

London

Represents industrialisation, labour and misery. The opposite of the countryside, which is carefree and clean.

Repetition suggests it happens everywhere – it's ubiquitous – shows how frequently these horrors occur; so much that it seems almost normal. Repetition also makes it sound like preaching, monotonous and factory-like.

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

- Comment [W1]:** A lazy, unhurried action; the persona is an innocent passer-by.
- Comment [W2]:** Ambiguous – can mean to put into a map, to fix, or to hire. Perhaps implies control and lack of freedom.
- Comment [W3]:** Again, ambiguous, as 'mark' could mean to notice, or to actually make an impression on them. "Weakness" and "woe" suggest this 'marking' can be physical or emotional, visible or hidden.
- Comment [W4]:** "Every" suggests uniformity and monotony.
- Comment [W5]:** Ambiguous – could mean forbidding something, or marriage laws/announcement. "Voice" and "ban" contrast – freedom vs. restrictions. Ironic because ban needs voice to be read out.
- Comment [W6]:** "Forg'd": industrial, man-made, fake. Manacles are like large handcuffs and represent control. Human inventions impose restrictions upon humans themselves, implying we create our own suffering.
- Comment [W7]:** Innocent child suffering because of society. Church is appalled because of child labour/occupation involving dirt and grime: cleanliness vs. filth.
- Comment [W8]:** Suffering is further emphasised through the repetition of "cry" and also the use of "sigh" and "curse". The expressive nature of these words helps reinforce the negative effect society and industrialisation has upon the people.
- Comment [W9]:** Shows his dislike for the church; how the pollution/smoke/soot and industrialisation affects this. Blackening also has connotations of evil and harsh.
- Comment [W10]:** Restricted/bound by his duty.
- Comment [W11]:** "Blood" stains the walls and therefore leaves a mark; the monarchy is a symbol of control;
- Comment [W12]:** Euphuism for prostitute. Victim or hero? "Youthful" suggests innocence, yet she 'blasts' the infants tear – therefore suggests how living in the industrialised city/society has corrupted her.
- Comment [W13]:** War-like connotations
- Comment [W14]:** Associated with death and dying; "plagues" suggests that marriage is a disease.

Each stanza represents a different loss to society, for example: innocence and freedom in the second and third paragraphs. The organised structure and the fixed AB rhyme scheme used clearly state Blake's dislike for the corrupted, industrialised society.

Organising Principles:

- Society and industrialisation corrupts and destroys innocence and purity.
- Rules and restrictions take away creativity and freedom, and only lead to misery.
- Ambiguities of words suggest things are not always what they seem to be. Not everything should be trusted (for example: the church is 'appalled' by the cry of the chimney sweep, despite the fact that it is supposed to help people in need.)