth, and images of victimised women in particular became an attraction for the general public audience (Martin 40; Barth 65, 74). The fact that Barnum's temperance productions were declared to be a 'tame recital' of real drunkards (*New York Times* 1865) and that the writer felt it necessary to make a comparison, shows us that the staged narrative resonated with the public even when it could appear caricatured. *The Drunkard's* record-breaking run at Barnum's Museum would certainly indicate that the drunkard narrative drew a crowd.

A very real representation of women's issues is the drama *Grace Huntley* (1833), where Grace has testified against her criminal husband, thereby breaking up the family and now caring for their child by herself. Along with a fascination for stories of abuse, the public also consumed a range of materials that addressed the ways in which women could take control when faced with intemperate husbands, and they increasingly started taking legal matters into their own hands. Mattingly goes so far as to regard temperance fiction to be a type of self-help manual for its readers (126). One preventative measure was to simply refuse to marry a man who drinks, a tactic employed by female characters in *The Fatal Glass* and *Broken Promises*; Fanny, Mabel and Kittie all maintain control of their own future by holding alcohol hostage. In each case, the tactic works and their men swear off alcohol forever, showing the economic power that women's bodies hold in temperance drama. The dramatic act of Edward to leave his home for the big city in *The Drunkard* can be seen as symbolic of the fear of urban sprawl and population affecting traditional ideas of family life. The men leaving the domestic sphere to find work were also breaking away from the virtues of female influence, creating in the minds of the public a fear of corruption of their young men (Halttunen, 1986, 1). On the temperance stage, this fear subsides when such a man marries a virtuous woman.

I hope to have shown that the gendered spaces which John Ruskin outlines in detail, although they may represent a Victorian ideal of domesticity, are repeatedly changed and broken when alcohol is in the picture. Parsons argues that because the drunkard's home was 'a space in which gender roles were perversely inverted', the state governments of the latter part of the nineteenth century began to design legislation to give women increased legal powers and protection (Parsons 2003, 163). The female characters of temperance drama are a mirror of the nineteenth-century women who sought change in their society, and their concerns led discussions on legislative action. This increased sympathy for a 'socially

conscious ideology' was, according to Richard Barnett, instrumental in leading the way towards prohibition (2011, 92). The drunkard narrative, in its reflection of the concerns of nineteenth-century society, changed the restrictions of gendered spaces and power.

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