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# The Temperance Movement and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century British Society

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**The Temperance Movement and the Working Class in  
Nineteenth Century British Society**

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Mémoire de Master 2

Sous la direction de  
Mme Pellegry,  
Maître de Conférences

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## **Abréviations**

U.K.A: United Kingdom Alliance

B.F.T.S: British Foreign Temperance Society

L.W.M.A: London Working Man's Association

N.C.A: National Charter Association

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# Introduction générale

A turning point is an event, happening or stage which thrusts the course of historical development into a different definition. By definition a turning point is a great event, but it is even more - a great event with the explosive impact of altering the trend of man's life on the planet. (Louis Snyder *Victorian England* 9)<sup>1</sup>

The industrial revolution and the growth of British Empire may be considered as the greatest turning points in nineteenth century British society. Both contributed to make Britain a model of prosperity (Clarice Swisher *Victorian England* 11). At that time, the development of transport and machinery changed the economic system of the country and the life of the population by creating new industrial towns where chances of employment were higher (Knowles *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions* 10). Through the development of the steam engine and the railways, moving rapidly from one place to another was henceforth possible (Knowles 5-10). Innovation in transport was certainly a significant progress for British people. Also, the development of machinery pushed Britain "far ahead of all other countries" because of its high "level of industrial production" (Thompson *England in the Nineteenth Century* 100). Through the new means of transportation and the expansion of factories, the country was booming. During the nineteenth century, the English population grew significantly from 11 to 37 million (Swisher *Victorian England* 12). Masses of people moved in urban areas where they could find employment (Briggs *A Social History of England* 192). The coming of the machinery opened the labour market in industrialized towns and took out a large section of inhabitants out of the countryside. In this regard, the industrial revolution reflected a model of prosperity for the national economy as well as for the inhabitants. In reality however, the consequences of industrialisation on the life of the working population was not as rewarding as expected.

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in a book entitled *Victorian England* published in 2000. The book encompasses a myriad of research works written by several scholars. Notably, one can find the works of historian Asa Briggs, economist Walter E. Houghton, critic Margaret Drabble or historian George Macaulay Trevelyan. Among these works, a great deal of aspects are studied such as Victorian traditions, politics, economics, society and scientific progress.

Significantly, “the idea of class hierarchy was - and had been, and is - central as a primordial principle and organizing basis in British society” (Smelser *Social Paralysis and Social Changes* 2) which implies that the English population was divided into several social classes. When we dive into British history, the idea of social hierarchy is indeed a typical feature which has, for decades, been broadly classified into three groups: the upper class, the middle and the lower class.<sup>2</sup> Historians have indeed employed these terms to refer to different sections of the English population. The distinction between social classes was based on economic resources and social status of the latter (Barnes “Social Classes” 172). Industrialisation gave rise to a new social class identified as the middle class, that is to say “factory owners, merchants, shokeepers, and professionals” (*Victorian England* 13). Below the middle class, there was a working class that represented the masses of people who moved in urban areas and most of them were poor city workers (*Victorian England* 13). The terms ‘working class’ can be defined as “the social group that consists of people who usually do physical work, and usually do not have much money or a very high level of education” (Cambridge Dictionary n. d. 5). In the context of nineteenth century British society, one may refer to the working class as people working in mills, mines and factories. To give a further description, in 1979, historian Paul Lauter defines the working class in nineteenth with these terms:

I would designate as "working-class people" those who sell their labor for wages, who create in that labor and have taken from them "surplus value," to use Marx's phrase; who are not "professionals" or "managers." [...] I would include those who work in the home, whose labor though not salaried is sold as surely as that of those who work in the mills or the streets. I would include also those whose labor was or is extorted from them by slavery or peonage. (“Working-Class Women’s Literature” 21)

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<sup>2</sup> German sociologists and economists Max Weber and Karl Marx provided further details regarding this classification which appeared to be more complex when observing the industrial revolution in England. Weber described the upper class as educated people with privileges, the middle class as people having some property and the lower class as uneducated and poor people (Saunders *Social Class and Stratification* 22-23). For Marx, industrialisation gave rise to capitalism which stood for a system of class domination, namely the bourgeoisie or the middle class and the proletariat or the working class. The middle class owned banks, lands and factories while the working class was under its leadership and sold its labour for wages (Saunders *Social Class and Stratification* 5-6). In this work, when we will talk about social classes, we must have Marx’s definition in mind.



This social group encompasses people working for someone else in exchange of payment. The working class was limited in terms of livelihood, education and was financially dependent on its employers. In the extract, the words “slavery” and “peonage” convey a negative representation of its condition. As a matter of fact, the industrial progress was a trying experience for the working class since all the benefits of its labour went to the capitalist employers who enriched themselves (Spencer-Wood, Matthews “Impoverishment” 3). The English working class emerged as the result of industrialisation (Briggs *A Social History of England* 198). In the aftermath of that great event, there was a clear distinction between employers and employees. Undoubtedly, it appeared that the prosperity of the national economy was not beneficial for all the population and this may have led to agitations and disputes.

By 1830, a great part of the English working population was employed in urban factories (Rosenbloom, “Men and Machines” 489). Countryside life was replaced by industrial experience. From that year, there were social disturbances. In the winter of 1830, in the southern counties of England, many field labourers demonstrated for higher wages and as a result, three of them were hanged and 420 were dragged as prisoners to Australia (Trevelyan *English Social History* 416). Besides, “tensions were particularly high in the early 1830 [...] workers rioted in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire, and middle-class radicals, discontent because the middle-class had neither representative in Parliament nor the right to vote, joined the workers” (Swisher *Victorian England* 13). English people were demonstrating their discontentment.

Importantly, the nineteenth century was a period of social reforms in England with an emphasis on “anti-slavery, evangelical religion, factory reform and public education” (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 1). All these elements may translate a need for change so as to improve the life of the English population. For anyone wishing to get more information on the latter, the writings of historians George Macaulay Trevelyan, Asa Briggs and Anne Lilian Charlotte Knowles may be regarded as great secondary sources. They also provide a myriad of facts with regard to the industrial revolution and its consequences in nineteenth century England. Regarding the English working population, descriptions of German social reformer Friedrich Engels and British poet Robert Southey of the time are essential materials to visualize its environment and its

lifestyle in urban areas. Historian Edward Palmer Thompson's book *The Making of the English Working Class* is of great use for collecting information on working-class demands and organisations.

More than a century of social reforms, the nineteenth century was also a period during which the English working class was going to rebel against the system it lived in. In the middle of the century, the latter undertook a struggle against the capitalist and the parliamentary system in order to assert its rights in the field of employment and national policy (*The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions* 12). As said earlier, in the 1830s, there was a general discontentment towards the Parliament. While the working class organized meetings in unions and discussed their grievances; in a perspective of lifelong evolution, a crusade arose in the same period to reform attitudes and views regarding alcoholic beverages known as the temperance movement (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* ). It grew predominantly in urban areas, more precisely in the northern industrial towns (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 33).

The temperance movement has generally been associated with the history of the United States as we may notice when venturing in its origins and its campaign. Perhaps, the movement was most popular in that country. Notably, the fact that only from 21 years old, people are allowed to drink alcohol may have been the result of temperance influence. But the temperance movement may have also impacted the pace of British history, more precisely it may have even caused significant changes in the life of the English population.

Historians Brian Harrison and Lilian Lewis Shiman may be regarded as prominent specialists of the temperance movement in Britain. Their books *Drink and the Victorians* (1971) and *Crusade Against Drink* (1970) are indispensable reading materials for anyone wishing to explore the anti-drink campaign in the United Kingdom. One must have in mind that the consumption of alcoholic beverages was a traditional, social and cultural custom in nineteenth century England (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 1). The problem was that the working class drank more than other social classes (*Crusade Against Drink* 1). That habit could be a hindrance in its struggle for improvement. That being said, this research work will seek to explain the reasons why

the working class drank and to show to what extent the temperance movement managed to alter that fact.

Drinking houses such as public houses, gin palaces or beershops enabled “large numbers of working people [to] escape from tyranny of Victorian capitalism and exploitative labour” (Smith “Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 370). These places provided the working class with an alternative environment where it could enjoy and relax. Moreover, “drink, like the modern cigarette - which did not then exist - was a convenient, generally acceptable, easily consumed article of symbolic exchange and so featured prominently in the reaffirmations of social relationships which occurred at such times” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 44). Drinking places and drinking habit were part of everyday life, more especially they were synonymous with sociability.

However, the consumption of alcoholic beverages did not match the Victorian ideal of respectability, a popular social norm emphasizing on manners and virtues which were triumphantly encouraged by middle classes since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Hull “The Bourgeoisie and Its Discontents” 223). The anti-drink campaign was an initiative to alter drinking habits and the welfare of the working class was one of its issues of concern (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 1). During the nineteenth century, drunkenness was already perceived as a product of immorality and the temperance movement with its abstinence pledges and its prohibitionists were going to emphasize the latter (Logan “The Age of Intoxication” 89).

As already said, the working class started to rebel against the capitalist and the parliamentary system in order to improve its social and political status. The latter demanded to the Parliament to be heard but being criticized as heavy drinker, this may have brought it into disrepute. That being said, the question that can be raised is : did the temperance movement contribute to the emancipation of the working class? The aim is to show whether the crusade against alcohol helped the urban workers to get more freedom in terms of political rights, cultural awareness, social intercourse and intellectual involvement. As already said, drinking was part of the English culture and tradition but with the rise of the temperance movement, that custom was questioned. The anti-drink movement may have shed light on many widely held misconceptions regarding alcohol consumption. Most importantly, the spirit of temperance may have

been a driven force standing for the basis of social and political movements undertaken by working-class leaders and even working men. As historian Brian Harrison points out:

Throughout the nineteenth century, the temperance movement remained a predominantly urban movement, and in its early years attracted those urban and non-conformist personalities who supported the Anti-Corn Law League [...] and the Chartist movement. Total abstinence gradually became a passport to social respectability. (“The Pubs” 161)

While industrialisation and urbanisation implied changes in terms of employments and lifestyle, the temperance movement appeared in the middle of the century in order to ‘cure’ a series of social ills and to restore harmony. Its principles may have inspired prominent figures such as Joseph Livesey, William Lovett, John Bright and John Cassell to provide the working class with essential tools for improvement. In an attempt to show whether the temperance contributed to the emancipation of the working class in nineteenth century British society, this research work is organized as follows.

Above all, we will deal with the 1830s as the starting point of the working-class struggle. Not only did that decade marked the beginning of working-class protests but also, it covered the enactment of Acts which directly impacted on the lifestyle and actions of the English working class. The first part will give historical background to contextualize the period under study and to present the issues to be met. When we will allude to the labour force, we will essentially refer to male workers as unfortunately “women have been virtually excluded from working-class history” (Samuel *Village Life and Labour* XVII). Through the representation of the worker’s environment, we will explain the reasons which led him to drink alcoholic beverages and we will also refer to the religious context.

In a second part, the temperance campaign and its impact on British society will be dealt with. We will enrich our research through newspapers of the day such as *The Temperance Advocate*, *London Morning Herald* and *The Temperance Chronicle*. In this part, we will present radical and political actions undertaken by prominent figures.

Social and political movements will be mentioned and their connexion with the temperance movement will be discussed.

In a third and last part, we will analyse a variety of initiatives undertaken by temperance reformers to implement a sober culture in England. We will demonstrate that the anti-drink cause was in compliance with respectability. Sunday school and working-class adult education will be emphasized as essential elements for moral and intellectual improvement. Then, the concept of self-help will be tackled in an attempt to portray Victorian beliefs regarding conventions of social behaviour. To some degree, temperance principles may have epitomised an archetype that stood as a model for British people. The effects of the anti-drink campaign on nineteenth British society may be debatable, therefore, we will analyse concrete results and answer our main question.

# **PARTIE I: The Social Context: Industrial Progress Contrasting with Human Development**

## **Introduction**

Historian Asa Briggs argues that some economic historians have described the industrial revolution as “a simple success story” (*A Social History of England* 186). Indeed, the development of steam power and the progress of iron, coal and textile industries in England were valuable for the national economy (*A Social History of England* 185-186). As we will show in this part, industrialisation led to progress in terms of production and transportation which may portray the latter as successful. But this process may have caused a certain number of negative effects on the English working class. As historian Martin Wiener points out: “it is a historic irony that the nation that gave birth to the industrial revolution, and exported it throughout the world, should have become embarrassed at the measure of its success”.<sup>3</sup> Through these words, Wiener implies that the industrial progress occurred while involving a dark side. In this part, we will deal with the economic progress of England which divided the population through a capitalist system (Rayner *Nineteenth Century England* 3). We will present the environment of the English working class in an attempt to understand why drinking habit was prevalent. To enrich the presentation of the social context, we will refer to significant elements such as the consequence of the 1830 Beerhouse and the status of religion in British society. The latter having a significant place in people’s life, we will discuss how alcohol consumption was approached in the churches and in the biblical texts. The aim will be to portray moral values advocated by religious constituencies before introducing the temperance movement.

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<sup>3</sup> As quoted in Asa Briggs’ book *A Social History of England* (1983).

## Section 1: Changes and Innovations: The Working and Living Condition of the Working Class

### 1.1.1 Economic Progress Based on Capitalism

What was the status of Britain in the nineteenth century? How did British people earn their living? What was life like? What was work like? With the rise of industrialization and the expansion of the British Empire, in the nineteenth century, Britain was perceived as a model of wealth and prosperity (Clarice Swisher *Victorian England* 11). Significantly, a century ago, the country innovated in the field of transportation with the steam engine and, as historian Lilian Charlotte Anne Knowles explains in her book entitled *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions in Great Britain During the Nineteenth Century* (1927) steamships and railways were “new methods of transport [...] capable of bridging great distances very rapidly” (5-10). The latter may be regarded as a significant progress and a first step towards prosperity.

Likewise, writer Walter Houghton points out in an essay entitled “An Age of Transition,” that “in the early decades of nineteenth century the introduction of more canals, macadam roads, railways, and steamboats hastened the growth of large-scale production by making possible a vast expansion of commerce. This development revolutionized the economic life of England” (*Victorian England* 46). Provided that, England was regarded as a model of wealth and prosperity. Since all these innovations made possible great economic progress through a high level of production and an easier exchange of goods, the country was booming. The new methods of transportation were a significant advancement.

Transportation was not the only great change of the time. The coming of machinery introduced a new labour market in which work status was labeled. As historian Rayner highlights in his book entitled *Nineteenth Century England* (1927):

the new circumstances required someone with the necessary funds to set up machinery and to provide it with large quantities of the raw material - that is to say, a *Capitalist*. To tend this machinery he would need to hire persons whom he must support (by

wages) while the process of manufacturing was going on - that is to say, *Labourers*.” (*Nineteenth Century England* 3).

The latter statement illustrates how the Capitalist system was born in England. Rayner uses the word Capitalist in the singular form and, Labourers in the plural form which portrays a sort of ‘imbalance’. In other words, the new system led to the creation of two groups: the employer at the top of social ladder and, the employee at the bottom. This was a drastic change for English people knowing that they had got used to agricultural output to earn a living (Rayner *Nineteenth Century England* 2). As historian Rayner emphasizes, before the industrial revolution, “the people of Britain consumed the produce of their own labour” (2). In former times domestic self-sufficiency appeared to be at the core of British society. One may argue that capitalism replaced self-sufficiency since, as we will show, it changed the life of a large part of the population.

Importantly, as historian Neil Smelser highlights in his book entitled *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working-Class Education in the Nineteenth Century* (1991), nineteenth century England was experiencing a “transition from a mainly agricultural toward an advanced industrial and urban society” (*Social Paralysis and Social Change* 2). In a perspective of evolution, industrialisation and urbanisation transformed the agrarian society in order to ‘modernise’ it. Not only was this transition fundamental but also, it implied a great number of changes at several levels. As we will show, the changes had significant impacts on the working population.

During the nineteenth century, the English population grew from 11 to 31 million inhabitants (*Victorian England* 12). In a book entitled *British History in the Nineteenth Century (1782-1919)*, published in 1922, historian Georges Macaulay Trevelyan underlines that there was a demographic change with an increase of the population at “a rapidity hitherto unknown” (148). Industrial towns such as Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and Birmingham confirmed the latter with an increase of 40 percent of inhabitants between 1820 and 1830 (Asa Briggs, *A Social History of England* 194). Trevelyan explains that the growth of the population in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was



the result of “a decrease in deaths” which suggests an improvement of the standard of living (Trevelyan *English Social History* 414).

The sudden increase of the population led to an overcrowding of the industrial towns which was the result of an intense level of urban migration caused by the industrial revolution in cities such as Liverpool, Manchester, Bolton, Rochdale (Briggs, *A Social History of England* 194). What drew people from the countryside? German philosopher Friedrich Engels describes the places mentioned above as “towns for work” (*The Condition of the Working-Class in England* 4). In fact, employment could give an account of the rural exodus, as historian Asa Briggs states in the introduction of his book entitled *A Social History of England* (1988): “workmen, who had more often been attracted into the factories and towns by higher wages and greater social opportunities than coerced into them, were more quickly adapted to the new industrial environment” (192). Thus, a great number of workers settled in the industrial towns because they could benefit from a suitable salary.

At first sight, industrialisation and urbanisation appeared to modernise British society and to offer a variety of employments to the population. These points could be regarded as factors of progress but in reality, as former Labour MP Patricia Hollis argues, many “working men were exploited in their very labour, because they did not receive back as wages the true value of the goods their labour produced” (*Class and Conflict in Nineteenth Century England 1815-1850* introduction xxi). To put it in another way, the workers were unaware of the value of their work and therefore, they were exploited. Exploitation of the labour force could be seen as the consequence of industrialisation and the process of capitalism. Likewise, historian George Douglas Howard Cole emphasizes on the exploitation of the workers which could be illustrated by facts such as the enforcement of child labour in mines and factories, long hours of labour, low wages or even a high pressure exerted by some employers (*A Short History of the Working-Class* 122). All these elements may be representative of industrial life.

To some extent, industrialisation led the working population to be dependent on their masters. As historian George Douglas Howard Cole sheds light on, the industrial revolution “destroyed the old life of the village, and created the problem of the new factory town” (*A Short History of the Working-Class* 3). He points out that industrialisation gave rise to a new group of wage earners known as a proletariat and

that the latter had to sell its labour for a wage (*A Short History of the Working-Class* 3). The proletariat was then dependent on its work to earn a living. When historian alludes to “the problem of the new factory town,” he may have in mind the issue of exploitation mentioned earlier but also other impacts caused by the industrial revolution that we will mention.

Historian Edward Palmer Thompson portrays the situation of the proletariat in his book entitled *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). He gives an account of a great deal of elements caused by industrialisation which appeared in early nineteenth century such as:

the grievances felt by working people as to changes in the character of capitalist exploitation: the rise of a master-class without traditional authority or obligations: the growing distance between master and man: the transparency of the exploitation at the source of their new wealth and power: the loss of status and above all of independence for the worker, his reduction to total dependence on the master's instruments of production: the partiality of the law: the disruption of the traditional family economy: the discipline, monotony, hours and conditions of work: loss of leisure and amenities: the reduction of the man to the status of an "instrument." (Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* 202-203)

All these facts may portray the condition of the working class in nineteenth century British society. The latter was exploited by capitalists employers and was compelled to labour in hard working conditions to earn its living. Historian Rayner notes that “under the new system the mill and the machinery and the raw material all belong to capitalist manufacturers, who pay wages to ‘hands’ to perform the actual labour” (*Nineteenth Century England* 6). Provided that, there was a clear distinction between employers and employees. To some degree, the capitalist manufacturers monopolised the market place and controlled the labour force. The distinction between the employers and the employee were obvious; there was no equality since a ratio of power might prevail. The workers were dependent on the manufacturers to earn their living.

### 1.1.2 The Working and Living Condition of the Working Class

The notion of wealth and prosperity could be seen as the result of the industrial revolution because “by the beginning of the nineteenth century only Great Britain and France could be reckoned as great economic powers” (Knowles *The Industrial and Commercial Revolution in Great Britain* 8). For instance, after traveling in England in 1828, Gustave Eichtal, French sociologist, stated that “as for the industrial aspect, you can imagine I felt only one thing, admiration, they make machines in this country as we plant cabbages in ours. They are afraid of nothing so plentiful are funds... The physical condition of the working class [though] is very uneven” (*A French Sociologist Looks at Britain* 7). The sociologist compared the two countries which put forward England as a developed and productive country despite the physical deterioration of the working population.

In an article entitled, “Men and Machines: Some 19th-Century Analyses of Mechanization,” (1964), Richard Rosenbloom points out that by 1830, the textile machine replaced the traditional and independent labourers who used to earn their living in the countryside (489). The latter may illustrate the transition mentioned above by historian Neil Smelser regarding industrialisation. In 1830s, most of the former independent labourers worked in urban factories (Rosenbloom 489). This drastic change of lifestyle implied a series of misfortunes in the manufacturing population since many workers lived in “unwholesome working conditions, long hours, and low pay” (Rosenbloom “Men and Machines” 494). Also, there was a high pressure at work in order to keep the economic dynamic (*Victorian England* 47). That said, not only did the capitalist system put an end to the labourers’ self-sufficiency but also, it set up a hard-working routine.

Coupled with the arduous working conditions, the worker’s environment was miserable. As historian Rayner portrays: “in the new towns the worker lived from morning to night in the steam atmosphere of a mill, and from night to morning in a disgusting rookery. Smoke shut out the light of the sun; all his surroundings were hideous and sordid” (*Nineteenth Century* 7). In the industrialised towns, the working population lived in a polluted and overcrowded environment. One cannot deny that the machines transformed

the environment into a dark and smoky place. This description contrasts with the worker's former life which was described by German socialist philosopher Friedrich Engels as "a passably comfortable existence" (*The Condition of the Working-Class 2*). Likewise, Engels asserts that the worker's habits and environment had changed in former times since he was accustomed to be independent in terms of employment in the countryside (Engels *The Condition of the Working-Class 2*).

Historian Knowles argues that as Britain was experiencing a new economic system based on factories, the position and the life of the working men changed (Knowles *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions 83*). While the industrial revolution was a significant progress which contributed to reinforce Britain's economy, an impact on the population was unavoidable. It could even be assumed that to be rapid and effective, this transition could not happen without some negative impacts on the working population. The negative effects of industrialisation on the working class were considerable since as historian Trevelyan explains:

The mass of unregarded humanity in the factories and mines were as yet without any social services or amusements of a modern kind to compensate for the lost amenities and traditions of country life. They were wholly uncared for by Church or state; no one visited them with blankets and advice; no one but the Nonconformist minister was their friend; they had no luxury but drink, no one to talk but one another, hardly any subject but their grievances. (*English Social History 419*)

Through this description, historian Trevelyan alludes to two significant changes for the 'industrial' workers: firstly, they had to adjust to a new working environment which was totally different from their former one and secondly, they had no help except a churchman or drink to resolve their new problems. One may assume that nostalgia regarded country life was ubiquitous. How could they know what awaited them? Left to their own situation in a tense atmosphere, the worker's state of mind was probably affected. If they could only rely on each other to voice their grievances, this may have led them to share their nostalgia and anger.

There is no need to say that changes caused by industrialisation were strongly criticised. In an article entitled "The Age of Uncertainty: Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century

England” (1998) David Eastwood asserts that: “politically and aesthetically English poet Robert Southey was repelled by the social transformation wrought by manufacturing and urbanisation” (“The Age of Uncertainty” 101). This supports the previous portrayal of the industrial revolution as spoiled and detrimental for British inhabitants. In 1807, poet and writer Robert Southey portrayed the condition of the English working class by declaring that:

Their health physical and moral alike is destroyed; they die of diseases induced by unremitting task work, by confinement in the impure atmosphere of crowded rooms, by the particles of metallic or vegetable dust which they are continually inhaling ; or they live to grow up without decency, without comfort, and without hope, without morals, without religion, and without shame, and bring forth slaves like themselves to tread in the same path of misery. The dwellings of the labouring manufacturers are in narrow streets and lanes, blocked up from light and air [...] crowded together because every inch of land is of such value, that room for light cannot be afforded to them.  
*(Letters from England 88)*

In this extract, Southey conveys an obscure and insipid image of the workers’ social background. They were physically and mentally affected by their work and their environment. In Southey’s view, there were lots of holes in their life which can be illustrated by the repetition of the word “without”. According to the account, the state of the workers was reduced to slavery and misery. It could even be assumed that they were condemned to a life deprived of happiness and faith. Their situation can be compared to imprisonment as the term “confinement” suggests. With the words “narrow,” “blocked up,” and “crowded,” the description of their dwellings was similar to a prison. The final sentence of the extract, “light cannot be afforded to them,” seems to be true both literally and figuratively. One cannot deny that the extract gives a negative account of the results of urbanisation and industrialisation on the working population. All things considered, the changes of the industrial revolution on the working population were more harmful than successful. To some extent, industrial progress occurred to the detriment of the working class.

### 1.1.3 Poverty and Sanitary Condition in Urban Areas

Another contrasting point regarding industrial progress in British society was poverty. In an article entitled “Impoverishment, Criminalization, and the Culture of Poverty” (2011), historians Suzanne Spencer-Wood and Christopher Matthew describe poverty as “a social position, created by political economic relations, that situates and contains populations within a larger and cultural systems” (1). In the context of nineteenth century British society, industrialisation impacted on the population as showed by urban migration and employment. One may wonder whether urban city-dwellers were subjected to poverty and what brought that about?

Importantly, Suzanne Spencer-Wood and Christopher Matthew underline that “impoverishment is a complex process involving the interaction of capitalism, patriarchy, and racism” (1). Poverty in nineteenth century British society was indeed connected with the capitalist system and the patriarchal structure as we will demonstrate. Having already said that the urban working class was under the control of capitalist manufacturers, one may assume that the financial support of the labour force depended on the latter. This financial dependence may be regarded as unstable and uncertain. What would happen if the capitalist employers did not longer need their employees?

In the 1830s, a great number of manufacturing labourers were laid off because of overproduction (*Victorian England* 13). As a result, many working-class families became poor because the father lost his work (*Victorian England* 13). In the same period, agricultural workers were rebellious because they endured the harmful effects of capitalism (Fay *Life and Labour* 199). It appeared that, under the capitalist system, the working class became impoverished. That said, industrial progress may have engendered poverty on a larger scale. Supporting the latter statement, economist Henry George points out in his book *Progress and Poverty* (1876):

the great fact that poverty and all its concomitants show themselves in communities just as they develop into the conditions toward which material progress tends - proves that the social difficulties existing wherever a certain stage of progress has been

reached, do not arise from local circumstances, but are, in some way or another, engendered by progress itself. (8)

Provided that, progress cannot occur without poverty, both are connected. In the case of industrialisation, Henry George highlights that “the ‘tramp’ [came] with the locomotive” (7) which may picture the relationship between industrial progress and impoverishment. How did the British government react in such a situation?

To understand the place of the state in nineteenth century British society, one must bear in mind that the latter advocated “*laissez faire* which was a doctrine of inevitability and the inference from it was that the government was neither responsible for, nor capable of improving the conditions of life - the English people must work out its own salvation” (Fay *Life and Labour* 125). There were no politics of social accompaniment to combat poverty and therefore, the population was neglected by the British government. In a book entitled *Nineteenth Century Britain 1815-1914*, Anthony Wood argues that *laissez faire* “had created an ogre of its own in a prosperous middle class whose wealth and political power were derived from the labour of a great industrial proletariat” (325). One may suggest that the popular doctrine was beneficial to the middle class which exploited the working class to climb the social ladder and to become wealthier.

Moreover, poverty was considered as “a problem of individual character and its waywardness tended to absolve the social order of any responsibility for the conditions that reduced individuals to destitutions” (Woodroffe “Social Group Work” 310). The general opinion was that poverty resulted from personal choices and neither the government nor the upper classes might assume any liabilities to sustain the most impoverished people.

Likewise, former Labour member of the House of Lords, Patricia Hollis explains that indigence was “a belief that God had ordained each men to his lot in life” and that “to aid the undeserving was simply to destroy the incentive of the struggling; to support social parasites and their offspring without requiring any labour in return was to destroy the equilibrium of the market created by political economy” (Hollis introduction xvi). Poverty was also perceived as God’s will and as necessary to maintain a sort of socio-economic balance. As historians Suzanne Spencer-Wood and Christopher

Matthew put it in “more than an economic condition, being poor is also a sociopolitical experience” (“Impoverishment, Criminalization, and the Culture of Poverty” 1). Significantly, poor people were considered as “social parasites” and as Hollis suggests if the government aided the most impoverished, there would be no reasons for them to endeavour to build their life. Therefore, it was normal to remain detached in the face of the current situation.

Besides, economist Thomas Malthus describes poverty as an “account of the natural increase of population” (Trevelyan *British History in the Nineteenth Century and After* 145). This cannot be denied since, as said earlier, industrial towns were subject to an important rural exodus which led to an overpopulation of urban areas. As a result, Trevelyan stresses that “the worst period for sanitary conditions in the industrial regions was the middle of the nineteenth century rather than the beginning, because so many of the new towns had then had time to become slums, since no one repaired or drained them as the years went by” (*English Social History in the Nineteenth Century* 418). By dealing with the middle of the nineteenth century as a particular period of degradation, historian Trevelyan highlights a crucial point: the disastrous consequences of industrialisation in towns which first and foremost impacted on the population.

Indeed, industrialisation and urbanisation were direct causes of public health deterioration and impoverishment. The industrial towns became “places of darkness and concealment for the fermentation of moral disease” (Driver “Moral Geographies” 281) demonstrating an unfavourable environment for the population’s wellbeing. All these facts were unavoidable if one delves into the analysis of Robert Southey who wrote about Birmingham in 1807:

A heavy cloud of smoke hung over the city, above which many places black columns were sent up with prodigious force from the steam-engines... the contagion spread far and wide. Every where around us... the tower of some manufactory was seen at a distance, vomiting up flames and smoke, and blasting over thing around with its metallic vapours. The vicinity was as thickly peopled as that of London... Such swarms of children I never beheld in any other pace, nor such wretched ones. (Southey 71)



Through this description, Southey gives an overview of the machinery which provoked a large quantity of smoke spreading above the city. It is not difficult to imagine the impact of the factories on the population with so much industrial haze. On top of that, the city was overcrowded just as many industrial towns mentioned previously. The description given by Southey could be applied to those towns since overcrowding and contamination can be regarded as common issues caused by the industrial revolution. If the latter was considered as a factor of economic development, its effect on the population was harmful, especially on the nineteenth century working classes.

An important fact to be mentioned was that “poverty, overcrowding, and a lack of clean water and sanitation caused poor health and diseases among the poor” (*Victorian England* 16). The latter was partially the result of urbanisation and industrialisation. As already said, over the years, many towns became slums because there was no maintenance. Houses were divided into rooms which were rented to working-class families (*Victorian England* 16). This may portray their living environment as oppressive since families were crammed together in one single room.

Besides, in the middle of the nineteenth century, industrial towns met with the most insalubrious sanitary condition (Trevelyan *English Social History in the Nineteenth Century* 418). Undoubtedly, the latter impacted on the population’s health since cholera epidemics killed a great number of people living mainly in poor districts (*Victorian England* 16). It is undeniable that “the price of manufacturing prosperity in an unregulated urban environment was the physical and moral degeneration of the working classes” (Eastwood “The Age of Uncertainty” 103). Here again, one can draw a parallel between the benefits of the industrial revolution making the British Empire the greatest economic power and the negative repercussions on the working population.

With all the harmful effects caused by industrialisation on the working class, it can be argued that it needed a means of escape. After emigrating to urban areas for employment and being forced to live in an insalubrious environment, the worker’s life became synonymous with misery. Finally, whether at work or at home, everything around him were gloomy. As already mentioned, it was as if the workers lived

imprisoned, trapped and condemned in a routine where work and home were the main components. Facing this situation, what could they do to escape that hard reality?

Historian Anthony Edward Dingle explains in an article entitled “Drink and Working-Class Living Standards in Britain 1870-1914” (1972), that “it was expenditure on ‘intoxicating liquors’ which was regarded above all others as the major obstacle to improvement” of the working class (608). If he alludes to the late nineteenth century, yet, long before “excessive drinking was a habit among all classes of Englishmen, low as well as high” (Trevelyan *Illustrated English Social* 206). Facing the harmful effects of industrialisation on the lower classes, the latter could console itself with intoxicating drinks.

As historian Lilian Lewis Shiman clarifies in her book entitled *Crusade against Drink in Victorian England* (1988), most of the poor were isolated in the slums which “became their permanent fate and their only escape was the momentary oblivion produced by intoxication” (Shiman 2). To a certain extent, alcoholic beverages may have provided some comfort to the population, especially for working-class men who went in drinking houses “where they were assured of the warmth and comfort that was lacking in their own abodes” (Shiman 2). One must keep in mind the myriad of harmful effects caused by industrialisation and urbanisation in order to understand some feeling of ‘relief’ provided by intoxicating beverages. Exploitation, poverty and bad sanitary condition could be regarded as elements which contributed to ‘drown’ the working class into alcohol.

## **Section 2: Intemperance and the Spread of Drinking Houses**

### **1.2.1 The Success of the Public House in the Worker’s Life**

There is no doubt that changes caused by industrialisation may have influenced attitudes and ways of thinking of the working class. As historian David Eastwood puts it, “the combination of dramatic changes in modes of production and apparently uncontrolled urbanisation [...] traumatised early-nineteenth century Britain” (“The Age of Uncertainty” 100). As already showed, changes were too abrupt which may be illustrated by the introduction of the capitalist system and the exploitation of the

working class in England. With the coming of machinery, a significant part of the population went to urban areas to find employments. Thus, in reference to dramatic changes, Eastwood may allude to new working and living conditions implemented by industrialisation.

Historian Francis Michael Longstreth Thompson argues that “the factory played the leading role as agent of dissolution” (“Social Control in Victorian Britain” 205). By employing these terms, Thompson suggests that the factory divided workers and manufacturers. In this regard, one can distinguish two different groups of people. To some degree, industrial life may have impacted sociability and created some ‘affinity’ among the workers. As Trevelyan highlights it, in factories and mines, workers had nobody else except a churchman or drink to find some consolation (*English Social History* 419). This may have pushed a large part of the working class to gather together, creating a group of their own. Perhaps, the division introduced by industrialisation generated an united labour force.

Regarding urban areas, one may assume that the factory took an important place in the workers’ life. Notably, in her book entitled *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions in Great Britain* (1921), historian Lilian Anne Charlotte Knowles stands for that “the man could no longer combine industry with a little farming. He became an attendant on a machine, his actions governed by the machine and his livelihood dependent on the demand for the production of the machine” (82). Through this, Knowles illustrates the worker as an automate conditioned by machinery and whose life was confined to the factory. She repeats the term “machine” to reinforce the fact that the latter was at the core of the worker’s life as if it had become a vital and predominant element on a daily basis.

Similarly, historian Thompson asserts that: “work was the central experience of the working classes” (“Social Control in Victorian Britain” 205). This reinforces the idea that the workers may have formed their own community. Massed together at work, this may have created a circle of acquaintances. Having already mentioned the fact that miners and factory workers discussed their grievances (Trevelyan *English Social History* 419), one may suggest that this may have enabled to forge closer links. Apart

from the workplace, they would also meet in the public house which had a significant part in their life (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 52).

Historian Francis Michael Thompson states that: “at the beginning of the nineteenth century the public house had a virtual monopoly as a meeting place for working people - for relaxation, for enjoying one another’s company, for entertainment” (“Social Control in Victorian Britain” 202). The working population could thus find an alternative to the workplace with the public house which enabled them to maintain a social life and to take a break from work. Also, one can draw a parallel between the public house and the working environment. The public house could be seen as a gathering place where many workers may have had a sense of belonging to a community. On the contrary, the workplace was probably too laborious and monotonous (Knowles 82). This may explain that the early nineteenth century was a significant period putting the public house at the core of the working population’s life (Thompson 202). It was subsequently one of the rarest places and a different context in which they could enjoy.

Indeed, public houses were mainly located in urban areas, as historian Daniel Vasey accounts for: “because of urbanization the majority of pubs were in the city, in crowded neighbourhoods with many potential customers close at hand” (*The Pub And English Social Change* 28). Likewise, in his book entitled *Drink and the Victorians* (1969), historian Brian Harrison asserts that a major part of public houses were “concentrated far more closely in the city centre” (172). All things considered, industrial towns were strategic points of sale for publicans since they were the most crowded places. Knowing that urban areas were inhabited by a large part of the working-class people, who moved in cities and town because they could find employments, they were therefore potential customers.

Contrary to the factory, public houses “provided a haven of warmth, light and sociability” to many workers and as a result, they became “a locus of working class life” (Smith Michael “Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 371-373). The public house may have brought a sense of security in the worker’s life. One must bear in mind that author Robert Macey Rayner insisted on the lack of light when he describes

industrial towns and houses in 1807. Indeed, he mentioned dwellings where the sun could not enter and rooms blocked up from light (*Letters from England* 88). The public houses may have offered comfort that the worker needed.

Furthermore, over the years, the dwellings were more and more deteriorated (Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* 318). The public houses may have constituted an escape from the insalubrious environment. As Vasey argues: “the homes were socially unfulfilling as well as decrepit, and thus caused the pub to have a greater role” (*The Pub and English Social Change* 30). The public house may have made the worker’s life less monotonous. It may have offered some recreation from work. Thus, the public house became a “focus of social freedoms” (Smith “Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 367). The public house played a significant role in the life of the working class and its role became much more important with the enactment of the Beerhouse Act in 1830, as we will show.

### 1.2.2 The Consequences of the 1830 Beerhouse Act

An important fact to mention is that from 1830 onwards, the number of public houses increased because “in that year Parliament passed the Beerhouse Act” (Daniel Vasey *The Pub And English Social Change* 27). The Act was “a reform, designed to check the power of the major breweries [...] by extending the franchise” (Byron “The English Alehouse 181). It “removed all restrictions on the establishment of new premises licensed to sell beer” (Valsey 33). To put it differently, the Act facilitated the sale of alcohol by granting low-priced liquor licenses to any publicans who could afford an annual fee of two guinea for the excise and for whatever the location of the pub would be (Tenbus *A Draught of Discontentment...* 2-3).

On top of that, as Nicholas Mason explains in his article entitled “The Sovereign People Are In A Beastly State: The Beer Act of 1830 and Victorian Discourse on Working-Class Drunkenness” (2001), the Act “repealed all duties on strong beer and cider” (109). This meant that the price of those “intoxicating” liquors dropped and consequently, it became easier and cheaper to buy them (109). Mason emphasizes that the Act generated “beer in greater abundance and at a lower price” than before and this led the British population to consume more (The Sovereign People” 111). All things

considered, the Beerhouse Act made alcoholic beverages more accessible in terms of prices and points of sale.

It was in the aftermath of the Act that a rapid “growth of new public drinking places [...] beer houses, gin palaces” occurred (Smith Michael “Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 371). While the Beerhouse Act was responsible for the latter, as said earlier, the drinking places provided comfort and warmth. The undeniable success of the public houses from the beginning of nineteenth century may explain the rapid growth. As said earlier, during that period, the latter had a “virtual monopoly” (“Social Control in Victorian Britain” 202).

Professor Nicholas Mason points out that within six months of the 1830 Act, over 24,000 beerhouses appeared in England and Wales (“The Sovereign People” 109). The increase of drinking places may indicate the success of alcoholic beverages among the population but also, it may show a desire for gathering and meeting outside working hours or home. The success of these places was so tremendous that one could find beerhouses at “everybody’s door” (Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class* 126). The drinking houses were undoubtedly the most frequented and popular places, especially for the working population.

As historian Brian Harrison explains in his book entitled *Drink and the Victorians* (1994), the beerhouse helped the working people to enjoy their leisure without supervision (84). This may echo with the fact that the public house became a “focus of social freedoms” (Smith “Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 367). It appears that there was a sort of discrepancy between the workplace and the drinking house; as if the worker could enjoy life only when he spent time at the pub or at the beer shop. If at work, miners and factory workers had “hardly any subject but their grievances” (English Social History 419), one may argue that in public houses, they could discuss everything they wanted.

Since from the beginning of the nineteenth century, “the public house had a virtual monopoly as a meeting place for working people” (Thompson “Social Control in Victorian Britain” 202), drinking was probably part of the daily life of the working population. In a 1834 report, Member of parliament Edwin Chadwick declared that “the workman when he comes home from work, in passing through the village where there

was formerly only one public-house, has now to run the gauntlet of three or four beer-shops, in each of which are fellow-labourers carousing, who urge him to stay and drink with them” (Report from the Select Committee on Inquiry into Drunkenness 31). With the growth of beerhouses that followed the 1830 Beerhouse Act, the worker had access to drinking houses everywhere in his neighborhood and therefore, he was tempted to join his workmates. It appears that drinking after work was a common social habit.

In her book entitled *Travels into the Poor Man’s Country: the Work of Henry Mayhew* (1977), historian Anne Humpherys relates that the transition from work to home was a period of recreation during which beer gave to the majority of workers strength and courage to endure the next day at work (59). The fact that the worker needed his beer after work could be perceived as ordinary but the problem was that from 1830s drunkenness is thought to have increased (Mason 115). Social commentators such as Friedrich Engels and Henry Mayhew regarded the Beerhouse Act of that year as “a defining moment in the fortunes of England’s working class” (Mason 110).

Besides, in the 1830s, a new type of drinking house appeared under the name of “gin palaces” (Smith “Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 368). As professor Mason explains, whereas the beer houses offered company and drink, the gin palaces were more luxurious with musicians, attractive interior designs and strong drinks (“The Sovereign people” 117). He stresses that many publicans remodelled their taverns or inns into “extravagant gin palaces” (117). To give a further explanation, in a Report made in 1834, magistrate Robert Edwards Broughton stated that:

In the course of things, [beer houses] very much interfered with the business of the regular publicans, and the capital laid out by the original houses was materially wasted and damaged, and therefore the persons are driven, many of them as a matter of necessity, to try those schemes which should retrieve them, or prevent them from failing, and that is the cause of a great number of what are called in the newspapers gin-palaces. The old public-houses, where a man could have his steak dressed, and sit down and take his ale, are extinct; they are obliged to convert them into splendid houses, and sell gin at the bar. (Report from the Select Committee on Inquiry into Drunkenness 14-15)

Broughton's report suggests that for economic reasons, the traditional public house had started to collapse gradually, and to prevent that, the publicans renewed their premises into a more attractive place where customers could still meet and enjoy drinking but in a more inviting atmosphere. Consequently, as prominent Victorian writer Charles Dickens criticizes in his piece entitled *Sketches By Boz* (1854), the gin palace "rushed to every part of town, knocking down all the old public-houses [by] depositing splendid mansions, stone balustrades, rosewood fittings, immense lamps, and illuminated clocks, at the corner of every street" in London (111). Provided that, it appears that the new drinking houses were as successful as beer-houses according to its rapid development spread in the capital. Dickens describes the gin palaces with the following words:

The primary symptoms were an inordinate love of plate glass, and a passion for gas lights and gilding. The disease gradually progressed, and at last attained a fearful height. Quiet dusty old shops in different parts of town, were pulled down; spacious premises with stuccoed fronts and gold letters, were erected instead; floors, were covered with Turkey carpets; roofs, supported by massive pillars; doors, knocked into windows; a dozen squares of glass into one; one shopman into a dozen; and there is no knowing what would have been done [...] (Dickens *The Gin Shops* 111)

With this account of gin shops, the author compares the latter to a disease and emphasizes on its gaudy aspect. He denounces the superficial nature of these new drinking places which appeared frantically throughout London. Also, he refers to attractive names of these places such as "The Cream of the Valley," "The Out and Out," "The No Mistake," "The Good for Mixing,"...etc, and he stresses that they were only different expressions for describing gin (Dickens 112). All things considered, Dickens seems to disagree with the spread of gin palaces and perhaps, this reflected the general opinion of the time knowing that the effects of gin had already been subject to great debates.

Indeed, a century earlier, the dreadful consequences of gin consumption on the poor was denounced with popular engravings entitled *Beer Street* and *Beer Lane* (1751)<sup>4</sup> made by

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<sup>4</sup> Annexe 1.



William Hogarth (Trevelyan *English Social History* 341). On these illustrations, Hogarth depicted people imbibing gin as sick and violent whereas those drinking beer were presented as simply entertaining, reading or laughing. Undoubtedly, his engravings promoted beer as a wholesome drink and in contrast, gin appeared to be devastating to health (Bernas, Gaudin, Poirier *The Document in British Civilisation Studies* 234). One may argue that the 1830 Beer Act agreed with the latter.

Importantly, when Dickens describes gin shops, he draws a sharp contrast between the luxurious palaces and “wretched houses with broken windows patched with rags and paper” located in the same area (*Sketches By Boz* 112). Dwellers living in this area would certainly prefer the gin palace to their abodes. With the description of Dickens in mind, one can notice that the gap between dwellings and gin palaces was striking. Historian Thompson points out that the deterioration of urban areas was the result of the industrial revolution which could be illustrated by bad sanitation and overcrowding (*The Making of the English Working Class* 318). That said, it appears that the drinking houses may have been the only ‘cosy’ places accessible to the city dwellers.

### 1.2.3 The Problem of ‘Drunkenness’

If until now, we presented drinking houses as a recreational and entertaining place, highly popular in the working population; one may wonder how they were portrayed at the time. In contrast to the successful development of drinking houses throughout England, the nineteenth century public houses were also denounced as being “centres of a great underworld of sex, indecency, depravity, crime, cock-fighting, gambling, plotting and subversion” (Thompson “Social Control in Victorian Britain” 202). As said earlier, if those places were appreciated by many working men, Thompson portrays a dissenting vision of such places which turned out to be synonymous with corruption, debauchery and vices. To go further, Michael Smith talks about the English public house as favouring “criminal culture” (“Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 370) which was probably due to alcohol consumption. Thereafter, the problem of intemperance rose and contributed to build a strongly negative image of the public houses and its customers. In 1874, as Reverend Sydney Smith stated: “everybody is drunk. Those who are not singing are sprawling. The sovereign people are in a beastly

state” (Holland *A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith* 481). Reverend Sydney Smith was not the only one to deal with the issue of drunkenness. Also, sociologist Friedrich Engels gave a deep account of intemperance among the working classes in his book entitled *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844):

There are other influences which enfeeble the health of a great number of workers, intemperance most of all. All possible temptations, all allurements combine to bring the workers to drunkenness. Liquor is almost their only source of pleasure, and all things conspire to make it accessible to them. The working-man comes from his work tired, exhausted, finds his home comfortless, damp, dirty, repulsive; he has urgent need of recreation, he has something to make work worth his trouble, to make the prospect of the next day endurable [...] His enfeebled frame, weakened by bad air and bad food, violently demands some external stimulus; his social need can be gratified only in the public house, he has absolutely no other place where he can meet his friends. How can he be expected to resist the temptation? It is morally and physically inevitable that, under such circumstances, a very large number of working-men should fall into intemperance. (Engels 103)

In this extract, Engels points out intemperance as a logical sequence in the worker’s life since, the environment in which he lived, led him to fall into drunkenness. The worker’s behaviour was finally the result of a daily pressure which led him to drink in order to satisfy his “urgent need of recreation.” It was as if alcoholic beverages were the only pleasure in the worker’s life while everything around him appeared to be gloomy and depressive. Engels insists on a significant angst felt by the worker when he refers to “the uncertainty of his existence.” This may convey the idea that the worker had no aim or ambition. Through the analysis, one may portray the worker as powerless, undergoing a life of misery in a poor and insalubrious environment. The public house appears as a better place than home since not only was it more comfortable but also, it was a social locus which may have provided a sense of liberty that the worker could not find elsewhere.

The high consumption of alcoholic beverages in urban areas was undeniable as Reverend Sydney Smith and Friedrich Engels reported. For writer Nicholas Mason, “the

Beer Act had only increased the amount of spirits being consumed by the working class” (“The Sovereign People” 117). One may suggest that the Act indirectly pushed the working class into a ‘vice’ that became regular and popular. It could even be assumed that most of the drinkers were unaware of the dreadful consequences that drunkenness could have on their health and their life. Perhaps, the notion of ‘addiction’ may have been unknown to them. One must keep in mind that for the workers, drinking beer after work was common and the general opinion was that it helped them to endure the next day (Humphreys *Travels into the Poor Man’s Country* 59). Thus, drinking was merely perceived as a popular social habit.

As historian Brian Harrison accounts for: “the Victorian often failed to distinguish between alcoholism, drinking and drunkenness [...] the word drunkenness - ‘the state of being drunk’ - had been regularly used by Englishmen at least since A.D. 893, whereas the word alcoholism - ‘the disease condition produced by alcohol’ - appeared only about 1860” (23). Some workers could thus be alcoholic; they could be addicted to intoxicating liquors without being aware of it. Since there was no distinction between drunkenness and alcoholism, one may suggest that there was no external aid such as doctors or psychiatrists.

Drunkenness may have provided an escape to the urban working class. Likewise, in an article entitled “The Silence of the ‘Addict’” (2016), psychologist Noémie Capart argues compellingly that getting drunk is a way to escape from reality when she explains: “the ego of the alcoholic subject removes itself [...] from a part of reality that is nevertheless its own reality” (7). She refers to Freud’s report on humour that promulgates “among great series of methods which the human mind has constructed in order to evade the compulsion to suffer [there is] intoxication” (7). On account of this, intemperance among the English nineteenth century working class could be partly justified by the environment it lived in. Assuredly, Engels and Capart study drunkenness as a phenomenon stemming from social background which may explain intemperance issues.

While the working environment did not provide sociability to the worker, yet, the drinking houses did since “drink provided an escape [...] from a barren environment” (Dingle “Drink and Working-Class Living Standards in Britain 1870-1914” 613). As

said previously, urban areas included small dwellings, unsanitary conditions and diseases (*Victorian England* 16). Thus, the health and the humour of the working class was badly affected (Eastwood “The Age of Uncertainty” 103). Drinking may be regarded as one of its rarest support. Finally, one may observe that the environment in which the working class lived, engendered a relationship between the worker and the drinking houses. Either public houses, beer-shops or gin palaces, all were places where intoxicating liquors could be consumed.

To some degree, a vicious circle stemmed from the latter. More precisely, exhausted after a long day of work, we said that most workers were used to have some recreation at a drinking house. Beer was believed to help them endure the next day. As said earlier, the public houses were synonymous with corruption since they were “centres of a great underworld of sex, indecency, depravity, crime, cock-fighting, gambling, plotting and subversion” (Thompson “Social Control in Victorian Britain” 202). Not only did that social habit trapped the worker in what was considered as an ‘unwholesome’ routine but also, it may have run against religious principles. One must take into account that in nineteenth century Britain, religious beliefs imposed social and cultural norms of conduct (Wood *Nineteenth Century Britain* 256).

### **Section 3: The Place of Religion and ‘Temperance’**

#### 1.3.1 The Status of Religion in British Society and Scientific Progress

In his book entitled *The Churches in the Nineteenth Century* (1967), historian Josef Altholz points out that in the nineteenth century, “the Christian proportion of the world’s population was larger than it has ever been before or since” (Altholz 3). This may illustrate the significant place of religion in people’s life. In England, the Anglican Church was “central to the maintenance of order and the continuation of social and political traditions” (Alderson *Religion, anliness and Imperialism in Nineteenth British Culture* 13). This religious institution was therefore essential to preserve a certain stability in British society. Christianity may be regarded as at the core of British culture and the expansion of Anglicanism, Presbyterian, Roman Catholicism and other cults in the British colonies during the nineteenth century gave evidence of the popularity of

religion (Porter *The Nineteenth Century* 122). Thus, a significant role was assigned to religion as a crucial tool to bind communities.

Its role was ubiquitous since as member of parliament in the House of Commons Edmund Burke defined religion in British society, in 1790; it was “the foundation of their whole constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union” (Porter *The Oxford History of the British Empire* 223). Through these words, Burke describes how British people perceived the Church and points out a powerful link between both which illustrates the significant place of faith in the country. More than that, it portrayed the Church of England as the foundation of the constitution which may have reinforced religious power and influence on British society.

Likewise, British Anglican priest, William Owen Chadwick, argues that “until the very end of the Victorian era the English people and English institutions were decidedly religious” (Soloway “Church and Society” 143). In this regard, there was a strong relation between the population and the public institutions. Along with faith and duty, Anglicanism also aspired to be the pillar of society and state which emphasized the crucial role of religion in Britain (Porter *The Oxford History of the British Empire* 223).

Historians Helmstadter and Lightman observe that during nineteenth century, the British nation experienced “the most fervent religious crusade” (*Victorian Faith* 11). To explain the latter, they highlight that the French Revolution had been the driving force that intensified religion because first, most British people were anti-revolutionary but also, there was a strong will to preserve “the existing social and political structures” in Britain (Helmstadter, Lightman 12). Religion was “a significant and spiritual force” (Helmstadter, Lightman 3). Likewise, to historian Ryan Dye, in nineteenth century England, “religion was central to the formation of a modern English (and British) identity” (Dye “Catholic Protectionism” 358). Provided that, one may assume that religion had a powerful influence on the society. Most importantly, one may argue that religious values and principles inculcated a high degree of morality in people’s life.

### 1.3.2 Religious Emphasis on Moral Manners

Industrialisation may have cast doubt on religion. As historian Josef Altholz underlines, urban migration caused new issues to English churches which had been based on an agrarian society (*The Churches in the Nineteenth Century* 3). He explains that urbanisation led to “a transformation of the material and social conditions of human life” (3). To handle the latter, he argues that “the churches had to make new appeals; to the social problems resulting from economic change they had to find new Christian responses” (3). It implied that religious institutions had to adapt to the changing situation as a large part of the population did by settling in urban areas.

Historian Altholz stresses that “in the nineteenth century, evangelicalism was to become the most vital religious force in England” (31); he also highlights that “the growth of evangelicalism and the rise of industrialism coincided in time” (32). One may regard evangelicalism as part of the industrial transition. As said above, changes caused by industrialisation required changes in the churches. With evangelicalism, the churches may have found responses to social problems caused by urbanization. To some degree, faith may have helped the population, more especially the lower classes, to find strength and support in daily life.

As Altholz explains, evangelical Protestantism was an individual religious experience which necessitated a ‘conversion’. The latter raised awareness of sin and awaked God’s grace in the Christian’s life (24). Most importantly, “evangelical Protestants are characterized by moral earnestness, a rigorous standard of conduct, and frequent examination of conscience; they emphasize Bible reading, private family and group prayers” (24). This religion provided a solid framework to teach moral values and to create a religious community in which Christians had to respect a specific code of conduct.

As we will show, Methodism was also a significant religious community. It achieved its independence after a Conference held in 1787 during which preachers prevailed ‘respectability.’ The Cambridge Dictionary defines this word as “the quality of being socially acceptable” (n. 1). ‘Respectability’ was a popular norm including high behavioural criteria such as manners and morals which were triumphantly encouraged

by middle classes since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Hull “The Bourgeoisie” 223). Respectability was also valued by evangelical religion (Altholz *The Churches in the Nineteenth Century* 31). It was undoubtedly compatible with religious constituencies since both implied a respectful social demeanour.

Methodism grew in the 1810s and “added a new strength to the ranks of the non-conformist churches of England” (Altholz *The Churches* 29). This religious constituency was supported by large proportion of the middle classes and it was “destined to set the tone of English life in the nineteenth century” (29). Methodists influenced nineteenth British society which may have advocated ‘respectability’ as a popular ideology. In this sense, religious constituencies taught moral values and manners in order to spread ‘respectability.’

### 1.3.2 ‘Temperance’ as a Virtue

Temperance may be regarded as a value encouraged by religion. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the latter as a “control of your own behaviour, such as not drinking or eating too much” (n. 1) and also, as “the habit of not drinking alcohol because you believe it is dangerous or wrong” (n. 2). That said, a campaign against alcohol began in 1830s known as the temperance movement (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 97-98). Was it connected with religious constituencies?

In an article entitled “Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth Century England” (1967), historian Harrison points out that the temperance movement remained “predominantly evangelical in origin and aim” (99). Since evangelicalism was the “most vital religious force in England” (Altholz 31), it may have fuelled the movement and made it popular. Historians Brace, Harvey and Bailey explain in their article entitled “Disciplining Youthful Methodist Bodies in Nineteenth-Century Cornwall” (2007), that “the discourse of temperance was utilized to enrol people into religious constituencies” (144). The purpose was to influence people’s religious commitment. The movement incited a large number of people to be devoted to the church where “notions of etiquette and appropriate behavior” emerged and impacted directly their conduct (Brace, Bailey, Harvey 144). Thus, temperance may have embodied a feature of ‘respectability.’

One may argue that the British population had to follow an ethical code spread by religious constituencies. Demonstrating soberness was synonymous with ‘respectable’ behavior. Temperance could be perceived as a virtue with which the ‘good’ Christian identified. In nineteenth century England, religion was considered as an educative tool for the building of a more modern British identity (Dye “Catholic Protectionism” 358) while temperance “presupposed a conception of the virtuous itself as an achievement, the result of a process through time, a narrative effort” (Tony Lynch “Temperance, Temptation, and Silence” 251). This may portray temperance as an ordeal testing one’s belief. Therefore, to be a ‘temperance’ advocate required time and constant efforts.

Another important point to underline was that to abstain from alcoholic beverages, the drinker should demonstrate self-control considered as being “constantly in Jesus’ teaching” (Matt. 5:21-6:34). Therefore, self-control appears to be a virtue which stands for the “foundation of spiritual discipline [...] throughout the New Testament scriptures” and this implies that “sobriety is often invoked as a key virtue in the Christian life” (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 145). Discipline was thus essential in Christianity since it illustrates a high moral criterion which requires personal commitment. If self-control was synonymous with virtue, it was also part of the temperance doctrine which stood for “moderation in drinking” (Horder Jeremy “Tort and the Road to Temperance” 735). A common point between religion and the temperance movement was that they both regarded self-control as the foundation of their ideology. However, religious temperance groups had various approaches regarding the drinking question.

As Gerrard Olsen states in his article entitled "From Paris to Palace" (1989) the Anglican Church promoted moderation rather than total abstinence (241). On the contrary, Methodists intended to eradicate intemperance totally (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 144). The Anglican establishment thought that total abstinence “had no place in the Anglican pastoral tradition and that it threatened the metaphysical and social principles” (Olsen 241) of the church which undoubtedly alluded to altar wine. Indeed, historian Shiman explains in her book entitled *Crusade Against Drink* (1988): “wine, an alcoholic and intoxicating drink, was used during the celebration of the sacraments to represent the blood of Christ, and was drunk as a part of the service” (69). The traditional consumption of wine in churches was so deeply rooted that it appeared incongruous to remove it.



Another important point was that “bottles of wine and brandy [were] given to ministers by members of their congregations as gifts in appreciation of their services, as was the custom in all walks of life in England in the early and mid-nineteenth century” (Shiman 43). This custom exemplifies how important those alcoholic drinks were and especially, how ordinary they became. They were not only consumed during sacramental rituals of the church, but also offered as rewarding presents to ministers. One may suggest that since wine and brandy were affiliated to many churches, it might be difficult for the temperance movement to support their cause. It is worth remembering that self-control was a virtue promoted by both which implies that a coexistence was possible despite the differences in views on the matter.

### 1.3.3 Influence on Social Habits: Religious Organisations and the Environment of the Worker

Methodist religious organisations were regarded as being “the first temperance reformers during the nineteenth century” (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 142). They intended to eradicate intemperance and towards that end, they ensured to make children “the Methodist adults of tomorrow” (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 144). Undoubtedly, Methodists were aware of the significant role of young people in the eradication of intemperance. Indoctrinating the younger generation could be an ingenious strategy to perpetuate total abstinence from alcoholic beverages. A key point to underline was that “getting children involved in temperance activity offers the promise of determining the habits of an as-yet-un-corrupted person” (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 146). Teaching children temperance was almost as stopping corruption. If from an early age children were taught that intemperance was evil, they would surely grow up with an extremely negative opinion about drinking and therefore, they would become abstainers.

Arguably, the younger people were, the easier it was to make them the non-drinkers of the future. Importantly, “education was under religion” which reinforced religious values including temperance and self-discipline (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 153). Temperance religious constituencies envisioned a ‘respectable’ British society in which children growing in a religious and temperance background would represent the working-class adults of tomorrow. Children under sixteen could become members; they

had to pronounce the following pledge: “I do agree that I will not use intoxicating liquors as a beverage.” (Longmate “The Waterdrinkers” 123). That said, they may have been conditioned to grow sober.

From the very beginning of the temperance movement, in the 1830s, numerous organisations for young people were created such as the Juvenile Temperance Association in Paisley, Scotland, the first Total Abstinence Society for Boys and Girls at Preston, Lancashire (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 150). The most popular of all was the Band of Hope, “a temperance organisation in which children took a pledge of total abstinence from alcohol” (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 142). Created in 1847, in Leeds, the designation ‘Band of Hope’ became a common term for a great number of youth organisations “concerned with all kind of temperance work among children for both sexes between the ages of six and twelve” (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 134). The ‘conversion’ of young people in the temperance struggle was thus thought to be essential to ensure a sober society.

The Band of Hope could be regarded as a ‘cult’ in which young people were indoctrinated. There was a whole process to join the organisation: firstly, young members had to sign the Pledge, stating that any intoxicating beverages were banned; and secondly, to wear ribbons to show their membership (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 152). In so doing, this commitment was to become a new part of their identity, namely that they were non-drinkers. The Band of Hope was not only considered as an organisation promoting temperance but also as a community gathering people in “public teas, galas and parades” to attract new members and widen their family (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 151).

The organisation became increasingly important since in 1874, there were 5,500 organisations with 800,000 members and in 1889, there were 16,000 Bands of Hope in the United Kingdom with 2 million members (Brace, Harvey, Bailey 150). Over the years, the number of organisations increased and showed a collective awareness regarding the dangers of alcoholic beverages. By using the youth to defend its ideologies, the community certainly influenced a large part of the English population. Eventually, if religious discourses and organisations did not erase intemperance,

however, they may have contributed to reduce it and to raise people's awareness regarding excess of drinking.

If the biblical texts and religious organisations portrayed temperance as a virtue, one may wonder whether they impacted the working class' view. One must bear in mind that while the public house was mainly frequented by working people ("Social Control in Victorian Britain" 202), the 1830 Beer Act led to a more regular consumption of intoxicating beverages in the working class ("The Sovereign People" 117). This tendency may be viewed as contrary to the religious discourse which highlighted sobriety and self-control. This contradiction may have created a barrier between the working class and religion. As said previously, religious discourses put an emphasis on moral conduct and temperance could reflect the ideology of 'respectability.' However, sobriety or moderation were not part of the habits of the working class since drinking was part of its routine as Friedrich Engels puts it in (*The Condition of the Working Class* 103).

Adopting a sober behaviour may be regarded as difficult if one refers to the environmentalist theory, that is to say "the belief that the environment in which people live constitutes a set of interrelated influences which shape their opportunities and experiences" (Driver "Moral Geographies" 276). In this regard, since the workers lived in favourable conditions which led him to intemperance - as Engels and Mason showed by describing their background and their social habit - it was unavoidable that their behaviours and their tastes were influenced.

Regarding the nineteenth-century working class, Friedrich Engels points out that the latter "does not understand religion" (125). He insists on the fact that there was "a total indifference to religion" among the working-class men and adds that "drunkenness, sexual irregularities, brutality [...] are the chiefs points with which the bourgeois charge them" (125-126). Perhaps, this indifference was due to the conditions in which the working class lived. As Engels argues "morality is destroyed by [...] work itself" (*The Condition of the Working-Class In England In 1844* 250) assuming that social behaviour was connected with labor. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, workers had to work "for long hours in inhuman conditions" (Basu "Scientific Honesty and the Working

Class” 4) and it certainly had a negative impact on their perception of life as well as their demeanour.

In an article entitled “Religion and the Nineteenth-Century British Working Class” (1964), Henry Pelling gives an account of a religious census made by a leader of an Industrial Mission of the Anglican Church named Reverend E. R. Wickam. The Reverend reported that during the first half of the nineteenth century, in Sheffield, the adult working class did not go to church or chapel and felt no need to go (128). Towards the end of the century, in the 1880s and 1890s, apathy towards religion was widespread in cities such as Liverpool, Newcastle and Ipswich (131). But for Pelling, if the working class was not regular Church attendees, it did not mean that they were devoid of faith (132). While adult workers did not go to church in most large cities of England, those living in small towns or in the countryside did (133). Thus, churchgoing varied from one place to another. In a book entitled *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (1984), Hugh McLeod explains that domestic missionaries visited working-class dwellings and noticed that many workers had no time for religion (10).

One may argue that facing a terrible working environment, most workers did not consider piety with a favourable eye and, to some extent, “the enjoyment of intoxicating liquors” (Engels 128) may have replaced religion and enabled workers to express anger that they could not at work. Finally, this generated a vicious circle in which the worker was trapped. The situation was no longer bearable for the working population whether in terms of living and working conditions, mental health, purpose in life or personnel advancement; the workers should act and struggle together to stop their daily nightmare. To some degree, the working class needed guidance to be free from its harsh routine. As the Band of Hope did with young people, one may suggest that the working class needed a movement to reshape its social habits and to adopt a ‘respectable’ attitude. To some degree, the rise of the temperance movement may have brought some support to the working class.

While the industrial revolution made Britain a model of wealth and prosperity, its impact on the working-class population was abrupt. The latter had to adapt to the life in industrial towns where pollution and overcrowding were significant. Living in an

insalubrious environment, the workers found in the public house an escape from their hard-working daily routine. Drinking alcoholic beverages was a popular habit and the 1830 Beerhouse may have pushed them to drink more by increasing the number of drinking places. We showed how common was the belief that drinking was helpful and gave the worker strength. In Engels' view, drunkenness was unavoidable in the life of the working class since all that surrounded it urged it to drink. But that habit was incompatible with religious values which emphasized on respectability as a social norm. Therefore, the temperance movement emerged under the evangelical impulse and was devoted to spread moderation as a 'public' virtue. Temperance advocates undertook to create a community of youth with the creation of the Band of Hope. The aim was to cultivate sobriety among young members. Towards that end, a change in popular beliefs might occur. As we will show, the temperance movement intended to implement new beliefs regarding alcohol in order to improve British society. In parallel, other social movements arose to improve the status and the life of the working class.

# **PART II: Popular Enthusiasm for Radical Changes in Drinking Habit, Politics and Living Standards**

## **Introduction**

In nineteenth century British society, “the consumption of alcohol among working-class men began to be viewed as a wasteful and illicit form of entertainment which served no purpose, caused many problems, and was scorned and fought against by the temperance movement” (Smith “The Temperance Movement and Class Struggle in Victorian England”).<sup>5</sup> That being said, drinking habit could be a social and political obstacle to the working-class struggle. In this second part, we will present the temperance campaign by focusing on its ideologies and its arguments in the press. While a working-class political movement known as Chartism arose in the same decade, we will attempt to show that temperance principles could reinforce the latter. Another significant movement emerged identified as the Anti-Corn Law League whose aim was to provide the population with a cheapest market. Aiming at repealing the Corn Laws which imposed high tariffs and trade restrictions on imported food, the Leaguers<sup>6</sup> campaigned for years and tried to get the support of the working class to establish free trade in Great Britain. In this part, we will essentially refer to the campaign for free-trade in England. We will demonstrate that prominent social reformers adhered to temperance ideas which may have forged their enthusiasm for social improvement.

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<sup>5</sup> This reference is from an online newspaper entitled *The Student Historical Journal 1992-1993*. Accessed May 2020. Available at: <http://people.loyno.edu/~history/journal/1992-3/smith-r.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Here, the term “Leaguers” refers to supporters of the Anti-Corn Law League Movement.

## Section 1: The Temperance Campaign and Its Impact on British Society

### 2.1.1 1830s: Revolts of the Working Class and the Rise of the Temperance Movement

Facing compelling issues in urban areas - unsanitary environment, hard working conditions, corruption in public houses - the situation of the working class could be perceived as precarious. Drastic changes in British society and policy were thought to be crucial to avoid an ‘English revolution.’<sup>7</sup> Indeed, in an attempt to manage social issues, the English working class demanded radical changes to the Parliament from the 1830s onward (Swisher *Victorian England* 43). From that period, “the workers began to organize and hold meetings protesting economic and social injustices” (Swisher *Victorian England* 17) which shed light on a general despondency. As said earlier, hard working conditions prevailed in British industrialised society and this may have led to a working class protest. Historian Clarice Swisher stresses that “tensions were particularly high in the early 1830s [...] In 1830 workers rioted in Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire” (*Victorian England* 13). It was therefore of paramount importance to decrease the tensions and to restore social and political balance.

Historian Clarice Swisher describes the nineteenth-century working conditions of the miners who “hewed ore in underground seams so small that they crawled on their knees or walked bent over. They worked twelve-hour shifts in near darkness - in seams filled with dust, bad air, and sometimes water and rat” (*Victorian England* 14). The work was arduous and directly affected their physical and mental health. This was undeniably an incentive to gather and protest. Towards that end, tracts were an ingenious media to spread the miner’s claims and attract other working-class groups to discuss hardship of

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<sup>7</sup>Echoed to the French Revolution when “forces exploded in 1789” and put an end to feudalism (Stromberg “Reevaluating the French Revolution” 88-89). As historian Lilian Charlotte Anne Knowles explains in her book entitled *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions in Great Britain during the Nineteenth Century* (1927), in the aftermath of the French Revolution, ideas of personal liberty influenced Britain (6).

work. For example, in 1831, the Coal Miners Union held a meeting at the High Bullen, Wednesbury: it publicized the latter through a tract in which was written:

For the purpose of taking into consideration the wretched system and abuses of the Coal Mining Interests; and to try if means can be adopted to amend them; our Masters are giving their Children's portions away, and we as Servants are being sunk into the lowest gulf of Poverty; therefore we hope all the Colliers throughout the Country will attend, both Booties and Wagemen, whether they belong to the UNION or not. (The National Archives)<sup>8</sup>

Through the announcement, it appears that the Coal Miners Union was not satisfied with the working conditions. It even criticized a hierarchical structure in which the miners were at the bottom while their masters took advantage of a better position. The latter may represent exploitation of the miners since the tract denounces a corrupted working environment including many abuses. Aiming at changing those injustices, the tract invited working people to gather and to discuss their grievances. As a matter of fact, “the working class endured hard working conditions in the mines and factories, and no laws existed before the 1840s to protect them” (Swisher *Victorian England* 14). Unions were then a means to change the system.

The Coal Miners Union was not the only organisation to advocate solutions for the improvement of working conditions. Historian Clarice Swisher points out that “trade unions had been working since the 1830s for better conditions, but their proposals for reform had also met with opposition” (*Victorian England* 22). She also notes that “trade unions formed around workmen in various industries, such as engineers or shoemakers, to negotiate wages, improve working conditions, fund sickness benefits and strike pay, and to press for reforms” (*Victorian England* 22). Those organisations aimed at improving the condition of the working class. This may be regarded as an attempt to establish radical measures to bring harmony in British society.

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<sup>8</sup> Annexe 2



As historian Francis Thompson explains in his article entitled “Social Control in Victorian Britain” (1981), in the 1830s, a significant moral crusade appeared: the temperance movement (200-201). Its aim was to “to reshape the tastes and habits of the working classes” (“Social Control in Victorian Britain” 200-201). The movement aimed at improving their life through behavioural changes. As historian Lewis Shiman puts it in, the consumption of intoxicating beverages was an issue of paramount importance among the working class (Shiman *Crusade against Drink* 2). That said, how could they claim for better working conditions if they were often intoxicated? It can be argued that to obtain radical changes, the working class should transform their ‘harmful’ habits. The temperance movement may be regarded as a triggering element towards individual improvement.

### 2.1.2 Moderation and Abstinence: Temperance Advocates and Teetotalers

In his book entitled *Drink and the Victorian* (1994), historian Brian Harrison stresses that the temperance movement originated from the United States and arrived in England in 1830s (97-98). To give a further account, he states that missionary George Charles Smith received a letter from New York, in 1829, telling him to write the first English tract to advocate the creation of temperance societies in Britain (98). In the aftermath of the event, Harrison underlines that many temperance organisations were founded such as the London Temperance Society, the British Foreign Temperance Society (B.F.T.S) or the English Total Abstinence League. The rise of the movement could be regarded as a popular enthusiasm to raise concern about consumption of alcohol in British population by spreading virtues of temperance.

Moreover, within the temperance movement, a more radical branch called teetotalism arose in the early 1830s and encouraged people to sign the ‘long pledge’ which “banned the offering, as well as the consuming, of intoxicants” (*Drink and the Victorian* 21). By signing the pledge, people were committed to be non-drinkers for their entire life. The temperance movement included different sort of drinkers. There were total abstainers, also called teetotalers, who did not even tolerate a drop of alcohol and in parallel, there were ‘moderationists,’ or temperance advocates, who accepted a reasonable consumption of alcohol (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 28). The B.F.T.S, for example,

allowed a moderate drinking of wine and beer (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 103). But, beyond this distinction, both moderationists and teetotalers considered drinking habits as problematic and therefore, temperance reformers were increasingly present to denounce intemperance and to propose alternatives as we will demonstrate.

Among the various temperance reformers, Joseph Livesey appeared as “the pioneer Preston teetotaler” and in his view, “individual moral reform was his road to social harmony” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 113-114). In other words, Livesey perceived morality as a tool for building a peaceful society. Historian Harrison stresses that “by 1826 [Livesey] was issuing tracts against drunkenness and by 1830 he was publicly declaring that no intoxicant was a necessity of life” (*Drink and the Victorians* 114) which gave evidence of his strong commitment. In so doing, Livesey may have attempted to fix a new trend and belief regarding drinking habit. If the latter was perceived as a popular social custom among the working class, as we showed with the success of the drinking houses, yet, it may have been one of the factors that prevented the working class to improve its condition.

In the 1830s, Livesey attacked the Beer Act by saying that it made ale accessible to the poorest which conveyed an illusory and intoxicated relief while greater employments and a minimum wage for home market were better options (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 114). For Livesey, the Act was dangerous and working-class people “should not be enticed by temptations which they cannot resist” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 114). It seems that the teetotaler was aware of the hold that alcohol had on this group which may be the reason why Livesey banned it entirely. It was impossible in Livesey’s opinion “to consume alcohol ‘moderately’: the smallest amount of such a poison is excessive” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 117). The latter may be regarded as a radical vision of intoxicating beverages emphasizing it as poisonous and unhealthy. Radicalism was thus, the watchword of teetotalism since the latter was radically opposed to the smallest consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Another element to consider is that the temperance movement enabled a reconsideration of drunkenness. Indeed, if the moderationists perceived the drunkard as someone devoid of willpower and criticized him as feeble, in parallel, teetotalers understood that the

drunkard was transformed by intoxicating drinks and needed support to get through their addiction (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 110). To have a better understanding of the latter, historian Harrison underlines that “teetotalers like Livesey and Whittaker could be seen through the streets arm-in-arm with drunkards whom moderationists spurned as an embarrassment to their cause” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 111). It is clear that the teetotalers were more empathic than moderationists.

The different approaches could justify the reason why the teetotalers were presumably more effective than the moderationists. Indeed, Harrison explains that, “teetotalism was much more resolute in its methods, much more confident that a dramatic change in national habits could be quickly seemed. In many respects, it was only with teetotalism that the temperance movement made real advances over previous patterns of moral reform” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 108). Based on this assumption, it appears that teetotalism brought some improvements to social morality. Perhaps, it was through their supportive nature that they gained recognition.

Teetotalers were in favour of industrial progress, scientific advancements, education and all humanitarian movements that subverted traditional forms of recreation (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 95). They were clearly for social progress through the sharing of knowledge and they were against old national customs which may refer to intoxicating beverages. A striking common point between temperance reformers and teetotalers was that they both advocated a shift in social customs by denouncing drinking habits. As Harrison points out: “the temperance movement was prominent among several reforming organizations which sought to mobilize and recruit respectability at the lowest social levels” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 26) which suggests a will to elevate the lowest social classes by teaching them morality and decency. In this regard, through their apparently admirable aim, temperance reformers became the nineteenth century “heroes of abstinence” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 28). But how did they proceed to spread their ideologies?

### 2.1.3 The Media's Views on Temperance and Drunkenness

One of the most efficient tools of the temperance campaign was certainly the media. *The Temperance Advocate*<sup>9</sup> was a nineteenth-century periodical which, as its title suggests, promoted abstinence from intoxicating beverages. It first appeared in April 1832 and introduced itself with the following words: “We present to the Public in the first number of our Periodical, an accurate description of the ground which we intend to occupy in our future labours. We advocate SCRIPTURAL TEMPERANCE, by Precept and Example, as illustrated in the operations of Temperance Societies” (1). It appears that the journal aimed at dealing with alcohol issues and by the means of the Scripture, it could illustrate religious arguments to promote abstinence.

Each issue started with a biblical quotation favouring temperance ideas such as “and every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.” (1 Corinthians 9:25). The latter exemplifies the importance of temperance as a virtue in the Bible and it puts an emphasis on self-control as a means to achieve it. By referring to the Bible, the periodical may have reached a larger readership and also, it showed temperance as wholly compatible with spiritual growth. To some degree, mastering one's alcohol consumption hinted to be able to master one's life. Besides, with those first lines, the periodical referred to temperance societies as a support to convey their message.

In the first issue of *The Temperance Advocate*, the periodical mentions other journals such as the *London Morning Herald* which illustrated the success and the need of temperance in the 1830's (*The Temperance Advocate* 10). For instance, the periodical reports the declaration of a group of medical men who states:

we are very happy to observe the names of many eminent members of our profession among the supporters of Temperance Societies. To prove the necessity of discountenancing intemperance, we have merely to state, that, during the four last weeks, no less than 4,070 drunken persons were taken to the Police Stations of the Metropolis. (*The Temperance Advocate* 10).

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<sup>9</sup> This newspaper is available on Google Books. It was digitized by the University of Princeton in 2008.

By mentioning an accurate number of intoxicated people during a specified, quite short, period of time, the report emphasizes intemperance as an issue to consider seriously. One may assume that if the police arrested drunkards, it means that the situation became unbearable. Provided that, the crusade against alcoholic drinks was an arduous task and perhaps, with the support of health workforce, the temperance campaign could achieve a better success.

In other respect, the report above was copied from a newspaper entitled the *Medical and Surgical Journal* which show that three newspapers promoted the anti-drink cause: *The Temperance Advocate*, the *London Morning Herald* and the *Medical and Surgical Journal*. This may reveal a popular enthusiasm for the temperance campaign in the media. One may suggest that the more the media was concerned with the latter, the more temperance values could be spread. Thus, the media could be an efficient tool to convince people about the benefits of moderation or sobriety. *The Temperance Advocate* referred also to other newspapers which struggled for the same cause. The *Temperance Chronicle*, another journal mentioned by *The Temperance Advocate* in 1832, announced the creation of the Medical Temperance Society with the following words:

An association of medical men has been formed in Edinburgh for the suppression of intemperance. [...] The following is the declaration signed by the members:- “We, subscribers, Physicians, Surgeons, and Students of Medicine, hereby declare our conviction, that the use of ardent spirits, now so prevalent, is one of the principal causes of disease, crime, misery, poverty, and in every way most injurious to the temporal and spiritual interests of the community; we therefore resolve, adding example to precept, so long as we belong to this association, to abstain from the use of ardent spirits, except for medicinal purposes, and to refrain from giving them to, or countenancing the use of them by persons in our employment; and that, as the promotion of temperance in general is an object of our institution, other liquors, although allowed, if used to excess, must necessarily exclude from membership. (21)

The fact that a group of “medical men” committed to take part in the crusade against drink can be seen as a major advancement for the temperance cause. By denouncing “ardent spirits” as a paramount element of misfortunes, it emphasized alcohol as dangerous and evil. The involvement of the community of doctors illustrated a serious attention regarding the consumption of alcohol. More especially, it questioned the widespread use of ardent spirits. The extract shows that every members of the Medical Temperance Society had to pledge and that they would avoid the use of ardent spirits unless it concerned medical treatments. In so doing, the extract promoted temperance ideas and the importance of moderation with regard to intoxicating beverages. By referring to the medical community, the periodicals of the time, whether *The Temperance Advocate*, the *London Morning Herald* or the *Temperance Chronicle*, based their anti-spirit arguments on reliable and trustworthy individuals which certainly, brought more credibility to the anti-drink campaign. By demonising alcohol and judging it as responsible of a multitude of social disasters and people’s poor health, the Medical Temperance Society suggested that moderation in drinking was synonymous with social balance.

Another way to promote temperance was the report of anecdotes which gave evidence of the advantages of alcoholic abstinence. In 1832, *The Temperance Advocate* transcribed an extract from the *Bristol Liberal* relating an experience of a crew navigating for one week without alcohol:

He sailed from the port of Hull with a crew of twenty-four men, and he never used in his vessel a single drop of ardent spirit, nor did he suffer it to be on board. He told his crew, before he engaged them, that he should allow of none. They all cheerfully agreed. He returned to Liverpool, and his men’s health was improved: his pilot said he had never seen a ship in such order. He told him why it was. He proceeded on the same temperate plan, and on the 18th September his vessel was run on shore; at the time the thermometer was below the freezing point in his cabin; they were in this state six days, and not a drop of spirits was on board, nor did one of them suffer in health. While he was at Miramichi, he endeavoured to persuade other captains to do the same: but they laughed him to scorn. The crew of the captain to whom he spoke, when he

had been there six days, got drunk; the ship was mismanaged, and became water-logged, and they were only able to make their escape to Newfoundland in an open boat, regretted that they had not followed his plan. (*The Temperance Advocate* 20)

The anecdote told above praises the benefits of travelling in a sober ship. By convincing his crew to travel without a drop of alcohol, the captain prepared his men to experience temperance in a good atmosphere. The journey onboard appears to be an ordeal successfully overcome with a positive effect on the crew's health. The fact that they resisted to drink strong liquors while the weather was extremely cold may display their solid will to temperate their feelings. The contrast the text does with another ship, whose crew was drunk while the captain was advised to try the same experience, confirms the damages of intemperance. One may notice that the text portrays the 'temperance' experience as totally astounding and utopic. This may cast doubt on its reliability. As historian Brian Harrison argues "throughout its history, temperance placed an exaggerated faith in the written appeal for sobriety" (*Drink and the Victorians* 104). That said, whether the anecdote was true or not, it may have led the readership to reflect on the alcohol issue.

All the extracts from newspapers mentioned above had a common aim: informing and raising awareness about the damages of drunkenness. Writing was not the only media denouncing the latter subject. In an article entitled "Cruikshank and Early Victorian Caricature," Louis James presents George Cruikshank's work as "a pillar of the Teetotal movement" (119). He tells that, in 1847, British caricaturist George Cruikshank made eight plates, the whole known as *The Bottle* (117). He describes the first plate with the following words:

A working-class family are enjoying their evening meal. Everything reflects the ideal of respectability. The clothes are modest but clean and carefully mended. Sprigs of lavender by mirror and family portrait scent the room. At the back centre wall is a portrait of a church; a Bible is on the dresser to the left. Below the parents, the young children at their table intimate the continuity of the happy family down the

generations, a box of heirlooms and portraits of the grandparents on the mantelpiece extend it backwards. Models of happy man, wife, dog and cottage stand as icons on the mantelpiece (118).<sup>10</sup>

Through this description, Cruikshank's plate appears to draw the portrait of a 'typical' working-class family. Respectability is mentioned as representative of the latter and can be noticed through an appropriate dress code and a religious background. It appears that the picture reflects the model of a blooming and happy family. On the illustration, one can see the parents at table while their two children play next to a female servant. The father holds a bottle of wine in his right hand, and offers a glass to his wife with his other hand. If at first sight, the illustration conveys a positive image of a respectable working-class family, yet, it actually introduces the bottle of wine as a trigger component of a series of misfortunes as we will show.

A book version of the illustrations was published in 1905 under the title: *The Bottle and the Drunkard's Children*. Historian Louis James describes it as "the most impassioned and dramatic work Cruikshank completed" ("Cruikshank and Early Victorian Caricature" 119). The plates tell the story of the same working-class family mentioned above. In the book version, the sixth illustration is introduced with the following words: "fearful quarrels, and brutal violence, are the natural consequences of the frequent use of the bottle" (21).<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, one may imagine that the illustration denounces the damages of drunkenness. It might be relevant to describe the picture to have an idea of how drinking habit was perceived by Cruikshank in nineteenth century British society.

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<sup>10</sup> Annexe 3

<sup>11</sup> Annexe 4



To begin with, the sixth plate represents a scene of domestic violence. In the centre, the husband attacks his wife while the two children try to hold him back. On the left, the servant observes the scene and raises her hand towards them as if she wanted to help. The father's face is aggressive while all other faces express fear and shock. At the bottom, one can see objects and furniture turned upside down. In the top right-hand corner, there is a bottle of wine and a glass barely noticeable. The whole picture is dark and therefore, one should watch it meticulously. One may assume that the caricaturist shed light on the domestic violence scene and the faces on purpose. There is no doubt that through this illustration, Cruikshank conveyed a negative vision of alcohol, especially by portraying it as the main cause of domestic violence.

*The Bottle and the Drunkard's Children* was not the Cruikshank's only work dealing with the consequences of drinking habit. In an article entitled "Psychiatry in Picture" (2006), Allan Beveridge comments *The Worship of Bacchus*, a painting made between 1860 and 1862. He states that: "George Cruikshank summed up his passionately held beliefs about the social ills caused by heavy drinking. He aimed to convert his audience to total abstinence. The vast array of scenes was designed to illustrate the multiple and disastrous consequences of partaking in alcohol" (188). Thus, it appears that Cruikshank was a fervent advocate of teetotalism since as his works showed, the consumption of alcohol could be tragic.

Perhaps, George Cruikshank was inspired by American Nathaniel Currier's work since the latter expresses a similar evolution of a common drinker. More precisely, in 1846, the American artist made a lithograph entitled "The Drunkard Progress" (Library of Congress).<sup>12</sup> It illustrates the nine steps of drinking habit. At the beginning, the drinker drinks wine with his friends and gradually, he gets addicted to alcohol and dies. The picture demonstrates drinking as a vicious circle in which the drinker starts to use intoxicating beverages as a mere social custom and becomes quickly intemperate which ends to destroy his health and his life. Also, on the picture, one can see the drinker's wife and child abandoned and upset which emphasizes the tragic consequence of drinking habit.

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<sup>12</sup> Annexe 5

In 2019, in an article entitled “The Drunkard’s Progress”, writer Benjamin Breen commented the illustration:

The “epidemic” of alcoholism in 19th century America stemmed from the convergence of several factors. Economic changes resulting from industrialization led to a rapid urbanization of the country and the breakage of older ties to family, profession, and place. In an echo of the current opiate epidemic, many early proponents of the temperance movement highlighted alcoholism as a harbinger of a larger decline of the social order, and framed sobriety as part of a larger spiritual and personal transformation.

Just as in England, the United States experienced industrialisation and urbanization. Breen explains that many American temperance advocates perceived consumption of alcoholic beverages as the primary cause of social disturbances. This analysis may echo with nineteenth century British society. Indeed, as already said, in England, industrialisation led to a massive demographic change in the country. It should be remembered that industrial towns were overcrowded (Briggs *A Social History of England* 194). Also, industrialisation had an impact on liquor trade since the public houses were mainly located in urban areas (Vasey *The pub and English social change* 28).

Overcrowding and availability of alcohol in industrialised areas stimulated intemperance (Logan “The Age of Intoxication” 88). That said, the abuse of alcoholic drinks was considered as responsible for social ills by the Medical Temperance society (*The Temperance Advocate* 21). Likewise, Livesey considered intoxicating beverages as an obstacle for individual moral reform (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 113-114). It appears that both American and English temperance advocates shared the same view regarding drunkenness. American influence on the temperance movement in England cannot be denied. One must keep in mind that the movement originated from America (Harrison *Drinks and the Victorians* 97-98) and, to some degree, the campaign against alcoholic drinks took the latter as its model.

#### 2.1.4 Decline and Revival of the Anti-Drink Cause

Despite all the efforts of temperance reformers to convince more people to join their cause, the movement declined by the end of 1840s (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 74). Historian Lewis Shiman justifies the latter by the fact that “persuading individuals that it was morally wrong to drink was proving to be a dishearteningly slow method of fighting the national curse of intemperance” (74). The method of temperance advocates seemed to be inefficient since their moralising messages failed to reach the whole society. Also, many temperance organisations received less and less fundings, some of them were even in debt (Shiman 74).

Historian Brian Harrison describes the decline as a “failure of volunteerism” (*Drink and the Victorians* 196) which may translate a resistance on behalf of a large section of the population. He points out that the state was perceived as responsible of the decline (*Drink and the Victorians*). This may echo with the 1830 Beer Act which, as seen earlier, contributed to the greater access of intoxicating liquors. Historian Harrison supports this argument and highlights that “the Beer Act of 1830 revealed the hard the state could do” (*Drink and the Victorians* 189). While the movement declined even more in the 1850s and 1860s (Shiman *Crusade against Drink* 75), it was of paramount importance to find new methods to revive the campaign.

In order to eradicate intemperance in England, an organisation called the United Kingdom Alliance (U.K.A.) was created in Manchester in 1853 (Shiman *Crusade* 75). The organisation did not consider itself as a temperance organisation but as a political party (Shiman 75) which could be regarded as a significant advancement for the anti-drink cause. The latter was influenced by the Maine Law, an Act passed on 2 June 1851 in the United States which “forbad all traffic in liquor, both wholesale and retail, within the boundaries of the state” (Shiman 75). Prohibition was undoubtedly more extreme than teetotalism since it made abstinence from alcohol compulsory by stopping its traffic.

Inspired by the Maine Law, the U.K.A. created the Permissive Bill in 1857 which “sought to enable a two-thirds majority of the rate-payers in any one locality to ban the

local drink trade” (Dingle, Harrison “Cardinal Manning” 487). Unlike the Maine Law, the Permissive Bill aimed at prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors locally rather than nationally (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 184). Perhaps, the U.K.A adapted a different strategy because the Bill was to be more successful if ratepayers of each locality could choose to apply prohibition or not. Thus, the Bill gave to ratepayers options regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages.

The process of the U.K.A may be regarded as innovative and radical since “it placed in temperance legislation all the hopes which previous temperance reformers had placed in individual moral reform” (Dingle, Harrison “Cardinal Manning” 487). Until then, it appeared that on the basis of moral arguments, temperance advocates believed that each individual was able to reject drunkenness. One may wonder whether temperance reformers and members of the U.K.A worked together since they both aimed at the repudiation of intemperance. Historian Brian Harrison argues that the U.K.A hoped to get the support of temperance advocates because it could be complementary (*Drink* 196). For the U.K.A, the state had to take its responsibilities and its unethical conduct into account (Harrison *Drink* 189). Alongside with prohibitionists, temperance reformers could reinforce their cause and obtain better results. Nevertheless, their coalition may have encountered many impediments.

If the prohibition could be perceived as “the state’s equivalent of the abstainer’s pledge” (Harrison *Drink* 189), yet, there was a division between the U.K.A and most of temperance societies (Harrison *Drink* 196). To explain the latter, historian Brian Harrison emphasizes that “for the Alliance, moral progress required infringements of individual liberty” (Harrison *Drink* 190) which went against temperance principles. One must keep in mind that before a person claimed to be a teetotaler or moderationist, they could chose to join the campaign or not. By proceeding in this manner, liberty of expression of each individual was respected. Thus, since the two groups had a different view regarding the management of drinking habit, one may assume that they could not associate.

As a matter of principle, some temperance supporters believed that self-control could help anyone who decided to quit their vices (Shiman *Crusade* 20) while, for teetotalers, self-control was the basis of their ideology (Shiman *Crusade* 76). The gap between

prohibitionists, moderationists and teetotalers may have prevented their coalition. The latter had a concrete project: the Permissive Bill. What happened to the latter? As historian Lewis Shiman chronicles, Sir Wilfrid Lawson introduced it in the House of Commons in 1863 but it was constantly rejected (*Crusade* 83). Despite that failure, prohibitionists made some progress as we will show. The U.K.A contributed to the temperance movement because it helped to spread temperance principles (Harrison *Drink* 199). While the strategy of temperance reformers showed slow progress, prohibitionists prevented the dissolution of the movement. As historian Brian Harrison insists on, by 1870s, the prohibitionists “dominated the entire temperance campaign” (Harrison *Drink* 182) which gave evidence of their fervour.

If for many temperance reformers, the prohibitionists contravened individual liberty because they wanted to impose prohibition, yet, their motivations looked alike. Indeed, most of the temperance campaigners, whether moderationists or teetotalers, struggled for individual improvement. They expected a significant moral progress through temperance principles. The prohibitionists wanted to bring similar improvement by modifying the environment of the drinker which would make moral conduct feasible (Harrison *Drink* 191). It could be said that the U.K.A was the first political party promoting temperance fervently and by adopting a policy approach, it added strength and credibility to the anti-drink cause.

Finally, one may suggest that with the objective of improving British society, social reformers had to adopt different strategies. As seen earlier, moral arguments were not enough to convince the population about the necessity to reduce or even to quit drinking alcoholic beverages. Then, the political approach of the Alliance revived and supplied the temperance movement. The general opinion about ‘social ills’ - such as drunkenness but also, hard living and working conditions - was that they could be managed with the intervention of the state. As historian Brian Harrison highlights, “the Alliance made high demands of the state: it must teach, discipline and educate its citizens; feed and clothe its delinquents and orphans” (Harrison *Drink* 189). One cannot deny that the U.K.A along with temperance reformers wanted to improve people’s life in various

areas. Furthermore, the U.K.A was not the first organisation to adopt a political strategy in order to obtain parliamentary reforms as we will see.

## **Section 2: The Birth of a Working Class Consciousness: the British Parliament and the Chartist Movement**

### 2.2.1 Trade Unions and Temperance Influence

Regarding the nineteenth-century working class, one may observe two significant elements. While trade unions enabled the latter to voice their grievances, the temperance movement advocated a major social advancement through the rejection of intoxicating beverages. To illustrate these points, in 1830s, an union, based in London, called The National Union of the Working Classes, focused on the establishment of a representative body for the labouring classes in Parliament (Rowe “Class and Political Radicalism in London 1831-2” 36). In parallel, many temperance societies such as the Bradford Long Pledge Association provided the workers with libraries and all types of educational activities to give them access to knowledge (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink In Victorian England* 31). Significantly, those organisations were based on radical views. They both aimed at improving the life of the working class in their working environment and even ‘at home’ by changing their ‘vicious’ habits. One may notice an evolution at a twofold level. On the one hand, thanks to the unions, the working class may have been more organized and determined to ask for reforms. On the other hand, the influence of temperance ideologies may have shaped an educated and ‘temperance’ group of workers.

Historian Norman Ware explains in his article entitled “Labor Movements of Great Britain and the United States” that trade unions began in 1824 in England, even though it only became legal only in 1872 with the Trade Union Act (237). This shows that it required a long period before the British Parliament legalized such an organized guild. Perhaps, unions needed time to give evidence of their legitimacy. The most likely fact was that workers had to be organised and credible before claiming for rights. The rejection of intoxicating beverages could certainly add more reliability to their

approach. What if the temperance movement armed some part of the working class with some ‘sobriety’?

Significantly, “from the mid 1830s to the late 1840s [...] working-class teetotallers dominated the [temperance] movement” (*Crusade Against Drink* 4) which was then perceived as “a vehicle for individual self-improvement” (4). The presence of working-class teetotallers in the anti-drink campaign may have showed a certain degree of awareness regarding drinking habit in the working population. Importantly, the aim of the temperance campaign was “to reshape the tastes and habits of the working classes” (Thompson “Social Control in Victorian Britain” 200-201). Thus, by combining trade union’s grievances and temperance ideologies, the working class was more prepared and united than ever to improve its condition at several levels.

Now that we mentioned various initiatives undertaken for the improvement of the working class, one may wonder how the British government reacted. We must remember that *laissez-faire* was a common doctrine which exempted the state from all responsibilities concerning the living environment of the British population (Fay *Life and Labour* 125). Likewise, historian Sau Ranjit highlights in his article entitled “Class Struggles, Economic Laws and Historical Materialism” that, “only in England could the state pretend for a while to be absent from the civil society” (8). In this regard, one may assume that indirectly, the passivity of the state encouraged British people to take measures. The ‘absenteeism’ of the state may have caused the protest of the working class or at least, prompted it to take its own initiatives by the means of trade unions or other collective association.

England was experiencing a turbulent time as historian Edward Palmer Thompson sheds light on in his book entitled *The Making of the English Working Class*:

The early years of the 1830s are aflame with agitations which turned on issues in which wages were of secondary importance; by the potters, against the Truck System; by the textile workers, for the 10-Hour Bill; by the building workers, for co-operative direct action; by all groups of workers, for the right to join trade unions. (*The Making of the English Working Class* 203).

Through this extract, Thompson puts an emphasis on a salient feature of British society: turmoils were due to the capitalist system which exploited the working class. He shows a contrast between the potters and the Truck System which may convey a negative image of capitalism. To have a better understanding of the latter, the “Truck System” was “a system during the early years of the Industrial Revolution of forcing workers to accept payment of wages in kind, usually to the employer’s advantage” (Collins Dictionary n. 1). Provided that, it is undeniable that industrialisation led to considerable issues such as work exploitation, abuse of power and injustices. One may imagine that the working classes were oppressed and claimed for radical changes. As historian Thompson points out in this extract, the reduction of working time and the liberty to join a labour union were among their claims.

Besides, those actions set up in different sectors of the working classes illustrated a great number of grievances. Through those claims, one may find an impetus for gathering in order to find rapid solutions. The working class became aware that their unity reinforced their struggle which could certainly lead to expected results. The working-class agitation could be regarded as a huge jigsaw puzzle in which each revolt was a significant piece and once we gather all of them, we may catch sight of a common and coherent aim. To bring coherence to its agitation, one may suggest that the working class needed a representative.

### 2.2.2 Popular Radicalism and the 1832 Reform Act

A major event in the history of the nineteenth-century English working class may be the first representation of the latter in the British Parliament. Historian Cole Georges Douglas Howard supports the former idea. In his book entitled *British Working Class Politics 1823-1914* (1965) he asserts that Henry Hunt was “the first M.P. who can be regarded as [...] the representative of the working classes” (13) which was probably a key moment for the laboring classes. Known to be an excellent orator, in the 1830s, Hunt “sat in Parliament during the struggle over the Reform Act as the sole representative of extreme Radicalism, and the sole advocate of working claims”(13).



Hunt could be perceived as the only radical member of Parliament to support the working-class protest.

As professor of history John Belchem points out, “it was Hunt who responded most fully to increasing distress” (“Henry Hunt and the Evolution of the Mass Platform” 740). Belchem explains that Hunt “followed a fairly conventional path to radicalism, progressing rapidly from berating corruption and mismanagement to demanding parliamentary reform (“Henry Hunt and the Evolution of the Mass Platform” 741). Importantly, in 1832, Hunt proposed a petition calling for “universal suffrage, annual parliaments and the ballot” (Belchem 747). Those suggestions could be perceived as a reorganisation of Parliament in taking into account the voice of the population. The reconceptualisation of the parliamentary system could then be a solution to solve the problems of riots and general discontent.

In Hunt’s view, “radicalism was synonymous with mass meetings, mass petitions and the programme of universal suffrage, annual parliaments and the ballot: a programme for which all could strive and which none should hinder by foolish excursions into violence” (Belchem 747). In other words, the latter suggests that British government had to be sensitive to the popular protest, by giving it a voice through meetings and petitions which could dissipate tensions and avoid violent and unmanageable riots. Hunt encouraged everyone to struggle for the programme in a peaceful way. His radical views with regard to parliamentary reforms envisioned a popular radicalism as we will demonstrate.

Another important fact underlined by historian Thompson, was that by 1832, there was a real increase of working-class organisations such as “trade unions, friendly societies, educational and religious movements, political organisations, periodicals-working-class intellectual traditions, working-class community-patterns, and a working-class structure of feeling” (*The Making of the English Working Class* 194). All these elements were initiatives taken by the working classes to improve their life at several levels and may be regarded as the fruit of a social and political radicalism. Likewise, in an article entitled “The Rise of the Working Classes” (2016), historian William Pelz emphasized that “radicals in nineteenth-century [...] built up organizations of workers, which could both fight for material improvements (higher wages, shorter hours, better working

conditions) and prepare proletarians to take power in the future (Pelz “The Rise of the Working Classes” 83). By mentioning “organizations of workers,” historian Pelz refers to all sorts of initiatives mentioned above by historian Thompson and specifies the main aims.

Indeed, one can notice that Pelz focuses on a certain number of changes which could improve the working environment and then, empower the working class to voice their demands. One may assume that the institutions mentioned by historian Thompson adopted a radical approach and were connected with different fields of British society, more precisely from morality, intellect to politics and media. In so doing, the working class was determined to evolve through those organisations. Also, those structures prompted the workers to reflect together which certainly arose a certain degree of awareness regarding morality, politics and collectivity. Finally, all these elements may have flourished and played a role in a positive evolution of the working class.

While many workers were gathering to improve several aspects of their life, the Parliament passed a bill which certainly emphasized their discontent. As historian Cole George Douglas Howard stands for, a bill passed in 1832: the Reform Act. The latter led to the enfranchisement of the middle class and a redistribution of the seats in Parliament (Cole *British Working Class Politics 1832-1914* 12). After the Act, it was the upper and middle class who chose members of the House of Commons (Cole 12). This reform appeared to be a significant advancement for the middle class which could then vote and decided about representatives in the Parliament. However, as Douglas Howard insists on: “the Act of 1832 did nothing to enfranchise the working classes. It even abolished their hold on the two or three constituencies in which they had been previously a power” (14). Through the Reform Act may reveal the non-consideration of the working class while as we stood for, by 1830s, the latter started to get involved in home policy since their meetings expressed the need for representatives and reforms. Furthermore, by reinforcing political power in the upper and middle class and reducing the constitutional rights of the working class, the Parliament may have broadened social disparities and preserved the prevailing social order.

On the surface, the 1832 Reform Act may have confirmed a class bias in British society since it advantaged the middle class in terms of parliamentary representation. It may

have also inspired the oppressed people to act even more radically. Likewise, for historian Anthony Wood, the Act “had opened a door, and through that door there was to come a whole mass of social and administrative reform, which was to bring in its wake the succeeding Parliamentary Reform Acts of the nineteenth century” (*Nineteenth Century Britain 1815-1914* 88). Thus, the Reform Act may have been a first step towards changes.

### 2.2.3 The Chartist Movement

Facing the parliamentary attitude, the working class adopted a radical approach and from this arose a national working-class movement: Chartism (Taylor “Rethinking the Chartists” 481). Historian Kemnitz Milton qualifies the latter as the response of “a pressure group without political power trying to force a resistant and hostile government to grant political rights” (“Approaches to the Chartist Movement” 68). Thus, Chartism emerged from the agitations of the working class as a reaction to the decadent legal system. Skilled workers such as William Lovett, Henry Hetherington, Francis Place can be seen as prominent figures of the Chartist movement since they founded the London Working Man’s Association (L.W.M.A) in 1836 that created the ‘People’s Charter’ (Cole *British Working Class Politics 1832-1914* 17). The People’s Charter was a political manifesto which formulated six main points for a fairer legal system: male suffrage, annual parliaments, the secret ballot, equal electoral districts, salaries for members, and no property qualification for sitting in Parliament (Cole 17). Through those points, the Chartists wanted to transform the parliamentary system into a fair structure.

It appeared therefore that the more efficient way for the working class to obtain reforms, was to act collectively and to get involved in politics of the nation. Historian Taylor Miles underlines “the importance of seeing the Chartist movement as an expression of working-class consciousness” (“Rethinking the Chartists” 481) which translates the various protests as a collective and social class reaction. Actually, by adopting a political reflexion and a mutual understanding, the Chartist movement may reflect a growth of the working class. Likewise, historian Taylor conveys Chartism as “the

response of a literate and sophisticated working class” (481) which again, portrays a class evolution at national level.

The national unity of the tendency illustrated a general discontent that emerged in all over the country. Thus, the Chartist movement did not belong to a specific area in England but it actually “grew out of working experiences that were locally and regionally differentiated” (Howell Philip “The Local Background of Chartism Revisited” 151). By spreading throughout the country, the movement demonstrated the collective awareness of the working class. One may suggest that working-class men were all experiencing social injustices and tensions. With all the social tensions of the time, Chartism can be considered as the continuity of numerous initiatives to obtain democratic reforms as we mentioned with the establishment of several working-class organisations such as friendly societies and trade unions.

In other respects, “Chartists were keenly concerned with the introduction of machinery and new work practices, with downward wage pressure, with hours of work, and with the elimination of customary privileges and apprenticeship statutes” (Howell Philip 156). As we showed, with the recent industrialisation and urbanisation of England, changes occurred - bringing hard working conditions, unsanitary housing and a polluted living environment - this transformation seemed to require an assistance for the population to adapt. In this regard, Chartism could be seen as a movement accompanying the shifts in British society. The Chartists were aware of the new challenges stemming from industrialisation and they were determined to bring improvements.

The exercise of the franchise protected by the secret ballot and the annual parliaments were among the same measures advocated by Henry Hunt. These radical and democratic measures were therefore generally agreed. The People’s Charter was the result of the various protests that occurred throughout England. As social historian Dorothy Thompson puts it in:

There were [radical] associations all over the county, but there was a great lack of cohesion. One wanted the ballot, another manhood suffrage and so on ... The radicals were without unity of aim and method, and there was but little hope of accomplishing

anything. When, however, the People's Charter was drawn up ... clearly defining the urgent demands of the working class, we felt we had a real bond of union; and so transformed our Radical Association into local Chartist centres. (*The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* 60)

There is no doubt that the political manifesto was a paramount component in the Chartist movement since it enabled a coalition which clarified the main interests of the working class. One may observe that it was necessary to gather the popular demands in order to take radical measures. In order to enforce the People's Charter, between 1836 and 1837, the Chartists established a "National Petition" which circulated throughout England and was presented to Parliament (Kemnitz, "Approaches to the Chartist Movement" 69). Just like Hunt advocated it, the Chartists adopted petitioning as a strategy to voice their claims.

In 1840, under the influence of Chartism, a political organisation concerned with the working class was founded: the National Charter Association (N.C.A), considered as "the movement's most significant institution" by researcher Philip Howell (152). The N.C.A actually had a thorough approach of social issues. The Association put education and improvement forward as the foundations of an artisan ideology (Stack "William Lovett and the National Association" 1034). It can be argued that education could arm the working class with knowledge and empowered it to struggle intelligently. Moreover, the N.C.A was devoted to improve people's life by the means of social structures and political meetings and also, it advocated abstinence from intoxicating beverages (Stack 1041).

#### 2.2.4 Chartist Views on Intoxicating Beverages and Evolution

Regarding the temperance influence, historian David Stack points out that "the National Association continued the radical tradition of the L.W.M.A in condemning drink for keeping the working classes in ignorance, making them unreliable in trade associations, and contributing to poverty" ("William Lovett and the National Association" 1041). The fact that these Chartist associations advocated abstinence and perceived alcohol as source of problems may have stemmed from the influence of the

temperance movement. Also, by considering alcoholic drinks as a drawback for the working class, the Chartists associations considered that more than provoking its bewilderment, that habit also discredited the latter in its struggle for rights.

Historian David Stack describes one of the Chartist leaders, William Lovett as “a deist, an Owenite, the leader of a trade association, a firebrand in the National Union of the Working Classes, a stalwart of the co-operative movement, and a militia martyr” (1027). With all these elements, Lovett can be seen as a philanthropist and a staunch defender of the working class devoted to change the legal system by proposing radical measures such as the People’s Charter. Towards that end, he was committed to various structures concerned with the development of the working class. And above all, Lovett was considered as “the brains of...Chartism” (Tawney *Life and Struggles* 236).

In his book entitled *Social and Political Morality* (1853), Lovett insists on the idea that Chartist individuals should be virtuous, as he exclaims “be virtuous and be happy, be vicious and be miserable” (35). In this book, the author deals with drunkenness as a vicious habit that led to mental decrease and violence (42). He denounces alcoholic drinks as a social evil:

That the use of intoxicating drink tends to produce imbecility, insanity, delirium tremens, and other mental diseases, is proved from the fact that upwards of one-seventh the *lunatics* of the United Kingdom alone are the victims of intoxicating drink. This too, apart from the hereditary results of the evil, as seen in the children of the drunkard, not only producing in them a weakened constitution, and inferior brain, but even *idiotcy*; for one-half of those unfortunate beings are found to be the children of drunken and dissipate parents. (*Social and Political Morality* 43-44)

In Lovett’s view, drunkenness was certainly a serious and popular problem in the country which not only spread ‘stupidity’ but also, it had consequences on the drinker’s children since it affected their brains and their physical conditions. In other words, intemperance led to the deterioration of the intellect of the population. In his work entitled *Anatomy and Physiology*, Lovett denounced alcohol as “the great barrier to all social and political progress” (144). With this view, drinking habit appeared to be a vice rejected by politics and the cause of social ills.

If the temperance movement was not connected with the Chartist movement officially, historian Brian Harrison sheds light on some connexions in his article entitled “Teetotal Chartism” (1973). Indeed since the temperance movement arose before the Chartist years, it may have reached the Chartist spirit. On one hand, Harrison argues that some Chartists noticed that total abstinence from all sorts of intoxicating liquors was feasible among working men and on the other hand, some working-class radicals were inspired by the teetotal movement to adapt their own political scheme (Harrison 196). Through temperance ideal, one may find an attainable model of sobriety that could reinforce the working class notoriety. Likewise, historian Harrison points out that sobriety was promoted among Owenites and radicals who perceived temperance as a necessary quality which ensured self-discipline and social harmony because “sobriety and political integrity went together” (Harrison 196).

Regarding the L.W.M.A, one may underline an emphasis on radical morality which excluded “the drunken and immoral” (Harrison “Teetotal Chartism” 197). Brian Harrison highlights that among the prominent figures of the L.W.M.A, Lovett, Hetherington and Cleave were abstainers and also that teetotalism and the association shared the same views regarding the drink question (Harrison “Teetotal Chartism” 197). Another prominent Chartist figure promoting sobriety was Henry Vincent who joined the L.W.M.A in 1836 and asserted in his 1840 temperance manifesto that “no government can long withstand the just claims of a people who have had the courage to conquer their own vice” (“Teetotal Chartism” 200). This implies that if the working class changed its drinking habit, that is to say if it stopped consuming intoxicating liquors; the government could no longer ignore the reliability of its grievances.

While combining temperance ideologies and the Chartists’ interests, they could be both regarded as stages towards social and political advancements of the working class. If the rejection of intoxicating beverages appeared to add credibility to the Chartist campaign, one may wonder whether the latter reached its goal, namely the enactment of the People’s Charter. To answer to this issue, it could be relevant to mention a chronology of the Chartist movement in order to analyse its different strategies. In an article entitled “Approaches to the Chartist Movement: Feargus O’Connor and Chartist Strategy”

(1973), historian Kemnitz Thomas Milton divides the Chartist movement into three major milestones to show its evolution.

In the first place, he introduces the Chartist movement as genuinely, a non-violent collective initiative dominated by moral force under the influence of prominent Chartist figures such as William Lovett and Henry Hetherington. In a second place, he observes a shift of the movement which then undertook an insecure and tense period controlled by Feargus O'Connor whose aim was to intimidate the government through a language of menace. Then, historian Milton accounts for its decline as the result of a violent period under the impulse of physical force which could be represented by prominent figures such as Georges Julian Harner and Doctor John Taylor (“Approaches to the Chartist Movement” 69). All things considered, the Chartist movement evolved gradually and adopted different strategies.

The Chartist movement insisted on collective demands and employed a rational and peaceful approach: petitioning to justify their claims. In May 1842, the Grand Petition for the enactment of the People’s Charter contained 3,317,702 signatures (Pickering “And Your Petitioner” 368). During that year, a great demonstration occurred with around 20,000 people protesting throughout London (Pickering 368). This illustrated the anger of the Chartist workers facing the imperturbable Parliament. The *Northern Star*, a chartist newspaper, described the event as a “novel [...] and dangerous experiment,” during which the demonstrators aimed to march until the House of Commons to introduce their petition (Pickering 368). While the petition was supported by the radical MP Thomas Ducombe who allowed the petitioners to be heard in the House of Commons, mainly comprised of Tories, the petition was rejected (368).

Despite the refusal of the government, one last similar process was undertaken by the Chartists but it failed following the 1848 National Petition, accused of fraud and subjected to a close scrutiny by a committee. This led to the decline of the Chartist movement (Pickering 370). If the movement decline, one cannot denied that it inspired the working class to take responsibilities and initiatives to improve its condition. Most importantly, we showed that it created a working-class consciousness. Thus, the working class became aware that collective and political actions could shed light on their demands. The Chartist enthusiasm was not pointless since it may have encouraged



the working population to struggle for other reforms as we will demonstrate with the Anti-Corn Law League movement.

## **Section 3: The Success of the Anti-Corn Law League: A Model of Prosperity**

### 2.3.1 The Anti-Corn Law League and Its Aim

As explained earlier, nineteenth century British society was confronted to a variety of issues. On the one hand, a great part of the working population lived in a poor environment, especially in urban areas. On the other hand, the public houses were a locus of sociability which provided the working class with alcoholic beverages. We showed that these places offered an escape from their harsh routine. Also, we mentioned that the working class asked for democratic reforms through the Chartist movement. The People's Charter translated an urgent demand for radical changes such as universal manhood suffrage.

If the Chartist movement failed to enact its manifesto, yet, it undoubtedly generated a popular dynamism for parliamentary reforms and gave voice to a large section of the working class regarding their grievances. While the Chartists struggled for more rights, another general discontentment spread among the population as a woman named Lucy Simkins testified during a peasants' protest in the county of Wilts, at Bremhill, in 1846 when she declared:

My name (she began) is Lucy Simkins. I am from Preston. I am the wife of a labouring man. I have had seven children all born in lawful wedlock. They are five living - two I buried. I have a boy seven years of age. He works for 3d. a day;... Yes, and when I was confined last, I had nothing to eat from one o'clock one day until four o'clock the next day (shame, shame). I wished I had a good jug of gruel; but a poor labouring woman like myself came in, and said, "I have brought you something to eat; bread with sugar on it. I had no cheese, or I would have brought that" (shame). And recollect, neighbours, this is under a protecting law (a voice, "I am a witness to the truth of what she says"). My husband is not a drunkard, nor anything of the kind, but a good husband to me, and a good father to his children, but he can't make his money go

further than it will (hear, hear). Many a Monday morning I say to him, “Well, how be we to get through this week, we have no food and no fire.” Well, but Saturday comes, and we have got through, but how I don’t rightly know. We manage it somehow. But that ain’t living (“no more it be”)... if free trade will make bread cheap, then I want free trade (loud cheers).<sup>13</sup> (Swisher *Victorian England* 231)

This speech may portray the life of a great number of working-class families at the time. At first sight, Lucy seems to be a respectable woman. She married a worker and she appears to be a careful mother. She worries about her young son who works and only earns a small amount of money. Most of all, she complains of being unable to feed her family. She introduces her husband as a good person and precises that he is not a drunkard. Arguably, she specifies the latter to support her speech since as we showed, drunkenness was strongly criticized. Also, she may have accused the Corn Laws which made food too expensive as we will show. In this extract, one can notice commentaries of the audience in parentheses which may show its approval regarding Lucy’s grievance. It appears that the introduction of free trade was perceived as a remedy to a widespread modest standard of living. Perhaps, the latter reflects the general opinion of the time.

Based on this assumption, another important protest to observe is the Anti-Corn Law League movement. As historian Julius West stands for in his book entitled *A History of the Chartist Movement* (1920), the latter appeared in the same period of the Chartist movement and since they both called for the support of the working class, they were rivals (104). Indeed, historian Archibald Prentice points out in his book entitled *History of the Anti-Corn League* (1968), that the first Anti-Corn Law League was founded in London in 1836 (49) and as said previously, the first Chartist organisation, the L.W.M.A, was created during the same year. The Anti-Corn League aimed at repealing the Corn Laws “which regulated the importation and exportation of cereals, and imposed duties on foreign corn to protect domestic agriculture” (Miller “Popular Petitioning” 882). The focus of the League was the establishment of free trade in order to rise profits and wages through international exchange of goods but also, to provide the population with a cheapest market (Miller “Popular Petitioning” 883). Likewise,

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<sup>13</sup> This speech can be found in historian Clarice Swisher’s book entitled *Victorian England* (2000). Originally, it is an extract from *The Observer* newspaper.

historian Asa Briggs asserts that the propaganda of the League focused on cheapness (*Victorian Things* 335).

Richard Cobden and John Bright were the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League (*Victorian Things* 168). Before he became one of the most prominent leaders of the League, Richard Cobden was a calico printer and it was through his pamphlet entitled “England, Ireland and America” (1838), that he drew attention (*Prentice History of the Anti-Corn League* Vol I 47). As for John Bright, he came from Rochdale and worked in his father’s firm before he committed in British national policy (*Trevelyan The Life of John Bright* 15). While Richard Cobden wrote with a great ability about the advantages of free trade (*Prentice* 47), John Bright was devoted to the latter and gave speeches of high quality (*Trevelyan The Life of John Bright* 82). It appears that both leaders used two efficient tools: writing and rhetoric.

The Anti-Corn Law League and the Chartists adopted similar methods to reach their goal. To give an instance, historian Henry Miller underlines in an article entitled “Popular Petitioning” (2012), that they both relied on petitioning and meeting to shed light on their demands (892). From 1839 to 1843, the Anti-Corn Law League organised annual petitions (Miller 890). In 1841, 4,702 petitions for the repeal of the Corn Laws were presented by 163 MPs to the House of Commons during which a certain Mr Villier was regarded as one of the most active members since he presented 523 petitions (Miller 892).

According to historian Miller, the fact that the League petitioned for the repeal of the Corn Laws, as the Chartists did for the enactment of the People’s Charter, may have showed an attempt to obtain the support of the working class (Miller “Popular Petitioning” 890). However, as historians Mark Hovell and Frederick Thomas put it in their book entitled *The Chartist Movement* (1967), the Anti-Corn League was widely criticized as a middle-class movement which only served the interests of the manufacturers (214). One may argue that the 1832 Reform Act contributed to the latter since it enfranchised only the middle class and this may have caused contempt among the working class.

Many Chartists believed that the repeal of the Corn Laws would ruin agriculture and lead agricultural workers to industrial towns causing a decline in wages and a major competition for labour (Hovell *The Chartist Movement* 214). For example, the Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor was in favour of the Corn Law and shared the belief that more trade meant more machinery and therefore, less wages (Hovell *The Chartist Movement* 217). Actually, historian George Trevelyan justifies the latter by saying that "Feargus O'Connor and a few other leaders remained Protectionists partly from jealousy of the success of Cobden's League" (Trevelyan *The Life of John Bright* 62). Provided that, pessimism of some Chartists regarding the repeal of the Corn Laws was due to a competitive spirit which may have cast doubt on the reliability of the Chartist cause. Perhaps, the reluctance of O'Connor may have contributed the decline of the Chartist movement.

### 2.3.2 The League's Campaign to Convince the Working-Class and to Preserve Its Dynamism

According to historian Prentice Archibald, the Corn Laws not only deteriorated the reward of the labour of the working class but also, they raised the price of food (*History of the Anti-Corn League* 58). Beyond the fear of adverse consequences that the repeal could cause on the labour market, the revocation of the Corn Laws could supply the population with cheapest food. In this sense, the repeal could improve the living standard. The latter may justify the fact that "not every Chartist was opposed to the League, and not every Chartist was hostile to Free Trade" (Hovell *The Chartist Movement* 217). Historian George Trevelyan stresses that "one section of the Chartists had always [...] remained strong Free Traders." (Trevelyan *Life of John Bright* 62) Therefore, some Chartists were in favour of the repeal of the Corn Laws because it could improve the life of the working class.

The general opinion was that the repeal of the Corn Laws could be beneficial for the whole British society. In 1840, Richard Cobden declared: "the object of the Anti-Corn League is to draw together in the bonds of friendship - to unite in the bonds of amity, the whole world" (Archibald *History of the Anti-Corn Law League* 148). However, it is obvious that before forging links with foreign markets, the Leaguers needed to

harmonize the different social classes in British society and convince the lower classes about the advantages of free trade in order to make their aim credible to the whole world. But as said earlier, the tension was high between the middle class and the working class following the 1832 Reform Act. Thus, the Leaguers needed to find solid arguments to convince the working class to join their cause.

To have a better understanding of the heated debates between the Leaguers and the Protectionists<sup>14</sup>, one must focus on the expectations of the working class. It appears that the debate between Protectionists and Leaguers was not only a debate between a Chartist group and advocates of free-trade as implied above. In the case of the working class, one may assume its issue of concern was different from the League's. Indeed, as historian Archibald Prentice explains, "a large section of the working class focused on trade unions which was criticized by some free traders who thought trade-unionists were wasting their energy (*History of the Anti-Corn League* Vol I 57). Having said that, a majority of workers preferred to struggle for better working conditions rather than supporting the repeal of the Corn Laws.

The Leaguers strove to convince the working class about the economic benefits of free trade by distributing pamphlets (Lusztig "Solving Peel's Puzzle" 406). For instance, during the mid 1840s, 3,5 millions pamphlets were distributed to the non-voter workers which increased the influence of the League within the working population (Lusztig "Solving Peel's Puzzle" 406). In addition to the pamphlets, speeches were also delivered and John Bright may be portrayed as one of most eloquent person of the time. In August 1842, he made an address to the working men of Rochdale in which he stated:

A deep sympathy with you in your present circumstances induces me to address you. Listen and reflect, even though you may not approve. You are suffering - you have long suffered. Your wages have for many years declined, and your position has gradually and steadily become worse. Your sufferings have naturally produced discontent, and you have turned eagerly to almost any scheme which gave hope of relief [...] Your speakers,

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<sup>14</sup> The Cambridge Dictionary defines the latter as "someone who supports helping a country's trade or industry by putting taxes on goods bought from other countries or by limiting the amount of goods that can be imported" (n. 3). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/protectionist>

and self-constituted leaders, urge you to give up the question of wages, and stand upon the Charter. Against obtaining the Charter the laws of nature offer no impediment, as they do against a forcible advance of wages; but to obtain the Charter now is just as impossible as to raise wages by force. (Trevelyan *The Life of John Bright* 82)

Through his speech, Bright demonstrates empathy towards the workers. He was aware of their pain and frustration. He understood their perspectives which he qualifies as “naturally produced.” He portrays the Charter and discussion on wages as attractive elements for the workers. However, in his view, these elements could not be managed at that moment. What was the point of his speech? Since John Bright was one of the leaders of the League, one may imagine that he was trying to convince the workers to join his campaign. Indeed, after sympathising with the working men, he goes straight to the point by saying:

As intelligent men you know you cannot remain out; you cannot permanently raise wages by force; you cannot get the Charter now. What are you to do then? Return to your employment. It is more noble to confess your error than to persist in it, and the giving up of an error brings you nearer the truth. When you resume your labor do not give up the hope of political improvement - that would be even more to be deplored than your present movement. Cherish it still - a brighter day will come - and you and your children will yet enjoy it. Your first step to entire freedom must be commercial freedom - freedom of industry. (*The Life of John Bright* 83)

In this speech, the leader speaks to the working men of Rochdale by calling them “intelligent men” which may have flattered them. Then, he explains that there is no need to resort to violence to obtain what they wanted. He alludes to the Chartist method as an “error” which may refer to the technique of intimidation used by the Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor (Kemnitz “Approaches to the Chartist Movement” 69). Through this speech, John Bright encourages the working men to conserve their political dynamism for “commercial freedom” which could help the future generation. He attempts to persuade its audience about the benefits of free trade. All the hope John Bright put in commercial freedom may echoe to the account of the female peasant Lucy Simkins who

exclaimed “if free trade will make bread cheap, then I want free trade” (Swisher *Victorian England* 231).

The efforts of the Leaguers to convince reluctant people were not in vain. Historian Mark Hovell puts forward the success of the Anti-Corn Law League over the Chartist movement which could be illustrated by a personal meeting between O’Conor and Cobden at Northampton on August 5th, in 1844 (Hovell *The Chartist Movement* 214). A few days later, on August 10th, O’Conor wrote about Cobden in his *Northern Star* and declared: “he is decidedly a man of genius, of reflection, of talent, and of fact... He has a most happy facility of turning the most trivial passing occurrence to the most important purpose. I am not astonished that a wily party should have selected so apt and cunning a leader” (Hovell *The Chartist Movement* 214). According to historian Mark Hovell, the meeting “destroyed the Chartist case and ended the feud” between the two campaigns (*The Chartist Movement* 214). Likewise, historian Gammage points out that the debate was the greatest victory ever won by the League over the Charter (*History of the Chartist Movement* 255).

There is no doubt that the League succeeded to empower its cause and even influenced the Chartists. Historian Trevelyan argues that “now that Chartism had collapsed, the working men were certain to fall into line behind the League” (*The Life of John Bright* 62). Finally, the efforts of leaders Richard Cobden and John Bright gave evidence of their success.

### 2.3.3 Contribution of Teetotal Pioneer Joseph Livesey in the Anti-Corn Law League Campaign

As said earlier, John Bright was an eloquent speaker who showed empathy towards the condition of the working class. Importantly, in 1833, Bright was eagerly engaged in the temperance campaign and gave lectures in Rochdale and in the neighbouring towns (Trevelyan *The Life of John Bright* 25). In January 1835, Livesey reported that Bright advocated temperance principles as he noticed in *The Advocate* newspaper and emphasized that the League’s leader promoted temperance “at his early period of its history” (*The Life and Teachings of Joseph Livesey* 107). Perhaps, it was

through temperance values, which advocated self-control and self-improvement, that John Bright gained recognition as a great orator.

As we showed, teetotalism consisted in abstaining from any intoxicating liquors which required a full commitment. Bright can be portrayed as a successful model of teetotalism. Besides, when Bright was elected minister for Durham in 1843, Livesey stated: “the election of this gentlemen is a valuable testimony in favour of commercial freedom, and an appropriate mark of respect for his indefatigable labour to promote it” (*Life and Teachings of Joseph Livesey* 58) which again portrayed him as a committed person. Certainly, Bright was praised by Livesey as a fervent temperance and free-trade advocate.

We already introduced Livesey as the prominent pioneer of teetotalism and the dominant leader of the temperance movement. He contributed equally to the success of the Anti-Corn League movement through his eminent newspaper entitled *The Struggle*.

<sup>15</sup> This contribution was highly recognized by Bright who wrote the following words in a letter dated from November 11st 1884:

Mr. Livesey was one of our firmest friends in the great conflict on the Corn Law question. His paper, *The Struggle*, was of great use, and I have often regretted that I do not possess a copy of it; for it told the story of the cruelty and wickedness of the Corn Law in pictures and language that could not be misunderstood. Mr Livesey was a man of great merit - he had a great sense of justice, and his life was one dignified by constant labours in the wide field of mercy and benevolence. (*Life and Teachings of Joseph Livesey* 73)

According to Bright, the role of Livesey in the Anti-Corn Law campaign was significant and certainly contributed to spread the cause. As said earlier, the print media was a powerful tool of communication and could influence a great number of people. The aim of *The Struggle* was to illustrate and promote the principles of free trade (*Livesey Life and Teachings* 64). There is no doubt that the use of picture could raise awareness about the inconveniences caused by the mercantile system in England.

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<sup>15</sup> *The Struggle* was issued between 1842 and 1846 and was mainly aimed at a working-class readership (*Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* 370).



For instance, *The Dog in the Manger*<sup>16</sup> may be regarded as a metaphorical picture. On the latter, one can see a dog standing on a haystack to prevent a cow to eat it. In the background, there is a landowner brandishing a lash to scare the dog off. Actually, this picture may have portrayed the situation of the time in England: the dog may represent the Corn Laws while the cow may symbolise the English population and the landowner may stand for the Anti-Corn Law League movement. One may suggest that the Corn Laws prevented the population to have access to cheaper consumer goods and therefore, the League took actions to change the situation. Moreover, the picture may show the absurdity of the Corn Laws since as it is written beneath the image: “the Dog will neither eat the hay itself, nor allow the Cow its right to do so.” In the context of the Corn Laws, the latter deprived the population of foreign wheats. All things considered, through this type of illustration, the newspaper portrayed the situation cunningly to denounce the mercantile system of Britain. This may explain the reason why *The Struggle* was regarded as the most popular newspaper promoting free trade (Livesey *Life and Teachings* 64).

John Bright was not the only one to acknowledge the valuable input of Livesey. Richard Cobden also shed light on the importance of *The Struggle* during a conference at Preston on March 7th, in 1844, when he declared:

we are much indebted to one gentleman in particular in this borough, for having disseminated information in a most useful form. I allude to my friend Mr. Livesey. I don't hesitate to say, after the name of Cobbett - I might have added Franklin - I know of no writer who has had the happy art of putting questions of a difficult and complex character in a more simple and lucid form than my friend Mr. Livesey; and make no hesitation in speaking of his work - *The Struggle*. (*Life and Teachings of Joseph Livesey* 73)

The fact that just like Bright, Cobden referred to Livesey's newspaper as a relevant tool supporting their campaign against the Corn Laws emphasized its effectiveness and its

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<sup>16</sup> Annexe 6. n.d.

contribution. The two prominent leaders of the League were grateful to Livesey for his newspaper. Another important point to observe was that as Livesey, the advocates of the Anti-Corn Law League believed that their cause could improve the life of the working class. Indeed, they strongly believed that Free Trade would raise wages and succeeded to convince masses of workers that the repeal was beneficial for every class (Trevelyan *The Life of John Bright* 63).

As previously stated, after the decline of Chartism, the Leaguers took advantage of the latter and sought to convince the working class to join them. The success of the League cannot be denied since the Corn Law was repealed in 1846 by Prime Minister Robert Peel (Archibald *History of the Anti-Corn League* 439). From that year onwards, as historian Michael Lusztig argues in his article entitled “Solving Peel’s Puzzle” (1995), Britain adopted free trade and permitted the exchange of goods with foreign countries (394). From 1850s onwards, wages increased as the supporters of League had asserted it (*Life of John Bright* 158). Regarding the urban working class, historian Lusztig explains that the League obtained significant support from this group and encouraged the latter to struggle for democratic reforms such as the extension of the franchise (Lusztig “Solving Peel’s Puzzle” 397). In so doing, the League maintained the popular enthusiasm of the urban working class for obtaining more parliamentary reforms. The former preserved dynamism among the urban workers, which formerly stemmed from the Chartist movement.

The working-class demand for the right to vote may have lead to the Reform Act of 1867, which enfranchised a great number of urban workers (Cole *British Working Class Politics* 7). Historian Trevelyan points out that “the working-class demand for the franchise only became effective when it found a leader in John Bright” (*British History in the Nineteenth Century and After* 252). In Trevelyan’s view, the leader influenced the enfranchisement of the urban workers which was obtained with the 1867 Reform Act (340). Importantly, he argues that the Act led to other legislative reforms which had to do with education, sanitary condition, trade union (340). Thus, by maintaining the popular enthusiasm caused by the Chartist movement, the League contributed indirectly to the political emancipation of urban workers.

From another perspective, the fact that free trade gave access to a cheapest market and facilitated the exchange of goods presupposed more choices for the consumers. The latter could have influenced the working population to consume a variety of products and perhaps, it reduced the attraction for alcoholic beverages. In this sense, free trade may have contributed indirectly to the temperance movement since it offered alternative food and drink items to the British population. The access to a larger number of products may have changed drinking habit of the working class. It is clear that temperance advocates had the latter in mind and as we will show, they put an emphasis on a myriad of commodities in order to shed light on alternative to alcoholic drinks.

The temperance campaign, the Chartist movement and the Anti-Corn Law League were all actions aiming at improving the life and the status of the working class in British society. While the anti-drink campaign denounced the harmful effect of intemperance through newspapers or illustrations, prominent Chartist leaders William Lovett and Henry Hetherington were influenced by temperance principles. In Lovett's view, alcohol was a hindrance to political and social progress of the working class. Likewise, prominent leader of the Anti-Corn Law League, John Bright joined the anti-drink campaign in giving temperance lectures in the 1830s. These leaders may have found in the spirit of temperance a strength and an asset to raise their voice and to ask for social reforms. That being said, the anti-drink caused engendered a plenty of initiatives to bring the working class outside the public houses as we will show.

## **PART 3: A Road Towards Improvement?**

### **Introduction**

Enthusiasm for social, cultural and intellectual improvement grew in nineteenth century British society. Temperance ideologies coupled with the educational activity of working-class organisations and the press were all initiatives to provide the working class with self-control and moral values (Hollis *Class and Conflict* 24). They may be considered as tools for improvement. In the middle of the century, the promotion of temperance and adult education epitomized the ideal of self-help which stood for dominant and puritan values of Victorian society such as thrift, sobriety and self-discipline (Hollis 27). The general opinion was that all these elements were ingredients for building a successful and virtuous life. In this part, we will examine initiatives undertaken by temperance advocates to build a sober culture through the promotion of healthier commodities and the attempt to implement what was thought to be more ‘respectable’ leisures. We will also refer to adult education of the working class as part of a dynamics for progress. Educational organisations may have provided knowledge to rise the social ladder and some of them may have taught the virtues of temperance. Then, we will focus on Victorian values by putting an emphasis on the concept of self-help. This concept may be regarded as the essence of the temperance movement and adult education. We will also attempt to analyse results achieved by the anti-drink campaign and show whether it impacted on the working class.

### **Section 1: Actions Promoting Sober Workers**

#### **3.1.1 From Intoxicating Beverages to Healthier Commodities**

The consumption of intoxicating liquors was rooted in British customs for centuries, as historian Lilian Lewis explains, “drinking was firmly fixed in traditional, social and cultural practices in England” (Shiman *Crusade 1*). Alcoholic beverages were thus widely appreciated and part of the daily life of English people. For instance, as

historian Mason puts it in, beer was portrayed as part of English national identity since the sixteenth century (“The Sovereign People” 112). One cannot deny its success since as illustrated previously with the gravure of William Hogarth,<sup>17</sup> drinking beer was thought to be healthier and more ‘respectable’ than other intoxicating beverages. Probably, the 1830 Beer Act contributed to make beer popular since following the latter, this beverage could be found “in greater abundance and at a lower price” (Mason “The Sovereign People” 111).

Another appealing feature which contributed to the popularity of alcoholic drinks was certainly its profitability. Indeed, public houses and inns were not only regarded as a place of sociability but also, as economically valuable for the country (Jennings *A History of the English Pub* 39). Thus, such places appeared to be attractive and advantageous for both customers and publicans. While they satisfied the consumer by enabling meeting with others, the barkeeper could ensure profitability in his business. Historian Brian Harrison describes public houses as social places providing working men with a precious and rare recreation (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 50). If the public houses were considered as social places enabling customers to meet people while enjoying alcoholic drinks, they were however badly reputed for attracting “sexual business, crimes, [and] gambling” (Thompson “Social Control in Victorian Britain” 202). Moreover, the beer houses were criticized in many poems, crime reports and speeches as the origin of the self-destructive vices of the working class (Mason “Sovereign People” 110).

In addition to the bad reputation of these drinking places, negative effects of alcohol on health were emphasized by doctors. For instance, in a 1849 report on alcoholic drink effects from University of Glasgow, it was said that hundreds of medical men in every part of the British empire asserted that “the maintenance of health is perfectly compatible with entire abstinence from fermented liquors: and that such abstinence, if general, would incalculably promote the improvement of the social condition of mankind” (*Temperance and Teetotalism* Carpenter 4). This argument surely supported the teetotal view of the time which condemned and rejected alcohol as an evil product. Likewise, Joseph Livesey argued: “it is impossible [...] to consume alcohol ‘moderately’: the smallest amount of such a poison is excessive” (Harrison *Drink and*

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<sup>17</sup> Annexe 1

*the Victorians* 117). Thus, the reputation of alcoholic drinks became negative since they were perceived as unhealthy and poisonous. The latter may have influenced a more general pejorative vision regarding alcohol which led a great part of the English population to view drunkenness as “a product of immorality” (Logan “The Age of Intoxication” 89).

Despite the myriad of negative aspects regarding alcoholic beverages, to quit drinking was not an easy task for working men. Historian Brian Harrison points out that for them, “to abandon drink was to abandon society itself, unless some alternative grouping were provided” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 50). This reflects the important place of alcoholic drinks in the life of the working class. Drinking in the public houses were synonymous with sociability. Therefore, to change that habit, temperance advocates should innovate and take initiatives.

As historian Erika Rappaport stands for in an article entitled “Sacred and Useful Pleasures: The Temperance Tea Party and the Creation of a Sober Consumer Culture in Early Industrial Britain” (2013), “temperance built a sober consumer culture of halls and hotels, coffee shops, and tea parties” (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 992). In other words, temperance advocates promoted sociable and welcoming places. In her article, Rappaport deals with alternative drinks and food which could replace alcoholic beverages in nineteenth century Britain. She introduces tea parties as “gustatory spectacles in which hundreds and at times thousands of working-class and middle-class men and women gathered in a beautifully decorated setting to drink tea and coffee, feast on sugary foods, sing hymns, and listen to reformed drunkards and others preach the righteousness of sobriety” (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 992). Thus, many temperance advocates and teetotalers encouraged people to consume other products than intoxicating liquors.

Tea parties were certainly a key event to convince people about the gustatory pleasures of non-alcoholic drinks and different types of meal while exposing advantages provided by abstinence. As Erika Rappaport highlights, such events “invited participants to look at, smell, and experience the gustatory pleasures of tea, sugar, bread, and cake” (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1008) which may have influenced people’s tastes and consumer behaviour. Rappaport explains that in the first half of nineteenth

century, many temperance groups began to promote tea and coffee as “antidotes to intemperance” (“Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 991). As a consequence, Chartists, evangelicals and missionaries offered tea and coffee during their meetings in order to convey a strong and positive image of sobriety (992). She explains that from 1830s, in northern England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, teetotal societies encouraged the consumption of tea and coffee (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 991-992). That said, those drinks became popular and widely appreciated and their promotion at temperance tea parties surely contributed to this fact.

Temperance tea parties were certainly most popular in Preston. As a matter of fact, the first temperance tea party was held on 11st July 1832, in the Cloth Hall of Preston and counted 540 working men and women (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1000). As Erika Rappaport points out, the event occurred in the afternoon, a moment usually spent on alcoholic drinking. She explains that the latter was organized in such a way that the place, meal, decoration and performances promoted sobriety and free trade emphasizing tea, bread, butter, cakes and fruit as appealing and appetizing items (“Sacred and Useful Pleasure” 1000). This event may be considered a first step towards improvement of diet.

Rappaport enumerates other tea parties which were held in the 1830s. For instance, she stresses that “on Guy Fawkes Day, 5 December 1835, 300 sat down to tea in Oldham’s Methodist School Room” (1006), and one month later, on 22 December, another tea party was held at the Brown Street Sabbath schoolroom in Chester. Significantly, Rappaport highlights that tea parties became popular in Great Britain. Her report of those events are mainly from the *Preston Temperance Advocate*, a newspaper which denounced drunkenness and gave evidence of advantages that temperance principles brought. It was one of the rarest newspapers which gave accounts of the events because most newspapers supported the drink trade and thus, they avoided to talk about temperance events (“Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1006).

More than promoting sobriety and alternative drinks and food items, tea parties were also a means to raise funds and to meet people sharing the same values (“Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1006). Notably, historian Erika Rappaport underlines that those events were also an opportunity for working women to find “sober, responsible, and

peaceful husbands” (“Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1010). She specifies that organizers of tea parties perceived those events as an opportunity for the participants to find a spouse who shared the same values (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1010). Contrary to the public house which was reputed to be a “male center” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 47), tea parties were mixed. Thus, they may have created a sober community in which individuals could feel integrated and in compliance with their principles.

### 3.1.2 Experience of Sobriety

To some extent, many working men may have not been convinced about the advantages of alcoholic abstinence since “to abandon drink was to abandon society itself” (Harrison *Drinks and the Victorians* 50). Therefore, temperance reformers needed to change their minds and gave evidences of the benefits. In a book entitled *History of the Temperance Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (1862), historian Samuel Couling reports that during a meeting in Wellsquare, in 1834, a certain teetotal advocate named Buckingham met a group of workers who had doubts about the advantages provided by alcoholic abstinence. One of them believed that beer was “the wholesome national beer” (76) and asked him the following question: “do you assert that beer is unnecessary even for hard-working men like us; and do you seriously advocate and recommend that all working-men should give it up, and believe that they would be able to get through their work better without it?” (76). To this question, Buckingham agreed and referred to the testimonies of numerous working men such as “coal-heavers, furnace-men, sheel-melters, shokers of steam-engines, anchor-smits” (76) who quit beer and replace it by “soup, oatmeal porridge, milk, coffee, tea” (76). Then, he proposed them to experiment a whole month without any alcoholic stimulants and to take notice of the effects (78).

As a result, one month later, they stated that they were “glad of the relief of coffee at breakfast and tea in the afternoon” (79) despite that they found it difficult to not drink on the first Saturday night when exhausted after a long week of work. They enjoyed to be fresh on the Sabbath morning and in the following weeks, they noticed an improvement and asserted: “our appetites were stronger, our digestion better, our



tempers less liable to irritation, our vigour and cheerfulness greatly increased” (79). They never missed work and they no longer wasted their wages in alcoholic beverages and felt “stronger, healthier and happier than before” (80). Undoubtedly, this experiment demonstrated that alcoholic abstinence brought many improvements to the workers in terms of health and mood.

Buckingham succeeded to change the mentality of the group of workers regarding beer. If at first, the latter was perceived as the national drink, Buckingham demonstrated that there were alternative commodities such as soup or tea. Based on this argument, he persuaded the workers to experiment a month without beer and to make an assessment. Coffee and tea were used at different times of the day which could fill the lack of alcohol. After one month, the workers pointed out that they were not only healthier, but also, they were more assiduous and in a better mental and physical condition. They went to church the next day without aftereffects due to intoxication. All of this showed the benefits of abstinence from alcohol.

More than improving physical and mental health, abstinence could help the working class in its working area. In 1836, while workers protested against wage reduction, the prominent teetotaler Livesey urged them to endorse sobriety which could help them in their struggle. He claimed that masters preferred to invent new machinery rather than relying on manual labour because of a significant consumption of alcoholic drinks among the workers (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1005). Livesey believed that sobriety could lead to a more productive labour force which would make machinery unnecessary, and perceived tea as a better commodity (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1005). Once again, tea was emphasized as an eminent alternative to alcoholic beverages.

Another important drink which became popular as an alternative to alcoholic stimulants was coffee. As Cowan Brain explains in his book entitled *The Social Life of Coffee* (2005), coffee drinking and coffee-houses appeared in the seventeenth century (3) and “from the very beginning of its introduction into England, coffee had been identified as a “sober drink” (44). As coffee had already a strong reputation, the temperance movement certainly used it as an alternative to intoxicating beverages. Historian Cowan asserts that “coffee does not intoxicate” (54) which surely accounts for its long-term

good reputation. This drink was a substitute to alcohol, as the episode related earlier by Buckingham showed.

Coffee consumption increased significantly in the 1820s (Harrison “Two Roads to Social Reform” 284). In nineteenth century England, coffee-houses were mainly known by their connexions with the temperance movement (McCue “Libraries of the London Coffeehouses” 627). There is no doubt that the reputation of coffee as a sober drink drew attention to the latter. Historian Brian Harrison highlights that many coffee-house keepers supported the temperance movement and by 1844, there were almost 2,000 coffee houses in London encouraging the movement (*Drink and the Victorians* 90). This may reveal a win-win partnership since by promoting coffee as a substitute, temperance advocates could have increased the clientele of coffee houses.

Undoubtedly, coffee became popular through the temperance movement. If a few years ago, drinking coffee was perceived as ridiculous by many working men (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 90), temperance advocates may have contributed to change the latter by portraying coffee as an appealing and social custom. Coffee, as tea and chocolate, was regarded as respectable commodities in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Cowan *The Social Life of Coffee* 47). The spread of coffee houses promoted sobriety directly and indirectly, especially among the working men in London (Harrison “Two Roads to Social Reform” 282). These places offered an alternative to public houses and may have portrayed coffee as a new tendency. It appears that tea, coffee and the variety types of sweet food encouraged a sober mode of consumption.

The established church of England also believed that the substitution of alcoholic drinks could transform people’s habits. This can be illustrated by a report made by *The British Medical Journal* which declared in 1875:

We learn with great pleasure, from a paragraph in the Times, that the Committee of the Church of England Temperance Society propose to establish in the crowded and poorer districts of London, wherever suitable accommodation can be obtained, street-stalls for the supply, at a low rate, of light but substantial refreshments, together with tea, coffee, cocoa, and other drinks suited to the varying seasons. Visitors to Munich will remember the temperance stalls in that city. It is intended to establish the stalls in London through the agency of the parochial branch societies, and the object of

the movement is to provide for the working classes counter-attractions to the public houses. (“Temperance Drinks” 207)

Through this report, one learns that the Church of England Temperance Society made available non-alcoholic beverages in order to encourage sobriety among the working class. Tea and coffee were the first drinks to be mentioned which may shed light on their active role in the temperance campaign. Above all, by publicizing temperance street-stalls to foreign visitors, in the capital, the aim was not only to raise awareness about the advantages of abstinence from alcohol but also, to spread temperance ideologies abroad. The initiative of the society could be qualified as benevolent for the working class since it distracted the latter from the public houses. That said, one cannot deny that the spread of ‘temperance’<sup>18</sup> drinks was a cunning way to erase drunkenness.

### 3.1.3 ‘Temperance’ Places and Leisure

Another factor that may have contributed to a shift from traditional drinking customs was the variety of activities proposed by temperance groups. Historian Brian Harrison emphasizes that “the nineteenth-century temperance debate was really an argument about how leisure time should be spent” (*Drinks and the Victorian* 34). However, the problem was that “the traditional lower-class entertainments were all intimately connected with drink, either being held in a public house or otherwise involving drinking customs” (*Shiman Crusade Against Drink* 30). To change this common usage, entertaining and appealing leisures were necessary in order to divert the working class from the public houses. To that end, temperance advocates put a great number of measures in place; temperance hotels, temperance societies and temperance music halls were established to create the same ‘satisfaction’ usually provided by the public houses (*Drinks and the Victorian* 111).

As said previously, public houses were popular because it was sociable and entertaining. The main issue may have been widespread drunkenness among working men (Engels *The Condition of the Working Class* 103). Historian Andrew Davison explains in his article entitled “‘Try the Alternative’: the Built Heritage of the Temperance Movement”

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<sup>18</sup> The expression ‘temperance’ drinks is used here in reference to all the beverages mentioned above in the report.

(2006), that from 1850s, a first ‘temperance’ public house appeared in Dundee in which coffee and snack were sold (102). In the aftermath, many similar establishments appeared in Manchester and London (102). Also, Davison points out that in 1867, the first British Workman’s Public House was established in Leeds and he precises that “this was deliberately designed to look like a pub, and to provide a similar social ambience, but without the alcohol” (102). One may suggest that by copying a similar design and atmosphere, the British Workman’s Public House recreated a familiar and friendly place. The success of the latter cannot be denied since over the years, many others opened in Leeds and in northern towns (102).

Aside from the ‘temperance’ public houses, one may mention temperance hotels as another component which supported the anti-drink cause. In a book entitled *A Comprehensive of the Rise and Progress of the Temperance Reformation* (1881), historian Peter Turner Winskill explains that in 1872, the Temperance Hotels Company Limited was established to provide hotels of quality (Davison 101). Located in large towns such as Leeds, Manchester and London, they provided dormitories rather than individual rooms (101-102). In those places, tea, coffee, soft drinks and food were served and some of them even provided rooms for meeting or simply to read newspapers and temperance tracts (102).

Music may be emphasized as another significant component which contributed to build a sober culture in England. For instance, historian Harrison refers to the Poland Street hand-bell ringers, a band composed of total abstainers with a teetotal singer named Simeon Smithard (111). An article from the *Isle of Wight Times* published on 10 August 1871, reported that the group performed on a Saturday night before the Queen and the Royal family at Osborne. The report says:

The performance was given under the auspices of the Ryde Temperance Society, and the Bell-ringers themselves are total abstainers. Their manipulation upon the bells was exquisitely beautiful, especially their execution of the ever-popular piece, “The Blue Bells of Scotland,” which gave unbounded pleasure at Osborne. Had the performance consisted of bell-ringing alone, it might have been tedious and wearisome; but the conductor, Mr. Miller, has a happy knack of sustaining the liveliness of an audience by

his funny remarks at the frequent intervals; and the entertainment was further made up of duets, songs, melodies, and recitations - all bearing upon the question of sobriety - in which all the five performers took part. Altogether the entertainment was of the most pleasing nature.<sup>19</sup>

One can notice that the performance is described with laudatory terms which conveys a positive image of the event. It appears that the band organized their show in such a way that the audience could not be bored. Above all, not only did they entertain the public but also, they dealt with sobriety in all of their songs which may have raised awareness about the dangers of alcohol. The fact that the five musicians appointed a dedicated performance to sobriety may have translated their enthusiasm and their commitment for temperance. One may regard the event as an evidence that temperance activities could be attractive and appreciated.

The singer Simeon Smithard may be mentioned as a popular temperance musician. Historian Peter Turner Winskill refers to him in his book entitled *Temperance Standard Bearers of the Nineteenth Century* (1898), as an acclaimed singer of temperance songs (450). He points out that the singer began to work in a lace factory and then, as a wood turner. At eighteen, Smithard signed the teetotal pledge and was committed in two temperance societies. Formerly, he was part of the South Midland Temperance Association and then, in the Sheffield and Rotherham Temperance Union (450). When he died in 1878, his wife took over him by managing a temperance hotel at Derby until she died nine years later (450). Undoubtedly, the couple was devoted to the temperance cause and shared their belief to people around them throughout their life.

It could be said that the necessity of proposing a variety of activities was approved by many temperance organisations. For example, the Glasgow Abstainers' Union, a temperance society, was "distinguished for its exertions to blend popular recreation and amusement with the more direct operations of the temperance movement" (Couling *History of the Temperance Movement* 259). For many years, concerts were organised by the society and drew people out of the public houses (259). The society succeeded to

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<sup>19</sup> This report is from a website called the "Ryde Social Heritage Group" which quotes the *Isle of Wight Times*. Retrieved on 12 July 2019 at 5:20 p.m. on the following link: <http://rshg.org.uk/2017/08/poland-street-hand-bell-ringers/>

divert people from drinking alcohol by providing them with a pleasurable entertainment. Music could therefore be portrayed as a tendency widely appreciated and promoted by temperance groups. Importantly, musical events were not only appreciated by temperance advocates but also, they promoted respectability among the working classes (Harrison *Drink and the Victorian* 126). Thus, attending musical events were more suitable to the workers than spending time in public houses.

### 3.1.4 Respectability in Compliance with the Anti-Drink Cause

Temperance advocates put a variety of measures in place in order to encourage sobriety among the working class. As seen earlier, temperance tea parties, coffee-houses, temperance hotels and musical performances were initiatives supporting the anti-drink cause. As historian Harrison explains, the aim was “to mobilize and recruit respectability at the lowest social levels” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 26). In other words, temperance advocates strove to encourage the population to have a healthier and more enriching lifestyle. Towards this end, respectability may be perceived as the motto of nineteenth century British society.

In an article entitled “More Sinful Pleasures: Leisure, Respectability and the Male Middle Classes” (2000), historian Mike Huggins points out that the concept of respectability was at the core of the nineteenth century middle classes who believed in the necessity to provide the working classes with respectable leisures (586). Even within the British parliament, the moral wing of mid-Victorian Liberalism encouraged temperance, self-help and responsibility as respectable behaviours which fostered progress among the citizens of all classes (586). This may translate a popular enthusiasm for social improvement which could be effective only through concrete actions. Temperance advocates may have this in mind and thus, they seized all potential opportunities to spread their ideologies.

Historian Huggins highlights that middle-class respectability was a popular tendency in the 1870s and to enforce the latter, a variety of entertainment promoting sober behaviours was advocated (“More Sinful Leisures” 586). Indeed, as said previously, in those years, the Temperance Hotels Company Limited was established, the Poland Street hand-bell ringers were successful and the Church of England Temperance Society

provided for the working classes alternatives to the public houses. All these were consistent with the idea of progress which prevailed in England at the time (Swisher *Victorian England* 82). Victorians strongly believed in progress (Swisher 148), and perhaps, this belief fueled the enthusiasm of temperance advocates.

The temperance movement contributed to a shift in traditional British drinking customs and “helped create and spread an idea of a sober consumer culture in early Victorian Britain” (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 990). The access to a variety of commodities such as tea, coffee or bread led the population to be less enticed to consume intoxicating beverages. One must keep in mind that tea parties and coffee houses offered an alternative to the public houses and could be portrayed as healthier and ‘respectable’ environments. If coffee had already the reputation of a sober drink, the temperance campaign reinforced it and conveyed a positive image of tea as a rational and social drink which could harmonize social classes and gender (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 991). As previously said, tea parties were mixed and invited people from all classes to enjoy the pleasure of soft drinks.

Most importantly, the promotion of tea and coffee certainly contributed to the improvement of the working-class condition. As Rappaport puts it in, “drinking tea produced well-behaved and energetic workers, as well as rational consumers” (Rappaport “Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 990). The same result can be noticed through coffee since as historian Brian William Cowan points out, “coffee was suitable for clear thought and efficient work, and as such it was a preferable alternative social beverage to alcohol” (*The Social Life of Coffee* 44). That said, the benefits of tea and coffee cannot be denied. Both improved productivity as well as the mental and physical condition of working people.

Tea and coffee promoted “health, sobriety, moderation and rationality” (*The Social Life of Coffee* 9). The experiment related by Buckingham confirmed the latter. By convincing a group of workers to try one month without beer, he succeeded to improve their mental and physical condition. Besides, Rappaport notes that tea is now regarded as the British nation’s drink (“Sacred and Useful Pleasures” 1016), a status assigned to beer formerly (Cowan *Drinking in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* 65). By promoting tea and coffee as ‘respectable’ drinks, the temperance campaign may have succeeded to

implement new drinking habits. English people had more choices in terms of commodities which may have helped them to improve their diet.

The 1849 report on alcoholic drink effects envisioned the benefits stemming from sobriety, namely “the improvement of the social condition of mankind (*Temperance and Teetotalism* Carpenter 4). Indeed, the great number of initiatives undertaken by temperance organisations and advocates gave evidence of the latter. Over the years, the anti-drink campaign kept its struggle by innovating its strategy while drawing its inspiration from the social environment. Tea parties and temperance hotels can be mentioned as examples. The focus on consumer behaviour and leisure showed a full commitment of the temperance movement to implement a sober lifestyle. One cannot deny that the working class could benefit from a healthier diet and more respectable leisures. In parallel, education of working men may have been a significant component.

## **Section 2: Education as a Response to the ‘Degradation’ of the Working Class**

### 3.2.1 Education of Children: Teachings of Sunday schools

“Get knowledge and in getting knowledge you get power... Get intelligence instead of alcohol, it is sweeter and more lasting,” the *Flint Glass Makers Magazine* stated in 1850 (Radcliffe, “Mutual Improvement Societies” 144).<sup>20</sup> With those words, the newspaper shed light on knowledge as a powerful weapon and ironically, it enhanced intelligence as much more rewarding than alcohol. That said, one may argue that if working-class people used this weapon, they were more likely to assert their rights. Thus, education could be pointed out as a tool towards that end.

Writers John Malcolm Forbes Ludlow and Lloyd Jones report a multitude of educational organisations in their book entitled *Progress of the Working Class 1832-1867*, published in 1867. They note that in 1843, a large number of children received no education because there were too few schools (14). For instance, in

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<sup>20</sup>The *Flint Glass Makers Magazine* was an union’s newspaper, this extract is from Christopher Radcliffe’s article entitled “Mutual improvement societies and the forging of working-class political consciousness in nineteenth-century England” (1997).



Cheshire, with a population of 50,250, towns such as Macclesfield, Congleton and Sandbach counted only 2,028 schools and 12,286 Sunday schools. It is clear that Sunday school was more popular than mere schools as the numbers showed. One may assume that this institution was the main instructor of children.

In an article entitled “Primary Education in England” (1886), American educator Frank Johnson Goodnow explains that the first Sunday schools appeared in 1781 (485). He accounts for many educational organisations: the British and Foreign School Society, created in 1803, the National Society, established in 1811, the Ragged-school society, founded in 1837, and the Lancashire Public Schools Association, founded in 1850 (485). All these may translate a need to educate lower class children.

Importantly, in his book entitled *A History of English Elementary Education 1760-1902* (1931), Frank Smith describes Sunday schools as “the chief instrument for humanising the poor, and for two generations they were the chief means of giving secular instruction to the new working class in the factories” (63). The role of Sunday schools was thus significant among the lower classes; they taught ‘human’ values and instructed some part of the working class. In his article entitled “Moral Education in the Victorian Sunday School” (1980), historian Trygve Tholsfen portrays the Sunday school as a religious and educational institution which, not only focused on the teaching of Christian doctrines and morality but also, it took responsibility of the education of working-class children (78). To some extent, the institution may have had a monopoly on attitude and knowledge of the lower classes. The teaching of Christian values may have implemented a high degree of morality.

At the local level “many children heard their first temperance lecture in Sunday School, and some even signed the teetotal pledge there” (*Crusade Against Drink* 138). Temperance was then regarded as a Christian value and many children were encouraged to commit to this principle. Notably, historian Shiman introduces the Band of Hope, established in 1847, as a common denomination for all juvenile temperance groups that were closely connected to churches and chapels (134).<sup>21</sup> The Band of Hope was similar to Sunday schools since they both advocated Christian values among youth groups.

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<sup>21</sup> The Band of Hope was already mentioned in the first section of this research work; it was created in 1847.

Not only did the Band of Hope taught temperance history and values, but also, it referred to the Bible (*Crusade Against Drink* 139). For example, the organisation put an emphasis on the Rechabites, a group of water drinkers mentioned in the biblical text (Shiman 139). Also, Shiman points out that the Band of Hope's program and Christian catechism were similar (*Crusade Against Drink* 139). She explains that there was one question a week to be deal with and the answer had to be memorised (139). She highlights that alcoholic drinks were portrayed as the devil and that they were "to be shunned and rejected by all children" (139). They were "blamed for all misfortunes in any drinking man's life" (139). With this in mind, the Band of Hope indoctrinated children with a 'propaganda' on drunkenness in order to terrify and repel them. Indeed, Shiman underlines that "creative thinking was not encouraged" because "drink was simply the devil" (139) which conveys a biased view regarding the teachings of the Band of Hope. Therefore, one may describe the latter as a propaganda since it decreed an undeniable teaching.

Among the various activities proposed by the Band of Hope's organisations, there were the reading of the Bible, the teaching of temperance songs and lectures about the dreadful consequences of drinking intoxicating liquors (*Crusade Against Drink* 135). The teachers were either educated men, temperance lecturers or former school teachers (Shiman 147). For instance, Mrs Anne Jane Carlile, an Irishwoman, was a prominent figure in the Band of Hope movement. Historian Shiman underlines that she devoted all her energy to alert the youth about the dangers of alcoholic drinks and to that end, she travelled around Britain lecturing to children in different Sunday Schools (*Crusade Against Drinking* 135).

It could be said that by teaching children temperance values, the Band of Hope was sure to promote sobriety in a significant part of the British population. Indeed, along with the fact that the young members could have lectured their parents about drinking, they were also the future generation. Teaching temperance to children could be perceived as a considered strategy to define their attitudes. As historian Shiman points out, Sunday schools and the Band of Hope's organisations "shared the belief that there would have to be a reformation of manners if the working classes were to live comfortably" (*Crusade against Drink* 138). In this sense, education of the youth was prominent to improve the life of the working classes.

However, teachings provided by Sunday schools were not rewarding since the interval between classes was too important to enable real learning (Ludlow, Jones 16). Sunday schools “had little effects in spreading education amongst the children of the working class” (17). With this in mind, one may suggest that since as a child, individuals did not benefit from a steady and formal education, once adults, they were ignorant. Subsequently, the Sunday schools may have succeeded to convey values but, they failed to provide the youngest with a solid education. Furthermore, while educational measures were put in place for children, what was the situation with working-class adults?

### 3.2.2 Mechanics’ Institutes

A great number of educational organisations were put in place for the working class as we will show. Among them, the most popular was called the London Mechanics’ Institute and was created in 1823 (*Victorian England* 166-169). In a British journal entitled *The Westminster Review* (1844), one learns that a great number of mechanics institutions appeared in the decade of the 1820s and were located in London and in other main cities (418-419). The journal defines the Mechanics Institution as:

A voluntary association of a portion of the humbler classes of a town or locality, assisted by a few of the leading and wealthy inhabitants, to raise, by means of small periodical contributions, a fund to be expended in the instruction of the members science, literature, and the arts, to the exclusion of controversial divinity, party politics, and subjects of local dispute, by means of a library of circulation, lectures, evening or day classes, and a reading room (*The Westminster Review* 417-18).

Based on volunteering, it is interesting to note that the organisation was a collective initiative. The contribution of the inhabitants may reveal an enthusiasm for spreading knowledge. Indeed, different subjects were taught which portrayed a varied and enriching program. Importantly, religious aspect, usually present at Sunday schools, or political discussions were excluded. The latter may portray some neutrality stemming from the teachings of the institution. Also, they were organised in such a way that their

members could adapt. For example, this extract implies that the libraries enabled to read at home and the evening classes could be an alternative for daytime workers. This arrangement gave options and above all, it could be regarded as an opportunity to learn a variety of topics.

As historian Edward Royle stands for in his article entitled “Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860,” (1971), “the institutes emphasized on the importance of the Three R’s,” namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic, which can be seen as the fundamentals of learning (314). Basically, the aim of the Mechanics’ Institutes was “to give instruction in reading, writing, grammar, drawing, mathematics, languages, etc., and to provide a reading room, a library and weekly scientific lecture” (Royle “Mechanics' Institutes” 320). With this wide range of courses, the members of the Mechanics’ Institutes benefited from a rich instruction. Therefore, they could become intellectual and cultivated.

The principles of the organisation appeared to be encouraging and may have contributed to the evolution of the British society in a larger sense since not only did such an organisation taught fundamental courses, but it could also instruct an ethic regarding the members’ demeanours. For example, The Working Class Mechanics’ Institution in Manchester was founded by an English autodidact and radical politician named Rowland Detrosier who taught science, morality and insisted on the virtues of temperance (Royle “Mechanics' Institutes” 316). By adding temperance ideologies to his teaching program, one may argue that the founder of this institution agreed on the fact that consumption of alcoholic beverages was an hindrance to the educational progress of the working class. Thus, such an organisation may have raised awareness on the dangers of drinking habits and influenced the members’ behaviour.

In a book entitled *The Working Class Progress 1832-1867* (1867), writers John Malcom Forbes Ludlow and Llyod Jones present the Mechanics’ Institutes as the most popular educational agency for the working class (169). They explain that they were mainly situated in Lancashire and Yorkshire and that from 1831 to 1861, the number of members grew from 7000 to 200,000 members in both counties (169). With this in mind, these institutions showed valuable results. Also, in 1857, the Mechanics’ Institute in Yorkshire created its first union and in the aftermath, many institutions did the same

(170). Prizes were offered to the members by these unions which may have encouraged them to continue their efforts (172).

As said previously, the Mechanics' Institutes were based on volunteerism which implied that individuals could choose to join the organisation or not. In other words, they were free to improve their brain capacity through learning. The purpose of the Mechanics' Institute endorsed an educational framework for the intellectual advancement of the working class. If the aim of the mechanics institutions appeared to be well-intentioned, yet, the exclusion of religious affiliation and political debates could be perceived as hindrances. Why would working-class adults join the mechanics institutions while, as previously seen, they were confronted to serious problems? One must keep in mind that in the 1830s, there was a general discontent among the working classes (Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* 203). In the same decade, many workers struggled for more rights, as illustrated by Chartism. Also, a large part of the population asked for a cheapest market, as the Anti-Corn Law League movement showed. Having said that, joining mechanics institutions was presumably not the working class' priority.

According to historian Edward Royle, "the institutes was too high and assumed a basic knowledge which the working classes lacked" (Royle "Mechanics' Institutes" 306). Indeed, social reformers of the time asserted that many working men were ignorant (*The Progress the Working Class* 14) which confirms the previous statement. Lacking of elementary knowledge, the diversity of courses proposed by the Mechanics' Institutes was probably unsuitable. Historian Edward Royle observes that the institutes failed to attract the working class because they were incompatible with the latter, whose tendency rather leant towards trade unions, temperance and political societies (Royle "Mechanics' Institutes" 306). But if the Mechanics' Institutes failed to educate the working class, it however pointed out the importance of education as a tool to emancipate from ignorance and social evils. Importantly, the tendency of the working class to head towards popular social organisations such as unions, temperance and political associations may reveal a preference for collective improvement within the labour force. While trade unions focused on the improvement of working conditions, temperance may have provided the working class with more lucidity which made its political claims coherent.

### 3.2.3 Mutual Improvement Societies and Working Men's Colleges

In an article entitled “Mutual Improvement Societies and the Forging of Working-Class Political Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century England” (1997), historian Christopher Radcliffe introduces mutual improvement societies as democratic organisations established by some part of the British working population whose aim was to spread elementary knowledge (141). According to Radcliffe, the creation of such societies was a working-class response to the numerous changes caused by the industrial revolution (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 144). As already said, the latter led to the exploitation of the labour force.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps, the creation of mutual improvement societies was an initiative to shed light on the working class and to show its unity.

Those societies took shape from 1825 and grew mainly in the north of England among factory workers (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 143). Historian Radcliffe explains that: “such societies typically had a low subscription and a small library, and taught elementary subjects on a one-to-one basis, while early groups frequently met in each other's houses. Debate, often of a political nature, was free and uncensored. They were of the people, while the mechanics' institutes were for the people” (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 143). One can assume that the societies played an important role in the education of the working class and above all, they appeared to be more accessible, familiar and opened on the discussion of political issues than the mechanics' institutions. Political discussion may be regarded as their obvious appeal.

More than spreading knowledge, the societies showed that personal commitment combined with collective effort could “increase the intellectual powers, financial (and hence physical) well-being, and the political status of the masses” (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 144). Access to knowledge, individual effort and collaborative work were essential elements for the improvement of the condition of the working class. Mutual improvement societies may have intended to rise the status of the workers in British society. This aim may be met through the teaching of elementary subjects and reflexion stemming from political debates. As Christoffer Radcliffe points out, “the habit of debate in Mutual Improvement Societies tended to direct the most promising

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<sup>22</sup> The exploitation of the working class was mentioned in the first part of this research work (*Class and Conflict in Nineteenth Century England 1815-1850* introduction xxi).

working men into oratory, lecturing and politics. Others became publishers, pamphleteers, preachers and teachers. To this list might be added, employers of labour” (145). That being said, those societies enabled the most motivated workers to climb the social ladder.

The mutual improvement societies were democratic, and the teaching of elementary or more complex subjects stemmed from the working class itself (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 154). Democratic enthusiasm grew in urban areas and with the same impulse, knowledge appeared to be a crucial tool that secured freedom of speech (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 144). Among all the teaching elements, political discussion was at the centre which may be explained by the fact that the societies were encouraged by radicals, Chartists and secularist groups (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 141-154). As we dealt with, Chartism played an important role in the formation of a working-class political consciousness. The latter may be regarded as the result of a collective effort.

To give examples of mutual improvement societies which appeared at the time, one can mention the Scottish United Operative Mason founded in Glasgow in 1831 which included a branch dedicated to mutual improvement societies or, the Journeymen Steam Engine and Machine Makers Friendly Societies founded in Manchester, in 1842. As historian Christopher Radcliffe asserts, they were both based on mutual instruction and emphasized on moral, physical and intellectual improvement (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 144). With this in mind, the aim was to transform the attitude of the working class from different angles in order to ensure greater changes in daily life.

A great part of the working class was active in “trade unions, temperance and co-operatives” (“Mutual Improvement Societies” 143). This fact may portray sobriety as an important asset for the advancement of the working class. An important point to observe was that the mutual improvement societies encouraged working men to modify their vicious habits. It was the case of the Leeds Mutual Improvement Society. In 1850, the society affirmed to have convinced many of their members to come on the Sabbath rather than wasting their time in public houses and beer shops (Radcliffe “Mutual Improvement Societies” 147). Some mutual improvement societies may have promoted temperance as part of education.

Another example of mutual improvement society which supported temperance was: the Royton Mutual Improvement Society. Founded in 1842, in Lancashire, it became one year later the Royton Temperance Society (Radcliffe “Mutual Improvement Societies” 145). The change of the society’s name may reveal its leaning for temperance principles. Some of its members climbed the social ladder and became masters, managers, mechanics (Radcliffe “Mutual Improvement Societies” 145). In other words, they obtained ‘respectable’ positions which was undeniably the result of the education provided by the society. Besides, mutual improvement societies may have influenced the creation of another important working-class educational institution: the Working Men’s College.

As historian Gordon Marsden explains, the first college was founded in London, in 1854 by Frederick Denison Maurice who considered that education was the most important necessity for a social emancipation of the masses (*Victorian Values* 161-162). Maurice was a Christian socialist who perceived morality and education as panaceas for social evils (160). He believed that education and religion should not be detached (161). Above all, he was opposed to democracy and political actions to obtain social reforms (161-162). The founder put an emphasis on moral and educational development which, for him, did not require immediate political changes. In this sense, one may assume that the working class should be educated and virtuous before obtaining significant rights such as enfranchisement.

The Working Men’s College gave rise to establishments which included the teaching of Art, History, Languages, Mathematics and Physical Science (*The Progress of the Working Class* 176). Most colleges were located in northeast cities of England, more precisely in Sheffield, Halifax, Ipswich, Salford (*The Progress of the Working Class* 176). In an article entitled “The Working Men’s College” (1885), Lucas C. P. points out that the aim of the colleges was to provide instruction at a lower price (161). For an optimal organisation, classes occurred on evenings (163). Most importantly, Lucas explains that on Saturday evenings, classes were held (163). This may have dissuaded the working men to go to the public houses. As said earlier, the founder of the Working Men’s College put an emphasis on moral which may justify such an organisation.



The creation of educational organisations was significant for the improvement of the English lower classes. Sunday school and the Band of Hope were established to teach values and ethics to the youngest. As already said, the education of young people could influence their attitude and build a sober group. Indeed, the emphasis made on temperance may have inculcated sobriety as a popular belief in children. As for adults, the creation of mechanics' institutions, mutual improvement societies and later, the working men's colleges, showed the importance of educating the working class. If the mechanics' institutes failed to attract the labour force, yet, they may have conveyed the idea that a rich and secularized education was necessary to spread knowledge. With the creation of mutual improvement societies, one may catch sight of the demands and expectations of the working class regarding educational institutions. It appears that political debates were crucial and undeniable. The latter reflected the general opinion of the time. Perhaps, the working class needed a political voice based on democratic scheme. It needed to be free from social, cultural and political barriers which prevented it to rise its status.

## Section 3: Victorian Values and Temperance Results

### 3.3.1 Self-Help as a Popular Victorian Virtue and the Essence of Teetotalism

With the myriad of temperance initiatives aiming at implementing a sober culture in Britain and a popular enthusiasm for intellectual and moral advancement among the working classes, one may suggest that social reformers shed light on a certain number of elements which could improved the society they lived in. We showed that temperance advocates put forward alternatives in terms of diet and leisures in order to get working men out of the public houses. In parallel, adult education grew from 1820s to provide the working class with basic knowledge in reading and writing but also, a further education into a variety of subjects. Notably, through the mutual improvement societies, working men could improve their intellectual skills and developed their own reflexion regarding the environment they lived in.

Their inclination for political debates may have shaped their demands and as we showed, through Chartism, they formed their own political consciousness. Sometimes, temperance principles were added to working-class mutual improvement societies such as the Leeds Mutual Improvement Society and the Royton Temperance Society did in the 1840s and 1850s. The rejection of intoxicating beverages was often assimilated to moral progress and a virtue which gave them credibility. Whether in terms of moral values or political and educational organisations, one may find a popular impetus for a steady progress in the daily life of working people.

The impetus for social and intellectual progress may be the reflect of popular concepts and beliefs that were formed during Victorian times. To illustrate the latter, historian Asa Briggs points out that “self-help was one of the favourite mid-Victorian virtues. Relying on yourself was preferred morally - and economically - to depending on others [...] The progressive development of society ultimately depended, it was argued, not on collective action or on parliamentary legislation but on the prevalence of practices of self-help” (Marsden *Victorian Values* 86). With this in mind, the concept of self-help

may be regarded as a common and fundamental ideology for individual progress. Like the popular tendency of respectability, self-help conveyed values that were required to lead a compliant life. Importantly, historian Marsden precises that self-help advocated thrift, perseverance and responsibility (*Victorian Values* 86). All of these may have been regarded as fundamental principles for building one's life.

As historian John Harrison explains, self-help was a popular concept that envisioned individual and social advancements of the working class through adult education in the 1840s (John Harrison "Adult Education and Self-Help" 48). To some extent, the working class appropriated the concept at the individual level as well as within its community. The concept became even more popular when Samuel Smiles published his book entitled *Self-Help*, in 1859, which accounts for the myth of the self made-man (Seaman *Victorian England* 95). Central to the book was the idea that thrift and hard work could lead any moral person to eminence (Seaman 95). In this regard, self-reliance was synonymous with success. It is important to note that "Smiles emerged [...] from a radical background, the background of Chartism, and the Anti-Corn Law League. He was not encouraging Leeds working men to be quiescent or deferential but to be active and informed" (Marsden *Victorian Values* 87). Somehow, Smiles' cultural and social background may have inspired him to put words on the virtues that would help anyone to climb the social ladder.

Regarding Smiles' *Self Help*, Asa Briggs highlights that "while the book belonged unmistakably to mid-Victorian Britain, the message, therefore, was an early-Victorian [...] message, delivered in years not of relative social harmony in Britain but of social conflict" (*Victorian Values* 87). This may refer to the 1830s, a period that we showed as strained because the working classes demonstrated their disagreement regarding the economic system (Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* 203). The latter was the result of industrialisation which imposed significant changes for the economic wealth of England at the detriment of the masses. Thus, one may argue that Smiles' book had the hindsight needed to put forwards virtues that could assisted the working class.

The ideologies of the self-help doctrine could be found in autobiographies of successful working men and temperance journals which inspired the masses about the advantages

to be a self-made man in the 1850s and 1860s (Harrison “Adult Education and Self-Help 37). The aim of the latter was to provide “a living testimony [of] the efficacy of educational self-help” (Harrison “Adult Education and Self-Help”40). Historian John Harrison highlights that there was a literature of success which led to the production of autobiographies of self-educated working class leaders, such as William Cobbett, Samuel Bamford, William Lovett and Thomas Cooper (40). The latter may have convinced some part of the working population about the benefits of independence and hard work. Similarly, in an article entitled “Mutual Improvement Societies and the Forging of Working-Class Political Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century England,” historian Christopher Radcliffe explains that autodidacticism stemmed from self-help tendency which portrayed the self-taught working man as a model (144).

The principles that stemmed from self-help, such as perseverance and responsibility, were similar to those of teetotalism. Indeed, we showed that the latter involved the rejection of all intoxicating beverages through self-control. In the case of the working class, one may argue that to be teetotaler entailed to take responsibility of one’s social behaviour and to resist the temptations of drinking or going to the public houses. This could be an arduous task for a working man since, as historian Shiman highlights, “it was not an uncommon sport for workmates to try to bet that total abstainers, knowingly or unknowingly, could be made to break their pledge” (*Crusade against Drink* 30). Provide that, teetotal working men were enticed to drink and had to persevere their efforts.

Regarding the teetotalers, historian Shiman that “typically these men were ambitious and of a flexible disposition, able to adjust to new situations and circumstances and thus take advantage of any opportunities offered them in bettering their position” (*Crusade against Drink* 30). That said, one may argue that they aimed at rising the social ladder and their commitment to abstinence may be regarded as the basis of their motivation. Importantly, “such men could apply the same ambition and self-control to other aspects of their lives and utilise these abilities to better themselves” (*Crusade against Drink* 30). Therefore, it is clear that teetotalism could forge their personalities and enable them to improve their life morally as well as socially.

It is worth observing that most ambitious temperance advocates had grown up in an educational and political background emphasizing on mutual improvement (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 30). Notably, the prominent leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League, John Bright, successfully campaigned for free trade while being a temperance advocate. Likewise, Chartist leader William Lovett showed its enthusiasm for working-class political involvement and denounced the tragic consequences of drinking habit through his work *Social and Political Morality* (1853). One must bear in mind that in his book entitled *Anatomy and Physiology*, Lovett denounced alcohol as “the great barrier to all social and political progress” (144). Therefore, their involvement in the anti-drink cause could be seen as a strength and an asset in their demands for parliamentary reforms.

Significantly, Smiles’ *Self Help* book could be regarded as a relevant tool of communication to spread ideas and knowledge but also, to teach principles and values such as thrift, perseverance and responsibility. In this book, he reported a 1847 speech of John Bright, addressed to working men at Rochdale, in which “the virtues of industry, frugality, temperance and honesty” were put forwards (Smiles 294). Provided that, just like Samuel Smiles, John Bright attempted to implement beliefs within the working class to give it an impulse towards individual and collective advancement and clearly, temperance went hand in hand with the latter. Through writings, the working class could have access to a myriad of knowledge and advice in order to instruct itself and to build a virtuous and successful life.

### 3.3.2 The Educational Press

Another important tool used for educational purposes and moral improvement was the print media. We mentioned its role in the temperance campaign to denounce the dreadful consequences of drunkenness while praising the advantages of abstinence. Its role was far more important in the evolution of working-class adult education. To give an account, from 1832 to 1860, the print media played a significant role in the emergence of a distinctive working-class culture by entertaining and educating many workers through the circulation of “penny dreadfuls, temperance tracts, illustrated news, religious and self-improvement periodicals” (Swisher *Victorian England* 198). Their

success cannot be denied since as professor Joanne Shattock explains in her book entitled *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2017), they circulated “on the streets of villages, towns and cities, its readers numbering in hundreds of thousands” (2). Even though illiteracy prevailed among the working classes, throughout the nineteenth century, they would meet in public houses where newspapers were read aloud (*The Making of the English Working Class* 712). The print media was probably ubiquitous and influential in the life of the working class.

In a book entitled *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* (2009), authors Laurel Brake and Demoor Marysa recorded the most prominent journalists of the time. For example, in the 1830s, one of the pioneer of radical journalism, Henry Hetherington, issued his working-class newspaper entitled *The Poor’s Man Guardian* with its popular motto “knowledge is power,” (*Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism* 281). Undoubtedly, the aim was to spread knowledge among the lower classes of Britain and this process continued in the 1850s, when John Cassell issued *The Working Man’s Friend and Family Instructor* (Swisher *Victorian England* 205). The newspaper succeeded to take part in the positive evolution of the working classes in terms of morality and sociability (*Dictionary of Nineteenth Century* 100). Its success was considerable since in 1851, 100,000 issues circulated in England (101). This may reveal a general propensity for educational publications.

Authors Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor describe Cassell as a self-made man and highlight that he was a humanitarian who supported universal suffrage and democracy (*Dictionary* 100). He was against slavery and the first English publisher of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel entitled *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (*Dictionary* 101). Most of all, Cassell was a staunch temperance advocate and issued several periodicals dedicated to this cause in the 1840s and 1850s, namely the *Teetotal Times*, *the Weekly Record*, *British Temperance Advocate* and *Band of Hope Review* (Swisher *Victorian England* 205). His commitment to the anti-drink cause was part of his enthusiasm for human progress. In an article published on April 10th 1852, he stated that “drinking practices of the world were but huge stumbling blocks in the way of human progression” (*The Working Man’s Friend* 25). Thus, just like other prominent leaders such as Joseph Livesey, John Bright or William Lovett, John Cassell had a negative view on alcohol.

Importantly, Cassel was the leader of illustrated education publishing as his prominent newspapers *Working Man's Friend* and *Popular Educator* showed it; both were issued in the 1850s (Swisher *Victorian England* 205). A great part of the working class looking for intellectual improvement appreciated those newspapers (Swisher 212). While educational publications flourished through prominent newspapers issued by Hetherington or Cassel, historian Patricia Anderson notes that by 1850, temperance publications constituted a major sub-genre of the literature of improvement (205). Thus, educational and temperance publications were both part of a cultural vigour for social improvement.

Educational publications emphasized on a set of social virtues such as “self-improvement, thriftiness, hard work, emotional restraint, perseverance, and temperance” (Swisher *Victorian England* 205). That being said, newspapers conveyed principles which could guide and support the working class in its excitement for progress. Historian Thompson highlights that “there is perhaps no country in the world in which the contest for the rights of the press was so sharp, so emphatically victorious, and so peculiarly identified with the cause of the artisans and labourers” (*The Making of the English Working Class* 720). The print media was thus a significant tool for the advancement of the working population and emphasized on the power of knowledge as Hetherington's and Cassell's newspapers showed it.

### 3.3.3 Parliamentary Involvement in the Anti-Drink Campaign and Drinking Habit in the Working Class

The temperance movement was most popular and successful among the working classes in the 1830s and 1840s (*Crusade Against Drink* 4). Historian Shiman points out that the anti-drink cause was part of many other self-help organisations looking for individual improvement. Notably, she underlines that most prominent temperance working-class leaders succeeded in terms of livelihood, political voice and social position (*Crusade Against Drink* 4). For instance, Joseph Livesey, William Lovett, John Bright or John Cassel were all leaders who put in practice and promoted abstinence

from alcohol. But did the temperance movement led to a reformation of drinking habits in British society?

To some extent, the temperance movement led to some considerable results since as historian Thora Hands highlights in her book entitled *Drinking in Victorian and Edwardian Period* (2018), moral and medical concerns about intemperance led to legislative reforms in 1860s (2). The efforts of temperance reformers were fruitful since the Liberal Party supported them in their demands for radical changes with regard to the licensing system (3). Drinking issues was tackled by the British parliament since between 1853 and 1890, five enquiries were conducted by a select committee to investigate issues of intemperance (Thora Hands 26-27). From the drinking places to the types of beverage consumed and to the drunkards, the enquiries reported drinking habit in England. Those enquiries may have been influenced by the U.K.A which, as previously mentioned, was a political party created in 1853 aiming at prohibiting the sale of alcohol at local level (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 184). Even though this aim was not reached, we showed that the U.K.A revived the anti-drink campaign in the 1870s. Thus, if prohibition was not enacted, yet, it appeared that changes regarding the drink trade were necessary .

Historian Thora Hands explains that “the Licensing Acts of 1869 and 1872 marked a turning point in British alcohol history” (25). They restricted opening hours of the public houses, regulated the content of beer and gave local authority the possibility to regulate licensing hours and to prohibit the sale of alcohol (Hands 25). Those Acts demonstrated that the drink trade had to be regulated. On one hand, this may show that the parliament took into account the dangers that may represent an unregulated trade of alcohol. On the other hand, the Acts may have satisfied temperance reformers.

As Thora Hands points out, “a sober industrial workforce may have been the moral and political ideal, but the 1877 enquiry was dealing with the realities of working-class life and it is clear that on a political level it was understood that working-class men’s drinking habits varied” (Hands 30). For instance, in this inquiry, John Matthias Weylland of the London City Mission reported his observation made on working-class drinking in public houses in London (Hands 30). He explained that drinking was still



widespread but most working-class people drank moderately (30). The latter fact may have stemmed from temperance influence which emphasized on moderation of alcohol. Another important point to note was that the parliamentary inquiries showed drinking as a more widespread habit among the poor working people (Hands 36). That fact was well-known to temperance societies and as said previously, from the 1870s, the Church of England Temperance Society proposed alternative drinks such as tea and coffee to reverse the drinking trend in the poorer districts of London (“Temperance Drinks” 207).

In an article entitled “Drink and Working-Class Living Standards in Britain, 1870-1914” (1972), historian Dingle indicates that in the 1870s, drinking habit was more widespread in urban areas among male workers (610). He emphasizes that only half of the women in country drank and children under age of fifteen were abstainers (610). However, he points out that alcohol consumption reached its peak in 1875-76 and that the majority of drinkers were working-class men. During those years, wages increased and the brewing industry was booming (610-618). The sudden increase of alcohol consumption may have been caused by the rise of wages and the prosperity of the drink trade.

Importantly, historian Dingle stresses that “the working man spent a larger proportion of his income on drink than did the more affluent; and that the major part, perhaps two-thirds to three-quarters, of all spending on drink came out of working-class pockets” (612). Drinking habit was thus still part of the working men’s life and the general opinion was that “it was expenditure on ‘intoxicating liquors’ which was regarded above all as the major obstacles to improvement” (608). If the temperance movement did not succeed to eradicate alcohol in the life of the working class as it aspired to do, however, it inscribed new beliefs regarding alcohol, namely that it was deleterious for health (Dingle 613).

Also, the temperance movement led to a reduction of alcoholism among the lower classes (Shiman *Crusade Against Drink* 244). At the end of the nineteenth century, most prominent families living in industrialised areas thrived because they had grown in a temperance background (245). The virtues of temperance were productive for those who put them in practice. In the case of the working class, it appeared that drinking was still part of its daily life as Dingle’s account showed it. Temperance advocates may have

failed to eradicate alcohol among the working-class adults but the anti-drink cause may have been more effective among their children.

As historian Shiman Lilian Lewis explains in her article entitled “The Band of Hope Movement: Respectable Recreation for Working-Class Children” (1973), through the Band of Hope, teetotal reformers attempted to implement a new cultural identity among working-class children (49). The organisation was a form of self-help which contributed to shape a more ‘respectable’ society (49). In the late nineteenth century, the organisation counted over three million children (50). Historian Shiman highlights that most of those children remained teetotalers and continued to promote alcohol abstinence throughout their life (73). By teaching the virtues of temperance to the youth, temperance advocates may have met more success with the latter than with their parents.

While the consumption of intoxicating liquors was a deeply rooted traditional and cultural habit, temperance advocates kept striving for years to implement a sober culture in England. They succeeded to anchor the belief that intoxicating beverages were unhealthy and not essential in the worker’s life. Most importantly, drunkenness was perceived as immoral and hostile to the model of respectability which emphasized on moral conduct. By the means of temperance parties, temperance advocates encouraged people to explore a variety of drinks. Those events were mixed and enabled loving encounters or friendly meetings. Through the creation of places such as coffee houses, ‘temperance’ public houses, hotels and musical halls, the working class had more ‘respectable’ options than spending time at its corner trendy public house.

Besides, the establishment of educational organisations such as the mechanics institutes, the mutual improvement societies and the working men’s colleges, provided working men with an enormous body of knowledge and taught them moral values. The working class was prompted to intellectual improvement through the teachings of a variety of subjects. And with the emphasis made on the cultivation of self-help, the latter had all the ingredients required to take control of its life and to climb the social ladder. The print media played a significant role by teaching and influencing the latter.

The temperance cause led to legislative reforms and most significantly, it rose awareness about the detrimental effects of alcohol. We showed that drinking was still

widespread among working men while alcohol abstinence was more effective among children. It appeared that the temperance campaign was more successful with the Band of Hope which had a considerable influence on the youth. The temperance movement may have failed to reach a great majority of the working class but at least, it implemented new beliefs regarding alcohol in the minds of the youngest. Perhaps, it was the fact that drinking was a popular and old tendency that made its eradication impossible.

## Conclusion

Whether the temperance movement contributed or not to the emancipation of the working class in nineteenth century British society is highly debatable. What is certain is that it raised serious concerns regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages and its consequences. As historian Francis Michael Longstreth states “the motives of teetotallers and temperance reformers, of those who sought to clean up the music halls, of those who campaigned to provide public parks, libraires, reading rooms, working men’s clubs, and organized game, were in large part those of social controllers consciously seeking to shape the tastes and habits of the working classes” (“Social Control in Victorian Britain” 200-201). With this in mind, one may suggest that the temperance movement aimed at emancipating the working class from its drinking habits and to reach that end, it based its strategy on the spread of knowledge, the teaching of moral values and the promotion of alternative commodities and activities.

Industrialisation and the rise of capitalism certainly transformed the life of the working population. The latter marked the transition from agrarian to industrial economy. As a result, urbanisation occurred with a significant overcrowding of industrial towns and engendered other problems such as poverty, poor sanitations and drunkenness. While the industrial revolution and the growth of the British Empire portrayed Great Britain as a great power and a model of prosperity, its effect on the working population was abrupt and harmful. One must keep in mind that while labour in mines, mills and factories was hard, the environment in which the workers lived was polluted. Comments of contemporary men of the time, Gustave Eichtal and Friedrich Engels, gave evidence of the tragic condition of the working class in the 1830s and 1840s. Likewise, historians George Trevelyan and Robert Rayner describe the environment of the nineteenth century urban working class as insalubrious and overcrowding. The description of the social context was important since it helps us to understand the reasons why the workers spent time in public houses.

Going to the public house was a popular habit of the working class since it provided it with comfort and sociability. We showed that drinking places were mainly located in

urban areas and that they were synonymous with recreation and entertainment. With the 1830 Beerhouse Act, the number of public houses and gin palaces increased. Alcoholic beverages were sold at a lower price which may have led the customers to drink more. Importantly, the drinking places were so numerous in urban areas that after a long day of work, it was common for the worker to spend his time there. Among the workers, the general opinion was that beer helped them to endure the next day at work. This was a popular belief which may have legitimated that habit. But the problem was that the public house had a bad reputation, it was assimilated with corruption which favoured “criminal culture” (“Social Usages of the Public Drinking House” 370). The high consumption of alcoholic beverages could be the cause of the latter.

According to Friedrich Engels, intemperance was a real problem among the workers and he argues that the environment in which they lived pushed them to drink. An important point to remember was that the Victorians made no distinction between alcoholism, drinking and drunkenness which makes it difficult to estimate how far went intemperance in the nineteenth century working class. While the latter was thought to drink more than the other classes, we attempted to give an explanation by referring to psychologist Noémie Capart who explains that alcohol procure an escape from reality.

Religion was fundamental in nineteenth British society and it put a significant emphasis on respectability as a social norm. It implied that believers had to adhere to a certain number of values; we showed that temperance and self-control were part of them. Besides, the temperance movement was predominantly evangelical and it was used as a principle to enrol people in religious constituencies. This research work underlined that religion and the anti-drink campaign perceived self-control as the foundation of their ideology. While Methodists rejected all kind of alcoholic beverages, Anglicans preferred moderation because altar wine was a sacred tradition that they could not remove. If the complete rejection of alcohol was impossible in the churches, yet, moderation was put forward.

The determination of Methodists to eradicate drinking habit cannot be denied when we take into account their enthusiasm to inculcate sobriety among children. Most importantly, the creation of temperance organisations for youth showed great results. The Band of Hope can be pointed out as the most successful of them. The latter created

its own community and organised tea parties and galas to promote temperance. The anti-drink cause appeared to be more effective among the youth since over the years, members of the Band of Hope increased.

We showed that in the 1830s, the working class started to organise meetings in unions to discuss their grievances. It wanted radical changes but drinking habit could be a hindrance which discredited its demands. Towards a perspective of evolution the temperance movement appeared “to reshape the tastes and habits of the working classes” (“Social Control in Victorian Britain” 200-201). It included the teetotal pledge which was a symbolic commitment of alcohol abstinence. Joseph Leader was the leader and believed that ‘individual moral reform was his road to social harmony’ (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 113-114). He campaigned against alcohol by making tracts and speeches to demonstrate that alcoholic beverages were not a necessity of life. In so doing, he aimed at changing the general opinion on drinking habit as poisonous and harmful. With this in mind, the temperance campaign may have enabled the working class to emancipate from the popular belief that drinking helped them to endure the next day of work.

The media was a significant tool to raise awareness about the harmful effect of intemperance and to promote moderation or abstinence as virtuous. Medical men agreed that “the use of ardent spirits [was] one of the principal causes of disease, crime, misery, poverty, and in every way most injurious to the temporal and spiritual interests of the community” (*The Temperance Advocate* 21). Another significant argument against alcohol consumption was that it could destroy a family as George Cruikshank and Nathaniel Currier illustrated through their works. While Cruikshank denounced domestic violence, Currier portrayed the thorny path of the drinker. Both showed that by introducing alcohol in everyday life, the drinker risked to enter into a vicious circle in which death could occur abruptly.

The general opinion was that drunkenness was a curse which could destroy individual’s health and reason. While in the 1840s, temperance moral suasion weakened, the U.K.A arose as a political party to compel the Parliament to enforce legislative reforms to eradicate alcohol. This generated disagreement among anti-drink campaigners because

prohibition of alcohol infringed individual rights. If the U.K.A did not succeed to enforce prohibition, yet, it revived the anti-drink cause.

The temperance movement was not the only initiative undertaken by social reformers to improve the life of the working class. The Chartist movement appeared in the same decade and generated a significant enthusiasm among the latter through its prominent manifesto: The People's Charter. By organising meetings and spreading petitions, the Chartists put in place radical strategies to express the demands of the working class. Even though they failed to enact the manifesto, they generated a political working-class consciousness. Chartist leaders William Lovett and Henry Hetherington perceived the consumption of alcohol as political and social obstacles to progress. The National Association and the L.W.M.A condemned drinking as a factor spreading ignorance and poverty in the working class (Stack 1041). That said, the anti-drink cause could help the latter to free itself from drinking habit.

The Anti-Corn Law League aimed at providing the population with a cheapest market by the means of free trade. The aim was to improve the life of the English population. Prominent leaders John Bright and Richard Cobden were devoted to this cause and were supported by teetotaler Joseph Livesey. We stated that John Bright was a staunch teetotaler who not only campaigned for free trade but also gave temperance speeches. The fact that Bright and Livesey were teetotalers may have reinforced their devotion to improve people's life. Above all, free trade could provided the population with alternative food and drinks and thus, it could give choices to consumers.

In England, as historian Lilian Shiman explains, drinking was “drinking was firmly fixed in traditional, social and cultural practices” (*Crusade Against Drink* 1) and for historian Brian Harrison “to abandon drink was to abandon society itself, unless some alternative grouping were provided” (Harrison *Drink and the Victorians* 50). With these elements in mind, temperance advocates had to find alternatives. Tea parties, promotion of tea and coffee, creation of temperance hotel and music halls were initiatives undertaken to change drinking habit and to implement a sober culture. Temperance reformers encouraged the working class to adopt a lifestyle in conformity with respectability.

Through the establishment of adult education, the working class could emancipate from ignorance and drinking habit. It is worth remembering what the *Flint Glass Maker Magazine* stated in 1850: “Get knowledge and in getting knowledge you get power... Get intelligence instead of alcohol, it is sweeter and more lasting” (Radcliffe, “Mutual Improvement Societies” 144). We showed that most children received an education in Sunday schools and that the latter focused on Christian values and morality. Many heard their first temperance lecture there. The teachings of temperance principles based on biblical texts may have helped them to free themselves from social customs such as the consumption of alcoholic beverages. As for the adult working class, the creation of mechanics institutes and the mutual improvement societies in the middle of the century provided them with basic knowledge and a variety of complex subjects. These organisations encouraged intellectual improvement of the masses. For founder of the Working Men’s College, Frederick Denison Maurice, education and morality went together and were panaceas for social ills. Classes on Saturday evenings could then be an alternative to time spent in a public house.

Just as respectability, self-help was a popular Victorian virtue popularized by Samuel Smiles’ book *Self-Help* (1859) which emphasized on thrift, perseverance and responsibility. This concept may be regarded as the essence of working-class adult education and teetotal activities. It was an ideology advocated in autobiographies of successful working men and temperance journals. Prominent figures such as William Lovett, John Bright and John Cassel can be referred as models of self-made men. These men agreed that the consumption of alcoholic beverages was an hindrance in the life of the working class. According to historian Trevelyan, Bright played a significant part in the enfranchisement of urban workers in 1867 (*British History in the Nineteenth Century and After* 340). To some degree, Bright’s zeal for temperance principles may have led him to gain popularity. His contribution in the repeal of the Corn Laws and in the enfranchisement of urban workers was important.

In the 1870s, working-class men were the highest consumer of intoxicating liquor which may have showed that the temperance movement failed to change their drinking habits.



However, it inscribed new beliefs regarding alcohol, namely that it was deleterious for health and a significant obstacle to their improvement. The Band of Hope organisations may have been more successful by teaching temperance ideologies to children. Historian Shiman argues that many of them remained teetotalers as they grew up (“The Band of Hope Movement: Respectable Recreation for Working-Class Children”<sup>73</sup>). The contribution of temperance movement with regard to the general opinion on alcohol may have raised awareness about the dangers of intemperance. Historian Brian Harrison argues that “society can encourage or discourage the relieving of tensions through drinking” (*Drink and the Victorians* 23). Perhaps, temperance advocates failed to eradicate completely this custom in British society because the latter has always found a way to promote alcoholic beverages. We must bear in mind that the drinking places provided the working class with sociability and also, they were valuable for the national economy (Jennings *A History of the English Pub* 39). It is obvious that the liquor trade was a lucrative business just as smoking is today despite awareness campaigns. Finally, when growing up in a society in which drinking and smoking are part of popular tendencies, it may be hard to emancipate from these customs. But by denouncing their negative effects in our modern times, as the temperance movement did with its campaign against alcohol, individuals are better informed and therefore, they can choose to follow the tendencies or not.

## Annexes

**Annexe 1:** William Hogarth - *Beer Street and Beer Lane*

**Annexe 2:** *Human Rights: 1815-1848 - Poster for a Staffordshire Coal Miners' Union Public Meeting*

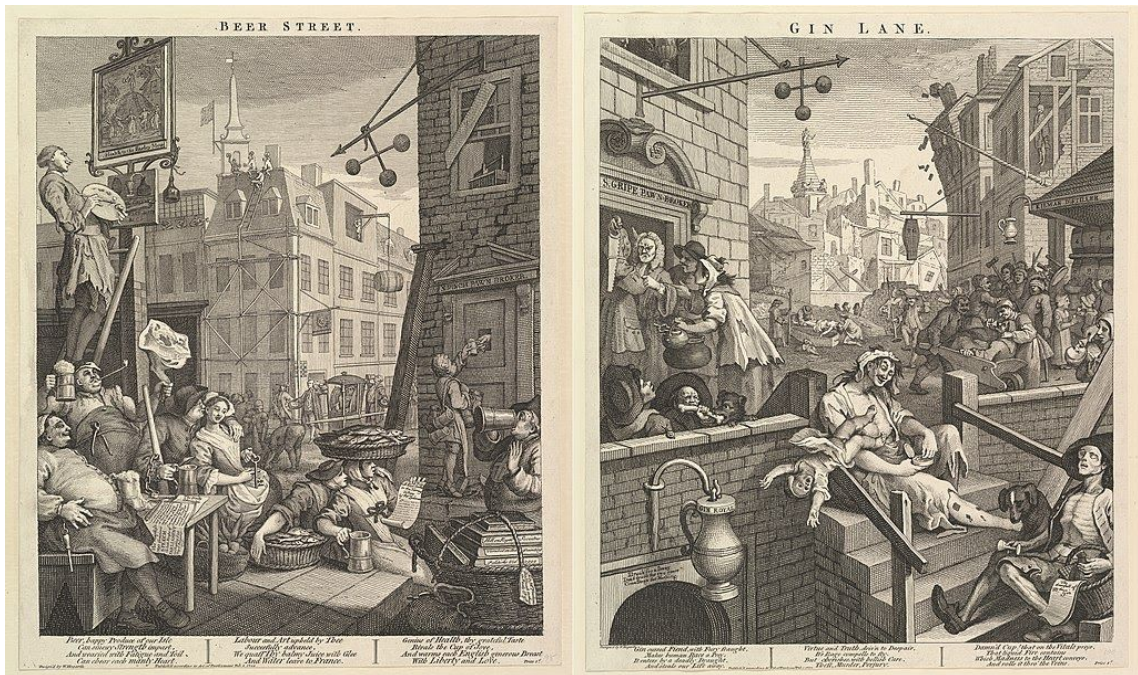
**Annexe 3:** George Cruikshank - *The Bottle. Plate I: The Bottle is Brought for the First Time: The Husband Induces His Wife "Just to Take a drop."*

**Annexe 4:** George Cruikshank - *The Bottle. Plate VI: Fearful Quarrels, and Brutal Violence, Are the Consequences of the Frequent Use of the Bottle.*

**Annexe 5:** Nathaniel Currier - *The Drunkard's Progress - From the First Glass to the Grave.*

**Annexe 6:** *Dog in the Manger. - The Struggle*

Annexe 1: HOGARTH, William. *Beer Street* and *Beer Lane*. 1751. Wikipedia.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beer\\_Street\\_and\\_Gin\\_Lane#/media/File:Beer-street-and-Gin-lane.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beer_Street_and_Gin_Lane#/media/File:Beer-street-and-Gin-lane.jpg) Accessed 28/04/2020



Annexe 2: Human Rights: 1815-1848 - Poster for a Staffordshire Coal Miners' Union Public Meeting. The National Archive.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/humanrights/1815-1848/doc-coalminers-image.htm>  
Accessed on 29/04/2020

THE  
**COAL MINERS**  
**UNION,**  
FOR STAFFORDSHIRE,  
WILL HOLD A  
**PUBLIC MEETING,**  
AT THE  
HIGH BULLEN, WEDNESBURY,  
**On Monday, November 7th. 1831,**

For the purpose of taking into consideration the *wretched system and abuses* of the *Coal Mining Interests*; and to try if means can be adopted to amend them; our Masters are giving their Childrens portions away, and we as Servants are being sunk into the lowest gulf of Poverty; therefore we hope all the Colliers throughout the Country will attend, both Booties and Wagemen, whether they belong to the UNION or not.

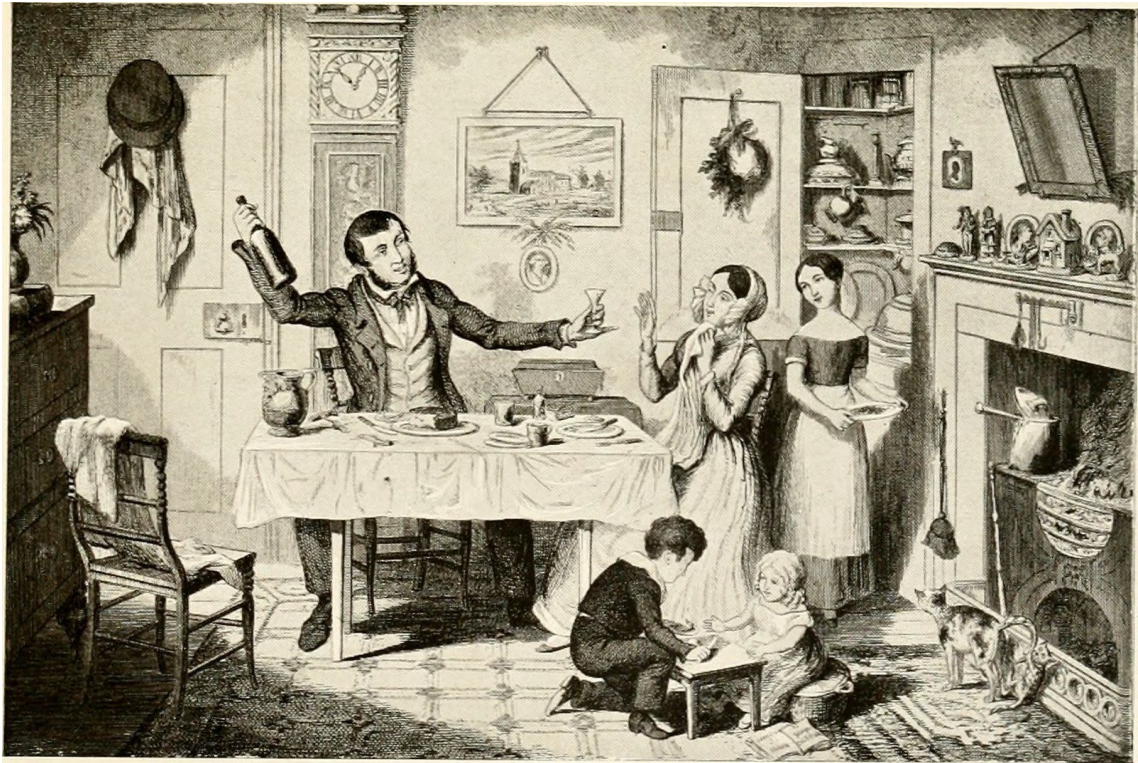
THE  
**TIPTON GREEN LODGES,**  
WILL CALL ON THE  
**Coseley & Prince's End Lodges,**  
WITH A BAND OF MUSIC.  
**WOLVERHAMPTON, BILSTON, and DARLSTON,**  
**LODGES,**  
WILL COME IN PROCESSION AND MEET AT WEDNESBURY BY TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.  
BY ORDER OF THE  
**GENERAL DELEGATES,**  
OF THE DIFFERENT LODGES.  
**October 27th. 1831,**

I. W. MAURICE, PRINTER, ALBION OFFICE, HIGH STREET, WESTBROMWICH.

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**Annexe 3:** CRUIKSHANK George. *The Bottle*. Plate I: *The Bottle is Brought for the First Time: The Husband Induces His Wife “Just to Take a drop.”* Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/internetarchivebookimages/14590721798> Accessed on 29/04/2020



**Annexe 4:** CRUIKSHANK George. *The Bottle*. Plate VI: *Fearful Quarrels, and Brutal Violence, Are the Consequences of the Frequent Use of the Bottle*. 1847. MeisterDrucke,

<https://www.meisterdrucke.uk/fine-art-prints/George-Cruikshank/257197/The-Bottle.-Plate-VI.-Fearful-quarrels-and-brutal-violence-are-the-natural-consequences-of-frequent-use-of-the-bottle.-1847-.html>. Accessed on 29/04/20.



**Annexe 5:** CURRIER Nathaniel. *The Drunkard's Progress - From the First Glass to the Grave.* 1846. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b53131/>. Accessed on 29/04/2020.





**Annexe 6:** *Dog in the Manger. The Struggle. Life and Teachings of Joseph Livesey.*  
1885.

<https://archive.org/details/lifeteachingsofj00live/page/n63/mode/2up/search/manger>.

Accessed on 29/04/2020.

ixii *Fac-simile Reproduction of a "Struggle" Page.*

At the end of another year Mr. Livesey made a similar declaration, as may be seen from the fac-simile reproduction of the first page of No. 105, here inserted.

# The Struggle.

— When countries shall be more enlightened in regard to the principles of commerce, commercial treaties will be unknown, because each country will adopt plans advantageous to itself, unobscured by the consideration that some part of its advantage may be shared by others. — *Pease's Progress.*



**DOG IN THE MANGER.**

The Dog will neither eat the hay itself, nor allow the Cow to reach it to do so. The Landowner will neither sell out the land as his property, nor let the People be supplied with food from Struggle farms.

**THE STRUGGLE.**

The number of *The Struggle* commences the third year of its publication. It was not expected, at its commencement, to remain in the field so long. But, sustained by public approval, it has continued weakly defending and illustrating the principles of free trade, and assailing the strongholds of monopoly. The circulation of eleven hundred thousand copies of the *Struggle* has contributed some little to the "Great Fact" which is now astounding the nation. It commences a new year with no diminished ardour; and the *Struggler* never intends to lay down his weapons, in one single or another, until he see the monster Monopoly prostrate on the field.

**No. 105.** J. LIVESEY.



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## Résumé

This research work will present the contribution of the temperance movement in the struggle of the English working class in terms of civil rights from 1830s. That period stood for the creation of the social movement against alcohol consumption and also the beginning of the British working-class protest. The latter attempted to improve working condition through union and to obtain rights such as enfranchisement. A popular enthusiasm grew in urban areas among the workers to improve their social status as well as their living standard. This enthusiasm may reflect the formation of a political working-class consciousness which emanated from Chartism. The temperance movement may have contributed to its social, political and cultural emancipation by emphasizing on moderation or even abstinence from alcoholic beverages. Values advocated by the temperance movement such as self-control and moral conduct may have raised awareness and taught the basics of a successful and free life. In other words, the temperance movement may have enabled the working class to emancipate from traditions and prejudices regarding alcohol.

**Keywords:** England, working-class men, temperance movement, parliamentary reforms, cultural and political emancipation, education, Victorian values.

Ce mémoire a pour but de présenter la contribution de la ligue de tempérance dans la lutte des classes ouvrières en termes de droits civiques en Angleterre à partir des années 1830. Cette période marque non seulement la création du mouvement social contre la consommation d'alcool mais aussi le début de la lutte de la classe ouvrière britannique. Cette dernière tentait d'améliorer les conditions de travail par le biais de syndicats mais aussi d'obtenir des droits tels que le suffrage. On peut observer dans les milieux urbains qu'un enthousiasme populaire grandissait parmi les travailleurs afin d'améliorer leur statut social et leur niveau de vie. Cet enthousiasme se traduit par la formation d'une conscience politique ouvrière qui s'émane du chartisme. Dans une perspective d'évolution, la ligue de tempérance a pu contribuer à leur émancipation social, politique et culturelle en mettant l'accent sur la modération voire l'exclusion des boissons

alcoolisées. Les valeurs prônées par la ligue de tempérance telles que la maîtrise de soi et la conduite morale ont pu élever les consciences et enseigner les bases d'une vie réussie et affranchie. En d'autres termes, la ligue de tempérance a pu permettre à la classe ouvrière de s'émanciper des traditions et des préjugés liés à l'alcool.

**Mots-clés:** Angleterre, classe ouvrière masculine, ligue de tempérance, réformes parlementaires, émancipation culturelle et politique, éducation, valeurs victoriennes.