

Inns and Taverns of Old London

Henry C. Shelley

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Title: Inns and Taverns of Old London

Author: Henry C. Shelley

Release Date: October, 2004 [EBook #6699]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on January 17, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII, with some ISO-8859-1 characters

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INNS AND TAVERNS OF OLD LONDON

SETTING FORTH THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF THOSE
ANCIENT HOSTELRIES, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE MOST NOTABLE
COFFEE-HOUSES, CLUBS, AND PLEASURE GARDENS OF THE BRITISH METROPOLIS

BY

HENRY C. SHELLEY

Author of "Untrodden English Ways," etc.

1909

PREFACE

For all races of Teutonic origin the claim is made that they are essentially home-loving people. Yet the Englishman of the sixteenth and seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially of the latter, is seen to have exercised considerable zeal in creating substitutes for that home which, as a Teuton, he ought to have loved above all else. This, at any rate, was emphatically the case with the Londoner, as the following pages will testify. When he had perfected his taverns and inns, perfected them, that is, according to the light of the olden time, he set to work evolving a new species of public resort in the coffee-house. That type of establishment appears to have been responsible for the development of the club, another substitute for the home. And then came the age of the pleasure-garden. Both the latter survive, the one in a form of a more rigid exclusiveness than the eighteenth century Londoner would have deemed possible; the other in so changed a guise that frequenters of the prototype would scarcely recognize the relationship. But the coffee-house and the inn and tavern of old London exist but as a picturesque memory which these pages attempt to revive.

Naturally much delving among records of the past has gone to the making of this book. To enumerate all the sources of information which have been laid under contribution would be a tedious task and need not be attempted, but it would be ungrateful to omit thankful acknowledgment to Henry B. Wheatley's exhaustive edition of Peter Cunningham's "Handbook of London," and to Warwick Wroth's admirable volume on "The London Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century." Many of the illustrations have been specially photographed from rare engravings in the Print Room of the British Museum.

H.C.S.

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I.

INNS AND TAVERNS OF OLD LONDON.

CHAPTER I.

FAMOUS SOUTHWARK INNS.

Unique among the quaint maps of old London is one which traces the ground-plan of Southwark as it appeared early in the sixteenth century. It is not the kind of map which would ensure examination honours for its author were he competing among schoolboys of the twentieth century, but it has a quality of archaic simplicity which makes it a more precious possession than the best examples of modern cartography. Drawn on the principle that a minimum of lines and a maximum of description are the best aid to the imagination, this plan of Southwark indicates the main routes of thoroughfare with a few bold strokes, and then fills in the blanks with queer little drawings of churches and inns, the former depicted in delightfully

distorted perspective and the latter by two or three half-circular strokes. That there may be no confusion between church and inn, the possibility of which is suggested by the fact that several of the latter are adorned with spire-like embellishments, the sixteenth-century cartographer told which were which in so many words. It is by close attention to the letter-press, and by observing the frequent appearance of names which have age-long association with houses of entertainment, that the student of this map awakens to the conviction that ancient Southwark rejoiced in a more than generous provision of inns.

Such was the case from the earliest period of which there is any record. The explanation is simple. The name of the borough supplies the clue. Southwark is really the south-work of London, that is, the southern defence or fortification of the city. The Thames is here a moat of spacious breadth and formidable depth, yet the Romans did not trust to that defence alone, but threw up further obstacles for any enemy approaching the city from the south. It was from that direction assault was most likely to come. From the western and southern counties of England, and, above all, from the Continent, this was the high road into the capital.

All this had a natural result in times of peace. As London Bridge was the only causeway over the Thames, and as the High street of Southwark was the southern continuation of that causeway, it followed that diplomatic visitors from the Continent and the countless traders who had business in the capital were obliged to use this route coming and going. The logical result of this constant traffic is seen in the countless inns of the district. In the great majority of cases those visitors who had business in the city itself during the day elected to make their headquarters for the night on the southern shore of the Thames.

Although no definite evidence is available, it is reasonable to conclude that the most ancient inns of Southwark were established at least as early as the most ancient hostelries of the city itself. To which, however, the prize of seniority is to be awarded can never be known. Yet on one matter there can be no dispute. Pride of place among the inns of Southwark belongs unquestionably to the Tabard. Not that it is the most ancient, or has played the most conspicuous part in the social or political life of the borough, but because the hand of the poet has lifted it from the realm of the actual and given it an enduring niche in the world of imagination.

No evidence is available to establish the actual date when the Tabard was built; Stow speaks of it as among the "most ancient" of the locality; but the nearest approach to definite dating assigns the inn to the early fourteenth century. One antiquary indeed fixes the earliest distinct record of the site of the inn in 1304, soon after which the Abbot of Hyde, whose abbey was in the neighbourhood of Winchester, here built himself a town mansion and probably at the same time a hostelry for travellers. Three years later the Abbot secured a license to erect a chapel close by the inn. It seems likely, then, that the Tabard had its origin as an adjunct of the town house of a Hampshire ecclesiastic.

But in the early history of the hostelry no fact stands out so clearly as that it was chosen by Chaucer as the starting-point for his immortal Canterbury pilgrims. More than two centuries had passed

since Thomas à Becket had fallen before the altar of St. Benedict in the minster of Canterbury, pierced with many swords as his reward for contesting the supremacy of the Church against Henry II.

"What a parcel of fools and dastards have I nourished in my house," cried the monarch when the struggle had reached an acute stage, "that not one of them will avenge me of this one upstart clerk!"

Four knights took the king at his word, posted with all speed to Canterbury, and charged the prelate to give way to the wishes of the sovereign.

"In vain you threaten me," À Becket rejoined. "If all the swords in England were brandishing over my head, your terrors could not move me. Foot to foot you will find me fighting the battle of the Lord."

And then the swords of the knights flashed in the dim light of the minster and another name was added to the Church's roll of martyrs. The murder sent a thrill of horror through all Christendom; À Becket was speedily canonized, and his tomb became the objective of countless pilgrims from every corner of the Christian world.

In Chaucer's days, some two centuries later, the pilgrimage had become a favourite occupation of the devout. Each awakening of the year, when the rains of April had laid the dust of March and aroused the buds of tree and herb from their winter slumber, the longing to go on a pilgrimage seized all classes alike.

"And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke."

Precisionists of the type who are never satisfied unless they can apply chronology in the realm of imagination will have it that Chaucer's pilgrimage was a veritable event, and that it took place in April, 1388. They go further still and identify Chaucer's host with the actual Henry Bailley, who certainly was in possession of the Tabard in years not remote from that date. The records show that he twice represented the borough of Southwark in Parliament, and another ancient document bears witness how he and his wife, Christian by name, were called upon to contribute two shillings to the subsidy of Richard II. These are the dry bones of history; for the living picture of the man himself recourse must be had to Chaucer's verse:

"A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe;
Bold of his speche, and wys, and well y-taught,
And of manhood him lakkede right naught.
Eke thereto he was right a merry man."

No twentieth century pilgrim to the Tabard inn must expect to find its environment at all in harmony with the picture enshrined in Chaucer's verse. The passing years have wrought a woeful and materializing change. The opening lines of the Prologue are permeated with a sense of the month of April, a "breath of

uncontaminate springtide" as Lowell puts it, and in those far-off years when the poet wrote, the beauties of the awakening year were possible of enjoyment in Southwark. Then the buildings of the High street were spaciouly placed, with room for field and hedgerow; to-day they are huddled as closely together as the hand of man can set them, and the verdure of grass and tree is unknown. Nor is it otherwise with the inn itself, for its modern representative has no points of likeness to establish a kinship with the structure visualized in Chaucer's lines. It is true the poet describes the inn more by suggestion than set delineation, but such hints that it was "a gentle hostelry," that its rooms and stables were alike spacious, that the food was of the best and the wine of the strongest go further with the imagination than concrete statements.

[Illustration: GEOFFREY CHAUCER.]

Giving faith for the moment to that theory which credits the Canterbury Tales with being based on actual experience, and recalling the quaint courtyard of the inn as it appeared on that distant April day of 1388, it is a pleasant exercise of fancy to imagine Chaucer leaning over the rail of one of the upper galleries to watch the assembling of his nine-and-twenty "sondry folk." They are, as J. R. Green has said, representatives of every class of English society from the noble to the ploughman. "We see the 'verray-perfright gentil knight' in cassock and coat of mail, with his curly-headed squire beside him, fresh as the May morning, and behind them the brown-faced yeoman in his coat and hood of green with a mighty bow in his hand. A group of ecclesiastics light up for us the mediaeval church--the brawny hunt-loving monk, whose bridle jingles as loud and clear as the chapel bell--the wanton friar, first among the beggars and harpers of the courtly side--the poor parson, threadbare, learned, and devout ('Christ's lore and his apostles twelve he taught, and first he followed it himself')--the summoner with his fiery face--the pardoner with his wallet 'full of pardons, come from Rome all hot'--the lively prioress with her courtly French lisp, her soft little red mouth, and *Amor vincit omnia* graven on her brooch. Learning is there in the portly person of the doctor of physics, rich with the profits of the pestilence--the busy sergeant-of-law, 'that ever seemed busier than he was'--the hollow-cheeked clerk of Oxford with his love of books and short sharp sentences that disguise a latent tenderness which breaks out at last in the story of Griseldis. Around them crowd types of English industry; the merchant; the franklin in whose house 'it snowed of meat and drink'; the sailor fresh from frays in the Channel; the buxom wife of Bath; the broad-shouldered miller; the haberdasher, carpenter, weaver, dyer, tapestry-maker, each in the livery of his craft; and last the honest ploughman who would dyke and delve for the poor without hire."

Smilingly as Chaucer may have gazed upon this goodly company, his delight at their arrival paled before the radiant pleasure of mine host, for a poet on the lookout for a subject can hardly have welcomed the advent of the pilgrims with such an interested anticipation of profit as the innkeeper whose rooms they were to occupy and whose food and wines they were to consume. Henry Bailley was equal to the auspicious occasion.

"Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon;

And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste."

But the host of the Tabard was more than an efficient caterer; he was something of a diplomatist also. Taking advantage of that glow of satisfaction which is the psychological effect of physical needs generously satisfied, he appears to have had no difficulty in getting the pilgrims to pay their "rekeninges," and having attained that practical object he rewarded his customers with liberal interest for their hard cash in the form of unstinted praise of their collective merits. In all that year he had not seen so merry a company gathered under his roof, etc., etc. But of greater moment for future generations was his suggestion that, as there was no comfort in riding to Canterbury dumb as a stone, the pilgrims should beguile their journey by telling stories. The suggestion was loudly acclaimed and the scheme unanimously pledged in further copious draughts of wine. And then, to "reste wente echon," until the dawn came again and smiled down upon that brave company whose tale-telling pilgrimage has since been followed with so much delight by countless thousands. By the time Stow made his famous survey of London, some two centuries later, the Tabard was rejoicing to the full in the glories cast around it by Chaucer's pen. Stow cites the poet's commendation as its chief title to fame, and pauses to explain that the name of the inn was "so called of the sign, which, as we now term it, is of a jacket, or sleeveless coat, whole before, open on both sides, with a square collar, winged at the shoulders; a stately garment of old time, commonly worn of noblemen and others, both at home and abroad in the war, but then (to wit in the wars) their arms embroidered, or otherwise depict upon them, that every man by his coat of arms might be known from others." All this heraldic lore did not prevent the subsequent change--for a time--of the name Tabard to the meaningless name of Talbot, a distortion, however, which survives only in antiquarian history.

At the dissolution of the monasteries this inn, which up till then had retained its connection with the church through belonging to Hyde Abbey, was granted to two brothers named Master, and in 1542 its annual rent is fixed at nine pounds. An authority on social life in England during the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign ventures on the following description of the arrangements of the inn at that period. "On the ground-floor, looking on to the street, was a room called 'the darke parlour,' a hall, and a general reception-room called 'the parlour.' This was probably the dining-room of the house, as it opened on to the kitchen on the same level. Below the dark parlour was a cellar. On the first floor, above the parlour and the hall, were three rooms--'the middle chamber,' 'the corner chamber,' and 'Maister Hussye's chamber,' with garrets or 'cock lofts' over them. Over the great parlour was another room. There were also rooms called 'the Entry Chamber' and 'the Newe chamber,' 'the Flower de Luce' and 'Mr. Russell's chamber,' of which the position is not specified."

[Illustration: TABARD INN, SOUTHWARK, IN 1810.]

When, in 1575, the old Tabard, the inn, that is, of George Shepherd's water-colour drawing of 1810, was demolished, making way for the present somewhat commonplace representative of the ancient hostelry, many protests were made on the plea that it was sheer vandalism to destroy a building so intimately associated with the

genius of Chaucer. But the protests were based upon lack of knowledge. Chaucer's inn had disappeared long before. It is sometimes stated that that building survived until the great Southwark fire of 1676, but such assertions overlook the fact that there is in existence a record dated 1634 which speaks of the Tabard as having been built of brick six years previously upon the old foundation. Here, then, is proof that the Tabard of the pilgrims was wholly reconstructed in 1628, and even that building--faithful copy as it may have been of the poet's inn--was burnt to the ground in 1676. From the old foundations, however, a new Tabard arose, built on the old plan, so that the structure which was torn down in 1875 may have perpetuated the semblance of Chaucer's inn to modern times.

Compared with its association with the Canterbury pilgrims, the subsequent history of the Tabard is somewhat prosaic. Here a record tells how it became the objective of numerous carriers from Kent and Sussex, there crops up a law report which enshrines the memory of a burglary, and elsewhere in reminiscences or diary may be found a tribute to the excellence of the inn's rooms and food and the reasonableness of the charges. It should not be forgotten, however, that violent hands have been laid on the famous inn for the lofty purposes of melodrama. More than sixty years ago a play entitled "Mary White, or the Murder at the Old Tabard" thrilled the theatregoer with its tragic situations and the terrible perils of the heroine. But the tribulations of Mary White have left no imprint on English literature. Chaucer's pilgrims have, and so long as the mere name of the Tabard survives, its recollection will bring in its train a moving picture of that merry and motley company which set out for the shrine of A Becket so many generations ago.

Poetic license bestows upon another notable Southwark inn, the Bear at Bridge-foot, an antiquity far eclipsing that of the Tabard. In a poem printed in 1691, descriptive of "The Last Search after Claret in Southwark," the heroes of the verse are depicted as eventually finding their way to

"The Bear, which we soon understood
Was the first house in Southwark built after the flood."

To describe the inn as "the first house in Southwark" might have been accurate for those callers who approached it over London Bridge, but in actual chronology the proud distinction of dating from post-deluge days has really to give place to the much more recent year of 1319. There is, preserved among the archives of the city of London a tavern lease of that date which belongs without doubt to the history of this hostelry, for it refers to the inn which Thomas Drinkwater had "recently built at the head of London Bridge." This Thomas Drinkwater was a taverner of London, and the document in question sets forth how he had granted the lease of the Bear to one James Beauflur, who agrees to purchase all his wines from the inappropriately named Drinkwater, who, on his part, was to furnish his tenant with such necessities as silver mugs, wooden hanaps, curtains, cloths and other articles.

A century and a half later the inn figures in the accounts of Sir John Howard, that warlike "Jacke of Norfolk" who became the first Duke of Norfolk in the Howard family and fatally attested his loyalty to his king on Bosworth Field. From that time onward casual references to the Bear are numerous. It was probably the best-known

inn of Southwark, for its enviable position at the foot of London Bridge made it conspicuous to all entering or leaving the city. Its attractions were enhanced by the fact that archery could be practised in its grounds, and that within those same grounds was the Thames-side landing stage from whence the tilt-boats started for Greenwich and Gravesend. It was the opportunity for shooting at the target which helped to lure Sir John Howard to the Bear, but as he sampled the wine of the inn before testing his skill as a marksman, he found himself the poorer by the twenty-pence with which he had backed his own prowess. Under date 1633 there is an interesting reference which sets forth that, although orders had been given to have all the back-doors to taverns on the Thames closed up, owing to the fact that wrong-doers found them convenient in evading the officers of the law, an exception was made in the case of the Bear owing to the fact that it was the starting-place for Greenwich.

[Illustration: BRIDGE-FOOT, SOUTHWARK. (_Showing the Bear Inn in_ 1616.)]

Evidence in abundance might be cited to show that the inn was a favourite meeting place with the wits and gallants of the court of Charles I and the Restoration. "The maddest of all the land came to bait the Bear," is one testimony; "I stuffed myself with food and tipple till the hoops were ready to burst," is another. There is one figure, however, of the thirties of the seventeenth century which arrests the attention. This is Sir John Suckling, that gifted and ill-fated poet and man of fashion of whom it was said that he "had the peculiar happiness of making everything that he did become him." His ready wit, his strikingly handsome face and person, his wealth and generosity, his skill in all fashionable pastimes made him a favourite with all. The preferences of the man, his delight in the joys of the town as compared with the pleasures of secluded study in the country, are clearly seen in those sprightly lines in which he invited the learned John Hales, the "walking library," to leave Eton and "come to town":

"There you shall find the wit and wine
Flowing alike, and both divine:
Dishes, with names not known in books,
And less among the college-cooks;
With sauce so pregnant, that you need
Not stay till hunger bids you feed.
The sweat of learned Jonson's brain,
And gentle Shakespeare's eas'er strain,
A hackney coach conveys you to,
In spite of all that rain can do:
And for your eighteenpence you sit
The lord and judge of all fresh wit."

Nor was it in verse alone that Suckling celebrated the praises of wine. Among the scanty remains of his prose there is that lively sally, written at the Bear, and entitled: "The Wine-drinkers to the Water-drinkers." After mockingly commiserating with the teetotalers over the sad plight into which their habits had brought them, the address continues: "We have had divers meetings at the Bear at the Bridge-foot, and now at length have resolved to despatch to you one of our cabinet council, Colonel Young, with some slight forces of canary, and some few of sherry, which no doubt will stand you in good stead, if they do not mutiny and grow too headstrong for their

commander. Him Captain Puff of Barton shall follow with all expedition, with two or three regiments of claret; Monsieur de Granville, commonly called Lieutenant Strutt, shall lead up the rear of Rhenish and white. These succours, thus timely sent, we are confident will be sufficient to hold the enemy in play, and, till we hear from you again, we shall not think of a fresh supply.... Given under our hand at the Bear, this fourth of July."

Somewhere about the date when this drollery was penned there happened at the Bear an incident which might have furnished the water-drinkers with an effective retort on their satirist. The Earl of Buccleugh, just returned from military service abroad, on his way into London, halted at the Bear to quaff a glass of sack with a friend. A few minutes later he put off in a boat for the further shore of the Thames, but ere the craft had gone many yards from land the earl exclaimed, "I am deadly sick, row back; Lord have mercy upon me!" Those were his last words, for he died that night.

Another picturesque figure of the seventeenth century is among the shades that haunt the memory of the Bear, Samuel Pepys, that irrepressible gadabout who was more intimately acquainted with the inns and taverns of London than any man of his time. That Thames-side hostelry was evidently a favourite resort of the diarist. On both occasions of his visits to Southwark Pair he made the inn his base of operations as it were, especially in 1668 when the puppet-show of Whittington seemed "pretty to see," though he could not resist the reflection "how that idle thing do work upon people that see it, and even myself too!"

Pepys had other excitements that day. He was so mightily taken with Jacob Hall's dancing on the ropes that on meeting that worthy at a tavern he presented him with a bottle of wine. Having done justice to all the sights of the fair, he returned to the Bear, where his Waterman awaited him with the gold and other things to the value of forty pounds which the prudent diarist had left in his charge at the inn "for fear of my pockets being cut."

Pepys himself incidentally explains why he had so friendly a regard for the Bridge-foot tavern. "Going through bridge by water," he writes, "my Waterman told me how the mistress of the Beare tavern, at the bridge-foot, did lately fling herself into the Thames, and drowned herself; which did trouble me the more, when they tell me it was she that did live at the White Horse tavern in Lumbard Street, which was a most beautiful woman, as most I have seen."

Yet another fair woman, Frances Stuart, one of the greatest beauties of the court of Charles II, is linked with the history of the Beare. Sad as was the havoc she wrought in the heart of the susceptible Pepys, who is ever torn between admiration of her loveliness and mock-reprobation of her equivocal position at court, Frances Stuart created still deeper passions in men more highly placed than he. Apart from her royal lover, there were two nobles, the Dukes of York and Richmond who contended for her hand, with the result of victory finally resting with the latter. But the match had to be a runaway one. The king was in no mood to part with his favourite, and so the lovers arranged a meeting at the Bear, where a coach was in waiting to spirit them away into Kent. No wonder Charles was offended, especially when the lady sent him back his presents.

Nearly a century and a half has passed since the Bear finally closed its doors. All through the lively years of the Restoration it maintained its reputation as a house of good cheer and a wholly desirable rendezvous, and it figures not inconspicuously in the social life of London down to 1761. By that time the ever-increasing traffic over the Thames bridge had made the enlargement of that structure a necessity, and the Bear was among the buildings which had to be demolished.

Further south in the High street, and opposite the house in which John Harvard, the founder of America's oldest university, was born, stood the Boar's Head, an inn which was once the property of Sir Fastolfe, and was by him bequeathed through a friend to Magdalen College, Oxford. This must not be confused with the Boar's Head of Shakespeare, which stood in Eastcheap on the other side of the river, though it is a remarkable coincidence that it was in the latter inn the dramatist laid the scene of Prince Hal's merrymaking with the Sir John Falstaff we all know. The earliest reference to the Southwark Boar's Head occurs in the Paston Letters under date 1459. This is an epistle from a servant of Fastolfe to John Paston, asking him to remind his master that he had promised him he should be made host of the Boar's Head, but whether he ever attained to that desired position there is no evidence to show. The inn makes but little figure in history; by 1720 it had dwindled to a mere courtyard, and in 1830 the last remnants were cleared away.

[Illustration: COURTYARD OF BOAR'S HEAD INN, SOUTHWARK.]

Inevitably, however, the fact that the Boar's Head was the property of Sir John Fastolfe prompts the question, what relation had he to the Sir John Falstaff of Shakespeare's plays? This has been a topic of large discussion for many years. There are so many touches of character and definite incidents which apply in common to the two knights that the poet has been assumed to have had the historic Fastolfe ever in view when drawing the portrait of his Falstaff. The historian Fuller assumed this to have been the case, for he complains that the "stage have been overbold" in dealing with Fastolfe's memory. Sidney Lee, however, sums up the case thus: "Shakespeare was possibly under the misapprehension, based on the episode of cowardice reported in 'Henry VI,' that the military exploits of the historical Sir John Fastolfe sufficiently resembled those of his own riotous knight to justify the employment of a corrupted version of his name. It is of course untrue that Fastolfe was ever the intimate associate of Henry V when Prince of Wales, who was not his junior by more than ten years, or that he was an impecunious spendthrift and gray-haired debauchee. The historical Fastolfe was in private life an expert man of business, who was indulgent neither to himself nor his friends. He was nothing of a jester, and was, in spite of all imputations to the contrary, a capable and brave soldier."

Sad as has been the havoc wrought by time and the hand of man among the hostelries of Southwark, a considerable portion of one still survives in its actual seventeenth century guise. This is the George Inn, which is slightly nearer London Bridge than the Tabard. To catch a peep of its old-world aspect, with its quaint gallery and other indubitable tokens of a distant past, gives the pilgrim a pleasant shock. It is such a contrast to the ugly modern structures which impose themselves on the public as "Ye Olde" this and "Ye

Olde" that. Here at any rate is a veritable survival. Nor does it matter that the George has made little figure in history; there is a whole world of satisfaction in the thought that it has changed but little since it was built in 1672. Its name is older than its structure. Stow included the George among the "many fair inns" he saw in Southwark in 1598, a fact which deals a cruel blow to that crude theory which declares inns were so named after the royal Georges of Great Britain.

[Illustration: GEORGE INN.]

Among the numerous other inns which once lined the High Street of Southwark there is but one which has claims upon the attention on the score of historic and literary interest. This is the White Hart, which was doubtless an old establishment at the date, 1406, of its first mention in historical records. Forty-four years later, that is in 1450, the inn gained its most notable association by being made the head-quarters of Jack Cade at the time of his famous insurrection. Modern research has shown that this rebellion was a much more serious matter than the older historians were aware of, but the most careful investigation into Cade's career has failed to elicit any particulars of note prior to a year before the rising took place. The year and place of his birth are unknown, but twelve months before he appears in history he was obliged to flee the realm and take refuge in France owing to his having murdered a woman who was with child. He served for a time in the French army, then returned under an assumed name and settled in Kent, which was the centre of discontent against Henry VI. As the one hope of reform lay in an appeal to arms, the discontent broke into open revolt. "The rising spread from Kent over Surrey and Sussex. Everywhere it was general and organized--a military levy of the yeomen of the three shires." It was not of the people alone, for more than a hundred esquires and gentlemen threw in their lot with the rebels; but how it came about that Jack Cade attained the leadership is a profound mystery. Leader, however, he was, and when he, with his twenty thousand men, took possession of Southwark as the most desirable base from which to threaten the city of London, he elected the White Hart for his own quarters. This was on the first of July, 1450, and for the next few of those midsummer days the inn was the scene of many stirring and tragic events. Daily, Cade at the head of his troops crossed the bridge into the city, and on one of those excursions he caused the seizure and beheading of the hated Lord Say. Daily, too, there was constant coming and going at the White Hart of Cade's emissaries. At length, however, the citizens of London, stung into action by the robberies and other outrages of the rebels, occupied the bridge in force. A stubborn struggle ensued, but Cade and his men were finally beaten off. The amnesty which followed led to a conference at which terms were arranged and a general pardon granted. That for Cade, however, as it was made out in his assumed name of Mortimer, was invalid, and on the discovery being made he seized a large quantity of booty and fled. Not many days later he was run to earth, wounded in being captured, and died as he was being brought back to London. His naked body was identified by the hostess of the White Hart, who was probably relieved to gaze upon so certain an indication that she would be able to devote herself once more to the entertainment of less troublesome guests.

For all the speedy ending of his ambitions, Cade is assured of immortality so long as the pages of Shakespeare endure. The rebel is

a stirring figure in the Second Part of King Henry VI and as an orator of the mob reaches his greatest flights of eloquence in that speech which perpetuates the name of his headquarters at Southwark. "Hath my sword therefore broke through London gates, that you should leave me at the White Hart in Southwark?"

But English literature was not done with the old inn. Many changes were to pass over its head during the nearly four centuries which elapsed ere it was touched once more by the pen of genius, changes wrought by the havoc of fire and the attritions of the hand of time. When those years had fled a figure was to be seen in its courtyard to become better known to and better beloved by countless thousands than the rebel leader of the fifteenth century. "In the Borough," wrote the creator of that figure, "there still remain some half dozen old inns, which have preserved their external features unchanged, and which have escaped alike the rage for public improvement and the encroachments of private speculation. Great, rambling, queer old places they are, with galleries, and passages, and staircases, wide enough and antiquated enough to furnish materials for a hundred ghost stories.... It was in the yard of one of these inns--of no less celebrated a one than the White Hart--that a man was busily employed in brushing the dirt off a pair of boots, early on the morning succeeding the events narrated in the last chapter. He was habited in a coarse-striped waistcoat, with black calico sleeves, and blue glass buttons; drab breeches and leggings. A bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck, and an old white hat was carelessly thrown on one side of his head. There were two rows of boots before him, one cleaned and the other dirty, and at every addition he made to the clean row, he paused from his work, and contemplated its results with evident satisfaction."

[Illustration: WHITE HART INN, SOUTHWARK.]

Who does not recognize Sam Weller, making his first appearance in "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club"? And who has not revelled in the lively scene in the White Hart when Mr. Pickwick and his friends arrived in the nick of time to prevent the ancient but still sentimental Rachael from becoming Mrs. Jingle? It is not difficult to understand why that particular instalment of "Pickwick" was the turning-point of the book's fortunes. Prior to the advent of Sam in the courtyard of the White Hart the public had shown but a moderate interest in the new venture of "Boz," but from that event onward the sales of the succeeding parts were ever on the increase. Sam and the White Hart, then, had much to do with the career of Dickens, for if "Pickwick" had failed it is more than probable that he would have abandoned literature as a profession.

When Dickens wrote, the White Hart was still in existence. It is no longer. Till late in the last century this hostelry was spared the fate which had overtaken so many Southwark taverns, even though, in place of the nobles it had sheltered, its customers had become hop-merchants, farmers, and others of lower degree. In 1889, in the month of July, four hundred and thirty-nine years after it had received Jack Cade under its roof, the last timbers of the old inn were levelled to the ground.

CHAPTER II.

INNS AND TAVERNS EAST OF ST. PAUL'S.

Boswell relates how, in one of his numerous communicative moods, he informed Dr. Johnson of the existence of a club at "the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, the very tavern where Falstaff and his joyous companions met; the members of which all assume Shakespeare's characters. One is Falstaff, another Prince Henry, another Bardolph, and so on." If the assiduous little Scotsman entertained the idea of joining the club, a matter on which he does not throw any light, Johnson's rejoinder was sufficient to deter him from doing so. "Don't be of it, Sir. Now that you have a name you must be careful to avoid many things not bad in themselves, but which will lessen your character."

Whether Johnson's remark was prompted by an intimate knowledge of the type of person frequenting the Boar's Head in his day cannot be decided, but there are ample grounds for thinking that the patrons of that inn were generally of a somewhat boisterous kind. That, perhaps, is partly Shakespeare's fault. Prior to his making it the scene of the mad revelry of Prince Hal and his none too choice companions, the history of the Boar's Head, so far as we know it, was sedately respectable. One of the earliest references to its existence is in a lease dated 1537, some sixty years before the first part of Henry IV was entered in the Stationers' Register. Some half century later, that is in 1588, the inn was kept by one Thomas Wright, whose son came into a "good inheritance," was made clerk of the King's Stable, and a knight, and was "a very discreet and honest gentleman."

But Shakespeare's pen dispelled any atmosphere of respectability which lingered around the Boar's Head. From the time when he made it the meeting-place of the mad-cap Prince of Wales and his roistering followers, down to the day of Goldsmith's reverie under its roof, the inn has dwelt in the imagination at least as the rendezvous of hard drinkers and practical jokers. How could it be otherwise after the limning of such a scene as that described in Henry IV? That was sufficient to dedicate the inn to conviviality for ever.

How sharply the picture shapes itself as the hurrying dialogue is read! The key-note of merriment is struck by the Prince himself as he implores the aid of Poins to help him laugh at the excellent trick he has just played on the boastful but craven Falstaff, and the bustle and hilarity of the scene never flags for a moment. Even Francis, the drawer, whose vocabulary is limited to "Anon, anon, sir"--the fellow that had "fewer words than a parrot, and yet the son of a woman"--and the host himself, as perplexed as his servant when two customers call at once, contribute to the movement of the episode in its earlier stages. But the pace is, increased furiously when the burly Falstaff, scant of breath indeed, bustles hurriedly in proclaiming in one breath his scorn of cowards and his urgent need of a cup of sack. We all know the boastful story he told, how he and his three companions had been set upon and robbed by a hundred men, how he himself--as witness his sword "packed like a hand-saw"--had kept at bay and put to flight now two, anon four, and

then seven, and finally eleven of his assailants. We all can see, too, the roguish twinkle in Prince Hal's eyes as the braggart knight embellishes his lying tale with every fresh sentence, and are as nonplussed as he when, the plot discovered, Falstaff finds a way to take credit for his cowardice. Who would not forgive so cajoling a vaunter?

It was later in this scene, be it remembered, that the portly knight was found fast asleep behind the arras, "snorting like a horse," and had his pockets searched to the discovery of that tavern bill--not paid we may be sure--which set forth an expenditure on the staff of life immensely disproportionate to that on drink, and elicited the famous ejaculation--"But one half-pennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack!"

But Shakespeare had not finished with the Boar's Head. More coarse and less merry, but not less vivid, is that other scene wherein the shrill-tongued Doll Tearsheet and the peace-making Dame Quickly figure. And it is of a special and private room in the Boar's Head we think as we listen to Dame Quickly's tale of how the amorous Falstaff made love to her with his hand upon "a parcel-gilt goblet," and followed up the declaration with a kiss and a request for thirty shillings.

For Shakespeare's sake, then, the Boar's Head is elect into that small circle of inns which are immortal in the annals of literature. But, like Chaucer's Tabard, no stone of it is left. Boswell made a mistake, and so did Goldsmith after him, in thinking that the Boar's Head of the eighteenth century was the Boar's Head of Shakespeare's day. They both forgot the great Fire of London. That disastrous conflagration of 1666 swept away every vestige of the old inn. Upon its foundation, however, another Boar's Head arose, the sign of which, cut in stone and dated 1668, is among the treasures of the Guildhall Museum. This was the building in which Boswell's club met, and it was under its roof Goldsmith penned his famous reverie.

As was to be expected of that social soul, the character of Falstaff gave Goldsmith more consolation than the most studied efforts of wisdom: "I here behold," he continues, "an agreeable old fellow forgetting age, and showing me the way to be young at sixty-five. Sure I am well able to be as merry, though not so comical, as he. Is it not in my power to have, though not so much wit, at least as much vivacity?--Age, care, wisdom, reflection, begone--I give you to the winds! Let's have t'other bottle: Here's to the memory of Shakespeare, Falstaff, and all the merry men of Eastcheap!"

[Illustration: OLIVER GOLDSMITH.]

With such zest did Goldsmith enter into his night out at the Boar's Head that when the midnight hour arrived he discovered all his companions had stolen away, leaving him--still in high spirits with the landlord as his sole companion. Then the mood of reverie began to work. The very room helped to transport him back through the centuries; the oak floor, the gothic windows, the ponderous chimney-piece,--all were reminders of the past. But the prosaic landlord was an obstacle to the complete working of the spell. At last, however, a change came over mine host, or so it seemed to the dreaming chronicler. "He insensibly began to alter his appearance; his cravat seemed quilled into a ruff, and his breeches swelled out

into a farlingale. I now fancied him changing sexes; and as my eyes began to close in slumber, I imagined my fat landlord actually converted into as fat a landlady. However, sleep made but few changes in my situation: the tavern, the apartment, and the table, continued as before: nothing suffered mutation but my host, who was fairly altered into a gentlewoman, whom I knew to be Dame Quickly, mistress of this tavern in the days of Sir John; and the liquor we were drinking seemed converted into sack and sugar."

Such an opportunity of interviewing an acquaintance of Falstaff was not to be lost, and to the credit of Dame Quickly be it said that she was far more communicative than some moderns are under the questioning ordeal. But it was no wonder she was loquacious: had she not been ordered by Pluto to keep a record of every transaction at the Boar's Head, and in the discharge of that duty compiled three hundred tomes? Some may subscribe to the opinion that Dame Quickly was indiscreet as well as loquacious; certainly she did not spare the reputations of some who had dwelt under that ancient roof. The sum of the matter, however, was that since the execution of that hostess who was accused of witchcraft the Boar's Head "underwent several revolutions, according to the spirit of the times, or the disposition of the reigning monarch. It was this day a brothel, and the next a conventicle for enthusiasts. It was one year noted for harbouring Whigs, and the next infamous for a retreat to Tories. Some years ago it was in high vogue, but at present it seems declining."

One other son of genius was to add to the fame of the Boar's Head, the American Goldsmith, that is, the gentle Washington Irving. Of course Shakespeare was the moving spirit once more. While turning over the pages of Henry IV Irving was seized with a sudden inspiration: "I will make a pilgrimage to Eastcheap, and see if the old Boar's Head tavern still exists." But it was too late. The only relic of the ancient abode of Dame Quickly was the stone boar's head, built into walls reared where the inn once stood. Nothing daunted, however, Irving explored the neighbourhood, and was rewarded, as he thought, by running to earth Dame Quickly's "parcel-gilt goblet" in a tavern near by. He had one other "find." In the old graveyard of St. Michael's, which no longer exists, he discovered, so he avers, the tombstone of one Robert Preston who, like the Francis of "Anon, anon, sir," was a drawer at the Boar's Head, and quotes from that tombstone the following admonitory epitaph:

"Bacchus, to give the toping world surprise,
Produced one sober son, and here he lies.
Though rear'd among full hogsheads, he defied
The charms of wine, and every one beside.
O reader, if to justice thou'rt inclined,
Keep honest Preston daily in thy mind.
He drew good wine, took care to fill his pots,
Had sundry virtues that excused his faults.
You that on Bacchus have the like dependence,
Pray copy Bob, in measure and attendance."

Small as was the reward of living's quest, a still more barren result would ensue on a modern pilgrimage to the Boar's Head. It was still a tavern in 1785, for a chronicler of that date described it as having on each side of the doorway "a vine branch, carved in

wood, rising more than three feet from the ground, loaded with leaves and clusters; and on the top of each a little Falstaff, eight inches high, in the dress of his day." But Dame Quickly's forecast of declining fortune moved on to its fulfilment. In the last stages of its existence the building was divided into two, while the carved boar's head which Irving saw still remained as the one sign of its departed glories. Finally came the resolve to widen the approach to London Bridge from the city side, and the carrying out of that resolve involved the sweeping away of the Boar's Head. This was in 1831, and, as has been said, the only relic of the ancient tavern is that carved sign in the Guildhall Museum. But the curious in such matters may be interested to know that the statue of King William marks approximately the spot of ground where hover the immortal memories of Shakespeare, and Goldsmith, and Irving.

Within easy distance of Eastcheap, in Upper Thames Street, which skirts the river bank, there stood, in Shakespeare's day and much later, a tavern bearing the curious name of the Three Cranes in the Vintry. John Stow, that zealous topographer to whom the historians of London owe so large a debt, helps to explain the mystery. The vintry, he tells us, was that part of the Thames bank where "the merchants of Bordeaux craned their wines out of lighters and other vessels, and there landed and made sale of them." He also adds that the Three Cranes' lane was "so called not only of a sign of three cranes at a tavern door, but rather 'of three strong cranes of timber placed on the Vintry wharf by the Thames side, to crane up wines there." Earlier than the seventeenth century, however, it would seem that one crane had to suffice for the needs of "the merchants of Bordeaux," and then the tavern was known simply as the Crane. Two references, dated respectively 1552 and 1554, speak of the sign in the singular. Twenty years later, however, the one had become three.

Ben Jonson, whose knowledge of London inns and taverns was second, only to that of Pepys, evidently numbered the Three Cranes in the Vintry among his houses of call. Of two of his allusions to the house one is derogatory of the wit of its patrons, the other laudatory of the readiness of its service. "A pox o' these pretenders to wit!" runs the first passage. "Your Three Cranes, Mitre, and Mermaid men! Not a corn of true salt, not a grain of right mustard amongst them all." And here is the other side of the shield, credited to Iniquity in "The Devil is an Ass":--

"Nay, boy, I will bring thee to the bawds and roysters
At Billingsgate, feasting with claret-wine and oysters;
From thence shoot the Bridge, child, to the Cranes in the Vintry,
And see there the gimblets how they make their entry."

Of course Pepys was acquainted with the house. He had, indeed, a savage memory of one meal under its roof. It was all owing to the marrying proclivities of his uncle Fenner. Bereft of his wife on the last day of August, that easy-going worthy, less than two months later, was discovered by his nephew in an ale-house, "very jolly and youthsom, and as one that I believe will in a little time get him a wife." Pepys' anticipation was speedily realized. Uncle Fenner had indulged himself with a new partner by the middle of January, and must needs give a feast to celebrate the event. And this is Pepys' frank record of the occasion: "By invitation to my uncle Fenner's, where I found his new wife, a pitiful, old, ugly, ill-bred woman, in

a hatt, a midwife. Here were many of his, and as many of her relatives, sorry, mean people; and after choosing our gloves, we all went over to the Three Cranes taverne, and (although the best room of the house) in such a narrow dogg-hole we were crammed, (and I believe we were near forty) that it made me loath my company and victuals; and a sorry, poor dinner it was."

In justice to the Three Cranes, Pepys must not be allowed to have the last word. That particular dinner, no doubt, owed a good deal of its defects to the atmosphere and the company amid which it was served. At any rate, the host of the Black Bear at Cumnor--he of Sir Walter Scott's "Kenilworth"--was never weary of praising the Three Cranes, "the most topping tavern in London" as he emphatically declared.

No one can glance even casually over a list of tavern signs without observing how frequently the numeral "three" is used. Various explanations have been offered for the propensity of mankind to use that number, one deriving the habit from the fact that primitive man divided the universe into three regions, heaven, earth, and water. Pythagoras, it will be remembered, called three the perfect number; Jove is depicted with three-forked lightning; Neptune bears a trident; Pluto has his three-headed dog. Again, there are three Fates, three Furies, three Graces and three Muses. It is natural, then, to find the numeral so often employed in the signs of inns and taverns. Thus we have the Three Angels, the Three Crowns, the Three Compasses, the Three Cups, the Three Horseshoes, the Three Tuns, the Three Nuns, and many more. In the city of London proper the Three Cups was a favourite sign and the Three Tuns was hardly less popular. There were also several Three Nuns, the most famous of which was situated in Aldgate High Street, where its modern representative still stands. In the bygone years it was a noted coaching inn and enjoyed an enviable reputation for the rare quality of its punch. Defoe has a brief reference to the house in his "A Journal of the Plague Year."

An attempt to enumerate the King's Head taverns of London would be an endless task. It must not be overlooked, however, that one of the most notable houses so named stood in Fenchurch Street, on the site now occupied by the London Tavern. This is the tavern for which a notable historic association is claimed. The tradition has it that when the Princess Elizabeth, the "Good Queen Bess" of after days, was released from the Tower of London on May 19th, 1554, she went first to a neighbouring church to offer thanks for her deliverance, and then proceeded to the King's Head to enjoy a somewhat plebeian dinner of boiled pork and Pease-pudding. This legend seems to ignore the fact that the freedom of the Princess was comparative only; that she was at that time merely removed from one prison to another; and that the record of her movements on that day speaks of her taking barge at the Tower wharf and going direct to Richmond en route for Woodstock. However, the metal dish and cover which were used in serving that homely meal of boiled pork and Pease-pudding are still shown, and what can the stickler for historical accuracy do in the face of such stubborn evidence?

Two other Fenchurch Street taverns have wholly disappeared. One of these, the Elephant, was wont to claim a somewhat dubious association with Hogarth. The artist is credited with once lodging under the Elephant's roof and with embellishing the walls of the

tap-room with pictures in payment for a long overdue bill. The subjects were said to have included the first study for the picture which afterwards became famous under the title of "Modern Midnight Conversation," but treated in a much broader manner than is shown in the well-known print. When the building was pulled down in 1826 a heated controversy arose concerning these Hogarth pictures, which were removed from the walls and exhibited in a Pall Mall gallery. The verdict of experts was given against their being the work of the master for whom they were claimed. The other tavern was one of the many mitres to be found in London during the seventeenth century. The host, Dan Rawlinson, was so staunch a royalist that when Charles I was executed he hung his sign in mourning, an action which naturally caused him to be regarded with suspicion by the Cromwell party, but "endeared him so much to the churchmen that he thrived again and got a good estate." Something of that prosperity was due no doubt to the excellent "venison-pasty" of which Pepys was so fond. But Dan Rawlinson of the Mitre had his reverses as well as his successes. During the dreaded Plague of London Pepys met an acquaintance in Fenchurch Street who called his attention to the fact that Mr. Rawlinson's door was shut up. "Why," continued his informant, "after all this sickness, and himself spending all the last year in the country, one of his men is now dead of the plague, and his wife and one of his maids sick, and himself shut up." Mrs. Rawlinson died a day or two later and the maid quickly followed her mistress to the grave. A year later the Mitre was destroyed in the Great Fire of London and Pepys met its much-tried owner shortly after "looking over his ruins." But the tavern was rebuilt on a more spacious scale, and Isaac Fuller was commissioned to adorn its walls with paintings. This was the artist whose fondness of tavern life prevented him from becoming a great painter. The commission at the Mitre was no doubt much to his liking, and Walpole describes in detail the panels with which he adorned a great room in that house. "The figures were as large as life: a Venus, Satyr, and sleeping Cupid; a boy riding a goat and another fallen down, over the chimney: this was the best part of the performance, says Vertue: Saturn devouring a Child, Mercury, Minerva, Diana, Apollo; and Bacchus, Venus, and Ceres embracing; a young Silenus fallen down, and holding a goblet, into which a boy was pouring wine; the Scarons, between the windows, and on the ceiling two angels supporting a mitre, in a large circle." The execution of all this must have kept Fuller for quite a long time amid his favourite environment.

[Illustration: COCK INN, LEADENHALL STREET.]

One of the lesser known Cock taverns of London was still in existence in Leadenhall Street during the first quarter of the last century. A drawing of the time shows it to have been a picturesque building, the most notable feature being that the window lights on the first floor extended the entire width of the front, the only specimen of the kind then remaining in London. At the time the drawing was made that particular room was used as the kitchen. From the dress of the boys of the carved brackets supporting the over-hanging upper story, it has been inferred that the house was originally a charity school. Behind the tavern there stood a brick building dated 1627, formerly used by the bricklayers' company, but in 1795 devoted to the purposes of a Jewish synagogue. As with all the old taverns of this sign, the effigy of the bird from which it took its name was prominently displayed in front. Far more ancient

than the Cock is that other Leadenhall Street tavern, the Ship and Turtle, which is still represented in the thoroughfare. The claim is made for this house that it dates back to 1377, and for many generations, down, indeed, to 1835, it had a succession of widows as hostesses. The modern representative of this ancient house prides itself upon the quality of its turtle soup and upon the fact that it is the meeting-place of numerous masonic lodges, besides being in high favour for corporation and companies' livery dinners.

If the pilgrim now turns his steps toward Bishopsgate Street Within--the "Within" signifying, of course, that that part of the thoroughfare was inside the old city wall--he will find himself in a neighbourhood where many famous inns once stood. Apart from the Wrestlers and the Angel which are mentioned by Stow, there were the Flower Pot, the White Hart, the Four Swans, the Three Nuns, the Green Dragon, the Ball, and several more. The reason for this crowding together of so many hostelryes in one street is obvious. It was through Bishop's gate that the farmers of the eastern counties came into the city and they naturally made their headquarters in the district nearest to the end of their journey.

For many years the White Hart maintained its old-time reputation as a "fair inn for the receipt of travellers." That it was an ancient structure is proved by the fact that when it was demolished, the date of 1480 was discovered on one of its half-timbered bays. The present up-to-date White Hart stands on the site of the old inn.

Far greater interest attaches to the Bull inn, even were it only for the fact of its association with Thomas Hobson, the Cambridge carrier whom Milton made famous. In the closing years of the sixteenth century the house appears to have had a dubious reputation, for when Anthony Bacon came to live in Bishopsgate Street in 1594 his mother became exceedingly anxious on his account, fearing "the neighbourhood of the Bull Inn." Perhaps, however, the distressed mother based her alarm on the dangers of play-acting, for the house was notable as the scene of many dramatic performances. That it was the recognized headquarters for Cambridge carriers is shown by an allusion, in 1637, which reads: "The Blacke Bull in Bishopsgate Street, who is still looking towards Shoreditch to see if he can spy the carriers coming from Cambridge." Hobson, of course, was the head of that fraternity. He had flourished amazingly since he succeeded to his father's business in the university city, and attained that position of independence which enabled him to force the rule that each horse in his stable was to be hired only in its proper turn, thus originating the proverb, "Hobson's choice," that is, "this or none." Despite his ever growing wealth and advanced years, Hobson continued his regular journeys to London until the outbreak of the plague caused the authorities to suspend the carrier service for a time. This is the fact upon which Milton seized with such humourous effect in his poetical epitaph:

"Here lies old Hobson. Death hath broke his girt,
And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;
Or else, the ways being foul, twenty to one
He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter that, if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down;
For he had any time this ten years full
Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and The Bull.

And surely Death could never have prevailed,
Had not his weekly course of carriage failed;
But lately, finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey's end was come,
And that he had ta'en up his latest inn,
In the kind office of a chamberlain,
Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pulled off his boots, and took away the light."

[Illustration: PAUL PINDAR TAVERN.]

Among the "Familiar Letters" of James Howell is a stately epistle addressed "To Sir Paul Pindar, Knight," who is informed to his face that of all the men of his times he is "one of the greatest examples of piety and constant integrity," and is assured that his correspondent could see his namesake among the apostles saluting and solacing him, and ensuring that his works of charity would be as a "triumphant chariot" to carry him one day to heaven. But Sir Paul Pindar was more than benevolent; he was a master in business affairs and no mean diplomatist. His commercial aptitude he put to profitable use during a fifteen years' residence in Italy; his skill as a negotiator was tested and proved by nine years' service in Constantinople as the ambassador of James I to Turkey. At the date of his final return to England, 1623, the merchant and diplomat was an exceedingly wealthy man, well able to meet the expense of that fine mansion in Bishopsgate Street Without which perpetuated his name down to our own day. In its original state Sir Paul Pindar's house, both within and without, was equal in splendour and extent to any mansion in London. And, as may be imagined, its owner was a person of importance in city and court life. One of his possessions was a great diamond worth thirty-five thousand pounds, which James I used to borrow for state occasions. The son of that monarch purchased this jewel in 1625 for about half its value and successfully deferred payment for even that reduced sum! Sir Paul, indeed, appears to have been a complacent lender of his wealth to royalty and the nobility, so that it is not surprising many "desperate debts" were owing him on his death. A century and a quarter after that event, that is in 1787, the splendid mansion of the wealthy merchant and diplomat had become a tavern under the names of its builder, and continued in that capacity until 1890, when railway extension made its demolition necessary. But the beautifully carved front is still preserved in the South Kensington Museum.

While there may at times be good reason for doubting the claims made as to the antiquity of some London taverns, there can be none for questioning the ripe old age to which the Pope's Head in Cornhill attained. This is one of the few taverns which Stow deals with at length. He describes it as being "strongly built of stone," and favours the opinion that it was at one time the palace of King John. He tells, too, how in his day wine was sold there at a penny the pint and bread provided free. It was destroyed in the Great Fire, but rebuilt shortly after. Pepys knew both the old and the new house. In the former he is said to have drunk his first "dish of tea," and he certainly enjoyed many a meal under its roof, notably on that occasion when, with Sir W. Penn and Mrs. Pepys, he "eat cakes and other fine things." Another, not so pleasant, memory is associated with the Pope's Head. Two actors figured in the episode, James Quin and William Bowen, between whom, especially on the side

of the latter, strong professional jealousy existed. Bowen, a low comedian of "some talent and more conceit," taunted Quin with being tame in a certain role, and Quin retorted in kind, declaring that Bowen's impersonation of a character in "The Libertine" was much inferior to that of another actor. Bowen seems to have had an ill-balanced mind; he was so affected by Jeremy Collier's "Short View" that he left the stage and opened a cane shop in Holborn, thinking "a shopkeeper's life was the readiest way to heaven." But he was on the stage again in a year, thus resuming the career which was to be his ruin. For so thoroughly was he incensed by Quin's disparagement that he took the earliest opportunity of forcing the quarrel to an issue. Having invited Quin to meet him, the two appear to have gone from tavern to tavern until they reached the Pope's Head. Quin was averse to a duel, but no sooner had the two entered an empty room in the Cornhill tavern than Bowen fastened the door, and, standing with his back against it and drawing his sword, threatened Quin that he would run him through if he did not draw and defend himself. In vain did Quin remonstrate, and in the end he had to take to his sword to keep the angry Bowen at bay. He, however, pressed so eagerly on his fellow actor that it was not long ere he received a mortal wound. Before he died Bowen confessed he had been in the wrong, and that frank admission was the main cause why Quin was legally freed of blame for the tragic incident in the Pope's Head.

Although there was a Mermaid tavern in Cornhill, it must not be confused with its far more illustrious namesake in the nearby thoroughfare of Cheapside. The Cornhill house was once kept by a man named Dun, and the story goes that one day when he was in the room with some witty gallants, one of them, who had been too familiar with the host's wife, exclaimed, "I'll lay five pounds there's a cuckold in this company." To which another immediately rejoined, "Tis Dun!"

Around the other Mermaid--that in Cheapside--much controversy has raged. One dispute was concerned with its exact site, but as the building disappeared entirely many generations ago that is not a matter of moment. Another cause of debate is found in that passage of Gifford's life of Ben Jonson which describes his habits in the year 1603. "About this time," Gifford wrote, "Jonson probably began to acquire that turn for conviviality for which he was afterwards noted. Sir Walter Raleigh, previously to his unfortunate engagement with Cobham and others, had instituted a meeting of *_beaux esprits_* at the Mermaid, a celebrated tavern in Friday Street. Of this club, which combined more talent and genius, perhaps, than ever met together before or since, our author was a member; and here, for many years, he regularly repaired with Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Cotton, Carew, Martin, Donne, and many others, whose names, even at this distant period, call up a mingled feeling of reverence and respect." Many have found this flowing narrative hard of belief. It is doubted whether Gifford had any authority for mixing up Sir Walter Raleigh with the Mermaid, and there are good grounds for believing that Jonson's relations with Shakespeare were not of an intimate character.

All the same, it is beyond dispute that there were rare combats of wit at the Mermaid in Jonson's days and under his rule. For indisputable witness we have that epistle which Francis Beaumont addressed to Jonson from some country retreat whither he and

Fletcher had repaired to work on two of their comedies. Beaumont tells how he had dreams of the "full Mermaid wine," dwells upon the lack of excitement in his rural abode, and then breaks out:

"Methinks the little wit I had is lost
Since I saw you; for wit is like a rest
Held up at tennis, which men do best
With the best gamesters. What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one (from whence they came)
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life."

That poem inspired another which should always be included in the anthology of the Mermaid. More than two centuries after Beaumont penned his rhyming epistle to Jonson, three brothers had their lodging for a brief season in Cheapside, and the poetic member of the trio doubtless mused long and often on those kindred spirits who, for him far more than for ordinary mortals, haunted the spot where the famous tavern once stood. Thus it came about that John Keats' residence in Cheapside was a prime factor in suggesting his "Lines on the Mermaid Tavern":

"Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse with horn and can.

"I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An Astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new-old sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

"Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?"

[Illustration: ANCIENT VIEW OF CHEAPSIDE, SHOWING THE NAG'S HEAD TAVERN.]

Compared with the Mermaid, the other old taverns of Cheapside make a meagre showing in history. There was a Mitre, however, which dated

back to 1475 at the least, and had the reputation of making "noses red"; and the Bull Head, whose host was the "most faithful friend" Bishop Ridley ever had, and was the meeting-place of the Royal Society for several years; and, above all, the Nag's Head, famous as the alleged scene of the fictitious consecration of the Elizabethan bishops in 1559. There is an interesting drawing of 1638 depicting the procession of Mary de Medici in Cheapside on the occasion of her visit to her daughter, the wife of Charles I. This animated scene is historically valuable for the record it gives of several notable structures in the thoroughfare which was at that time the centre of the commercial life of London. In the middle of the picture is an excellent representation of Cheapside Cross, to the right the conduit is seen, and in the extreme corner of the drawing is a portion of the Nag's Head with its projecting sign.

Another of Ben Jonson's haunts was situated within easy distance of the Mermaid. This was the Three Tuns, of the Guildhall Yard, which Herrick includes in his list of taverns favoured by the dramatist.

"Ah Ben!
Say how or when
Shall we thy Guests,
Meet at those lyric feasts
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tunne;
Where we such clusters had
As made us nobly wild, not mad?"

Close at hand, too, in Old Jewry, was that Windmill tavern, of which Stow wrote that it was "sometime the Jews' synagogue, since a house of friars, then a nobleman's house, after that a merchant's house, wherein mayoralties have been kept, and now a wine tavern." It must have been a fairly spacious hostelry, for on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor Charles V in 1522 the house is noted as being able to provide fourteen feather-beds, and stabling for twenty horses. From the fact that one of the characters in "Every Man in His Humour" dates a letter from the Windmill, and that two of the scenes in that comedy take place in a room of the tavern, it is obvious that it also must be numbered among the many houses frequented by Jonson.

One dramatic episode is connected with the history of the Windmill. In the early years of the seventeenth century considerable excitement was aroused in Worcestershire by the doings of John Lambe, who indulged in magical arts and crystal glass enchantments. By 1622 he was in London, and numbered the king's favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, among his clients. That was sufficient to set the populace against him, an enmity which was greatly intensified by strange atmospheric disturbances which visited London in June, 1628. All this was attributed to Lambe's conjuring, and the popular fury came to a climax a day or two later, when Lambe, as he was leaving the Fortune Theatre, was attacked by a mob of apprentices. He fled towards the city and finally took refuge in the Windmill. After affording the hunted man haven for a few hours the host, in view of the tumult outside, at length turned him into the street again, where he was so severely beaten that he died the following morning. A crystal ball and other conjuring implements were found on his person.

Far less exciting was the history of Pontack's, a French ordinary in Abchurch Lane which played a conspicuous part in the social life of London during the eighteenth century. Britons of that period had their own insular contempt for French cookery, as is well illustrated by Rowlandson's caricature which, with its larder of dead cats and its coarse revelation of other secrets of French cuisine, may be regarded as typical of the popular opinion. But Pontack and his eating-house flourished amazingly for all that. A French refugee in London in 1697 took pride in the fact that whereas it was difficult to obtain a good meal elsewhere "those who would dine at one or two guineas per head are handsomely accommodated at our famous Pontack's." The owner of this ordinary is sketched in brief by Evelyn, who frequently dined under his roof. Under date July 13, 1683, the diarist wrote: "I had this day much discourse with Monsieur Pontaq, son to 'the famous and wise prime President of Bordeaux. This gentleman was owner of that excellent vignoble of Pontaq and Obrien, from whence come the choicest of our Bordeaux wines; and I think I may truly say of him, what was not so truly said of St. Paul, that much learning had made him mad. He spoke all languages, was very rich, had a handsome person, and was well bred; about forty-five years of age."

[Illustration: A FRENCH ORDINARY IN LONDON. (_From a Rowlandson Caricature_.)]

Hogarth, it will be remembered, paid Pontack a dubious compliment in the third plate of his Rake's Progress series. The room of that boisterous scene is adorned with pictures of the Roman Emperors, one of which has been removed to give place to the portrait of Pontack, who is described by a Hogarth commentator as "an eminent French cook, whose great talents being turned to heightening sensual, rather than mental enjoyments, has a much better chance of a votive offering from this company, than would either Vespasian or Trajan." These advertisements, however, were all to the good of the house. They were exactly of the kind to attract the most profitable type of customer. Those customers might grumble, as Swift did, at the prices, but they all agreed that they enjoyed very good dinners. The poet, indeed, expressed the unanimous verdict of the town when he asked:

"What wretch would nibble on a hanging shelf,
When at Pontack's he may regale himself?"

CHAPTER III.

TAVERNS OF FLEET STREET AND THEREABOUTS.

Save for the High Street of Southwark, there was probably no thoroughfare of old London which could boast so many inns and taverns to the square yard as Fleet Street, but ere the pilgrim explores that famous neighbourhood he should visit several other spots where notable hostelries were once to be seen. He should, for example, turn his steps towards St. Paul's Churchyard, which, despite the fact that it was chiefly inhabited by booksellers, had its Queen's Arms tavern and its Goose and Gridiron.

Memories of David Garrick and Dr. Johnson are associated with the Queen's Arms. This tavern was the meeting-place of a select club formed by a few intimate friends of the actor for the express purpose of providing them with opportunities to enjoy his society. Its members included James Clutterback, the city merchant who gave Garrick invaluable financial aid when he started at Drury Lane, and John Paterson, that helpful solicitor whom the actor selected as one of his executors. These admirers of "little David" were a temperate set; "they were 'none of them drinkers, and in order to make a reckoning called only for French wine.'" Johnson's association with the house is recorded by Boswell as belonging to the year 1781. "On Friday, April 6," he writes, "he carried me to dine at a club which, at his desire, had been lately formed at the Queen's Arms in St. Paul's Churchyard. He told Mr. Hoole that he wished to have a City _Club_, and asked him to collect one; but, said he, 'Don't let them be _patriots_.' The company were to-day very sensible, well-behaved men." Which, taken in conjunction with the abstemious nature of the Garrick club, would seem to show that the Queen's Arms was an exceedingly decorous house.

Concerning the Goose and Gridiron only a few scanty facts have survived. Prior to the Great Fire it was known as the Mitre, but on its being rebuilt it was called the Lyre. When it came into repute through the concerts of a favourite musical society being given within its walls, the house was decorated with a sign of Apollo's lyre, surmounted by a swan. This provided too good an opportunity for the wits of the town to miss, and they promptly renamed the house as the Goose and Gridiron, which recalls the facetious landlord who, on gaining possession of premises once used as a music-house, chose for his sign a goose stroking the bars of a gridiron and inscribed beneath, "The Swan and Harp." It is an interesting note in the history of the St. Paul's Churchyard house that early in the eighteenth century, on the revival of Freemasonry in England, the Grand Lodge was established here.

Almost adjacent to St. Paul's, that is, in Queen's Head Passage, which leads from Paternoster Row into Newgate Street, once stood the famous Dolly's Chop House, the resort of Fielding, and Defoe, and Swift, and Dryden, and Pope and many other sons of genius. It was built on the site of an ordinary owned by Richard Tarleton, the Elizabethan actor whose playing was so humorous that it even won the praise of Jonson. He was indeed such a merry soul, and so great a favourite in clown's parts, that innkeepers frequently had his portrait painted as a sign. The chief feature of the establishment which succeeded Tarleton's tavern appears to have been the excellence of its beef-steaks. It should also be added that they were served fresh from the grill, a fact which is accentuated by the allusion which Smollett places in one of Melford's letters to Sir Walkin Phillips in "Humphry Clinker": "I send you the history of this day, which has been remarkably full of adventures; and you will own I give you them like a beef-steak at Dolly's, _hot_ and _hot_, without ceremony and parade."

Out into Newgate Street the pilgrim should now make his way in search of that Salutation Tavern which is precious for its associations with Coleridge and Lamb and Southey. Once more, alas! the new has usurped the place of the old, but there is some satisfaction in being able to gaze upon the lineal successor of so

noted a house. The Salutation was a favourite social resort in the eighteenth century and was frequently the scene of the more formal dining occasions of the booksellers and printers. There is a poetical invitation to one such function, a booksellers' supper on January 19, 1736, which reads:

"You're desired on Monday next to meet
'At Salutation Tavern, Newgate Street,
Supper will be on table just at eight."

One of those rhyming invitations was sent to Samuel Richardson, the novelist, who replied in kind:

"For me I'm much concerned I cannot meet
At Salutation Tavern, Newgate Street."

Another legend credits this with being the house whither Sir Christopher Wren resorted to smoke his pipe while the new St. Paul's was being built. More authentic, however, and indeed beyond dispute, are the records which link the memories of Coleridge and Lamb and Southey with this tavern. It was here Southey found Coleridge in one of his many fits of depression, but pleasanter far are the recollections which recall the frequent meetings of Lamb and Coleridge, between whom there was so much in common. They would not forget that it was at the nearby Christ's Hospital they were schoolboys together, the reminiscences of which happy days coloured the thoughts of Elia as he penned that exquisite portrait of his friend: "Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee--the dark pillar not yet turned--Samuel Taylor Coleridge--Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!--How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus, or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar--while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the inspired charity-boy!" As Coleridge was the elder by two years he left Christ's Hospital for Cambridge before Lamb had finished his course, but he came back to London now and then, to meet his schoolmate in a smoky little room of the Salutation and discuss metaphysics and poetry to the accompaniment of egg-hot, Welsh rabbits, and tobacco. Those golden hours in the old tavern left their impress deep in Lamb's sensitive nature, and when he came to dedicate his works to Coleridge he hoped that some of the sonnets, carelessly regarded by the general reader, would awaken in his friend "remembrances which I should be sorry should be ever totally extinct--the 'memory 'of summer days and of delightful years,' even so far back as those old suppers at our old Salutation Inn,--when life was fresh and topics exhaustless--and you first kindled in me, if not the power, yet the love of poetry and beauty and kindliness."

Continuing westward from Newgate Street, the explorer of the inns and taverns of old London comes first to Holborn Viaduct, where there is nothing of note to detain him, and then reaches Holborn proper, with its continuation as High Holborn, which by the time of Henry III had become a main highway into the city for the transit of wood and hides, corn and cheese, and other agricultural products. It must be remembered also that many of the principal coaches had their stopping-place in this thoroughfare, and that as a consequence the

inns were numerous and excellent and much frequented by country gentlemen on their visits to town. Although those inns have long been swept away, the quaint half-timbered buildings of Staple Inn remain to aid the imagination in repicturing those far-off days when the Dagger, and the Red Lion, and the Bull and Gate, and the Blue Boar, and countless other hostelries were dotted on either side of the street.

With the first of these, the Dagger Tavern, we cross the tracks of Ben Jonson once more. Twice does the dramatist allude to this house in "The Alchemist," and the revelation that Dapper frequented the Dagger would have conveyed its own moral to seventeenth century playgoers, for it was then notorious as a resort of the lowest and most disreputable kind. The other reference makes mention of "Dagger frumety," which is a reminder that this house, as was the case with another of like name, prided itself upon the excellence of its pies, which were decorated with a representation of a dagger. That these pasties were highly appreciated is the only conclusion which can be drawn from the contemporary exclamation, "I'll not take thy word for a Dagger pie," and from the fact that in "The Devil is an Ass" Jonson makes Iniquity declare that the 'prentice boys rob their masters and "spend it in pies at the Dagger and the Woolsack."

A second of these Holborn inns bore a sign which has puzzled antiquaries not a little. The name was given as the Bull and Gate, but the actual sign was said to depict the Boulogne Gate at Calais. Here, it is thought, a too phonetic pronunciation of the French word led to the contradiction of name and sign. What is more to the point, and of greater interest, is the connection Fielding established between Tom Jones and the Bull and Gate. When that hero reached London in his search after the Irish peer who brought Sophia to town, he entered the great city by the highway which is now Gray's Inn Road, and at once began his arduous search. But without success. He prosecuted his enquiry till the clock struck eleven, and then Jones "at last yielded to the advice of Partridge, and retreated to the Bull and Gate in Holborn, that being the inn where he had first alighted, and where he retired to enjoy that kind of repose which usually attends persons in his circumstances."

No less notable a character than Oliver Cromwell is linked in a dramatic manner with the histories of the Blue Boar and the Red Lion inns. The narrative of the first incident is put in Cromwell's own mouth by Lord Broghill, that accomplished Irish peer whose conversion from royalism to the cause of the Commonwealth was accomplished by the Ironsides general in the course of one memorable interview. According to this authority, Cromwell once declared that there was a time when he and his party would have settled their differences with Charles I but for an incident which destroyed their confidence in that monarch. What that incident was cannot be more vividly described than by the words Lord Broghill attributed to Cromwell. "While we were busied in these thoughts," he said, "there came a letter from one of our spies, who was of the king's bed-chamber, which acquainted us, that on that day our final doom was decreed; that he could not possibly tell us what it was, but we might find it out, if we could intercept a letter, sent from the king to the queen, wherein he declared what he would do. The letter, he said, was sewed up in the skirt of a saddle, and the bearer of it would come with the saddle upon his head, about ten of the clock that night, to the Blue Boar Inn in Holborn; for there he was to

take horse and go to Dover with it. This messenger knew nothing of the letter in the saddle, but some persons at Dover did. We were at Windsor, when we received this letter; and immediately upon the receipt of it, Ireton and I resolved to take one trusty fellow with us, and with troopers' habits to go to the Inn in Holborn; which accordingly we did, and set our man at the gate of the Inn, where the wicket only was open to let people in and out. Our man was to give us notice, when any one came with a saddle, whilst we in the disguise of common troopers called for cans of beer, and continued drinking till about ten o'clock: the sentinel at the gate then gave notice that the man with the saddle was come in. Upon this we immediately arose, and, as the man was leading out his horse saddled, came up to him with drawn swords and told him that we were to search all that went in and out there; but as he looked like an honest man, we would only search his saddle and so dismiss him. Upon that we ungirt the saddle and carried it into the stall, where we had been drinking, and left the horseman with our sentinel: then ripping up one of the skirts of the saddle, we there found the letter of which we had been informed: and having got it into our own hands, we delivered the saddle again to the man, telling him he was an honest man, and bid him go about his business. The man, not knowing what had been done, went away to Dover. As soon as we had the letter we opened it; in which we found the king had acquainted the queen, that he was now courted by both the factions, 'the Scotch Presbyterians and the Army; and which bid fairest for him should have him; but he thought he should close with the Scots, sooner than the other. Upon this we took horse, and went to Windsor; and finding we were not likely to have any tolerable terms with the king, we immediately from that time forward resolved his ruin."

As that scene at the Blue Boar played so important a part in the sequence of events which were to lead to Cromwell's attainment of supreme power in England, so another Holborn inn, the Red Lion, was to witness the final act of that petty revenge which marked the downfall of the Commonwealth. Perplexing mystery surrounds the ultimate fate of Cromwell's body, but the record runs that his corpse, and those of Ireton and Bradshaw, were ruthlessly torn from their graves soon after the Restoration and were taken to the Red Lion, whence, on, the following morning, they were dragged on a sledge to Tyburn and there treated with the ignominy hitherto reserved for the vilest criminals. All kinds of legends surround these gruesome proceedings. One tradition will have it that some of Cromwell's faithful friends rescued his mutilated remains, and buried them in a field on the north side of Holborn, a spot now covered by the public garden in Red Lion Square. On the other hand grave doubts have been expressed as to whether the body taken to the Red Lion was really that of Cromwell. One legend asserts that it was not buried in Westminster Abbey but sunk in the Thames; another that it was interred in Naseby field; and a third that it was placed in the coffin of Charles I at Windsor.

Impatient though he may be to revel in the multifarious associations of Fleet Street, the pilgrim should turn aside into Ludgate Hill for a few minutes for the sake of that Belle Sauvage inn the name of which has been responsible for a rich harvest of explanatory theory. Addison contributed to it in his own humorous way. An early number of the Spectator was devoted to the discussion of the advisability of an office being established for the regulation of signs, one suggestion being that when the name of a shopkeeper or innkeeper

lent itself to "an ingenious sign-post" full advantage should be taken of the opportunity. In this connection Addison offered the following explanation of the name of the Ludgate Hill inn, which, it has been shrewdly conjectured by Henry B. Wheatley, was probably intended as a joke. "As for the bell-savage, which is the sign of a savage man standing by a bell, I was formerly very much puzzled upon the conceit of it, till I accidentally fell into the reading of an old romance translated out of the French; which gives an account of a very beautiful woman who was found in a wilderness, and is called in the French *La Belle Sauvage*; and is everywhere translated by our countrymen the bell-savage."

Not quite so poetic is the most feasible explanation of this unusual name for an inn. It seems that the original sign of the house was the Bell, but that in the middle of the fifteenth century it had an alternative designation. A deed of that period speaks of "all that tenement or inn with its appurtenances, called Savage's inn, otherwise called the Bell on the Hoop." This was evidently a case where the name of the host counted for more than the actual sign of the house, and the habit of speaking of Savage's Bell may easily have led to the perversion into Bell Savage, and thence to the Frenchified form mostly used to-day.

Leaving these questions of etymology for more certain matters, it is interesting to recall that it was in the yard of the Belle Sauvage Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion came to an inglorious end. That rising was ostensibly aimed at the prevention of Queen Mary's marriage with a prince of Spain, and for that reason won a large measure of support from the men of Kent, at whose head Wyatt marched on the capital. At London Bridge, however, his way was blocked, and he was obliged to make a *détour* by way of Kingston, in the hope of entering the city by Lud Gate. But his men became disorganized on the long march, and at each stage more and more were cut off from the main body by the queen's forces, until, by the time he reached Fleet Street, the rebel had only some three hundred followers. "He passed Temple Bar," wrote Froude, "along Fleet Street, and reached Ludgate. The gate was open as he approached, when some one seeing a number of men coming up, exclaimed, 'These be Wyatt's ancients.' Muttered curses were heard among the by-standers; but Lord Howard was on the spot; the gates, notwithstanding the murmurs, were instantly closed; and when Wyatt knocked, Howard's voice answered, 'Avaunt! traitor; thou shall not come in here.' 'I have kept touch,' Wyatt exclaimed; but his enterprise was hopeless now, He sat down upon a bench outside the Belle Sauvage yard." That was the end. His followers scattered in all directions, and in a little while he was a prisoner, on his way to the Tower and the block.

[Illustration: YARD OF BELLE SAUVAGE INN.]

More peaceful are the records which tell how the famous carver in wood, Grinling Gibbons, and the notorious quack, Richard Rock, once had lodgings in the Belle Sauvage Yard, and more picturesque are the memories of those days when the inn was the starting-place of those coaches which lend a touch of romance to old English life. Horace

Walpole says Gibbons signalized his tenancy by carving a pot of flowers over a doorway, so delicate in leaf and stem that the whole shook with the motion of the carriages passing by. The quack, into the hands of whom and his like Goldsmith declared all fell unless

they were "blasted by lightning, or struck dead with some sudden disorder," was a "great man, short of stature, fat," and waddled as he walked. He was "usually drawn at the top of his own bills, sitting in his arm-chair, holding a little bottle between his finger and thumb, and surrounded with rotten teeth, nippers, pills, packets, and gallipots."

From the Belle Sauvage to the commencement of Fleet Street is but a stone's throw, but the pilgrim must not expect to find any memorials of the past in the eastern portion of that famous thoroughfare. The buildings here are practically all modern, many of them, indeed, having been erected in the last decade. As these lines are being written, too, the announcement is made of a project for the further transformation of the street at the cost of half a million pounds. The idea is to continue the widening of the thoroughfare further west, and if that plan is carried out, devastation must overtake most of the ancient buildings which still remain.

By far the most outstanding feature of the Fleet Street of to-day is the number and variety of its newspaper offices; two centuries ago it had a vastly different aspect.

"From thence, along that tipling street,
Distinguish'd by the name of Fleet,
Where Tavern-Signs hang thicker far,
Than Trophies down at Westminster;
And ev'ry Bacchanalian Landlord
Displays his Ensign, or his Standard,
Bidding Defiance to each Brother,
As if at Wars with one another."

How thoroughly the highway deserved the name of "tipling street" may be inferred from the fact that its list of taverns included but was not exhausted by the Devil, the King's Head, the Horn, the Mitre, the Cock, the Bolt-in-Tun, the Rainbow, the Cheshire Cheese, Hercules Pillars, the Castle, the Dolphin, the Seven Stars, Dick's, Nando's, and Peele's. No one would recognize in the Anderton's Hotel of to-day the lineal successor of one of these ancient taverns, and yet it is a fact that that establishment perpetuates the Horn tavern of the fifteenth century. In the early seventeenth century the house was in high favour with the legal fraternity, but its patronage of the present time is of a more miscellaneous character. The present building was erected in 1880.

[Illustration: THE CHESHIRE CHEESE--ENTRANCE FROM FLEET STREET.]

Close by, a low and narrow archway gives access to Wine Office Court, a spot ever memorable for its having been for some three years the home of Oliver Goldsmith. It was in 1760, when in his thirty-second year, that he took lodgings in this cramped alleyway, and here he remained, toiling as a journeyman for an astute publisher, until towards the end of 1762. So improved were Goldsmith's fortunes in these days that he launched out into supper parties, one of which, in May, 1761, was rendered memorable by the presence of Dr. Johnson, who attired himself with unusual care for the occasion. To a companion who, noting the new suit of clothes, the new wig nicely powdered, and all else in harmony, commented on his appearance, Johnson rejoined, "Why, sir, I hear that Goldsmith, who is a very great sloven, justifies his disregard of cleanliness

and decency by quoting my practice, and I am desirous this night to show him a better example." The house where that supper party was held has disappeared, but in the Cheshire Cheese nearby there yet survives a building which the centuries have spared.

Exactly how old this tavern is cannot be decided. It is inevitable that there must have been a hostelry on this spot before the Great Fire of 1666, inasmuch as there is a record to show that it was rebuilt the following year. Which goes to show that the present building has attained the ripe age of nearly two and a half centuries. No one who explores its various apartments will be likely to question that fact. Everything about the place wears an air of antiquity, from the quaint bar-room to the more private chambers upstairs. The chief glory of the Cheshire Cheese, however, is to be seen downstairs on the left hand of the principal entrance. This is the genuinely old-fashioned eating-room, with its rude tables, its austere seats round the walls, its sawdust-sprinkled floor, and, above all, its sacred nook in the further right hand corner which is pointed out as the favourite seat of Dr. Johnson. Above this niche is a copy of the Reynolds portrait of the sturdy lexicographer, beneath which is the following inscription: "The Favourite Seat of Dr. Johnson.--Born 18th Septr., 1709. Died 13th Decr., 1784. In him a noble understanding and a masterly intellect were united with grand independence of character and unfailing goodness of heart, which won him the admiration of his own age, and remain as recommendations to the reverence of posterity. 'No, Sir! there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness has been produced as by a good tavern.'"

[Illustration: THE CHESHIRE CHEESE--THE JOHNSON ROOM.]

After all this it is surprising to learn that the authority for connecting Dr. Johnson with the Cheshire Cheese rests upon a somewhat late tradition. Boswell does not mention the tavern, an omission which 'is accounted for by noting that "Boswell's acquaintance with Johnson began when Johnson was an old man, and when he had given up the house in Gough Square, and Goldsmith had long departed from Wine Office Court. At the best," this apologist adds, "Boswell only knew Johnson's life in widely separated sections." As appeal cannot, then, be made to Boswell it is made to others. The most important of these witnesses is a Cyrus Jay, who, in a book of reminiscences published in 1868, claimed to have frequented the Cheshire Cheese for fifty-five years, and to have known a man who had frequently seen Johnson and Goldsmith in the tavern. Another writer has placed on record that he often met in the tavern gentlemen who had seen the famous pair there on many occasions.

Taking into account these traditions and the further fact that the building supplies its own evidence as to antiquity, it is not surprising that the Cheshire Cheese enjoys an enviable popularity with all who find a special appeal in the survivals of old London. As a natural consequence more recent writing in prose and verse has been bestowed upon this tavern than any other of the metropolis. Perhaps the best of the many poems penned in its praise is that "Ballade" written by John Davidson, the poet whose mysterious disappearance has added so sad a chapter to the history of literature.

"I know a house of antique ease
Within the smoky city's pale,
A spot wherein the spirit sees
Old London through a thinner veil.
The modern world so stiff and stale,
You leave behind you when you please,
For long clay pipes and great old ale
And beefsteaks in the 'Cheshire Cheese.'

"Beneath this board Burke's, Goldsmith's knees
Were often thrust--so runs the tale--
'Twas here the Doctor took his ease
And wielded speech that like a flail
Threshed out the golden truth. All hail,
Great souls! that met on nights like these
Till morning made the candles pale,
And revellers left the 'Cheshire Cheese.'

"By kindly sense and old decrees
Of England's use they set the sail
We press to never-furrowed seas,
For vision-worlds we breast the gale,
And still we seek and still we fail,
For still the 'glorious phantom' flees.
Ah well! no phantom are the ale
And beefsteaks of the 'Cheshire Cheese.'

"If doubts or debts thy soul assail,
If Fashion's forms its current freeze,
Try a long pipe, a glass of ale,
And supper at the 'Cheshire Cheese.'"

While the Cheshire Cheese was less fortunate than the Cock in the Fire of London, the latter house, which escaped that conflagration, has fallen on comparatively evil days in modern times. In other words, the exterior of the original building, which dated from early in the seventeenth century, was demolished in 1888, to make room for a branch establishment of the Bank of England. Pepys knew the old house and spent many a jovial evening beneath its roof. It was thither, one April evening in 1667, that he took Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Knapp, the latter being the actress whom he thought "pretty enough" besides being "the most excellent, mad-humoured thing, and sings the noblest that ever I heard in my life." The trio had a gay time; they "drank, and eat lobster, and sang" and were "mightily merry." By and by the crafty diarist deleted Mrs. Pierce from the party, and went off to Vauxhall with the fair actress, his confidence in the enterprise being strengthened by the fact that the night was "darkish." If she did not find out that excursion, Mrs. Pepys knew quite enough of her husband's weakness for Mrs. Knapp to be justified of her jealousy. And even he appears to have experienced twinges of conscience on the matter. Perhaps that was the reason why he took his wife to the Cock, and "did give her a dinner" there. Other sinners have found it comforting to exercise repentance on the scene of their offences.

Judging from an advertisement which was published in 1665, the proprietor of the Cock did not allow business to interfere with pleasure. "This is to certify," his announcement ran, "that the master of the Cock and Bottle, commonly called the Cock Alehouse, at

Temple Bar, hath dismissed his servants, and shut up his house, for this Long Vacation, intending (God willing) to return at Michaelmas next."

But the tavern is prouder of its association with Tennyson than of any other fact in its history. The poet was always fond of this neighbourhood. His son records that whenever he went to London with his father, the first item on their programme was a walk in the Strand and Fleet Street. "Instead of the stuccoed houses in the West End, this is the place where I should like to live," Tennyson would say. During his early days he lodged in Norfolk Street close by, dining with his friends at the Cock and other taverns, but always having a preference for the room "high over roaring Temple-bar." In the estimation of the poet, as his son has chronicled, "a perfect dinner was a beef-steak, a potato, a cut of cheese, a pint of port, and afterwards a pipe (never a cigar). When joked with by his friends about his liking for cold salt beef and new potatoes, he would answer humorously, 'All fine-natured men know what is good to eat.' Very genial evenings they were, with plenty of anecdote and wit."

All this, especially the pint of port, throws light on "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue," which, as the poet himself has stated, was "made at the Cock." Its opening apostrophe is familiar enough:

"O plump head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port."

How faithfully that waiter obeyed the poet's injunction to bring him of the best, all readers of the poem are aware:

"The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe."

Undoubtedly. As witness the flights of fancy which it created. Its potent vintage transformed both the waiter and the sign of the house in which he served and shaped this pretty legend.

"And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed.
That with the napkin dally;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley."

"The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley."

"A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the law:
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement:
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

"But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire
Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter."

Just here the poet bethought himself. It was time to rein in his fancy. Truly it was out of place to make

"The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks."

So he descends to more mundane things, to moralize at last upon the waiter's fate and the folly of quarrelling with our lot in life. It is interesting to learn from Fitzgerald that the Cock's plump head-waiter read the poem, but disappointing to know that his only remark on the performance was, "Had Mr. Tennyson dined oftener here, he would not have minded it so much." From which poets may learn the moral that to trifle with Jove's cupbearer in the interests of a tavern waiter is liable to lead to misunderstanding. But it is, perhaps, of more importance to note that, notwithstanding the destruction of the exterior of the Cock in 1888, one room of that ancient building was preserved intact and may be found on the first floor of the new house. There, for use as well as admiration, are the veritable mahogany boxes which Tennyson knew,--

"Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners--"

and not less in evidence is the stately old fireplace which Pepys was familiar with.

Not even a seat or a fireplace has survived of the Mitre tavern of Shakespeare's days, or the Mitre tavern which Boswell mentions so often. They were not the same house, as has sometimes been stated, and the Mitre of to-day is little more than a name-successor to either. Ben Jonson's plays and other literature of the seventeenth century make frequent mention of the old Mitre, and that was no doubt the tavern Pepys patronized on occasion.

No one save an expert indexer would have the courage to commit himself to the exact number of Boswell's references to the Mitre. He had a natural fondness for the tavern as the scene of his first meal with Johnson, and with Johnson himself, as his biographer has explained, the place was a first favourite for many years. "I had learned," says Boswell in recording the early stages of his

acquaintance with his famous friend, "that his place of frequent resort was the Mitre Tavern in Fleet Street, where he loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be allowed to pass an evening with him there, which he promised I should. A few days afterwards I met him near Temple-bar, about one o'clock in the morning, and asked if he would then go to the Mitre. 'Sir,' said he, 'it is too late; they won't let us in. But I'll go with you another night with all my heart.'" That other night soon came. Boswell called for his friend at nine o'clock, and the two were soon in the tavern. They had a good supper, and port wine, but the occasion was more than food and drink to Boswell. "The orthodox high-church sound of the Mitre,--the figure and manner of the celebrated Samuel Johnson,--the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced."

[Illustration: DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.]

On the next occasion Goldsmith was of the company, and the visit after that was brought about through Boswell's inability to keep his promise to entertain Johnson at his own rooms. The little Scotsman had a squabble with his landlord, and was obliged to take his guest to the Mitre. "There is nothing," Johnson said, "in this mighty misfortune; nay, we shall be better at the Mitre." And Boswell was characteristically oblivious of the slur on his gifts as a host. But that, perhaps, is a trifle compared with the complacency with which he records further snubbings administered to him at that tavern. For example, there was that rainy night when Boswell made some feeble complaints about the weather, qualifying them with the profound reflection that it was good for the vegetable creation. "Yes, sir," Johnson rejoined, "it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals." Then there was that other occasion when the note-taker talked airily about his interview with Rousseau, and asked Johnson whether he thought him a bad man, only to be crushed with Johnson's, "Sir, if you are talking jestingly of this, I don't talk with you. If you mean to be serious, I think him one of the worst of men." Severer still was the rebuke of another conversation at the Mitre. The ever-blundering Boswell rated Foote for indulging his talent of ridicule at the expense of his visitors, "making fools of his company," as he expressed it. "Sir," Johnson said, "he does not make fools of his company; they whom he exposes are fools already: he only brings them into action."

But, if only in gratitude for what Boswell accomplished, last impressions of the Mitre should not be of those castigations. A far prettier picture is that which we owe to the reminiscences of Dr. Maxwell, who, while assistant preacher at the Temple, had many opportunities of enjoying Johnson's company. Dr. Maxwell relates that one day when he was paying Johnson a visit, two young ladies, from the country came to consult him on the subject of Methodism, to which they were inclined. "Come," he said, "you pretty fools, dine with Maxwell and me at the Mitre, and we will take over that subject." Away, they went, and after dinner Johnson "took one of them upon his knee, and fondled her for half an hour together." Dante Gabriel Rossetti chose that incident for a picture, but neither his canvas nor Dr. Maxwell's record enlightens us as to whether the "pretty fools" were preserved to the Church of England.

But it was a happy evening--especially for Dr. Johnson.

As with the Cock, a part of the interior of the Rainbow Tavern dates back more than a couple of centuries. The chief interest of the Rainbow, however, lies in the fact that it was at first a coffee-house, and one of the earliest in London. It was opened in 1657 by a barber named James Farr who evidently anticipated more profit in serving cups of the new beverage than in wielding his scissors and razor. He succeeded so well that the adjacent tavern-keepers combined to get his coffee-house suppressed, for, said they, the "evil smell" of the new drink "greatly annoyed the neighbourhood." But Mr. Farr prospered in spite of his competitors, and by and by he turned the Rainbow into a regular tavern.

No one who gazes upon the century-old print of the King's Head can do other than regret the total disappearance of that picturesque building. This tavern stood at the west corner of Chancery Lane and is believed by antiquaries to have been built in the reign of Edward VI. It figures repeatedly in ancient engravings of the royal processions of long-past centuries, and contributed a notable feature to the progress of Queen Elizabeth as she was on her way to visit Sir Thomas Gresham. The students of the Temple hit upon the effective device of having several cherubs descend, as it were, from the heavens, for the purpose of presenting the queen with a crown of gold and laurels, together with the inevitable verses of an Elizabethan ceremony, and the roof of the King's Head was chosen as the heaven from whence these visitants came down. Only the first and second floors were devoted to tavern purposes; on the ground floor were shops, from one of which the first edition of Izaak Walton's "Complete Angler" was sold, while another provided accommodation for the grocery business of Abraham Cowley's father.

From 1679 the King's Head was the common headquarters of the notorious Green Ribbon Club, which included a precious set of scoundrels among its members, chief of them all being that astounding perjurer, Titus Gates. Hence the tavern's designation as a "Protestant house." It was pulled down in 1799.

Another immortal tavern of Fleet Street, the most immortal of them all, Ben Jonson's Devil, has also utterly vanished. Its full title was The Devil and St. Dunstan, aptly represented by the sign depicting the saint holding the tempter by the nose, and its site, appropriately enough, was opposite St. Dunstan's Church, on the south side of Fleet Street and close to Temple-bar. One of Hogarth's illustrations to "Hudibras" gives a glimpse of the tavern, but on the wrong side of the street, as is so common in the work of that artist.

No doubt the Devil had had a protracted existence prior to Jonson's day, but its chief title to fame dates from the time when the convivial dramatist made it his principal rendezvous. The exact date of that event is difficult to determine. Nor is it possible to explain why Jonson removed his patronage from the Mermaid in Cheapside to the Devil in Fleet Street. The fact remains, however, that while the earlier period of his life has its focus in Cheapside the later is centred in the vicinity of Temple-bar.

[Illustration: TABLET AND BUST FROM THE DEVIL TAVERN.]

Perhaps Jonson may have found the accommodation of the Devil more suited to his needs. After passing through those years of opposition which all great poets have to face, there came to him the crown of acknowledged leadership among the writers of his day. He accepted it willingly. He seems to have been temperamentally fitted to the post. He was, in fact, never so happy as when in the midst of a group of men who owned his pre-eminence. What was more natural, then, than that he should have conceived the idea of forming a club? And in the great Apollo room at the Devil he found the most suitable place of meeting. Over the door of this room, inscribed in gold letters on a black ground, this poetical greeting was displayed.

"Welcome all who lead or follow
To the Oracle of Apollo--
Here he speaks out of his pottle,
Or the tripes, his tower bottle:
All his answers are divine,
Truth itself doth bow in wine.
Hang up all the poor hop-drinkers,
Cries old Sam, the king of skinkers;
He the half of life abuses,
That sits watering with the Muses.
Those dull girls no good can mean us;
Wine it is the milk of Venus,
And the poet's horse accounted:
Ply it, and you all are mounted.
'Tis the true Phoebian liquor,
Cheers the brains, makes wit the quicker.
Pays all debts, cures all diseases,
And at once three senses pleases.
Welcome all who lead or follow,
To the Oracle of Apollo."

That relic of the Devil still exists, carefully preserved in the banking establishment which occupies the site of the tavern; and with it, just as zealously guarded, is a bust of Jonson which stood above the verses. Inside the Apollo room was another poetical inscription, said to have been engraved in black marble. These verses were in the dramatist's best Latin, and set forth the rules for his tavern academy. Much of their point is lost in the English version, which, however, deserves quotation for the sake of the inferences it suggests as to the conduct which was esteemed "good form" in Jonson's club.

"As the fund of our pleasure, let each pay his shot,
Except some chance friend, whom a member brings in.
Far hence be the sad, the lewd fop, and the sot;
For such have the plagues of good company been.

"Let the learned and witty, the jovial and gay,
The generous and honest, compose our free state;
And the more to exalt our delight whilst we stay,
Let none be debarred from his choice female mate.

"Let no scent offensive the chamber infest.
Let fancy, not cost, prepare all our dishes.
Let the caterer mind the taste of each guest,
And the cook, in his dressing, comply with their wishes.

"Let's have no disturbance about taking places,
To show your nice breeding, or out of vain pride.
Let the drawers be ready with wine and fresh glasses,
Let the waiters have eyes, though their tongues must be ty'd.

"Let our wines without mixture or stum, be all fine,
Or call up the master, and break his dull noddle.
Let no sober bigot here think it a sin,
To push on the chirping and moderate bottle.

"Let the contests be rather of books than of wine,
Let the company be neither noisy nor mute.
Let none of things serious, much less of divine,
When belly and head's full profanely dispute.

"Let no saucy fidler presume to intrude,
Unless he is sent for to vary our bliss.
With mirth, wit, and dancing, and singing conclude,
To regale every sense, with delight in excess.

"Let raillery be without malice or heat.
Dull poems to read let none privilege take.
Let no poetaster command or intreat
Another extempore verses to make.

"Let argument bear no unmusical sound,
Nor jars interpose, sacred friendship to grieve.
For generous lovers let a corner be found,
Where they in soft sighs may their passions relieve.

"Like the old Lapithites, with the goblets to fight,
Our own 'mongst offences unpardoned will rank,
Or breaking of windows, or glasses, for spight,
And spoiling the goods for a rakehelly prank.

"Whoever shall publish what's said, or what's done,
Be he banished for ever our assembly divine.
Let the freedom we take be perverted by none
To make any guilty by drinking good wine."

By the testimony of those rules alone it is easy to see how thoroughly the masterful spirit of Jonson ruled in the Apollo room. His air was a throne, his word a sceptre that must be obeyed. This impression is confirmed by many records and especially by Drummond's character sketch. The natural consequence was that membership in the Apollo Club came to be regarded as an unusual honour. There appears to have been some kind of ceremony at the initiation of each new member, which gave all the greater importance to the rite of being "sealed of the tribe of Ben." Long after the dramatist was dead, his "sons" boasted of their intimacy with him, much to the irritation of Dryden and others. While he lived, too, they were equally elated at being admitted to the inner circle at the Devil, and, after the manner of Marmion, sung the praises of their "boon Delphic god," surrounded with his "incense and his altars smoking."

[Illustration: BEN JONSON.]

Incense was an essential if Jonson was to be kept in good humour.

Many anecdotes testify to that fact. There is the story of his loss of patience with the country gentleman who was somewhat talkative about his lands, and his interruption, "What signifies to us your dirt and your clods? Where you have an acre of land, I have ten acres of wit." And Howell tells of that supper party which, despite good company, excellent cheer and choice wines, was turned into a failure by Jonson engrossing all the conversation and "vapouring extremely of himself and vilifying others." Yet there were probably few of his own circle, the "sons of Ben," who would have had it otherwise. Few indeed and fragmentary are the records of his conversation in the Apollo room, but they are sufficient to prove how ready a wit the poet possessed. Take, for example, the story of that convivial gathering when the tavern keeper promised to forgive Jonson the reckoning if he could tell what would please God, please the devil, please the company, and please him. The poet at once replied:

"God is pleased, when we depart from sin,
The devil's pleas'd, when we persist therein;
Your company's pleas'd, when you draw good wine,
And thou'd be pleas'd, if I would pay thee thine."

Some austere biographers have chided the memory of the poet for spending so much of his time at the Devil. They forget, or are ignorant of the fact that there is proof the time was well spent. In a manuscript of Jonson which still exists there are many entries which go to show that some of his finest work was inspired by the merry gatherings in the Apollo room.

For many years after Jonson's death the Devil, and especially the Apollo room, continued in high favour with the wits of London and the men about town. Pepys knew the house, of course, and so did Evelyn, and Swift dined there, and Steele, and many another genius of the eighteenth century. It was in the Apollo room, too, that the official court-day odes of the Poets Laureate were rehearsed, which explains the point of the following lines:

"When Laureates make odes, do you ask of what sort?
Do you ask if they're good or are evil?
You may judge--From the Devil they come to the Court,
And go from the court to the Devil."

But the Apollo room is not without its idyllic memory. It was created by the ever-delightful pen of Steele. Who can forget the picture he draws of his sister Jenny and her lover Tranquillus and their wedding morning? "The wedding," he writes, "was wholly under my care. After the ceremony at church, I resolved to entertain the company with a dinner suitable to the occasion, and pitched upon the Apollo, at the Old Devil at Temple-bar, as a place sacred to mirth tempered with discretion, where Ben Jonson and his sons used to make their liberal meetings." The mirth of that assembly was threatened by the indiscretion of that double-meaning speaker who is usually in evidence at such gatherings to the confusion of the bride, but happily his career was cut short by the plain sense of the soldier and sailor, as may be read in the pages of the "Tatler."

Within easy hail of the Devil, on the site now occupied by St. Clement's Chambers, Dane's Inn, there stood until 1853 a quaint old hostelry known as the Angel Inn. It dated from the opening years of

the sixteenth century at least, for it is specifically named in a letter of February 6th, 1503. In the middle of that century, too, it figures in the progress of Bishop Harper to the martyr's stake, for it was from this inn that prelate was taken to Gloucester to be burnt. The Angel cannot hope to compete with the neighbouring taverns of Fleet Street on the score of literary associations, but the fact that seven or eight mail coaches started from its yard every night will indicate how large a part it played in the life of old London.

CHAPTER IV.

TAVERNS WEST OF TEMPLE BAR.

Even one short generation ago it would have been difficult to recognize in the Strand of that period any resemblance to the picture of that highway given by Stow at the dawn of the seventeenth century. Much less would it have been possible to recall its aspect in those earlier years when it was literally a strand, that is, a low-lying road by the side of the Thames, stretching from Temple-bar to Charing Cross. On the south side of the thoroughfare were the mansions of bishops and nobles dotted at sparse intervals; on the north was open country. To-day there are even fewer survivals of the past than might have been seen thirty years ago. The wholesale clearance of Holywell Street and the buildings to the north has completely transformed the neighbourhood, while along the southern line of the highway, changes almost equally revolutionary have been carried out. As a consequence the inns and taverns of the Strand and the streets leading therefrom have nearly all been swept away, leaving a modern representative only here and there. Utterly vanished, for example, leaving not a wreck behind, are the Spotted Dog and the Craven Head, two houses more or less associated with the sporting fraternity. The former, indeed, was a favourite haunt of prize-fighters and their backers; the latter was notorious for its host, Robert Hales by name, whose unusual stature--he stood seven feet six inches--enabled him "to look down on all his customers, although he was always civil to them." When the novelty of Hales' physical proportions wore off, and trade declined, a new attraction was provided in the form of a couple of buxom barmaids attired in bloomer costume--importations, so the story goes, from the United States.

A far more ancient and reputable house was the Crown and Anchor which had entrances both on the Strand and Arundel Street. It is referred to by Strype in his edition of Stow, published in 1720, as "a large and curious house, with good rooms and other conveniences," and could boast of associations with Johnson, and Boswell, and Reynolds. Perhaps there was something in the atmosphere of the place which tended to emphasize Johnson's natural argumentativeness; at any rate the Crown and Anchor was the scene of his dispute with Reynolds as to the merits of wine in assisting conversation, and it was here too that he had his famous bout with Dr. Percy. Boswell describes him as being in "remarkable vigour of mind, and eager to exert himself in conversation" on that occasion, and then transcribes the following proof. "He was vehement against old Dr.

Mounsey, of Chelsea College, as 'a fellow who swore and talked bawdy.' 'I have been often in his company,' said Dr. Percy, 'and never heard him swear or talk bawdy.' Mr. Davies, who sat next to Dr. Percy, having after this had some conversation with him, made a discovery which in his zeal to pay court to Dr. Johnson, he eagerly proclaimed aloud from the foot of the table: 'Oh, sir, I have found out a very good reason why Dr. Percy never heard Mounsey swear or talk bawdy, for he tells me he never saw him but at the Duke of Northumberland's table.' 'And so, sir,' said Dr. Johnson loudly to Dr. Percy, 'you would shield this man from the charge of swearing and talking bawdy, because he did not do so at the Duke of Northumberland's table. Sir, you might as well tell us that you had seen him hold up his hand at the Old Bailey, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy; or that you had seen him in the cart at Tyburn, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy. And is it thus, sir, that you presume to controvert what I have related?' Dr. Johnson's animadversion was uttered in such a manner, that Dr. Percy seemed to be displeased, and soon after left the company, of which Johnson did not at that time take any notice." Nor did the following morning bring any regret. "Well," said he when Boswell called, "we had good talk." And Boswell's "Yes, sir; you tossed and gored several persons," no doubt gave him much pleasure.

When the Crown and Anchor was rebuilt in 1790 the accommodation of the tavern was materially increased by the erection of a large room suitable for important public occasions and capable of seating upwards of two thousand persons. That room was but eight years old when it was the scene of a remarkable gathering. Those were stirring times politically, largely owing to Fox's change of party and to his adhesion to the cause of electoral reform. Hence the banquet which took place at the Crown and Anchor on January 24th, 1798, in honour of Fox's birthday. The Duke of Norfolk presided over a company numbering fully two thousand persons, and the notable men present included Sheridan and Horne Tooke. The record of the function tells how "Captain Morris"--elder brother of the author of "Kitty Crowder," and a song-writer of some fame in his day--"produced three new songs on the occasion," and how "Mr. Hovell, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Dignum, and several other gentlemen, in the different rooms sang songs applicable to the _fête_." But the ducal chairman's speech and the toasts which followed were the features of the gathering. The former was commendably brief. "We are met," he said, "in a moment of most serious difficulty, to celebrate the birth of a man dear to the friends of freedom. I shall only recall to your memory, that, not twenty years ago, the illustrious George Washington had not more than two thousand men to rally round him when his country was attacked. America is now free. This day full two thousand men are assembled in this place. I leave you to make the application. I propose to you the health of Charles Fox."

Then came the following daring toasts:

"The rights of the people."

"Constitutional redress of the wrongs of the people."

"A speedy and effectual reform in the representation of the people in Parliament."

"The genuine principles of the British constitution."

"The people of Ireland; and may they be speedily restored to the blessings of law and liberty."

And when the chairman's health had been drunk "with three times three," that nobleman concluded his speech of thanks with the words: "Before I sit down, give me leave to call on you to drink our sovereign's health: 'The majesty of the people.'"

Such "seditious and daring tendencies," as the royalist chronicler of the times described them, could not be overlooked in high quarters, and the result of that gathering at the Crown and Anchor was that the Duke of Norfolk was dismissed from the lord-lieutenancy of the west riding of Yorkshire, and from his regiment in the militia. It would have been a greater punishment could George III have ordered a bath for the indiscreet orator. That particular member of the Howard family had a horror of soap and water, and appears to have been washed only when his servants found him helpless in a drunken stupor. He it was also who complained to Dudley North that he had vainly tried every remedy for rheumatism, to receive the answer, "Pray, my lord, did you ever try a clean shirt?"

In that district of the Strand known as the Adelphi--so called from the pile of buildings erected here in 1768 by the brothers Adam--there still exists an Adelphi Hotel which may well perpetuate the building in which Gibbon found a temporary home in 1787. Ten years earlier it was known as the Adelphi Tavern, and on the thirteenth of January was the scene of an exciting episode. The chief actors in this little drama, which nearly developed into a tragedy, were a Captain Stony and a Mr. Bates, the latter being the editor of The Morning Post. It appears that that journal had recently published some paragraphs reflecting on the character of a lady of rank, whose cause, as the sequel will show, Captain Stony had good reason for making his own. Whether the offending editor had been lured to the Adelphi ignorant of what was in store, or whether the angry soldier met him there by accident, does not transpire; the record implies, however, that the couple had a room to themselves in which to settle accounts. The conflict opened with each discharging his pistol at the other, but without effect, which does not speak well for the marksmanship of either. Then they took to their swords, with the result of the captain receiving wounds in the breast and arm and Mr. Bates a thrust in the thigh, clearly demonstrating that at this stage the man of the pen had the better of the man of the sword. And he maintained the advantage. For a little later the editor's weapon "bent and slanted against the captain's breast-bone." On having his attention called to the fact the soldier agreed that Mr. Bates should straighten his blade. At this critical moment, however, while, indeed, the journalist had his sword under his foot, the door of the room was broken open and the combatants separated. "On the Sunday following," so the sequel reads, "Captain Stony was married to the lady in whose behalf he had thus hazarded his life."

Duels were so common in those days that Gibbon probably heard nothing about the fight in the Adelphi when he took rooms there one hot August day in 1787. Besides, he had more important matters to occupy his thoughts. Only six weeks had passed since, between the hours of eleven and twelve at night, he had, in the summer house of

his garden at Lausanne, written the last sentence of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and now he had arrived in London with the final instalment of the manuscript on which he had bestowed the labour of nearly twenty years. The heightened mood he experienced on the completion of his memorable task may well have persisted to the hour of his arrival in London. Some reflection of that feeling perhaps underlay the jocular announcement of his letter from the Adelphi to Lord Sheffield, wherein he wrote: "INTELLIGENCE EXTRAORDINARY. This day (August the seventh) the celebrated E. G. arrived with a numerous retinue (one servant). We hear that he has brought over from Lausanne the remainder of his History for immediate publication." Gibbon remained at the Adelphi for but a few days, after which the story of the tavern lapses into the happiness which is supposed to accrue from a lack of history.

Before retracing his steps to explore the many interesting thoroughfares which branch off from the Strand, the pilgrim should continue on that highway to its western extremity at Charing Cross. The memory of several famous inns is associated with that locality, including the Swan, the Golden Cross, Locket's, and the Rummer. The first named dated from the fifteenth century. It survived sufficiently long to be frequented by Ben Jonson and is the subject of an anecdote told of that poet. Being called upon to make an extemporary grace before King James, and having ended his last line but one with the word "safe," Jonson finished with the words, "God blesse me, and God blesse Raph." The inquisitive monarch naturally wanted to know who Ralph was, and the poet replied that he was "the drawer at the Swanne Taverne by Charing Crosse, who drew him good Canarie." It is feasible to conclude that no small portion of the hundred pounds with which the king rewarded Jonson was expended on that "good Canarie." And perhaps Ralph was not forgotten.

By name, at any rate, the Golden Cross is still in existence, but the present building dates no farther back than 1832. Of Locket's ordinary, however, no present-day representative exists. When Leigh Hunt wrote "The Town" he declared that it was no longer known where it EXACTLY stood, but more recent investigators have discovered that Drummond's banking house covers its site.

As was the case with Pontack's in the city, Locket's was pre-eminently the resort of the "smart set." The prices charged are proof enough of THAT, even though they were not always paid. The case of Sir George Ethrege is one in point. That dissolute dramatist and diplomat of the Restoration period was a frequent customer at Locket's until his debt there became larger than his means to discharge it. Before that catastrophe overtook him he was the principal actor in a lively scene at the tavern. Something or other caused an outbreak of fault-finding one evening, and the commotion brought Mrs. Locket on the scene. "We are all so provoked," said Sir George to the lady, "that even I could find in my heart to pull the nosegay out of your bosom, and throw the flowers in your face."

Nor was that the only humorous threat against Mrs. Locket from the same mouth. Probably because he was so good a customer and an influential man about town, his indebtedness to the ordinary was allowed to mount up until it reached a formidable figure. And then Sir George stopped his visits. Mrs. Locket, however, sent some one to dun him for the money and to threaten him with prosecution. But that did not daunt the wit. He bade the messenger tell Mrs. Locket

that he would kiss her if she stirred in the matter. Sir George's command was duly obeyed. It stirred Mrs. Locket to action. Calling for her hood and scarf, and declaring that she would see if "there was any fellow alive that had the impudence," she was about to set out to put the matter to the test when her husband restrained her with his "Pr'ythee, my dear, don't be so rash, you don't know what a man may do in his passion."

It is not difficult to understand how the bill of Sir George Ethrege reached such alarming proportions. "They shall compose you a dish," is a contemporary reference, "no bigger than a saucer, shall come to fifty shillings." And again,

"At Locket's, Brown's, and at Pontack's enquire
What modish kickshaws the nice beaux desire,
What fam'd ragouts, what new invented sallat,
Has best pretensions to regale the palate."

Adam Locket, the founder of the house, lived until about 1688, and was succeeded by his son Edward who was at the head of affairs until 1702. All through the reign of Queen Anne the ordinary flourished, but after her death references to it become scanty and finally it disappeared so completely that Leigh Hunt, as has been said, was in ignorance as to its site.

And Hunt also owned to not knowing the site of another Charing Cross tavern, the Rummer. As a matter of fact that, to modern ear, curiously-named tavern was at first located almost next door to Locket's, whence it was removed to the waterside in 1710 and burnt down in 1750. The memory of the tavern would probably have sunk into oblivion with its charred timbers, save for the accident of its connection with Matthew Prior. For the Rummer was kept by an uncle of the future poet, into whose keeping he is supposed to have fallen on the death of his father. One cannot resist the suspicion that this uncle, Samuel Prior by name, was of a shifty nature. He had serious enemies, that is certain. The best proof of that fact is the announcement he inserted in the London Gazette offering a reward of ten guineas for the discovery of the persons who spread the report that he was in league with the clippers of aoin. Then there is the nephew's portrait, which implies that his tavern-keeping relative was an adept in the tricks of his trade.

"My uncle, rest his soul! when living,
Might have contrived me ways of thriving;
Taught me with cider to replenish
My vats, or ebbing tide of Rhenish;
So, when for hock I drew pricked white-wine,
Swear't had the flavour, and was right-wine."

Destiny, however, had decided the nephew's fate otherwise. The Earl of Dorset, so the story goes, was at the Rummer with a party one day when a dispute arose over a passage in Horace. Young Prior, then a scholar of Westminster, was called in to decide the point, and so admirably did he do it that the earl immediately undertook to pay his expenses at Cambridge. He, in fact, "spoiled the youth to make a poet." Annotators of Hogarth have pointed out that the scene of his "Night" picture was laid in that district of Charing Cross where Locket's and the Rummer were situated.

Harking back now to Drury Lane the explorer finds himself in the midst of the memories of many daring adventures. The Jacobites who aimed at the dethroning of William III were responsible for one of those episodes. During the absence of that monarch they tried to raise a riot in London on the birthday of the Prince of Wales. Macaulay tells the rest of the story. "They met at a tavern in Drury Lane, and, when hot with wine, sallied forth sword in hand, headed by Porter and Goodman, beat kettledrums, unfurled banners, and began to light bonfires. But the watch, supported by the populace, was too strong for the revellers. They were put to rout: the tavern where they had feasted was sacked by the mob: the ringleaders were apprehended, tried, fined, and imprisoned, but regained their liberty in time to bear a part in a far more criminal design."

Noisy brawls and dark deeds became common in Drury Lane. It was the haunt of such quarrelsome persons as that Captain Fantom, who, coming out of the Horseshoe Tavern late one night, was offended by the loud jingling spurs of a lieutenant he met, and forthwith challenged him to a duel and killed him. And the tavern-keepers of Drury Lane were not always model citizens. There was that Jack Grimes, for example, whose death in Holland in 1769 recalled the circumstance that he was known as "Lawyer Grimes," and formerly kept the Nag's Head Tavern in Princes' Street, Drury Lane, "and was transported several years ago for fourteen years, for receiving fish, knowing them to be stolen." There is, however, one relieving touch in the tavern history of this thoroughfare. One of its houses of public entertainment was the meeting-place of a club of virtuosi, for whose club-room Louis Laguerre, the French painter who settled in London in 1683, designed and executed a Bacchanalian procession. This was the artist who was coupled with Verrio in Pope's depreciatory line,

"Where sprawl the Saints of Verrio and Laguerre."

Poets and prose writers alike were wont to agree in giving Catherine Street an unenviable reputation. Gay is specially outspoken in his description of that thoroughfare and the class by which it used to be haunted. It was in this street, too, that Jessop's once flourished, "the most disreputable night house of London." That nest of iniquity, however, has long been cleared away, and there are no means of identifying that tavern of which Boswell speaks. He describes it, on the authority of Dr. Johnson, as a "pretty good tavern, where very good company met in an evening, and each man called for his own half-pint of wine, or gill if he pleased; they were frugal men, and nobody paid but for what he himself drank. The house furnished no supper; but a woman attended with mutton pies, which anybody might purchase."

If the testimony of Pope is to be trusted, the cuisine of the Bedford Head, which was described in 1736 as "a noted tavern for eating, drinking, and gaming, in Southampton Street, Covent Garden," was decidedly out of the ordinary. In his imitation of the second satire of Horace he makes Oldfield, the notorious glutton who exhausted a fortune of fifteen hundred pounds a year in the "simple luxury of good eating," declare,

"Let me extol a Cat, on oysters fed,
I'll have a party at the Bedford-head."

And in another poem he asks,

"When sharp with hunger, scorn you to be fed,
Except on pea-chicks at the Bedford-head?"

There is an earlier reference to this house than the one cited above, for an advertisement of June, 1716, alludes to it as "the Duke of Bedford's Head Tavern in Southampton Street, Covent Garden." Perhaps the most notable event in its history was it being the scene of an abortive attempt to repeat in 1741 that glorification of Admiral Vernon which was a great success in 1740. That seaman, it will be remembered, had in 1739 kept his promise to capture Porto Bello with a squadron of but six ships. That the capture was effected with the loss of but seven men made the admiral a popular hero, and in the following year his birthday was celebrated in London with great acclaim. But in 1740 his attempt to seize Cartagena ended in complete failure, and another enterprise against Santiago came to a similar result. All this, however, did not daunt his personal friends, who wished to engineer another demonstration in Vernon's honour. Horace Walpole tells how the attempt failed. "I believe I told you," he wrote to one of his friends, "that Vernon's birthday passed quietly, but it was not designed to be pacific; for at twelve at night, eight gentlemen dressed like sailors, and masked, went round Covent Garden with a drum beating for a volunteer mob; but it did not take; and they retired to a great supper that was prepared for them at the Bedford Head, and ordered by Whitehead, the author of 'Manners.'" At a later date it was the meeting-place of a club to which John Wilkes belonged.

In all London there is probably no thoroughfare of equal brief length which can boast so many deeply interesting associations as Maiden Lane, which stretches between Southampton and Bedford Streets in the vicinity of Covent Garden. Andrew Marvell had lodgings here in 1677; Voltaire made it his headquarters on his visit to London in 1727; it was the scene of the birth of Joseph Mallord William Turner in 1775; and while one tavern was the rendezvous of the conspirators against the life of William III, another was the favourite haunt of Richard Porson, than whom there is hardly a more illustrious name in the annals of English classical scholarship.

While the name of the conspirators' tavern is not mentioned by Macaulay, that frequented by Porson had wide fame under the sign of the Cider Cellars. It had been better for the great scholar's health had nothing but cider been sold therein. But that would hardly have suited his tastes. It is a kindly judgment which asserts that he would have achieved far more than he actually did "if the sobriety of his life had been equal to the honesty and truthfulness of his character." All accounts agree that the charms of his society in such gatherings as those at the Cider Cellars were irresistible. "Nothing," was the testimony of one friend, "could be more gratifying than a tête-à-tête with him; his recitations from Shakespeare, and his ingenious etymologies and dissertations on the roots of the English language were a high treat." And another declares that nothing "came amiss to his memory; he would set a child right in his twopenny fable-book, repeat the whole of the moral tale of the Dean of Badajos, or a page of Athenæus on cups, or Eustathius on Homer." One anecdote tells of his repeating the "Rape of the Lock," making observations as he went on, and noting the various readings. And an intimate friend records the following

incident connected with the tavern he held most in regard. "I have heard Professor Porson at the Cider Cellars in Maiden Lane recite from memory to delighted listeners the whole of Anstey's 'Pleaders' Guide.' He concluded by relating that when buying a copy of it and complaining that the price was very high, the bookseller said, 'Yes, sir, but you know Law books are always very dear.'"

Somewhat earlier than Porson's day another convivial soul haunted this neighbourhood. This was George Alexander Stevens, the strolling player who eventually attained a place in the company of Covent Garden theatre. He was an indifferent actor but an excellent lecturer. One of his discourses, a lecture on Heads, was immensely popular in England, and not less so in Boston and Philadelphia. Prior to the affluence which he won by his lecture tours he had frequently to do "penance in jail for the debts of the tavern." He was, as Campbell says, a leading member of all the great Bacchanalian clubs of his day, and had no mean gift in writing songs in praise of hard drinking. One of these deserves a better fate than the oblivion into which it has fallen, and may be cited here as eminently descriptive of the scenes enacted nightly in such a resort as the Cider Cellars.

"Contented I am, and contented I'll be,
For what can this world more afford,
Than a lass that will sociably sit on my knee,
And a cellar as sociably stored.
My brave boys.

"My vault door is open, descend and improve,
That cask,--ay, that will we try.
'Tis as rich to the taste as the lips of your love,
And as bright as her cheeks to the eye:
My brave boys.

"In a piece of slit hoop, see my candle is stuck,
'Twill light us each bottle to hand;
The foot of my glass for the purpose I broke,
As I hate that a bumper should stand,
My brave boys.

"Astride on a butt, as a butt should be strode,
I gallop the brusher along;
Like a grape-blessing Bacchus, the good fellow's god,
And a sentiment give, or a song,
My brave boys.

"We are dry where we sit, though the coying drops seem
With pearls the moist walls to emboss;
From the arch mouldy cobwebs in gothic taste stream,
Like stucco-work cut out of moss:
My brave boys.

"When the lamp is brimful, how the taper flame shines,
Which, when moisture is wanting, decays;
Replenish the lamp of my life with rich wines,
Or else there's an end of my blaze,
My brave boys.

"Sound those pipes, they're in tune, and those bins are well fill'd;

View that heap of old Hock in your rear;
'Yon bottles are Burgundy! mark how they're pil'd,
Like artillery, tier over tier,
My brave boys.

"My cellar's my camp, and my soldiers my flasks,
All gloriously rang'd in review;
When I cast my eyes round, I consider my casks
As kingdoms I've yet to subdue,
My brave boys.

"Like Macedon's Madman, my glass I'll enjoy,
Defying hyp, gravel, or gout;
He cried when he had no more worlds to destroy,
I'll weep when my liquor is out,
My brave boys.

"On their stumps some have fought, and as stoutly will I,
When reeling, I roll on the floor;
Then my legs must be lost, so I'll drink as I lie,
And dare the best Buck to do more,
My brave boys.

"Tis my will when I die, not a tear shall be shed,
No _Hic Jacet_ be cut on my stone;
But pour on my coffin a bottle of red,
And say that his drinking is done,
My brave boys."

Although to-day celebrated chiefly for being the central clearing-house for the flower, fruit and vegetable supply of London, Covent Garden as a whole can vie with any other district of the British capital in wealth of interesting association. The market itself dates from the middle of the seventeenth century, but the area was constituted a parish a few years earlier. By that time, however, it could boast many town residences of the nobility, and several inns. One of these has its name preserved only in the records of the House of Lords, in a letter from a John Button at Amsterdam, who wrote to his brother "with Mr. Wm. Wayte, at the sign of the Horseshoe, Covent Garden." But the taverns of greater note, such as Chatelaine's, the Fleece, the Rose, the Hummums, and Macklin's ill-fated ordinary, belong to more recent times.

Which of these houses was first established it would be hard to say. There can be no question, however, that Chatelaine's ordinary was in great repute during the reign of Charles II, and that it continued in high favour throughout the latter years of the seventeenth century. Pepys alludes to it in 1667 and again in his entries of the following year. On the second occasion his visit interfered with toothsome purchases he was making for a dinner at his own house. "To the fishmonger's, and bought a couple of lobsters, and over to the 'sparagus garden, thinking to have met Mr. Pierce, and his wife, and Knipp; but met their servant coming to bring me to Chatelin's, the French house, in Covent Garden, and there with musick and good company, Manuel and his wife, and one Swaddle, a clerk of Lord Arlington's, who dances, and speaks French well, but got drunk, and was then troublesome, and here mighty merry till ten at night. This night the Duke of Monmouth and a great many blades were at Chatelin's, and I left them there, with a hackney-coach attending

him." This was a different experience than fell to the lot of Pepys on the previous occasion, for he tells how the dinner cost the party eight shillings and sixpence apiece, and it was "a base dinner, which did not please us at all." The ordinary was evidently in the same class as Pontack's and Locket's, as may be inferred from it being classed with the latter in one contemporary reference:

"Next these we welcome such as firstly dine
At Locket's, at Gifford's, or with Shataline."

Allusions in the plays of the period also show it was the resort of those who thought quite as much of spending money as of eating. Thus Shadwell makes one of his characters say of another who had risen in life that he was "one that the other day could eat but one meal a day, and that at a threepenny ordinary, now struts in state and talks of nothing but Shattelin's and Lefrond's." And another dramatist throws some light on the character of its frequenters by the remark, "Come, prettie, let's go dine at Chateline's, and there I'll tell you my whole business."

Far less fashionable was the Fleece tavern, where Pepys found pleasant entertainment on several occasions. His earliest reference to the house is in his account of meeting two gentlemen who told him how a Scottish knight was "killed basely the other day at the Fleece," but that tale did not prevent him from visiting the tavern himself. Along with a "Captain Cuttle" and two others he went thither to drink, and "there we spent till four o'clock, telling stories of Algiers, and the manner of life of slaves there." And then he tells how one night he dropped in at the Opera for the last act "and there found Mr. Sanchy and Mrs. Mary Archer, sister to the fair Betty, whom I did admire at Cambridge, and thence took them to the Fleece in Covent Garden; but Mr. Sanchy could not by any argument get his lady to trust herself with him into the taverne, which he was much troubled at."

Equally lively reputations were enjoyed by the Rose and the Hummums. The former was conveniently situated for first-nighters at the King's Playhouse, as Pepys found on a May midday in 1668. Anxious to see the first performance of Sir Charles Sedley's new play, which had been long awaited with great expectation, he got to the theatre at noon, only to find the doors not yet open. Gaining admission shortly after he seems to have been content to sit for a while and watch the gathering audience. But eventually the pangs of hunger mastered him, and so, getting a boy to keep his place, he slipped out to "the Rose Tavern, and there got half a breast of mutton off the spit, and dined all alone." Twenty years later the vicinity of the Rose gained an unenviable reputation. "A man could not go from the Rose Tavern to the Piazza once, but he must venture his life twice." And it maintained that reputation well into the next century, growing ever more and more in favour with the gamblers and rufflers of the times. It was at the bar of this house that Hildebrand Horden, an actor of talent and one who promised to win a great name, was killed in a brawl. Colley Cibber tells that he was exceedingly handsome, and that before he was buried "it was observable that two or three days together several of the fair sex, well dressed, came in masks, and some in their own coaches, to visit the theatrical hero in his shroud."

To the student of etymology the name of the Hummums tells its own

tale. The word is a near approach to the Arabic "Hammam," meaning a hot bath, and hence implies an establishment for bathing in the Oriental manner. The tavern in Covent Garden bearing that name was one of the first bathing establishments founded in England, and the fact that it introduced a method of ablution which had its origin in a country of slavery prompted Leigh Hunt to reflect that Englishmen need not have wondered how Eastern nations could endure their servitude. "This is one of the secrets by which they endure it. A free man in a dirty skin is not in so fit a state to endure existence as a slave with a clean one; because nature insists that a due attention to the clay which our souls inhabit shall be the first requisite to the comfort of the inhabitant. Let us not get rid of our freedom; let us teach it rather to those that want it; but let such of us as have them, by all means get rid of our dirty skins. There is now a moral and intellectual commerce among mankind, as well as an interchange of inferior goods; we should send freedom to Turkey as well as clocks and watches, and import not only figs, but a fine state of pores."

John Wolcot, the satirist to whom, as Peter Pindar, nothing was sacred, and who surely had more accomplishments to fall back upon than ever poet had before, having been in turns doctor, clergyman, politician and painter, found a congenial resort at the Hummums when he established himself in London. He preserved the memory of the house in verse, but it is an open question whether his reflections on the horrible sounds of which he complains should be referred to Covent Garden or to the city he had abandoned.

"In Covent Garden at the Hummums, now
I sit, but after many a curse and vow,
Never to see the madding City more;
Where barrows truckling o'er the pavement roll:
And, what is sorrow to a tuneful soul,
Where asses, asses greeting, love songs roar:
Which asses, that the Garden square adorn,
Must lark-like be the heralds of my morn."

Those love songs have not ceased in Covent Garden; the amorous duets are to be heard to this day from the throats of countless costermongers' donkeys. But they disturb Peter Pindar's tuneful soul no more as he lies in his grave near by.

It would be a grave injustice to the Hummums to overlook the fact that it possessed a ghost-story of its own. Its subject was Dr. Johnson's cousin, the Parson Ford "in whom both talents and good dispositions were disgraced by licentiousness," and the story was told to Boswell by Johnson himself. "A waiter at the Hummums," Johnson said, "in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again, he met him a second time. When he came up he asked some of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time. When he recovered, he said he had a message to deliver to some women from Ford; but he was not to tell what or to whom. He walked out; he was followed; but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back and said he had delivered it, and the women exclaimed, 'Then we are all undone!' Dr. Pellet, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the truth of this story, and he said the evidence was irresistible."

A tantalizing ghost-story this, and one that begets regret that the Society for Psychical Research did not enter on its labours a century or so earlier.

One other tavern, or ordinary, of unusual interest spent its brief career of less than a year under the Piazza of Covent Garden. It was the experiment of Charles Macklin, an eighteenth century actor of undoubted talent and just as undoubted conceit and eccentricity. He had reached rather more than the midway of his long life--he was certainly ninety-seven when he died and may have been a hundred--when he resolved to leave the stage and carry out an idea over which he had long ruminated. 'This was nothing less than the establishment of what he grandiloquently called the British Institution.

So much in earnest was Macklin that he accepted a farewell benefit at Drury Lane theatre, at which he recited a good-bye prologue commending his daughter to the favour of playgoers. In the greenroom that night, when regrets were expressed at the loss of so admirable an actor, Foote remarked, "You need not fear; he will first break in business, and then break his word." And Foote did not a little to make his prophecy come true. For a part of Macklin's scheme, whereby he was to instruct the public and fill his own pockets at the same time, was a lecture-room on the "plan of the ancient Greek, Roman, and Modern French and Italian Societies of liberal investigation." Macklin appointed himself the instructor in chief, and there was hardly a subject under the sun upon which he was not prepared to enlighten the British public at the moderate price of "one shilling each person." The first two or three lectures were a success. Then the novelty wore off and opposition began. Foote set up a rival oratory and devoted himself to the simple task of burlesquing that of Macklin. He would impersonate Macklin in his armchair, examining a pupil in classics after this fashion.

"Well, sir, did you ever hear of Aristophanes?"

"Yes, sir; a Greek Dramatist, who wrote--"

"Ay; but I have got twenty comedies in these drawers, worth his _CLOUDS_ and stuff. Do you know anything of Cicero?"

"A celebrated Orator of Rome, who in the polished and persuasive is considered a master in his art."

"Yes, yes; but I'll be bound he couldn't teach Elocution."

Of course all this raillery was more attractive to the public than Macklin's serious and pedagogic dissertations. The result may be imagined. Foote's oratory was crowded; Macklin's empty.

But that was not the worst. Another feature of the British Institution was the establishment of the ordinary aforesaid. The prospectus of the Institution bore this notice: "There is a public ordinary every day at four o'clock, price three shillings. Each person to drink port, claret, or whatever liquor he shall choose." A disastrous precursor of the free lunch this would seem. And so it proved. But not immediately. Attracted by the novelty of having a famous actor for host, the ordinary went swimmingly for a time. Macklin presided in person. As soon as the door of the room was

shut--a bell rang for five minutes, a further ten minutes' grace was given, and then no more were admitted--the late actor bore in the first dish and then took his place at the elaborate sideboard to superintend further operations. Dinner over, and the bottles and glasses placed on the table, "Macklin, quitting his former situation, walked gravely up to the front of the table and hoped 'that all things were found agreeable;' after which he passed the bell-rope round the chair of the person who happened to sit at the head of the table, and, making a low bow at the door, retired." He retired to read over the notes of the lecture he had prepared for these same guests, and during his absence for the rest of the evening his waiters and cooks seized the opportunity to reap their harvest. The sequel of the tale was soon told in the bankruptcy court, and Macklin went back to the stage, as Foote said he would. And now he lies peacefully enough in his grave in the Covent Garden St. Paul's, within stone's throw of the scene where he tried to be a tavern-keeper and failed.

CHAPTER V.

INNS AND TAVERNS FURTHER AFIELD.

Outside the more or less clearly defined limits of the city, the neighbourhood of St. Paul's, Fleet Street, the Strand and Covent Garden, the explorer of the inns and taverns of old London may encircle the metropolis from any given point and find something of interest everywhere. Such a point of departure may be made, for example, in the parish of Lambeth, where, directly opposite the Somerset House of to-day, once stood the Feathers Tavern connected with Cuper's Gardens. The career of that resort was materially interfered with by the passing of an act in 1752 for the regulation of places of entertainment "and punishing persons keeping disorderly houses." The act stipulated that every place kept for public dancing, music, or other entertainment, within twenty miles of the city, should be under a license.

[Illustration: FEATHERS TAVERN.]

Evidently it was found impossible to secure a license for Cuper's Gardens, for in a public print of May 22nd, 1754, the Widow Evans advertises that "having been deny'd her former Liberty of opening her Gardens as usual, through the malicious representations of ill-meaning persons, she therefore begs to acquaint the Public that she hath open'd them as a Tavern till further notice. Coffee and Tea at any hour of the day." There is no record of the Widow Evans ever recovering her former "Liberty," and hence the necessity of continuing the place as a tavern merely, with its seductive offer of "coffee and tea at any hour." Even without a license, however, a concert was announced for the night of August 30th, 1759, the law being evaded by the statement that the vocal and instrumental programme was to be given by "a select number of gentlemen for their own private diversion." As there is no record of any other entertainment having been given at the E'eathers, it is probable that this attempt to dodge the law met with condign punishment, and

resulted in the closing of the place for good. After it had stood unoccupied for some time Dr. Johnson passed it in the company of Beauclerk, Langton, and Lady Sydney Beauclerk, and made a sportive suggestion that he and Beauclerk and Langton should take it. "We amused ourselves," he said, "with scheming how we should all do our parts. Lady Sydney grew angry and said, 'An old man should not put such things in young people's heads.' She had no notion of a joke, sir; had come late into life, and had a mighty unpliant understanding." Though Johnson did not carry his joke into effect, the Feathers has not lacked for perpetuation, as is shown by the modern public-house of that name in the vicinity of Waterloo Bridge.

From Lambeth to Westminster is an easy journey, but unhappily there are no survivals of the numerous inns which figure in records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One of those hostelries makes its appearance in the expense sheet of a Roger Keate who went to London in 1575 on the business of his town of Weymouth. He notes that on Friday the tenth day of February, "in the companie of certain courtiars, and of Mr. Robert Gregorie, at Westminster, at the Sarrazin's Head" he spent the sum of five shillings. This must have been a particularly festive occasion, for a subsequent dinner cost Mr. Keate but twenty pence, and "sundrie drinkinges" another day left him the poorer by but two shillings and twopence.

Another document, this time of date 1641, perpetuates the memory of a second Westminster inn in a lively manner. This is a petition of a constable of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields to the House of Commons, and concerned the misdoings of certain apprentices at the time of the riot caused by Colonel Lunsford's assault on the citizens of Westminster. The petitioner, Peter Scott by name, stated that he tried to appease the 'prentices by promising to release their fellows detained as prisoners in the Mermaid tavern. When he and another constable approached the door of the house, his colleague was thrust in the leg with a sword from within, which so enraged the 'prentices--though why is not explained--that they broke into the tavern, and the keeper had since prosecuted the harmless Peter Scott for causing a riot.

Numerous as were the taverns of Westminster, it is probable that the greater proportion of them were to be found in one thoroughfare, to wit, King Street. It was the residence and place of business of one particularly aggressive brewer in the closing quarter of the seventeenth century. This vendor of ale, John England by name, had the distinction of being the King's brewer, and he appears to have thought that that position gave him more rights than were possessed by ordinary mortals. So when an order was made prohibiting the passing of drays through King Street during certain hours of the day, he told the constables that he, the King's brewer, cared nothing for the order of the House of Lords. The example proved infectious. Other brewers' draymen became obstreperous too, one calling the beadle that stopped him "a rogue" and another vowing that if he knew the beadle "he would have a touch with him at quarterstaff." But all these fiery spirits of King Street were brought to their senses, and are found expressing sorrow for their offence and praying for their discharge.

According to the legend started by Ben Jonson, this same King Street was the scene of poet Spenser's death of starvation. "He died," so Jonson said, "for want of bread in King Street; he refused twenty

pieces sent him by my Lord Essex, and said he was sure he had no time to spend them." This myth is continually cropping up, but no evidence has been adduced in its support. The fact that he died in a tavern in King Street tells against the story. That thoroughfare, then the only highway between the Royal Palace of Whitehall and the Parliament House, was a street of considerable importance, and Spenser's presence there is explained by Stow's remark that "for the accommodation of such as come to town in the terms, here are some good inns for their reception, and not a few taverns for entertainment, as is not unusual in places of great confluence." There are ample proofs, too, that King Street was the usual resort of those who were messengers to the Court, such as Spenser was at the time of his death.

It is strange, however, that not many of the names of these taverns have survived. Yet there are two, the Leg and the Bell, to which there are allusions in seventeenth century records. There is one reference in that "Parliamentary Diary" supposed to have been written by Thomas Burton, the book which Carlyle characterized as being filled "with mere dim inanity and moaning wind." This chronicler, under date December 18th, 1656, tells how he dined with the clothworkers at the Leg, and how "after dinner I was awhile at the Leg with Major-General Howard and Mr. Briscoe." Being so near Whitehall in one direction and the Parliament House in the other, it is not surprising to learn that the nimble Pepys was a frequent visitor at the tavern. After a morning at Whitehall "with my lord" in June, 1660, he dined there with a couple of friends. Nearly a year later business took him to the House of Lords, but as he failed to achieve the purpose he had in view he sought consolation at the Leg, where he "dined very merry." A more auspicious occasion took place three years after. "To the Exchequer, and there got my tallys for ~17,500, the first payment I ever had out of the Exchequer, and at the Legg spent 14s. upon my old acquaintance, some of them the clerks, and away home with my tallys in a coach, fearful every moment of having one of them fall out, or snatched from me." He was equally glowing with satisfaction when he visited the tavern again in 1667. All sorts of compliments had been paid him that day, and he had been congratulated even by the King and the Duke of York. "I spent the morning thus walking in the Hall, being complimented by everybody with admiration: and at noon stepped into the Legg with Sir William Warren."

'Then there was that other house in King Street, the Bell, upon which the diarist bestowed some of his patronage. On his first visit he was caught in a neat little trap. "Met with Purser Washington, with whom and a lady, a friend of his, I dined at the Bell Tavern in King Street, but the rogue had no more manners than to invite me, and to let me pay my club." Which was too bad of the Purser, when Pepys' head and heart were full of "infinite business." The next call, however, was more satisfactory and less expensive. He merely dropped in to see "the seven Flanders mares that my Lord has bought lately." But the Bell had a history both before and after Pepys' time. It is referred to so far back as the middle of the fifteenth century, and it was in high favour as the headquarters of the October Club in the reign of Queen Anne.

During the eighteenth century many fashionable resorts were located in Pall Mall and neighbouring streets. In Pall Mall itself was the famous Star and Garter, and close by was St. Alban's Tavern,

celebrated for its political gatherings and public dinners. Horace Walpole has several allusions to the house and tells an anecdote which illustrates the wastefulness of young men about town. A number of these budding aristocrats were dining at St. Alban's Tavern and found the noise of the coaches outside jar upon their sensitive nerves. So they promptly ordered the street to be littered with straw, and probably cared little that the freak cost them fifty shillings each.

No doubt the charges at the St. Allan's were in keeping with the exclusive character of the house, and it might be inferred that the same would have held good at the Star and Garter. But that was not the case. Many testimonies to the moderate charges of that house have been cited. Perhaps the most conclusive evidence on this point is furnished by Swift, who was always a bit of a haggler as to the prices he paid at taverns. It was 'at his suggestion that the little club to which he belonged discarded the tavern they had been used to meeting in and went to the Star and Garter for their dinner. "The other dog," Swift wrote in one of his little letters to Stella, "was so extravagant in his bills that for four dishes, and four, first and second course, without wine or dessert, he charged twenty-one pounds, six shillings and eightpence." That the bill at the Star and Garter was more reasonable is a safe inference from the absence of any complaint on the part of Swift.

Several clubs were wont to meet under this roof. Among these was the Nottinghamshire Club, an association of gentlemen who had estates in that county and were in the habit of dining together when in town. One such gathering, however, had a tragic termination. It took place on January 26th, 1765, and among those present were William Chaworth, John Hewett, Lord Byron, a great-uncle of the poet, and seven others. Perfect harmony prevailed until about seven o'clock, when the wine was brought in and conversation became general. At this juncture one member of the company started a conversation about the best method of preserving game, and the subject was at once taken up by Mr. Chaworth and Lord Byron, who seem to have held entirely opposite views. The former was in favour of severity against all poachers, the latter declaring that the best way to have most game was to take no care of it all. Nettled by this opposition, Mr. Chaworth ejaculated that he had more game on five acres than Lord Byron had on all his manors. Retorts were bandied to and fro, until finally Mr. Chaworth clenched matters by words which were tantamount to a challenge to a duel.

Nothing more was said, however, and the company was separating when Mr. Chaworth and Lord Byron happened to meet on a landing. What transpired at first then is not known, but evidently the quarrel was resumed in some form or other, for the two joined in calling a waiter and asking to be shown into an empty room. The waiter obeyed, opening the door and placing a small tallow candle on the table before he retired. The next news from that room was the ringing of a bell, and when it was answered it was found that Mr. Chaworth was mortally wounded. What had happened was explained by Mr. Chaworth, who said that he could not live many hours; that he forgave Lord Byron, and hoped the world would; that the affair had passed in the dark, only a small tallow candle burning in the room; that Lord Byron asked him if he meant the conversation on the game to Sir Charles Sedley or to him? To which he replied, if you have anything to say, we had better shut the door; that while he was doing this,

Lord Byron bid him draw, and, in turning, he saw his lordship's sword half drawn, on which he whipped out his own, and made the first pass; the sword being through his lordship's waistcoat, he thought he had killed him, and asking whether he was not mortally wounded, Lord Byron, while he was speaking, shortened his sword, and stabbed him in the abdomen. Mr. Chaworth survived but a few hours. There was a trial, of course, but it ended in Lord Byron's acquittal on the ground that he had been guilty of but manslaughter. And the poet, the famous grand-nephew, rounds off this story of the Star and Garter by declaring that his relative, so far from feeling any remorse for the death of Mr. Chaworth, always kept the sword he had used with such fatal effect and had it hanging in his bedroom when he died.

Although the neighbouring Suffolk Street is a most decorous thoroughfare at the present time, and entirely innocent of taverns, it was furnished with two, the Cock and The Golden Eagle, in the latter portion of the seventeenth century. At the former Evelyn dined on one occasion with the councillors of the Board of Trade; at the latter, on January 30th, 1735, occurred the riot connected with the mythical Calf's Head Club. How the riot arose is something of a mystery. It seems, however, that a mob was gathered outside the tavern by the spreading of the report that some young nobles were dining within on a calf's head in ridicule of the execution of Charles I, and a lurid account was afterwards circulated as to how a bleeding calf's head, wrapped in a napkin, was thrown out of the window, while the merrymakers within drank all kinds of confusion to the Stuart race. According to the narrative of one who was in the tavern, the calf's head business was wholly imaginary. Nor was the date of the dinner a matter of prearrangement. It seems that the start of the commotion was occasioned by some of the company inside observing that some boys outside had made a bonfire, which, in their hilarity, they were anxious to emulate. So a waiter was commissioned to make a rival conflagration, and then the row began. It grew to such proportions that the services of a justice and a strong body of guards were required ere peace 'could be restored to Suffolk Street.

Rare indeed is it to find a tavern in this district which can claim a clean record in the matter of brawls, and duels, and sudden deaths. Each of the two most famous houses of the Haymarket, that is, Long's and the Blue Posts Tavern, had its fatality. It was at the former ordinary, which must not be confused with another of the same name in Covent Garden, that Philip Herbert, the seventh Earl of Pembroke, committed one of those murderous assaults for which he was distinguished. He killed a man in a duel in 1677, and in the first month of the following year was committed to the Tower "for blasphemous words." That imprisonment, however, was of brief duration, for in February a man petitioned the House of Lords for protection from the earl's violence. And the day before, in a drunken scuffle at Long's he had killed a man named Nathaniel Cony. This did not end his barbarous conduct, for two years later he murdered an officer of the watch, when returning from a drinking bout at Turnham Green. Mercifully for the peace of the community this blood-thirsty peer died at the age of thirty. At the Blue Posts Tavern the disputants were a Mr. Moon and a Mr. Hunt, who began their quarrel in the house, "and as they came out at the door they drew their swords, and the latter was run through and immediately died." There was another Blue Posts in Spring Gardens close by, which became notorious from being the resort of the Jacobites. This,

in fact, was the house in which Robert Charnock and his fellow conspirators were at breakfast when news reached them which proved that their plot had been discovered.

A more refined atmosphere hangs around the memory of the Thatched House, that St. James's Street tavern which started on its prosperous career in 1711 and continued it until 1865, at which date the building was taken down to make room for the Conservative Clubhouse. Its title would have led a stranger to expect a modest establishment, but that seems to have been bestowed on the principle which still prevails when a mansion is designated a cottage. It reminds one of Coleridge and his

"the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
Is the pride that apes humility."

Swift was conscious of the incongruity of the name, as witness the lines,

"The Deanery House may well be match'd,
Under correction, with the Thatch'd."

As a matter of fact the tavern was of the highest class and greatly in repute with the leaders of society and fashion. And its frequenters were not a little proud of being known among its patrons. Hence the delightful retort of the Lord Chancellor Thurlow recorded by Lord Campbell. "In the debates on the Regency, a prim peer, remarkable for his finical delicacy and formal adherence to etiquette, having cited pompously certain resolutions which he said had been passed by a party of noblemen and gentlemen of great distinction at the Thatched House Tavern, the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, in adverting to these said, 'As to what the noble lord in the red ribbon told us he had heard at the ale-house.'"

Town residences of a duke and several earls are now the most conspicuous buildings in the Mayfair Stanhope Street, but in the closing years of the eighteenth century there was a tavern here of the name of Pitt's Head. On a June night in 1792 this house was the scene of a gathering which had notable results. The host conceived the idea of inviting a number of the servants of the neighbourhood to a festivity in honour of the King's birthday, one feature of which was to be a dance. The company duly assembled to the number of forty, but some busybody carried news of the gathering to a magistrate who, with fifty constables, quickly arrived on the scene to put an end to the merrymaking. Every servant in the tavern was taken into custody and marched off to a watch-house in Mount Street. News of what had happened spread during the night, and early in the morning the watch-house was surrounded by a furious mob. A riot followed, which was not easily suppressed. But another consequence followed. During the riot the Earl of Lonsdale was stopped in his carriage while passing to his own house, and annoyed by that experience he addressed some curt words to a Captain Cuthbert who was on duty with the soldiers. Of course a duel was the next step. After failing to injure each other at two attempts, the seconds intervened, and insisted that, as their quarrel had arisen through a mutual misconception, and as neither of them would make the first concession, they should advance towards each other, step for step, and both declare, in the same breath, that they were sorry for what had happened.

In pre-railway days Piccadilly could boast of the White Horse Cellar, which Dickens made famous as the starting-point of Mr. Pickwick for Bath after being mulct in seven hundred and fifty pounds damages by the fair widow Bardell. The fact that it was an important coaching depot appears to have been its chief attraction in those and earlier days, for the novelist's description of the interior would hardly prove seductive to travellers were the house existing in its old-time condition. "The travellers' room at the White Horse Cellar," wrote Dickens, "is of course uncomfortable; it would be no travellers' room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fireplace appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs, and shovel. It is divided into boxes, for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, and a live waiter: which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses, in a corner of the apartment." Pierce Egan, in the closing pages of his lively account of Jerry Hawthorn's visit to London, gives an outside view of the tavern only. And that more by suggestion than direct description. It is the bustle of the place rather than its architectural features Egan was concerned with, and in that he was seconded by his artist, George Cruikshank, whose picture of the White Horse Cellar is mostly coach and horses and human beings.

Few if any London taverns save the Adam and Eve can claim to stand upon ground once occupied by a King's palace. This tavern, which has a modern representative of identical name, was situated at the northern end of Tottenham Court Road, at the junction of the road leading to Hampstead. It was built originally on the site of a structure known as King John's Palace, which subsequently became a manor house, and then gave way to the Adam and Eve tavern and gardens. This establishment had a varied career. At one time it was highly respectable; then its character degenerated to the lowest depths; afterwards taking an upward move once more.

Something in the shape of a place for refreshments was standing on this spot in the mid seventeenth century, for the parish books of St. Giles in the Fields record that three serving maids were in 1645 fined a shilling each for "drinking at Totenhall Court on the Sabbath daie." In the eighteenth century the resort was at the height of its popularity. It had a large room with an organ, skittle-alleys, and cosy arbour for those who liked to consume their refreshments out of doors. At one time also its attractions actually embraced "a monkey, a heron, some wild fowl, some parrots, and a small pond for gold-fish." It was at this stage in its history, when its surroundings were more rural than it is possible to imagine to-day, that the tavern was depicted by Hogarth in his "March to Finchley" plate. Early in the last century, however, it "became a place of more promiscuous resort, and persons of the worst character and description were in the constant habit of frequenting it; highwaymen, footpads, pickpockets, and common women formed its leading visitants, and it became so great a nuisance to the neighbourhood, that the magistrates interfered, the organ was banished, the skittle-grounds destroyed, and the gardens dug up." A creepy story is told of a subterraneous passage having existed in connection with the manor house which formerly stood on this spot, a passage which many set out to explore but which has kept its secret hidden to this day.

[Illustration: ADAM AND EVE TAVERN.]

Record has already been made of the fact that there was one "Sarrazin's" Head tavern at Westminster; it must be added that there was another at Snow Hill, which disappeared when the Holborn Viaduct was built. Dickens, who rendered so many valuable services in describing the buildings of old London, has left a characteristic pen-picture of this tavern. "Near to the jail, and by consequence near to Smithfield, and on that particular part of Snow Hill where omnibuses going eastward seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westward not unfrequently fall by accident, is the coachyard of the Saracen's Head Inn; its portals guarded by two Saracens' heads and shoulders frowning upon you from each side of the gateway. The Inn itself garnished with another Saracen's head, frowns upon you from the top of the yard. When you walk up this yard you will see the booking-office on your left, and the tower of St. Sepulchre's Church darting abruptly up into the sky on your right, and a gallery of bedrooms upon both sides. Just before you, you will observe a long window with the words 'Coffee Room' legibly painted above it." That allusion to St. Sepulchre's Church recalls the fact that in that building may be seen the brass to the memory of the redoubtable Captain John Smith, who was to win the glory of laying the first abiding foundations of English life in America. The brass makes due record of the fact that he was "Admiral of New England," and it also bears in the coat of arms three Turks' heads, in memory of Smith's alleged single-handed victory over that number of Saracens. As Selden pointed out, when Englishmen came home from fighting the Saracens, and were beaten by them, they, to save their own credit, pictured their enemy with big, terrible faces, such as frowned at Dickens from so many coigns of vantage in the old Saracen's Head,

[Illustration: A TRIAL BEFORE THE PIE-POWDER COURT AT THE HAND AND SHEARS TAVERN.]

During the closing decade of the famous Bartholomew Fair--an annual medley of commerce and amusement which had its origin in the days when it was the great cloth exchange of all England and attracted clothiers from all quarters--the scene of what was known as the Pie-Powder Court was located in a 'tavern known as the Hand and Shears. Concerning this court Blackstone offered this interesting explanation: "The lowest, and, at the same time, the most expeditious court of justice known to the law of England, is the Court of Pie-Powder, *_curia pedis pulverizati_*, so called from the dusty feet of the suitors." Another explanation of the name is that the court was so called "because justice is there done as speedily as dust can fall from the foot." Whatever be the correct solution, the curious fact remains that this court was a serious affair, and had the power to enforce law and deal out punishment within the area of the Fair. There is an excellent old print of the Hand and Shears in which the court was held, and another not less interesting picture showing the court engaged on the trial of a case. It is evident from the garb of the two principal figures that plaintiff and defendant belonged to the strolling-player fraternity, who always contributed largely to the amusements of the Fair. This curious example of swift justice, recalling the Old Testament picture of the judge sitting at the gate of the city, became entirely a thing of the past when Bartholomew Fair was abolished in 1854.

There are two other inns, one to the north, the other to the south, the names of which can hardly escape the notice of the twentieth century visitor to London. These are the Angel at Islington, and the Elephant and Castle at Walworth. The former is probably the older of the two, though both were in their day famous as the starting-places of coaches, just as they are conspicuous to-day as traffic centres of omnibuses and tram-cars. The Angel dates back to before 1665, for in that year of plague in London a citizen broke out of his house in the city and sought refuge here. He was refused admission, but was taken in at another inn and found dead in the morning. In the seventeenth century and later, as old pictures testify, the inn presented the usual features of a large old country hostelry. As such the courtyard is depicted by Hogarth in his print of the "Stage Coach." Its career has been uneventful in the main, though in 1767 one of its guests ended his life by poison, leaving behind this message: "I have for fifteen years past suffered more indigence than ever gentleman before submitted to, I am neglected by my acquaintance, traduced by my enemies, and insulted by the vulgar."

[Illustration: FALCON TAVERN, BANKSIDE.]

If he would complete the circle of his tour on the outskirts of London proper, the pilgrim, on leaving the Elephant and Castle, should wend his way to Bankside, though not in the expectation of finding any vestige left of that Falcon tavern which was the daily resort of Shakespeare and his theatrical companions; Not far from Blackfriars Bridge used to be Falcon Stairs and the Falcon Glass Works, and other industrial buildings bearing that name, but no Falcon tavern within recent memory. It has been denied that Shakespeare frequented the Falcon tavern which once did actually exist. But so convivial a soul must have had some "house of call," and there is no reason to rob the memory of the old Falcon of what would be its greatest honour. Especially does it seem unnecessary in view of the fact that the Falcon and many another inn and tavern of old London, has vanished and left "not a rack behind."

II.

COFFEE-HOUSES OF OLD LONDON.

CHAPTER I.

COFFEE-HOUSES ON 'CHANGE AND NEAR-BY.

Coffee-Houses still exist in London, but it would be difficult to find one answering to the type which was so common during the last forty years of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth. The establishment of to-day is nothing more than an eating-house of modest pretensions, frequented mostly by the labouring classes. In many cases its internal arrangements follow the old-time model, and the imitation extends to the provision of a

daily newspaper or two from which customers may glean the news of the day without extra charge. Here and there, too, the coffee-house of the present perpetuates the convenience of its prototype by allowing customers' letters to be sent to its address. But the more exalted type of coffee-house has lost its identity in the club.

It is generally agreed that 1652 was the date of the opening of the first coffee-house in London. There are, however, still earlier references to the drink itself. For example, Sir Henry Blount wrote from Turkey in 1634 to the effect that the natives of that country had a "drink called *_cauphe_* ...in taste a little bitterish," and that they daily entertained themselves "two or three hours in *_cauphe_-houses*, which, in Turkey, abound more than inns and alehouses with us." Also it will be remembered that Evelyn, under date 1637, recorded how a Greek came to Oxford and "was the first I ever saw drink coffee."

Whether the distinction of opening the first coffee-house in London belongs to a Mr. Bowman or to a Pasqua Rosee cannot be decided. But all authorities are as one in locating that establishment in St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill, and that the date was 1652. The weight of evidence seems to be in favour of Rosee, who was servant to a Turkey merchant named Edwards. Having acquired the coffee-drinking habit in Turkey, Mr. Edwards was accustomed to having his servant prepare the beverage for him in his London house, and the new drink speedily attracted a levee of curious onlookers and tasters. Evidently the company grew too large to be convenient, and at this juncture Mr. Edwards suggested that Rosee should set up as a vendor of the drink. He did so, and a copy of the prospectus he issued on the occasion still exists. It set forth at great length "the virtue of the Coffee Drink First publicly made and sold in England by Pasqua Rosee," the berry of which was described as "a simple innocent thing" but yielding a liquor of countless merits. But Rosee was frank as to its drawbacks; "it will prevent drowsiness," he continued, "and make one fit for business, if one have occasion to watch; and therefore you are not to drink it after supper, unless you intend to be watchful, for it will hinder sleep for three or four hours."

That Pasqua Rosee prospered amazingly in St. Michael's Alley, "at the Signe of his own Head," is the only conclusion possible from the numerous rival establishments which were quickly set up in different parts of London. By the end of the century it was computed that the coffee-houses of London numbered nearly three thousand.

But there were days of tribulation to be passed through before that measure of success was attained. In eight years after Rosee had opened his establishment the consumption of coffee in England had evidently increased to a notable extent, for in 1660 the House of Commons is found granting to Charles II for life the excise duty on coffee "and other outlandish drinks." But it is a curious fact that while the introduction of tea was accepted with equanimity by the community, the introduction of coffee was strenuously opposed for more than a decade. Poets and pamphleteers combined to decry the new beverage. The rhyming author of "A Cup of Coffee, or Coffee in its Colours," published in 1663, voiced his indignation thus:

"For men and Christians to turn Turks and think
To excuse the crime, because 'tis in their drink!
Pure English apes! ye might, for aught I know,

Would it but mode learn to eat spiders too.
Should any of your grandsires' ghosts appear
In your wax-candle circles, and but hear
The name of coffee so much called upon,
Then see it drank like scalding Phlegethon;
Would they not startle, think ye, all agreed
'Twas conjuration both in word and deed?"

By way of climax this opponent of the new drink appealed to the shades of Ben Jonson and other libation-loving poets, and recalled how they, as source of inspiration, "drank pure nectar as the Gods drink too."

Three years later a dramatist seems to have tried his hand at depicting the new resort on the stage, for Pepys tells how in October, 1666, he saw a play called "The Coffee-House." It was not a success; "the most ridiculous, insipid play that ever I saw in my life," was Pepys' verdict. But there was nothing insipid about the pamphlet which, under the title of "The Character of a Coffee-House," issued from the press seven years later. The author withheld his name, and was wise in so doing, for his cuts and thrusts with his pen would have brought down upon him as numerous cuts and thrusts with a more dangerous weapon had his identity been known. "A coffee-house," he wrote, "is a lay-conventicle, good-fellowship turned puritan, ill-husbandry in masquerade; whither people come, after toping all day, to purchase, at the expense of their last penny, the repute of sober companions: a rota-room, that, like Noah's ark, receives animals of every sort, from the precise diminutive band, to the hectoring cravat and cuffs in folio; a nursery for training up the smaller fry of virtuosi in confident tattling, or a cabal of kittling critics that have only learned to spit and mew; a mint of intelligence, that, to make each man his penny-worth, draws out into petty parcels what the merchant receives in bullion. He, that comes often, saves two-pence a week in Gazettes, and has his news and his coffee for the same charge, as at a three-penny ordinary they give in broth to your chop of mutton; it is an exchange where haberdashers of political smallwares meet, and mutually abuse each other, and the public, with bottomless stories, and headless notions; the rendezvous of idle pamphlets, and persons more idly employed to read them; a high court of justice, where every little fellow in a camlet cloke takes upon him to transpose affairs both in church and state, to shew reasons against acts of parliament, and condemn the decrees of general councils."

Having indulged in that trenchant generalization, this vigorous assailant proceeded to describe a coffee-house in detail. The room "stinks of tobacco worse than hell of brimstone;" the coffee itself had the appearance of "Pluto's diet-drink, that witches tipples out of dead men's skulls;" and the company included "a silly fop and a worshipful justice, a griping rook and a grave citizen, a worthy lawyer and an errant pickpocket, a reverend non-conformist and a canting mountebank, all blended together to compose an oglio of impertinence." There is a delightful sketch of one named "Captain All-man-sir," as big a boaster as Falstaff, and a more delicately etched portrait of the Town Wit, who is summed up as the "jack-pudding of society" in the judgment of all wise men, but an incomparable wit in his own. The peroration of this pamphlet, devoted to a wholesale condemnation of the coffee-house, indulges in too frank and unsavoury metaphors for modern re-publication.

Of course there was an answer. Pamphleteering was one of the principal diversions of the age. "Coffee-Houses Vindicated" was the title of the reply. The second pamphlet was not the equal of the first in terseness or wit, but it had the advantage in argument. The writer did not find it difficult to make out a good case for the coffee-house. It was economical, conduced to sobriety, and provided innocent diversion. When one had to meet a friend, a tavern was an expensive place; "in an ale-house you must gorge yourself with pot after pot, sit dully alone, or be drawn in to club for others' reckonings." Not so at the coffee-house: "Here, for a penny or two, you may spend two or three hours, have the shelter of a house, the warmth of a fire, the diversion of company; and conveniency, if you please, of taking a pipe of tobacco; and all this without any grumbling or repining." On the score of sobriety the writer was equally cogent. It was stupid custom which insisted that any and every transaction should be carried out at a tavern, where continual sipping made men unfit for business. Coffee, on the contrary, was a "wakeful" drink. And the company of the coffee-house enabled its frequenter to follow the proper study of man, mankind. The triumphant conclusion was that a well-regulated coffee-house was "the sanctuary of health, the nursery of temperance, the delight of frugality, an academy of civility, and free-school of ingenuity."

But a still more serious-minded person took part in the assault upon the coffee-house. He was one of those amateur statesmen, who usually, as in this case, abrogate to themselves the title of "Lover of his Country," who have a remedy for every disease of the body politic. In a series of proposals offered for the consideration of Parliament, this patriot pleaded for the suppression of coffee-houses on the ground that if less coffee were drunk there would be a larger demand for beer, and a larger demand for beer meant the growing of more English grain. Apart from economics, however, there were adequate reasons for suppression. These coffee-houses have "done great mischiefs to the nation, and undone many of the King's subjects: for they, being great enemies to diligence and industry, have been the ruin of many serious and hopeful young gentlemen and tradesmen, who, before frequenting these places, were diligent students or shopkeepers, extraordinary husbands of their time as well as money; but since these houses have been set up, under pretence of good husbandry, to avoid spending above one penny or two-pence at a time, have gone to these coffee-houses; where, meeting friends, they have sat talking three or four hours; after which, a fresh acquaintance appearing, and so one after another all day long, hath begotten fresh discourse, so that frequently they have staid five or six hours together," to the neglect of shops and studies, etc., etc.

Even yet, however, the worst had not been said. The wives of England had to be heard from. Hence the "Women's Petition against Coffee," which enlivens the annals of the year of grace 1674. The pernicious drink was indicted on three counts: "It made men as unfruitful as the deserts whence that unhappy berry is said to be brought;" its use would cause the offspring of their "mighty ancestors" to "dwindle into a succession of apes and pigmies;" and when a husband went out on a domestic errand he "would stop by the way to drink a couple of cups of coffee."

These assaults--or, what is more probable, the abuse of the

coffee-house for political purposes--had an effect, for a time. The king, although enjoying the excise from that "outlandish" drink, did issue a proclamation for the suppression of the coffee-houses, only to cancel it almost ere the ink was dry. But later, to put a stop to that public discussion of state affairs which was deemed sacrilege in the seventeenth century, an order was issued forbidding coffee-houses to keep any written or other news save such as appeared in the Gazette.

But the coffee-house as an institution was not to be put down. Neither pamphlets nor poems, nor petitions nor proclamations, had any effect. It met a "felt want" apparently, or made so effective an appeal to the social spirit of seventeenth century Londoners that its success was assured from the start. Consequently Pasqua Rosee soon had opposition in his own immediate neighbourhood. It may be that the Rainbow of Fleet Street was the second coffee-house to be opened in London, or that the honour belonged elsewhere; what is to be noted is that the establishments multiplied fast and nowhere more than in the vicinity of the Royal Exchange. Several were to be found in Change Alley, while in the Royal Exchange of to-day, the third building of that name, are the headquarters of Lloyd's, which perpetuates in name at least one of the most remarkable coffee-houses of the seventeenth century.

Evidence is abundant that the early coffee-houses took their colour from the district in which they were established. Thus it would be idle in the main to expect a literary atmosphere among the houses which flourished in the heart of the city. They became the resorts of men of business, and gradually acquired a specific character from the type of business man most frequenting them. In a way Batson's coffee-house was an exception to the rule, inasmuch as doctors and not merchants were most in evidence here. But the fact that it was tacitly accepted as the physicians' resort shows how the principle acted in a general way. One of the most constant visitors at Batson's was Sir Richard Blackmore, that scribbling doctor who was physician to William III and then to Queen Anne. Although his countless books were received either with ridicule or absolute silence, he still persisted in authorship, and finally produced an "Heroick Poem" in twelve books entitled, "Prince Alfred." Lest any should wonder how a doctor could court the muse to that extent without neglecting his proper work, he explained in his preface that he had written the poem "by such catches and starts, and in such occasional uncertain hours as his profession afforded, and for the greater part in coffee-houses, or in passing up and down the streets," an apology which, led to his being accused of writing "to the rumbling of his chariot wheels." But in the main the real literary folk of the day would have none of him. He belonged to the city, and what had a mere city man to do with poetry? Even Dr. Johnson, in taking note of a reply Blackmore made to his critics, chided him with writing "in language such as Cheapside easily furnished."

Other physicians, however, resorted to Batson's coffee-house in a professional and not a poetic way. The character of its frequenters was described in a lively manner in the first number of the *Connoisseur*, published in January, 1754. Having devoted a few sentences to a neighbouring establishment, the writer noted that it is "but a short step to a gloomy class of mortals, not less intent on gain than the stock-jobbers: I mean the dispensers of life and

death, who flock together like birds of prey watching for carcasses at Batson's. I never enter this place, but it serves as a *memento mori* to me. What a formidable assemblage of sable suits, and tremendous perukes! I have often met here a most intimate acquaintance, whom I have scarce known again; a sprightly young fellow, with whom I have spent many a jolly hour; but being just dubbed a graduate in physic, he has gained such an entire conquest over the risible muscles, that he hardly vouchsafes at any time to smile. I have heard him harangue, with all the oracular importance of a veteran, on the possibility of Canning's subsisting for a whole month on a few bits of bread; and he is now preparing a treatise, in which he will set forth a new and infallible method to prevent the spreading of the plague from France to England. Batson's has been reckoned the seat of solemn stupidity: yet it is not totally devoid of taste and common sense. They have among them physicians, who can cope with the most eminent lawyers or divines; and critics, who can relish the *sal volatile* of a witty composition, or determine how much fire is requisite to sublimate a tragedy *secundum artem*." The house served a useful purpose at a time when physicians were not in the habit of increasing their knowledge by visiting the wards of the hospitals. Batson's was a consulting-house instead, not alone for patients but for the doctors themselves. In this respect, then, it differed from the generally commercial character of the coffee-houses under the shadow of the Exchange.

[Illustration: GARRAWAY'S COFFEE-HOUSE.]

But there was no mistaking the commercial character of a place like Garraway's in Change Alley. The essayist just quoted is responsible for a story to the effect that when a celebrated actor was cast for the part of Shylock he made daily visits to the coffee-houses near the Exchange that "by a frequent intercourse and conversation with 'the unforeskin'd race,' he might habituate himself to their air and deportment." And the same chronicler goes on to say that personally he was never more diverted than by a visit to Garraway's a few days before the drawing of a lottery. "I not only could read hope, fear, and all the various passions excited by a love of gain, strongly pictured in the faces of those who came to buy; but I remarked with no less delight, the many little artifices made use of to allure adventurers, as well as the visible alterations in the looks of the sellers, according as the demand for tickets gave occasion to raise or lower their price. So deeply were the countenances of these bubble-brokers impressed with attention to the main chance, and their minds seemed so dead to all other sensations, that one might almost doubt, where money is out of the case, whether a Jew 'has eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, affections, passions.'" But lottery tickets were not the only things offered-for sale at Garraway's. Wine was a common article of sale there in the early days, and in the latter career of the house it became famous as an auction-room for land and house property.

Thomas Garraway was the founder of the house, the same who is credited with having been the first to retail tea in England. On the success of Pasqua Rosee he was not long, apparently, in adding coffee to his stock, and then turning his place of business into a coffee-house. The house survived till 1866, and even to its latest years kept an old-time character. A frequenter of the place says the ground-floor was furnished with cosy mahogany boxes and seats, and that the ancient practice of covering the floor with sand was

maintained to the last.

Two other houses, Jonathan's and Sam's, were notorious for their connection with stock-jobbing. The latter, indeed, figured prominently in the gigantic South Sea Bubble fraud. And even when that was exposed Sam's continued to be the headquarters of all the get-rich-quick schemes of the day. Thus in one issue of a newspaper of 1720 there were two announcements specially designed to catch the unwary. One notice told that a book would be opened for entering into a joint-partnership "on a thing that will turn to the advantage of the concerned," and the other was a modest proposal to raise two million pounds for buying and improving the Fens of Lincolnshire.

[Illustration: MAD DOG IN A COFFEE-HOUSE. _(From a Rowlandson Caricature.)_]

Jonathan's is incidentally described by Addison as "the general mart of stock-jobbers," and in that amusing account of himself to which he devoted the first number of the Spectator he explained that he had been taken for a merchant on the exchange, "and sometimes passed for a Jew in the assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's." Half a century later than these allusions the Annual Register recorded a case tried at the Guildhall arising out of an assault at this coffee-house. It seems that the master, Mr. Ferres, pushed the plaintiff, one Isaac Renoux, out of his house, for which he was fined one shilling damages on it being proved at the trial that "the house had been a market, time out of mind, for buying and selling government securities."

Such houses as John's in Birchin Lane and the Jerusalem coffee-house, which was situated in a court off Cornhill, were typical places of resort for merchants trading to distant parts of the world. One of Rowlandson's lively caricatures, that of a "Mad Dog in a Coffee-House," is a faithful representation of the interior of one of those houses. A bill on the wall shows how they were used for the publication of shipping intelligence, that particular placard giving details of the sailing of "The Cerebus" for the Brazils. In a private letter of July 30th, 1715, is an account of an exciting incident which had its origin in the Jerusalem coffee-house. At that time England was in a state of commotion over the Jacobite insurrection and the excitement seems to have turned the head of a Captain Montague, who was reputed to be "a civil sober man," of good principles and in good circumstances. He had entered the Jerusalem coffee-house on the previous day, as the letter relates, and, without any provocation, "of a sudden struck a gentleman who knew him a severe blow on the eye; immediately after; drawing his sword, ran out through the alley cross Cornhill still with it drawn; and at the South entrance of the Exchange uttered words to this effect, that he was come in the face of the Sun to proclaim James the third King of England, and that only he was heir." Whereupon he knocked down another gentleman, who, however, had sense enough to see that the captain was out of his mind and called for assistance to secure him. It took half a dozen men to hold him in the coach which carried him to a magistrate, who promptly committed him to a mad-house.

Tom's coffee-house was situated in the same thoroughfare as John's. This was the resort affected by Garrick on his occasional visits to the city, and is also thought to have been the house frequented by

Chatterton. In a letter to his sister that ill-fated poet excused the haphazard nature of his epistle he was writing her from Tom's on the plea that there was "such a noise of business and politics in the room." He explained that his present business--the concocting of squibs, tales and songs on the events of the day--obliged him to frequent places of the best resort.

[Illustration: TOM'S COFFEE-HOUSE.]

In view of its subsequent career no coffee-house of the city proper was of so much importance as that founded by Edward Lloyd. He first appears in the history of old London as the keeper of a coffee-house in Tower Street in 1688, but about four years later he removed to Lombard Street in close proximity to the Exchange, and his house gradually became the recognized centre of shipbroking and marine insurance business, for which the corporation still bearing the name of Lloyd's is renowned all over the world.

Two pictures of Lloyd's as it was in the first decade of the eighteenth century are to be found in the gallery of English literature, one from the pen of Steele, the other from that of Addison. The first is in the form of a petition to Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., from the customers of the house, and begged that he would use his influence to get other coffee-houses to adopt a custom which prevailed at Lloyd's. Great scandal, it seems, had been caused by coffee-house orators of the irresponsible order. Such nuisances were not tolerated at Lloyd's. The petitioners explained--and by inference the explanation preserves a record of the internal economy of the house--that at Lloyd's a servant was deputed to ascend the pulpit in the room and read the news on its arrival, "while the whole audience are sipping their respective liquors." The application of the petition lay in the suggestion that this method should be adopted in all coffee-houses, and that if any, one wished to orate at large on any item of the news of the day he should be obliged to ascend the pulpit and make his comments in a formal manner.

[Illustration: LLOYD'S COFFEE-HOUSE.]

Evidently the pulpit at Lloyd's was a settled institution. It played a conspicuous part in that ludicrous incident which Addison describes at his own expense. It was his habit, he explained, to jot down from time to time brief hints such as could be expanded into Spectator papers, and a sheetful of such hints would naturally look like a "rhapsody of nonsense" to any one save the writer himself. Such a sheet he accidentally dropped in Lloyd's one day, and before he missed it the boy of the house had it in his hand and was carrying it around in search of its owner. But Addison did not know that until it was too late. Many of the customers had glanced at its contents, which had caused them so much merriment that the boy was ordered to ascend the pulpit and read the paper for the amusement of the company at large. "The reading of this paper," continues Addison, "made the whole coffee-house very merry; some of them concluded that it was written by a madman, and others by somebody that had been taking notes out of the Spectator. One who had the appearance of a very substantial citizen told us, with several political winks and nods, that he wished there was no more in the paper than what was expressed in it: that for his part, he looked upon the dromedary, the gridiron, and the barber's pole, to signify

something more than what was usually meant by those words: and that he thought the coffee-man could not do better than to carry the paper to one of the secretaries of state." In the midst of the numerous other comments, wise and otherwise, Addison reached for the paper, pretended to look it over, shook his head twice or thrice, and then twisted it into a match and lit his pipe with it. The ruse diverted suspicion, especially as Addison applied himself to his pipe and the paper he was reading with seeming unconcern. And he consoled the readers of the Spectator with the reflection that he had already used more than half the hints on that unfortunate sheet of notes.

Since those almost idyllic days, Lloyd's has played a notable part in the life of the nation. At its headquarters in the Royal Exchange building are preserved many interesting relics of the history of the institution. From a simple coffee-house open to all and sundry, it has developed into the shipping-exchange of the world, employing 1,500 agents in all parts of the globe.

CHAPTER II.

ROUND ST. PAUL'S.

If there was a certain incongruity in the physicians having their special coffee-house in the heart of the city, there was none in clerics affecting the St. Paul's coffee-house under the shadow of the cathedral of that name. This being the chief church of the metropolis, notwithstanding the greater historic importance of Westminster Abbey, it naturally became the religious centre of London so far as clergymen were concerned. But the frequenters of this house were of a mixed type. That historian of Batson's who was quoted in the previous chapter, related that after leaving its dismal vicinity he was glad to "breathe the pure air in St. Paul's coffee-house," but he was obliged to add that as he entertained the highest veneration for the clergy he could not "contemplate the magnificence of the cathedral without reflecting on the abject condition of those 'tatter'd crapes,' who are said to ply here for an occasional burial or sermon, with the same regularity as the happier drudges who salute us with the cry of 'coach, sir,' or 'chair, your honour.'" Somewhat late in the eighteenth century St. Paul's coffee-house had a distinguished visitor in the person of Benjamin Franklin, who here made the acquaintance of Richard Price, that philosophical dissenting divine whose pamphlet on American affairs is said to have had no inconsiderable part in determining Americans to declare their independence. The fact that Dr. Price frequented the St. Paul's coffee-house is sufficient proof that its clients were not restricted to clergymen of the established church.

More miscellaneous was the patronage of Child's, another resort in St. Paul's Church-yard. It is sometimes described as having been a clerical house like the St. Paul's, and one reference in the Spectator gives some support to that view. The writer told how a friend of his from the country had expressed astonishment at seeing London so crowded with doctors of divinity, necessitating the explanation that not all the persons in scarfs were of that dignity,

for, this authority on London life continued, "a young divine, after his first degree in the university, usually comes hither only to show himself; and on that occasion, is apt to think he is but half equipped with a gown and cassock for his public appearance, if he hath not the additional ornament of a scarf of the first magnitude to entitle him to the appellation of Doctor from his landlady and the boy at' Child's." There is another allusion to the house in the Spectator. "Sometimes I"--the writer is Addison--"smoke a pipe at

Child's, and while I seem attentive to nothing but the Postman, overhear the conversation of every table in the room." Apart from such decided lay patrons as Addison, Child's could also claim a large constituency among the medical and learned men of the day.

Notwithstanding its ecclesiastical name, the Chapter coffee-house in Paul's Alley was not a clerical resort. By the middle of the eighteenth century it had come to be recognized as the rendezvous of publishers and booksellers. "The conversation here," to appeal to the Connoisseur once more, "naturally turns upon the newest publications; but their criticisms are somewhat singular. When they say a good book, they do not mean to praise the style or sentiment, but the quick and extensive sale of it. That book in the phrase of the Conger is best, which sells most; and if the demand for Quarles should be greater than for Pope, he would have the highest place on the rubric-post. There are also many parts of every work liable to their remarks, which fall not within the notice of less accurate observers. A few nights ago I saw one of these gentlemen take up a sermon, and after seeming to peruse it for some time with great attention, he declared that 'it was very good English.' The reader will judge whether I was most surprised or diverted, when I discovered that he was not commending the purity and elegance of the diction, but the beauty of the type; which, it seems, is known among printers by that appellation. We must not, however, think the members of the Conger strangers to the deeper parts of literature; for as carpenters, smiths, masons, and all mechanics, smell of the trade they labour at, booksellers take a peculiar turn from their connexions with books and authors."

Could the writer of that gentle satire have looked forward about a quarter of a century he would have had knowledge on which to have based a greater eulogy of the Congers. It should be explained perhaps that Conger was the name of a club of booksellers founded in 1715 for co-operation in the issuing of expensive works. Booklovers of the present generation may often wonder at the portly folios of bygone generations, and marvel especially that they could have been produced at a profit when readers were so comparatively few. Many of those folios owed their existence to the scheme adopted by the members of the Conger, a scheme whereby several publishers shared in the production of a costly work.

Such a sharing of expense and profit was entered into at that meeting at the Chapter coffee-house which led to Dr. Johnson's "Lives of the English Poets." The London booksellers of that time were alarmed at the invasion of what they called their literary property by a Scottish publisher who had presumed to bring out an edition of the English poets. To counteract this move from Edinburgh the decision was reached to print "an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets of reputation, from Chaucer down to the present time." The details were thoroughly debated at the Chapter

coffee-house, and a deputation was appointed to wait upon Dr. Johnson, to secure his services in editing the series. Johnson accepted the task, "seemed exceedingly pleased" that it had been offered him, and agreed to carry it through for a fee of two hundred pounds. His moderation astonished Malone; "had he asked one thousand, or even fifteen hundred guineas, the booksellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it."

But writers of books as well as makers and sellers of books could be found on occasion within the portals of the Chapter coffee-house. Two memories of Goldsmith, neither of them pleasant, are associated with the house. One is concerned with his acceptance of an invitation to dinner here with Charles Lloyd, who, at the end of the meal, walked off and left his guest to pay the bill. The other incident introduces the vicious William Kenrick, that hack-writer who slandered Goldsmith without cause on so many occasions. Shortly after the publication of one of his libels in the press, Kenrick was met by Goldsmith accidentally in the Chapter and made to admit that he had lied. But no sooner had the poet left the house than the cowardly retractor began his abuse again to the company at large.

Chatterton, too, frequented the house in his brief days of London life. "I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee-House," he wrote his mother, "and know all the geniuses there." And five years later there is this picture of the democratic character of the resort from the shocked pen of one who had been attracted thither by the report of its large library and select company: "Here I saw a specimen of English freedom. A whitesmith in his apron and some of his saws under his arm came in, sat down, and called for his glass of punch and the paper, both which he used with as much ease as a lord. Such a man in Ireland and, I suppose, in France too, and almost any other country, would, not have shown himself with his hat on, nor any way, unless sent for by some gentleman."

Perhaps the most interesting association of the Chapter coffee-house was that destined to come to it when its race was nearly run. On a July evening in 1548 the waiter was somewhat startled at the appearance of two simply-dressed, slight and timid-looking ladies seeking accommodation. Women guests were not common at the Chapter. But these two were strangers to London; they had never before visited the great city; and the only hostelry they knew was the Chapter they had heard their father speak about. So it was to the Chapter that Charlotte and Anne Brontë went when they visited London to clear up a difficulty with their publishers, Smith and Elder. Mrs. Gaskell describes the house as it was in those July days. "It had the appearance of a dwelling-house two hundred years old or so, such as one sometimes sees in ancient country towns; the ceilings of the small rooms were low, and had heavy beams running across them; the walls were wainscoted breast-high; the stairs were shallow, broad, and dark, taking up much space in the centre of the house. The gray-haired elderly man who officiated as waiter seems to have been touched from the very first by the quiet simplicity of the two ladies, and he tried to make them feel comfortable and at home in the long, low, dingy room upstairs. The high, narrow windows looked into the gloomy Row; the sisters, clinging together in the most remote window-seat (as Mr. Smith tells me he found them when he came that Saturday evening), could see nothing of motion or of change in the grim, dark houses opposite, so near and close, although the whole breadth of the Row was between." If it were only for the sake

of those startled sisters from the desolate Yorkshire moors one could wish that the Chapter coffee-house were still standing. But it is not. Nor are there any vestiges remaining of the St. Paul's or Child's.

Nor will the pilgrim fare better in the adjacent thoroughfare of Ludgate Hill. Not far down that highway could once be found the London coffee-house, which Benjamin Franklin frequented, and where that informal club for philosophical discussions of which Dr. Priestly was the chairman held its social meetings. The London continued in repute among American visitors for many years. When Charles Robert Leslie, the artist, reached London in 1811 intent on prosecuting his art studies, he tells how he stopped for a few days "at the London Coffee-house on Ludgate Hill, with Mr. Inskeep and other Americans."

Further west, in the yard of that Belle Sauvage inn described in an earlier chapter, there existed in 1730 a coffee-house known as Wills', but of which nothing gave one somewhat pathetic incident is on record. The memory of this incident is preserved among the manuscripts of the Duke of Portland in the form of two letters to the Earl of Oxford. The first letter is anonymous. It was written to the earl on February 8th, 1730, in the interests of William Oldisworth, that unfortunate miscellaneous writer whose adherence to the Stuart cause helped, along with a liking for tavern-life, to mar his career. This anonymous correspondent had learnt that Oldisworth was in a starving condition, out of clothes likewise, and labouring under many infirmities. "Though no man has deserved better of his country, yet is none more forgot." The letter also hinted at the fact that Oldisworth would not complain, nor suffer any one to do that office for him. But the writer was wise enough to enclose the address of the man in whose behalf he made so adroit an appeal, that address being Wills' coffee-house in the Belle Sauvage yard.

Edward Harley, that Earl of Oxford who preferred above all things to surround himself with poets and men of letters, and whose generosity helped to bring about his financial ruin, was not the man to ignore a letter of that kind. Some assistance was speedily on its way to Will's coffee-house, for on February 21st Oldisworth was penning an epistle which was to "wait in all humility on your Lordship to return you my best thanks for the late kind and generous favour you conferred on me." He sent the earl an ancient manuscript as token of his gratitude, explained that he was ignorant of the one who had written in his behalf, and for the rest was determined to keep his present station, low as it was, with content and resignation. The inference is that Will's coffee-house was but a lowly and inexpensive abode and hence it is not surprising that it makes so small a showing in the annals of old London.

At the western end of Fleet Street the passer-by cannot fail to be attracted by the picturesque, timbered house which faces Chancery Lane. This unique survival of the past, which has been carefully restored within recent years, has often been described as "Formerly the Palace of Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey." Another legend is that the room on the first floor was the council-chamber of the Duchy of Cornwall under Henry, the eldest son of James I. More credible is the statement that Nando's coffee-house was once kept under this roof. In the days when he was a briefless barrister, Thurlow was a frequent visitor here, attracted, it is said, as were

so many more of the legal fraternity, by the dual merits of the punch and the physical charms of the landlady's daughter. Miss Humphries was, as a punster put it, "always admired at the bar by the bar." The future Lord Chancellor had no cause to regret his patronage of Nando's. So convincingly did he one day prove his skill in argument that a stranger present bestirred himself, and successfully, to have the young advocate retained in a famous law case of the time, an appointment which led to Thurlow's becoming acquainted with the Duchess of Queensbury, with after important results.

During those stirring days when the "Wilkes and Liberty" riots caused such intense excitement in London, one worthy merchant of the city found Nando's a valuable place of refuge. Arrangements had been made for a body of merchants and tradesmen of the city to wait on George III at St. James's with a loyal address and as token of their sympathy with the position assumed by that obstinate monarch. But on the night before handbills had been scattered broadcast desiring all true and loyal subjects to meet on the following day and form a procession towards the city, taking particular care "not to interfere with the Merchants going to St. James's" The handbill had the desired effect. The cavalcade of merchants was scattered in confusion long before it reached Temple-bar, and isolated members of the party, few in number, did their best to reach the royal palace' by roundabout ways. Even so they were a sorry spectacle. For the other loyal subjects of the king had liberally bespattered them with mud. Nor was this the most disconcerting feature of their situation. Having reached the presence of their sovereign it was certainly annoying that they could not present the address which had brought them into all this trouble. But the fact was the address was missing. It had been committed to the care of a Mr. Boehm, and he was not present. As a matter of fact Mr. Boehm had fled for refuge to Nando's coffee-house, leaving the precious address under the seat of his coach. The rioters were not aware of that fact, and it seems that the document was eventually recovered, after his Majesty had been "kept waiting till past five."

There is a fitness in the fact that as Thurlow's name is linked with Nando's coffee-house so Cowper's memory is associated with the adjacent establishment known as Dick's. The poet and the lawyer had been fellow clerks in a solicitor's office, had spent their time in "giggling and making giggle" with the daughters of Cowper's uncle, and been boon friends in many ways. The future poet foretold the fame of his friend, and extorted a playful promise that when he was Lord Chancellor he would provide for his fellow clerk. The prophecy came true, but the promise was forgotten. Thurlow did not even deign to notice the poetical address of his old companion, nor did he acknowledge the receipt of his first volume of verse. "Be great," the indignant poet wrote--

"Be great, be fear'd, be envied, be admired;
To fame as lasting as the earth pretend,
But not hereafter to the name of friend!"

For Thurlow the ungrateful, Nando's was associated with his first step up the 'ladder of success; for Cowper, Dick's was the scene of an agony that he remembered to his dying day. For it was while he was at breakfast in this coffee-house that he was seized with one of his painful delusions. A letter he read in a paper he interpreted as

a satire on himself, and he threw the paper down and rushed from the room with a resolve either to find some house in which to die or some ditch where he could poison himself unseen.

Reference has already been made to the Rainbow as one of the famous taverns of Fleet Street, and also to the fact that it was a coffee-house ere it became a tavern. But somehow it was as a coffee-house that it was usually regarded. It is so described in 1679, in 1708, in 1710, and in 1736. Under the earliest date it appears as playing a part in the astounding story of Titus Gates. One of the victims of that unrivalled perjurer was Sir Philip Lloyd, whom Oates declared had "in a sort of bravery presented himself in the Rainbow coffee-house, and declared he did not believe any kind of plot against the King's person, notwithstanding what any had said to the contrary." This was sufficient to arouse the enmity of the wily Oates, who had the knight haled before the council and closely examined. Sir Philip explained that he had only said he knew of no other than a fantastic plot, but, as a contemporary letter puts it, "Oates had got ready four shrewd coffee-drinkers, then present, who swore the matter point blank." So the perjurer won again, and Sir Philip was suspended during the king's pleasure as the outcome of his Rainbow coffee-house speech.

But there is a pleasanter memory with which to bid this famous resort farewell. It is enshrined in a letter of the early eighteenth century, wishing that the recipient might, if he could find a leisure evening, drop into the Rainbow, where he would meet several friends of the writer in the habit of frequenting that house, gentlemen of great worth and whom it would be a pleasure to know.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRAND AND COVENT GARDEN.

How markedly the coffee-houses of London were differentiated from each other by the opening of the eighteenth century is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in Steele's first issue of the Tatler. After hoodwinking his readers into thinking he had a correspondent "in all parts of the known and knowing world," he informed them that it was his intention to print his news under "such dates of places" as would provide a key to the matter they were to expect. Thus, "all accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-house; poetry, under that of Will's Coffee-house; learning, under the title of the Grecian; foreign and domestic news, you shall have from Saint James's Coffee-house, and what else I have to offer on any other subject shall be dated from my own apartment."

Several days elapsed ere there was anything to report from the Grecian coffee-house, which was situated in Devereux Court, Strand, and derived its name from the fact that it was kept by a Greek named Constantine. When it does make its appearance, however, the information given under its name is strictly in keeping with the character Steele gave the house. "While other parts of the town are amused with the present actions, we generally spend the evening at

this table in inquiries into antiquity, and think anything news which gives us new knowledge." And then follow particulars of how the learned Grecians had been amusing themselves by trying to arrange the actions of the Iliad in chronological order. This task seems to have been accomplished in a friendly manner, but there was an occasion when a point of scholarship had a less placid ending. Two gentlemen, so the story goes, who were constant companions, drifted into a dispute at the Grecian one evening over the accent of a Greek word. The argument was protracted and at length grew angry. As neither could convince the other by mere words, the resolve was taken to decide the matter by swords. So the erstwhile friends stepped out into the court, and, after a few passes, one of them was run through the body, and died on the spot.

That the Grecian maintained its character as the resort of learned disputants may be inferred from the heated discussions which took place within its walls when Burke confused the public with his imitation of the style and language of Bolinbroke in his "Vindication of Natural Society." All the critics were completely deceived. And Charles Macklin in particular distinguished himself by rushing into the Grecian one evening, flourishing a copy of the pamphlet, and declaring, "Sir, this must be Harry Bolinbroke; I know him by his cloven foot!"

[Illustration: GRECIAN COFFEE-HOUSE.]

Even if it were not for that fatal duel between the two Greek scholars, there are anecdotes to show that some frequenters of the house were of an aggressive nature. There is the story, for example, of the bully who insisted upon a particular seat, but came in one evening and found it occupied by another.

"Who is that in my seat?"

"I don't know, sir," replied the waiter.

"Where is the hat I left on it?"

"He put it in the fire."

"Did he? damnation! but a fellow who would do THAT would not mind flinging me after it!" and with that he disappeared.

Men of science as well as scholars gave liberal patronage to the Grecian. It was a common thing for meetings of the Royal Society to be continued in a social way at this coffee-house, the president, Sir Isaac Newton, being frequently of the parties. Hither, too, came Professor Halley, the great astronomer, to meet his friends on his weekly visit to London from Oxford, and Sir Hans Sloane, that zealous collector of curiosities, was often to be met at the Grecian. Nor did the house wholly lack patrons of the pen, for Goldsmith, among others, used the resort quite frequently.

Goldsmith was also a faithful customer of George's coffee-house which was situated close to the Grecian. This was one of the places to which he had his letters addressed, and the house figures in one of his essays as the resort of a certain young fellow who, whenever he had occasion to "ask his friend for a guinea, used to prelude his request as if he wanted two hundred, and talked so familiarly of

large sums" that no one would have imagined him ever to be in need of small ones. It was the same young fellow at George's who, whenever he wanted credit for a new suit from his tailor, used to dress himself in laced clothes in which to give the order, for he had found that to appear shabby on such occasions defeated the purpose he had in view.

Most likely Goldsmith sketched his certain young fellow from life. There was another frequenter of the place who would have provided an original for another character study. This was that Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale, of whom the story is told that having one day changed a piece of silver in the coffee-house, and paid twopence for his cup of coffee, he was helped into his carriage and driven home, only to return a little later to call attention to the fact that he had been given a bad halfpenny in his change and demand another in exchange. All this was in keeping with the character of the man, for despite the fact that he had an income of forty thousand pounds a year, he was notorious for his miserly conduct, and would not pay even his just debts.

There was another legend connected with George's which Horace Walpole ought not to have destroyed. In telling a correspondent of the amusement with which he had been reading Shenstone's letters, he took occasion to characterize as vulgar and devoid of truth an anecdote told of his father, Lord Orford. This was the story that his father, "sitting in George's, was asked to contribute to a figure of himself that was to be beheaded by the mob. I do remember something like it," Walpole continued, "but it happened to myself. I met a mob, just after my father was put out, in Hanover-square, and drove up to it to know what was the matter. They were carrying about a figure of my sister." Walpole traded so largely in traditional stories himself that it was ungrateful of him to spoil so good a one.

On the way to Bedford Street, where Wildman's coffee-house was situated, the pilgrim will pass the site of the Somerset coffee-house, which was notable in its day from the fact that some of the letters of Junius were left here, the waiters being paid tips for taking them in. Wildman's was notorious as being the favourite headquarters of the supporters of John Wilkes, and hence the lines of Churchill:

"Each dish at Wildman's of sedition smacks;
Blasphemy may be Gospel at Almacks.
Peace, good Discretion, peace,--thy fears are vain;
Ne'er will I herd with Wildman's factious train."

Among the notable coffee-houses of Covent Garden were the Bedford, King's, Rawthmell's and Tom's. The first was situated under the Piazza, and could count among its patrons Fielding, Pope, Sheridan, Churchill, Garrick, Foote, Quinn, Collins, Horace Walpole and others. Its characters, according to the Connoisseur, 'afforded a greater variety of nearly the same type as those to be found at George's. It was, this authority asserts, crowded every night with men of parts. Almost every one to be met there was a polite scholar and a wit. "Jokes and bon mots are echoed from box to box; every branch of literature is critically examined, and the merit of every production of the press, or performance at the theatres,

weighed and determined. This school (to which. I am myself indebted for a great part of my education, and in which, though unworthy, I am now arrived at the honour of being a public lecturer) has bred up many authors, to the amazing entertainment and instruction of their readers."

But the Bedford coffee-house has a more sensational association. It was here, according to Horace Walpole, that James Hackman spent his last few hours of freedom ere he murdered Martha Ray as she was leaving Covent Garden theatre on the night of April 17th, 1779. No tragedy of that period caused so great a sensation. Miss Ray had for some years been the mistress of the Earl of Sandwich, at whose house Hackman first met and fell in love with her. There are good reasons for believing that his love was returned for a time, but that afterwards Miss Ray determined to continue in her irregular relation with the nobleman. On learning that his suit was wholly hopeless, Hackman conceived the plan which had so fatal an ending. The question as to whether the fact that he provided himself with two pistols was proof that he intended to take his own life as well as that of Miss Ray was the theme of a warm discussion between Dr. Johnson and his friend Beauclerk, the latter 'arguing that it was not, and the former maintaining with equal confidence that it was.

King's coffee-house was nothing more than a humble shed, an early representative of the peripatetic coffee-stall which is still a common sight of London streets in the early morning. Kept by a Thomas King who absconded from Eton because he feared that his fellowship would be denied him, it was the resort of every rake according to Fielding, and, in the phrase of another, was "well known to all gentlemen to whom beds are unknown." On the other hand Rawthmell's was an exceedingly fashionable house, and witnessed the founding of the Society of Arts in 1754. It had another claim to slight distinction as being the resort of Dr. John Armstrong, the poet of the "Art of Preserving Health," and a man so generally unsociable that one acquaintance described him as having a rooted aversion against the whole human race, except a few friends, and they were dead!

Judging from a poetical allusion of 1703, Tom's coffee-house was at that time a political resort. A little later it was distinguished for its fashionable gatherings after the theatre. A traveller through England in 1722 records that at Tom's there was "playing at Picket, and the best of conversation till midnight. Here you will see blue and green ribbons and Stars sitting familiarly, and talking with the same freedom as if they had left their quality and degrees of distance at home." But the most interesting picture of this house is given by William Till. He writes: "The house in which I reside was the famous Tom's Coffee-House, memorable in the reign of Queen Anne; and for more than half a century afterwards: the room in which I conduct my business as a coin dealer is that which, in 1764, by a guinea subscription among nearly seven hundred of the nobility, foreign ministers, gentry, and geniuses of the age--was made the card-room, and place of meeting for many of the now illustrious dead, and remained so till 1768, when a voluntary subscription among its members induced Mr. Haines, the then proprietor, to take in the next door westward, as a coffee-room; and the whole floor _en_ suite was constructed into card and conversation rooms." It seems that the house took its name originally from the first landlord, a Captain Thomas West, who, driven distracted by the agony of gout,

committed suicide by throwing himself from his own windows.

Interesting, as has been seen, as are the associations which cluster round the coffee-houses of this district already mentioned, their fame is slight compared with the glory of the houses known as Will's and Button's.

Macaulay has given us a glowing picture of the wits' room on the first floor at Will's. Through the haze of tobacco smoke with which he filled the apartment we can see earls, and clergymen, and Templars, and university lads, and hack-workers. We can hear, too, the animated tones in which discussions are being carried on, discussions as to whether "Paradise Lost" should have been written in rhyme, and many another literary question of little interest in these modern days. But, after all, the eye does not seek out earls, or clergy, or the rest; nor does the ear wish to fill itself with the sound of their voices. There is but one face, but one voice at Will's in which the interest of this time is as keen as the interest of the seventeenth century. That face and voice were the face and voice of John Dryden.

Exactly in what year Dryden first chose this coffee-house as his favourite resort is unknown. He graduated at Cambridge in 1654, and is next found in London lodging with a bookseller for whom he worked as a hack-writer. By 1662 he had become a figure of some consequence in London life, and a year later his first play was acted at the King's theatre. Then, in the pages of Pepys, he is seen as the centre of that group of the wits which he was to dominate for a generation. "In Covent Garden to-night," wrote Pepys under the date February 3rd, 1664, "going to fetch home my wife, I stopped at the great Coffee-house there, where I never was before; where Dryden, the poet, I knew at Cambridge, and all the wits of the town, and Harris the player, and Mr. Hoole, of our college. And, had I had time then, or could at other times, it will be good coming hither, for there, I perceive, is very witty and pleasant discourse."

[Illustration: JOHN DRYDEN.]

With what persistence this tradition survived, the tradition of Dryden as the arbiter of literary criticism at Will's is illustrated by the story told by Dr. Johnson. When he was a young man he had a desire to write the life of Dryden, and as a first step in the gathering of his materials he applied to the 'only two persons then alive who had known him, Swinney and Cibber. But all the assistance the former could give him was to the effect that at Will's. Coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and removed to the balcony in summer; and the extent of Cibber's information was that he remembered the poet as a decent old man, judge of critical disputes at Will's. But happily a more detailed picture of Dryden as the centre of the wits at Will's has survived. On his first trip to London as a youth of seventeen, Francis Lockier, the future dean of Peterborough, although an odd-looking boy of awkward manners, thrust himself into the coffee-house that he might gaze on the celebrated men of the day. "The second time that ever I was there," Lockier said, "Mr. Dryden was speaking of his own things, as he frequently did, especially of such as had been lately published. 'If anything of mine is good,' says he, 'tis Mac Flecknoe; and I value myself the more upon it, because it is the first piece of ridicule written in

Heroics.' On hearing this, I plucked up my spirit to say, in a voice just loud enough to be heard, that 'Mac Flecknoe was a very fine poem; but that I had not imagined it to be the first that ever was writ that way.' On this, Dryden turned short upon me, as surprised at my interposing; asked how long I had been a dabbler in poetry; and added, with a smile, 'Pray, sir, what is it that you did imagine to have been writ so before?' I named Boileau's *Lutrin*, and Tassoni's *Secchia Rapita*, which I had read, and knew Dryden had borrowed some strokes from each. 'Tis true,' said Dryden, 'I had forgot them.' A little after Dryden went out, and in going spoke to me again, and desired me to come and see him next day. I was highly delighted with the invitation; went to see him accordingly, and was well acquainted with him after, as long as he lived."

As a companion to this picture in prose there is the poetic vignette which Prior and Montague inserted in their "Country Mouse and the City Mouse," written in burlesque of Dryden's "Hind and Panther."

"Then on they jogg'd; and since an hour of talk
Might cut a banter on the tedious walk,
As I remember, said the sober mouse,
I've heard much talk of the Wits' Coffee-house;
Thither, says Brindle, thou shalt go and see
Priests supping coffee, sparks and poets tea;
Here rugged frieze, there quality well drest,
These baffling the grand Senior, those the Test,
And there shrewd guesses made, and reasons given,
That human laws were never made in heaven;
But, above all, what shall oblige thy sight,
And fill thy eyeballs with a vast delight,
Is the poetic judge of sacred wit,
Who does i' th' darkness of his glory sit;
And as the moon who first receives the light,
With which she makes these nether regions bright,
So does he shine, reflecting from afar
The rays he borrowed from a better star;
For rules, which from Corneille and Rapin flow,
Admired by all the scribbling herd below,
From French tradition while he does dispense
Unerring truths, 'tis schism, a damned offence,
To question his, or trust your private sense."

Dryden appears to have visited Will's every day. His rule of life was to devote his mornings to writing at home, where he also dined, and then to spend the remainder of the day at the coffee-house, which he did not leave till late. There came a night for the poet when this regularity of habit had unpleasant consequences. A Newsletter of December 23rd, 1679, tells the story: "On Thursday night last Mr. Dryden, the poet, comeing from the coffee-house in Covent Garden, was set upon by three or four fellows, and very soarly beaten, but likewise very much cutt and wounded with a sword. It is imagined that this has happened to him because of a late satyr that is laid at his door, though he positively disowned it." The compiler of that paragraph was correct in his surmise. The hired ruffians who assaulted the solitary poet on that December night were in the pay of Lord Rochester, who had taken umbrage at a publication which, although not written by Dryden, had been printed with such a title-page as suggested that it was his work. A reward of fifty pounds was offered for the discovery of the perpetrators of this

outrage, but to no effect. Still it is some consolation to know that the cowardly Rochester immediately fell under suspicion as the author of the attack. Less reprehensible is the story told of a Mr. Finch, "an ingenious young gentleman," who, nearly a decade later, "meeting with Mr. Dryden in a coffee-house in London, publicly before all the company wished him joy of his _new_ religion. 'Sir,' said Dryden, 'you are very much mistaken; my religion is the old religion.' 'Nay,' replied the other, 'whatever it be in itself I am sure 'tis new to you, for within these three days you had no religion at all.'"

[Illustration: JOSEPH ADDISON.]

Dryden died in 1700 and for a time Will's maintained its position as the resort of the poets. Did not Steele say that all his accounts of poetry in the Tatler would appear under the name of that house? But the supremacy of Will's was slowly undermined, so that even in the Tatler the confession had soon to be made that the place was very much altered since Dryden's time. The change had been for the worse. "Where you used to see songs, epigrams, and satires in the hands of every man you met, you now have only a pack of cards; and instead of the cavils about the turn of the expression, the elegance of the style, and the like, the learned now dispute only about the truth of the game." This is all confirmed by that traveller who took notes in London in 1722, and found there was playing at Picket at Will's after the theatre.

Addison was the chief cause of this transformation. And Steele helped him. The fact is that about 1713 Addison set up coffee-house keeper himself. That is to say, he was the means of getting one Daniel Button, once servant with the Countess of Warwick, to open such an establishment in close proximity to Will's. For Addison to remove his patronage from Will's to Button's meant the transference of the allegiance of the wits of the town also, consequently it soon became known that the wits were gone from the haunt of Dryden to the new resort affected by Addison. And a close scrutiny of the pages of the Guardian will reveal how adroitly Steele aided Addison's plan. Thus, the issue of the Guardian for June 17th, 1713, was devoted to the habits of coffee-house orators, and especially to the objectionable practice so many had of seizing a button on a listener's coat and twisting it off in the course of argument. This habit, however, was more common in the city than in the West-end coffee-houses; indeed, Steele added, the company at Will's was so refined that one might argue and be argued with and not be a button the poorer. All that delightful nonsense paved the way for a letter in the next number of the Guardian, a letter purporting to come from Daniel Button of Button's coffee-house.

[Illustration: SIR RICHARD STEELE.]

"I have observed," so ran the epistle, "that this day you made mention of Will's Coffee-house, as a place where people are too polite to hold a man in discourse by the button. Everybody knows your honour frequents this house; therefore they will taken an advantage against me, and say, if my company was as civil as that at Will's, you would say so: therefore pray your honour do not be afraid of doing me justice, because people would think it may be a conceit below you on this occasion to name the name of Your humble servant, Daniel Button." And then there is this naïve postscript:

"The young poets are in the back room, and take their places as you directed."

Nor did that end the plot. A few days later Steele found another occasion to mention Button's. His plan this time was to concoct a letter from one Hercules Crabtree, who offered his services as lion-catcher to the Guardian, and incidentally mentioned that he already possessed a few trophies which, he wished to present to Button's coffee-house. This lion business paved the way for Addison's interference in the clever scheme to divert the wits from Will's. Hence that paper of the Guardian which he wound up by announcing that it was his intention to erect, as a letter-box for the receipt of contributions, a lion's head in imitation of those he had described in Venice, through which all the private intelligence of that commonwealth was said to pass.

"This head," he explained, "is to open a most wide and voracious mouth, which shall take in such letters and papers as are conveyed to me by my correspondents, it being my resolution to have a particular regard to all such matters as come to my hands through the mouth of the lion. There will be under it a box, of which the key will be kept in my own custody, to receive such papers as are dropped into it. Whatever the lion swallows I shall digest for the use of the public. This head requires some time to finish, the workman being resolved to give it several masterly touches, and to represent it as ravenous as possible. It will be set up in Button's coffee-house in Covent-garden, who is directed to shew the way to the lion's head, and to instruct young authors how to convey his works into the mouth of it with safety and secrecy."

[Illustration: LION'S HEAD AT BUTTON'S COFFEE-HOUSE.]

That lion's head was no myth. A fortnight later the leonine letter-box was actually placed in position at Button's, and, after doing service there for some years, was used by Dr. Hill when editing the Inspector. It was sold in 1804, the notice of the sale in the Annual Register stating that "The admirable gilt lion's head letter-box, which was formerly at Button's coffee-house, and in which the valuable original copy of the Guardian was received, was yesterday knocked down at the Shakespeare-tavern, Cove & Garden, to Mr. Richardson, for seventeen pounds ten shillings." It changed hands again in more recent times, and is now the property of the Duke of Bedford, who preserves it at Woburn.

For some months after the installation of the lion's head at Button's, constant references are made in the Guardian to that unique letter-box, Addison being mainly responsible for the quaint conceits which helped to keep attention on the house where it was placed. In the final number of the Guardian there is a lively letter in response to an attack on masquerading which had reached the public via the lion's head. "My present business," the epistle ran, "is with the lion; and since this savage has behaved himself so rudely, I do by these presents challenge him to meet me at the next masquerade, and desire you will give orders to Mr. Button to bring him thither, in all his terrors, where, in defence of the innocence of these midnight amusements, I intend to appear against him, in the habit of Signior Nicolimi, to try the merits of this cause by single combat."

But Addison and his lion's head and Steele were not the only notable figures to be seen at Button's. Pope was a constant visitor there, as he was reminded by Cibber in his famous letter. Those were the days when, in Cibber's phrase, the author of the "Dunciad" was remarkable for his satirical itch of provocation, when there were few upon whom he did not fall in some biting epigram. He so fell upon Ambrose Philips, who forthwith hung a rod up in Button's, and let Pope know that he would use it on him should he ever catch him under that roof. The poet took a more than ample revenge in many a stinging line of satire afterwards.

Pope was cut adrift from Button's through the controversy as to which was the better version of the Iliad, his or Tickell's. As the latter belonged to the Addisonian circle, the opinion at Button's turned in favour of his version, especially as Addison himself thought Tickell had more of Homer than Pope. This ended Pope's patronage of Button's, and, indeed, it was not long ere the glory it had known began to wane. Various causes combined to take away one and another of its leading spirits, and when the much-talked-of Daniel Button passed away in 1730 it was to a pauper's grave. Yet farewell of so famous a house should not be made with so melancholy a story. There is a brighter page in its history, which dates three years earlier. Aaron Hill had been so moved by the misfortunes of his brother poet, Richard Savage, that he had penned an appeal on his behalf and arranged for subscriptions for a volume of his poems. The subscriptions were to be left at Button's, and when Savage called there a few days later he found a sum of seventy guineas awaiting him. Hill may, as has been asserted, have been a bore of the first water, but that kindly deed may stand him in stead of genius.

CHAPTER IV.

FURTHER WEST.

Several favourite coffee-houses might once have been found in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross. One of these bore the name of the Cannon and was much frequented by John Philpot Curran, of whom it was said "there never was so honest an Irishman," and Sir Jonas Barrington, that other Irish judge who was at first intended for the army, but who, on learning that the regiment to which he might be appointed was likely to be sent to America for active service, declined the commission, and requested that it might be bestowed on "some hardier soldier." Evidently Sir Jonas desired no further acquaintance with cannon than was involved in visiting the coffee-house of that name. The legend is that he and Curran affected one particular box at the end of the room, where they might be seen almost any day.

[Illustration: BRITISH COFFEE-HOUSE.]

In the same vicinity, but close to the Thames-side, was the coffee-house kept by Alexander Man, and known as Man's. The proprietor had the distinction of being appointed "coffee, tea, and chocolate-maker" to William III, which gave him a place in the vast

army of "By Appointment" tradesmen, and resulted further in his establishment being sometimes described as the Royal Coffee-house. This resort had a third title, Old Man's Coffee-house, to distinguish it from the Young Man's, which was situated on the other side of the street.

Of greater note than any of these was the British coffee-house which stood in Cockspur Street. There is a record of its existence in 1722, and in 1759 it was presided over by the sister of Bishop Douglas, who was described as "a person of excellent manners and abilities." She was succeeded by a Mrs. Anderson, on whom the enoomium was passed that she was "a woman of uncommon talents and the most agreeable conversation." As the names of these ladies suggest, they were of Scottish birth, and hence it is not surprising to learn that their house was greatly in favour among visitors from north of the Tweed. That the Scottish peers were sometimes to be found here in great numbers is the only conclusion to be drawn from an incident recorded by Horace Walpole. There was a motion before the House of Lords for which the support of the Scots was required, and the Duke of Bedford wrote to sixteen of their number to solicit their votes, enclosing all the letters under one cover directed to the British coffee-house. It was under this roof, too, that the Scottish club called The Beeswing used to meet, one of whose members was Lord Campbell, that legal biographer who shared with most of his countrymen the ability of "getting on." The club in question consisted of about ten members, and the agreement was to meet once a month at the British coffee-house to dine and drink port wine. The other members included Spankie, Dr. Haslam, author of several works on insanity, Andrew Grant, a merchant of considerable literary acquirements, and George Gordon, known about town as "the man of wit." The conversation is described as being as good as any to be enjoyed anywhere in the London of that day, and the drinking was voted "tremendous." The last-named fact is one illustration out of many that during the latter years of their existence the coffee-houses of London did not by any means confine their liquors to the harmless beverage from which they took their name.

[Illustration: SLAUGHTER'S COFFEE-HOUSE.]

Among the earliest coffee-houses to be established in the West-end of London was that opened by Thomas Slaughter in St. Martin's Lane in 1692 and known as Slaughter's. It remained under the oversight of Mr. Slaughter until his death in 1740, and continued to enjoy a prosperous career for nearly a century longer, when the house was torn down. The bulk of its customers were artists, and the famous men numbered among them included Wilkie, Wilson, and Roubiliac. But the most pathetic figure associated with its history is that of Abraham De Moivre, that French mathematician who became the friend of Newton and Leibniz. Notwithstanding his wonderful abilities he was driven to support himself by the meagre pittance earned by teaching and by solving problems in chess at Slaughter's. In his last days sight and hearing both failed, and he finally died of somnolence, twenty hours' sleep becoming habitual with him. By the time of De Moivre's death, or shortly after, the character of the frequenters of Slaughter's underwent a change, for when Goldsmith alluded to the house in 1758 it was to make the remark that if a man were passionate "he may vent his rage among the old orators at Slaughter's Coffee-house, and damn the nation, because it keeps him from starving."

Politics and literature were the topics most under discussion at the Smyrna coffee-house which had its location on the north side of Pall Mall. It makes its appearance in an early number of the Tatler, where reference is made to "that cluster of wise heads" that might be found "sitting every evening from the left hand side of the fire, at the Smyrna, to the door." Five months later Steele entered into fuller particulars.

"This is to give notice," he wrote, "to all ingenious gentlemen in and about the cities of London and Westminster, who have a mind to be instructed in the noble sciences of music, poetry, and politics, that they repair to the Smyrna coffee-house in Pall-mall, betwixt the hours of eight and ten at night, where they may be instructed gratis, with elaborate essays, by word of mouth on all or any of the above-mentioned arts. The disciples are to prepare their bodies with three dishes of bohea, and purge their brains with two pinches of snuff. If any young student gives indication of parts, by listening attentively, or asking a pertinent question, one of the professors shall distinguish him, by taking snuff out of his box in the presence of the whole audience." And the further direction is given that "the seat of learning is now removed from the corner of the chimney on the left towards the window, to the round table in the middle of the floor over against the fire; a revolution much lamented by the porters and chairmen, who were much edified through a pane of glass that remained broken all last summer."

That Steele and Addison knew their Smyrna well may be inferred from their familiar references to the house, and there are equal proofs that Swift and Prior were often within its doors. The Journal to Stella has many references to visits from the poet and the satirist, such as, "The evening was fair, and I walked a little in the Park till Prior made me go with him to the Smyrna Coffee-house, where I sat a while, and saw four or five Irish persons, who are very handsome, genteel fellows, but I know not their names." From Prior's pen there is an allusion to be found in the manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath in a letter the poet addressed to Lord Harley from London in the winter of 1719. Prior was lying low on that visit to town, for the main purpose of his presence was medicinal. "I have only seen Brown, the surgeon," he writes, "to whom, I have made an auricular confession, and from him have received extreme unction, and applied it, which may soften the obduracy of my ear, and make it capable of receiving the impression of ten thousand lies which will be poured into it as soon as I shall take my seat at the Smyrna."

Two other figures not unknown to fame haunt the shades of the Smyrna, Beau Nash and Thomson of the "Seasons." It is Goldsmith who tells of the first that he used to idle for a day at a time in the window of the Smyrna to receive a bow from the Prince of Wales or the Duchess of Marlborough as they drove by; and of the second is it not on record that he in person took subscriptions at the Smyrna for the "Four Seasons?"

In the Cocoa-Tree Club of to-day may be found the direct representative of the most famous Tory chocolate-house of the reign of Queen Anne. It had its headquarters first in Pall Mall, but removed not long after to St. James's Street, the Mecca of clubland at the present time. Perhaps the best picture of the house and its

ways is that given by Gibbon, who in his journal for November 24th, 1762, wrote: "I dined at the Cocoa-Tree with -----, who, under a great appearance of oddity, conceals more real humour, good sense, and even knowledge, than half those who laugh at him. We went then

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