

**DRAKE
SAMUEL
ADAMS**

OLD BOSTON TAVERNS
AND TAVERN CLUBS

Samuel Drake

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Drake S.

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Samuel Adams Drake, Walter K. Watkins Old Boston Taverns and Tavern Clubs

FOREWORD

The Inns of Old Boston have played such a part in its history that an illustrated edition of Drake may not be out of place at this late date. “Cole’s Inn” has been definitely located, and the “Hancock Tavern” question also settled.

I wish to thank the Bostonian Society for the privilege of reprinting Mr. Watkin’s account of the “Bakers’ Arms” and the “Golden Ball” and valuable assistance given by Messrs. C. F. Read, E. W. McGlenen, and W. A. Watkins; Henderson and Ross for the illustration of the “Crown Coffee House,” and the Walton Advertising Co. for the “Royal Exchange Tavern.”

Other works consulted are Snow’s History of Boston, Memorial History of Boston, Stark’s Antique Views, Porter’s Rambles in Old Boston, and Miss Thwing’s very valuable work in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

THE PUBLISHER

I. UPON THE TAVERN AS AN INSTITUTION

The famous remark of Louis XIV., “There are no longer any Pyrenees,” may perhaps be open to criticism, but there are certainly no longer any taverns in New England. It is true that the statutes of the Commonwealth continue to designate such houses as the Brunswick and Vendome as taverns, and their proprietors as innkeepers; yet we must insist upon the truth of our assertion, the letter of the law to the contrary notwithstanding.

No words need be wasted upon the present degradation which the name of tavern implies to polite ears. In most minds it is now associated with the slums of the city, and with that particular phase of city life only, so all may agree that, as a prominent feature of society and manners, the tavern has had its day. The situation is easily accounted for. The simple truth is, that, in moving on, the world has left the venerable institution standing in the eighteenth century; but it is equally true that, before that time, the history of any civilized people could hardly be written without making great mention of it. With the disappearance of the old signboards our streets certainly have lost a most picturesque feature, at least one avenue is closed to art, while a few very aged men mourn the loss of something endeared to them by many pleasant recollections.

As an offset to the admission that the tavern has outlived its usefulness, we ought in justice to establish its actual character and standing as it was in the past. We shall then be the better able to judge how it was looked upon both from a moral and material stand-point, and can follow it on through successive stages of good or evil fortune, as we would the life of an individual.

It fits our purpose admirably, and we are glad to find so eminent a scholar and divine as Dr. Dwight particularly explicit on this point. He tells us that, in his day, “The best old-fashioned New England inns were superior to any of the modern ones. There was less bustle, less parade, less appearance of doing a great deal to gratify your wishes, than at the reputable modern inns; but much more was actually done, and there was much more comfort and enjoyment. In a word, you found in these inns the pleasures of an excellent private house. If you were sick you were nursed and befriended as in your own family. To finish the story, your bills were always equitable, calculated on what you ought to pay, and not upon the scheme of getting the most which extortion might think proper to demand.”

Now this testimonial to what the public inn was eighty odd years ago comes with authority from one who had visited every nook and corner of New England, was so keen and capable an observer, and is always a faithful recorder of what he saw. Dr. Dwight has frequently said that during his travels he often “found his warmest welcome at an inn.”

In order to give the history of what may be called the Rise and Fall of the Tavern among us, we should go back to the earliest settlements, to the very beginning of things. In our own country the Pilgrim Fathers justly stand for the highest type of public and private morals. No less would be conceded them by the most unfriendly critic. Intemperance, extravagant living, or immorality found no harborage on Plymouth Rock, no matter under what disguise it might come. Because they were a virtuous and sober people, they had been filled with alarm for their own youth, lest the example set by the Hollanders should corrupt the stay and prop of their community. Indeed, Bradford tells us fairly that this was one determining cause of the removal into New England.

The institution of taverns among the Pilgrims followed close upon the settlement. Not only were they a recognized need, but, as one of the time-honored institutions of the old country, no one seems to have thought of denouncing them as an evil, or even as a necessary evil. Travellers and sojourners had to be provided for even in a wilderness. Therefore taverns were licensed as fast as new villages grew up. Upward of a dozen were licensed at one sitting of the General Court. The usual form of

concession is that So-and-So is licensed to draw wine and beer for the public. The supervision was strict, but not more so than the spirit of a patriarchal community, founded on morals, would seem to require; but there were no such attempts to cover up the true character of the tavern as we have seen practised in the cities of this Commonwealth for the purpose of evading the strict letter of the law; and the law then made itself respected. An innkeeper was not then looked upon as a person who was pursuing a disgraceful or immoral calling, – a sort of outcast, as it were, – but, while strictly held amenable to the law, he was actually taken under its protection. For instance, he was fined for selling any one person an immoderate quantity of liquor, and he was also liable to a fine if he refused to sell the quantity allowed to be drank on the premises, though no record is found of a prosecution under this singular statutory provision; still, for some time, this regulation was continued in force as the only logical way of dealing with the liquor question, as it then presented itself.

When the law also prohibited a citizen from entertaining a stranger in his own house, unless he gave bonds for his guest's good behavior, the tavern occupied a place between the community and the outside world not wholly unlike that of a moral quarantine. The town constable could keep a watchful eye upon all suspicious characters with greater ease when they were under one roof. Then it was his business to know everybody's, so that any show of mystery about it would have settled, definitely, the stranger's *status*, as being no better than he should be. "Mind your own business," is a maxim hardly yet domesticated in New England, outside of our cities, or likely to become suddenly popular in our rural communities, where, in those good old days we are talking about, a public official was always a public inquisitor, as well as newsbearer from house to house.

On their part, the Puritan Fathers seem to have taken the tavern under strict guardianship from the very first. In 1634, when the price of labor and everything else was regulated, sixpence was the legal charge for a meal, and a penny for an ale quart of beer, at an inn, and the landlord was liable to ten shillings fine if a greater charge was made. Josselyn, who was in New England at a very early day, remarks, that, "At the tap-houses of Boston I have had an ale quart of cider, spiced and sweetened with sugar, for a groat." So the fact that the law once actually prescribed how much should be paid for a morning dram may be set down among the curiosities of colonial legislation.

No later than the year 1647 the number of applicants for licenses to keep taverns had so much increased that the following act was passed by our General Court for its own relief: "It is ordered by the authority of this court, that henceforth all such as are to keep houses of common entertainment, and to retail wine, beer, etc., shall be licensed at the county courts of the shire where they live, or the Court of Assistants, so as this court may not be thereby hindered in their more weighty affairs."

A noticeable thing about this particular bill is, that when it went down for concurrence the word "deputies" was erased and "house" substituted by the speaker in its stead, thus showing that the newly born popular body had begun to assert itself as the only true representative chamber, and meant to show the more aristocratic branch that the sovereign people had spoken at last.

By the time Philip's war had broken out, in 1675, taverns had become so numerous that Cotton Mather has said that every other house in Boston was one. Indeed, the calamity of the war itself was attributed to the number of tippling-houses in the colony. At any rate this was one of the alleged sins which, in the opinion of Mather, had called down upon the colony the frown of Providence. A century later, Governor Pownall repeated Mather's statement. So it is quite evident that the increase of taverns, both good and bad, had kept pace with the growth of the country.

It is certain that, at the time of which we are speaking, some of the old laws affecting the drinking habits of society were openly disregarded. Drinking healths, for instance, though under the ban of the law, was still practised in Cotton Mather's day by those who met at the social board. We find him defending it as a common form of politeness, and not the invocation of Heaven it had once been in the days of chivalry. Drinking at funerals, weddings, church-raisings, and even at ordinations, was a thing everywhere sanctioned by custom. The person who should have refused to furnish liquor on such an occasion would have been the subject of remarks not at all complimentary to his motives.

It seems curious enough to find that the use of tobacco was looked upon by the fathers of the colony as far more sinful, hurtful, and degrading than indulgence in intoxicating liquors. Indeed, in most of the New England settlements, not only the use but the planting of tobacco was strictly forbidden. Those who had a mind to solace themselves with the interdicted weed could do so only in the most private manner. The language of the law is, “Nor shall any take tobacco in any wine or common victual house, except in a private room there, so as the master of said house nor any guest there shall take offence thereat; which, if any do, then such person shall forbear upon pain of two shillings sixpence for every such offence.”

It is found on record that two innocent Dutchmen, who went on a visit to Harvard College, – when that venerable institution was much younger than it is to-day, – were so nearly choked with the fumes of tobacco-smoke, on first going in, that one said to the other, “This is certainly a tavern.”

It is also curious to note that, in spite of the steady growth of the smoking habit among all classes of people, public opinion continued to uphold the laws directed to its suppression, though, from our stand-point of to-day, these do seem uncommonly severe. And this state of things existed down to so late a day that men are now living who have been asked to plead “guilty or not guilty,” at the bar of a police court, for smoking in the streets of Boston. A dawning sense of the ridiculous, it is presumed, led at last to the discontinuance of arrests for this cause; but for some time longer officers were in the habit of inviting detected smokers to show respect for the memory of a defunct statute of the Commonwealth, by throwing their cigars into the gutter.

Turning to practical considerations, we shall find the tavern holding an important relation to its locality. In the first place, it being so nearly coeval with the laying out of villages, the tavern quickly became the one known landmark for its particular neighborhood. For instance, in Boston alone, the names Seven Star Lane, Orange Tree Lane, Red Lion Lane, Black Horse Lane, Sun Court, Cross Street, Bull Lane, not to mention others that now have so outlandish a sound to sensitive ears, were all derived from taverns. We risk little in saying that a Bostonian in London would think the great metropolis strangely altered for the worse should he find such hallowed names as Charing Cross, Bishopsgate, or Temple Bar replaced by those of some wealthy Smith, Brown, or Robinson; yet he looks on, while the same sort of vandalism is constantly going on at home, with hardly a murmur of disapproval, so differently does the same thing look from different points of view.

As further fixing the topographical character of taverns, it may be stated that in the old almanacs distances are always computed between the inns, instead of from town to town, as the practice now is.

Of course such topographical distinctions as we have pointed out began at a time when there were few public buildings; but the idea almost amounts to an instinct, because even now it is a common habit with every one to first direct the inquiring stranger to some prominent landmark. As such, tavern-signs were soon known and noted by all travellers.

Then again, tavern-titles are, in most cases, traced back to the old country. Love for the old home and its associations made the colonist like to take his mug of ale under the same sign that he had patronized when in England. It was a never-failing reminiscence to him. And innkeepers knew how to appeal to this feeling. Hence the Red Lion and the Lamb, the St. George and the Green Dragon, the Black, White, and Red Horse, the Sun, Seven Stars, and Globe, were each and all so many reminiscences of Old London. In their way they denote the same sort of tie that is perpetuated by the Bostons, Portsmouths, Falmouths, and other names of English origin.

II. THE EARLIER ORDINARIES

As early as 1638 there were at least two ordinaries, as taverns were then called, in Boston. That they were no ordinary taverns will at once occur to every one who considers the means then employed to secure sobriety and good order in them. For example, Josselyn says that when a stranger went into one for the purpose of refreshing the inner man, he presently found a constable at his elbow, who, it appeared, was there to see to it that the guest called for no more liquor than seemed good for him. If he did so, the beadle peremptorily countermanded the order, himself fixing the quantity to be drank; and from his decision there was no appeal.

Of these early ordinaries the earliest known to be licensed goes as far back as 1634, when Samuel Cole, comfit-maker, kept it. A kind of interest naturally goes with the spot of ground on which this the first house of public entertainment in the New England metropolis stood. On this point all the early authorities seem to have been at fault. Misled by the meagre record in the Book of Possessions, the zealous antiquaries of former years had always located Cole's Inn in what is now Merchants' Row. Since Thomas Lechford's Note Book has been printed, the copy of a deed, dated in the year 1638, in which Cole conveys part of his dwelling, with brew-house, etc., has been brought to light. The estate noted here is the one situated next northerly from the well-known Old Corner Bookstore, on Washington Street. It would, therefore, appear, beyond reasonable doubt, that Cole's Inn stood in what was already the high street of the town, nearly opposite Governor Winthrop's, which gives greater point to my Lord Leigh's refusal to accept Winthrop's proffered hospitality when his lordship was sojourning under Cole's roof-tree.

In his New England Tragedies, Mr. Longfellow introduces Cole, who is made to say, —

“But the ‘Three Mariners’ is an orderly,
Most orderly, quiet, and respectable house.”

Cole, certainly, could have had no other than a poet's license for calling his house by this name, as it is never mentioned otherwise than as *Cole's Inn*.

Another of these worthy landlords was William Hudson, who had leave to keep an ordinary in 1640. From his occupation of baker, he easily stepped into the congenial employment of innkeeper. Hudson was among the earliest settlers of Boston, and for many years is found most active in town affairs. His name is on the list of those who were admitted freemen of the Colony, in May, 1631. As his son William also followed the same calling, the distinction of Senior and Junior becomes necessary when speaking of them.

Hudson's house is said to have stood on the ground now occupied by the New England Bank, which, if true, would make this the most noted of tavern stands in all New England, or rather in all the colonies, as the same site afterward became known as the **Bunch of Grapes**. We shall have much occasion to notice it under that title. In Hudson's time the appearance of things about this locality was very different from what is seen to-day. All the earlier topographical features have been obliterated. Then the tide flowed nearly up to the tavern door, so making the spot a landmark of the ancient shore line as the first settlers had found it. Even so simple a statement as this will serve to show us how difficult is the task of fixing, with approximate accuracy, residences or sites on the water front, going as far back as the original occupants of the soil.

Next in order of time comes the house called the **King's Arms**. This celebrated inn stood at the head of the dock, in what is now Dock Square. Hugh Gunnison, victualler, kept a “cooke's shop” in his dwelling there some time before 1642, as he was then allowed to sell beer. The next

year he humbly prayed the court for leave “to draw the wyne which was spent in his house,” in the room of having his customers get it elsewhere, and then come into his place the worse for liquor, – a proceeding which he justly thought unfair as well as unprofitable dealing. He asks this favor in order that “God be not dishonored nor his people grieved.”

We know that Gunnison was favored with the custom of the General Court, because we find that body voting to defray the expenses incurred for being entertained in his house “out of ye custom of wines or ye wampum of ye Narragansetts.”

Gunnison’s house presently took the not always popular name of the *King’s Arms*, which it seems to have kept until the general overturning of thrones in the Old Country moved the Puritan rulers to order the taking down of the King’s arms, and setting up of the State’s in their stead; for, until the restoration of the Stuarts, the tavern is the same, we think, known as the **State’s Arms**. It then loyally resumed its old insignia again. Such little incidents show us how taverns frequently denote the fluctuation of popular opinion.

As Gunnison’s bill of fare has not come down to us, we are at a loss to know just how the colonial fathers fared at his hospitable board; but so long as the ‘treat’ was had at the public expense we cannot doubt that the dinners were quite as good as the larder afforded, or that full justice was done to the contents of mine host’s cellar by those worthy legislators and lawgivers.

When Hugh Gunnison sold out the *King’s Arms* to Henry Shrimpton and others, in 1651, for £600 sterling, the rooms in his house all bore some distinguishing name or title. For instance, one chamber was called the “Exchange.” We have sometimes wondered whether it was so named in consequence of its use by merchants of the town as a regular place of meeting. The chamber referred to was furnished with “one half-headed bedstead with blew pillars.” There was also a “Court Chamber,” which, doubtless, was the one assigned to the General Court when dining at Gunnison’s. Still other rooms went by such names as the “London” and “Star.” The hall contained three small rooms, or stalls, with a bar convenient to it. This room was for public use, but the apartments upstairs were for the “quality” alone, or for those who paid for the privilege of being private. All remember how, in “She Stoops to Conquer,” Miss Hardcastle is made to say: “Attend the Lion, there! – Pipes and tobacco for the Angel! – The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour!”

The **Castle Tavern** was another house of public resort, kept by William Hudson, Jr., at what is now the upper corner of Elm Street and Dock Square. Just at what time this noted tavern came into being is a matter extremely difficult to be determined; but, as we find a colonial order billeting soldiers in it in 1656, we conclude it to have been a public inn at that early day. At this time Hudson is styled lieutenant. If Whitman’s records of the Artillery Company be taken as correct, the younger Hudson had seen service in the wars. With “divers other of our best military men,” he had crossed the ocean to take service in the Parliamentary forces, in which he held the rank of ensign, returning home to New England, after an absence of two years, to find his wife publicly accused of faithlessness to her marriage vows.

The presence of these old inns at the head of the town dock naturally points to that locality as the business centre, and it continued to hold that relation to the commerce of Boston until, by the building of wharves and piers, ships were enabled to come up to them for the purpose of unloading. Before that time their cargoes were landed in boats and lighters. Far back, in the beginning of things, when everything had to be transported by water to and from the neighboring settlements, this was naturally the busiest place in Boston. In time Dock Square became, as its name indicates, a sort of delta for the confluent lanes running down to the dock below it.

Here, for a time, was centred all the movement to and from the shipping, and, we may add, about all the commerce of the infant settlement. Naturally the vicinity was most convenient for exposing for sale all sorts of merchandise as it was landed, which fact soon led to the establishment of a corn market on one side of the dock and a fish market on the other side.

The **Royal Exchange** stood on the site of the Merchants' Bank, in State Street. In this high-sounding name we find a sure sign that the town had outgrown its old traditions and was making progress toward more citified ways. As time wore on a town-house had been built in the market-place. Its ground floor was purposely left open for the citizens to walk about, discuss the news, or bargain in. In the popular phrase, they were said to meet "on 'change," and thereafter this place of meeting was known as the Exchange, which name the tavern and lane soon took to themselves as a natural right.

A glance at the locality in question shows the choice to have been made with a shrewd eye to the future. For example: the house fronted upon the town market-place, where, on stated days, fairs or markets for the sale of country products were held. On one side the tavern was flanked by the well-trodden lane which led to the town dock. From daily chaffering in a small way, those who wished to buy or sell came to meet here regularly. It also became the place for popular gatherings, – on such occasions of ceremony as the publishing of proclamations, mustering of troops, or punishment of criminals, – all of which vindicates its title to be called the heart of the little commonwealth.

Indeed, on this spot the pulse of its daily life beat with ever-increasing vigor. Hither came the country people, with their donkeys and panniers. Here in the open air they set up their little booths to tempt the town's folk with the display of fresh country butter, cheese and eggs, fruits or vegetables. Here came the citizen, with his basket on his arm, exchanging his stock of news or opinions as he bargained for his dinner, and so caught the drift of popular sentiment beyond his own chimney-corner.

To loiter a little longer at the sign of the *Royal Exchange*, which, by all accounts, always drew the best custom of the town, we find that, as long ago as Luke Vardy's time, it was a favorite resort of the Masonic fraternity, Vardy being a brother of the order. According to a poetic squib of the time, —

"Twas he who oft dispelled their sadness,
And filled the breth'ren's hearts with gladness."

After the burning of the town-house, near by, in the winter of 1747, had turned the General Court out of doors, that body finished its sessions at Vardy's; nor do we find any record of legislation touching Luke's taproom on that occasion.

Vardy's was the resort of the young bloods of the town, who spent their evenings in drinking, gaming, or recounting their love affairs. One July evening, in 1728, two young men belonging to the first families in the province quarreled over their cards or wine. A challenge passed. At that time the sword was the weapon of gentlemen. The parties repaired to a secluded part of the Common, stripped for the encounter, and fought it out by the light of the moon. After a few passes one of the combatants, named Woodbridge, received a mortal thrust; the survivor was hurried off by his friends on board a ship, which immediately set sail. This being the first duel ever fought in the town, it naturally made a great stir.

SATIRE ON LUKE TARDY OF THE ROYAL EXCHANGE TAVERN

By Joseph Green at a Masonic Meeting, 1749

"Where's honest *Luke*, – that cook from London?
For without *Luke* the *Lodge* is undone;
'Twas he who oft dispelled their sadness.
And fill'd the *Brethren's* heart with gladness.
For them his ample bowls o'erflow'd.
His table groan'd beneath its load;

For them he stretch'd his utmost art. —
Their honours grateful they impart.
Luke in return is made a *brother*,
As *good* and *true* as any other;
And still, though broke with age and wine,
Preserves the *token* and the *sign*.”

– “*Entertainments for a Winter’s Evening*.”

We cannot leave the neighborhood without at least making mention of the Massacre of the 5th of March, 1770, which took place in front of the tavern. It was then a three-story brick house, the successor, it is believed, of the first building erected on the spot and destroyed in the great fire of 1711. On the opposite corner of the lane stood the Royal Custom House, where a sentry was walking his lonely round on that frosty night, little dreaming of the part he was to play in the coming tragedy. With the assault made by the mob on this sentinel, the fatal affray began which sealed the cause of the colonists with their blood. At this time the tavern enjoyed the patronage of the newly arrived British officers of the army and navy as well as of citizens or placemen, of the Tory party, so that its inmates must have witnessed, with peculiar feelings, every incident of that night of terror. Consequently the house with its sign is shown in Revere’s well-known picture of the massacre.

One more old hostelry in this vicinity merits a word from us. Though not going so far back or coming down to so late a date as some of the houses already mentioned, nevertheless it has ample claim not to be passed by in silence.

The **Anchor**, otherwise the “Blew Anchor,” stood on the ground now occupied by the Globe newspaper building. In early times it divided with the *State’s Arms* the patronage of the magistrates, who seem to have had a custom, perhaps not yet quite out of date, of adjourning to the ordinary over the way after transacting the business which had brought them together. So we find that the commissioners of the United Colonies, and even the reverend clergy, when they were summoned to the colonial capital to attend a synod, were usually entertained here at the *Anchor*.

This fact presupposes a house having what we should now call the latest improvements, or at least possessing some advantages over its older rivals in the excellence of its table or cellarage. When Robert Turner kept it, his rooms were distinguished, after the manner of the old London inns, as the Cross Keys, Green Dragon, Anchor and Castle Chamber, Rose and Sun, Low Room, so making old associations bring in custom.

It was in 1686 that John Dunton, a London bookseller whom Pope lampoons in the “Dunciad,” came over to Boston to do a little business in the bookselling line. The vicinity of the town-house was then crowded with book-shops, all of which drove a thriving trade in printing and selling sermons, almanacs, or fugitive essays of a sort now quite unknown outside of a few eager collectors. The time was a critical one in New England, as she was feeling the tremor of the coming revolt which sent King James into exile; yet to read Dunton’s account of men and things as he thought he saw them, one would imagine him just dropped into Arcadia, rather than breathing the threatening atmosphere of a country that was tottering on the edge of revolution.

But it is to him, at any rate, that we are indebted for a portrait of the typical landlord, – one whom we feel at once we should like to have known, and, having known, to cherish in our memory. With a flourish of his goose-quill Dunton introduces us to George Monk, landlord of the *Anchor*, who, somehow, reminds us of Chaucer’s Harry Bailly, and Ben Jonson’s Goodstock. And we more than suspect from what follows that Dunton had tasted the “Anchor” Madeira, not only once, but again.

George Monk, mine host of the *Anchor*, Dunton tells us, was “a person so remarkable that, had I not been acquainted with him, it would be a hard matter to make any New England man believe that I had been in Boston; for there was no one house in all the town more noted, or where a man

might meet with better accommodation. Besides he was a brisk and jolly man, whose conversation was coveted by all his guests as the life and spirit of the company.”

In this off-hand sketch we behold the traditional publican, now, alas! extinct. Gossip, newsmonger, banker, pawnbroker, expediter of men or effects, the intimate association so long existing between landlord and public under the old régime everywhere brought about a still closer one among the guild itself, so establishing a network of communication coextensive with all the great routes from Maine to Georgia.

Situated just “around the corner” from the council-chamber, the *Anchor* became, as we have seen, the favorite haunt of members of the government, and so acquired something of an official character and standing. We have strong reason to believe that, under the mellowing influence of the punch-bowl, those antique men of iron mould and mien could now and then crack a grim jest or tell a story or possibly troll a love-ditty, with grave gusto. At any rate, we find Chief Justice Sewall jotting down in his “Diary” the familiar sentence, “The deputies treated and I treated.” And, to tell the truth, we would much prefer to think of the colonial fathers as possessing even some human frailties rather than as the statues now replacing their living forms and features in our streets.

But now and then we can imagine the noise of great merriment making the very windows of some of these old hostelries rattle again. We learn that the **Greyhound** was a respectable public house, situated in Roxbury, and of very early date too; for the venerable and saintly Eliot lived upon one side and his pious colleague, Samuel Danforth, on the other. Yet notwithstanding its being, as it were, hedged in between two such eminent pillars of the church, the godly Danforth bitterly complains of the provocation which frequenters of the tavern sometimes tried him withal, and naïvely informs us that, when from his study windows he saw any of the town dwellers loitering there he would go down and “chide them away.”

It is related in the memoirs of the celebrated Indian fighter, Captain Benjamin Church, that he and Captain Converse once found themselves in the neighborhood of a tavern at the South End of Boston. As old comrades they wished to go in and take a parting glass together; but, on searching their pockets, Church could find only sixpence and Converse not a penny to bless himself with, so they were compelled to forego this pledge of friendship and part with thirsty lips. Going on to Roxbury, Church luckily found an old neighbor of his, who generously lent him money enough to get home with. He tells the anecdote in order to show to what straits the parsimony of the Massachusetts rulers had reduced him, their great captain, to whom the colony owed so much.

The **Red Lion**, in North Street, was one of the oldest public houses, if not the oldest, to be opened at the North End of the town. It stood close to the waterside, the adjoining wharf and the lane running down to it both belonging to the house and both taking its name. The old Red Lion Lane is now Richmond Street, and the wharf has been filled up, so making identification of the old sites difficult, to say the least. Nicholas Upshall, the stout-hearted Quaker, kept the *Red Lion* as early as 1654. At his death the land on which tavern and brewhouse stood went to his children. When the persecution of his sect began in earnest, Upshall was thrown into Boston jail, for his outspoken condemnation of the authorities and their rigorous proceedings toward this people. He was first doomed to perpetual imprisonment. A long and grievous confinement at last broke Upshall’s health, if it did not, ultimately, prove the cause of his death.

The **Ship Tavern** stood at the head of Clark’s Wharf, or on the southwest corner of North and Clark streets, according to present boundaries. It was an ancient brick building, dating as far back as 1650 at least. John Vyal kept it in 1663. When Clark’s Wharf was built it was the principal one of the town. Large ships came directly up to it, so making the tavern a most convenient resort for masters of vessels or their passengers, and associating it with the locality itself. King Charles’s commissioners lodged at Vyal’s house, when they undertook the task of bringing down the pride of the rulers of the colony a peg. One of them, Sir Robert Carr, pummeled a constable who attempted to arrest him in this house. He afterward refused to obey a summons to answer for the assault before the

magistrates, loftily alleging His Majesty's commission as superior to any local mandate whatever. He thus retaliated Governor Leverett's affront to the commissioners in keeping his hat on his head when their authority to act was being read to the council. But Leverett was a man who had served under Cromwell, and had no love for the cavaliers or they for him. The commissioners sounded trumpets and made proclamations; but the colony kept on the even tenor of its way, in defiance of the royal mandate, equally regardless of the storm gathering about it, as of the magnitude of the conflict in which it was about to plunge, all unarmed and unprepared.

III. IN REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

Such thoroughfares as King Street, just before the Revolution, were filled with horsemen, donkeys, oxen, and long-tailed trucks, with a sprinkling of one-horse chaises and coaches of the kind seen in Hogarth's realistic pictures of London life. To these should be added the chimney-sweeps, wood-sawyers, market-women, soldiers, and sailors, who are now quite as much out of date as the vehicles themselves are. There being no sidewalks, the narrow footway was protected, here and there, sometimes by posts, sometimes by an old cannon set upright at the corners, so that the traveller dismounted from his horse or alighted from coach or chaise at the very threshold.

Next in the order of antiquity, as well as fame, to the taverns already named, comes the **Bunch of Grapes** in King, now State Street. The plain three-story stone building situated at the upper corner of Kilby Street stands where the once celebrated tavern did. Three gilded clusters of grapes dangled temptingly over the door before the eye of the passer-by. Apart from its palate-tickling suggestions, a pleasant aroma of antiquity surrounds this symbol, so dear to all devotees of Bacchus from immemorial time. In *Measure for Measure* the clown says, "Twas in the Bunch of Grapes, where indeed you have a delight to sit, have you not?" And Froth answers, "I have so, because it is an open room and good for winter."

This house goes back to the year 1712, when Francis Holmes kept it, and perhaps further still, though we do not meet with it under this title before Holmes's time. From that time, until after the Revolution, it appears to have always been open as a public inn, and, as such, is feelingly referred to by one old traveller as the best punch-house to be found in all Boston.

When the line came to be drawn between conditional loyalty, and loyalty at any rate, the *Bunch of Grapes* became the resort of the High Whigs, who made it a sort of political headquarters, in which patriotism only passed current, and it was known as the Whig tavern. With military occupation and bayonet rule, still further intensifying public feeling, the line between Whig and Tory houses was drawn at the threshold. It was then kept by Marston. Cold welcome awaited the appearance of scarlet regimentals or a Tory phiz there; so gentlemen of that side of politics also formed cliques of their own at other houses, in which the talk and the toasts were more to their liking, and where they could abuse the Yankee rebels over their port to their heart's content.

But, apart from political considerations, one or two incidents have given the *Bunch of Grapes* a kind of pre-eminence over all its contemporaries, and, therefore, ought not to be passed over when the house is mentioned.

On Monday, July 30, 1733, the first grand lodge of Masons in America was organized here by Henry Price, a Boston tailor, who had received authority from Lord Montague, Grand Master of England, for the purpose.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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