

Publicans of Birmingham

From: The Political Songster by John Freeth

The PUBLICANS of BIRMINGHAM to the CHURCH-WARDENS.

Tune ... Sit down neighbour's all, &c.

THE SOCIAL COMPANION's a foe to contention,
The SOCIABLE CUP is a spur to invention;
Good ale is a blessing, what creature will doubt it?
And friendship we prize – pray what is life without it?

That tipping on Sundays is too much a practice,
In both town and country and undoubted fact is'
Whilst many are rigid, and some wink at small things,
Let this be observ'd, there's a medium in all things.

Penalties inflicting may well make us frown, Sir,
We pay to the CHURCH, and we pay to the CROWN, SIR;
Our payments are frequent, and frequently heavy,
But heaviest of all is a CHURCH WARDEN's levy.

The WARDENS, I'll venture to say, will believe us,
'Tis true, their demands we would wish were less greivous;
However, the good of the soul they may study,
From them comes the tax-plague, which much gripes the body.

On all kinds of people the taxes are many,
But PUBLICANS are tax'd the hardest of any!
'Tis Parliament only relief can devise for't,
We give drink away, and pay the King excise for't.

'Tis true that much tipling brings on vain discoursing,
'Tis true that the laws stand in need of enforcing;
But if at reformation you mean to be trying,
On fair ground proceed, and let's have no decoying.

Disorder to check is a laudable meaning,
The law strikes at this, nor requires more explaining;
In every station to please is the beauty,
But upstarts in office will overdo their duty.

Our Town which is great ev'ry Year becomes greater,
JUSTICES to serve us, we can't wish for better;
As Justice should always be strictly regarded,
May merit be look'd at, and amply rewarded.

The clock had struck three, where a party assembled:

Their cups to replenish, the LANDLADY trembled;
They all left the house, but not with empty pockets,
And bundled away to spend their cash at CROCKIT's.

PUBLICANS of HANDSWORTH fortunes may be making,
Tradesmen more and more their trips there will be taking;
PUBLICANS of HANDSWORTH may good things be carving,
And live whilst the LANDLORDS of BIRMINGHAM are starving.