

Drunkard's Wife

John Arg



1860
Oil on Board
51 x 43cm

The oil painting below offers a more sombre exterior scene of an inn with a woman wearing a brown dress watching anxiously while her husband lurches through a yard with a companion.

Most Victorian art has little reference to the day to day struggle for existence experienced by a large proportion of the population. However, during the era of the Temperance Movement, art was very influential and many pictures show poverty as a result of drunkenness.

The fear that excessive drinking would lead husbands to abandon their wives and children was a common theme and is highlighted in this painting. Women were frequently depicted as the bearer of burdens and as a symbol of dutiful suffering. This painting is a reflection of a wide gap that existed between male and female expectations in the 19th Century and was painted by John Arg in the mid-19th century.