

Devil of the Domestic Sphere: Temperance, Gender, and Middle-class Ideology, 1800–1860. By SCOTT C. MARTIN. (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008. xi, 204 pp. Illustrations, notes, works cited, index. \$38.)

Cultural historian Scott C. Martin presents a thoughtful and innovative study that transcends the source-imposed boundaries of most works on this great antebellum reform. Histories compiled from reams of temperance society and government records seldom yield the amount of information on women that is available on men. And as all scholars of the early nineteenth century quickly learn, rare records of women's groups do survive, but the majority of associational and individual experiences are particularly difficult to coax from the shadows of the past. In an effort to reclaim the world in which these women lived, raised their families, and joined the ranks of temperance activists, Martin takes a creative leap into the larger realm of print culture and widens the lens to include sentimental fiction, sermons, medical "science," and prints. The result is a dramatic, evocative, and often disturbing account of the contradictory identities that antialcohol reformers gleaned from this plethora of material and then attached to American women.

This work is strongest in the superbly developed analysis of the complex and multifaceted portraits of women that Martin first examined in "A Star that Gathers Lustre from the Gloom of Night': Wives, Marriage, and Gender in Early-Nineteenth-Century American Temperance Reform" (*Journal of Family History* 29 [2004]: 274–92). He elaborates on these insights and brings forth women who, as caretakers of home and hearth, bore primary responsibility for keeping sober homes and raising alcohol-free children. Within these notions of domesticity, women were often portrayed as temptresses likely to entice innocent and unsuspecting men onto the "path of doom" by offering that first glass of wine. In another construction, women appeared as saviors, strapping on their moral influence and encouraging men to take the pledge and give up "ardent spirits." In yet one more guise, "virtuous" women (and children) suffered silently at the hands of drunken husbands and fathers, and within a legal system that all-too-often failed to protect them. From nearly every angle, Martin notes mysogyny at play in this reform, an element that led to a "distrust of female power" and produced a "deep ambivalence about women's commitment to the temperance cause" (93). Ultimately, during the Maine-law campaigns of the 1850s, that fear of manipulation and the "perverted" image of womanhood forced many middle-class men to "push women back to their domestic sphere" (132).

From this platform, Martin boldly applies the information to gender ideology and the development of the middle class. Overall, the argument is logical, but some statements are a bit broad. Temperance reform undeniably serves as a "primary site for the elaboration and development of middle class ideology" (9), and the evidence is solid and well-constructed. Yet other sites, such as religion, cer-

tainly served as equally important contributing forces in shaping the foundation of the emerging middle class. One should also consider, for example, the evangelical women who worked for temperance in the earliest years of organized antialcohol reform and drew their purpose from the millennial promise. And, at the end of the day, the majority of women who lived through those years remain anonymous, as do their personal experiences. These minor points aside, *Devil of the Domestic Sphere* is an intriguing addition to temperance history, one that provides a persuasive interpretation of the social and cultural context in which middle-class women lived, worked, and raised their families.

Maryland Historical Society

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What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848. By DANIEL WALKER HOWE. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. xviii, 904 pp. Maps, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$35.)

A train carried John Quincy Adams's body from Washington, DC, to his home in Massachusetts in February 1848, giving the venerable ex-president the distinction of being the first politician to take that posthumous ride by railway to his final resting place. Adams had collapsed in the House chambers a couple days earlier, stricken while speaking out against a resolution thanking the generals who had brought the United States victory against Mexico in a war that he had opposed from the beginning.

Daniel Walker Howe punctuates his sweeping history of America between 1815 and 1848 with similar telling anecdotes, facts, and stories that will enliven many a survey lecture. But these brief paragraphs on Adams's final days also reflect Howe's broader story. The particulars of Adams's death highlight the grand political and cultural clash between a Whig Party intent on moral and economic improvements and a Democratic Party aggressively seeking territorial expansion—a transformative clash that was a harbinger of the sharper conflicts that lay ahead.

The train that carried Adams's body also serves as a symbol of the transportation and communication revolutions that both bound the nation together and exacerbated the tensions that would ultimately break it apart. While Howe revels in detailing partisan ideologies and legislative battles, he never loses sight of the broader social context. He devotes considerable attention to the expansion of the cotton kingdom and the intensification of industrial development, religious revivalists and social reformers, the artists of the American Renaissance, and utopian experimenters. Howe has written a superb book on a crucial period in American history.

While the Mexican-American War looms large at the end of the study, it is