**ST GILES’S BOWL**

**Tune: ‘Packington’s Pound’1**

Where St. Giles’s church stands

Once a lazar-house stood2;

And chain’d to its gates

Was a vessel of wood.

A broad-bottom’d bowl from which

All the fine fellows,

Who pass’d by that spot

On their way to the gallows,

Might tipple strong beer,

Their spirits to cheer

And drown in a sea of good liquor, all fear!

For nothing the transit to Tyburn beguiles,

So well as a draught from the bowl of St Giles3.

By many a highwayman many a draught

Of nutty brown ale at St. Giles’s was quaft,

Until the old lazar house chanced to fall down,

And the broad-bottom’d bowl

Was removed to The Crown4.

Where the robber may cheer,

His spirit with beer,

And drown in a sea of good liquor, all fear!

For nothing the transit to Tyburn beguiles,

So well as a draught from the bowl of St Giles.

There Mulsack5 and Swiftneck, both

Prigs from their birth,

Old Mob and Tom Cox took their

Last draught on earth;

There Randal, and Shorter,

And Whitney pulled up,

And jolly Jack Joyce drank

His finishing cup.

For a can of ale calms,

A highwayman’s qualms,

And makes him sing blithely

His dolorous psalms,

And nothing the transit to Tyburn beguiles,

So well as a draught from the bowl of St Giles.

When gallant Jack Sheppard6

To Tyburn was led,

“Stop the cart at the Crown,

Stop a moment” he said

He was offered the bowl,

But he left it, and smiled, crying

“Keep it ‘til call’d for by Jonathan Wild7.

The rascal one day, will pass by this way

And drink a full measure

To moisten his clay

And never the transit to Tyburn beguile,

So well as a draught from the bowl of St Giles.

Should it e’er be *my* lot

To ride backwards that way8,

At door of the Crown

I will certainly stay;

I’ll summon the landlord,

I’ll call for the bowl,

And drink a deep draught

To the health of my soul!

Whatever may hap,

I’ll taste of the tap,

To keep up my spirits

When brought to the crap9;

For nothing Bowl of St. Giles have beguiled,

Such a thorough-paced scoundrel as Jonathan Wild

For nothing the transit to Tyburn beguiles,

So well as a draught from the bowl of St Giles.

Printer: Possibly written or adapted by Victorian novelist William Harrison Ainsworth. There is one verse on a sheet of Jack Sheppard ballads in BBO.

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1. ‘Packington’s Pound’ – Claude Simpson (The English Broadside Ballad and its Music’) writes that this is the ‘most popular single tune associated with ballads before 1700’.
2. St Giles was the site of London’s primary medieval leprosy hospital or ‘leprosarium’, founded in the early C12th by Queen Matilda. Named after St Giles, patron saint of the sick. At this time St Giles was a green expanse of fields, well outside the capital.
3. Bowl of St. Giles: condemned prisoners were reputed to stop for a drink from a bowl of strong ale on their way from Newgate prison to Tyburn.
4. The Crown, a pub also known as The Angel
5. John Cottinham, alias ‘Mulsack’, was hung for murder in 1655. One of a list of infamous criminals reputed to have drunk from the bowl of St Giles.
6. Jack Sheppard 1702-1724 notorious thief and prison escapee. Arrested 5 times, and escaped four times, making him popular with the poorer classes. His autobiography was thought to have been ghostwritten by Daniel Defoe, and the character of Macheath in Gay’s ‘Beggar’s Opera’ was based on Sheppard, keeping him well-known for 100 years. He returned to public consciousness around 1840 when William Harrison Ainsworth wrote ‘Jack Sheppard’ a novel illustrated by Cruikshank, from which these verses are taken.
7. Jonathan Wild: infamous corrupt thief-taker responsible for the arrest and execution of Sheppard. He himself was hung at Tyburn in 1725.
8. Ride backwards: prisoners on their way to execution were transported through the streets sitting backwards on a cart or horse as a shaming punishment, often next to their coffin, which would later contain them, sometimes dressed in a shroud.
9. ‘Brought to the crap’ – Possibly a cant term meaning ‘taken to be hung’. Could originate from Old Dutch ‘*krappe*’, from ‘*krappen*’ ‘pluck or cut off’.