

COMRADES, FILL NO GLASS FOR ME: STEPHEN FOSTER'S MELODIES AS BORROWED BY THE AMERICAN TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

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Abstract. Among the thousands of temperance songs written between 1840 and 1920 were many songs set to tunes by American Composer, Stephen Collins Foster (1826-1864). Despite his personal battle with alcohol, he wrote at least two temperance songs, "Comrades, Fill No Glass for Me" and "The Wife," and temperance writers frequently set their lyrics to some of his more famous tunes. This article explores the borrowing of four of Foster's best known melodies, "Oh! Susanna," "Old Folks at Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," and "Old Black Joe," by temperance lyricists from 1857 to 1920, and the seemingly ironic choice to use tunes by a heavy drinker in support of the temperance cause.

INTRODUCTION

From the 1840s to 1920, the American Temperance Movement produced an astounding number of songs. Ewing credits several professional songwriters – Stephen Foster, Mrs. E.A. Parkhurst, George F. Root, and Henry Work – with many of the best songs of the movement. Foster stands apart from the others in this group for several reasons. He was the best known composer of the group. While the others wrote Civil War songs sympathetic to the Union cause, Foster wrote minstrel songs, many of which are considered racist today, and his family was strongly opposed to abolitionism. Unlike the other three, Foster wrote both temperance songs and drinking songs, and finally Foster drank heavily and was considered an alcoholic by many sources.¹

Stephen Foster was born on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of Independence Day, a day when a population prone to alcohol consumption had even more reason to imbibe. By 1830, four years after Foster's birth, the per capita consumption of alcohol for those fifteen years and older was 9.5 gallons of alcohol per year, nearly four times current rates. The severity of the problem led to the formation of numerous temperance organizations over the course of the next century and many drinkers, including Foster's father, William, took the pledge to abstain from intoxicating beverages. William joined

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the Washington Total Abstinence Society shortly after that group was founded in 1840 and became an active member, once speaking at three Washingtonian conventions in a single day.²

Had Stephen followed in his father's footsteps, he might not have died so tragically in New York's Bowery in 1864. That he drank heavily in his last four years is undisputed. Foster's friend and lyricist, George Cooper, noted that in his last years Foster drank rum all the time, but claimed he was never intoxicated. Other sources note that Foster had a long history of alcoholism and that he consulted a druggist, Robert Nevin, about his alcohol problem around 1856.³ Perhaps Foster's Temperance song, "Comrades, Fill No Glass for Me" (1855), was a reflection of his personal struggle with alcohol:

- (1) Oh, comrades, fill no glass for me
 To drown my soul in liquid flame,
 For if I drank, the toast should be
 To blighted fortune, health and fame.
 Yet, though I long to quell the strife,
 That passion holds against my life,
 Though boon companions ye may be,
 Oh! comrades, fill no glass for me.
- (2) I know a breast that once was light
 Whose patient sufferings need my care,
 I know a hearth that once was bright,
 But drooping hopes have gather'd there,
 Then while the tear-drops nightly steal
 From wounded hearts that I should heal,
 Though boon companions ye may be,
 Oh! comrades, fill no glass for me.
- (3) When I was young I felt the tide
 Of aspirations undefiled,
 But manhood's years have wronged the pride
 My parents centered on their child.
 Then, by a mother's sacred tear,
 By all that memory should revere,
 Though boon companions ye may be,
 Oh! comrades, fill no glass for me.⁴

Along with the original temperance compositions by Foster, Parkhurst, Root, Work and others, the temperance movement borrowed many tunes in support of the cause, a practice common among nineteenth-century hymn and popular song writers. The tunes of familiar hymns, patriotic songs, traditional Scottish songs, Civil War songs, and other popular songs, including songs by Foster, Root and Work, played an important role in the movement. The use of familiar tunes had great benefits; temperance lyricists could quickly write songs on any topic required and be assured that singers would pick them up almost perfectly the first time through. While Foster's temperance compositions and especially the borrowing of his tunes by the movement may seem paradoxical to modern readers given his personal alcohol problems, there were other seemingly ironic cases. For example, Robert Burns who wrote two of the five verses for "Auld Lang Syne" – a tune both frequently borrowed by the movement and closely associated with toasting the New Year – was a heavy

drinker, composer of drinking songs, and defender of whiskey distillers.⁵

Although borrowed tunes were used throughout the temperance movement, the role of music differed somewhat among the various organizations. The Washingtonians, the group to which William Foster belonged, retained many of the more appealing aspects of the tavern experience while shunning intoxicating beverages. As a result, group singing, entertainment by professional musicians, and camaraderie continued to be important aspects of their meetings. They also carefully avoided association with any particular church or political party. Their approach to solving the alcohol problem was “moral suasion,” appealing to the drinker as an equal, pointing to the evils of drinking and its impact on home and family, and inducing the drinker to take the pledge and join their ranks. Many later organizations objected to the entertainment aspect of Washingtonian meetings along with their secular approach and the belief that moral suasion alone could bring an end to the alcohol problem. Groups such as the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), established in 1873, and the Anti-Saloon League, formed in 1895, found that moral suasion alone was insufficient to rid America of “demon rum” and turned their attention to crusading for laws to control or prohibit the sale of alcohol, know as “legal suasion.” The WCTU concerned itself with the spiritual welfare of drunkards and their families and members generally sang traditional hymns and gospel songs during their crusades, but like the Washingtonians they often sang temperance songs at social gatherings and in their homes.⁶

Temperance writers borrowed Foster’s tunes through the various stages of the movement, beginning in 1857 and continuing to the years immediately prior to National Prohibition. Four of his best known songs were particularly popular: “Oh! Susanna” (1847), “Old Folks at Home” (1851), “My Old Kentucky Home” (1853), and “Old Black Joe” (1860). All these tunes share the simple melodic structure, harmonies, and forms characteristic of Foster’s best music. All except “Oh! Susanna” move at slower tempi, three have the same basic form, and two are pentatonic (based on a scale of five pitches) except in the initial phrase of the chorus. Seventeen of the temperance movement’s settings of these tunes are presented below along with each of Foster’s original tunes.⁷

OH! SUSANNA

One of the earliest temperance settings to “Oh! Susanna,” retitled “There’s A Good Time Coming,” was first published in 1857, a decade after the original song (Figure 1). This patriotic temperance song pledges to put an end to the alcohol problem, pointing out its destructive effects on families, and casting owners of dram-shops and taverns as enemies of the “sweet land of liberty.” Although aspects of this text are incompatible with Foster’s comic tune, the upbeat melody supports the overall theme anticipating better days ahead. In addition, the text underlay fits the original tune well.

Figure 1. T. Ederley's lyrics for "There's a Good Time Coming" set to Stephen Foster's "Oh! Susanna" ⁸



1. There is a good time com - ing, Though we can - not fix the date; But ___
 2. There is a good time com - ing, And we wish it now were here; When ___
 3. And ___ for this good time com - ing, Let us sing, and work, and pray, When
 6 yet 'tis sure - ly on the way, At tel - e - graph - ic rate. What ___
 men, all strong drink shun - ning, Will sip the wat - er clear; When ___
 10 tip - pling - shops and tav - erns Will no long - er lead a - stray; When ___
 though the dram - shops do in - crease, And pau - per tax - es too, We ___
 half - starved wives, with pal - lid cheeks, And chil - dren filled with fear, And ___
 14 grain no more to poi - son's made, By pas - sing through the still, And ___
 should not let our ef - forts cease, While there's so much to do.
 drun - ken id - i - o - tic freaks, Shall nev - er more ap - pear.
 all man - kind a - void that trade, Which doth their neigh - bors kill.
 18 *Chorus*
 Oh, my coun - try, Sweet land of lib - er - ty, We'll ___
 22 bold - ly van - quish ev - 'ry foe That seeks to in - jure thee!

As mentioned earlier in relation to the Washingtonians, moral suasion appeals to the drinker as an equal and encourages him/her to give up drinking, often pointing to the impact of alcohol on home and family. Moral suasion dominates the following two selections from 1874; the narrator recounts his path of drunkenness, leading finally to the temperance pledge and freedom from alcohol.⁹

O, Ginspinner!

(1) My home was once a cheerless place,
 Where tear-drops oft did start,
 From eyes should beam with love for me,
 And tenderness of heart;
 My wife and children all became
 The prey of grief and woe;
 For Brandy, Rum, and Gin, alas!
 Have proved my overthrow.

Chorus

O, Ginspinner,
 You may cry for me,
 I'm going to sign the Temp'rance pledge,
 And gain my liberty.

(2) For many years I patronized
 The ale-house day and night,

The landlord greeted me with joy,
 And hailed me with delight;
 I spent my money at the bar,
 Until my cash ran dry,
 And then he turned me out of doors,
 In drunkenness to die! *To Chorus*

(3) But now I've signed the Temp'rance pledge,
 And gained my liberty;
 From Brandy, Whisky, Rum and Gin,
 I am forever free.
 No more I'll tread the drunkard's path,
 Nor be the willing slave,
 Of those who send their victims forth
 To fill the drunkard's grave. *To Chorus*¹⁰

Oh, Drinkseller

(1) My house was once a cheerless home,
 Where tear-drops oft did start
 From eyes that beamed with love for me
 And tenderness of heart;
 My wife and children oft became
 The sport of grief and woe;
 For brandy, rum, and gin, alas!
 Had proved my overthrow.

Chorus

Oh, drinkseller,
 Don't you long for me?
 I'm going to sign the Temp'rance pledge,
 To gain my liberty.

(2) For fifteen years I patronized
 The alehouse day and night –
 The landlord greeted me with smiles,
 And hailed me with delight;
 I spent my money at his house,
 Until my cash ran dry,
 And then he turned me out of doors,
 In drunkenness to die. *To Chorus*

(3) But now I've signed the pledge at last,
 And gained my liberty!
 From all intoxicating drinks
 I am entirely free;
 No more I'll tread the drunkard's path,
 Nor be the willing slave
 Of those who send their victims forth
 To fill the drunkard's grave. *To Chorus*¹¹

Two such similar settings could certainly not have materialized by coincidence, and borrowing of this type was very common in nineteenth-century temperance songsters. Along with others, John Pierpont, composer of “Jingle Bells,” confessed in 1842 to taking a “tolerably wide range” in compiling his temperance collection. He notes:

Of many of the pieces, I could not ascertain who the authors were; on others of which the authors were named, I had good reason, – judging from the fact that the same piece would often appear in different forms in different collections, as

well as from the mutilations and metamorphoses that some of my own temperance canticles have undergone, – to believe that the hand of “improvement” had been laid, by strangers, and I knew not therefore, except in a few instances, what I might rightfully attribute to any writer.¹²

A final setting to “Oh! Susanna,” entitled “A License Party Trick,” turns to legal suasion. Some viewed licensing as a means of exercising control over the alcohol problem, and “high license” imposed a more expensive licensing fee than “low license,” restricting sales to more reputable establishments. But many temperance advocates felt the only true solution was total prohibition. The Maine Law of 1851 established statewide prohibition, and became the model that Ohio and other states would soon follow. “A License Party Trick” refers to the Ohio election of 1883 when the Republicans lost the governorship and their solid majority in both houses of the legislature following efforts by Governor Charles Foster and the legislature to tax and regulate the sale of alcoholic beverages. In that election, Republicans lost the votes of many temperance supporters who viewed them as too liberal, but also lost the support of German and Irish voters who considered their liquor policies too restrictive. The comic quality of the original tune works well with this political text.¹³

A License Party Trick

(1) There was a great election once,
 (We need not name the date,)
 Out in Ohio, and it lost
 Republicans the State.
 That party runs the Government
 With still house revenue,
 And boasts much of its temperance,
 From its “high license” view.

Chorus

Oh, high license,
 How is that for high?
 You’ll make your party very sick and
 It will surely die.

(2) Republicans are anxious, Sir,
 With two faced policy,
 To suit both rum and temperance,
 Just as the case may be;
 To hoodwink Prohibitionists,
 This is a cunning trick,
 But in the end, ‘twill hurt themselves,
 And make them very sick. *To Chorus*

(3) How can one trust such party, Sir,
 With plans so opposite,
 That offers either right or wrong,
 To all who vote for it?
 No wonder people in disgust
 Upon such morals frown;
 Like as Ohio, they will put
 Such double dealing down. *To Chorus*

(4) That party is the wrong one, Sir,
 To wear a temp’rance name

Yet make high license fallacy
 Its highest moral aim!
 It cannot carry both at once,
 The church and the saloon,
 As other States will let it know,
 Besides Ohio, soon. *To Chorus*

(5) Of late, severe rebuke unto
 Republicans has come,
 And yet, deluded people trust
 The treachery of rum!
 They cling to party, though it be
 The known ally of drink!
 But with some more experience,
 They'll vote with us, we think. *To Chorus*¹⁴

OLD FOLKS AT HOME

Like the original song, "Old Folks at Home," "The Drunkard's Home" borrows the nostalgic reference to home focusing this time on a wife's sadness and fear due to her husband's drinking. The final verse ends hopefully suggesting that the model for prohibition "floating from Maine" might spread to other states. While this temperance setting is effective, one wonders whether the original *moderato* of "Old Folks at Home" (Figure 2) is really slow enough to convey the generally bleak message of the new lyrics.

This song uses both moral and legal suasion; references to "Maine" and "law" in the final verse and chorus propose legislative action, but the dominant sentimental theme of home appeals the drinker on a more personal level. The following selection, "The Prodigal's Dream," relies purely on moral suasion by appealing to memories of loved ones and their disappointment in the drinker. The text uses Foster's tune to its fullest advantage, and borrows the text, "the cot amid the wildwood," in direct reference to another temperance favorite, "The Old Oaken Bucket."

The Prodigal's Dream
 (Lyrics by Wm. B. Marsh)

(1) Scenes culled in memory o'er us stealing
 From years gone by,
 Heart-language to our own sense appealing
 Gives birth to sorrow's sigh.
 In mem'ry looking for each other
 O'er whom we mourn,
 Dear father, mother, sister, brother,
 Down through the dark vale gone.

Chorus

They have all died broken-hearted,
 Death ends all their pain,
 Those loving ones from whom we parted
 Here not to meet again.

(2) How oft the days of early childhood
 We live once more,
 And see the cot amid the wildwood,
 With mother at the door.
 How often that dear soul has waited

For us to come,
How often sighed when we, belated,
Staggered to the door in rum. *To Chorus*

(3) God save the drinking sons and daughters
Throughout this land,
God bring them through the troubled waters,
Guide them, Father, with thy hand.
God save the drinking fathers, brothers,
Cease appetite,
Rum-sellers, drunkards and all others,
Joining in the cause of right. *To Chorus*¹⁶

Aside from few awkward lines that require rhythm changes, “The Prodigal’s Dream” is not a bad fit in terms of text underlay, but the lyrics are neither as attractive nor as clearly focused on a common theme as “The Drunkard’s Home.” Less appealing still is “Nothing Short of Prohibition.” Its pervasive references to alcoholism as slavery are effective, but the grandiloquent style of phrases such as “this boasted Christian nation” and “worse than Afric bond-

Figure 2. E.D. Howard’s lyrics for “The Drunkard’s Home” set to Stephen Foster’s “Old Folks at Home”¹⁵

1. Dark fall the shades of eve - ning drear - y, Sad, sad am I;
2. Once hap - py was our sun - ny dwell - ing, Wil - liam was true;
3. Once hap - py were my child - ren's voic - es, Un - hushed by fear;
4. One hope with - in my heart is glow - ing, One ris - ing star;

5
Slow drag the cheer - less hours a - wea - ry, Cold - ly the storm sweeps by;
Now an - guish in my heart is swell - ing, Deep as the joy I knew;
Gone now the mus - ic that re - joic - es, Fa - mine and grief are here!
One strain, as of a bug - le blow - ing, Tells of a glo - rious war.

9
Hope - less and fear - ful of to - mor - row, Weep - ing sad tears;
He yield - ed to the fell temp - ta - tion, Fiends led him on;
Once ten - der were the words of greet - ing, When Wil - liam came;
13 First came its bless - ed note of glad - ness, Float - ing from Maine!

I'm watch - ing in my home of sor - row, griev - ing o'er van - ished years.
Till, reel - ing from his loft - y sta - tion, Man - hood and truth are gone.
Now fear - ful - ly my heart is beat - ing, Scared at the once loved name.
Tremb - ling, I turn from thoughts of sad - ness, Home may be bright a - gain!

17 *Chorus*
O! my home of joy and glad - ness, Thou art lost to me!
(Final Chorus)
21 O! the hope new - born and glo - rious, May its pro - mise be
Now dark - ened with dis - tress and sad - ness, Weep - ing, I mourn for thee!
Crowned with the bless - ed law vic - to - rious Giv - ing the old home to me!

men's wailing" blends poorly with such a fact-filled texts as "yet, a hundred million dollars yearly." Furthermore, many rhythmic adjustments are required to adapt the tune to this text making it truly awkward to sing. The approach is one of legal suasion with its references to licensing alcohol in verse two and voting in verse four.

Nothing Short of Prohibition

(1) O'er all this boasted Christian nation,
 Rum is holding sway;
 Blighting cursing every life-relation,
 And driving peace away;
 There are watching eyes all dim with weeping,
 There are hopeless sighs;
 There are broken hearts all lonely sleeping,
 Under rum cursed skies!

Chorus

Nothing short of Prohibition,
 Can this foe destroy;
 Speed, Oh, Heaven, its hopeful, blessed mission,
 Bring to the home peace and joy.

(2) Ah! Who could think that this destroyer
 Licensed is by law,
 Or that the Government is its employer,
 Rum-revenue to draw?
 Yet, a hundred million dollars yearly,
 Boasting, it terms gain!
 Every dollar costs the people dearly –
 Marked with crime-cursed stain! *To Chorus*

(3) Far more than slav'ry once prevailing
 On our Southern plains –
 Worse than Afric bondmen's wailing,
 In fetters and in chains,
 Is this slavery of rum that fetters
 Body both and soul
 Toiling in its service, hopeless debtors
 Under its control! *To Chorus*

(4) Shall this dire slav'ry live, that party
 Bound to it may live?
 At the ballot box, your support hearty,
 To such plan can you give?
 Party license, voter, is sustaining
 Rum's accursed reign;
 When you vote, rum party, 'tis maintaining
 License, that is plain. *To Chorus*¹⁷

"Our Christian Temperance Union," appeared in a WCTU publication designed with the primary purpose of encouraging men in the armed forces to abstain from alcohol. This song employs moral suasion by calling to mind loving mothers, wives, and sisters.

Our Christian Temperance Union
 (Dedicated to the Christian Temperance Unions of our Army and Navy)

(1) In many a home where once was gladness,
 Our country o'er,

Mothers to-day are filled with sadness,
 Sadness and sorrow sore.
 And day by day their hearts are breaking
 For the boys they love;
 And night by night their plea they're making
 Unto their God above.

Chorus

Yes, the land is full of sorrow,
 Very full of sin;
 But we expect a brighter morrow;
 We know the right must win.

(2) What is it makes the boys to wander
 So far astray?

What is it makes them madly squander
 Life's precious chance away?

It is that curse of every nation
 Called the saloon;

Oh may this terrible temptation
 Be done away with soon! *To Chorus*

(3) There's banded in a great communion
 Firm 'gainst the wrong,

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union,
 Three hundred thousand strong.

These loving sisters, wives and mothers
 Labour and pray,

That God will keep their soldier-brothers
 Faithful from day to day. *To Chorus*

(4) Henceforth will we no more forever
 Trifle with sin;

Henceforth we'll do our best endeavor
 To help the right to win.

Now in a solemn bond we bind us,
 God keep us true;

God bless the homes we've left behind us;
 God bless our C. T. U. *To Chorus*¹⁸

MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME

"My Old Kentucky Home" uses the familiar form of previously discussed Foster tunes, but broadens the melodic palette beyond the mostly pentatonic melodies of the other tunes. The following temperance setting (Figure 3), by itinerant singing teacher and minister, Palmer Hartsough, points to the impact of saloons on the community and prescribes legal suasion by voting to eliminate the alcohol problem.¹⁹

Like "There's a Good Time Coming," Elisha Hoffman's "A Stainless Banner" appeals to the patriotism of listeners. It also shortens Foster's song by eliminating the second half of the verse. With the exception of final line of verse one, the text fits Foster's original tune comfortably.

A Stainless Banner
 Lyrics by Elisha A. Hoffman

(1) A stainless flag! o'er our country may it wave,
 O'er our country, the land of the free;
 Beneath its folds may a people pure and brave

Share the blessings of perfect liberty.

Chorus

May the flag of Freedom

A stainless banner be,

Waving o'er a land from intemperance and vice,
From injustice and from greed ever free.

(2) The evils reigning within our borders long,

Let us righteously banish away,

And free the land from injustice and from wrong;

God of heaven! speed on the happy day. *To Chorus*

(3) A stainless flag o'er a people pure and true!

O the prospect, how glorious and bright!

For this we labor with hope and courage new,

Sure that God is with us in the fight. *To Chorus*²¹

Clements makes a heart-felt appeal on behalf of “the boys facing manhood today” in the following setting. Writing just a few years prior to the dawning

Figure 3. Palmer Hartsough’s lyrics for “Then and Now” set to Stephen Foster’s “My Old Kentucky Home”²⁰

1. They sing sweet songs on the lit - tle vil - lage green, At ev'n-ing when la - bor is
2. The drink - man hangs on the wall of his sa - loon A writ-ing most pre - cious and
3. The drink - man rules, for in cau - cus he is king, His bid - ding his tip - plers all

5 done; No fear of want and no thought of ill or wrong, For there's
rare, And safe is he with this li - cense o'er his head, For it
do, And good men vote with their par - ty and the ring, So the

8 plen - ty there for eve - ry - one; But soon there comes to this
bears Co - lum - bia's seal so fair; He leads young men in the
11 drink - man's schemes are car - ried through; The time comes fast when be -

love - ly lit - tle spot The drink - man with whis - ky and beer, The song dies out and the
paths of sin and shame, And moth - ers and maid - ens must weep, He breaks great hearts and he
neath the ty - rant Rum The na - tion must bow as a slave, Stand, pa - triots, then for the

15 drunk - en brawl be - gins, And there's pain and grief where once was cheer.
wrecks the bright - est homes, Yet se - rene - ly on his way will keep.
18 cause of truth and right, And your col - ors fly, ye free - men brave.

Chorus
Cast your vote my broth - er O, cast your vote to - day, That sa -

22 loons must go with their pov - er - ty and woe, Cast your vote, my broth - er now while you may.

of National Prohibition, his opening line hints of the legislation that was soon to come. Clements' text fits well with Foster's original tune and boasts a more memorable chorus than many of the temperance settings.

For The Boy Facing Manhood Today
Lyrics by John R. Clements

(1) The day dawns fair for a whisky-banished land;
Forever its blighting must fade;
The brewers wheels shall be made to idle stand,
And the man must seek an honest trade.
The youthful hearts that are turning to the foe
So happy, so hopeful and true,
Must be guided and guarded by us for evermore;
So each wretched whisky house, adieu!

Chorus

Sing, oh sing in chorus;
We'll put the drink away!
We will rid our land of the rotten whisky blight
For the boy who faces manhood today.

(2) No man lives true in a selfish-centered way,
For there's ever some burden to bear;
The fiercer fights bring the muscles into play,
And the heart grows stronger under care.
The youthful souls need defending by us all;
So banish forever the rum.
There's naught but death in the whisky-gilded hall,
For the long unbroken years to come. *To Chorus*²²

OLD BLACK JOE

"Old Black Joe," has a slightly different form than the other Foster tunes and richer melodic material. Of the following six settings, none was published before 1904. Perhaps the late date with National Prohibition on the horizon accounts for the spirit of optimism that most of these settings exhibit. Three of the six convert "I'm coming" from the opening of Foster's chorus to "it's coming" or "'tis coming," referring to the happy arrival of national prohibition. The tune seems to have been a favorite of the WCTU. Katharine Stevenson, a WCTU officer, penned "Some Glad Day" (Figure 4) which appeared in at least four WCTU songsters. Ewing credits this song with the establishment of the white ribbon as a symbol of the movement.²³

Like "A Stainless Banner" and "There's A Good Time Coming," Eva Munson Smith's "A Temperance War Cry" takes on a patriotic tone. The original *adagio* of "Old Black Joe" seems too slow for the martial spirit of Smith's lyrics. The phrase "a happy contest band" in the chorus refers to the elocution contests in which many WCTU members competed.²⁵

A Temperance War-Cry
Lyrics by Eva Munson Smith

(1) Come, come and sing! descendents of the free;
Wave high o'erhead the flag of liberty;
Proud see it waving now from sea to sea;
Cheer, all you sons and daughters true, of liberty!

Chorus

We're coming! we're coming! a happy contest band;
 We'll help to drive strong drink away from all the land.

(2) We'll keep our minds, like crystals, pure and bright;
 Our bodies strong by doing what is right;

We'll let all forms of alcohol alone;
 Pure water makes good sinew, and the best of bone. *To Chorus*

(3) Now then three cheers for Temperance we sing!
 And to her help our brightest talent bring;

Let all unite to set the whole world free
 From all that's wrong, and Alcohol's dread tyranny. *To Chorus*²⁶

“The World Is Going Bright” borrows portions of Foster’s original lyrics in addition to the opening of the chorus (indicated by underlined words with slight text variances noted in brackets). This practice of borrowing text was not uncommon in the movement, and it may suggest greater familiarity with the original song on the part of the lyricist.²⁷

The World is Growing Bright

(1) Gone are the days when saloons all have their way;
Gone many men who upheld them day by day;
 Shout and be glad for saloons are sure to go,
 All omens of the future point this way I know.

Chorus

It's [I'm] coming, it's [I'm] coming,
 Yes, the day is coming on,
 When the saloon and all its curse,
 Will soon be gone.

(2) Why should [do] I weep when the world is growing bright;

Figure 4. Katharine Lent Stevenson’s lyrics for “Some Glad Day” set to Stephen Foster’s “Old Black Joe”²⁴

1. All round the world the rib-bon white is twined; All round the world the
 2. All round the world, where sounds the note of woe, There in God's strength our
 3. All round the world, ho-san-nas yet shall ring; All lands and climes the
 glo-ri-ous light has shined; All round the world our cause has right of way; We'll
 rib-bon white shall go; Em-blem of peace, of pu-ri-ty's bright ray, 'Twill
 Sav-ior's praise shall sing; No jar-ring note shall mar that rap-tr-ous lay; 'Twill
 7. raise the an-them swell of vic-t'ry some glad day. It's com-ing, it's com-ing the
 bind our sin-stained earth to heav-en some glad day.
 rise from all the sin-saved na-tions some glad day.
 10. morn for which we pray; We'll take the world for Christ's own King-dom some glad day.

Why should [do] I sigh when the land is filled with light;
Grieve not thyself for mistake of long ago,
But come and help us press the fight against the foe. *To Chorus*

(3) Go forth, my friends and fight this foe unjust,
Strike the saloons and crush them to the dust,
Then will appear a day of joy unknown
To men who weep and sadly reap what they have sown. *To Chorus*²⁸

In the following settings as with the previous one, Hoffman shares the hopeful message on the part of lyricist, the temperance singers, and their audiences that the saloon will soon be gone. Clements setting, "No More Rum," focuses on a similar theme, the demise of "demon rum."

The Doom of the Saloon
Lyrics by Elisha A. Hoffman

(1) Patient and long we waited for the day
When the saloons should all be wiped away,
When all this woe and drunkenness should cease,
And all the homes within our borders should have peace.

Chorus

'Tis coming, 'tis coming, The doom of the saloon;
See God's handwriting on the wall, It must die soon.

(2) Long have we prayed with favor unto God
Swiftly to speak with sword and chast'ning rod,
To bear his arm and in his wrath to come
And strike with death this cruel foe of ev'ry home. *To Chorus*

(3) Now at the last in answer to our pray'r
God moves among the people ev'rywhere,
Strength'ning their hearts for righteousness to stand,
And drive this evil thing from our beloved land. *To Chorus*²⁹

No More Rum
Lyrics by John R. Clements

(1) Soon from our land will we put the drink away;
Soon will there dawn a better, fairer day;
Soon will the light of the purer morning come;
We hear the nearer echoes ringing, No more Rum!

Chorus

It's Cheering, It's Cheering, The glad sweet morning's come,
We see the sunrise splendor breaking! No more Rum!

(2) Soon from our land will the gladsome note ascend;
Soon fly the news as friend is greeting friend;
Soon will the foe stand helplessly and dumb.
We hear the nearer echoes ringing, No more Rum! *To Chorus*

(3) Soon through the land an awakened conscience hear;
Then will Saloons be made [to] disappear.
Then, then anew the shop-wheels' busier hum;
We hear the nearer echoes ringing, No more Rum! *To Chorus*³⁰

"My Ohio," another song based on "Old Black Joe," was printed around

1916 by the American Issue Publishing Company, the publishing arm of The Anti-Saloon League. This organization, established in 1895, finally pulled together temperance forces against the single issue they most despised. Through highly organized governance, the League turned the tide for National Prohibition, but “My Ohio,” seems to be more a state song than a temperance song, at least until we reach the final verse with its single reference to rum. Overall, the temperance settings of “Old Black Joe” fit the original tune well. “My Ohio” is no exception, but differs from the original text and other temperance settings in rhyme scheme. Previously settings were mostly constructed of rhymed couplets, but the verses of “My Ohio” consist of three rhyming lines followed by a line ending with the title text, “My Ohio.”³¹

My Ohio

Lyrics by Dr. Joseph Clark

1. Home land of love – Ohio rich and free,
Love land of homes, far famed for purity;
Rich land of peace and great prosperity;
Home land of Love, blest from above; My Ohio

Refrain

Ohio! Ohio! The State so dear to me.

My heart is thine, as thou art mine; My Ohio.

2. Fields, harvest-wed, enriched with golden grain,
Hills, cattle-spread, enrift with carbon vein,
Streams, water-fed, refreshed by Heaven’s rain,
Home land of love, blest from above; My Ohio. *To Refrain*
3. Father of youth, sent out the world to bless,
Leader, forsooth, in paths of happiness,
Guardian of truth, a friend to righteousness,
Home land of love, blest from above; My Ohio. *To Refrain*
4. O, State whose fame will through the ages stand;
O, State whose aim is service hand-in-hand;
O, state whose name is known from strand to strand;
Home land of love, blest from above; My Ohio. *To Refrain*
5. God save thy homes from rum’s curse and despair;
God save thy youth from the despoiler’s snare;
Strength to thy sons, for this to do and dare;
Home land of love, blest from above; My Ohio. *To Refrain*³²

CONCLUSION

Temperance writers seemed to have no misgivings about using Foster’s tunes in spite of his drinking problems, but perhaps they simply didn’t realize he was the composer of many of their favorite tunes. Millions of people sang Foster’s songs without actually knowing he was the composer. Particularly with “Oh! Susanna” and “Old Folks at Home,” listeners were far more likely to associate the songs with the Christy Minstrels who performed his songs than with Foster himself. No doubt, many temperance lyricists were also unaware that Foster composed these popular tunes. In addition, songs were often learned through oral transmission in the nineteenth century, and editors in those days

seemed far less concerned about copyright law than their twentieth-century counterparts. While the names of Foster's tunes were provided with all these temperance songs, he is identified as composer in only five cases and these were all published after 1900.³³

No doubt temperance writers were banking on the popularity of Foster's songs even when they did not know he was the composer. James Mowatt acknowledged the love of temperance organizations for "popular airs of the day, sung to any wretched doggerel," but he and a few other compilers of temperance songsters attempted to rise above the mediocrity. A.G. Nichols expressly stated in his collection, *The Iron Door*, that "the sentiments of these songs are better expressed... in the tunes mentioned with each piece, than... with any other; for they were blended in the mind at the inception and originated with the melody."³⁴

The temperance settings of Foster's tunes ranged from "wretched doggerel" to carefully constructed lyrics. Temperance writers who combined mediocre poetry and poor text underlay, as in "Nothing Short of Prohibition," were guilty of using the popularity of Foster's tunes in the most offensive way. However, those settings that exhibit careful consideration of the original tune deserve some recognition for their efforts. "No More Rum," for example, goes beyond merely relying on the popularity of the tune to the sort of careful blending that Nichols mentions. Both the original tune and the temperance setting are best served when the general character of the original song, be it comical or sentimental, is maintained, and careful attention is devoted to fitting the text to the original tune. While we may not appreciate all their poetry or agree with the tactics of the temperance movement, the motives of many in this grassroots effort were pure, and their awareness of the power of music is something we truly can appreciate. As Clements exclaims:

Once the nation gets to singing the message of temperance, the greatest single stride has been taken toward the birth of the new day that sees whisky banished forever from our land. There are familiar airs and tunes that have become a part of our American inheritance. To make them the vehicles for carrying the challenge and confidence of temperance and prohibition, is to endow them with a new commission and larger usefulness.³⁵

Stephen Foster's tunes are an important part of that musical inheritance. Temperance reformers recognized the significance of Foster's music and paid him the great compliment of using his tunes regardless of his personal battle with alcohol.

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ENDNOTES

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9. Blocker, *American Temperance*, xiv-xv; Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), 6-7.

10. Mowatt, *Mowatt's Temperance*, 34.

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12. John Pierpont, *Cold Water Melodies and Washingtonian Songster* (Boston: Theodore Abbot, 1842), [iii].

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