



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

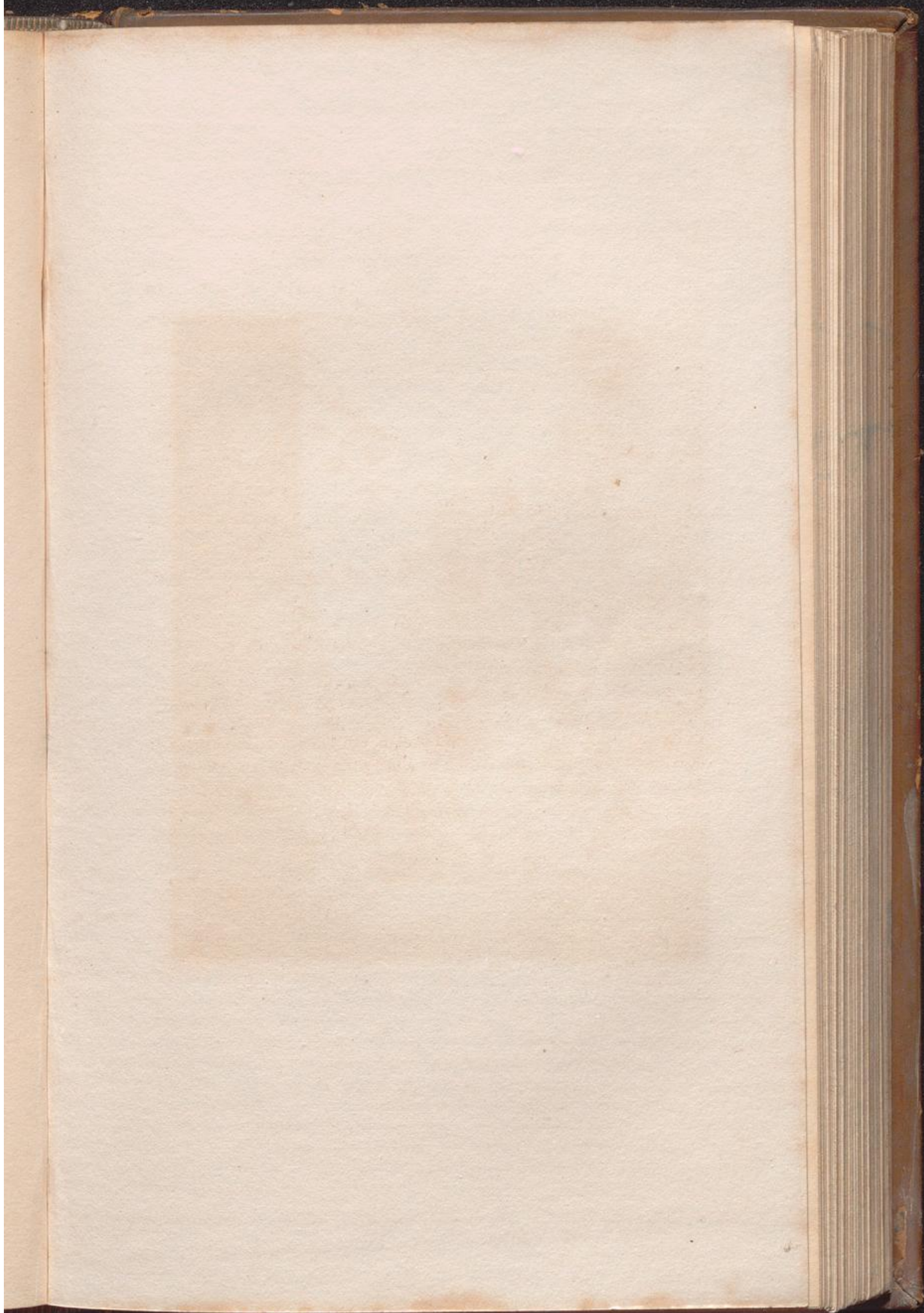
Hogarth moralized

Hogarth, William

London, 1831

Beer-Street And Gin-Lane.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-62527](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-62527)





A. Durran. sc.

BEER STREET.

Published by John Major, 50, Fleet Street, June 30, 1831.

BEER-STREET AND GIN-LANE.

BEER-STREET.

As all countries have their peculiar manners, customs, fashions, and the like, so are they no less particular in their food, especially their liquors. Italy, Spain, and Portugal excel in wines; France in wines and brandy; Holland in geneva; the East-Indies in arrack; the West in rum; and England in beer. And as most provinces in other kingdoms boast their peculiar sorts of wines or spirits, so do most counties here their respective malt liquor. Some brew their amber, some their brown. Nottingham, Burton, and Dorchester are as renowned in England as Bourdeaux, Champagne, and Burgundy in France. But what principally bears the bell with us is the porter brewed in London: a wholesome cordial, that taken in moderation recruits the spirits of the working man, and renews that strength which labour impairs. Pity 'tis, it should be burthened with any tax!* Such however is the natural depravity of men, that

* [The striking moral conveyed by the contrast between this and the succeeding print, will be more strongly felt than ever in the present day, when the legislature have so recently passed an important enactment for the welfare of the people as respects the easy purchase of their most wholesome beverage. That best "Barley wine," which as *Izaak Walton* delightfully says, "Our honest forefathers did use to drink of; the drink which PRESERVED THEIR HEALTH AND MADE THEM LIVE SO LONG, AND TO DO SO MANY GOOD DEEDS!"]

(fond of new things, not contented with the old) when English gin first received birth from the still, in imitation of that of Holland, gin-drinking among the lower class became the fashion ; that fashion in time grew up into habit, and introduced into this metropolis wretchedness, disease, and death. Sensible of the prevailing custom, and shuddering at the unhappy consequences, Mr. Hogarth designed these two prints (and published them in the year 1751) as a contrast, setting forth the fattening healthy qualities of the one, and the emaciating deadly properties of the other.

See then in the view before us a general cessation of work, and all parties regaling themselves with a refreshing draught of this chearing liquor. On the left we have a group of jovial tap-house politicians, a butcher, a drayman, and a cooper. The drayman is deceitfully whispering some soft things to a servant maid, who is described as all attention to what she hears ; this we may gather from the appearance of her eyes and hands ; and by her having the key of the street-door with her, she is supposed to have stept out of some neighbouring house, at dinner-time, for a tankard of porter, which the family is waiting for : thus, while this figure serves to fill the piece, her loitering by the way gives us a lively representation of the generality of servants, who pay little or no regard to their duty, but neglect their business, and waste their time. The butcher is splitting his sides with laughter to see the girl so easily imposed on, and the cooper behind with a pipe in his mouth, a full pot in one hand and a shoulder of mutton in the other, enjoying the determination, that where good eating and drinking is there must true happiness and jollity reside. On the table before them is the daily advertiser, and his late Majesty's speech on Tuesday

the 29th of November, 1748,* which our author has introduced here by way of commemoration, it being much admired; and to heighten our idea of the present festive enjoyment, it being at a time when the tumults of war were subsided, and this country, as at present, blessed with a happy peace. On the right is a city-porter, supposed to have just set down his load in order to recruit his spirits with a heartening draught. This load Mr. Hogarth has humourously made to consist of a parcel of books consigned to Mr. Pastem, the trunk-maker in St. Paul's church-yard; as (on account of their subjects and execrable performances) being fit for nothing but waste paper. The books in sight are in folio, as follow; Lauder on Milton, Modern Tragedies, vol. 12. Hill on Royal Societies, Turnbull on Ancient Painting and Politics, vol. 9999. In the midst of this plate are two fish-women loaded with British herrings, which at the time these prints were published became very plentiful under the protection of the British fishery. Our author has here taken an opportunity of paying his ingenious friend Mr. Lockman, secretary to the society, a compliment, by putting into one of these womens hands a ballad, written by him on the herring fishery, and sung at Vauxhall with great applause. Behind are some paviours at work; further back is a dame of quality in a sedan going to court, it being supposed by the flag displayed on the steeple to be a birth-day; and so corpulent is she, that was it not for a draught of porter by the way, her chairmen would not be able to carry her. In

* In this speech are these words in view, "Let me earnestly recommend to you the advancement of our commerce, and cultivating the arts of peace, in which you may depend on my hearty concurrence and encouragement."

painting this lady, our author has not forgot to ridicule the enormous size of the hoop in those days, which when pulled up on each side resembled the wheels of a carriage. Though Mr. Hogarth has thought proper in this print to shew the advantage almost every individual receives from the drinking this valuable liquor, which is at so low a price as to be within the compass of a poor man's pocket, yet he has given us a painter (painting a sign, viz. the barley-mow) in all the appearance of want, though happy and smiling under it. Whether he intended the leanness and tattered condition of this man as a contrast to the corpulent, tight-dressed figures of the men below, or whether meant to draw a compliment upon himself by lowering his own profession while he raises those of others, is immaterial; let it suffice to say it completes the group by making it pyramidal;* thus it pleases the eye and perfects the piece. But let us carry our observation still farther, and we may notice at the top of a house a taylor's workshop, whose men within seem to partake of the general joy, the bricklayers' shew, on the roof of the next house, at the arrival of their expected beer. This house is an ale-house, the landlord of which is supposed to be growing rich by his repairing it, in opposition to his neighbour, Nicholas Pinch, the pawnbroker, who finds it difficult to live for want of trade; see this man's house quite decayed, ready to fall over his head, intimated by the sign, props, and rat-trap in the chamber; and observe him taking in a half-pint of beer through a hole in the door, not daring to open it, or shew his face abroad; such professions thriving only on the miseries of others, and starving when the public prosper. The general design of this print was, if

* Vide the preface to the work.

possible, to depreciate the pernicious custom of gin-drinking, whose destructive quality is represented in the next, and to shew mankind, if they must needs have recourse to strong liquors, that, that of beer is by much the most wholesome.*

* At the bottom of this plate are engraved the following lines :

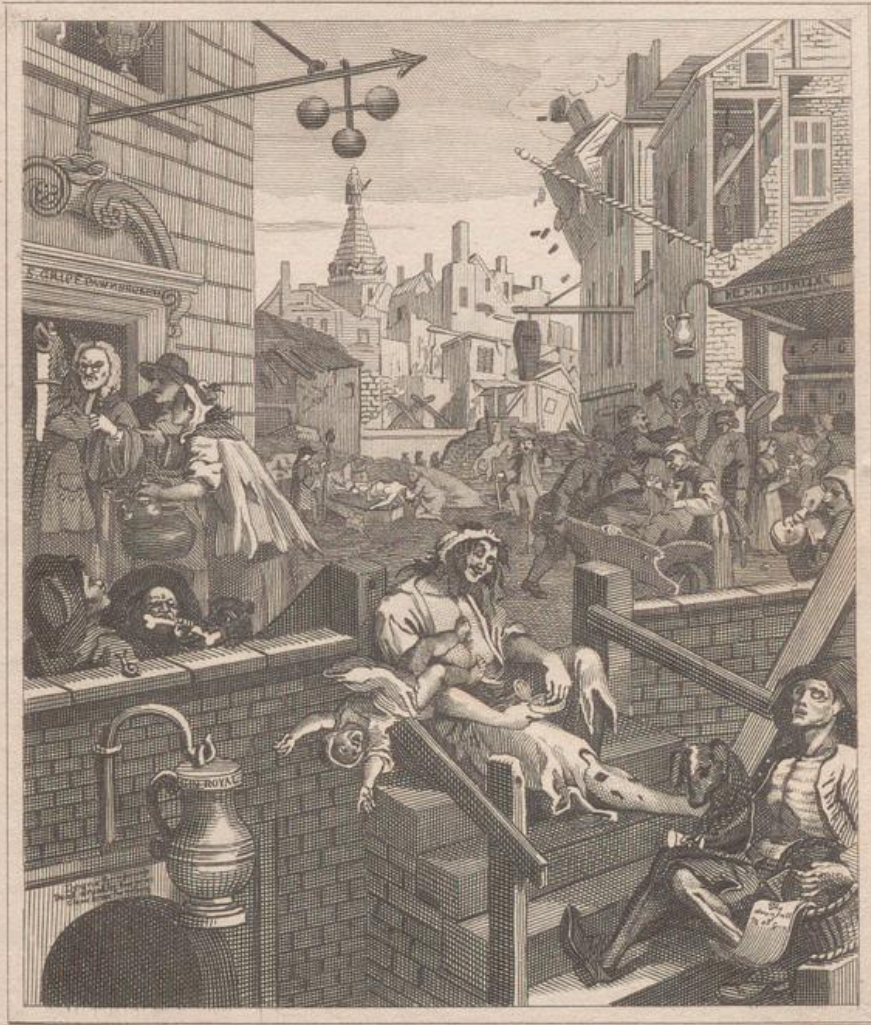
Beer (the happy produce of our isle)
Can sinewy strength impart,
And wearied with fatigue and toil,
Can cheer each manly heart.

Labour and art upheld by thee,
Successfully advance :
We quaff thy balmy juice with glee,
And water leave to France.

Genius of health, thy grateful taste
Rivals the cup of Jove,
And warms each English gen'rous breast
With liberty and love.

GIN-LANE.

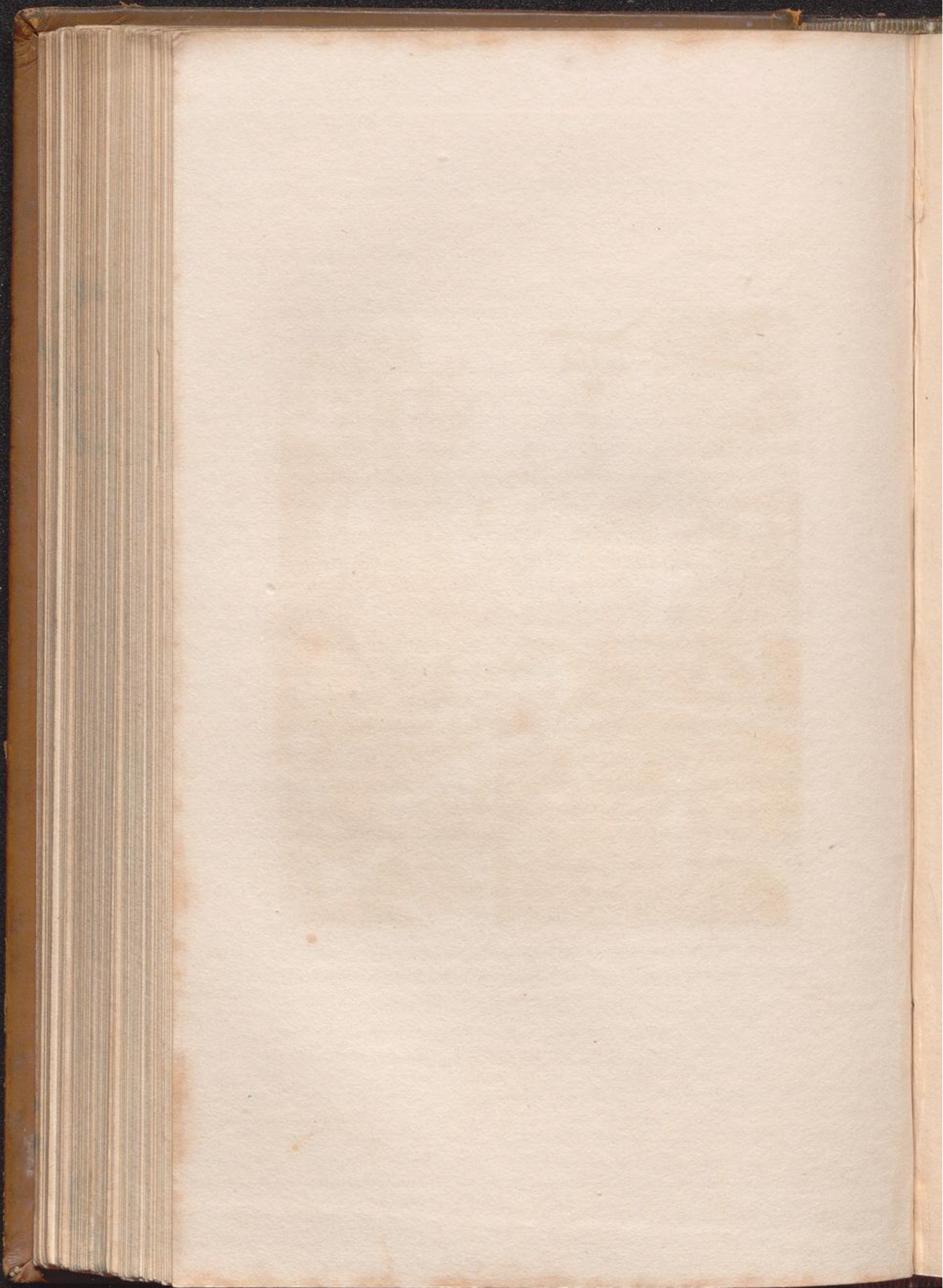
As a contrast to the last print, we observe in this the pernicious effects of British spirits becoming general among the poor. Behold here the scene of health and gladness vanished, and that of disease and wretchedness introduced! How shudders the heart at the ghastly sight! How turns the eye from the pallid view! But as we learn to live by looking on the dead, 'tis hoped this appearance of horror will teach us a lesson of temperance. May it create in mankind an abhorrence of the deadly evil, and make them timely avoid the destruction that attends it!—Let us then probe the wound, in order to its cure. As we remarked in Beer-street the houses to be fair and good-conditioned, excepting that of the pawnbroker's, which was ready to fall, so we perceive the houses here in general old and ruinous, excepting that of master Gripe's. By this we are taught that poverty is the usual attendant on gin-drinking, and that where this vice prevails, none are known to thrive but such as feed upon the property of others. This abominable liquor is, among the vulgar, very justly called by the name of Strip-me-naked, it being found to waste the substance of those poor wretches that accustom themselves to the drinking it, by a continual drain, not leaving them at last the bare necessaries of life; for this infatuating poison leads them on, and almost obliges them to repair the gnawings of one dram by the burning aid of a second. See them, then,



A. Dunbar, sc.

GIN LANE.

Published by John Major, 50, Fleet Street, June 30, 1831.



in order to support this endless expence, carrying their things to pawn, whilst they have ought to pledge! Take notice of the broker examining the articles, lest he should lend too much upon them! Remark his grinding disposition in his countenance! Finely is this idea heightened by the boys below; they are both supposed accustomed to the fatal drench, as indeed are all the people present. One is stupified and fast asleep giving the snail (an emblem of the pawnbroker) an opportunity of crawling over him; the other tormented with raging hunger, and having nothing to eat, gnawing a bare bone, which the greedy cur, (equally emblematical) is tearing from him. It may probably be wondered at, why these beggarly loan-offices should have been so long distinguished by the sign of three balls, disposed in so particular a manner; but a moment's consideration will convince us of the propriety, it being universally allowed to be *two to one*, that things once lodged in these houses are ever got out again. As a proof that this custom of drinking gin is encouraged among the poorer people, and prevails among all ages of them, before the house of Killman, the distiller, is a woman pouring this deadly potion down her infant's throat; two charity girls drinking to each other in the same, and one drenching her mother, who is already so much intoxicated as to be under the necessity of being wheeled home in a barrow. The customary use of this liquor is as destructive as a pestilence, destroying numbers of people yearly, bringing on death by various ways. Some it fills with diseases, others it throws into a decline; some it drives to despair, and others it maddens. A picture of the first we have in the drunken beast upon the steps, whose legs are broken out in ulcers; she is

taking snuff, careless of her infant, who is falling from her arms into the area of a gin-cellar, over whose entrance is humourously written a public invitation, viz. "Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for two-pence, clean straw for nothing." Though rather foreign to our purpose, yet led to it by the figure before us, I cannot help taking notice of another bad custom among the poor, that of snuff-taking, which some will do in great quantities, wasting sixpence or more a week in that useless pernicious drug, while their children are crying for bread, and they have none to give; of the second, we have a representation in the man at the bottom of the steps, who lived by selling of gin, and is supposed to have just expired, worn away by the frequent use of it; and in the woman at the back of this plate, whom two men are putting into a shell, by order of the beadle of the parish,* whose chief attention seems fixed upon the care of her child beside it: of the third, is the barber, hanging in his chamber above; murdered by his own hands; and of the fourth, are the cripple fighting, and the madman behind dancing, with a pair of bellows on his head and a spit in his hand, on which he has spitted an infant in the absence of its mother. These, with the rest, are most melancholy instances of the dreadful consequence of the sin of drunkenness, which however it may escape the punishment of human justice, will most assuredly meet with the vengeance of divine.†

* Viz. St. Giles in the fields.

† This plate is enriched with the following stanzas.

Gin, cursed fiend, with fury fraught,
 Makes human race a prey;
 It enters by a deadly draught,
 And steals our life away.

If, then (as I meet with it in the remarks of a very eminent enquirer) after the most accurate calculation it be certain, that since the introduction of spirituous liquors (for it is not gin only that is destructive) the number of births, yearly, has been for some time decreasing, so that it is now a fourth part less than it was forty years ago; and the burials increasing at a dreadful rate, so that the nation, in London only, has lost near fifteen thousand people every three years; the fruit of the womb being blasted before it has seen the light; besides, the lives of those who have come into the world being shortened; if it be certain, as it is affirmed by tradesmen in the city, that the bodily strength of the people is so decayed, within the memory of those alive, that working men are not able to carry two thirds of what they could formerly, with ease; if it be evident that, by the excessive use of these liquors, the spirit of industry must be sunk, and the hands which should carry on the trade and manufactures of the nation enfeebled; if it be in the power of every miscreant to inflame his blood, and fit himself for the execution of the most horrid barbarity for two-pence; if villains, by an inflaming draught of gin, derive boldness to perpetrate mischief; if, by this means, we find that neither our lives or properties are safe; if the number or good condition of a people are the strength and

Virtue and truth, driv'n to despair,
It's rage compells to fly;
But cherishes with hellish care,
Theft, murder, perjury.

Damn'd cup, that on the vitals preys,
That liquid fire contains,
Which madness to the heart conveys,
And rolls it through the veins!

security of a nation, and both these are by the prevalency of this poison daily declining, and of consequence our naval and military force decaying ; if the number of the poor be, through the effect of a universal debauchery daily increasing, and consequently the consumption of the food, cloathing, and household-furniture lessening, and our home-trade, and manufactures sinking ; if the infection be every day spreading from the capital through the manufacturing towns and provinces ; if health, life, and soul are all going to destruction, gibbets groaning with the load of encreasing malefactors brought to a dreadful end by the force of this maddening drench ; if death and hell are ever opening their jaws and swallowing our wretched fellow-creatures by thousands ; if these things are so, is it not time to blow a trumpet and sound an alarm, an alarm that may reach the ears of those who have it in their power to remedy this calamitous evil, and prevent the impending misery ?*

* [The striking moral tendency of these two prints does immortal honour to the worthy Hogarth ; he did all that he could do in writing, as it were, the word Poison upon every "quartern" measure in the kingdom !—neither is the wrath of his commentator much overcharged. May "answering" or rather unanswering "gin-shops"—now that the beer trade is thrown open,

"Sourer sighs return !"]