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ENGLISH INNS

THOMAS BURKE

BRITAIN IN PICTURES

ENGLISH INNS

by

Thomas Burke

The English inn is world famous. It has a character and quality that is unique. The traveller in England, no less than the Englishman himself, has his favourite village, and the atmosphere of that village is largely determined by the character of the local inn.

The earliest inns in England were the *Maisons Dieu* along the Pilgrim routes to Canterbury, Glastonbury and the ports used by those going on pilgrimage abroad—such inns as the *Star* at Alfriston and the *Angel* at Grantham. Later the inns developed for the service of ordinary travellers; then came the coaching inns, to be succeeded by a bad period when travel was diverted from the roads to the new railways, and custom left the inn for the Railway Hotel. But with the advent of motor cars and bicycles, travellers returned to the roads and rediscovered the pleasures of the English inn.

Mr. Burke brings to his subject a great deal of original and interesting information. He knows the famous inns linked with the tale of England's history, anecdotes of well-known hosts and distinguished guests; but he knows also the quality which can be found in the village inn which has no fame outside its own small locality. As Mr. Burke says, "Six hundred years separates the road-house from Chaucer's *Tabard*. Yet the atmosphere and tradition are one."

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ENGLISH INNS

THOMAS BURKE

The Society for the Study of Addiction,

4 Palace Gate,

Kensington, W.8.

BRITAIN IN PICTURES

THE BRITISH PEOPLE IN PICTURES

ENGLISH INNS

GENERAL EDITOR
W. J. TURNER

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so kindly helped in the selection of illustrations
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to all others who have generously
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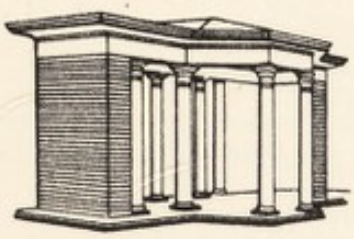
ENGLISH INNS

THOMAS BURKE

WITH
8 PLATES IN COLOUR
AND
24 ILLUSTRATIONS IN
BLACK & WHITE



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ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES IN COLOUR

THE *TRIP TO JERUSALEM*, NOTTINGHAM
The oldest Inn in England
Water colour by C. Freestone

THE *KING'S ARMS*, DORCHESTER
Water colour by Thomas Rowlandson, 1756-1827

THE *MAN WITH THE LOAD OF MISCHIEF*
Inn Sign attributed to William Hogarth, 1697-1764
Oil painting on panel

A BEDROOM AT AN INN
Coloured engraving from Eugène Lami's *Voyage en Angleterre*, 1830

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Nineteenth century coloured engraving after James Pollard

DR. SYNTAX READING HIS *TOUR* IN THE KITCHEN OF THE *DUN COW*
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BLACK AND WHITE ILLUSTRATIONS

VIGNETTES

THE *RUNNING HORSE* INN, SWINDON, 1836
Detail from the oil painting by G. Puckey

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapel House, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its inns and taverns.

James Boswell *(Life of Samuel Johnson)*

WHEN the first English road was made the first English inn was born. The date of that event no man can name, but from that day to this the inn has been an essential factor of English life and a delightful feature of the English scene—as familiar to English eyes as the church, the castle and the cottage. It serves us all, whatever our rank, and at all times it has reflected our habits, our fashions in food and furniture, and the prosperity or agitations of our times. The story of any of our older inns is therefore an epitome of the story of ourselves ; and an unbroken journal of the doings of an old inn from the day of its opening would give us a close history of its town and a fair social history of England.

The England that we cannot find in the Town Hall we can find in the inn. Not only did it afford shelter and entertainment to the traveller : it was a semi-official centre of its town. It was regularly used, and sometimes still is, as a Coroner's Court, as a Churchwardens' Court, as a Court for the election of borough officers, and even Quarter Sessions have been, as late as mid-Victorian times, held at the inn. The rate-books of many a town show that the Councillors preferred the local inn to the bleak Town Hall for their meetings, and that the debates were carried on as a literal symposium ; three or four pounds for wine is a frequent entry. The election of borough officers was almost always held at the inn, and was always followed by a dinner debited against the town's rates. Distinguished visitors were entertained by the Mayor and Council at the

local inn; election committees made it their headquarters; and the Mayor used it as a second Parlour for meeting indignant ratepayers.

Of our very earliest inns we know nothing. The story of those British, Roman and Saxon inns is buried with their fragments. Not until the fourteenth century do we begin to get, in picture and word, a stray glimpse or two of what the inn then was and the nature of its life. Then we perceive, from the illuminations of the Luttrell Psalter and similar MSS. of the time, and from Langland's *Vision concerning Piers the Plowman*, that the peculiar qualities which we find and enjoy in our inns of to-day were even at that time a part of the spirit and substance of the inn.

The English inn has developed from the style it first took; a replica of the English home of each period, charged with English traits and their attendant defects. In the centuries before the railway, every man who travelled twenty miles from his home had need of its services and amenities, and it was to the innkeeper's interest to provide these in as good measure as or better than those of the traveller's own house. Mostly he did, and that is why to-day the old inn is often the noblest building of its town or district, and, in many a town, the only feature worth travelling to see.

By their lifelong aim to keep up with the times, our old inns now afford examples of the architecture of many centuries. In them we see the ages pressing upon each other in the form of relics of the loving craft of the days when men were proud to use their hands—thirteenth-century stonework; a fourteenth-century king-post; a stately staircase or Tudor panelling; elaborate ironwork; carved ceilings; an Oriel window; a Tompion clock; a decorated fireplace and overmantel; a musicians' gallery—as fine, in each example, as any to be found in the great private mansions. The mere exterior of some of them lends poetry to the street in which they stand—as the *Angel* at Grantham; the *Talbot* at Oundle; the *Flying Horse* at Nottingham; the *Lygon Arms* at Broadway; the *Boar's Head* at Middleton; the *King's Arms* at Dorchester; the *George* at Southwark; the *King's Head* at Shrewsbury. They shine like jewels of old wood or stone, sometimes set in a cluster of harmonious companions, sometimes solitary in a village, and sometimes—such is the English way—given a setting of utilitarian shops and stores.

In their very signs our inns echo the events of our national story and make themselves part of the English pageant. All ranks of English life are celebrated, and many of our occupations, sports, legends, and heroes. In the days when few people could read, the sign was necessary to trade, and shops proclaimed their business by a model of what they had to sell or by a picture of some associated crest or badge. The earliest taverns displayed the sign of the Bush (a bundle of boughs and leaves) a custom adopted from the Romans who used this sign for their *tabernae*; and the earliest inns displayed the sign of the reigning king or of the lord of their particular manor, or some figure from his heraldic shield.

By courtesy of the Artist

THE *TRIP TO JERUSALEM*, NOTTINGHAM

The oldest Inn in England
Water colour by C. Freestone

By courtesy of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

THE *KING'S ARMS,* DORCHESTER
Water colour by Thomas Rowlandson, 1756-1827

Thus we have the *White Horse*—originally the Saxon banner and later the badge of the house of Hanover; the *Sun*—the badge of Richard Cœur de Lion; the *White Hart*—the badge of Richard II; the *Boar*—the badge of Richard III; the *Red Lion*—John of Gaunt; the *Rose*—the Tudors; the *Feathers*—the Black Prince; the *Bear*—the house of Warwick.

Our mythology and folk-lore are recorded in the *George & Dragon*, the *Griffin*, the *Dick Whittington*, the *King & Tinker*, the *Robin Hood*, the *Mother Red Cap*, the *Miller of Mansfield*, the *Mad Tom*, the *Cat & Fiddle*. The Crusades are commemorated in the *Saracen's Head*, the *Lamb & Flag*, and the *Trip to Jerusalem*. From heraldry we have the *Chequers*—the field of a coat-of-arms; the *Unicorn* and the *Tabard*. Our sports are celebrated in the *Falcon*, the *Sparrow-hawk*, the *Fox & Hounds*, the *Talbot*, the *Dog & Duck*, the *Maypole*, the *Pheasant*, the *Compleat Angler*, the *Cricketers*.

Our occupations are signified sometimes under their own names, as the *Weavers' Arms*, the *Saddlers' Arms*, and so on, and sometimes under the crests of their Guilds: the *Dolphin*—the crest of the Watermen; the *Three Compasses*—Carpenters; the *Wheatsheaf*—Bakers; the *Three Horseshoes*—Farriers. In the past a particular inn would be chosen as the meeting-place of men of a particular occupation, and it would become the headquarters in each town of that occupation. In its rooms men were engaged, wages were paid, grievances were heard, and subscriptions for sick members were opened. So, in towns throughout the country, we find numbers of inns and taverns of the signs just named; while for the rural occupations we have the *Pack Horse*, the *Woolpack*, the *Jolly Waggoner*, the *Jolly Farmer*, the *Hay Wain*, the *Row Barge*, the *Green Man* (forest ranger or game-keeper), the *Coach & Horses*, the *Woodman*, the *Horse & Groom*.

Our monarchs are celebrated in the *King's Arms*, *King's Head*, *Queen's Head*, *Crown & Sceptre*, the *Garter*, the *Royal Oak*, the *Three Crowns*, the *George* and the *Albert*. Army and Navy are celebrated in the *Grenadier*, the *Golden Hind*, the *Blenheim*, the *Trafalgar*, the *Lord Nelson*, the *Hero of Waterloo*, the *Alma*, the *Rodney*; prominent families in the many *Russell*, *Grosvenor*, *Howard* and *Dorset Arms*; and even our food and drink are remembered in the *Haunch of Venison*, the *Round of Beef*, the *Cheshire Cheese*, the *Rum Puncheon* and the *Black Jack*.

When, with the spread of learning, and the naming and numbering of streets, the sign was no longer necessary, it was generally discarded. The inn alone retained this form of identification. It has never effaced itself in an impersonal street number, and innkeepers have always jealously guarded their right to a particular sign, and have always given much thought and fancy to their signboards and supports, and made them familiar and welcome features of the highways and main streets.

THE oldest of our still-existing inns are those which originally were Pilgrims' inns or Maisons Dieu. In the early days nobody travelled for pleasure or for the delight of looking upon rural scenery. Only serious temporal or spiritual business took them out. The great majority never left their home-town in a lifetime, and those of the ordinary people who did make a journey made only a rare pilgrimage to the shrine of some saint. The regular travellers—the chapmen, packhorse men, messengers and vagrants—were served by the ale-stakes and the roadside inns. The pilgrims were served by hostels supported by the Church, where the very poor were given hospitality for two nights without charge. Those hostels mostly stood in the precincts of the abbey or cathedral, or just outside the gates of the town, where shelter of some sort was necessary, since at nightfall the gates were irrevocably shut till dawn. Of this class of still-existing inn are the *George*, Glastonbury; the *Falstaff*, Canterbury; the *Star*, Alfriston; the *New Inn*, Gloucester; the *Angel*, Grantham; the *George*, Norton St. Philip; the *Pilgrim's Rest*, Battle; and the *Bell*, Tewkesbury.

The accommodation they offered was lenten in its simplicity. The floors were of stone or earth, strewn with rushes, and the bedroom was a room common to both sexes, fitted with a number of pallets. Even in the regular inns of the fourteenth century, where charges were made, the accommodation was not much better, and there was no fixed arrangement for meals. Whatever was needed was specially prepared and cooked. Each guest brought or purchased his own food, and gave his own directions for its dressing. In the better inns of the larger towns the host sometimes kept a table, and guests had the choice of taking their meal with him or of ordering to their own fancy and dining in their own rooms. Chaucer, in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, shows us the group of pilgrims supping at the host's table, and gives us a picture of the host which is a picture of any good innkeeper of to-day.

The fifteenth century saw an increase of travel and an increase in the number and quality of inns. Some of the most gracious inns of to-day owe their graciousness to the portions that are of that period or earlier. Among them are the *Luttrell Arms*, Dunster; the *Swan*, Minster Lovel; the *Lion*, Buckden; the *Maid's Head*, Norwich; the *King's Head*, Shrewsbury; the *Bell*, Thetford; the *King's Head*, Aylesbury; the *Bull*, *Sittingbourne*; the *Chequers*, Tonbridge; and the *George*, Salisbury. Those of the sixteenth century showed still further improvements in their appointments and conduct. The only London example still to be seen of a galleried inn of this period is the *George*, Southwark, founded 1554. Many inns whose main structure is of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries date back, so far as their sites and foundations, to even earlier times, though not all of them were originally built as inns. Roman paving has been found at the *Red Lion*, Colchester, and in one or two other inns

A TAVERNER
Woodcut from Caxton's *The Game of Chesse*, c. 1474

the opening of bricked-up portions of the cellar has revealed Norman crypts. Of the inns of early foundation which have been from time to time restored or even rebuilt are the *Bell*, Finedon (1042); the *Ostrich*, Colnbrook (1106); the *Angel*, Blyth, Nottinghamshire (1270); the *George & Dragon*, Speldhurst (1270); the *Crown*, Chiddingfold (1383); the *Red Lion*, Colchester (1470).

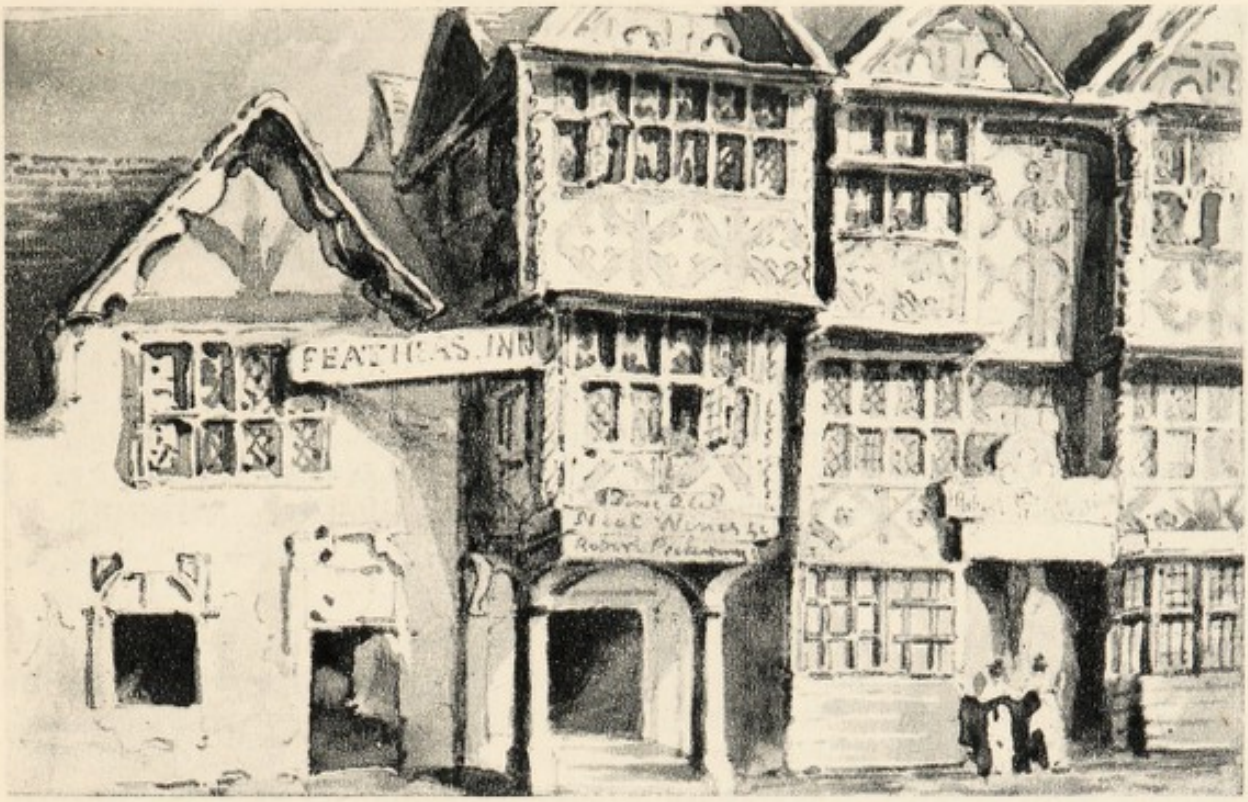
Beautiful houses they are, and deserving of all that William Harrison said of them in his *Description of England*, a work of the late sixteenth century. He speaks of the "great and sumptuous" inns of the highway towns, capable of entertaining two or three hundred people and their horses at one time; of the excellent furniture; of the competition among innkeepers to outdo each other in splendour, and of the comeliness of their houses. A little later, Fynes Moryson, in his *Itinerary*, was equally lavish of praise:

> The world affords not such inns as England hath, either for good and cheap entertainment after the guests' own pleasure, or for humble attendance on passengers, yea, even in very poor villages . . . As soon as a passenger comes to an inn, the servants run to him . . . Then the Host or Hostess visits him, and if he will eat with the Host or at a common table with others, his meal will cost him sixpence, or in some places but fourpence ; but if he will eat in his chamber, he commands what meat he will, according to his appetite . . . While he eats, if he have company especially, he shall be offered musick, which he may freely take or refuse . . . it is the custom, and no way disgraceful, to set up part of supper for breakfast . . .
>
> There is no place in the world where passengers may so freely command as in the English inns, and are attended for themselves and their horses as well as if they were at home, and perhaps better, each servant being ready at call, in hope of a small reward in the morning. Neither did I ever see inns so well furnished with household stuff.

By the end of the sixteenth century, carpets had been introduced and the walls of the best rooms were hung with tapestry or embossed leather. The host kept a generous table, and the food, drawn largely from local woods and rivers, was more various and particular than the standardised meals of the inns of our own time. If the kitchens of those inns were without some of the imported foods that we know, they used many that we have forgotten or never heard of. The Roast Beef of Old England was a more prominent dish of the eighteenth century than of the sixteenth or seventeenth, and the dishes most in favour at the Tudor and Stuart inns were—brawn, neat's tongue, capon, goose, swan, venison, kid, hare, plover, snipe, larks, capon, boar, sturgeon, crayfish, carp, pike, trout, elvers, lampreys, pigeon-pie, rook-pie ; and for sweets—warden-pie, olive-pie, saffron cake, gingerbread, marchpane (an almond paste), custard, medlars, citrons, nectarines. The drinks were wines of Gascony, Orleans and the Rhine, and sherris (sack), malmsey, muscadine and beer. The cooking was varied, according to the locality, by the use of local recipes.

The seventeenth century, which brought the coach, brought a still further increase in the number of inns, and many inns which to-day are historic treasures then opened their doors for the first time. The best of these were originally the private mansions of wealthy merchants of the time—as the *Feathers*, Ludlow ; the *Lygon Arms*, Broadway ; the *White Hart*, Scole, Norfolk ; the *Haycock*, Wansford ; the *Talbot*, Oundle ; the *Ship*, Mere ; the *Peacock*, Rowsley ; the *Dolphin*, Norwich ; the *Middle House*, Mayfield ; the *Crown*, Uxbridge ; and the *Duke's Head*, King's Lynn.

William Harrison, in his remarks on the inns of his time, commented on the large sums spent by innkeepers on their signs. He did not live to see the sign of one of these seventeenth-century inns—the *White Hart* at Scole. That magnificent carved sign, one of the wonders of Norfolk, straddled



THE *FEATHERS*, LUDLOW
Early nineteenth century water colour by George Shepherd

the roadway and consisted of twenty-five life-size figures classic and mythological. It cost over £1,000—a fantastic sum in seventeenth-century money—and was described by Sir Thomas Browne as the noblest sign-post in England. It is known to-day only by old prints. In the early nineteenth century it was taken down and its figures scattered, and nobody knows what became of them.

But we may still see a few signs of that period, or at least the beautiful iron-work of their supports, at the *Bell*, Stilton; the *Three Swans*, Market Harborough; the *Falstaff*, Canterbury; and the *Bull*, Redbourn; and wrought-ironwork of a later date may be seen in the signs of the *Swan*, Knowle; the *Swan*, Charing; the *Ship*, Mere; the *Cock*, Hadleigh; and the *Angel*, Woolhampton.

As the seventeenth-century inn shows us the best domestic building of its time, so does the eighteenth. Satisfying examples of the square box of deep-red brick and white window-frames are the *George*, Axminster; the *Lion*, Shrewsbury; the *Crown*, Bawtry; the *White Horse*, Ipswich; the *George*, Stamford; the *Red Lion*, High Wycombe; the *Bull*, Dartford. Some of these are of an earlier date. Since the inn throughout its life has constantly re-constructed itself to keep up with the times, many old inns at that time modernised themselves by putting on a Georgian apron.

Sometimes this re-construction has been done without need or reason and with unhappy results. In some of our old inns nineteenth-century wall-paper has been found covering old linen-fold panelling; stucco covering sixteenth-century half-timbering; false whitewashed ceilings covering seventeenth-century plaster-moulding. In recent years we have seen many an eighteenth-century inn or tavern pulled down by its brewer-owners and rebuilt not, (which would be fitting) to designs of to-day but to a trumpery self-evident fake of Ye Olde Tudor. But our genuine old inns, like old manor houses, have something of all periods. Each generation has added a wing here or a floor there, so that often you find a nineteenth-century façade, eighteenth-century bedrooms, a seventeenth-century musicians' gallery, a sixteenth-century yard and outhouses, a fourteenth-century cellar, and a twentieth-century kitchen and dance-floor. And the taste of to-day is not to cover up the work of the dead and gone, but to reveal it, even if it is Mid-Victorian or as recent as the nineties.

The first thirty years of the nineteenth century gave the inn its highest time of activity and growth, and its largest tribute of appreciation. Coach travel and post-chaise travel was at its peak. The inns were crowded, and were alive with a warm bustle night and day. New wings were added; stabling was enlarged; post-boys worked in relays through the twenty-four hours; the kitchen fire was never out, and bells were always ringing. George Borrow has given us a picture of an inn typical of the period:

> The inn of which I had become an inhabitant was a place of infinite life and bustle. Travellers of all descriptions, from all the cardinal points, were continually stopping at it; and to attend to their wants, and minister to their convenience, an army of servants, of one description or other, was kept; waiters, chambermaids, grooms, postillions, shoe-blacks, cooks, scullions, and what not, for there was a barber and hair-dresser who had been at Paris, and talked French with a cockney accent . . . Jacks creaked in the kitchens turning round spits, on which large joints of meat piped and smoked before great big fires. There was running up and down stairs, and along galleries, slamming of doors, cries of "Coming, sir" and "Please to step this way, ma'am" during eighteen hours of the four-and-twenty. Truly a very great place for life and bustle was this inn. And often in after life, when lonely and melancholy, I have called up the time I spent there, and never failed to become cheerful from the recollection.

Increase of business brought new customs. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the inn had had no common dining-room. Each party dined in a private room, distinguished not by a colourless number but by some fanciful name—the Rose, the Sun, the Fleur-de-Lys. The poorer travellers dined in the kitchen. But with the turn of the century, the Tudor and Stuart custom of a common table was revived for the coach-breakfast and the coach-dinner. Resident guests or those travelling by their own post-chaises, still dined in private, but the ordinary traveller took his place at the big dining-room or coffee-room table, and

THE *SUN* PUBLIC HOUSE
Water colour after William Hogarth, 1697-1764

dined on the dishes of the day. The modern custom of one common dining-room set with separate tables did not come into use till Mid-Victorian times.

Another new custom introduced in that Corinthian hey-day of the inn was a tiresome custom which will never, it seems, become obsolete—the custom of the Tip.

But just when the main-road inn was enjoying such business as it had never before known, and when new inns were being built along the new coach-routes, disaster arrived and all the bustle was stilled, and the bright lights extinguished, and the warm rooms occupied by chill. The railway came and brought with it, for hundreds of noble inns, ruin. It made its own road. It touched many towns off the coaching routes, and ignored many of the then-prosperous highway-towns. The realist inn-keepers closed their doors and sold up. The hope-against-hopers lingered on and saw their business dwindle and their rooms and stables year by year moulder away. As, in the seventeenth century, to meet the demand for accommodation, many private mansions became inns, so, a hundred years ago, with the withdrawal of the demand, many of the famous Georgian inns became private residences or farm-houses.

In their place arrived something that was quite out of the tradition and that, even with the popular passion of the time for innovation, never succeeded in winning the affection won by the inn. It had all the faults of the old inn and none of its graces. It was called the Railway Hotel, and it sprang up outside every important railway-station. Sprang up is right, since from contemporary accounts it seems to have been hastily built and to have impressed everybody with a sense of the new and raw and bleak. It did not have a long life. It was soon displaced in its turn by the great, solid, ugly but comfortable modern inn or hotel in the centre of the town.

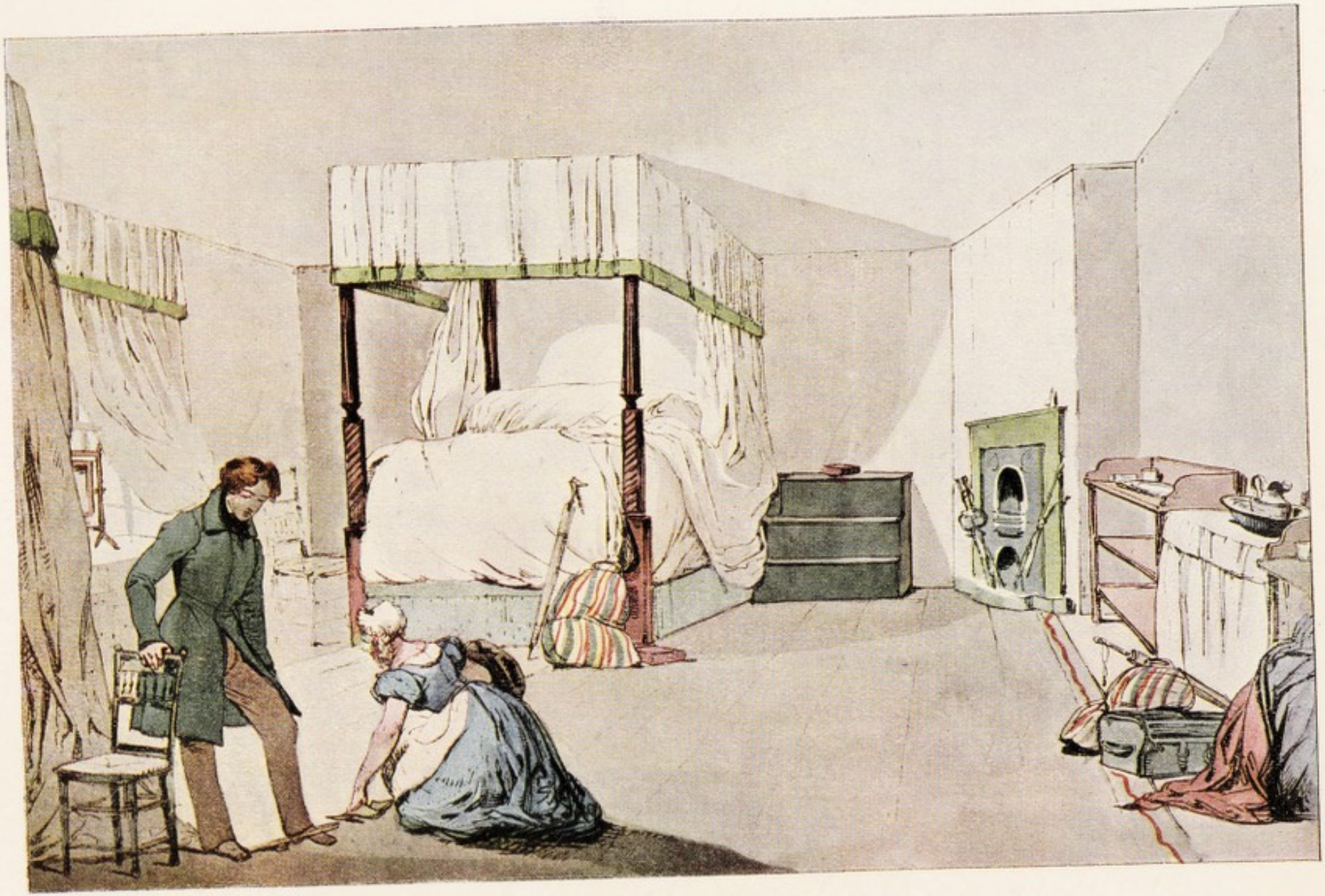
As the inn faded from the English scene—it was believed, at that time, for ever—so began a series of laments for it, the most heartfelt coming from those who, while it was there, had been most critical of it. For the new hotel they had no welcome ; they complained that it offered all luxuries except comfort. Their thoughts lingered still with the old abused inn, and they wrote verse and prose charged with pathos to its memory. The old inn was dead, and would never be seen again. Everything was rush and turmoil, and the times were out of joint. The prophets were of course wrong, but they were only doing what every generation does.

The decay of the Good Old Inn is being lamented even in our own time, and still the inn goes on getting older and older and more and more modern, and winning the appreciation of all except those who must always hark back for their pleasures. Here is one of the many wails of the railway age :

By courtesy of Mrs. Glossop

THE MAN WITH THE LOAD OF MISCHIEF

Inn Sign attributed to William Hogarth, 1697-1764. Oil painting on panel



A BEDROOM AT AN INN

Coloured engraving from Eugène Lami's *Voyage en Angleterre*, 1830

> The old, legitimate, delightful idea of an Inn is becoming obsolete ; like so many other traditional blessings, it has been sacrificed to the genius of locomotion . . . The rapidity with which distance is consumed obviates the need that so long existed of byway retreats and halting-places . . . The rural alehouse and picturesque hostel now exist chiefly in the domain of memory ; crowds, haste and ostentation triumph here over privacy and rational enjoyment . . . Old Walton would discover but few of the secluded inns that refreshed him on his piscatorial excursions ; the ancient ballads on the wall have given place to French paper ; the scent of lavender no longer makes the linen fragrant ; instead of the crackle of the open wood-fire, we have the dingy coal-smoke and exhalations of a stove . . . Not only these material details, but the social character of the inn is sadly changed. Few hosts can find time to gossip . . . Jollity, freedom and comfort are no longer inevitably associated with the name ; the world has become a vast procession that scorns to linger on its route and has almost forgotten how to enjoy.

But the old inns were not dead, nor the habit of leisurely lingering in them ; they were only in a long sleep, and towards the end of the century they awoke. The cycle and the car re-opened the road, and the inn was re-born, and with it all those pleasures that belong to it. Some of the private mansions which, centuries back, had become inns and, with the decay of the road, had reverted to privacy, made one more change and again became inns. With the re-discovery of the joy of the open road, the roads became so populous that the old inns were too few, and with the twentieth century came the guest-house, the private hotel, the light-refreshment cottage with a whimsical name, and eventually, alongside the inns which began in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the American road-house set itself, bang up-to-date with palm-lounge, snack-bar, cocktail-bar, swimming-pool, dance-floor and jazz-band.

Six hundred years separates the road-house from Chaucer's *Tabard*. Yet the atmosphere and tradition are one. They and their company are linked in an unbroken line. Only the appointments are different. Each is the typical English Inn of its period.

AND for many of us, some of the pleasantest hours of our lives have been those spent at the typical English Inn. By this social institution —which, if it did not exist, we would have to invent—all the grace of those beautiful houses mentioned earlier may be enjoyed by any of us, at the cost of a pound or so, as though they were our own. Shenstone's lines are not now so apposite as they were ; the Arctic Nod of a girl-clerk is more often our reception than the Warm Welcome of a beaming Host. But once past the reception-desk all those amenities and satisfactions catalogued by Johnson are ours.

In the old inn we are in the stream of English life of this hour and of long ago ; part of a procession without end of travellers like ourselves on their daily occasions. In the room where we sleep, men, differently dressed from ourselves, were sleeping a hundred, two hundred, three hundred years ago. That room which for us is lit by electricity, was lit fifty years ago by gas, and a hundred years ago by a moderator-lamp, and before that by wax-candles, and again before that by a rush-light. The kitchen that has served us has served generation after generation. The yard that shelters our runabout has sheltered their phaetons, gigs, post-chaises and horses. The unexpected step in the passage that trips us tripped them. Where we are playing billiards or darts they played tables (backgammon) or chequers or passage or shuffle-board. They sat on that bench in the ingle-nook, worried by the times as we are, or relinquishing their worries in facetious talk and silly stories and songs. The rafters heard their loud complaints of bad service, high charges, poor food, as the cushions of the chairs hear our nervous and half-shamed mutterings on the same theme.

The old inn is no antiquarian exhibit, no frozen relic of the past. It lives in one long continuous Present. Its guests from time to time change their clothes and their ways of speech and their tastes in food, but they are one string of guests, and any landlord of the past, if he could look round the dining-room of an inn of to-day, would recognise the same types as he had known in his own days. The atmosphere of any inn that we are enjoying was made by them, as we are helping to make it for those who follow us. Its traditions have grown not from imposed law but from the oddities of its landlords and from the auras of generations of the departed.

Each of our older inns has, as I said, some special feature or relic of the past to give an extra zest to its general interest. These are not dead museum pieces ; they are beautiful old things in current use, and are retained only because they are still as useful as their modern equivalents. The *King's Head*, Aylesbury, has a perfect fifteenth-century stained-glass window lighting a noble room of the period, used as the smoking room. The *Luttrell Arms*, Dunster, has a similar window. Other beautiful old windows make part of the charm of the *George*,

INN AND POST OFFICE
Coloured engraving from Eugène Lami's *Voyage en Angleterre*, 1830

YARD OF THE *KING'S ARMS*, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON
Water colour by T. H. Shepherd

Salisbury; the *Reindeer*, Banbury; and the *Angel*, Grantham. The *Maid's Head*, Norwich, has a delightful Jacobean bar, as fresh and apt to its purpose to-day as when it was first put to use. At the *Talbot* at Oundle you go up a staircase which came from Fotheringay Castle. The inn is built of the stone from the ruins of that castle which was destroyed in the early seventeenth century. The cellars of the *Angel* at Guildford are a mediaeval crypt. At the Shrewsbury *Lion* you will find a ball-room and musicians' gallery designed by the brothers Adam, and at the *George* at Axminster a dining-room and fireplace from the same hands. At the *Beverley Arms*, in that Yorkshire town, they have a great sixteenth-century kitchen; at the *Oxenham Arms* at Zeal a Tudor gateway and Stuart fireplaces; and at the *Fox & Hounds* at Beauworth, water is pumped by the original water-wheel which served it in the long-ago.

The yard was always an important feature of the best inns; the earliest plays were given in the inn-yards of the time, and the structure of those yards, with their bedroom galleries, gave the modern theatre

its form. Interesting yards, with work of many centuries, are those of the *New Inn*, Gloucester ; the *George*, Huntingdon ; the *Eagle*, Cambridge; the *George*, Southwark ; the *Saracen's Head*, Southwell ; the *George*, Norton St. Philip ; the *Ostrich*, Colnbrook ; the *Rose & Crown*, Wisbech ; the *Shakespeare*, Stratford-on-Avon ; the *Rose*, Wokingham, and the *White Horse*, Newmarket.

Ancient doorways and porches are those of the *Lygon Arms*, Broadway ; the *Cock*, Stony Stratford ; the *Bear's Head*, Brereton ; the *Haycock*, Wansford ; the *Keigwin Arms*, Mousehole ; the *White Bull*, Ribchester ; the *White Horse*, Ipswich ; the *Castle*, Chiddingstone ; and the *Luttrell Arms* ; among many others. Fireplaces and chimney-pieces of early periods are part of the furniture of the *White Swan*, Stratford-on-Avon ; the *George* at Odiham ; the *King's Arms*, Amesbury ; the *George*, Crawley ; the *Queen's Head*, Ludgershall ; the *White Horse*, Shere ; the *Maid's Head*, Norwich. The *Luttrell Arms* has a most elaborately moulded seventeenth-century fireplace and overmantel, and in addition to its old fireplace, the *White Swan* at Stratford has some unusual mural paintings of the sixteenth century on subjects taken from the Apochrypha. The best of panelled walls and carved ceilings are those of the *Feathers*, Ludlow, a treasure of a house inside and out ; and fine panelling also embellishes the Grantham *Angel ;* the Long Melford *Bull ;* the Tonbridge *Rose & Crown ;* Mayfield's *Middle House* and Sittingbourne's *Bull.*

As the innkeepers of the sixteenth century gave much thought and fancy to their signs, so did those of succeeding centuries, even to our own day. Many of the signs of the past were the work of recognised artists. Hogarth's sign of *The Man Loaded with Mischief* is well known. Morland is said to have done one or two, though none has been with certainty identified ; but it is certain that David Cox painted the sign of the *Royal Oak* at Bettws-y-coed. This is no longer used as a sign ; it is fixed under a glass frame over the hall fireplace. In the nineteenth century it became quite a fashion for artists to amuse themselves in this way, especially among the inns of the Thames Valley, where signs were painted by Walter Crane, Marcus Stone, G. D. Leslie and Caton Woodville. Just before the present war there was a revival of interest in this matter, and an exhibition was held of inn-signs painted by modern artists. Many of the companies owning country inns had new and impressive signs done for all their houses, and in some cases well-known artists were employed.

The most important feature of an inn, more important than its age, its architectural grace, its oak beams, its yard or even its kitchen, is its landlord. A landlord of the wrong type can ruin the most fortunate inn. The comfort of the guests is in the hands of the staff, and the members of the staff of an inn always take their note from the landlord. If he is temperamentally unsuited to innkeeping, no amount of willing service

from the staff, or of his own energy, organising ability or business acumen will bring him success. He must not enter it as men enter other businesses—purely for profit. He must enter it as a vocation, because he loves it and has pride in it and in his house and its story.

Innkeeping, from its very beginning, was recognised as something more than a mere trade. It was seen as an honourable calling, and the good innkeeper was expected to have the grace of the good private host, to be not a shopkeeper but a householder entertaining, if not angels unawares, at least honest fellow-creatures in need of pleasant treatment as well as sustenance and shelter. The first innkeeper sketched for us is the host of the Southwark *Tabard*. Chaucer's *Tabard*, which was to be seen, or parts of it, in Borough High Street as late as 1880, was the most noted of the many inns outside the gate of London Bridge, and its owner was the most noted of Southwark's innkeepers. Chaucer's picture was not a lively piece of fancy; it was a sketch from the life. Henry Bailly was the actual host of the *Tabard* in Chaucer's time, and, as his name implies, he was descended from a family who had been bailiffs of Southwark. He was himself at that time both bailiff and Member of Parliament for the Borough. He was, as the good innkeeper should be, and as Chaucer sketches him, a man fit to take his place in any company—"a seemly man"—"bold of his speech and wise and well taught"—"a merry man"—"a fairer burgess is there none in Chepe."

He has had many successors, and though to-day the head of an inn is too often only a salaried manager, when we do find an inn run by its resident owner we find him to be such a man as Henry Bailly. Later centuries afford many examples conforming to his pattern. An innkeeper famous in his town and all along the London-Holyhead Road was the owner of Shrewsbury's chief inn, the *Lion*. Robert Lawrence was not only a good host; he was a man of enterprise who brought much business to his town. Up to his time, the late eighteenth century, the coaches for the Irish packet had by-passed Shrewsbury and had gone to Holyhead by way of Whitchurch and Chester. By his own personal agitation in interesting local people, in getting inns opened along the Welsh road, and in starting a coach of his own to go by the shorter route, he succeeded in getting the Holyhead traffic diverted from Chester to Shrewsbury, to the great profit of his town. His services are recorded in a tablet to his memory on the wall of the church in whose yard he lies, not far from his famous inn.

An innkeeper of equal standing and consequence was the keeper of the *Swan*, at Stafford, where, according to his own story in *The Romany Rye*, George Borrow worked for a time:

> He knew his customers, and had a calm clear eye which would look through a man without seeming to do so. The accommodation of his house was of the very best description; his wines were good, his viands equally so, and his

COURTYARD OF THE *TABARD*, SOUTHWARK, LONDON
Engraving by Jackson after Prior, c. 1780

charges not immoderate ; though he very properly took care of himself. He was no vulgar innkeeper, had a host of friends, and deserved them all. During the time I lived with him, he was presented by a large assemblage of his friends and customers with a dinner at his own house, which was very costly, and at which the best of wines were sported, and after the dinner with a piece of plate estimated at fifty guineas. He received the plate, made a neat speech of thanks, and when the bill was called for, made another neat speech in which he refused to receive one farthing for the entertainment, ordering in at the same time two dozen more of the best champagne.

Many innkeepers in provincial towns were members of the local Council, sometimes Mayors or J.P.'s. Always they took a prominent part in local functions, sports, charities, and so on. As G. P. R. James said in one of his now-unread novels, speaking of the inns of the eighteenth century :

The landlords in England at that time—I mean, of course, in country towns —were very different in many respects, and of a different class from what they are at present. In the first place, they were not fine gentlemen ; in the next place, they were not discharged valets-de-chambre or butlers who, having

cheated their masters handsomely, and perhaps laid them under contribution in many ways, retire to enjoy the fat things at their ease in their native towns. Then again they were on terms of familiar intercourse with two or three classes, completely separate and distinct from each other—a sort of connecting link between them. At their door, the justice of the peace, the knight of the shire, the great man of the neighbourhood, dismounted from his horse and had his chat with mine host. There came the village lawyer . . . There sneaked in the doctor . . . There the alderman, the wealthy shopkeeper, and the small proprietor or large farmer. But besides these the inn was the resort of a lower or poorer class with whom the landlord was still upon as good terms as with the others.

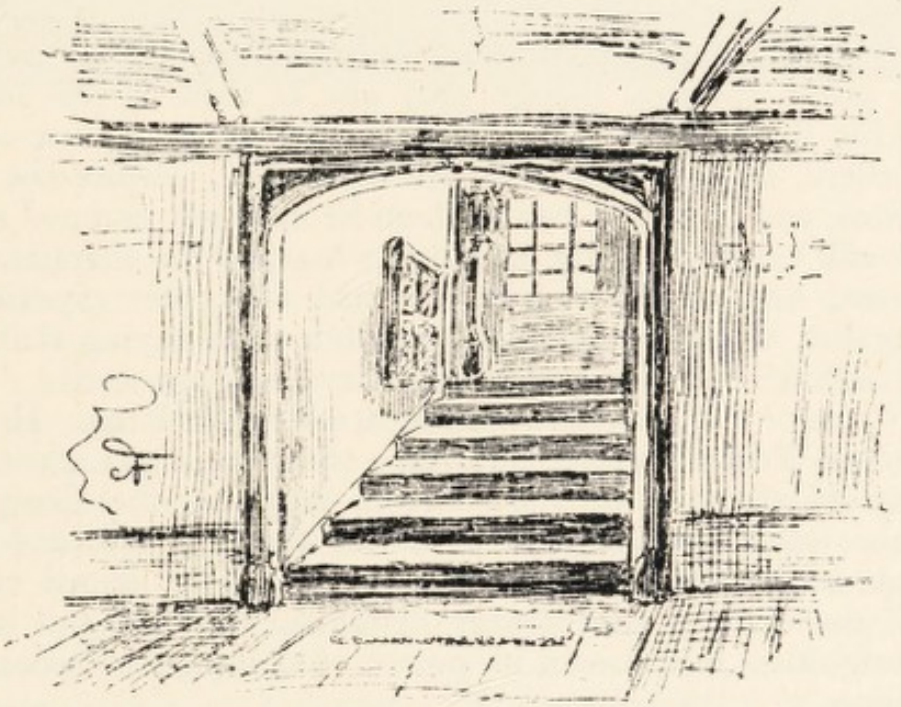
Such a man was Anthony Wilson, landlord of the Grasmere *Swan* whose epitaph was written by his friend and regular customer, Hartley Coleridge. And men of similar character were Cooper Thornhill, of the *Bell*, Stilton, who first sold to the public the famous cheeses which became known by the name of his town though they were made in Leicestershire ; Cartwright, of the *George*, Buckden ; "Young" Percival, of the *Haycock*, Wansford ; George Clark, of the *Bell*, Barnby Moor ; Peake, of the *Royal Anchor*, Liphook ; the Dennett family of the *White Hart*, East Retford ; Lawrence, of the *Bear*, Devizes ; all of whom have been recorded in nineteenth-century diaries or sketches, and are part of the story of England's inns. The last of that type of landlord was Harry Preston, of the Brighton *Albion*.

Though innkeeping closely touches domesticity, the women innkeepers were few. Fielding has given us a sketch of one of his time—the landlady of the *Bell* at Gloucester, a sister-in-law of Whitfield, the preacher : "Her person and deportment might have made a shining figure in the politest assemblies . . . To be concise, she is a very friendly, good-natured woman ; and so industrious to oblige that the guests must be of a very morose disposition who are not extremely well satisfied in her house." Later in the eighteenth century a notable figure of the road was the centenarian hostess of the *Three Swans*, Market Harborough, Mrs. Soller. Notable personages of the nineteenth century were Mrs. Nelson, who kept the *Bull* at Aldgate and ran a line of coaches ; Mrs. Mountain, of the *Saracen's Head*, Snow Hill ; and the Misses Dibble of the *Anchor*, Ripley. Of the present century there is Miss Murray, of the *George*, Southwark.

That these hosts and hostesses earned the compliments that have been paid them in Memoirs and Recollections is proved by the number of the compliments and their unanimity. Americans particularly have shown much appreciation of the English innkeeper of the nineteenth century ; it appears, from what they say, that in their own country they had nothing like him. There, it appears, the situation of host and guest was the reverse of the English custom ; the American landlord, instead of giving deference,

expected it to be given to him. He was, as one put it, not the servant of the public but its master, and there was a total contrast between the "courteous devotion" of the English innkeeper and "the nonchalance, even despotism" of his American cousin.

In recent years we have seen in England a new type of innkeeper, and running an inn has been adopted as a profession by men who have been figures of other professions. Among them are Mr. John Fothergill, formerly of the *Spread Eagle*, Thame, and later of the *Three Swans*, Market Harborough; Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis, who made the unique hotel at Port Meirion; Mr. Barry Neame, formerly of the *Hind's Head*, Bray, now of the *Golden Hind* at Hythe in the New Forest; Mr. Gordon Russell, of the *Lygon Arms*, Broadway; and Captain Fremantle, of the *Spread Eagle*, Midhurst. Like the enlightened innkeepers of the past, they are maintaining the best traditions of the inn, and giving it new life and a new store of honest principles.



INTERIOR OF THE *LYGON ARMS*, BROADWAY
Drawing from *The Antiquary*, 1887

THE inn is, and always has been, the home of Everyman, from the sovereign to his meanest subject. And in the past the sovereign was a frequent patron. Sometimes he held Court at an inn; sometimes he made it his headquarters in battle; sometimes he dined at it, and sometimes caroused in it. Elizabeth could hardly have slept in all the inns with which legend associates her name, nor would she have needed to; in all her "progresses" she landed herself and her retinue on the local lord at his charge. While she may, like her lieges, have halted here and there for refreshment, her sojourns were made in baronial halls.

But other sovereigns did in times of necessity make use of the inn. Richard III, in 1483, made the *Angel* at Grantham his headquarters, and there, in a room that may still be seen, he signed the death-warrant of Buckingham. At the *Crown*, Rochester, Henry VIII, through a peep-hole, had his first sight of Anne of Cleves, and made that rude remark about her. At the *Saracen's Head*, Southwell, Charles I lodged himself when he decided to make the best of a bad dilemma and surrender himself not to the Parliament but to the leaders of the Scotch army. There, in a room in which you yourself may sleep, he slept his last night as a free man, and in what is now the coffee-room he surrendered to the Scotch commissioners who, for a price, handed him over to the Parliamentary Army.

In the West Country a number of inns received, as a flying (and disguised) guest, his son, though only one of these is still in service as an inn. After the battle of Worcester, when the young Prince was dodging here and there, he was once or twice compelled, despite the danger, to resort to inns, and at one or two of them he narrowly escaped recognition. But at the still existing *Talbot*, at Mere, where, in the character of servant to his escort, he stopped to dine, he had a happier experience. The host, a loyalist, did not recognise him, but after saying that he looked an honest fellow, tested him with the Cavalier pass-word: "Are you a friend to Caesar?" and invited him to drink to the King. His last night in England, as Prince, before the escape to France, was spent at another loyalist inn which stood on the shore at Brighton, the *George*.

But more interesting to most of us are the links afforded by the inn with people less exalted, more like ourselves. That is one of the many charms of the inn; it is not only delightful in itself and its comforts and its antiquities, but also in its power of evoking memories and trains of association.

And almost every old inn has some association with the important or piquant figures of the past, many of whom are more warmly alive than the tangible dummies in the lounge this evening. The hall of many an inn brings a thought of Samuel Pepys—the *Anchor*, at Liphook; the *George*, at Salisbury, where he "lay in a silk bed and had a very good diet"; the *Red Lion*, at Guildford, where he had the room

TAM O'SHANTER AT THE INN
Water colour by George Cruikshank, 1792-1878

lately used by his royal master ; the *Bear* at Cambridge, "where Cromwell and his officers did begin to plot and act their mischiefs in these counties" ; the *Red Lion*, at Barnet, where he "eat some of the best cheese-cakes that ever I eat in my life" ; and the *George*, Norton St. Philip, where he and his company "dined very well, 10s."

At the *George*, Stamford, one thinks at once of Walter Scott, who regularly halted there on his journeys to and from the North. The inn at Burford Bridge brings a cluster of memories—Nelson taking his last farewell of Emma Hamilton ; Keats engaged on *Endymion* ; Stevenson plotting a romance of the road. At the *Lion*, Shrewsbury, one recalls that orchestral passage of De Quincey's *Opium Eater*, in which he describes his sleepless night in its ball-room. At the *Pheasant*, just past Lobscombe Corner on the London-Salisbury Road, pictures rise of Hazlitt drinking pots and pots of tea and writing those papers collected under the title *Winterslow*, when he was living there and the inn was known as *Winterslow Hut*.

Times recent and times long gone throw up their shining phantoms. The *Lion* of Shrewsbury throws up not only the goblinesque De Quincey,

but the equally goblinesque Paganini, who gave a recital in its ball-room ; and those makers of goblins, Dickens and H. K. Browne, who stayed there in 1858. In the same town the *Raven* brings a memory of the luckless George Farquhar, who was staying there when he began *The Recruiting Officer*, the scene of which is laid in Shrewsbury. The *Bell*, at Barnby Moor, brings a thought of Laurence Sterne, who sometimes halted there on his journeys to and from the capital where he was so agreeably flattered ; and in the garden of the *Bush* at Farnham rises the massive figure of Cobbett who, in a moving passage of the *Rural Rides*, tells us how he stood in that garden late in life, and how it brought back his childhood at Farnham and his first little garden and his blue smock frock and his mother's last words.

The *Bull* at Hoddesdon reminds us of the almost-forgotten Matthew Prior and of his halting there on that journey to Essex described in his *Down Hall ;* and the *Swan* at Grasmere evokes Scott and Wordsworth and an embarassing incident. When Scott was the guest of his frugal and austere host, they called one morning at the Swan to hire a pony, and the landlord unwittingly disclosed the fact that Scott had been regularly calling there for what he could not get at Rydal Mount—"Ye're early this morning for yere glass."

And there is scarcely an inn of the South and Midlands that does not bring to mind some pleasant or acid comment from the four volumes of the *Torrington Diaries*, discovered and published some ten years ago. The stout John Byng, who went rural-riding some thirty years before Cobbett, is a complete guide to the inns of the late eighteenth century and the characters of their owners. The *Diaries* are concerned with nothing but his tours, and he mentions every inn at which each day he breakfasted, dined, or supped and slept, and usually he quotes the bill and gives a free opinion on the food, appointments, and comfort or otherwise of his bed. He was quick to give praise to comfortable inns and good food, and outspoken in his condemnation of the opposite. Most of the inns at which he stayed on his fifteen tours are still in service, so that you will find very few places at which John Byng hasn't been before you, since, in the fifteen tours, he slept or rested at just on 350 inns.

On the whole he was dissatisfied with his inns, but De Quincey, remembering the inns of that same period, the late eighteenth century, found them altogether superior and their landlords more friendly than those of the high days of the 1820's. But the difference may be due to the fact that De Quincey was looking back from middle-age to his youth, while John Byng was setting down his verdicts hot-and-hot.

Other memories evoked by the inn are of those men and women who never lived and therefore are so much more alive than mortals. Since the appearance in literature of the *Tabard*, the *Boar's Head*, and the *Garter* at Windsor, the inn has been a useful resource to the playwright

RECRUITING AT AN INN
Oil painting by Edmund Bristow, 1786-1876

and novelist, and almost all novelists in one or other of their books have used it. At the *Upper Flask*, Hampstead, we think of Clarissa Harlowe ; at the *Bell* at Gloucester we meet Tom Jones and Partridge ; and the hall of the *Lion* at Upton-on-Severn is crowded with a gathering of the company of that novel of which Jones is the rather wooden hero—Jones himself, Partridge, the distressed female rescued by Jones, Sophia Western, Mrs. Abigail, Squire Western and half a dozen others.

At the *Bell* at Tewkesbury, one sees that rather painful prig, John Halifax, and directly you enter the *George* at Knutsford you are with the ladies of *Cranford*, arriving for that entertainment which they witnessed in its Assembly Room. At the *Rutland Arms* at Newmarket you meet the barbarian John Jorrocks ; at the *Red Lion*, Clovelly, up comes Salvation Yeo ; and at the *King's Arms*, Dorchester, you see that banquet in progress, with the Mayor of Casterbridge in the chair. At the *King's Head*, Chigwell, (the '*Maypole*' of *Barnaby Rudge*) John Willett is still dozing in the chimney corner ; at the *Pomfret Arms*, Towcester, the

battle between the rival editors of Eatanswill is still going on; and in half a dozen other inns—the *White Horse*, Ipswich; the *Angel*, Bury St. Edmund's; the *Leather Bottle*, Cobham; the *Bull*, Rochester; the *Bell*, Berkeley Heath, and the *Hop Pole*, Tewkesbury—Pickwick and his friends are still turning life upside down.

So firm a feature of our life is the inn, and so marked its Englishness, that there is scarcely one English writer or foreign visitor who has not paid tribute to it. Chaucer, Harrison and Fynes Moryson began it, and it continued through the centuries up to the specific looking-back laudation of the writers of the nineteenth century and our own times. The Tudor and Stuart dramatists, Izaak Walton, Pepys, Fielding, Smollet, Johnson, Goldsmith, Lamb, De Quincey, Borrow, Hazlitt, Washington Irving, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Kingsley, Disraeli, Hawthorne, Surtees, Marryat, George Eliot, Stevenson—all have left records of their appreciation of and delight in it. Most of their eulogies are well known. Here is an affectionate picture by a little-known American writer of the middle nineteenth century, Henry Tuckerman:

> The coffee room of the best class of English inns, carpeted and curtained, the dark rich hue of the old mahogany, the ancient plate, the four-post bed, the sirloin or mutton joint, the tea, muffins, Cheshire and Stilton, the ale, the coal-fire and *The Times*, form an epitome of England; and it is only requisite to ponder well the associations and history of each of these items to arrive at what is essential in English history and character. The impassable divisions of society are shown in the difference between the "commercial" and the "coffee" room; the time-worn aspect of the furniture is eloquent of conservatism; the richness of the meats and strength of the ale explain the bone and sinew of the race; the tea is fragrant with Cowper's memory, and suggestive of East India conquests; the cheese proclaims a thrifty agriculture, the bed and draperies comfort, the coal-fire manufactures; while *The Times* is the chart of English enterprise, division of labour, wealth, self-esteem, politics, trade, court-life, "inaccessibility to ideas" and bullyism.

Yes; about a hundred years ago the English inn no doubt communicated all that, as to-day it communicates the resources and climate of our contemporary character. It always has done so, and could not do otherwise. That is why, in any locality, the inn will tell the stranger more of that locality and its temper than the Church can. Its existence depends upon its keeping the current pace, and we who are past middle-age have seen how swiftly and silently it can adjust itself to changing conditions and tastes. We have seen stables and coach-houses changed to garages. We have seen old inns, born three hundred or four hundred years ago, turn an Assembly Room into a Palm Lounge or Dance Hall. We have seen an old Powder Closet become a Telephone Booth. We have seen the old yard, where hung the hams and bacon-flitches and pheasants, roofed with glass and turned into a Cocktail Lounge, and a cellar, too

INTERIOR OF A ROADHOUSE
Oil painting by J. Pollard, 1797-1867

large for the modern capacity for wine, divided and made to yield a basement Billiard Room.

And with all those wrenchings and shovings the old place has retained its original character, and still stands as the oldest thing in its town, wearing all the centuries on its frame and yet as modern as men found it when it first opened its doors in 1623 or 1575. In that, it is like the British Constitution, which can change as often as need be and yet never be mistaken for anything but itself.

Not only have the appointments changed. All details have suffered change. Yet nothing has really disappeared. In the inns of the seventeenth century the important members of the staff were the Chamberlain, the Drawer and the Ostler. They are still in the inns of to-day as Hall Porter, Waiter and Garage Mechanic. Many of us have seen an Ostler translated in three or four weeks into Garage Mechanic. Sometimes the signs are brought into the modern stream, but it is the old iron frame that supports the new legend and device which will, in its turn, acquire a patina of age and association.

Growing old gracefully is one of the inn's many accomplishments, and the staff seems to be subject to this pleasant infection. Porters, waiters, boots and yardmen of the old inns do not dash around from one job to another. Most of us know one or two old inns where the head-waiter was a smoking-room waiter when we were boys, and where Boots of to-day is the Boots we knew forty years ago and not looking a week older. Most conservative of all are the Commercial inns. The Commercial Traveller, living at a constant strain of keeping up with the minute, seems to like to have something static and mellow as a background to his galloping pulse of modernity, and while he appreciates improvements in fixtures, he dislikes change of spirit or structure. The Grand Babylon Hotel of the twentieth century, which is almost a small town on five or six floors, has its appeal at certain times and its advantages for certain occasions, but the comely old inn gratifies both the eye and the mind, and can give all reasonable comfort to the lower senses.

To taste its full savour you should come to it on an evening of autumn or winter, when tired and chilled; not after a cooped and sedentary journey in a car but after a fairly stiff walk against the wind. At such a time the hall fire, glinting on old panels or even shabby old chairs, is a benediction, and the odours from the kitchen, and the glass and napkins of the lighted dining-room make a promise which in itself is delightful even if it is not fulfilled to your expectations. And the last half-hour in the lounge, and the last drink and chat with Boots, and the going up the old worn stairs, and absorbing the atmosphere of the old place, common and transitory incidents of travel as they are, make precious moments.

The dinner the kitchen produced for you was, however, a little different from those of the past. Lusty travellers of the lusty days of the inn's

By courtesy of Boodles, London

WEST COUNTRY MAILS AT THE GLOUCESTER COFFEE HOUSE, PICCADILLY

Nineteenth century coloured engraving after James Pollard

DR. SYNTAX READING HIS *TOUR* IN THE KITCHEN OF THE *DUN COW*

Coloured aquatint by Thomas Rowlandson

From Combe's *Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque,* 1868

THE *RIFLEMAN'S ARMS*, SWINDON
Oil painting by J. Hood

youth would have considered it a mere snack; an appetiser to the meal proper. Even seventy years back a country-inn dinner for two people, quoted in a contemporary sketch, was—a turbot of four pounds weight, two roast ducks, an apple-pie, cheese and dessert. Breakfast was cold ham and beef, Cambridge sausages, fried eggs, followed by a roast mallard. At the end of the eighteenth century an inn dinner for one person (John Byng) was—spitch-cocked eels, roast pigeons, a loin of pork, tarts, jellies, custards and cheese. The dinners of the middle eighteenth century, if not of so many dishes, were even heavier in substance, and at the end of the seventeenth century eight or nine courses was usual. In the sixteenth century the dishes were, as mentioned earlier, many and various, and supported by all kinds of side-dishes which have long disappeared from our tables. The high feeding of those times was not due to gluttony. Diversions were few, and at the end of the day's journey there was little to fill the lonely hours but eating and drinking.

But with all this high feeding the inns of the past said little about their food. It seems to have been taken for granted that there would be a generous table, and there was no need to talk, as our inns of to-day do, of "butter and cream from our own farm," or "fruit from our own orchard,"

THE *ELEPHANT AND CASTLE*, LONDON
Water colour by Thomas Rowlandson, 1756-1827

or "home-made honey and preserves." Nobody in those days expected the food to come from anywhere except the local fields. What was stressed is something of which to-day nothing is said. They stressed Good Beds —Comfortable Beds—Well-Aired Beds; and the warming-pan was always on view to re-assure those nervous travellers to whom damp sheets implied certain death. They also stressed Neat Wines, meaning wine unwatered, and Good Post-Horses, where to-day our inns stress Inspection Pit, H. & C. Basins and Gas-Fires in all bedrooms, American Bar and new Dance Floor.

Customs change as well as fashions and material appointments. It was once the custom for the host to be in a very real sense the host of a lonely traveller, to greet him on arrival, farewell him on departure, and, on a Sunday, escort him to church and dine him with the family. To-day our notion of a good host is one who leaves his guests alone, even to the point of being invisible. If the host did not personally greet his guest, it was the custom in many inns for the chambermaid to take to his room, as a welcome to the House, a complimentary glass of sherry or Madeira. Another old custom was that of giving the newly-arrived guest a Serenade by the inn's tame musician, and, on the morning of his departure, an Aubade; neither of which customs was greatly appreciated by those

ROBERT WASS, A WELL-KNOWN WAITER AT THE *RED LION*, COLCHESTER, IN 1770
Drawing by James Dunthorne

with a music sense. Pepys more than once refers to it with distaste. To-day the only serenade the guest receives is a hint from the lounge-waiter that he wants to go to bed, and he is awakened by the more agreeable means of Early Tea.

One very old custom has lately been revived. The earliest interludes and plays, in the days before theatres, were given in inn-yards, and in the eighteenth century strolling players visiting a small town usually gave their show in the Assembly Room of the chief inn ; and at the beginning of this century some of the first film-shows that country towns saw were given in the public rooms of inns. Lately, the inn has reverted to entertainment. The *Greyhound* at Croydon has as part of its premises a theatre, and just before the war there was a movement for giving Poetry Recitals in inns and public-houses. During the present war, Hours of Music with distinguished soloists have been given at the *White Horse*, Dorking, and I believe at a number of other inns up and down the country.

An old custom that might, for the public's sake, be revived is one whose lapse has caused much inconvenience and fraying of temper. Up to the end of last century a meal could be had at an inn at any hour ; the kitchen was never still. Under this century's organisation and standardisation, the dining-room operates only at fixed hours, and if you arrive late you must go without—or take your custom to one of the little arty "luncheries" which do exist to serve the traveller and which do serve a meal at any hour.

A prominent feature of all the inns of last century was the Visitors' Book. To-day, the official Register, ordained by law, has frozen out the casual and homely Visitors' Book, and one more link in the personal relations between innkeeper and traveller has been broken. Relations to-day, rather than those of Host and Guest, are those of Shop and Customer. But the inn follows the spirit of each generation, and the spirit of the inn to-day is what to-day's people have made it. They don't seem to want personal recognition and effusiveness. They only want impersonal Service. They don't want an invitation to dine with the landlord as a mark of his esteem. They only want Food. They are content to be Numbers : and most of them are.

This spirit of detachment is not really the true English spirit. It is the result of a deliberate pose, adopted long ago by a small clique from a Chesterfield pattern, and copied now by all classes. The accepted figure of the Englishman as a man of marble face and stiff back which no joy or grief can melt or bend, is pure fantasy, a piece of conscious acting. The Englishman by nature is an intensely emotional creature, as anybody knows who has had to attend a race-meeting, a football-match, the last hour of a cricket match with eight wickets down and fifty wanted to save defeat, or a Division on some hotly-contested Bill in the House. His attempts at the Strong, Silent Man are attempts only. He is not frigid.

MID-DAY REST AT THE *BELL* INN
Drawing by George Morland, 1763-1804

He is only *being* frigid. He is not unemotional. He is only consciously refraining from displaying emotion. That is why the modern face is so nervous and drawn. In the past, when English friends met, they flung their arms about each other. When they hated, they let everybody know it instead of bottling it up. When they were happy they laughed and sang. In their own or another's sorrow, they wept—and were all the better for it.

The inn itself affords evidence that the English are people of warm feelings, ardent spirit and, if not imagination, at least lively fancy. They could not, if they were the detached, frigid things they try to be, have invested their inns and taverns with such fantastic or ludicrous names, and such a farrago of legend and old wives' tales. Letting themselves go in their true current of emotion and sentiment, they found such names as the *Who'd Have Thought It?—Mrs. Grundy's Arms—The Old Friends—Magnet & Dewdrop—Darby & Joan—Horn of Plenty—Baker & Basket—Sun in Splendour—Rent Day—Mortal Man—Merry Month of May—Bel & the Dragon—Labour in Vain—Tippling Philosopher—Good Intent—Castle of Comfort—Cat & Mutton—World Turned Upside Down.*

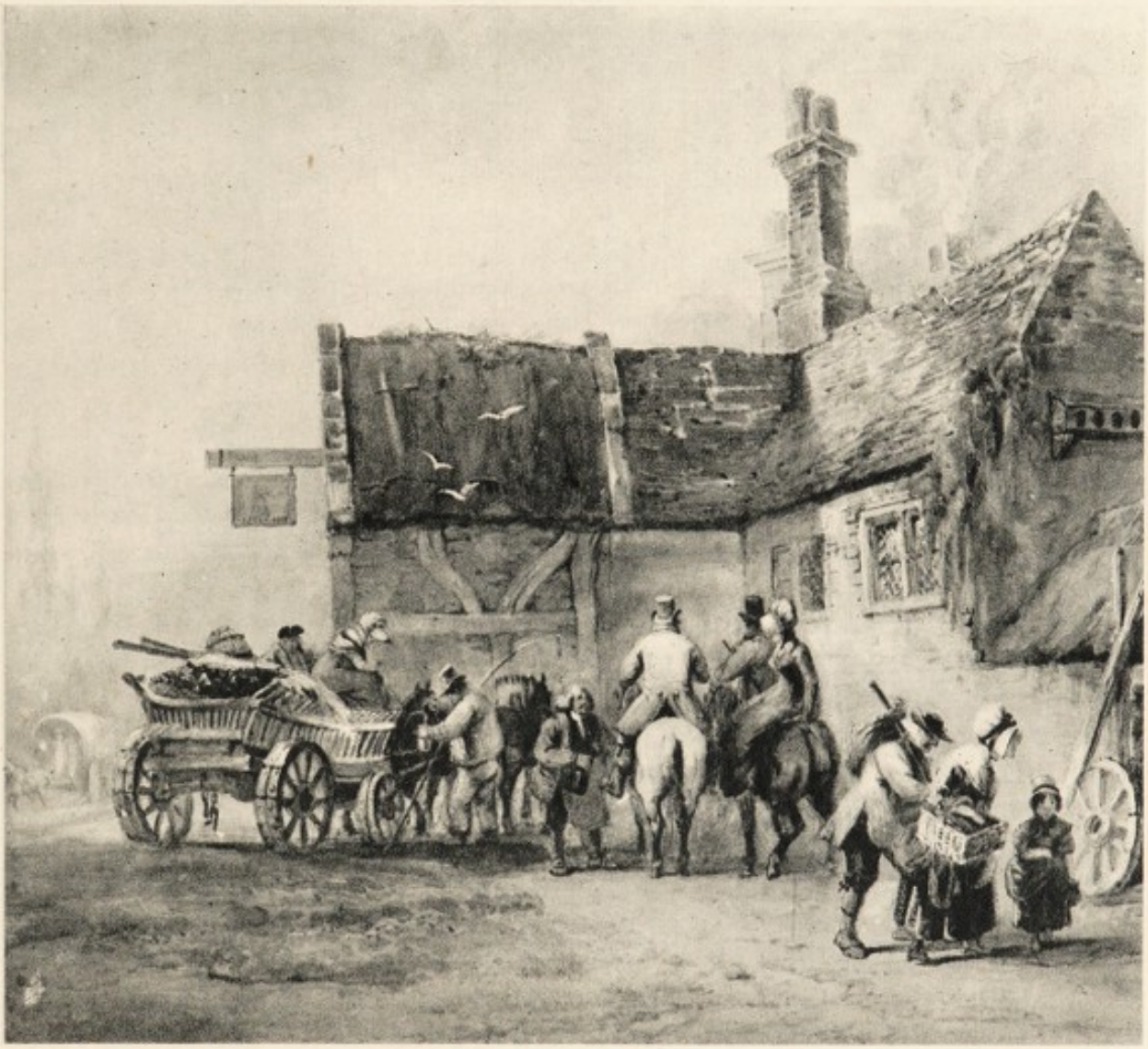
As to legends, wherever there was a lonely inn on a blasted heath, the easily excited Englishman set his fancy to work to furnish it with a story. And so we have the story of the woman traveller, benighted at a lonely inn, and passing the time before retiring by counting her money. After a while she had a feeling that she was under observation, and on looking up she saw on the opposite wall a portrait in oils. And then she saw its eyes move. And when she got up to examine it she found that the eyes of the portrait had been cut out of the canvas to make a spy-hole for the landlord. The story, as such a story should, ends on that.

Many inns have legends of the villainies of their landlords—landlords, that is, of the long past. The most grim and ghastly is the legend cherished by the *Ostrich* at Colnbrook; the legend of the landlord whose dirty deeds are presented in Deloney's novelette—*Thomas of Reading*. In the days before paper-money, travellers on business were compelled to carry their money in specie. For such travellers, if they were alone, the landlord of the *Ostrich* had a special bedroom. The bed was fixed on a trap-door which, when the traveller was asleep, dropped and shot him into the cellar where a cauldron of boiling water was waiting.

And there is a legend of an adventure at an inn on the Great North Road in the early nineteenth century; an adventure with the Hand of Glory. The Hand of Glory was a hand cut from the body of a gibbeted murderer, and it was credited with occult powers, and was used by burglars as a help and protection in their business. A lighted candle fixed within the bones of that hand had the power of casting sound sleep upon all the members of the house in which it was used. Once it was extinguished, its power was gone and the household would awake, but it could be extinguished by one thing only—milk. The story concerns two thieves, who had arrived at the inn as guests. A chambermaid happened to overhear their talk, and saw them getting to work, with a light fixed in the Hand of Glory, to plunder the other soundly-sleeping guests. As she was not asleep at the time they lit it, it had no power over her, and she was able to keep awake, and, by a gallant and hair-raising dash to the dairy, able to foil them:

Dick Turpin has furnished legends to numbers of inns, most of which are right away from the roads he worked, and the nickname of a famous highwayman of the seventeenth century, *The Golden Farmer*, has been adopted as the sign of an inn on the Exeter Road which was once his home. Many a coastal inn is proud of the legend that its eighteenth-century landlord was in league with smugglers, and present owners make a point of showing you the Smugglers' Hole in the cellar or attic. Underground passages leading nowhere are said to have connected with castles of dark story. Priests' holes are discovered, and a priest of the period has to be found on whom a thrilling story of the hole can be fastened. Covered-in wells, found on the premises of some inns, are furnished with a story

by the local romancer; and bones found when removing walls or excavating foundations are always given a Mistletoe Bough story. Other legends have been created by way of explanation of an inn's ridiculous name—probably from a morbid shame that anybody of the innkeeping profession could be inspired by mad poesy. So valuable indeed are legends to an inn's business, and the Englishman at heart is so much of a romantic, that two well-known inns have even found it worth their while to recall and perpetuate and advertise all the libellous things that Dickens said about them and their service.



A Wayside Inn
Water colour by Luke Clennell, 1781-1840

THE *GEORGE* INN, GLASTONBURY
Water colour by John Buckler, 1770-1851

IN the past a sharp distinction was drawn between the tavern and the inn; they were controlled by laws peculiar to each other, and held a different form of license. The tavern was restricted to providing casual refreshment, both food and drink, and was usually kept by a vintner. The inn was restricted to the receipt and entertainment of travellers by day and night. Neither was allowed to overlap the other. The tavern was forbidden to harbour guests; the inn was forbidden to allow itself to be used for "tippling" or as a place of idle resort. The tavern had to close at a certain hour; the inn had to be open at all hours.

Inn and tavern to-day still hold different licenses, but their functions are more or less common. Most inns to-day, as part of their ordinary business, give the service given by the taverns of the past, and many taverns or public-houses give the service once restricted to the inn. You can now stop at any inn for a casual drink or a meal, and if a tavern or public-house cares to let you have a room for the night it may do so. The inn, so long as it has room, is *bound* to give you shelter—and at any hour.

The very old tavern or public-house is not so common as the inn. Most public-houses are owned by brewers, and they are rather given to

By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum

SIGN BOARD FROM THE *WHITE HART*, WITLEY, SURREY

Oil on panel

Repainted by Birket Foster and Alfred Cooper, c. 1875

By courtesy of the Artist and the Pilgrim Trust

SMOKE-ROOM OF THE INN, ASHOPTON, DERBYSHIRE
Water colour by Kenneth Rowntree

RICHARD LEE AT THE *GOLDEN TOBACCO ROLL* IN PANTON STREET, LONDON
Engraving after William Hogarth

"enlarging," which means, not adapting, in the manner of the old inn, but completely demolishing and rebuilding. And so we see a snug little Jacobean or Georgian tavern wiped out, and a three-sizes-larger public-house erected on the site, with all Modern Improvements, but with a stark atmosphere from which the spirit of the place, still present in our skilfully renovated old inns, has completely vanished.

The essential function of the inn was, as I say, to afford rest and food to the wayfarer. The essential function of the tavern was to afford a rendezvous for its townsmen and a place of recreation. The inn still fulfils its old function, and has kept its social place from its beginning up to this week. But the tavern or public-house, though continuing its service, does so with a difference. While it is still used, as always, by many ranks and classes, it is no longer a rendezvous for the leading men of the age. With the coming of the coffee-house of the later Stuart times,

and the club of the later Georgian times, both of which encroached on the tavern's business, it suffered a set-back, and by the middle of the nineteenth century it had become something quite different from its old self.

It ceased to be the meeting-place of the first wits and poets, of Ministers and solid merchants and dignified burgesses. The serious, the prosperous, and the titled ranks turned their backs on it, and made the private club their centre. Even the easier social world of the established poets and artists deserted it. It began to be regarded as "low." Men who, fifty years earlier, would have been tavern men became club-men. Theodore Hook, a natural tavern man if ever there was one, and who would, in the middle eighteenth century, have had a tavern chair, had, as a man of his time, a chair at Crockford's and the Athenaeum. And so the fashion grew, and the club, as a social centre for the leading men of their time, took the place formerly held by the tavern. The Tavern declined into the Mid-Victorian Pub.

But what a past it has had ; what company it has seen ; what things it has heard. We think of the *Mermaid* and the *Mitre* in Cheapside ; of the *Devil* at Temple Bar and the *Falcon* on Bankside ; and the *Spiller's Head*, Clare Market ; the *Turk's Head*, Gerrard Street ; and most of us, I fancy, would rather make one of the company at any of their evenings than sit around in the best clubs of to-day. At those Cheapside taverns, and at the *Falcon*, the poets and playwrights of the English Renaissance met, and their patrons, Raleigh, Southampton and Essex. Pepys at his taverns sat with other Government officials and ministers, or with more homely company enjoyed madrigal-singing. At the *Star & Garter*, Pall Mall, Swift and Addison and others gathered. The *Spiller's Head*, in Clare Market, was a resort of Dr. Radcliffe, founder of the Radcliffe Museum, and of Hogarth and Colley Cibber and Churchill. Another of Hogarth's haunts was *Slaughter's*, in St. Martin's Lane, which also knew Roubilliac the sculptor and Gardelle the miniature painter, who was hanged for killing his landlady in the heat of a quarrel. In later days it was the resort of Haydon and Wilkie.

And there were those great tavern evenings, in the middle eighteenth century, at the *King's Head*, Ivy Lane, the *Turk's Head*, Gerrard Street and the *Queen's Head*, St. Paul's Churchyard, and the *Mitre*, Fleet Street, with the company named in Boswell—Garrick, Goldsmith, Beauclerk, Reynolds, Burke and Thomas Percy ; though even then Respectability was beginning to frown on the tavern : John Hawkins referred to the Johnson côteries as "low ale-house associations." Later in the century, at the Covent Garden *Queen of Bohemia*, Sheridan would meet his friends, and others of the company were the actor, George Frederick Cooke, and the penniless and homeless Irish poet, Thomas Dermody. The *Salutation & Cat* in Newgate Street was a favourite rendezvous of Lamb and

A Tavern in Knightsbridge, London
Engraving by Nugent after Tiffin

Coleridge, when, as young men, they met to drink egg-hot and discuss metaphysics and poetry; and later there was Edmund Kean's *Coal Hole* in Fountain Court, Strand, and the *Cyder Cellars* in Maiden Lane, and the two theatrical taverns, the *Harp* in Russell Street and the *Craven Head* in Drury Lane.

Taverns then were the regular centres of the arts, and many periodicals of the time seem to have been edited at tavern tables. As late as the fifties, as we see from Edmund Yates's *Recollections*, the weekly issue of the papers he was connected with were planned and prepared at tavern meetings ; and even our great and respectable satirical weekly was founded

at meetings at the *Edinburgh Castle* in the Strand and the *Crown* in Vinegar Yard, and its first editor was an ex-publican.

Provincial towns, too, had old and picturesque taverns where the bright and the serious of the town met for gossip and debate and song. But records are few. Taverns kept no Visitors' Books, and Boswells were rare. Of all those London taverns named above not a brick or rafter is left. There remains only, to show us what they were like, the *Cheshire Cheese*. And for the lore of the old and vanished taverns of the provincial and country towns, we must go to the respective local histories or to such specific publications as Mr. L. C. Lloyd's lately-published booklet on the taverns past and present of Shrewsbury.

The taverns have been and still are centres of political debate, of argument on technical developments in literature and painting, of discussions on moral philosophy and religion, of gossip (and no doubt slander) and of all that piquant or pungent and always extravagant pleasantry which the most staid Englishman can release in his hours of ease. And they still are a part of the social life of a large section of the community, not only as rendezvous for recreation but as Lodges of the various Friendly and Benevolent Societies and of Slate Clubs, and as the headquarters of clubs covering all manner of interests from angling and pigeon-fancying to chrysanthemum-growing and archaeology and bowls.

In recent years they have entered a new phase. In the new residential suburbs, under the more advanced owners, they have become rather domestic than convivial centres. In contrast to the old dark and dingy late-Victorian places, they are large and open and airy, with no partitions and with daylight all round them. They are dressed in light paint and fitted with light furniture. They have a children's room, a games room, a garden, a dining-room, and no bar. They are built as places to which the whole family may decently go, and they appear to be successful. But none of our taverns, new or old, are now the rendezvous of wits and beaux and gallants and noble lords, and they have no chairs to be put, a hundred years from now, in glass cases for reverent inspection as the tavern-chairs of the Great Men of their Age.

But the inns where the bowmen and the halberdiers and the packmen lodged and lingered we still have for our use and delight. That delight, as I say, began with the earliest travellers, and has been constant. But it was not until the temporary eclipse of the old inns that people began to compare and rank them, and to collect their lore, and to cherish them just because of their age. In the Stuart days nobody found anything to relish or admire in the structure and aroma of a fifteenth-century inn. In the eighteenth century nobody found any special interest in staying at a black-and-white gabled inn of the sixteenth century ; they preferred and praised those of their own time. Nor did anybody then think it worth while to write the story of England's inns. They were so much in

THE MEET OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE INN
Pen drawing by H. Furniss 1854-1925

the foreground of every hour of current life—like our railway-stations—that nobody thought about their past. Only with their eclipse did this interest begin, and then it was expressed only in fugitive magazine articles. Not until the present century was a book devoted to them and their history, and their part in the social development of England ; it was in 1906 that Charles G. Harper published his two handsome volumes, *The Old Inns of Old England*, the first and best work on the subject. Since then many volumes have appeared until now we have quite a large "literature" of the old inn, and it is recognised as one of our precious possessions, celebrated by each town on picture-postcards and even on cigarette-cards.

And we amateurs of inns know that they are worthy of our recognition and affection, and we look hopefully to the time when we can again make a tour of our favourites and enjoy the little stimulations they always give ; when we can re-visit our special riverside inn and find out if it can still make that perfect cherry-tart ; when we can find out whether that sixteenth-century place on the Great North Road has lost the trick of its luscious sherry-trifle ; and whether Boots at the old house on the

Bath Road is still 75—as he has been for the last fifteen years. And I hope we shall get happier answers than Matthew Prior got when he revisited an old inn after some years absence :

> Come here, my sweet landlady, pray how d'ye do ?
> Where is Cicely so cleanly, and Prudence, and Sue ?
> And where is the widow that dwelt here below ?
> And the ostler that sung about eight years ago ?
>
> Why now let me die, Sir, or live upon trust,
> If I know to which question to answer you first ;
> Why things since I saw you, most strangely have varied,
> The ostler is hanged and the widow is married ;
> And Prue left a child for the parish to nurse,
> And Cicely went off with a gentleman's purse.

What damage will have been wrought among them by the time the fighting ceases, we do not know ; we can only hope that the most nobly aged have been spared. If so, then when easy travel is again possible, you might find a pleasant holiday in making a period tour through the centuries. You might begin with the stone-fronted *Angel* of Grantham, or *George* of Glastonbury, and pick up the Tudor age of half-timbering at the *Shakespeare*, Stratford-on-Avon, or the *New Inn*, Gloucester. Then to the Jacobean *Feathers* of Ludlow or *Lygon Arms* of Broadway. Then to the Queen Anne *Beaufort Arms* of Chepstow. Thence to the late Georgian *White Hart* at Salisbury ; the Regency *Royal* at Falmouth ; the mid-Victorian *Bedford* of Brighton ; and finish at the late Victorian *Savoy* or the Edwardian *Ritz*, or perhaps the last-built road-house.

Similar period tours could be made in the North and Midlands and other parts. Wherever you go you will be in contact with the still-pulsing story of past England. You may walk down a stone passage with fourteenth-century pilgrims. You may light your cigarette in the room where Richard III stood and fumed. You may sleep in the bedroom where Charles I slept—or lay awake ; and in bedrooms used by Pepys and Charles II and Swift and Boswell and Garrick and Turner and Gladstone and Disraeli and Dickens—and all the Englishmen of distinction who have ever travelled English roads. You will, I hope, have meals which will be something more than food, in a William and Mary or Regency dining-room ; you will go to your room by a Robert Adam staircase, and be able to sit in a Stuart hall, or by a fireplace as good to the eye to-day as it was to the eye of the traveller in the days of the Armada.

And there will be tales to hear of what has been happening in and to the old inns during the war years. Some of those tales, no doubt, will be of a kind fit to be added to the store of the inn's history. Dramatic

THE *ANGEL*, GRANTHAM AS IT IS TO-DAY
Drawing by Walter M. Keesey

events may have centred on some of them ; hurried meetings and farewells ; highly-charged moments. Or perhaps they will have nothing more urgent to tell than an arid story of occupation by Civil Servants.

It may be that after the war there will be, as with the coming of the cycle and the car, such a rush to the roads that we shall need many new inns. What they will be like we cannot guess. So many Planners have been at work—on paper—re-planning our towns, our roads, our villages, and even our leisure moments that there are probably a hundred conflicting plans for new inns from which the worst features of each will probably be selected. But so long as the new inn is suitable to the spirit of this age it should fit well with our townscapes and our country horizons. The English countryside has "taken" every kind of architecture that has been imposed upon it. Where the builder has used the local material, the style, whether harking back or leaping forward, has melted with the background. The oldest inn of Gloucester is the *New Inn*. The oldest inn of Salisbury is the thatch-roofed *New Inn*. Both of them, when their names were apt, must have caused some remark ; there were no doubt many who objected to them as upstarts in style and manner. But we see them now as wholly

right, and if our new inns adopt the style of Broadcasting House or of the latest cinema, they too, in a little time, will be right.

Meantime, the older inns are still with us, keeping themselves new every year. The succession stretches from the early Pilgrims' Inns to the *Ritz Hotel ;* from the fifteenth-century *George* of Salisbury to the hotel at the Airport or the road-house. Wide as the gap is between the *Angel* of Grantham and the *Ritz*, it is bridged by a series of orderly steps. Each successive inn has derived from its fore-runner ; and whatever new form, whatever vast dimensions, the new inn may take, whatever ideas may be imported from other countries, it will somehow take our colouring and our temper and will be the English Inn, the Pilgrims' *Tabard* of to-day.

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