

EARLE ALICE MORSE

STAGE-COACH AND
TAVERN DAYS

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«Public Domain»

Earle A.

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Alice Morse Earle

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CHAPTER I

THE PURITAN ORDINARY

In reverent and affectionate retrospective view of the influences and conditions which had power and made mark upon the settlement of New England, we are apt to affirm with earnest sentiment that religion was the one force, the one aim, the one thought, of the lives of our forbears. It was indeed an ever present thought and influence in their lives; but they possessed another trait which is as evident in their records as their piety, and which adds an element of human interest to their story which their stern Puritanism never could have done; with them their neighborliness, was as ever present and as sincere as their godliness. Hence the establishment of an hostelry, – an ordinary it was usually called, – for the entertainment of travellers and for the mutual comfort of the settlers, was scarcely second to their providing a gathering-place for the church.

The General Court of Massachusetts at an early date took decisive measures with regard to houses of common entertainment. No one was permitted to keep without license “a common victuallng house,” under a penalty of twenty shillings a week. Soon the power of granting licenses was transferred to the County Courts, as the constant increase in the number of ordinaries made too constant detailed work for so important a body as the General Court.

Consideration for the welfare of travellers, and a desire to regulate the sale of intoxicating liquors, seemed to the magistrates important enough reasons not only to counsel but to enforce the opening of some kind of a public house in each community, and in 1656 the General Court of Massachusetts made towns liable to a fine for not sustaining an ordinary. Towns were fined and admonished for not conforming to this law; Concord, Massachusetts, was one of the number. The Colonial Records of Connecticut, in 1644, ordered “one sufficient inhabitant” in each town to keep an ordinary, since “strangers were straitened” for want of entertainment. A frequent and natural choice of location for establishing an ordinary was at a ferry. Tristram Coffyn kept both ferry and ordinary at Newbury, Massachusetts; there was an ordinary at Beverly Ferry, known until 1819 as the “Old Ferry Tavern.”

Great inducements were offered to persons to keep an ordinary; sometimes land was granted them, or pasturage for their cattle, or exemption from church rates and school taxes. In 1682, Hugh March, of Newbury, Massachusetts, petitioned for a renewal of his license to keep an ordinary, saying thus: “The town of Newbury, some years since, were destitute of an ordinary, and could not persuade any person to keep it. For want of an ordinary they were twice fined by the county, and would have been a third time had I not undertaken it.” In 1668 the town had persuaded one Captain White to “undertake an ordinary” on high moral grounds; and it is painful to record that, though he did so unwillingly, he found the occupation so profitable that he finally got into disgrace through it.

The early taverns were not opened wholly for the convenience of travellers; they were for the comfort of the townspeople, for the interchange of news and opinions, the sale of solacing liquors, and the incidental sociability; in fact, the importance of the tavern to its local neighbors was far greater than to travellers. There were many restrictions upon the entertainment of unknown strangers. The landlord had to give the name of all such strangers to the selectmen, who could, if they deemed them detrimental or likely to become a charge upon the community, warn them out of the town. The old town records are full of such warnings, some of them most amusing. Nor could the landlord “knowingly harbor in house, barn, or stable, any rogues, vagabonds, thieves, sturdy beggars,

masterless men or women.” Our ancestors were kindly neighbors to godly folk, but sternly intolerant of wrong-doers, or even of those suspected of wrong.

We cannot wonder that citizens did not seek to become ordinary-keepers when we learn how they were hampered, or how the magistrates tried to hamper them. They were at one time not to be permitted to sell “sack or strong waters,” nor have any dancing or singing within their walls. No games could be played in their precincts. They were even hindered in the selling of cakes and buns. Innholders and victuallers were prohibited the brewing of beer, but that soon had to be revoked. The price and quality of beer was constantly being established by law and as constantly changed. In 1634 the Court set the price of a single meal at sixpence, and not above a penny for an ale-quart of beer out of meal time. Then, a little later, the landlords were forbidden to change more than twelve pence for a meal; and they were ordered to furnish meals to “pore people,” as simply as called for.

One Richard Cluffe, in an utterance which sounds like the voice of Shakespeare’s clown, exclaimed at a mean meal served to him, “What! shall I pay twelve pence for the fragments which the grand jury roages have left?” The majesty of the law could not thus be attacked in Massachusetts in the year 1640. Three pounds six shillings and eight pence did Cluffe pay for his rash and angry words – truly a costly dinner.

The ordinary called The Anchor, at Lynn, was kept by one Joseph Armitage. Being a halfway house between Boston and Salem, the magistrates made it their stopping-place on their various trips from court to court. The accounts of this ordinary are still preserved. Governor Endicott’s bills for “vitals, beare, and logen,” for “bear and caeks,” were paid by the Auditor. Governor Bradstreet had “beare and wyne.” The succeeding landlord of this ordinary was described by John Dunton in 1686 as a hearty, talkative, fine old gentleman, one of Oliver Cromwell’s soldiers. Dunton had at The Anchor a good fowl and a bottle of sack, instead of the beer and cakes of the abstemious Puritan governor.

The “Sports of the Innyard” were sternly frowned upon by Puritan magistrates. Among the games which were named as forbidden in the ordinaries were “carding,” dicing, tally, bowls, billiards, slidegroat, shuffle-board, quoits, loggets, ninepins. After a time shuffle-board and bowls were tolerated in private houses, though not deemed reputable at the ordinary.

The Puritan ordinary saw some wedding scenes, and apparently some tentatively gay scenes, since in 1631 the magistrates of Massachusetts Bay, in “consequence of some miscarriages at weddings” which had been held in an ordinary, passed a law prohibiting dancing on such occasions in public houses.

Lord Ley lodged at the Boston ordinary in 1637; and when Governor Winthrop urged him to come to his home from the inn, his lordship declined, saying that the house where he was staying was so well ordered that he could be as private there as elsewhere.

In the towns a night-watch was soon instituted, and the instructions given by the Boston magistrates smack strongly of Dogberry’s famous charge. Their number each night was eight; they were “to walk two by two together, a youth joined to an older and more sober person.” Lights had to be out, – or hidden, – especially in the ordinaries. “If they see lights, to inquire if there be warrantable cause; and if they hear any noise or disorder, wisely to demand the reason; if they are dancing and singing vainly, to admonish them to cease; if they do not discontinue after moderate admonition, then the constable to take their names and acquaint the authorities therewith. If they find young men and maidens, not of known fidelity, walking after ten o’clock, modestly to demand the cause, and if they appear ill-minded, to watch them narrowly, command them to go to their lodgings, and if they refuse then to secure them till morning.” In 1663 Josselyn found that young sparks walking with their sweet-hearts, or “Marmalet-Madams” as he called them, had to go home at nine o’clock.

Constant and strenuous efforts were made from earliest days to prevent drunkenness and all tavern disorders. As early as 1637 complaints had been made that “much drunkenness, waste of the good creatures of God, mispense of time, and other disorders” had taken place at the ordinaries.

Frequent laws were made about selling liquor to the “devilish bloody salvages,” and many were the arrests and fines and punishments therefor.

Landlords were forbidden by the Court in 1645 “to suffer anyone to be drunk or drink excessively, or continue tippling above the space of half an hour in any of their said houses under penalty of 5s. for every such offence suffered; and every person found drunk in the said houses or elsewhere shall forfeit 10s.; and for every excessive drinking he shall forfeit 3s. 4d.; for sitting idle and continuing drinking above half an hour, 2s. 6d.; and it is declared to be excessive drinking of wine when above half a pint of wine is allowed at one time to one person to drink: provided that it shall be lawful for any strangers, or lodgers, or any person or persons, in an orderly way to continue in such houses of common entertainment during meal times or upon lawful business, what time their occasions shall require.”

Drunkards were severely punished by being thrust into the bilboes, set in the stocks, and whipped. In 1632 one “James Woodward shalbe sett in the bilbowes for being drunke at New-Towne.” Robert Wright was fined twenty shillings and ordered to sit in the stocks an hour for being “twice distempered in drink.” On September 3, 1633, in Boston: —

“Robert Coles was fyned ten shillings and enjoynd to stand with a white sheet of paper on his back, whereon Drunkard shalbe written in great lres, and to stand therewith soe long as the Court find meet, for abusing himself shamefully with drinke.”

This did not reform Robert Coles, for a year later his badge of disgrace was made permanent: —

“Robert Coles for drunkenness by him committed at Rocksbury shalbe disfranchizd, weare about his neck, and so to hang upon his outwd garment a D. made of redd cloth & sett upon white: to continyu this for a yeare, & not to have it off any time hee comes among company, Vnder the penalty of xl s. for the first offence, and 5 £ for the second, and afterward to be punished by the Court as they think meet: also *hee is to wear the D outwards.*”

It might be inferred from the clause I have italicized that the Puritan drunkard was not without guile, and that some had worn the scarlet letter and hidden it from public view as skilfully as the moral brand is often hidden from public knowledge to-day. Women, also, were punished severely for “intemperate drinking from one ordinary to another,” but such examples were rare.

Lists of names of common drunkards were given to landlords in some towns (among them New Castle, New Hampshire), and landlords were warned not to sell liquor to them. Licenses were removed and fines imposed on those who did not heed the warning.

The tithing-man, that amusing but most bumptious public functionary of colonial times, was at first the official appointed to spy specially upon the ordinaries. He inspected these houses, made complaint of any disorders he discovered, and gave in to the constable the names of idle drinkers and gamers. He warned the keepers of public houses to sell no more liquor to any whom he fancied had been tippling too freely. John Josselyn, an English visitor in Boston in 1663, complained bitterly thus: —

“At houses of entertainment into which a stranger went, he was presently followed by one appointed to that office, who would thrust himself into the company uninvited, and if he called for more drink than the officer thought in his judgement he could soberly bear away, he would presently countermand it, and appoint the proportion, beyond which he could not get one drop.”

Now that certainly was trying. Nor could it have been agreeable to would-be cheerful frequenters of Greyhound Tavern, in Roxbury, to have godly Parson Danforth, when he saw from his study windows any neighbors or strangers lingering within the tavern doors, come sallying forth from

his house across the way, and walk sternly into their company, and, as he said, “chide them away.” Patient must have been the Greyhound’s landlord to have stood such pious meddling and hindrance to trade.

Governor Winthrop gives an account of the exploits of a Boston constable in 1644, which shows the restraint held over a lodger in a Boston ordinary at that date.

“There fell out a troublesome business in Boston. An English sailor happened to be drunk and was carried to his lodging; and the Constable (a Godly man and much zealous against such disorders) hearing of it, found him out, being upon his bed asleep; so he awaked him, and led him to the stocks, no magistrate being at home. He being left in the stocks, some one of La Tours French gentlemen visitors in Boston lifted up the stocks and let him out. The Constable hearing of it, went to the Frenchman (being then gone and quiet) and would needs carry *him* to the stocks. The Frenchman offered to yield himself to go to prison but the Constable, not understanding his language, pressed him to go to the stocks. The Frenchman resisted and drew his sword. With that company came in and disarmed him, and carried him by force to the stocks, but soon after the Constable took him out and carried him to prison.”

Winthrop gravely enumerates the faults of the constable, such as his “transgressing the bounds of his office, the fruits of ignorant and misguided zeal, not putting a hook on the stocks,” etc., and the matter bade fair to assume some gravity, since it was deemed in France “most ignominious to be laid in the stocks.” Yet Winthrop took care not to rebuke the Constable in public lest he “discourage and discountenance an honest officer.”

It has been said that the homely injunction “to mind your own business” was the most difficult lesson New Englanders ever had to learn, and that even now it has been acquired and practised in the cities only, not in the country.

Administration of government in those days certainly consisted much of meddlesome interference in the private affairs of daily life. Experience has since taught that the free-will of the citizen is the best regulator in such matters.

It is one of the curiosities of old-time legislation that the use of tobacco was in earliest colonial days plainly regarded by the magistrates and elders as far more sinful, degrading, and harmful than indulgence in intoxicating liquors. Both the use and the planting of it were forbidden, the latter being permitted in small quantities “for meere necessitie, for phisick, for preservaceon of the health, and that the same be taken privately by auncient men.” Landlords were ordered not to “suffer any tobacco to be taken into their houses” on penalty of a fine to the “victualler,” and another to “the party that takes it.” The “Creature called Tobacko” seemed to have an immortal life. The laws were constantly altered and were enforced, still tobacco was grown and was smoked. Soon it was forbidden to “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 offense thereat; which, if any do, the said person shall forbear upon pain of two shillings sixpence for every such offense.” No one could take tobacco “publicquely” nor in his own house or anywhere else before strangers. Two men were forbidden to smoke together. Windsor required a physician’s certificate ere it could be used. No one could smoke within two miles of the meeting-house on the Sabbath day. There were wicked backsliders who were caught smoking around the corner of the meeting-house, and others on the street, and they were fined, and set in the stocks, and in cages. Until within a few years there were New England towns where tobacco-smoking was prohibited on the streets, and innocent cigar-loving travellers were astounded at being requested to cease smoking. Mr. Drake wrote in 1886 that he knew men, then living, who had had to plead guilty or not guilty in a Boston police court for smoking in the streets of Boston. In Connecticut in

early days a great indulgence was permitted to travellers – a man could smoke once during a journey of ten miles.

The relationship of tavern and meeting-house in New England did not end with their simultaneous establishment; they continued the most friendly neighbors. And so long as a public house was commonly known as an ordinary, those who were high in church counsels looked sharply to the control of these houses of sojourn. The minister and tithing-man were aided in their spying and their chiding by deacons, elders, and church members.

Usually the ordinary and the meeting-house were close companions. Licenses to keep houses of entertainment were granted with the condition that the tavern must be near the meeting-house – a keen contrast to our present laws prohibiting the sale of liquor within a certain distance of any church. A Boston ordinary-keeper, in 1651, was granted permission to keep a house of common entertainment “provided hee keepe it neare the new meeting-house.”

Those who know of the old-time meeting-house can fully comprehend the desire of the colonists to have a tavern near at hand, especially during the winter services. Through autumn rains, and winter frosts and snows, and fierce northwesterners, the poorly-built meeting-house stood unheated, growing more damp, more icy, more deadly, with each succeeding week. Women cowered, shivering, half-frozen, over the feeble heat of a metal foot-stove as the long sermon dragged on and the few coals became ashes. Men stamped their feet and swung their arms in the vain attempt to warm the blood. Gladly and eagerly did all troop from the gloomy meeting-house to the cheerful tavern to thaw out before the afternoon service, and to warm up before the ride or walk home in the late afternoon. It was a scandal in many a town that godly church-members partook too freely of tavern cheer at the nooning; the only wonder is that the entire congregation did not succumb in a body to the potent flip and toddy of the tavern-keeper.

In midsummer the hot sun beat down on the meeting-house roof, and the burning rays poured in the unshaded windows. The taproom of the tavern and the green trees in its dooryard offered a pleasant shade to tired church-goers, and its well-sweep afforded a grateful drink to those who turned not to the taproom.

There are ever backsliders in all church communities; many walked into the ordinary door instead of up the church “alley.” The chimney seat of the inn was more comfortable than the narrow seat of the “pue.” The General Court of Massachusetts passed a law requiring all innkeepers within a mile of any meeting-house, to clear their houses “during the hours of the exercise.” “Thus,” Mr. Field says wittily, “the townsmen were frozen out of the tavern to be frozen in the meeting-house.”

Our ancestors had no reverence for a church save as a literal meeting-house, and it was not unusual to transform the house of God into a tavern. The Great House at Charlestown, Massachusetts, the official residence of Governor Winthrop, became a meeting-house in 1633, and then a tavern, the Three Cranes, kept by Robert Leary and his descendants for many years. It was destroyed in June, 1775, in the burning of the town. In this Great House, destined to become a tavern, lived Governor Winthrop when he announced his famous discountenance of health-drinking at the tables and in public places. This first of all temperance pledges in New England is recorded in his Diary in his own language, which was as temperate as his intent: —

“The Governor, upon consideration of the inconveniences which had grown in England by drinking one to another, restrained it at his own table, and wished others to do the like; so it grew, little by little, into disuse.”

Frequently religious services were held in the spacious rooms of the tavern, until a meeting-house was built; as in the town of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and in Providence, Rhode Island, where Roger Williams preached. Many of the Puritan ordinaries were thus used.

Ecclesiastical affairs were managed at the ordinary, among them that most ticklish and difficult of all adjustments and allotments, namely, seating the meeting. The “Elders, Deacons, and Selectmen”

of Cambridge were made a “constant and settled power for regulating the seating of persons in the meeting-house.” They were ordered to meet at the ordinary, and such orders and appointments as this were made: —

“Brother Richard Jackson’s wife to sit where Sister Kempster was wont to sit.
Ester Sparhawke to sit in the place where Mrs. Upham is removed from. Mr. Day to sit the second seat from the table. Ensign Samuel Greene to sit at the Table. Goody Gates to sit at the end of the Deacon’s seat. Goody Wines to sit in the Gallery.”

It needed much consultation and thought to “seat the meeting.” We can imagine the deacons loosening their tongues over the tavern flip and punch, and arguing confidentially over the standing, the wealth, and temper of the various parties to be seated.

There were in Boston at different times several ordinaries and taverns known as the King’s Arms. One of the earliest ones stood at the head of Dock Square. In 1651 one Hugh Gunnison, vintner, and his wife, sold this house, known by the sign of the King’s Arms, with its furniture and appurtenances, for the sum of £600 sterling, a goodly sum for the day. An inventory of the “p’ticular goods and household stuffe” still exists, and is of much interest not only as indicating the furnishings of a house of that character in that colony at that date, but showing also the naming of the chambers, as in the English inns of Shakespeare’s day.

“In the chamber called the Exchange one halfe bedstead with blew pillows, one livery Cupbord coloured blue, one long table, benches, two formes and one carved chaire.

“In the Kitchen three formes dressers shelves.

“In the Larder one square Table banisters dressers & shelves round.

“In the Hall, three Small Roomes with tables and benches in them, one table about six foote long in the Hall and one bench.

“In the low parlor one bedstead one table and benches two formes, one small frame of a form and shelves, one Closet with shelves.

“In the room Vnder the closet one child’s bedsted.

“In the Chamber called London, one bedsted two benches.

“In the Chamber over London one bedsted one crosse table one forme one bench.

“In the Closet next the Exchange, shelves.

“In the barr by the hall, three shelves, the frame of a low stoole.

“In the vpper p’lor one bedsted two chaires one table one forme bench and shelves.

“In the Nursery one Crosse Table with shelvs.

“In the Court Chamber one Long table three formes one livery cupbord, & benches.

“In the closet within the Court chamber one bedsted and shelvs.

“In the Starr chamber one long table, one bedsted, one livery Cupbord one chaire three formes with benches.

“In the Garret over the Court chamber one bedsted one table two formes.

“In the garret over the closet in the Court chamber one bedsted one smale forme.

“In the foure garrett chambers over the Starr chamber three bedsteds four tables with benches.

“In the brewhouse one Cop’, twoe fatts, one vnder back, one vpper back, one kneading trough one dresser one brake.

“In the stable one Racke & manger.

“In the yarde one pumpe, pipes to convey the water to the brew house, fyve hogg styes, one house of office.

“The signes of the Kinges Armes and signe posts.”

This was certainly a large house and amply furnished. It contained thirteen bedsteads and a vast number of tables, forms, benches, shelves, and cupboards.

The rooms of the Blue Anchor, another Boston ordinary, also bore names: the Rose and Sun Low room, the Cross Keys, the Green Dragon, the Anchor and Castle.

We can form, from the items of this inventory, a very good and detailed picture of the interior of a Boston ordinary at that date. But it must not be imagined that there were at the time of this sale many colonial ordinaries as amply furnished as the King's Arms. The accommodations in the public houses of small towns, indeed perhaps everywhere in New England save in Boston and Salem, were very primitive. The ordinary was doubtless as well furnished as the private homes of its neighbors, and that was very simple of fashion, while the fare was scant of variety.

We know that even the early ordinaries had sign-boards.

The ordinary-keeper had his license granted with the proviso that “there be sett up some inoffensive sign obvious for direction to strangers” – this in Salem in 1645. In 1655 the Rhode Island courts ordered that all persons appointed to keep an ordinary should “cause to be sett out a convenient Signe at ye most perspicuous place of ye said house, thereby to give notice to strangers yt it is a house of public entertainment, and this to be done with all convenient speed.”

Women kept ordinaries and taverns from early days. Widows abounded, for the life of the male colonists was hard, exposure was great, and many died in middle age. War also had many victims. Tavern-keeping was the resort of widows of small means then, just as the “taking of boarders” is to-day. Women were skilled in business affairs and competent; many licenses were granted to them to keep victualling-houses, to draw wine, and make and sell beer. In 1684 the wife of one Nicholas Howard was licensed “to entertain Lodgers in the absence of her husband”; while other women were permitted to sell food and drink but could not entertain lodgers because their husbands were absent from home, thus drawing nice distinctions. A Salem dame in 1645 could keep an ordinary if she provided a “godly man” to manage her business. Some women became renowned as good innkeepers, and they were everywhere encouraged in the calling.

The colonists did not have to complain long, nor to pine long for lack of ordinaries. In 1675 Cotton Mather said every other house in Boston was an ale-house.

One of the first serious protests against the increase of ordinaries and ale-houses in the colonies, and appreciation of their pernicious effects, came from Nathaniel Saltonstall of Haverhill, Massachusetts. He was a magistrate, and an officer in the militia. He was appointed one of the judges in the Salem witchcraft trials; but in this latter capacity he refused to serve, which may be taken as a proof of his advanced thought. He was said to be “a man of superior powers of mind and rare talents.” In December, 1696, he sent a letter to the Salem Court which ran thus: —

“Much Hon'd Gentlemen:

“I allways thought it great prudence and Christianity in our former leaders and rulers, by their laws to state the number of publique houses in towns and for regulation of such houses, as were of necessity, thereby to prevent all sorts, almost, of wickednesses which daily grow in upon us like a flood. But alas! I see not but that now the case is over, and such (as to some places I may term them) pest-houses and places of enticement (tho not so intended by the Justices) the sin are multiplied. It is multiplied too openly, that the cause of it may be, the price of retailers' fees, etc. I pray what need of six retailers in Salisbury, and of more than one in Haverhill, and some other towns where the people, when taxes and rates for the country and ministers are collecting, with open mouths complain of povertie and being hardly

dealt with, and yet I am fully informed, can spend much time, and spend their estates at such blind holes, as are clandestinely and unjustly petitioned for; and more threaten to get licenses, chiefly by repairing to a remote court, where they are not known or suspected, but pass for current, and thereby the towns are abused, and the youth get evil habits; and men sent out on country service at such places waste much of their time, yet expect pay for it, in most pernicious loitering and what, and sometimes by foolish if not pot-valiant firing and shooting off guns, not for the destruction of enemies, but to the wonderful disturbance and affrightment of the inhabitants, which is not the service a scout is allowed and maintained for.

“Please to see what good is done by giving a license to Robert Hastings, in such a by-place about three miles from the publique house in town. The man himself I am sure has no cause, nor do I believe the town and travellers if they are sober men, will ever give the court thanks for the first grant to him, or the further renewal thereof.

“But now the bravado is made, what is done is not enough; we must have a third tippling house at Peter Patey’s about midway between the other two, which they boast as cock-sure of, and have it is thought laid in, for this very end, an unaccountable store of cyder, rum, molasses, and what not. It is well if this stock be not now spent on, in procuring subscriptions for to obtain the villain’s license, which I fear, knowing the man, we may be bold to say, wickedness will be practiced and without control... I have done my part in court, as to what I heard of, to prevent such confiding licenses to persons unknown...

“I am now God’s prisoner and cant come abroad, and have waited long to speak of those, and others, but as yet cant meet with an opportunity. You have nothing here of personal animosity of mine against any man, but zeal and faithfulness to my country and town, and to the young and rising generation that they be not too much at liberty to live and do as they list. Accept of the good intentions of, gentlemen, your humble servant,

“N. Saltonstall.”

There is a sturdy ring about this letter, a freedom from cant and conventional religious expressions, that serve to paint clearly the character of the writer, and show us by one of those side-glances, which, as Ruskin says, often afford more light than a full stare, the sort of man that built up New England in the beginning, on its solid and noble foundations.

In spite of the forebodings of Saltonstall and other Christian gentlemen, the flood of wickedness and disorder which he predicted was slow in its approach. The orderly ways and close restrictions and surveillance of the Puritan ordinary lasted until long after public houses were called taverns.

In the latter quarter of the seventeenth century and the first of the eighteenth a nearly continual diary was kept by a resident of Boston, Judge Samuel Sewall, who might be called Boston’s first citizen. He was rich, he was good, he was intelligent, and some portions of his diary are of great value for the light they throw on contemporary customs and events. He has been called a Puritan Pepys; but in one respect he is markedly unlike Pepys, who gave us ample record of London taverns, and of tavern life in his day. It is doubtful that Sewall knew much about tavern life in Boston; for his private life was a great contrast to that of our gay Pepys. Judge Sewall was a home-body, tenderly careful of his children – he had fourteen; a “loving servant” to his wives – he had three; especially devoted to his mother-in-law – he had but one, the richest woman in Boston; kind to his neighbors, poor as well as rich; attentive to his friends in sickness, and thoughtful of them in death; zealous in religious duties both in the church and the family; public-spirited and upright in his service to his town and state, from his high office as judge, down to fulfilling petty duties such as serving on the watch. He had little time for tavern life, and little inclination to it; and he condemned men who “kept ordinaries and sold rum.” He was a shining example of the “New-English men,” whose fast-thinning ranks he so sadly

deplored, and whose virtues he extolled. He occasionally refers in his diary to ordinaries. Sometimes he soberly drank healths and grace-cups within Boston and Cambridge tavern walls with the honored Deputies, at the installation of a new Governor, on the King's Coronation Day, or a Royal Birthday. Sometimes we read of his pleasuring trips with his wife to the Greyhound Tavern in Roxbury, his gala dinner of boiled pork and roast fowls, and his riding home at curfew in "brave moonshine." That clear June moonlight shining down through the centuries does not display to us any very gay figures, any very jolly riders. We can see the Judge in rich but sad-colored attire, with his wife on a pillion behind him, soberly jogging home, doubtless singing psalms as they went through the short stretches of Roxbury woods; for he sang psalms everywhere apparently, when he was permitted to do so. This is as might be expected of a man who on another pleasure jaunt with his wife left her eating cherries in the orchard, while he, like any other Puritan, "sweetened his mouth with a bit of Calvin," that is, he sat indoors and read *Calvin on Psalms*.

At this time – in the year 1714 – Boston had a population approaching ten thousand. It had thirty-four ordinary- or inn-holders, of whom twelve were women; four common victuallers, of whom one was a woman; forty-one retailers of liquor, of whom seventeen were women, and a few cider sellers. There were, therefore, ample places in which liquor could be bought; but Sewall's entire diary gives proof of the orderliness of life in Boston. There are not half a dozen entries which give any records or show any evidence of tavern disorders. In 1708 an inquiry was made by the magistrates "as to debaucheries at the Exchange," and as a result one young man was fined five shillings for cursing, ten shillings for throwing a beer-pot and scale-box at the maid, and twenty shillings for lying – that was all. The longest entry is on the Queen's birthday in 1714: —

"My neighbor Colson knocks at my door about nine P.M., or past, to tell of disorders at the ordinary at the South End, kept by Mr. Wallace. He desired me that I would accompany Mr. Bromfield and Constable Howell hither. It was 35 minutes past nine before Mr. Bromfield came, then we went, took Æneas Salter with us. Found much company. They refused to go away. Said was there to drink the Queen's health and had many other healths to drink. Called for more drink and drank to me: I took notice of the affront, to them. Said they must and would stay upon that solemn occasion. Mr. Netmaker drank the Queen's health to me. I told him I drank none; on that he ceased. Mr. Brinley put on his hat to affront me. I made him take it off. I threatened to send some of them to prison. They said they could but pay their fine and doing that might stay. I told them if they had not a care they would be guilty of a riot. Mr. Bromfield spake of raising a number of men to quell them, and was in some heat ready to run into the street. But I did not like that. Not having pen and ink I went to take their names with my pencil and not knowing how to spell their names they themselves of their own accord writ them. At last I addressed myself to Mr. Banister. I told him he had been longest an inhabitant and freeholder and I expected he would set a good example by departing thence. Upon this he invited them to his own house, and away they went. And we after them went away. I went directly home and found it 25 minutes past ten at night when I entered my own house."

No greater tribute to orderly Boston could be given than this record of rare disturbance. Even in that day, half after nine was not a late hour, and it took the Judge but an hour to walk from his house and back and disperse these soberly rioting young men, whom we can picture, solemnly writing down their own names with the Judge's pencil for him to bring them up in the morning. The next day they were each fined five shillings. Some paid, some appealed and gave bonds. Mr. Netmaker was Secretary to the Commander of her Majesty's forces, and he had to pay five shillings for cursing. They also attempted to make him give bonds to keep the peace, but at this he and his friends lost patience and refused. Judges Sewall and Bromfield promptly sent him to jail. It is not surprising to

know that the Governor released him, though under strenuous protest from the two magistrates, who had, they contended, simply executed the laws.

Judge Sewall records one scene, a typically Puritanical one, and worthy of a Puritan tithing-man. It took place at the Castle Inn where he went with some other good Bostonians to shut off a “vain show.”

“Treat with Brother Wing (the landlord) about his Setting a Room in his House for a Man to shew Tricks in. He saith, seeing ’tis offensive he will remedy it. It seems the Room is fitted with Seats. I read what Dr. Ames saith of Callings, and spake as I could from this Principle, that the Man’s Practice was unlawfull, and therefore Capt. Wing could not lawfully give him an accommodation for it. Sung the 90 Ps from the 12 v to the end. Broke up.”

There is a suggestion of sober farce in this picture of those pious gentlemen reading and expounding a sermon, whipping out their psalm books, and singing a psalm to poor hospitable Landlord Wing in the parlor or taproom of his own house.

Naturally the Puritan planters, and all “true New-English men” like Sewall, did not care to have the ordinaries of their quiet towns made into places of gay resort, of what they called “the shewing of vain shews.” They deemed those hostelries places of hospitable convenience, not of lively entertainment. A contemporary poet, Quarles, thus compares human life to a stay at an inn: —

“Our life is nothing but a winter’s day,
Some only break their fast and so away;
Others stay dinner and depart full fed;
The deepest age but sups and goes to bed.
He’s most in debt who lingers out the day,
Who dies betimes, has less and less to pay.”

This somewhat melancholy view, both of life and of a public house, lingered long in the colonies, for nearly a century; we might say, with the life of the ordinary. When taverns came, their guests thought very little of dying, and paid very much attention to living.

CHAPTER II

OLD-TIME TAVERNS

By the close of the seventeenth century the word ordinary was passing into disuse in America; public houses had multiplied vastly and had become taverns, though a few old-fashioned folk – in letters, and doubtless in conversation – still called them ordinaries – Judge Sewall was one. The word inn, universal in English speech, was little heard here, and tavern was universally adopted. Though to-day somewhat shadowed by a formless reputation of being frequently applied to hostelries of vulgar resort and coarse fare and ways, the word tavern is nevertheless a good one, resonant of sound and accurate of application, since to this present time in the commonwealth of Massachusetts and in other states such large and sumptuous caravansaries as the Touraine and the Somerset Hotel of Boston are in the eye and tongue of the law simply taverns, and their proprietors inn-holders or tavern-keepers.

In the Middle colonies ordinaries and inns were just as quickly opened, just as important, just as frequent, as in New England; but in the Southern colonies, the modes of settlement were so different, there were so few towns and villages, that hospitality to the traveller was shown at each plantation, every man's home was an inn; every planter was a landlord.

In general no charge was made for the entertainment of the chance visitor whose stay was deemed a pleasure in the secluded life of the Virginia tobacco planter. Indeed, unless a distinct contract had been made in advance and terms stated, the host could not demand pay from a guest, no matter how long the visitor remained. Rates of prices were set for the first Virginian ordinaries; previous to 1639 six pounds of tobacco were paid for a dinner, or about eighteen pence in coin; but as food soon grew more abundant, the price was reduced to twelve pence, and it was enjoined that the food must be wholesome and plentiful. Then the charges grew exorbitant, – twenty pounds of tobacco for a meal for a master, fifteen for a servant. Throughout the country the prices wavered up and down, but were never low. There were apparently two causes for this: the fact that ordinary-keepers captured so few guests, and also that the tobacco leaf varied and depreciated in value.

By 1668 so many small tippling-houses and petty ordinaries existed in the colony of Virginia that laws were passed restricting the number in each county to one at the court-house, and possibly one at a wharf or ferry. Then the magistrates tried to limit the drinks sold in these houses to beer and cider; and private individuals were warned not to sell “any sort of drink or liquor whatsoever, by retail under any color, pretence, delusion, or subtle evasion whatsoever.” Those conditions did not last long. Soon the Virginia ordinaries had plentiful domestic and imported liquors, and at very low prices. Mr. Bruce says that “Madeira, Canary, Malaga, and Fayal wines were probably much more abundant in the Colony than in England at this time, and were drunk by classes which in the mother country were content with strong and small-beer.”

But the ordinaries did scant business as lodging-places. Governor Harvey complained that he could with as much justice be called the host as the Governor of Virginia, from the great number of persons entertained by him. This condition of affairs continued outside the cities till well into this century. In the large towns, however, comfortable taverns were everywhere established; and they were, as in the Northern colonies, the gathering places of many serious and many frivolous assemblages. The best of our American taverns were found in Southern cities; Baltimore had the Fountain Inn built around a courtyard like an old English inn, and furnished very handsomely.

Few of these ancient taverns still remain. The old Indian Queen Tavern is still standing at Bladensburg, Maryland. Its picture is given opposite [page 33](#). This view is from a painting by Mr. Edward Lamson Henry. It shows also an old stage-wagon such as was used in the eighteenth century, starting out from the tavern door. Mr. Henry has made a most exhaustive study of old-time modes of travel, as well as a fine collection of old vehicles, harnesses, costumes, etc. The copies of his

paintings, which I am honored by using in this book, are in every detail authoritative and invaluable records of the olden time.

With the establishment of turnpikes, road houses multiplied, and for a time prospered. But their day was short; a typical Maryland road house is shown on [page 34](#), far gone in a decrepit and ugly old age.

The history of Pennsylvania shows that its taverns were great in number and good in quality, especially soon after the Revolution. This would be the natural accompaniment of the excellent roads throughout the state. Philadelphia had an extraordinary number of public houses, and many were needed; for the city had a vast number of visitors, and a great current of immigration poured into that port. In the chapter on Signs and Symbols, many names and descriptions are given of old Philadelphia taverns.

The first Dutch directors-general of New Netherland entertained infrequent travellers and traders at their own homes, and were probably very glad to have these visitors. But trade was rapidly increasing, and Director-General Kieft, "in order to accommodate the English, from whom he suffered great annoyance, built a fine inn of stone." The chronicler De Vries had often dined in Kieft's house, and he says dryly of the building of this inn, "It happened well for the travellers."

The Stadt Harberg, or City Tavern, was built in where now stand the warehouses, 71 and 73 Pearl Street. It was ordained that a well and brew-house might be erected at the rear of the inn; right was given to retail the East India Company's wine and brandy; and some dull records exist of the use of the building as an inn. It had a career afterward of years of use and honor as the Stadt Huys, or City Hall; I have told its story at length in a paper in the *Half-Moon Series* on Historic New York.

The building was certainly not needed as a tavern, for in 1648 one-fourth of the buildings in New Amsterdam had been turned into tap-houses for the sale of beer, brandy, and tobacco. Governor Stuyvesant placed some restraint on these tapsters; they had to receive unanimous consent of the Council to set up the business; they could not sell to Indians. "Unreasonable night-tipping," that is, drinking after the curfew bell at nine o'clock, and "intemperate drinking on the Sabbath," that is, drinking by any one not a boarder before three o'clock on the Sabbath (when church services were ended), were heavily fined. Untimely "sitting of clubs" was also prohibited. These laws were evaded with as much ease as the Raines Law provisions of later years in the same neighborhood.

In 1664 the red cross of St. George floated over the city; the English were in power; the city of New Amsterdam was now New York. The same tavern laws as under the Dutch obtained, however, till 1748, and under the English, taverns multiplied as fast as under Dutch rule. They had good old English names on their sign-boards: the Thistle and Crown, the Rose and Thistle, the Duke of Cumberland, the Bunch of Grapes, St. George and the Dragon, Dog's Head in the Porridge Pot, the Fighting Cocks, the White Lion, the King's Head.

On the Boreel Building on Broadway is a bronze commemorative tablet, placed there in 1890 by the Holland Society.

The site of this building has indeed a history of note. In 1754 Edward Willet opened there a tavern under the sign of the Province Arms; and many a distinguished traveller was destined to be entertained for many a year at this Province Arms and its successors. It had been the home residence of the De Lanceys, built about 1700 by the father of Lieutenant-Governor James De Lancey, and was deemed a noble mansion. The Province Arms began its career with two very brilliant public dinners: one to the new English Governor, Sir Charles Hardy; the other upon the laying of the corner-stone of King's College. A grand function this was, and the Province Arms had full share of honor. All the guests, from Governor to students, assembled at the tavern, and proceeded to the college grounds; they laid the stone and returned to Landlord Willet's, where, says the chronicle, "the usual loyal healths were drunk, and Prosperity to the College; and the whole was conducted with the utmost Decency and Propriety."

In 1763 the Province Arms had a new landlord, George Burns, late of the King's Head in the Whitehall, and ere that of the Cart and Horse. His advertisements show his pretensions to good housekeeping, and his house was chosen for a lottery-drawing of much importance – one for the building of the lighthouse at Sandy Hook. This lottery was for six thousand pounds, and lighthouse and lottery were special pets of Cadwallader Colden, then President of his Majesty's Council. Lotteries were usually drawn at City Hall, but just at that time repairs were being made upon that building, so Mr. Burns's long room saw this important event. The lighthouse was built. *The New York Magazine* for 1790 has a picture and description of it. It is there gravely stated that the light could be seen at a distance of ten leagues, that is, thirty miles. As the present light at Sandy Hook is officially registered to be seen at fifteen miles' distance, the marvel of our ancestors must have shone with "a light that never was on land or sea."

Troublous times were now approaching. George Burns's long room held many famous gatherings anent the Stamp Act – at the first the famous Non-Importation Agreement was signed by two hundred stout-hearted New York merchants. Sons of Liberty drank and toasted and schemed within the walls of the Province Arms. Concerts and duels alternated with suppers and society meetings; dancing committees and governors of the college poured in and out of the Province Arms. In 1792 Peter De Lancey sold it to the Tontine Association; the fine old mansion was torn down, and the City Hotel sprang up in its place.

The City Hotel filled the entire front of the block on Broadway between Thomas and Cedar streets. Travellers said it had no equal in the United States, but it was unpretentious in exterior, as may be seen through the picture on the old blue and white plate (shown on page 38) which gives the front view of the hotel with a man sawing wood on Broadway, this in about 1824. It was simply yet durably furnished, and substantial comfort was found within. Though the dining room was simply a spacious, scrupulously neat apartment, the waiters were numerous and well-trained. There was a "lady's dining room" in which dances, lectures, and concerts were given. The proprietors were two old bachelors, Jennings and Willard. It was reported and believed that Willard never went to bed. He was never known to be away from his post, and with ease and good nature performed his parts of host, clerk, bookkeeper, and cashier. When Billy Niblo opened an uptown coffee-house and garden, it was deemed a matter of courtesy that Willard should attend the housewarming. When the hour of starting arrived, it was found that Willard had not for years owned a hat. Two streets away from the City Hall would have been to him a strange city, in which he could be lost. Jennings was purveyor and attended to all matters of the dining room, as well as relations with the external world. Both hosts had the perfect memory of faces, names, and details, which often is an accompaniment of the successful landlord. These two men were types of the old-fashioned Boniface.

In the early half of the eighteenth century the genteel New York tavern was that of Robert Todd, vintner. It was in Smith (now William) Street between Pine and Cedar, near the Old Dutch Church. The house was known by the sign of the Black Horse. Concerts, dinners, receptions, and balls took place within its elegant walls. On the evening of January 19, 1736, a ball was therein given in honor of the Prince of Wales's birthday. The healths of the Royal Family, the Governor, and Council had been pledged loyally and often at the fort through the day, and "the very great appearance of ladies and gentlemen and an elegant entertainment" at the ball fitly ended the celebration. The ladies were said to be "magnificent." The ball opened with French dances and then proceeded to country dances, "upon which Mrs. Morris led up to two new country dances made upon the occasion, the first of which was called the Prince of Wales, the second the Princess of Saxe-Gotha."

The Black Horse was noted for its Todd drinks, mainly composed of choice West India rum; and by tradition it is gravely asserted that from these delectable beverages was derived the old drinking term "toddy." (Truth compels the accompanying note that the word "toddy," like many of our drinking names and the drinks themselves, came from India, and the word is found in a

geographical description of India written in 1671, before Robert Todd was born, or the Black Horse Tavern thought of.)

When Robert of toddy fame died, after nine years of successful hospitality, his widow Margaret reigned in his stead. She had a turn for trade, and advertised for sale, at wholesale, fine wines and playing cards, at reasonable rates. In 1750 the Boston Post made this tavern its headquarters, but its glory of popularity was waning and soon was wholly gone.

At the junction of 51st and 52d streets with the post-road stood Cato's Road House, built in 1712. Cato was a negro slave who had so mastered various specialties in cooking that he was able to earn enough money to buy his freedom from his South Carolina master. He kept this inn for forty-eight years. Those who tasted his okra soup, his terrapin, fried chicken, curried oysters, roast duck, or drank his New York brandy-punch, his Virginia egg-nogg, or South Carolina milk-punch, wondered how any one who owned him ever could sell him even to himself. Alongside his road house he built a ballroom which would let thirty couple swing widely in energetic reels and quadrilles. When Christmas sleighing set in, the Knickerbocker braves and belles drove out there to dance; and there was *always* sleighing at Christmas in old New York – all octogenarians will tell you so. Cato's egg-nogg was mixed in single relays by the barrellful. He knew precisely the mystic time when the separated white and yolk was beaten enough, he knew the exact modicum of sugar, he could count with precision the grains of nutmeg that should fleck the compound, he could top to exactness the white egg foam. A picture of this old road house, taken from a print, is here given. It seems but a shabby building to have held so many gay scenes.

The better class of old-time taverns always had a parlor. This was used as a sitting room for women travellers, or might be hired for the exclusive use of some wealthy person or family. It was not so jovial a room as the taproom, though in winter a glowing fire in the open fireplace gave to the formal furnishings that look of good cheer and warmth and welcome which is ever present, even in the meanest apartment, when from the great logs the flames shot up and "the old rude-furnished room burst flower-like into rosy bloom." We are more comfortable now, with our modern ways of house-heating, but our rooms do not look as warm as when we had open fires. In the summer time the fireplace still was an object of interest. A poet writes: —

"'Tis summer now; instead of blinking flames
Sweet-smelling ferns are hanging o'er the grate.
With curious eyes I pore
Upon the mantel-piece with precious wares,
Glazed Scripture prints in black lugubrious frames,
Filled with old Bible lore;
The whale is casting Jonah on the shore:
Pharaoh is drowning in the curling wave.
And to Elijah sitting at his cave
The hospitable ravens fly in pairs
Celestial food within their horny beaks."

The walls of one tavern parlor which I have seen were painted with scenes from a tropical forest. On either side of the fireplace sprang a tall palm tree. Coiled serpents, crouching tigers, monkeys, a white elephant, and every form of vivid-colored bird and insect crowded each other on the walls of this Vermont tavern. On the parlor of the Washington Tavern at Westfield, Massachusetts, is a fine wallpaper with scenes of a fox-chase. This tavern is shown on the opposite page; also on page 45 one of the fine hand-wrought iron door-latches used on its doors. These were made in England a century and a half ago.

The taproom was usually the largest room of the tavern. It had universally a great fireplace, a bare, sanded floor, and ample seats and chairs. Usually there was a tall, rather rude writing-desk, at which a traveller might write a letter, or sign a contract, and where the landlord made out his bills and kept his books. The bar was the most interesting furnishing of this room. It was commonly made with a sort of portcullis grate, which could be closed if necessary. But few of these bars remain; nearly all have been removed, even if the tavern still stands. The taproom of the Wayside Inn at Sudbury, Massachusetts, is shown on [page 19](#). It is a typical example of a room such as existed in hundreds of taverns a century ago. Another taproom may still be seen in the Wadsworth Inn. This well-built, fine old house, shown on [page 47](#), is a good specimen of the better class of old taverns. It is three miles from Hartford, Connecticut, on the old Albany turnpike. It was one of twenty-one taverns within a distance of twenty miles on that pike. It was not a staging inn for every passing coach, but enjoyed an aristocratic patronage. The property has been in the same family for five generations, but the present building was erected by Elisha Wadsworth in 1828. It is not as old as the member of the Wadsworth family who now lives in it, Miss Lucy Wadsworth, born in 1801. Its old taproom is shown on [page 51](#). This tavern was a public house till the year 1862.

Some of the furnishings of the taproom of the old Mowry Inn still are owned by Landlord Mowry's descendants, and a group of them is shown on [page 7](#). Two heavy glass beakers brought from Holland, decorated with vitrifiable colors like the Bristol glass, are unusual pieces. The wooden tankard, certainly two centuries old, has the curious ancient lid hinge. The Bellarmine jug was brought to America filled with fine old gin from Holland by Mayor Willet, the first Mayor of New York City. The bowl is one of the old Indian knot bowls. It has been broken and neatly repaired by sewing the cracks together with waxed thread. The sign-board of this old inn is shown on [page 57](#). The house stood on the post-road between Woonsocket and Providence, in a little village known as Lime Rock. As it was a relay house for coaches, it had an importance beyond the size of the settlement around it.

Sometimes the taproom was decorated with broad hints to dilatory customers. Such verses as this were hung over the bar: —

“I’ve trusted many to my sorrow.
Pay to-day. I’ll trust to-morrow.”

Another ran: —

“My liquor’s good, my measure just;
But, honest Sirs, I will not trust.”

Another showed a dead cat with this motto: —

“Care killed this Cat.
Trust kills the Landlord.”

Still another: —

“If Trust,
I must,
My ale,
Will pale.”

The old Phillips farm-house at Wickford, Rhode Island, was at one time used as a tavern. It has a splendid chimney over twenty feet square. So much room does this occupy that there is no central

staircase, and little winding stairs ascend at three corners of the house. On each chimney-piece are hooks to hang firearms, and at one side curious little drawers are set for pipes and tobacco. I have seen these tobacco drawers in several old taverns. In some Dutch houses in New York these tobacco shelves are found in an unusual and seemingly ill-chosen place, namely, in the entry over the front door; and a narrow flight of three or four steps leads up to them. Hanging on a nail alongside the tobacco drawer or shelf would usually be seen a pipe-tongs – or smoking tongs. They were slender little tongs, usually of iron or steel; with them the smoker lifted a coal from the fireplace to light his pipe. Sometimes the handle of the tongs had one end elongated, knobbed, and ingeniously bent S-shaped into convenient form to press down the tobacco into the bowl of the pipe. Other old-time pipe-tongs were in the form of a lazy-tongs. A companion of the pipe-tongs on the mantel was what was known as a comfortier; a little brazier of metal in which small coals could be handed about for pipe lighting. An unusual luxury was a comfortier of silver, which were found among the wealthy Dutch settlers.

Two old taverns of East Poultney, Vermont, are shown on page 59. Both sheltered Horace Greeley in his sojourn there. The upper house, the Pine Tree, is a “sun-line” house, facing due north, with its ends pointing east and west. Throughout a century the other house, the Eagle Tavern, has never lost its calling; now it is the only place in the village where the tourist may find shelter for the night unless he takes advantage of the kindness of some good-hearted housekeeper.

The main portion of the Eagle Tavern of Newton, New Hampshire, is still standing and is shown with its sign-board on page 126. It was the “halfway house” on the much-travelled stage-road between Haverhill, Massachusetts, and Exeter, New Hampshire. The house was kept by Eliphalet Bartlett in Revolutionary times as account-books show, though the sign-board bears the date 1798. The tavern originally had two long wings, in one of which was kept a country store. Five generations of Bartletts were born in it before it was sold to the present owners. The sign-board displays on one side the eagle which confers the name; on the other, what was termed in old descriptions a punch-bowl, but which is evidently a disjointed teapot.

About the time when settlements in the New World had begun to assume the appearance of towns, and some attempt at closely following English modes of life became apparent, there were springing up in London at every street corner coffee-houses, which flourished through the times of Dryden, Johnson, and Goldsmith, till the close of the eighteenth century. Tea and coffee came into public use in close companionship. The virtues of the Turkish beverage were first introduced to Londoners by a retired Turkey merchant named Daniel Edwards, and his Greek servant, Pasque Rosser. The latter opened the first coffee-house in London in 1652. The first advertisement of this first coffee venture is preserved in the British Museum.

The English of a certain class were always ready to turn an evil eye on all new drinks, and coffee had to take its share of abuse. It was called “syrup of soot,” and “essence of old shoes,” etc.; and the keeper of the Rainbow Coffee-house was punished as a nuisance “for making and selling of a drink called coffee whereby in making the same he annoyeth his neighbours by evil smells.” Soon, however, the smell of coffee was not deemed evil, but became beloved; and every profession, trade, class, and party had its coffee-house. The parsons met at one, “cits” at another; soldiers did not drink coffee with lawyers, nor gamesters with politicians. A penny was paid at the bar at entering, which covered newspaper and lights; twopence paid for a dish of coffee. Coffee-houses sprang up everywhere in America as in London. In 1752 in New York the New or Royal Exchange was held to be so laudable an undertaking that £100 was voted toward its construction by the Common Council. It was built like the English exchanges, raised on brick arches, and was opened as a coffee-room in 1754. The name of the Merchant’s Coffee-house – on the southeast corner of Wall and Water streets – appears in every old newspaper. It was a centre of trade. Ships, cargoes, lands, houses, negroes, and varied merchandise were “vendued” at this coffee-house. It also served as an insurance office. Alexander Macraby wrote in 1768 in New York: —

“They have a vile practice here, which is peculiar to this city; I mean that of playing back-gammon (a noise I detest) which is going forward in the public coffee-houses from morning till night, frequently ten or a dozen tables at a time.”

From this it will be seen that the English sin of gaming with cards did not exist in New York coffee-houses.

The London Coffee-house was famous in the history of Philadelphia. On April 15, 1754, the printer, Bradford, put a notice in his journal for subscribers to the coffee-house to meet at the court-house on the 19th to choose trustees. Bradford applied for a license to the Governor and Council thus: —

“Having been advised to keep a Coffee-House for the benefit of merchants and traders, and as some people may be desirous at times to be furnished with other liquors besides coffee, your petitioner apprehends that it is necessary to have the government license.”

The coffee-house was duly opened; Bradford’s account for opening day was £9 6s. The trustees also lent him £259 of the £350 of subscriptions, and this coffee-house became a factor in American history. The building, erected about 1702, stood on the corner of Front and Market streets, on land which had been given by Penn to his daughter Letitia. Bradford was a grandson of the first printer Bradford, and father of the Attorney-General of the United States under Washington. His standing at once gave the house prestige and much custom. Westcott says “it was the headquarters of life and action, the pulsating heart of excitement, enterprise, and patriotism.” Soldiers and merchants here met; slaves here were sold; strangers resorted for news; captains sold cargoes; sheriffs held “vandues.”

The Exchange Coffee-house of Boston was one of the most remarkable of all these houses. It was a mammoth affair for its day, being seven stories in height. It was completed in 1808, having been nearly three years in building, and having cost half a million dollars. The principal floor was an exchange. It ruined many of the workmen who helped to build it. During the glorious days of stage-coach travel, its successor, built after it was burnt in 1818, had a brilliant career as a staging tavern, for it had over two hundred bedrooms, and was in the centre of the city. At this Coffee-house Exchange was kept a register of marine news, arrivals, departures, etc., and many distinguished naval officers were registered there. At a sumptuous dinner given to President Monroe, who had rooms there, in July, 1817, there were present Commodores Bainbridge, Hull, and Perry; ex-President John Adams; Generals Swift, Dearborn, Cobb, and Humphreys; Judges Story, Parker, Davis, Adams, and Jackson; Governor Brooks, Governor Phillips, and many other distinguished men.

It would be a curious and entertaining study to trace the evolution of our great hotels, from the cheerful taverns and country inns, beloved of all travellers, to more pretentious road houses, to coffee-houses, then to great crowded hotels. We could see the growth of these vast hotels, especially those of summer resorts, and also their decay. In many fashionable watering-places great hotels have been torn down within a few years to furnish space for lawns and grounds around a splendid private residence. Many others are deserted and closed, some flourish in exceptional localities which are in isolated or remote parts of the country, such as southern Florida, the Virginia mountains, etc.; many have been forced to build so-called cottages where families can have a little retirement and privacy between meals, which are still eaten in a vast common dining room. But the average American of means in the Northern states, whose parents never left the city till after the 4th of July, and then spent a few weeks in the middle of the summer in a big hotel at Saratoga, or Niagara Falls, or Far Rockaway, or in the White Mountains, now spends as many months in his own country home. A few extraordinary exceptions in hotel life in America remain prosperous, however, the chief examples on our Eastern coast being at Atlantic City and Old Point Comfort.

The study of tavern history often brings to light much evidence of sad domestic changes. Many a cherished and beautiful home, rich in annals of family prosperity and private hospitality, ended its days

as a tavern. Many a stately building of historic note was turned into an inn in its later career. The Indian Queen in Philadelphia had been at various times the home of Sir Richard Penn, the headquarters of General Howe and of General Benedict, the home of Robert Morris and Presidents Washington and Adams. Benjamin Franklin's home became a tavern; so also did the splendid Bingham mansion, which was built in 1790 by the richest man of his day. Governor Lloyd's house became the Cross Trees Inn. Boston mansions had the same fate. That historic building – the Province House – served its term as a tavern.

Sometimes an old-time tavern had a special petty charm of its own, some peculiarity of furnishing or fare. One of these was the Fountain Inn of Medford, Massachusetts. It was built in 1725 and soon became vastly frequented. No town could afford a better site for inns than Medford. All the land travel to Boston from Maine, eastern New Hampshire, and northeastern Massachusetts poured along the main road through Medford, which was just distant enough from Boston centre to insure the halting and patronage of every passer-by. The Fountain Inn bustled with constant customers, and I can well believe that all wanderers gladly stopped to board and bait at this hospitable tavern. For I know nothing more attractive, "under the notion of an inn," than this old tavern must have been, especially through the long summer months. It was a road house and stood close to the country road, so was never quiet; yet it afforded nevertheless a charming and restful retreat for weary and heated wanderers. For on either side of the front dooryard grew vast low-spreading trees, and in their heavy branches platforms were built and little bridges connected tree to tree, and both to the house. Perhaps the happy memories of hours and days of my childhood spent in a like tree nest built in an old apple tree, endow these tree rooms of the Fountain Inn with charms which cannot be equally endorsed and appreciated by all who read of them; but to me they form an ideal traveller's joy. To sit there through the long afternoon or in the early twilight, cool and half remote among the tree branches, drinking a dish of tea; watching horsemen and cartmen and sturdy pedestrians come and go, and the dashing mail-coach rattle up, a flash of color and noise and life, and pour out its motley passengers, and speedily roll away with renewed patrons and splendor – why, it was like a scene in a light opera.

The tree abodes and the bridges fell slowly in pieces, and one great tree died; but its companion lived till 1879, when it, too, was cut down and the bald old commonplace building crowded on the dusty street stood bare and ugly, without a vestige or suggestion of past glory around it. Now that, too, is gone, and only the picture on the opposite page, of the tavern in its dying poverty, remains to show what was once the scene of so much bustle and good cheer.

The State House Inn of Philadelphia was built in 1693, and was long known as Clark's Inn. It was a poor little building which stood in a yard, not green with grass, but white with oysters and clam shells. Its proximity to the State House gave it the custom of the members and hangers-on of the colonial assemblies. William Penn often smoked his pipe on its porch. Clark had a sign-board, the Coach and Horses, and he had something else which was as common perhaps in Philadelphia as tavern sign-boards, namely, turnspit dogs – little patient creatures, long-bodied and crook-legged, whose lives were spent in the exquisite tantalization of helping to cook the meat, whose appetizing odors of roasting they sniffed for hours without any realization of tasting at the end of their labors.

Dr. Caius, founder of the college at Cambridge, England, that bears his name, is the earliest English writer upon the dog, and he tells thus of turnspits: "Certain dogs in kitchen service excellent. When meat is to be roasted they go into a wheel, where, turning about with the weight of their bodies they so diligently look to their business that no drudge or scullion can do the feat more cunningly." The Philadelphia landlord says in his advertisement of dogs for sale, "No clock or jack so cunningly." The summary and inhuman mode of teaching these turnspits their humble duties is described in a book of anecdotes published at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1809. The dog was put in the wheel. A burning coal was placed with him. If he stopped, his legs were burned. That was all. He soon learned his lesson. It was hard work, for often the great piece of beef was twice the weight of the dog, and took at least three long hours' roasting. I am glad to know that these hard-working turn-broches usually grew

shrewd with age; learned to vanish at the approach of the cook or the appearance of the wheel. At one old-time tavern in New York little brown Jesse listened daily at the kitchen doorstep while the orders were detailed to the kitchen maids, and he could never be found till nightfall on roast-meat days; nay, more, he, as was the custom of dogs in that day, went with his mistress to meeting and lay at her feet in the pew. And when the parson one Sunday chose to read and expound from the first chapter of Ezekiel, Jesse fled with silent step and slunken tail and drooping ears at the unpleasant verse, "And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up." Naturally Jesse never suspected that these Biblical wheels were only parts of innocent allegorical chariots, but deemed them instead a very untimely and unkind reminder on a day of rest of his own hated turnspit wheel.

One of the sweetest of all tales of an inn is that begun by Professor Reichel and ended by Mr. John W. Jordan of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; it is called "A Red Rose from the Olden Time." It is a story of *Der neue Gasthof* or "The Tavern behind Nazareth," as it was modestly called, the tavern of the Moravian settlement at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It was a substantial building, "quartered, brick-nogged, and snugly weatherboarded, with a yard looking North and a Garden looking South." In 1754, under the regency of its first ruler, one Schaub, the cooper, and Divert Mary, his faithful wife, it bore a sign-board charged with a full-blown rose, and was ever after known as the Rose. This was not because the walls were coated with Spanish red; this rose bloomed with a life derived from sentiment and history, for it was built on land released by William Penn on an annual payment as rental of ONE RED ROSE.

There is something most restful and beautiful in the story of this old inn. Perhaps part of the hidden charm comes from the Biblical names of the towns. For, without our direct consciousness, there is ever something impressive in Biblical association; there is a magical power in Biblical comparison, a tenderness in the use of Biblical words and terms which we feel without actively noting. So this Red Rose of Nazareth seems built on the road to Paradise. An inventory was made of the homely contents of the Rose in 1765, when a new landlord entered therein; and they smack of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Ample store was there of rum, both of New England and the West Indies, of Lisbon wine, of cider and madigolum, which may have been metheglin. Punch-bowls, tumblers, decanters, funnels, black bottles, and nutmeg-graters and nutmegs also. Feather-beds and pillows were there in abundance, and blankets and coverlets, much pewter and little china, ample kitchen supplies of all sorts. In war and peace its record was of interest, and its solid walls stood still colored a deep red till our own day.

The night-watch went his rounds in many of our colonial towns, and called the hour and the weather. Stumbling along with his long staff and his dim horn-lantern, he formed no very formidable figure either to affright marauders or warn honest citizens that they tarried too long in the taproom. But his voice gave a certain sense of protection to all who chanced to wake in the night, a knowledge that a friend was near. All who dwelt in the old towns of Bethlehem and Nazareth in Pennsylvania could listen and be truly cheered by the sound of the beautiful verses written for the night watchman by Count Zinzendorf. In winter the watchman began his rounds at eight o'clock, in summer at nine. No scenes of brawling or tippling could have prevailed at the Rose Inn when these words of peace and piety rang out: —

Eight o'clock:

The clock is eight! To Bethlehem all is told,
How Noah and his seven were saved of old.

Nine o'clock:

Hear, Brethren, hear! The hour of nine is come;
Keep pure each heart and chasten every home.

Ten o'clock:

Hear, Brethren, hear! Now ten the hour-hand shows;
They only rest who long for night's repose.

Eleven o'clock:

The clock's eleven! And ye have heard it all,
How in that hour the mighty God did call.

Twelve o'clock:

It's midnight now! And at that hour ye know
With lamps to meet the bridegroom we must go.

One o'clock:

The hour is one! Through darkness steals the day.
Shines in your hearts the morning star's first ray?

Two o'clock:

The clock is two! Who comes to meet the day,
And to the Lord of Days his homage pay?

Three o'clock:

The clock is three! The three in one above
Let body, soul, and spirit truly love.

Four o'clock:

The clock is four! Where'er on earth are three,
The Lord has promised He the fourth will be.

Five o'clock:

The clock is five! While five away were sent,
Five other virgins to the marriage went.

Six o'clock:

The clock is six! And from the watch I'm free,
And every one may his own watchman be.

CHAPTER III

THE TAVERN LANDLORD

The landlord of colonial days may not have been the greatest man in town, but he was certainly the best-known, often the most popular, and ever the most picturesque and cheerful figure. Travellers did not fail to note him and his virtues in their accounts of their sojourns. In 1686 a gossiping London bookseller and author, named John Dunton, made a cheerful visit to Boston. He did not omit to pay tribute in his story of colonial life to colonial landlords. He thus pictures George Monk, the landlord of the Blue Anchor of Boston: —

“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 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.”

This picture of an old-time publican seems more suited to English atmosphere than to the stern air of New England Puritanism.

Grave and respectable citizens were chosen to keep the early ordinaries and sell liquor. The first “house of intertainment” at Cambridge, Massachusetts, was kept by a deacon of the church, afterward Steward of Harvard College. The first license in that town to sell wine and strong water was to Nicholas Danforth, a selectman, and Representative to the General Court. In the Plymouth Colony Mr. William Collier and Mr. Constant Southworth, one of the honored Deputies, sold wine to their neighbors. These sober and discreet citizens were men of ample means, who took the duty of wine-selling to aid the colony rather than their own incomes.

The first ordinary in the town of Duxbury was kept by one Francis Sprague, said by a local chronicler to be of “ardent temperament.” His license was granted October 1, 1638, “to keep a victualling on Duxburrow side.” His ardent temperament shaped him into a somewhat gay reveller, and his license was withdrawn. It was regranted and again recalled in 1666. His son succeeded him, another jovial fellow. Duxbury folk were circumspect and sober, and desired innkeepers of cooler blood. Mr. Seabury, one of the tavern inspectors, was granted in 1678 “to sell liquors unto such sober-minded neighbours as hee shall thinke meet; soe as hee sell not lesse than the quantie of a gallon att a tyme to one pson, and not in smaller quantities by retaile to the occationing of drunkenness.”

The license to sell liquor and keep a tavern explained clearly the limitations placed on a tavern-keeper. The one given the Andover landlord in 1692 ran thus: —

“The Condition of this Obligation is sent. That Whereas the above said William Chandler is admitted and allowed by their Majesties’ Justices at a General Sessions of the Peace to keep a common Home of Entertainment and to use common selling of Ale, Beer, Syder, etc., till the General Session of Peace next, in the now-Dwelling house of said Chandler in Andover, commonly known by the sign of the Horse Shoe and no other, if therefore the said William Chandler, during the time of keeping a Publick House shall not permit, suffer, or have any playing at Dice, Cards, Tables, Quoits, Loggets, Bowls, Ninepins, Billiards, or any other unlawful Game or Games in his House, yard, Garden, or Backside, nor shall suffer to be or remain in his House any person or persons not being of his own family upon Saturday nights after it is Dark, nor any time on the Sabbath Day or Evening after the Sabbath, nor shall suffer any person to lodge or stay in his House above one Day or Night, but such whose Name and Surname he shall deliver to some one of the Selectmen or

Constables or some one of the Officers of the Town, unless they be such as he very well knoweth, and will answer for his or their forthcoming: nor shall sell any Wine or Liquors to any Indians or Negroes nor suffer any apprentices or servants or any other persons to remain in his house tippling or drinking after nine of the Clock in the night time; nor buy or take to Pawn any stolen goods, nor willingly Harbor in his said House, Barn, Stable, or Otherwhere any Rogues, Vagabonds, Thieves, nor other notorious offenders whatsoever, nor shall suffer any person or persons to sell or utter any ale, beer, syder, etc., by Deputation or by colour of this License, and also keep the true assize and measure in his Pots, Bread and otherwise in uttering of ale, beer, syder, rum, wine, &c., and the same sell by sealed measure. And in his said house shall and do use and maintain good order and Rule: Then this present Obligation to be either void, or else to stand in full Force, Power, and Virtue.”

Dr. Dwight in his Travels said that Englishmen often laughed at the fact that inns in New England were kept by men of consequence. He says: —

“Our ancestors considered the inn a place where corruption might naturally arise and easily spread; also as a place where travellers must trust themselves, their horses, baggage, and money, and where women must not be subjected to disagreeable experiences. To provide for safety and comfort and against danger and mischief they took particular pains in their laws to prevent inns from being kept by unprincipled or worthless men. Every innkeeper in Connecticut must be recommended by the selectmen and civil authorities, constables and grand jurors of the town in which he resides, and then licensed at the discretion of the Court of Common Pleas. It was substantially the same in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.”

Lieutenant Francis Hall, travelling through America in 1817, wrote: —

“The innkeepers of America are in most villages what we call vulgarly, topping men – field officers of militia, with good farms attached to their taverns, so that they are apt to think what, perhaps, in a newly settled country is not very wide of the truth, that travellers rather receive than confer a favour by being accommodated at their houses. The daughters of the host officiate at tea and breakfast and generally wait at dinner.”

An English traveller who visited this country shortly after the Revolution speaks in no uncertain terms of “the uncomplying temper of the landlords of the country inns in America.” Another adds this testimony: —

“They will not bear the treatment we too often give ours at home. They feel themselves in some degree independent of travellers, as all of them have other occupations to follow; nor will they put themselves into a bustle on your account; but with good language, they are very civil, and will accommodate you as well as they can.”

Brissot comprehended the reason for this appearance of independence; he wrote in 1788: —

“You will not go into one without meeting neatness, decency, and dignity. The table is served by a maiden well-dressed and pretty; by a pleasant mother whose age has not effaced the agreeableness of her features; and by men *who have that air of respectability which is inspired by the idea of equality*, and are not ignoble and base like the greater part of our own tavern-keepers.”

Captain Basil Hall, a much-quoted English traveller who came to America in 1827, designated a Salem landlord as the person who most pleased him in his extended visit. Sad to say he gives neither the name of the tavern nor the host who was “so devoid of prejudice, so willing to take all matters on their favourable side, so well informed about everything in his own and other countries, so ready to impart his knowledge to others; had such mirthfulness of fancy, such genuine heartiness of good-humour,” etc.

In 1828 a series of very instructive and entertaining letters on the United States was published under the title, *Notions of the Americans*. They are accredited to James Fenimore Cooper, and were addressed to various foreigners of distinction. The travels took place in 1824, at the same time as the visit of Lafayette, and frequently in his company. Naturally inns, hotels, and modes of travel receive much attention. He speaks thus lucidly and pleasantly of the landlords: —

“The innkeeper of Old England and the innkeeper of New England form the very extremes of their class. The former is obsequious to the rich; the other unmoved and often apparently cold. The first seems to calculate at a glance the amount of profit you are likely to leave behind you, while his opposite appears to calculate only in what manner he can most contribute to your comfort without materially impairing his own... He is often a magistrate, the chief of a battalion of militia or even a member of a state legislature. He is almost always a man of character, for it is difficult for any other to obtain a license to exercise the calling.”

John Adams thus described the host and hostess of the Ipswich Inn: —

“Landlord and landlady are some of the grandest people alive, landlady is the great-granddaughter of Governor Endicott and has all the notions of high family that you find in the Winslows, Hutchinsons, Quincys, Saltonstalls, Chandlers, Otises, Learneds, and as you might find with more propriety in the Winthrops. As to landlord, he is as happy and as big, as proud, as conceited, as any nobleman in England, always calm and good-natured and lazy, but the contemplation of his farm and his sons, his house and pasture and cows, his sound judgment as he thinks, and his great holiness as well as that of his wife, keep him as erect in his thoughts as a noble or a prince.”

The curiosity and inquisitiveness of many landlords was a standing jest.

“I have heard Dr. Franklin relate with great pleasantry,” said one of his friends, “that in travelling when he was young, the first step he took for his tranquillity and to obtain immediate attention at the inns, was to anticipate inquiry by saying, ‘My name is Benjamin Franklin. I was born in Boston. I am a printer by profession, am travelling to Philadelphia, shall have to return at such a time, and have no news. Now, what can you give me for dinner?’”

The landlord was usually a politician, sometimes a rank demagogue. He often held public office, was selectman, road commissioner, tax assessor, tax collector, constable, or town moderator; occasionally he performed all these duties. John Adams wrote bitterly that at public houses men sat drinking heavily while “plotting with the landlord to get him at the next town-meeting an election either for selectman or representative.”

They were most frequently soldiers, either officers in the militia or brave fighters who had served in the army. It was a favorite calling for Revolutionary soldiers who lived till times of peace. They were usually cheerful men; a gloomy landlord made customers disappear like flowers before a frost. And these cheery hosts were fond of practical jokes.

One of the old hotels with the long piazza across the entire front was owned by a jesting landlord who never failed to spring an April-fool joke on his forgetful customers each year. The tavern had two doors, and every winter these were protected by portable storm porches the width of the door and about four feet deep. On the first day of April the landlord moved the porches a few feet down the

piazza, so they opened upon the blank wall of the house. The house and piazza sat at such an angle with the walk from the street that the uncovered front doors were not visible to the visitor, so the delusion was complete. Grocerymen, butchers, bakers, travellers, even the tavern servants, invariably fell into the trap, thrust open the door, which swung with a slam and left them facing the blank wall. Any tavern frequenter, caught early in the day, was always ready to tole in a group of victims. As they walked up the steps he would say, "Come, boys, let's all pile into the office in a bunch and holler, 'Hullo, old Jed,' all together." All agreed and charged with a rush into the 4 x 6 storm box, while the plotter of the trick went in the real door and sat coolly sipping a rum punch as the confused and angry contingent came in with battered hats and bruised elbows, after its scuffle in the trap.

One landlord had the name of frequently tricking travellers who stopped for a single meal by having the driver call out "Stage is ready" before they could eat the dinner they had ordered and paid for. A Yankee passenger disregarded this hasty summons and leisurely ate his dinner while the stage drove off without him. He finished the roast and called at last for a bowl of bread and milk to top off with as dessert. Not a spoon could be found for this dish, though plenty of silver spoons had been on the table when the stage stopped. To the distracted landlord the Yankee drawled out, "Do you think them passengers was going away without something for their money? I could p'int out the man that took them spoons." A stable boy on a fleet horse was promptly despatched after the stage, and overtook it two miles down the road. A low-spoken explanation and request to the driver caused him to turn quickly around and drive back to the tavern door with all the angry protesting passengers. The excited landlord called out to the Yankee as the coach stopped, "You just p'int out the man that took them spoons." – "Sartainly, Squire," said he, as he climbed into the coach, "I'll p'int him out. I took 'em myself. You'll find 'em all in the big coffee pot on the table. Hurry up, driver, I've had my dinner. All aboard."

Grant Thorburn quaintly tells of this custom at another tavern: —

"At Providence coaches were ready: on flew through the dust and sweat of the day like Jehus. At the tavern dinner was ready, but there was no contract for time to eat; after grace from Dr. Cox (too long for the occasion) we begun to eat. Scarcely had I swallowed half my first course when in came driver hallowing "All ready." I thought there was a stable-yard understanding between him and the landlord, for while we were brushing the dust from our clothes, mustering and saying grace, he was eating and drinking as fast as he could, and I did not observe that he paid anything. We arrived at the Eagle Tavern (Boston) about sundown; the ladies' hats and frocks which had shewed colours enough to have decked fifteen rainbows were now one, viz.: ashes on ashes and dust on dust."

The graceless modern reader might suspect that the "stable-yard understanding" included the parson.

A very amusing and original landlord was "Devil" Dave Miller, of the old General Washington Tavern which stood on East King Street, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He was very stout and was generally seen in public bestriding an unusually small horse, which he would ride into his barroom to get a drink for both. When he wished to dismount, he rode to the doorway and hung on the frame of the door with his hands. The horse would walk from under him and go unguided to the stable. An old print of this tavern marked D. Miller's Hotel, is shown on [page 73](#). The various vehicles standing in front of the hotel are interesting in shape, – old chaises, chairs, and a coach.

An old landlord named Ramsay had a spacious and popular inn on a much-travelled turnpike road, and was the proprietor of a prosperous line of stage-coaches. He waxed rich, but though looked up to by all in the community, plainly showed by the precarious condition of his health in his advancing years that he partook too freely of his own "pure old rye." His family and friends, though thoroughly alarmed, did not dare to caution the high-spirited old gentleman against this over-indulgence; and the

family doctor was deputed to deal with the squire in the most delicate and tactful manner possible. The doctor determined to employ a parable, as did Nathan to David, and felt confident of success; and to deliver his metaphorical dose he entered the taproom and cheerfully engaged the squire in conversation upon an ever favorite topic, the stage-coach. He finally ran on to know how long a well-built coach would last on the road, and then said: "Now, Squire, if you had a fine well-built old coach that had done good service, but showed age by being a little shackling, being sprung a little, having the seams open, would you hitch it up with young horses and put it on a rough road, or would you favor it with steady old stagers and the smoothest road you could find?" – "Well, Doctor," answered the squire, "if I had such a coach as that *I would soak it.*" And that seemed to bring the doctor's parable to a somewhat sudden and unprofitable ending.

CHAPTER IV

TAVERN FARE AND TAVERN WAYS

In the year 1704 a Boston widow named Sarah Knights journeyed “by post,” that is, went on horseback, in the company of the government postman, from Boston to New York, and returned a few months later. She kept a journal of her trip, and as she was a shrewd woman with a sharp eye and sharper tongue, her record is of interest. She stopped at the various hostelries on the route, some of which were well-established taverns, others miserable makeshifts; and she gives us some glimpses of rather rude fare. On the first night of her journey she rode late to “overtake the post,” and this is the account of her reception at her first lodging-place: —

“My guide dismounted and very complasently shewed the door signing to me to Go in, which I Gladly did. But had not gone many steps into the room ere I was interrogated by a young Lady with these or words to this purpose, viz., Law for mee – what in the world brings you here this time-a-night? I never see a Woman on the Rode so Late in all my Varsall Life! Who are you? Where are you goeing? Im scar’d out of my witts... She then turned agen to mee and fell anew into her silly questions without asking mee to sit down. I told her she treated me very Rudely and I did not think it my duty to answer her unmannerly questions. But to get ridd of them I told her I come there to have the Posts company with me to morrow on my journey.”

She thus describes one stopping-place: —

“I pray’d her to show me where I must lodge. Shee conducted mee to a parlour in a little back Lento, which was almost filled with the bedstead, which was so high that I was forced to climb on a chair to gitt up to ye wretched bed that lay on it, on which having Strecht my tired Limbs and lay’d my Head on a Sad-coloured pillow, I began to think on the transactions of ye past day.”

At another place she complained that the dinner had been boiled in the dye-kettle, that the black slaves ate at the table with their master, “and into the dish goes the black hoof as freely as the white hand...” Again she says: —

“We would have eat a morsell, but the Pumpkin and Indian-mixt Bread had such an aspect, and the Bare-legg’d Punch so awkerd or rather awfull a sound that we left both.”

At Rye, New York, she lodged at an ordinary kept by a Frenchman. She thus writes: —

“Being very hungry I desired a Fricassee which the landlord undertaking managed so contrary to my notion of Cookery that I hastened to Bed superless. Being shew’d the way up a pair of Stairs which had such a narrow passage that I had almost stopt by the Bulk of my Body; But arriving at my Apartment found it to be a little Lento Chamber furnisht among other Rubbish with a High Bedd and a Low one, a Long Table, a Bench and a Bottomless Chair. Little Miss went to scratch up my Kennell whch Russelled as if shee’d bin in the Barn among the Husks and suppose such was the contents of the Tickin – nevertheless being exceedingly weary down I laid my poor Carkes never more tired and found my Covering as scanty as my bed was hard. Anon I heard another Russelling noise in the room – called to know the matter – Little Miss said she was making a bed for the men; who when they were in Bed complain’d their Leggs lay out of it by reason of its shortness – my poor bones complained bitterly not being used to such Lodgings, and so did the man who was

with us; and poor I made but one Grone which was from the time I went to bed to the time I riss which was about three in the morning Setting up by the fire till light.”

Manners were rude enough at many country taverns until well into the century. There could be no putting on of airs, no exclusiveness. All travellers sat at the same table. Many of the rooms were double-bedded, and four who were strangers to each other often slept in each other's company.

An English officer wrote of this custom in America: —

“The general custom of having two or three beds in a room to be sure is very disagreeable; it arises from the great increase of travelling within the last few years, and the smallness of their houses, which were not built for houses of entertainment.”

Mr. Twining said that after you were asleep the landlord entered, candle in hand, and escorted a stranger to your side, and he calmly shared the bed till morning. Thurlow Weed said that any one who objected to a stranger as a bedfellow was regarded as obnoxious and as unreasonably fastidious. Still Captain Basil Hall declared that even at remote taverns his family had exclusive apartments; while in crowded inns it was never even suggested to him that other travellers should share his quarters.

Many old tavern account-books and bills exist to show us the price of tavern fare at various dates.

Mr. Field gives a bill of board at the Bowen Inn at Barrington, Rhode Island. John Tripp and his wife put up at the inn on the 11th of May, 1776.

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
To 1 Dinner		9
To Bread and Cheese		7
To breakfast & dinner	1	3
To 1 Bowl Toddy		9
To Lodging you and wife		6
To 1½ Bowl Toddy	1	1½
To ½ Mug Cyder		1½
To lodge self and wife		6
To 1 Gill Brandy		5½
To breakfast		9½
Mug Cyder		1½
To ½ bowl Toddy		4½
Dinner		8
To 15 Lb Tobacco at 6d.	7	6
To ¼ Bowl Toddy		4½
To ½ Mug Cyder		1½
To Supper		6"

I suppose the quarter bowls of toddy were for Madam Tripp.

The house known for many years as the Ellery Tavern is still standing in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and is a very good example of the overhanging second story, as is shown in the front view of it given on [page 79](#); and also of the lean-to, or sloping-roofed ell, which is shown by the picture on page 83 of the rear of the house. This house was built by Parson White in 1707, and afterward kept as a tavern by James Stevens till 1740; then it came into the hands of Landlord Ellery. As in scores of other taverns in other towns, the selectmen of the town held their meetings within its doors. There were five selectmen in 1744, and their annual salary for transacting the town's business was five dollars apiece. The tavern charges, however, for their entertainment amounted to £30, old tenor. It is not surprising, therefore, to read in the town records of the following year that the citizens voted the selectmen a salary of £5, old tenor, apiece, and “to find themselves.” Nevertheless, in 1749, there was another bill from the Ellery Tavern of £78, old tenor, for the selectmen who had been sworn

in the year previously and thus welcomed, “Expense for selectmen and Licker, £3. 18s.” The Ellery Tavern has seen many another meeting of good cheer since those days.

The selectmen of the town of Cambridge, Massachusetts, met at the Blue Anchor Tavern, which was established as an ordinary as early as 1652. Their bill for 1769 runs thus: —

“The Selectmen of the Town of Cambridge to Ebenezer Bradish, Dr. 1769:

March, To dinners and drink	£0.	17.	8
April, To flip and punch		2.	
May, To wine and eating		6.	8
May, To dinners, drink and suppers		18.	
May, To flip and cheese		1.	8
May, To wine and flip		4.	
June, To punch		2.	8
July, To punch and eating		4.	
August, To punch and cheese		3.	7
October, To punch and flip		4.	8
October, To dinners and drink		13.	8
Sundries		12.	
	—		
	£4.	10.	7 ^u

“Ordination Day” was almost as great a day for the tavern as for the meeting-house. The visiting ministers who came to assist at the religious service of ordination of a new minister were usually entertained at the tavern. Often a specially good beer was brewed called “ordination beer,” and in Connecticut an “ordination ball” was given at the tavern – this with the sanction of the parsons. The bills for entertaining the visitors, for the dinner and lodging at the local taverns, are in many cases preserved. One of the most characteristic was at a Hartford ordination. It runs: —

	£	s.	d.
“To keeping Ministers		2.	4
2 Mugs tody		5.	10
5 Segars		3	
1 Pint Wine			9
3 Lodgings		9	
3 Bitters			9
3 Breakfasts		3.	6
15 boles Punch	1.	10	
24 dinners	1.	16	
11 bottles wine		3.	6
5 Mugs flip		5.	10
5 Boles Punch		6	
3 Boles Tody		3.	6 ^u

The bill is endorsed with unconscious humor, “This all paid for except the Ministers Rum.”

The book already referred to, called *Notions of the Americans*, tells of taverns during the triumphal tour of Lafayette in 1824. The author writes thus of the stage-house, or tavern, on the regular stage line. He said he stopped at fifty such, some not quite so good and some better than the one he chooses to describe, namely, Bispham’s at Trenton, New Jersey.

“We were received by the landlord with perfect civility, but without the slightest shade of obsequiousness. The deportment of the innkeeper was manly, courteous, and even kind; but there was that in his air which sufficiently proved that both parties were expected to manifest the same qualities. We were asked if we all

formed one party, or whether the gentlemen who alighted from stage number one wished to be by themselves. We were shown into a neat well-furnished little parlour, where our supper made its appearance in the course of twenty minutes. The table contained many little delicacies, such as game, oysters, and choice fish, and several things were named to us as at hand if needed. The tea was excellent, the coffee as usual indifferent enough. The papers of New York and Philadelphia were brought at our request, and we sat with our two candles before a cheerful fire reading them as long as we pleased. Our bed-chambers were spacious, well-furnished, and as neat as possible; the beds as good as one usually finds them out of France. Now for these accommodations, which were just as good with one solitary exception (sanitary) as you would meet in the better order of English provincial inns, and much better in the quality and abundance of the food, we paid the sum of 4s. 6d. each."

A copy is given opposite [page 86](#) of a bill of the "O. Cromwell's Head Tavern" of Boston, which was made from a plate engraved by Paul Revere. This tavern was kept for over half a century by members of the Brackett family. It was distinctly the tavern of the gentry, and many a distinguished guest had "board, lodging, and eating" within its walls, as well as the wine, punch, porter, and liquor named on the bill. It will be noted that the ancient measure – a pottle – is here used. Twenty years before the Revolutionary War, and just after the crushing defeat of the British general, Braddock, in what was then the West, an intelligent young Virginian named George Washington, said to be a good engineer and soldier, lodged at the Cromwell's Head Tavern, while he conferred with Governor Shirley, the great war Governor of the day, on military affairs and projects. When this same Virginian soldier entered Boston at the head of a victorious army, he quartered his troops in Governor Shirley's mansion and grounds.

The sign-board of this tavern bore a portrait of the Lord Protector, and it is said it was hung so low that all who passed under it had to make a necessary reverence.

While British martial law prevailed in Boston, the grim head of Cromwell became distasteful to Tories, who turned one side rather than walk under the shadow of the sign-board, and at last Landlord Brackett had to take down and hide the obnoxious symbol.

The English traveller Melish was loud in his praise of the taverns throughout New York State as early as 1806. He noted at Little Falls, then in the backwoods, and two hundred miles from New York, that on the breakfast table were "table-cloth, tea tray, tea-pots, milk-pot, bowls, cups, sugar-tongs, teaspoons, casters, plates, knives, forks, tea, sugar, cream, bread, butter, steak, eggs, cheese, potatoes, beets, salt, vinegar, pepper," and all for twenty-five cents. He said Johnstown had but sixty houses, of which nine were taverns.

Another English traveller told of the fare in American hotels in 1807. While in Albany at "Gregory's," which he said was equal to many of the London hotels, he wrote: —

"It is the custom in all American taverns, from the highest to the lowest, to have a sort of public table at which the inmates of the house and travellers dine together at a certain hour. It is also frequented by many single gentlemen belonging to the town. At Gregory's upwards of thirty sat down to dinner, though there were not more than a dozen who resided in the house. A stranger is thus soon introduced to an acquaintance with the people, and if he is travelling alone he will find at these tables some relief from the ennui of his situation. At the better sort of American taverns very excellent dinners are provided, consisting of almost everything in season. The hour is from two to three o'clock, and there are three meals in the day. They breakfast at eight o'clock upon rump steaks, fish, eggs, and a variety of cakes with tea or coffee. The last meal is at seven in the evening, and consists of as substantial fare as the breakfast, with the addition of cold fowl, ham, &c. The price of boarding at

these houses is from a dollar and a half to two dollars per day. Brandy, hollands, and other spirits are allowed at dinner, but every other liquor is paid for extra. English breakfasts and teas, generally speaking, are meagre repasts compared with those of America, and as far as I observed the people live with respect to eating in a much more luxurious manner than we do. Many private families live in the same style as at these houses; and have as great variety. Formerly pies, puddings, and cyder used to grace the breakfast table, but now they are discarded from the genteeler houses, and are found only in the small taverns and farm-houses in the country.”

In spite of the vast number of inns in Philadelphia, another English gentleman bore testimony in 1823 that he deemed the city ill-provided with hostelries. This gentleman “put up” at the Mansion House, which was the splendid Bingham Mansion on Third Street. He wrote: —

“The tavern-keepers will not receive you on any other terms except boarded at so much a day or week; you cannot have your meals by yourself, or at your own hours. This custom of boarding I disliked very much. The terms are, however, very moderate, only ten dollars per week. The table is always spread with the greatest profusion and variety, even at breakfast, supper, and tea; all of which meals indeed were it not for the absence of wine and soup, might be called so many dinners.”

There lies before me a collection of twoscore old hotel bills of fare about a half century old. They are of dates when stage-coaching had reached its highest point of perfection, and the coaching tavern its glory. There were railroads, — comparatively few lines, however, — but they had not destroyed the constant use of coaches.

These hotels were the best of their kind in the country, such as the United States Hotel of Philadelphia, Foley’s National Hotel of Norfolk, Virginia, Union Place Hotel and New York Hotel of New York, Union Hotel of Richmond, Virginia, American House of Springfield, Massachusetts, Dorsey’s Exchange Hotel and Barnum’s City Hotel of Baltimore, Maryland, the Troy House, the Tremont House of Boston, Massachusetts, etc. At this time all have become hotels and houses, not a tavern nor an inn is among them.

The menus are printed on long narrow slips of poor paper, not on cardboard; often the names of many of the dishes are written in. They show much excellence and variety in quality, and abundant quantity; they are, I think, as good as hotels of similar size would offer to-day. There are more boiled meats proportionately than would be served now, and fewer desserts. Here is what the American House of Springfield had for its guests on October 2, 1851: Mock-turtle soup; boiled blue-fish with oyster sauce; boiled chickens with oyster sauce; boiled mutton with caper sauce; boiled tongue, ham, corned beef and cabbage; boiled chickens with pork; roast beef, lamb, chickens, veal, pork, and turkey; roast partridge; fricasseed chicken, oyster patties, chicken pie, boiled rice, macaroni; apple, squash, mince, custard, and peach pies; boiled custard; blanc mange, tapioca pudding, peaches, nuts, and raisins. Vegetables were not named; doubtless every autumnal vegetable was served.

At the Union Place Hotel in 1850 the vegetables were mashed potatoes, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, boiled rice, onions, tomatoes, squash, cauliflower, turnips, and spinach. At the United States Hotel in Philadelphia the variety was still greater, and there were twelve entrées. The Southern hotels offered nine entrées, and egg-plant appears among the vegetables. The wine lists are ample; those of 1840 might be of to-day, that is, in regard to familiar names; but the prices were different. Mumm’s champagne was two dollars and a half a quart; Ruinard and Cliquot two dollars; the best Sauterne a dollar a quart; Rudesheimer 1811, and Hockheimer, two dollars; clarets were higher priced, and Burgundies. Madeiras were many in number, and high priced; Constantia (twenty years in glass) and Diploma (forty years in wood) were six dollars a bottle. At Barnum’s Hotel there were Madeiras at ten dollars a bottle, sherries at five, hock at six; this hotel offered thirty choice Madeiras — and these dinners were served at two o’clock. Corkage was a dollar.

Certain taverns were noted for certain fare, for choice modes of cooking special delicacies. One was resorted to for boiled trout, another for planked shad. Travellers rode miles out of their way to have at a certain hostelry calves-head soup, a most elaborate and tedious dish if properly prepared, and a costly one, with its profuse wine, but as appetizing and rich as it is difficult of making. More humble taverns with simpler materials but good cooks had wonderful johnny-cakes, delightful waffles, or even specially good mush and milk. Certain localities afforded certain delicacies; salmon in one river town, and choice oysters. One landlord raised and killed his own mutton; another prided himself on ducks. Another cured his own hams. An old Dutch tavern was noted for rolliches and head-cheese.

During the eighteenth century turtle-feasts were eagerly attended – or turtle-frolics as they were called. A travelling clergyman named Burnaby wrote in 1759: —

“There are several taverns pleasantly situated upon East River, near New York, where it is common to have these turtle-feasts. These happen once or twice a week. Thirty or forty gentlemen and ladies meet and dine together, drink tea in the afternoon, fish, and amuse themselves till evening, and then return home in Italian chaises, a gentleman and lady in each chaise. On the way there is a bridge, about three miles distant from New York, which you always pass over as you return, called the Kissing Bridge, where it is part of the etiquette to salute the lady who has put herself under your protection.”

Every sea-captain who sailed to the West Indies was expected to bring home a turtle on the return voyage for a feast to his expectant friends. A turtle was deemed an elegant gift; usually a keg of limes accompanied the turtle, for lime-juice was deemed the best of all “sourings” for punch. In Newport a Guinea Coast negro named Cuffy Cockroach, the slave of Mr. Jahleel Brenton, was deemed the prince of turtle cooks. He was lent far and wide for these turtle-feasts, and was hired out at taverns.

Near Philadelphia catfish suppers were popular. Mendenhall Ferry Tavern was on the Schuylkill River about two miles below the Falls. It was opposite a ford which landed on the east side, and from which a lane ran up to the Ridge Turnpike. This lane still remains between the North and South Laurel Hill cemeteries, just above the city of Philadelphia. Previous to the Revolution the ferry was known as Garrigue’s Ferry. A cable was stretched across the stream; by it a flatboat with burdens was drawn from side to side. The tavern was the most popular catfish-supper tavern on the river drive. Waffles were served with the catfish. A large Staffordshireware platter, printed in clear, dark, beautiful blue, made by the English potter, Stubbs, shows this ferry and tavern, with its broad piazza, and the river with its row of poplar trees. It is shown on [page 93](#). Burnaby enjoyed the catfish-suppers as much as the turtle-feasts, but I doubt if there was a Kissing Bridge in Philadelphia.

Many were the good reasons that could be given to explain and justify attendance at an old-time tavern; one was the fact that often the only newspaper that came to town was kept therein. This dingy tavern sheet often saw hard usage, for when it went its rounds some could scarce read it, some but pretend to read it. One old fellow in Newburyport opened it wide, gazed at it with interest, and cried out to his neighbor in much excitement: “Bad news. Terrible gales, terrible gales, ships all bottom side up,” as indeed they were, in his way of holding the news sheet.

The extent and purposes to which the tavern sheet might be applied can be guessed from the notice written over the mantel-shelf of one taproom, “Gentlemen learning to spell are requested to use last week’s newsletter.”

The old taverns saw many rough jokes. Often there was a tavern butt on whom all played practical jokes. These often ended in a rough fight. The old Collin’s Tavern shown on [page 97](#) was in coaching days a famous tavern in Naugatuck on the road between New Haven and Litchfield. One of the hostlers at this tavern, a burly negro, was the butt of all the tavern hangers-on, and a great source of amusement to travellers. His chief accomplishment was “bunting.” He bragged that he could with

a single bunt break down a door, overturn a carriage, or fell a horse. One night a group of jokers promised to give him all the cheeses he could bunt through. He bunted holes through three cheeses on the tavern porch, and then was offered a grindstone, which he did not perceive either by his sense of sight or feeling to be a stone until his alarmed tormentors forced him to desist for fear he might kill himself.

A picturesque and grotesque element of tavern life was found in those last leaves on the tree, the few of Indian blood who lingered after the tribes were scattered and nearly all were dead. These tawnies could not be made as useful in the tavern yard as the shiftless and shifting negro element that also drifted to the tavern, for the Eastern Indian never loved a horse as did the negro, and seldom became handy in the care of horses. These waifs of either race, and half-breeds of both races, circled around the tavern chiefly because a few stray pennies might be earned there, and also because within the tavern were plentiful supplies of cider and rum.

Almost every community had two or three of these semi-civilized Indian residents, who performed some duties sometimes, but who often in the summer, seized with the spirit of their fathers or the influence of their early lives, wandered off for weeks and months, sometimes selling brooms and baskets, sometimes reseating chairs, oftener working not, simply tramping trustfully, sure of food whenever they asked for it. It is curious to note how industrious, orderly Quaker and Puritan housewives tolerated the laziness, offensiveness, and excesses of these half-barbarians. Their uncouthness was endured when they were in health, and when they fell sick they were cared for with somewhat the same charity and forbearance that would be shown a naughty, unruly child.

Often the landlady of the tavern or the mistress of the farm-house, bustling into her kitchen in the gray dawn, would find a sodden Indian sleeping on the floor by the fireplace, sometimes a squaw and pappoose by his side. If the kitchen door had no latch-string out, the Indian would crawl into the hay in the barn; but wherever he slept, he always found his way to the kitchen in good time for an ample breakfast.

Indian women often proved better helpers than the men. One Deb Browner lived a severely respectable life all winter, ever ready to help in the kitchen of the tavern if teamsters demanded meals; always on hand to help dip candles in early winter, and make soap in early spring; and her strong arms never tired. But when early autumn tinted the trees, and on came the hunting season, she tore off her respectable calico gown and apron, kicked off her shoes and stockings, and with black hair hanging wild, donned moccasins and blanket, and literally fled to the woods for a breath of life, for freedom. She took her flitting unseen in the night, but twice was she noted many miles away by folk who knew her, tramping steadily northward, bearing by a metomp of bark around her forehead a heavy burden in a blanket.

One Sabbath morning in May a travelling teamster saw her in her ultra-civilized state on her way home from meeting, crowned, not only with a discreet bonnet, but with a long green veil hanging down her back. She was entering the tavern door to know whether they wished her to attack the big spring washing and bleaching the following day. "Hello, Teppamoy!" he said, staring at her, "how came you here and in them clothes?" Scowling fiercely, she walked on in haughty silence, while the baffled teamster told a group of tavern loafers that he had been a lumberman, and some years there came to the camp in Maine a wild old squaw named Teppamoy who raised the devil generally, but the constable had never caught her, and that she "looked enough like that Mis' Browner to be her sister."

Another half-breed Indian, old Tuggie Bannocks, lived in old Narragansett. She was as much negro as Indian and was reputed to be a witch; she certainly had some unusual peculiarities, the most marked being a full set of double teeth all the way round, and an absolute refusal ever to sit on a chair, sofa, stool, or anything that was intended to be sat upon. She would sit on a table, or a churn, or a cradle-head, or squat on the floor; or she would pull a drawer out of a high chest and recline on the edge of that. It was firmly believed that in her own home she hung by her heels on the oaken chair rail which ran around the room. She lived in the only roofed portion of an old tumble-down house

that had been at one time a tavern, and she bragged that she could “raise” every one who had ever stopped at that house as a guest, and often did so for company. Oh! what a throng of shadows, some fair of face, some dark of life, would have filled the dingy tavern at her command! I have told some incidents of her life in my *Old Narragansett*, so will no longer keep her dusky presence here.

Other Indian “walk-about,” as tramps were called, lived in the vicinity of Malden, Massachusetts; old “Moll Grush,” who fiercely resented her nickname; Deb Saco the fortune-teller, whose “counterfeit presentment” can be seen in the East Indian Museum at Salem; Squaw Shiner, who died from being blown off a bridge in a gale, and who was said to be “a faithful friend, a sharp enemy, a judge of herbs, a weaver of baskets, and a lover of rum.”

Another familiar and marked character was Sarah Boston. I have taken the incidents of her life from *The Hundredth Town*, where it is told so graphically. She lived on Keith Hill in Grafton, Massachusetts, an early “praying town” of the Indians. A worn hearthstone and doorstone, surrounded now by green grass and shadowed by dying lilacs, still show the exact spot where once stood her humble walls, where once “her garden smiled.

The last of the Hassanamiscoes (a noble tribe of the Nipmuck race, first led to Christ in 1654 by that gentle man John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians), she showed in her giant stature, her powerful frame, her vast muscular power, no evidence of a debilitated race or of enfeebled vitality. It is said she weighed over three hundred pounds. Her father was Boston Phillips, also told of in story and tradition for his curious ways and doings. Sarah dressed in short skirts, a man’s boots and hat, a heavy spencer (which was a man’s wear in those days); and, like a true Indian, always wore a blanket over her shoulders in winter. She was mahogany-red of color, with coarse black hair, high cheek-bones, and all the characteristic features of her race. Her great strength and endurance made her the most desired farm-hand in the township to be employed in haying time, in wall-building, or in any heavy farm work. Her fill of cider was often her only pay for some powerful feat of strength, such as stone-lifting or stump-pulling. At her leisure times in winter she made and peddled baskets in true Indian fashion, and told improbable and baseless fortunes, and she begged cider at the tavern, and drank cider everywhere. “The more I drink the drier I am,” was a favorite expression of hers. Her insolence and power of abuse made her dreaded for domestic service, though she freely entered every home, and sat smoking and glowering for hours in the chimney corner of the tavern; but in those days of few house-servants and scant “help,” she often had to be endured that she might assist the tired farm wife or landlady.

A touch of grim humor is found in this tale of her – the more humorous because, in spite of Apostle Eliot and her Christian forbears, she was really a most godless old heathen. She tended with care her little garden, whose chief ornament was a fine cherry tree bearing luscious blackhearts, while her fellow-townsmen had only sour Morellos growing in their yards. Each year the sons of her white neighbors, unrestrained by her threats and entreaties, stripped her tree of its toothsome and beautiful crop before Sarah Boston could gather it. One year the tree hung heavy with a specially full crop; the boys watched eagerly and expectantly the glow deepening on each branch, through tinted red to dark wine color, when one morning the sound of a resounding axe was heard in Sarah’s garden, and a passer-by found her with powerful blows cutting down the heavily laden tree. “Why, Sarah,” he asked in surprise, “why are you cutting down your splendid great cherry tree?” – “It shades the house,” she growled; “I can’t see to read my Bible.”

A party of rollicking Yankee blades, bold with tavern liquor, pounded one night on the wooden gate of the old Grafton burying-ground, and called out in profane and drunken jest, “Arise, ye dead, the judgment day is come.” Suddenly from one of the old graves loomed up in the dark the gigantic form of Sarah Boston, answering in loud voice, “Yes, Lord, I am coming.” Nearly paralyzed with fright, the drunken fellows fled, stumbling with dismay before this terrifying and unrecognized apparition.

Mrs. Forbes ends the story of Sarah Boston with a beautiful thought. The old squaw now lies at rest in the same old shadowy burial place – no longer the jest and gibe of jeering boys, the despised and drunken outcast. Majestic with the calm dignity of death, she peacefully sleeps by the side of her white neighbors. At the dawn of the last day may she once more arise, and again answer with clear voice, “Yes, Lord, I am coming.”

CHAPTER V

“KILL-DEVIL” AND ITS AFFINES

Any account of old-time travel by stage-coach and lodging in old-time taverns would be incomplete without frequent reference to that universal accompaniment of travel and tavern sojourn, that most American of comforting stimulants – rum.

The name is doubtless American. A manuscript description of Barbadoes, written twenty-five years after the English settlement of the island in 1651, is thus quoted in *The Academy*: “The chief fudling they make in the island is Rumbullion, alias Kill-Divil, and this is made of sugar canes distilled, a hot, hellish, and terrible liquor.” This is the earliest-known allusion to the liquor rum; the word is held by some antiquaries in what seems rather a strained explanation to be the gypsy rum, meaning potent, or mighty. The word rum was at a very early date adopted and used as English university slang. The oldest American reference to the word rum (meaning the liquor) which I have found is in the act of the General Court of Massachusetts in May, 1657, prohibiting the sale of strong liquors “whether knowne by the name of rumme, strong water, wine, brandy, etc., etc.” The traveller Josselyn wrote of it, terming it that “cursed liquor rhum, rumbullion or kill-devil.” English sailors still call their grog rumbowling. But the word rum in this word and in rumbooze and in rumfustian did not mean rum; it meant the gypsy adjective powerful. Rumbooze or rambooze, distinctly a gypsy word, and an English university drink also, is made of eggs, ale, wine, and sugar. Rumfustian was made of a quart of strong beer, a bottle of white wine or sherry, half a pint of gin, the yolks of twelve eggs, orange peel, nutmeg, spices, and sugar. Rum-barge is another mixed drink of gypsy name. It will be noted that none of these contains any rum.

In some localities in America rum was called in early days Barbadoes-liquor, a very natural name, occasionally also Barbadoes-brandy. The Indians called it ocuby, or as it was spelled in the Norridgewock tongue, ah-coobee. Many of the early white settlers called it by the same name. Kill-devil was its most universal name, not only a slang name, but a trading-term used in bills of sale. A description of Surinam written in 1651 says: “Rhum made from sugar-canes is called kill-devil in New England.” At thus early a date had the manufacture of rum become associated with New England.

The Dutch in New York called the liquor brandy-wine, and soon in that colony wherever strong waters were named in tavern lists, the liquor was neither aqua vitæ nor gin nor brandy, but New England rum.

It soon was cheap enough. Rev. Increase Mather, the Puritan parson, wrote, in 1686: “It is an unhappy thing that in later years a Kind of Drink called Rum has been common among us. They that are poor and wicked, too, can for a penny make themselves drunk.” From old account-books, bills of lading, grocers’ bills, family expenses, etc., we have the price of rum at various dates, and find that his assertion was true.

In 1673 Barbadoes rum was worth 6s. a gallon. In 1687 its price had vastly fallen, and New England rum sold for 1s. 6d. a gallon. In 1692 2s. a gallon was the regular price. In 1711 the price was 3s. 3d. In 1757, as currency grew valueless, it was 21s. a gallon. In 1783 only a little over a shilling; then it was but 8d. a quart. During this time the average cost of molasses in the West Indies was 12d. a gallon; so, though the distillery plant for its production was costly, it can be seen that the profits were great.

Burke said about 1750: “The quantity of spirits which they distill in Boston from the molasses which they import is as surprising as the cheapness at which they sell it, which is under two shillings a gallon; but they are more famous for the quantity and cheapness than for the excellency of their rum.” An English traveller named Bennet wrote at the same date of Boston society: “Madeira wine and rum punch are the liquors they drink in common.” Baron Riedesel, who commanded the foreign

troops in America during the Revolution, wrote of the New England inhabitants: “Most of the males have a strong passion for strong drink, especially rum.” While President John Adams said caustically: “If the ancients drank wine as our people drink rum and cider, it is no wonder we hear of so many possessed with devils;” yet he himself, to the end of his life, always began the day with a tankard of hard cider before breakfast.

The Dutch were too constant beer drinkers to become with speed great rum consumers, and they were too great lovers of gin and schnapps. But they deprecated the sharp and intolerant prohibition of the sale of rum to the Indians, saying: “To prohibit all strong liquor to them seems very hard and very Turkish. Rum doth as little hurt as the Frenchman’s Brandie, and in the whole is much more wholesome.” The English were fiercely abhorrent of intemperance among the Indians, and court records abound in laws restraining the sale of rum to the “bloody salvages,” of prosecutions and fines of white traders who violated these laws, and of constant and fierce punishment of the thirsty red men, who simply tried to gratify an appetite instilled in them by the English.

William Penn wrote to the Earl of Sutherland in 1683: “Ye Dutch, Sweed, and English have by Brandy and Specially Rum, almost Debaucht ye Indians all. When Drunk ye most Wretched of Spectacles. They had been very Tractable but Rum is so dear to them.”

Rum formed the strong intoxicant of all popular tavern drinks; many are still mixed to-day. Toddy, sling, grog, are old-time concoctions.

A writer for the first *Galaxy* thus parodied the poem, *I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled*: —

“I knew by the pole that’s so gracefully crown’d
Beyond the old church, that a tavern was near,
And I said if there’s black-strap on earth to be found
A man who had credit might hope for it here.”

Josiah Quincy said that black-strap was a composition of which the secret, he fervently hoped, reposed with the lost arts. Its principal ingredients were rum and molasses, though there were other simples combined with it. He adds, “Of all the detestable American drinks on which our inventive genius has exercised itself, this black-strap was truly the most outrageous.”

Casks of it stood in every country store and tavern, a salted cod-fish hung alongside, slyly to tempt by thirst additional purchasers of black-strap. “Calibogus,” or “bogus,” was unsweetened rum and beer.

Mimbo, sometimes abbreviated to mim, was a drink made of rum and loaf-sugar – and possibly water. The “Rates in Taverns” fixed in York County in Pennsylvania, in 1752, for “the protecting of travellers against the extortions of tavern-keepers,” gives its price: —

“1 Quart Mimbo made best W. I. Rum and Loaf:	10d.
1 Quart Mimbo, made of New England Rum and Loaf:	9d.”

Many years ago, one bitter winter day, there stepped down from a rocking mail-coach into the Washington Tavern in a Pennsylvania town, a dashing young man who swaggered up to the bar and bawled out for a drink of “Scotchchem.” The landlord was running here and there, talking to a score of people and doing a score of things at once, and he called to his son, a lubberly, countrified young fellow, to give the gentleman his Scotchchem. The boy was but a learner in the taproom, but he was a lad of few words, so he hesitatingly mixed a glass of hot water and Scotch whiskey, which the traveller scarcely tasted ere he roared out: “Don’t you know what Scotchchem is? Apple-jack, and boiling water, and a good dash of ground mustard. Here’s a shilling to pay for it.” The boy stared at the uninviting recipe, but faithfully compounded it, when toot-toot sounded the horn – the coach

waited for no man, certainly not for a man to sip a scalding drink – and such a drink, and off in a trice went full coach and empty traveller. The young tapster looked dubiously at the great mug of steaming drink; then he called to an old trapper, a town pauper, who, crippled with rheumatism, sat ever in the warm chimney corner of the taproom, telling stories of coons and catamounts and wolverines, and taking such stray drops of liquid comfort as old companions or new sympathizers might pityingly give him. “Here, Ezra,” the boy said, “you take the gentleman’s drink. It’s paid for.” Ezra was ever thirsty and never fastidious. He gulped down the Scotchem. “It’s good,” he swaggered bravely, with eyes streaming from the scalding mustard, “an’ it’s tasty, too, ef it does favor tomato ketchup.”

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