8

The last tyrant:
the rise of temperance

Through the influence of strong drink, we are now living in worse than Egyptian oppression. Banish this pernicious article from common use and we shall at once breath in all the freedom and happiness of Canaan. (*Temperance Magazine and Review*)

If they would rest their cause on the fair ground of temperance for those who can be temperate, and total abstinence for those who cannot be temperate … we should regard them as a good example and a public benefit. But, running a-muck like mad Malays, we look upon them as a bad example, and a public evil, only less intolerable than drunkenness itself. (Charles Dickens)

As Brian Harrison has pointed out, the single factor which distinguished the Victorian temperance movement from the raft of anti-drink activity that preceded it was the emergence of organised temperance societies.[1] That is, local, and later national, associations whose defining feature was their goal of reducing or eradicating alcohol consumption across society. The Society for the Reformation of Manners had been active in the late seventeenth century and a raft of 'loyal associations' emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century.[2] The Proclamation Society existed alongside other groups such as The Society for the Reformation of Principles, not to mention campaigning organisations like the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The Society for the Suppression of Vice boasted 1,200 members in 1804 and included a number of groups based outside the capital.[3] William Wilberforce's prominent role in the Proclamation Society, the Abolition Society and the Vice Society illustrates the extent to which many of these associations drew their membership from the evangelical wing of upper-class Anglican society. Evangelicalism was spreading the message of organised social and moral reform at the same time as increasing numbers of individuals were publicly mooting the idea of partial or even total abstinence from alcoholic drinks. However, it was the 'fusion of the idea of association with the idea of abstinence' which was needed to kick-start the temperance campaign proper.[4]

Organising temperance

One or two idiosyncratic total abstention societies had sprung up in the early nineteenth century. In June 1817 a nailer from Skibereen, one Jeffrey Sedwards, set up a total abstinence society with twelve friends. Similar groups followed in nearby communities, but the movement was short-lived and soon fell into obscurity.[5] In Manchester a religious sect calling themselves the Cowherdites renounced alcohol in 1809, but this was part of a wider asceticism which also included becoming vegetarian. Large-scale and well-organised temperance associations were, as later temperance campaigners were always quick to recognise, an American idea. Small anti-spirits societies had begun to form sporadically in America as early as 1808, including the sizeable Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (founded in Boston in 1813). However, it was the formation of the American Temperance Society (ATS) in 1826 which marked a turning point. The ATS was a not just a society whose members pledged to abstain from drinking spirits, but one whose ambitions were national, indeed international, reform.

In post-colonial America, as in Hanoverian England, alcohol consumption tapped into deep-set concerns about both freedom and national identity. In England, as we have seen, there was tension between the liberty of the 'free-born Englishman' to drink alcohol and the polite idea of rational social progress. In America high levels of alcohol consumption in the late eighteenth century raised questions that went to the heart of what the newly independent nation's idea of itself was. W. J. Rorabaugh has shown the extent to which the right to get drunk became entrenched in post-colonial popular culture almost as an expression of the freedoms that the War of Independence had secured, while at the same time religious preachers, railing against the sinfulness of drunkenness in terms already familiar, hitched their arguments to both the notion of America's religious destiny and its achievement of historically unprecedented political freedoms.[6] Lyman Beecher, whose 'Six Sermons on Intemperance' (1825) had a direct influence on the founding of the ATS,[7] warned that once the people were 'perverted by intemperance, ambition needs no better implements with which to dig the graves of our liberties, and entomb our glory'.[8]

The sermons of American preachers associated with the ATS, brought over to Britain by American seamen commanding ships which ran on temperance principles, triggered the formation of organised anti-spirits societies in Britain. Remarkably, a number of anti-spirits societies were founded almost simultaneously in the late summer of 1829 by people who were apparently unaware of each others' activities. In August Dr John Edgar, secretary of the Belfast Religious Tract Society, wrote a public temperance

appeal, while at the same time in New Ross, Wexford, Revd George Carr established a temperance society at his local Quaker meeting house. Meanwhile one John Dunlop was on the verge of setting up a temperance society in Greenock, just outside of Glasgow. Within a year there would be temperance societies in the major cities throughout Britain, including Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Dublin, Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle, Bradford and, from November 1830, London.

It is important to emphasise that none of the temperance societies which were formed between 1829 and 1831 preached total abstinence. They only required their members to foreswear spirits (except, in most cases, for 'medicinal purposes') and to campaign for the reduction of spirit consumption and drunkenness in their communities. They caught on for a number of reasons. Certainly, the increased levels of spirit consumption after 1825 had prepared the ground for an organised response to what some saw as the beginnings of a new gin craze, but the new temperance societies also tapped into (and were largely driven by) the evangelical spirit of social reform. What is more, they gave that desire for social reform a concrete object: the use of spirituous liquors. Abstaining from spirits was manageable, meaningful, visible and culturally significant. Just as coffee-drinking had allowed sectors of the urban middle class to claim a portion of the moral high ground in the midst of the gin craze, so the conspicuous rejection of spirits signified the moral rectitude of a section of the more evangelically-minded middle class. In the 1820s spirit-drinking remained a predominantly lower-class activity (although more than one witness to the 1830 Select Committee noted that the main increase in spirit consumption after 1825 had been among middle-class householders buying in bulk for home consumption). Abstaining from spirits, even when coupled with the promise to only use other drinks in moderation, was without doubt an act of cultural self-assertion as much as it was an act of moral reform. Indeed, John Dunlop – who had as good an understanding of the cultural politics of drink as anyone at the time – claimed later that he had tried, unsuccessfully, to include a pledge against wine-drinking when forming the Glasgow and Edinburgh Temperance Societies, but had been unable to persuade enough people to sign up to such an intrusive requirement.[9]

The early temperance societies were born out of an evangelical spirit of social reform which had already produced numerous associations for moral improvement such as the Proclamation Society and the Society for the Suppression of Vice. The American Temperance Society presented a model of how the specific practice of spirit-drinking, which had been the source of widespread social anxiety for most of the preceding century, could provide a coherent focus for evangelical reform. Finally, the reorganisation of spirits duties in 1825, and the ensuing increase in consumption,

sparked off a wave of social anxiety which provided fertile ground for cultivation of organised temperance. However, had the temperance movement remained the marginal activity of a few relatively affluent evangelicals it is unlikely it would have had much of a social impact; it certainly would not have led to the long-running and politically charged disputes over temperance that will be discussed in the following chapters. In order for that to happen the conservative notion of partial abstinence and moderate drinking which underpinned the first temperance societies had to be supplanted by the radical idea of total abstinence which drove the second wave of the temperance campaign.

The teetotal revolution

As we have seen, the idea of total abstinence was not new in 1830; and while it was extremely unusual to abstain from all alcohol, it was not something limited solely to a handful of cranks and eccentrics. Indeed, a debate had already been taking place as to the relative merits of abstention as against moderation. In 1794, the author of a *Treatise on the True Effects of Drinking Spirituous Liquors, Wine and Beer* argued against moderate drinking on the grounds that 'the words *moderately taken* express nothing at all, for a certain quantity may not affect a strong man and another may be very much hurt by it'.[10] Basil Montagu, writing twenty years later, set out a detailed refutation of the Quaker doctrine of moderation and listed a series of arguments for total abstinence, including the claim that 'abstinence is easier than temperance'.[11] While apparently counter-intuitive, the idea that it is easier to give up a pleasure entirely than to indulge in that activity with complete self-control was one that would later become critical to the teetotal temperance message.

Despite the existence of arguments for total abstention, the idea of not drinking beer remained largely untenable so long as it was popularly agreed that the serious social problems which arose from drunkenness were attributable to spirits. As long as beer and spirits were perceived as qualitatively different, then anti-spirits campaigns had no use for total abstinence. However, once that distinction began to collapse then anti-spirits temperance became open to question. Gin had raised the prospect of an 'instantaneous drunkenness' and had created the novel idea that drunkenness need not necessarily arise from gluttony, nor from extended bouts of drinking. By the later eighteenth century, once technological developments had made it possible to measure levels of alcohol in drinks, there was no question that gin and beer were qualitatively different drinks, they simply contained alcohol in different degrees of concentration. If, as anti-spirits campaigners felt, drinking gin was an unquestionably bad thing

then there was no logical reason why all alcoholic drinks should not be condemned as simply lesser versions of the same evil. Total abstinence arose as an idea partly out of the breakdown in the distinction between different types of alcoholic drinks. There was no reason why beer, taken in quantities, could not achieve precisely the same effects as gin.

By expanding access to beer and, apparently, increasing levels of drunkenness, the Beer Act opened the door for total abstentionists to make precisely this argument. The most notable and influential total abstention campaigner to emerge in the wake of the Beer Act was a cheese-maker from Preston called Joseph Livesey. In his testimony to a remarkable Select Committee on Drunkenness, convened in 1834, Livesey made this point clearly by insisting that there had been a significant rise in drunkenness in his home town of Preston since 1830 and that the rise in disorder was attributable solely to beer. When asked if there had not also been a rise in spirit-drinking, Livesey responded 'I do not think there has … the drunkenness in Preston is principally owing to the consumption of beer'.[12] Livesey's determination to lay the blame for increased drunkenness at the door of beer led one bemused-sounding member to ask whether the Committee were 'to understand that you object, as a general principle, to the consumption of beer?' 'Yes', Livesey responded.[13]

The reason that Livesey, a mere cheese-factor, found himself testifying to a Parliamentary committee was that he was also the most prominent member of the Preston Temperance Society. It was the Preston Temperance Society which had made the crucial leap from moderation to total abstinence in August 1832 when Livesey, along with five fellow members, signed a pledge to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, rather than just spirits. Since then Livesey had been tireless in spreading the total abstinence message throughout the country. Within three years of establishing teetotalism as a viable concept (the word teetotal is widely attributed to one Dicky Turner, a member of the Preston Temperance Society), the anti-spirits movement in Britain was on the verge of collapse. Its self-assured message of middle-class moral ascendancy was steam-rollered by a radical, energetic and visionary movement of largely working-class teetotallers whose fundamentalism allowed for a clarity of message which made the existing temperance movement seem both smug and confused by comparison.

Organised teetotalism was a revolutionary idea, especially among the working class. Whatever the debates taking place among doctors, lawyers, priests and poets as to the benefits of abstinence, drinking remained absolutely central to working-class culture. As Brian Harrison put it, for the working man in the early nineteenth century ,'to abandon drink was to abandon society itself'.[14] Magistrates and politicians had historically

been suspicious of the alehouse precisely because it was, as it were, the 'parliament of the people'. The already pivotal role of the alehouse in lower-class society became, if anything, even more vital in the early years of the Industrial Revolution. Public houses provided working communities with their only social space outside of work and home. They were places to drink, but they were also the working people's social clubs, trading and entertainment centres, meeting places for societies and unions, labour exchanges and reading rooms.[15] Before organised sport, public libraries, parks and museums – not to mention cinemas, concert halls and holiday resorts – there was often literally nowhere for working people to socialise other than the pub. To remove the pub was to tear out the heart of the community; to stop drinking was to make oneself an outcast.

The annihilation of alcohol

Far from being diminished by this, the early teetotal movement thrived on it. It gained its intensity, like many religious movements, from the fact that the demands it placed on its adherents left them with no home other than the Society itself. Furthermore, the genuinely revolutionary nature of what teetotalism proposed – the complete abandonment of alcohol and all the cultural rituals, exchanges and economies associated with it – gave it a sense of mission which went far beyond anything dreamt up in the cosy meeting rooms of the anti-spirits campaigners. By necessity, as well as by design, teetotalism saw its ultimate goal as the transformation of society.

The evangelical zeal which fired the temperance movement ensured that, from its earliest days, it was infused with millenarian rhetoric. American temperance preachers, employing a declamatory style that combined religious enthusiasm with a sense of historical destiny, were fond of describing sobriety in the most utopian terms. It 'will be a mater of rejoicing', proclaimed Lyman Gilbert, when '*temperance* shall so entirely prevail, that a generation shall finally arrive, that can say, Behold the last drunkard is gone!'[16] Livesey enthusiastically adopted this tone, but went further than prophesying the day when there were be no more drunkards; for him the teetotal revolution promised more again. In the first edition of his *Preston Temperance Advocate* he implored his readers in fiery terms:

> Brethren! Let us arouse ourselves! Let the love of God, of men, and of truth, be our impelling principle … let the martyr's zeal burn quenchless in our breasts; and let our object be nothing less than the ANNIHILATION OF ALCOHOL from Britain and the world, *and the consequent deliverance of all people from his tyrannic yoke!* [17]

This style swiftly became the lingua franca of teetotalism. 'Nerve your arm for the conflict,' wrote one campaigner to the people of Northampton, 'and drive the tyrant from the earth'.[18] In making the dramatic shift to total abstention, teetotallers convinced themselves that they had identified the last tyrant, the last shackle holding mankind back from its progressive destiny. Livesey was no nostalgic pastoralist looking back to some pre-industrial golden age. For him, teetotalism was the gateway to the future, not an escape route to the past, and his movement was an early exponent of that utopian notion of social transformation which would influence European political movements throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The utopianism of the teetotal movement was quickly identified by its opponents as its greatest absurdity. In a public rebuff to the teetotal New British and Foreign Temperance Society, one writer asserted that:

> The total abandonment of intoxicating liquids is one of the most extravagant projects of this inventive age … [Let] the impartial observer seriously ask himself, if to overthrow all the drinking customs of society is not almost to re-model the social condition; if it be not a very revolution which would convulse the empire from its pinnacle to its base.[19]

The *Times*, agreeing with the surgeon Astley Cooper's description of teetotalism as 'too utopian' complained that 'drunkenness is a heinous vice and a detestable nuisance, but it is not half so demoralizing or disgusting as the cant of the Pharisaical prigs' in the teetotal movement.[20] In 1849 Charles Dickens accused teetotallers of promoting 'demoralisation' by their fanatical insistence that alcohol was the root of all evil.[21] Two years later Dickens fell out badly with his one-time collaborator George Cruikshank over the latter's conversion to teetotalism and he publicly rebuked the 'whole hoggism' of teetotal fundamentalists, Cruikshank very much included.[22]

Teetotalism was indeed a utopian concept, even if teetotallers denied the term, which tended to be used pejoratively, at the time. Early teetotal literature revelled in the language of total social transformation and, like all utopian movements, it showed complete conviction in the belief that it had identified the means to achieve that transformation. As we shall see in Chapter 9, however, the teetotal movement would soon split over the question of means. Livesey always believed the sober millennium had, by necessity, to be achieved through the free choice of the people; he had an unshakeable belief in both the possibility and the righteousness of grass-roots change based on individual ethical choices. From 1851, however, this entire principle would come under attack from teetotallers who lacked Livesey's belief that, given clear enough moral guidance, everyone would freely choose sobriety over drunkenness.

The belief that everyone, drunkards included, could be made better through what became known as 'moral suasion' meant that teetotalism not only took a new approach to the idea of abstention, but it also took a completely new view of habitual drunkards. Rather than condemn drinkers as immoral, or even as diseased, teetotallers saw them as victims of a destructive habit who could be reclaimed through proper moral guidance and the acceptance of teetotal principles. It was early teetotal organisations that pioneered the technique of bringing drinkers to public meetings to hear the testimony of ex-drinkers who had found sobriety. At teetotal gatherings processions of ex-drinkers would regale the audience with tales of desperation and debauchery – all, inevitably, ending in the discovery of the light of temperance.[23] Respectable moderationists may have hated it, but the movement struck a chord with large numbers of working people, not least because it suggested that both personal salvation and social transformation were in their hands rather than the hands of priests or politicians. Teetotalism spoke directly to that class of people whose exclusion from the mainstream political process had just been confirmed by the 1832 Reform Act and it offered them, among other things, a stake and a role in social change. It held out, especially to those who had previously been reviled as drunks, the promise of more than mere emancipation or even respectability. It told them they could spearhead the dawn of a new age: the sober millennium.

This radical message was both teetotalism's strength and its greatest weakness. While it required an extraordinary commitment from its adherents, teetotalism had the advantage of paying more than lip-service to the real lives of the people it reached out to. Between 1832 and 1836 teetotalism spread throughout both the major cities and the provinces – especially North Wales and Cornwall. The British Teetotal Temperance Society was founded by Joseph Livesey in London in September 1835 while at the same time existing 'moderationist' temperance organisations clashed with the teetotallers. Anti-spirits temperance groups, such as the original British and Foreign Temperance Society, had, by this time, established themselves as the kind of respectable organisation that members of the social elite were happy to be associated with. They were horrified when Livesey's horny-handed teetotallers arrived on the scene and were extremely reluctant to join with them. The New British and Foreign Temperance Society split from its more respectable forebear in 1836 to pursue a line supporting both total abstention and a condemnation of the drinks trade. Meanwhile, numerous other teetotal groups sprang up including the British Teetotal Temperance Society, the British Temperance Association, and a teetotal-friendly society founded in 1835 grandly titled the Independent Order of Rechabites.

To many outsiders, teetotallers were frankly mad. The Chartists held teetotalism at arm's length. While there were some teetotal Chartist groups, many were wary of the teetotal insistence that emancipation should be driven, first and foremost, by abstention.[24] Teetotallers blamed the sufferings of the poor on alcohol rather than systemic inequalities. Livesey's famous Malt Liquor Lecture, which he delivered in towns and cities throughout Britain, hitched teetotalism specifically to successful development of modern capitalism. 'The Temperance Society is an insurance for the safety of every man's property,' Livesey insisted. 'Drunkenness and disorder are sure to drive capital away; but in the midst of a reformed population it will find a secure investment'.[25] The Chartists blamed the suffering of the poor on the exclusion of the labouring classes from the levers of power; Livesey blamed it on drink. However, while Livesey saw sobriety as an end in itself, teetotalism did make it possible for others to see sobriety as a stage in the achievement of wider political freedom. Millenarian teetotallers may have dreamed of the dry utopia, but it appeared to others that more practical emancipatory goals might also be achieved by the adoption of sobriety.

Sobriety and liberation

This was certainly the case in Ireland where teetotalism (promulgated through the spectacular temperance 'crusade' of Father Theobald Mathew between 1838 and 1841) was taken up by a number of nationalist politicians. Since as far back as the sixteenth century, the supposed drunkenness of the Irish had been seen by English colonialists as exacerbating the threat of insurrection.[26] Coleridge voiced a typical complaint in 1811, writing that the Irish, after 'the third of fourth glass of whisky' are likely to 'itch for a riot and … begin to enquire after a rebellion!'[27] The stereotype of the savage, drunken Irishman remained extraordinarily widespread in mainland Britain throughout the nineteenth century, especially as agitation for Home Rule began to bite. Even Friedrich Engels, presumably trying to speak on behalf of poor Irish immigrants, fell into absurd caricature as he explained how the 'crudity' of the Irishman, his 'contempt for all humane enjoyments', coupled with grinding poverty, led to widespread drunkenness. 'How can society blame him when it places him in a position in which he almost of necessity becomes a drunkard,' wrote Engels, 'when it leaves him to himself, to his savagery?'[28]

Understandably, many nationalist politicians angrily rejected such offensive representations, not least because to ascribe a kind of genetic propensity for drunkenness to an entire people was an extremely effective way of justifying the 'civilising mission' of colonial rule. Irish drunkenness

was seen as contiguous with Irish savagery and Irish childishness – all of which were central elements in the ideological justification of English power. Falling in with the teetotal temperance movement provided a range of benefits to nationalists in the 1830s and 1840s. It allowed them to conspicuously reject the charge that the Irish were any more drunk than the English, but the sheer scale of the Mathewite Crusade also provided an unprecedented platform and infrastructure through which nationalist ideas could be disseminated. It was estimated that between four and five million people signed up to Father Mathew's teetotal pledge between 1839 and 1841; it was an extraordinary campaign, albeit one which revolved entirely around the personality of Father Mathew himself. Many Protestant teetotallers on the mainland were suspicious of the sacerdotal focus of a movement in which pledges appeared to be dispensed rather than adhered to (the joke was that many signatories were later seen drunk complaining that 'the pledge hadn't worked'). But the impact of the movement, which combined the expression of collective cultural pride with the conspicuous celebration of sobriety, was deep and lasting. Daniel O'Connell took the pledge in October 1840, and in 1846 he presided over a meeting of the National Temperance Society in London.[29] However, it has been argued that O'Connell's enthusiasm was based on the fact that the vast juggernaut of the Mathewites provided an ideal vehicle to which O'Connell could hitch the 'monster meetings' of his campaign for Repeal.[30] Meanwhile other temperance-minded nationalists, such as Thomas Davis of the Young Irelanders, argued that teetotalism provided 'the offering of incipient freedom'.[31] The phrase 'Ireland sober, Ireland free', popularly, though apocryphally, ascribed to Father Mathew himself, became a touchstone over the following decades and drove the often radically anti-drink agenda of later nationalist organisations such as the Gaelic Athletics Association.

In America, the Washingtonian Movement, founded in 1840, echoed the British teetotal campaign in focusing on the reclamation of drunkards and in positing the idea that social change could be driven by a sober working people. Many abolitionists would later draw direct parallels between the tyranny of drink and the tyranny of slavery.[32] The role of alcohol in the subjugation of Native Americans had been highlighted by anti-spirits campaigners as far back as the mid-eighteenth century (one speech by a Creek chief, published in London in 1754, described spirits as 'the tyrant … which our pretended *white friends* artfully introduced' for the enslavement of the Creek nation).[33] Abolitionists drew parallels between drunkenness and subjugation, but they also pointed to the practical uses of drunkenness by slave-owners as a means of managing their slaves. Frederick Douglass, whose slave narrative became so central to

the abolition movement, dwelt at some length on the custom of allow-ing slaves periodic 'holidays' in which they could get drunk. Douglass castigated the 'liberty' given to slaves to go on periodic drinking bouts, pointing out that such holidays were 'among the most effective means in the hands of the slaveholders in keeping down the spirit of insurrection' by serving as 'safety-valves, to carry off the spirit of enslaved humanity'.[34] Over the course of the nineteenth century, the 'safety-valve' uses of drunk-enness would be identified by abolitionists, nationalists and, later, many socialists as one of the key means by which exploitative social systems were sustained.

Temperance and the idea of freedom

Throughout this period we see, once again, that debates over drink pro-vided a way of talking about the meaning and nature of freedom. We can also see some of the areas around which this debate began to crystallise. One was the extent to which the freedom to engage in certain activi-ties (such as frequenting alehouses, or getting drunk in public) could be regulated by the state, and on what grounds. The control of alehouses was always a matter of the control of lower-class social spaces, for all the political and social reasons described above. The control of drunken-ness was also, from the early eighteenth century, partly a health issue. From this perspective, drunkenness raised the question of how free we should be to damage our own bodies, and also to what extent physical ill-health limited our freedom to pursue other activities. Politically, personal ill-health was increasingly condemned during the gin craze as impacting disastrously on the common good. This was a gendered discourse: it was specifically the impact of alcohol on the bodies of mothers that was con-demned in terms of its effect on their offspring. But drunkenness also, of course, raised questions about public order. The freedom to drink clearly impinged on the freedom of others to go about their daily business when drunkenness led to either violent crime or public disorder. As we shall see in Chapter 9, this question of where personal liberty encroached on the liberties of others would become ever more heated as modern liberalism took shape across the course of the nineteenth century. Equally concern-ing to liberals was the question of market freedom. The 1830 Beer Act was an experiment in market freedom as much as the 1736 Gin Act was an experiment in market control. Neither achieved their desired goals. After 1830, it became impossible to ignore the extent to which the ab-stract notion of market freedom had a direct impact on the other ques-tions regarding the nature of personal freedom which liberalism took as its fundamental concern. A free trade in beer implied an increased liberty

to consume a commodity which in many cases visibly impacted on the freedom of others when the consumer of that beer became drunk. Finally, we see the question of the extent to which intoxication itself was an act of freedom or, even leaving addiction aside for the moment, either an act of enslavement (because it undermined the rationality on which liberty was taken to be founded) or an action which made the drinker more susceptible to enslavement or subjugation by others. The drink question, in many ways, was a question of liberty itself.

Teetotalism, though limited in terms of its number of adherents, and though ridiculed by its many opponents, forced a debate which required the clarification of these issues. It did so primarily because it expressed the problem in fundamentalist terms, and partly because it had an energy and a single-mindedness which propelled its vision of the sober millennium onto the political agenda. It was the utopian strain in the discourse of total abstention, the idea that society could be transformed fundamentally and permanently by the abolition of alcohol consumption, which would be the principal legacy of teetotalism. Anti-drink writers had linked the idea of individual freedom to the issue of drunkenness for centuries; however, it was after the teetotallers conjured up their vision of a sober millennium that it became possible to think about entirely new levels of social and political freedom as being achieved through sobriety. The early teetotallers never had the practical means to achieve this goal: their reliance on persuasion really did, to use a later utopian slogan, 'demand the impossible'. However, it was not long before a new raft of temperance campaigners, committed not to the regeneration of society through persuasion but to the transformation of society through the force of legislation, took up the baton and drove temperance headlong towards the politically explosive principle of total alcohol prohibition. By hitching the utopian elements of teetotalism to the principle of legitimate State coercion, prohibitionism brought underlying debates over the nature of freedom to the surface of the drink question. By doing so, it further shifted the focus of drink discourse from the practical management of public behaviours to the most basic principles of liberal thought.

Notes

1   Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, p. 101.
2   A. Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
3   M. J. D. Roberts, 'The Society for the Suppression of Vice and its early critics', *Historical Journal*, 26: 1 (1983), 159–76, p. 163.
4   Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, p. 101.
5   Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland* Free, p. 77.

6   W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
7   Blocker, Fahey and Tyrell (eds), *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, p. 92.
8   L. Beecher, *Six Sermons on Intemperance* (Boston, MA: T. R. Marvin, 1828), p. 57.
9   J. Dunlop, *The Philosophy of Drinking Usage in Great Britain* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1839), p. 110.
10 Anon., *A Treatise on the True Effects of Drinking Spirituous Liquors, Wine and Beer on Body and Mind* (London, 1794), p. 10.
11 Montagu, *Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors*, p. 366.
12 House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee of Inquiry into Drunkenness* (1834) 559, p. 92.
13 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
14 Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, p. 50.
15 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
16 L. Gilbert, *Reasons for Temperance: A Discourse* (Boston, MA: Lincoln and Edmonds, 1829), p. 22.
17 J. Livesey, *The Preston Temperance Advocate* (1 January 1837), p. 2.
18 Anon., 'An appeal to the inhabitants of Northampton by the committee of the Temperance Society' (undated), p. 3.
19 Anon. (I. C. Y.), 'Teetotalism: Absurd in its object and censurable in its agency' (London: E. Grattan, 1838), p. 5.
20 Anon., 'A Temperance Society' (*Times*, 6 September 1833), p. 2.
21 C. Dickens, 'Demoralization and total abstinence', in M. Slater (ed.), *Dickens' Journalism, Vol. 2* (London: J. M. Dent, 2003), pp. 159–69.
22 C. Dickens, 'Whole Hogs' (*Household Words*, 23 August 1851).
23 Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, p. 130.
24 L. L. Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 33.
25 J. Livesey, *The Malt Liquor Lecture* (Ipswich: J. M. Burton, 1850), p. 31.
26 Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free*, p. 2.
27 Coleridge, *The Collected Works*, p. 176.
28 F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 125.
29 S. Couling, *History of the Temperance Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: William Tweedie, 1862), p. 180.
30 Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free*, pp. 127–9.
31 *Ibid.*, p. 131.
32 D. Herd, 'The paradox of temperance: Blacks and the alcohol question in nineteenth-century America', in Barrows and Room (eds), *Drinking: Behaviour and Belief in Modern History*; J. Crowley, 'Slaves to the bottle: Gough's *Autobiography* and Douglass's *Narrative*', in D. S. Reynolds and D. J. Rosenthal (eds), *The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).
33 Anon., 'The speech of a Creek-indian against the immoderate use of spirituous liquors' (London: R. Griffiths, 1754).
34 F. Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 115.