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## **Hogarth moralized**

**Hogarth, William**

**London, 1831**

Beer-Street.

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## 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.