



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

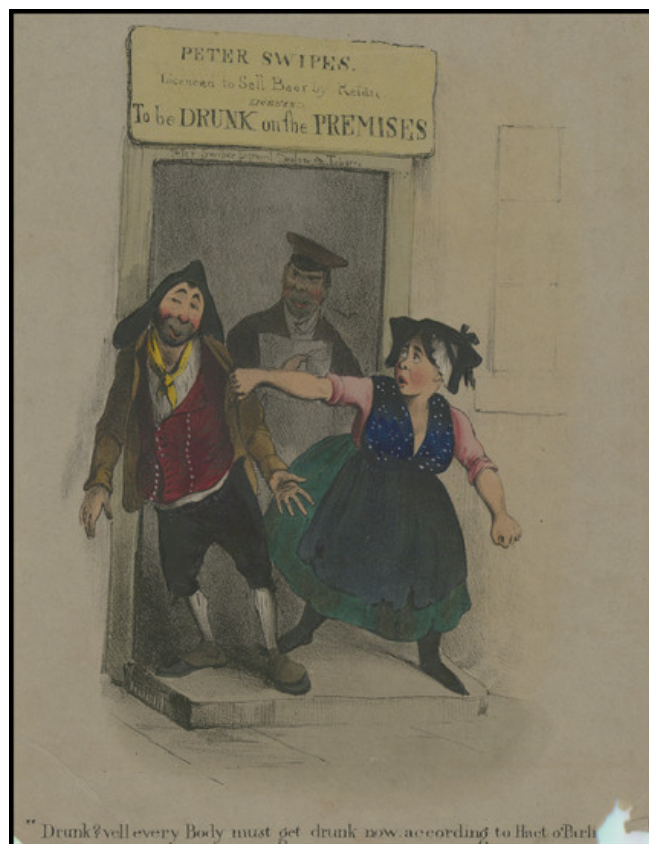
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(Beerhouse Act of 1830) "Drunk? vell every Body must get drunk now, according to Hact o'Parliament"

Stock#: 94985
Map Maker: Heath
Date: 1830 circa
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: Good
Size: 5.5 x 8 inches
Price: \$ 245.00



Description:

This caricature, prominently labeled with the sign "PETER SWIPES, Licensed to Sell Beer by Retail, To be DRUNK on the PREMISES," offers a humorous yet biting commentary on the Beerhouse Act of 1830. The Act was introduced in Britain with the intention of curbing the consumption of spirits, particularly gin, which was seen as the cause of widespread social problems. By allowing homeowners to sell beer or cider without a magistrate's license, the government hoped to encourage the public to choose the milder beverage over hard spirits.

However, in practice, this Act led to the rapid proliferation of beer houses across the country. Anyone could now sell beer, as long as they purchased a relatively inexpensive annual license, and agreed not to sell spirits. The text beneath the image, "Drunk? vell every Body must get drunk now, according to Hact o'Parli[ament]," is a sarcastic nod to the unforeseen outcome of this legislation, which, rather than curbing drunkenness, seemed to encourage it.



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The characters in the caricature are depicted in exaggerated, almost grotesque manners, emphasizing the inebriated state that many found themselves in due to the newfound accessibility of beer. The woman's shocked expression, the jovial and almost stumbling man, and the seemingly disinterested man in the doorway collectively serve as representations of different societal reactions to this Act.

The caricature serves as a poignant reminder of the unforeseen consequences of legislation. What was intended to be a solution to the gin epidemic in Britain inadvertently led to a different set of challenges, emphasizing the complexities of governing and regulating societal behaviors. The print, with its comedic yet critical portrayal, would have resonated with a British audience who were witnessing the ramifications of the Beerhouse Act firsthand.

This is No. 24 from Heath's *Oddities* published by W. Spooner, London. It is one of a series of 38 hand-colored lithographic plates. The satirical plates depict both social and sporting scenes.

Detailed Condition:

Lithograph with original hand-color. Damage to the lower right corner, as illustrated.