

The image features two elegant martini glasses filled with a clear liquid, positioned on a bar counter. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of warm, golden lights, creating a cozy and sophisticated atmosphere. The text is overlaid on black rounded rectangular backgrounds.

**JOHN  
BICKERDYKE**

***THE CURIOSITIES  
OF ALE &  
BEER***

**John Bickerdyke**

# **The Curiosities of Ale & Beer**

**An Entertaining History (Illustrated with over Fifty  
Quaint Cuts)**

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## PREFACE.

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HAT the history and curiosities of Ale and Beer should fill a bulky volume, may be a subject for surprise to the unthinking reader; and that surprise will probably be intensified, on his learning that great difficulty has been experienced in keeping this book within reasonable limits, and at the same time doing anything like justice to the subject. Since the dawn of our history Barley-wine has been the “naturall drinke” for an “Englysshe man,” and has had no unimportant influence on English life and manners. It is, therefore, somewhat curious that up to the present, among the thousands of books published annually, no comprehensive work on the antiquities of ale and beer has found place.

Some years ago this strange neglect of so excellent a theme was observed by the late John Greville Fennell, best known as a contributor to *The Field*, and who, like “John of the Dale,” was a “lover of ale.” With him probably originated the idea of filling this void in our literature. As occasion offered he made extracts from works bearing on the subject, and in time amassed a considerable amount of material, which was, however, devoid of arrangement. Old age overtaking him before he was able to commence writing his proposed book, he asked me to undertake that which from failing health he was unable to accomplish. To this I assented, and at the end of some months had prepared a complete scheme of the book, with the materials for each chapter carefully grouped. That arrangement, for which I am responsible, has, with a few slight modifications, been

carefully adhered to. The work did not then proceed further, as to carry out my scheme a large amount of additional matter, from sources not then available, was required. A few months later my friend was taken seriously ill, and, finding his end approaching, directed that on his decease all papers connected with the book should be placed at my disposal. His death seems to render a statement of our respective shares in the book desirable.

When able to resume work on the book, with the object of hastening its publication, I obtained the assistance of my friend, Mr. J. M. D——. By the collection of fresh matter, in amplification of that already arranged, and the addition of several new features, we have considerably increased the scope of the work, and, it is to be hoped, added to its attractiveness. To my friend's researches in the City of London and other Records is due the bringing to light of many curious facts, so far as I am aware, never before noticed. He has also rendered me great assistance in those portions of the book in which the antiquities of the subject are specially treated.

The illustrations have been in most part taken from rare old works. As any smoothing away of defects in such relics of the past would be deemed by many an offence against the antiquarian code of morality, they have been reproduced in exact fac-simile, and will no doubt appeal to those interested in the art of the early engraver, and amuse many with their quaintness.

As aptly terminating the chapter devoted to an account of the medicinal qualities of ale and beer, I have ventured to enter upon a short consideration of the leading teetotal arguments. In extending their denunciations to ale and beer

drinkers, the total abstainers are, in my opinion, working a very grievous injury on the labouring classes, who for centuries have found the greatest benefit from the use of malt liquors. Barley-broth should be looked upon as *the* temperance drink of the people or, in other words, the drink of the temperate.

I have gratefully to acknowledge the kindness and courtesy accorded me during the preparation of this work by the authorities of the British Museum, by Dr. Sharpe, Records Clerk of the City of London, by Mr. Higgins, Clerk of the Brewers' Company, and by several eminent brewers and a large number of correspondents.

JOHN BICKERDYKE.









# THE CURIOSITIES OF ALE AND BEER.

CHAPTER I.  
*INTRODUCTORY.*

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“For a quart of ale is a dish for a King.”

*Winter's Tale*, Act iv. Scene 2.

No doubt it is a very tedious thing  
To undertake a folio work on law,  
Or metaphysics, or again to ring  
The changes on the Flood or Trojan War:  
Old subjects these, which Poets only sing  
Who think a new idea quite a flaw;  
But thirst for novelty can't fail in liking  
The theme of Ale, the aptitude's so striking.

*Brasenose College Shrovetide Verses.*

*SUPPRESSION OF BEER SHOPS IN EGYPT 2,000 B.C. — BREWING IN A TEAPOT. — ALE SONGS. — DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN ALE AND BEER. — ALE-KNIGHTS' OBJECTION TO SACK. — HOGARTH AND TEMPERANCE. — IMPORTANCE OF ALE TO THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER. — SIR JOHN BARLEYCORNE INTRODUCED TO THE READER.*



OUR thousand years ago, if old inscriptions and papyri lie not, Egypt was convulsed by the high-handed proceedings of certain persons in authority who inclined to the opinion that the beer shops were too many. Think of it, ye modern Suppressionists! 'Tis now forty centuries since first your theories saw the light, and yet there is not a town in our happy country without its alehouse.

While those disturbing members of the Egyptian community were waxing wrath over the beer shops, our savage ancestors probably contented themselves with such

drinks as mead made from wild honey, {2} or cyder from the crab tree. But when Ceres sent certain of her votaries into our then benighted land to initiate our woad-dressed forefathers into the mysteries of grain-growing, the venerable Druids quickly discovered the art of brewing that beverage which in all succeeding years has been the drink of Britons.

Of true British growth is the Nectar we boast,  
The homely companion of plain boiled and roast,

most truly wrote an Oxford poet, whose name has not been handed down to posterity.

Almost every inhabitant of this country has tasted beer of some kind or another, but on the subject of brewing the great majority have ideas both vague and curious. About one person out of ten imagines that pale ale consists solely of hops and water; indeed, more credit is given by most persons to the hop than to the malt. In order to give a proper understanding of our subject, and at the risk of ruining the brewing trade, let us then, in ten lines or so, inform the world at large how, with no other utensils than a tea-kettle and a saucepan, a quart or two of ale may be brewed, and the revenue defrauded.

Into your tea-kettle, amateur brewer, cast a quart of malt, and on it pour water, hot, but not boiling; let it stand awhile and stir it. Then pour off the sweet tea into the saucepan, and add to the tea-leaves boiling water again, and even a third time, until possibly a husband would rebel at the weak liquid which issues from the spout. The saucepan is now nearly full, thanks to the frequent additions from the tea-kettle, so on to the fire with it, and boil up its contents for an hour or two, not forgetting to add of hops half-an-ounce, or a little more. This process over, let the

seething liquor cool, and, when at a little below blood-heat, throw into it a small particle of brewer's yeast. The liquor now ferments; at the end of an hour skim it, and lo! beneath the scum is bitter beer—in quantity, a quart or more. After awhile bottle the results of your brew, place it in a remote corner of your cellar, and order in a barrel of XXX. from the nearest brewer.

If the generality of people have ideas of the vaguest on the subject of brewing, still less do we English know of the history of that excellent compound yclept ale.

O ale! aurum potabile!  
That gildest life's dull hours,  
When its colour weareth shabbily,  
When fade its summer flowers.

Old ballad makers have certainly sung in its praise, but it is a subject which few prose writers have touched upon, except in the most superficial manner. Modern song writers rarely take ale as their theme. The reason is not far to seek. The ale of other days—not the single beer rightly stigmatised as “whip-belly vengeance,” nor even the doble beer, but the doble-doble beer brewed against law, and beloved by the ale-knights of old—was of such mightiness that whoso drank of it, more often than not dashed off a verse or two in its praise. Now most people drink small beer which exciteth not the brain to poesy. Could one of the ancient toppers be restored to life, in tasting a glass of our most excellent bitter, he would, in all likelihood, make a wry face, for hops were not always held in the estimation they obtain at present. There is no doubt, however, that we could restore his equanimity and make him tolerably happy with a gallon or two of old Scotch or Burton ale, double stout or,

better still, a mixture of the three with a little *aqua vitæ* added.

In these pages it will be our task, aided or unaided by strong ale as the case may be, to remove the reproach under which this country rests; for surely a reproach it is that the history of the bonny nut-brown ale, to which we English owe not a little, should have been so long left unwritten.

Now ale has a curious history which, as we have indicated, will be related anon, together with other matters pertaining to the subject. At present let us only chat awhile concerning the great Sir John Barleycorn, malt liquors of the past and present, their virtues, and importance to the labouring classes. Also may we consider the foolish ideas of certain worthy but misguided folk, halting now and again, should we find ourselves growing too serious, to chant a jolly old drinking song, that the way may be more enlivened. If on reaching the first stage of our journey you, dear reader, and ourselves remain friends, let us in each other's company pass lightly and cheerfully over the path which Sir John Barleycorn has traversed, and fight again his battles, rejoicing at his victories; grieving over his defeats—if any there be. If, on the other hand, it so happens that by the time we arrive at our first halting place you should grow weary of us—which the Spirit of Malt forbid!—let us at once part company, friends none the less, and consign us to a place high up on your bookshelf, or with kindly words present us to the President of the United Kingdom Alliance.

In accusing modern poets of neglecting to sing the praises of our {4} national drink, we must not forget that in one place is kept up the good old custom of brewing strong beer and glorifying it in verse. At Brasenose College, Oxford, beer of the strongest, made of the best malt and hops, is

brewed once a year, distributed *ad. lib.*, and verses are written in its praise. Mr. Prior, the college butler, to whom is due the honour of having kept alive the custom for very many years, writes us<sup>1</sup> that it is proposed to pull down the old college brewery. Should this happen, Brasenose ale will become a thing of the past.

A fig for Horace and his juice,  
Falernian and Massic,  
Far better drink can we produce,  
Though 'tis not quite so classic—

wrote a Brasenose poet. Alas, that both poets and ale should soon become extinct!

1 May, 1886. See also pp. [165](#); [389](#).

Among the few prose writers past or present who have taken ale for their subject, John Taylor, of whom a good deal will be heard in these pages, stands pre-eminent. His little work, *Drinke and Welcome*, written some two hundred years ago, and which glorifies ale in a manner most marvellous, is one of the most curious literary productions it has ever been our good fortune to read. "Ale is rightly called nappy," says the old Thames waterman and innkeeper, "for it will set a nap upon a man's threed-bare eyes when he is sleepy. It is called *Merry-goe-downe*, for it slides downe merrily; It is fragrant to the *Sent*, it is most pleasing to the *taste*. The flowring and mantling of it (like chequer worke) with the verdant smiling of it, is delightfull to the *Sight*, it is *Touching or Feeling* to the Braine and Heart; and (to please the senses all) it provokes men to singeing and mirth, which is contenting to the Hearing. The speedy taking of it doth comfort a heavy and troubled minde; it will make a weeping

widowe laugh and forget sorrow for her deceas'd husband..... It will set a Bashfull Suiter a wooing; It heates the chill blood of the Aged; It will cause a man to speake past his owne or any other man's capacity, or understanding; It sets an Edge upon Logick and Rhetorick; It is a friend to the Muses; It inspires the poore Poet, that cannot compasse the price of *Canarie* or *Gascoign*; It mounts the Musician 'bove Eccla; It makes the Balladmaker Rime beyond Reason; It is a Repairer of a {5} decaied Colour in the face; It puts Eloquence into the Oratour; It will make the Philosopher talke profoundly, the Scholler learnedly, and the Lawyer acute and feelingly. *Ale* at Whitsontide, or a *Whitson Church Ale*, is a repairer of decayed Countrey Churches; It is a great friend to Truth; so they that drinke of it (to the purpose) will reveale all they know, be it never so secret to be kept; It is an Embleme of Justice, for it allowes, and yeelds measure; It will put Courage into a Coward, and make him swagger and fight; It is a Seale to many a good Bargaine. The Physittian will commend it; the Lawyer will defend it; It neither hurts or kils any but those that abuse it unmeasurably and beyond bearing; It doth good to as many as take it rightly; It is as good as a Paire of Spectacles to cleare the Eyesight of an old Parish Clarke; and in Conclusion, it is such a nourisher of Mankinde, that if my Mouth were as bigge as Bishopsgate, my Pen as long as a Maypole, and my Inke a flowing spring, or a standing fishpond, yet I could not with Mouth, Pen or Inke, speake or write the true worth and worthiness of *Ale*." Bravo, John Taylor! He would be a bold man who could lift up his voice against our honest English nappy, after reading your vigorous lines.

It is not uninteresting to compare this sixteenth century work with a passage taken from *By Lake and River*, the

author of which rarely loses an opportunity of eulogising beer. Anglers and many more will cordially agree with Mr. Francis Francis in his remarks. "Ah! my beloved brother of the rod," he writes, "do you know the taste of beer—of bitter beer—cooled in the flowing river? Not you; I warrant, like the 'Marchioness,' hitherto you have only had 'a sip' occasionally—and, as Mr. Swiveller judiciously remarks, 'it can't be tasted in a sip.' Take your bottle of beer, sink it deep, deep in the shady water, where the cooling springs and fishes are. Then, the day being very hot and bright, and the sun blazing on your devoted head, consider it a matter of duty to have to fish that long, wide stream (call it the Blackstone stream, if you will); and so, having endued yourself with high wading breeks, walk up to your middle, and begin hammering away with your twenty-foot flail. Fish are rising, but not at you. No, they merely come up to see how the weather looks, and what o'clock it is. So fish away; there is not above a couple of hundred yards of it, and you don't want to throw more than about two or three-and-thirty yards at every cast. It is a mere trifle. An hour or so of good hard hammering will bring you to the end of it, and then—let me ask you *avec impressement*—how about that beer? Is it cool? Is it refreshing? Does it {6} gurgle, gurgle, and 'go down glug,' as they say in Devonshire? Is it heavenly? Is it Paradise and all the Peris to boot? Ah! if you have never tasted beer under these or similar circumstances, you have, believe me, never tasted it at all."

A word or two now as to the distinctions between the beverages known as ale and beer. Going back to the time of the Conquest, or earlier, we find that both words were applied to the same liquor, a fermented drink made usually from malt and water, without hops. The Danes called it ale, the Anglo-Saxons beer. Later on the word beer dropped



almost out of use. Meanwhile, in Germany and the Netherlands, the use of hops in brewing had been discovered; and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Flemings having introduced their *bier* into England, the word “beer” came to have in this country a distinct meaning—viz., hopped ale. The difference was quaintly explained by Andrew Boorde in his *Dyetary*, written about the year 1542. “Ale,” said Andrew, “is made of malte and water; and they which do put any other thyng to ale than is rehersed, except yest, barme, or godesgood, doth sofystical theyr ale. Ale for an Englysshe man is a naturall drinke. Ale must have these propertyes: it must be fresshe and cleare, it muste not be ropy nor smoky, nor it must have no weft nor taylor. Ale shuld not be dronke vnder v. dayes olde. Newe ale is vnholosome for all men. And sowre ale, and deade ale the which doth stande a tylt, is good for no man. Barly malte maketh better ale then oten malte or any other corne doth: it doth ingendre grose humoures; but yette it maketh a man stronge.”

#### OF BERE.

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“Bere is made of malte, of hoppes, and water; it is the naturall drynke for a Dutche man, and nowe of late dayes it is moche vsed in Englande to the detryment of many Englysshe people; specyally it kylleth them the which be troubled with the colycke, and the stone, and the strangulion; for the drynke is a colde drynke; yet it doth make a man fat, and doth inflate the bely, as it doth appere by the Dutche men’s faces and belyes. If the bere be well serued, and be fyned, and not new, it doth qualyfy heat of the liquer.”

The distinction between ale and beer as described by Boorde lasted for a hundred years or more. As hops came into general use, though malt liquors generally were now beer, the word ale was still retained, and was used whether the liquor it was intended to designate was {7} hopped or not. At the present day beer is the generic word, which includes all malt liquors; while the word ale includes all but the black or brown beers—porter and stout. The meanings of the words are, however, subject to local variations. This subject is further treated of in Chapter VII.

The union of hops and malt is amusingly described in one of the Brasenose College alepoems:—

A Grand Cross of “Malta,” one night at a ball,  
Fell in love with and married “Hoppetta the Tall.”  
Hoppetta, the bitterest, best of her sex,  
By whom he had issue—the first, “Double X.”  
Three others were born by this marriage—“a girl,”  
Transparent as *Amber* and precious as *Pearl*.  
Then a son, twice as strong as a Porter or Scout,  
And another as “Spruce” as his brother was “Stout.”  
*Double X*, like his Sister, is brilliant and clear,  
Like his Mother, tho’ bitter, by no means severe:  
Like his Father, *not small*, and resembling each  
brother,  
Joins the spirit of one to the strength of the other.

In John Taylor's time there seems to have existed among ale drinkers a wholesome prejudice against wine in general, and more especially sack. The water poet writes very bitterly on the subject:—

Thus Bacchus is ador'd and deified,  
And we *Hispanialized* and *Frenchifide*;  
Whilst *Noble Native Ale* and *Beere's* hard fate  
Are like old Almanacks, quite out of date.

Thus men consume their credits and their wealths,  
And swallow Sicknesses in drinking healths,  
Untill the Fury of the spritefull Grape  
Mountes to the braine, and makes a man an Ape.

Another poet wrote in much the same strain:—

Thy wanton grapes we do detest:  
Here's richer juice from Barley press'd.

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh let them come and taste this beer  
And water henceforth they'll forswear.

Our ancestors seem, indeed, almost to have revered good malt liquor. Richard Atkinson gave the following excellent advice to Leonard Lord Dacre in the year 1570: "See that ye keep a noble house for beef and beer, that thereof may be praise given to God and to your honour."

The same subject—comparison of sack with ale to the disadvantage of the former—is still better treated in an old ale song by Beaumont; it is such a good one of its kind that we give it in full:—

ANSWER OF ALE TO THE CHALLENGE OF SACK.

Come all you brave wights,  
That are dubbed ale-knights,  
    Now set out yourselves in sight;  
And let them that crack  
In the presence of Sack  
    Know Malt is of mickle might.

Though Sack they define  
Is holy divine,  
    Yet it is but naturall liquor,  
Ale hath for its part  
An addition of art  
    To make it drinke thinner or thicker.

Sack; fiery fume,  
Doth waste and consume  
    Men's humidum radicale;  
It scaldeth their livers,  
It breeds burning feavers,  
    Proves vinum venenum reale.

But history gathers,  
From aged forefathers,  
    That Ale's the true liquor of life,  
Men lived long in health,  
And preserved their wealth,  
    Whilst Barley broth only was rife. {9}

Sack, quickly ascends,  
And suddenly ends,  
    What company came for at first,  
And that which yet worse is,  
It empties men's purses  
    Before it half quenches their thirst.

Ale, is not so costly  
Although that the most lye  
    Too long by the oyle of Barley;  
Yet may they part late,  
At a reasonable rate,  
    Though they came in the morning early.

Sack, makes men from words  
Fall to drawing of swords,  
    And quarrelling endeth their quaffing;  
Whilst dagger ale Barrels  
Beare off many quarrels  
    And often turn chiding to laughing.

Sack's drink for our masters,  
All may be Ale-tasters,  
    Good things the more common the better,  
Sack's but single broth,  
Ale's meat, drinke, and cloathe,  
    Say they that know never a letter.

But not to entangle  
Old friends till they wrangle  
    And quarrell for other men's pleasure;  
Let Ale keep his place,  
And let Sack have his grace,  
    So that neither exceed the due measure.

“Wine is but single broth, ale is meat, drink and cloth,” was a proverbial saying in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and occurs in many writings, both prose and poetical. John Taylor, for instance, writes that ale is the “warmest lining of a naked man’s coat.” “Barley broth” and “oyle of barley” were very common expressions for ale. “Dagger ale” was very strong malt liquor. The word “ale-tasters” will be fully explained later on. {10}

The nearest approach in modern times to a denunciation of wine by an ale-favouring poet occurs in a few lines—by whom written we know not—cleverly satirising the introduction of cheap French wines into this country. Cheap clarets command, thanks to an eminent statesman, a considerable share of popular favour. If unadulterated, they are no doubt wholesome enough, and suitable for some specially constituted persons. Let those who like them drink them, by all means.

#### MALT LIQUOR, OR CHEAP FRENCH WINES.

No ale or beer, says Gladstone, we should drink,  
Because they stupefy and dull our brains.  
But sour French wine, as other people think,  
Our English stomachs often sorely pains.  
The question then is which we most should dread,  
*An aching belly or an aching head?*

Among famous ale songs of the past, *Jolly Good Ale and Old*, which has been wrongly attributed to Bishop Still, stands pre-eminent. Of the eight double stanzas composing the song, four were incorporated in “a ryght pithy, plesaunt, and merie comedie, intytuled, *Gammer Gurton’s Nedle*, played on stage not longe ago, in Christe’s Colledge, in Cambridge. Made by Mr. S—, Master of Art” (1575).

According to Dyer, who possessed a MS., giving the song in its complete form, "it is certainly of an earlier date," and could not have been by Mr. Still (afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells), the Master of Trinity College, who was probably the writer of the play. The "merrie comedie" well illustrates the difference of tone and thought which divides those days from the present, and it is a little difficult to understand how it could have been produced by the pen of a High Church dignitary. The prologue of the play is very quaint, it runs thus:—

## PROLOGUE.

As Gammer Gurton, with manye a wyde styche,  
Sat pesynge and patching of Hodge her man's briche,  
By chance or misfortune, as shee her geare tost,  
In Hodge lether bryches her needle shee lost.  
When Diccon the bedlam had hard by report,  
That good Gammer Gurton was robde in thys sorte,  
He quyetlye perswaded with her in that stound,  
Dame Chat, her deare gossyp, this needle had found.  
Yet knew shee no more of this matter, alas, {11}  
Then knoweth Tom our clarke what the Priest saith at  
    masse,  
Hereof there ensued so fearfull a fraye,  
Mas. Doctor was sent for, these gossyps to staye;  
Because he was curate, and esteemed full wyse,  
Who found that he sought not, by Diccon's device.  
When all things were tumbled and cleane out of  
    fashion,  
Whether it were by fortune, or some other  
    constellation,  
Suddenlye the neele Hodge found by the prychnge,  
And drew out of his buttocke, where he found it  
    stickyng,  
Theyr hartes then at rest with perfect securytie,  
With a pot of Good ale they stroake up theyr  
    plauditie.

The song, *Jolly Good Ale and Old*, four stanzas of which occur in the second act, is a good record of the spirit of those hard-drinking days, now passed away, in which a man who could not, or did not, consume vast quantities of liquor



was looked upon as a milksop. It is given as follows in the Comedy:—

Back and syde go bare, go bare,  
Booth foote and hande go colde;  
But belly, God send thee good ale ynoughe,  
Whether it bee newe or olde.

I can not eate but lytle meate,  
My stomache is not goode,  
But, sure, I thinke, that I can drynk  
With him that wears a hood.<sup>2</sup>  
Thoughe I go bare, take ye no care,  
I am nothyng a colde;  
I stuffe my skyn so full within  
Of jolly good ale, and olde.

Back and syde go bare, go bare, &c., &c.

<sup>3</sup>I love no rost, but a nut-brown toste,  
And a crab layde in the fyre;  
A lytle bread shall do me stead,  
Much bread I not desyre. {12}

No froste nor snow, no winde, I trow,  
Can hurte mee if I wolde,  
I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt,  
Of joly good ale and olde.

Back and syde go bare, go bare, &c., &c.

And Tyb, my wife, that as her lyfe  
Loveth well good ale to seeke,  
Full ofte drinkes shee, tyll ye may see,  
The teares run down her cheekes;  
Then doth she trowle to mee the bowle<sup>4</sup>  
Even as a *mault worme* shuld  
And sayth, sweet hart, I tooke my part  
Of this joly good ale, and olde.

Back and syde go bare, go bare, &c., &c.

Now let them drynke, tyll they nod and winke,  
Even as good fellowes shoulde doe,  
They shall not misse to have the blisse  
Good ale doth bringe men to:  
And all poor soules, that have scoured boules,  
Or have them lustely trolde,  
God save the lyves of them and their wyves,  
Whether they be yonge or olde.

Back and syde go bare, go bare, &c., &c.

2 Alluding to the drunkenness of the clergy.

3 *Cf.*:

“And sometimes lurk I in a gossip’s bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab.”

*Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act ii. Scene 1.

4 The word “trowle” was used of passing the vessel about, as appears by the beginning of an old catch:

*Trole, trole* the *bowl* to me,  
And I will *trole* the same again to thee.

Charles Dibdin the younger has, in a couple of verses, told a very amusing little story of an old fellow who, in addition to finding that ale was meat, drink and cloth, discovered that it included friends as well—or, at any rate,

when he was without ale he was without friends, which comes to much the same thing.

### THE BARREL OF HUMMING ALE.

Old Owen lived on the brow of an hill,  
And he had more patience than pelf;  
A small plot of ground was his labour to till, {13}  
And he toiled through the day by himself.  
But at night crowds of visitors called at his cot,  
For he told a right marvellous tale;  
Yet a stronger attraction by chance he had got,  
A barrel of old humming ale.

Old Owen by all was an oracle thought,  
While they drank not a joke failed to hit;  
But Owen at last by experience was taught,  
That wisdom is better than wit.  
One night his cot could scarce hold the gay rout,  
The next not a soul heard his tale,  
The moral is simply they'd fairly drank out  
His barrel of old humming ale.

For the sake of contrast with the foregoing songs, if for nothing else, the following poem (save the mark!) by George Arnold, a Boston rhymster, is worthy of perusal. The “gurgle-gurgle” of the athletic salmon-fisher, described by Mr. Francis, is replaced by the “idle sipping” (fancy sipping beer!) of the beer-garden frequenter.

BEER.

Here  
With my beer  
I sit,  
While golden moments flit:  
Alas!  
They pass  
Unheeded by:  
And, as they fly,  
I,  
Being dry,  
Sit, idly sipping here  
My beer.

The new generation of American poets do not mean, it would appear, to be confined in the old metrical grooves. Very different in style are the verses written on ale by Thomas Wharton, in 1748. *A Panegyric on Oxford Ale* is the title of the poem, which is prefaced by the lines from Horace:—

Mea nec Falernæ  
Temperant vites, neque Formiani  
Pocula colles.

The poem opens thus:—

Balm of my cares, sweet solace of my toils,  
Hail, Juice benignant! O'er the costly cups  
Of riot-stirring wine, unwholesome draught,  
Let Pride's loose sons prolong the wasteful night;  
My sober evening let the tankard bless,  
With toast embrown'd, and fragrant nutmeg fraught,  
While the rich draught with oft repeated whiffs  
Tobacco mild improves. Divine repast!  
Where no crude surfeit, or intemperate joys  
Of lawless Bacchus reigns; but o'er my soul  
A calm Lethean creeps; in drowsy trance  
Each thought subsides, and sweet oblivion wraps  
My peaceful brain, as if the leaden rod  
Of magic Morpheus o'er mine eyes had shed  
Its opiate influence. What though sore ills  
Oppress, dire want of chill-dispelling coals,  
Or cheerful candle (save the makeweight's gleam  
Haply remaining), heart-rejoicing Ale  
Cheers the sad scene, and every want supplies.

There exist, sad to relate, persons who, with the notion of promoting temperance, would rob us of our beer. Many of these individuals may act with good motives, but they are weak, misguided bodies who, if they but devoted their energies to promoting ale-drinking as opposed to spirit-drinking, would be doing useful service to the State, for malt liquors are the true temperance drinks of the working classes. The Bill (for the encouragement of private tippling) so long sought to be introduced by the teetotal party, was cleverly hit off in *Songs of the Session*, published in *The World* some years back:—

\* \* \* \* \*

If with truth they assure us that liquors allure us,  
I don't think 'twill cure us the taverns to close;  
When in putting drink down, sirs, you've shut up the  
Crown, sirs,  
You'll find Smith and Brown, sirs, drunk under the  
rose.

"Men are slaves to this custom," you cry; "we can't  
trust 'em!"

Very good; then why thrust 'em from scenes where  
they're known  
If the daylight can't shame 'em, or neighbours  
reclaim 'em,  
Do you think you can tame 'em in haunts of their  
own? {15}

And if in Stoke Pogis no publican lodges,  
It don't follow Hodge is cut off from good cheer;  
In the very next parish the tap may be fairish,  
And the vestry less bearish and stern about beer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Men in time will refrain when that goes with their  
grain;  
Till it does 'tis in vain that their wills you coerce;  
For the man whom by force you turn out of his  
course,  
Without fear or remorse will soon take to a worse.

Of course, in asserting malt liquors to be the  
temperance drink, or drink of the temperate, it must be  
understood that we refer to the ordinary ales and beers of  
to-day, in which the amount of alcohol is small, and which  
are very different from the potent liquor drunk by the toppers  
of the past, who were rightly designated malt worms.