Tavern Days and the Old Taverns of Fitchburg.

"Food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, And a home for the weary traveler."

Stage Coach Days and Stage Coach Ways.

"We hear no more the clanging bell, And the stage-coach rattling by."

FREDERICK A. CURRIER.
"Four Bs are necessary to make a satisfactory hotel," says a traveler of experience: “good beds, good beef, good bread, and good butter.”

Never was an Englishman more at home than when taking his ease in his inn. Even men of fortune, who might in their own mansions have enjoyed every luxury, were in the habit of passing their evenings in the parlor of some neighboring house of public entertainment.

They seemed to think that comfort and freedom could in no other place be enjoyed with equal perfection. This feeling continued, during many generations, to be a national peculiarity. The liberty and jollity of inns long furnished matter to novelists and dramatists. Crabbe, Fielding and Smollett have shown us a vivid picture of the inns of their time. The tavern life of Dr. Johnson is as familiar to us as his rusty wig; and the houses of entertainment he frequented are as famous as the “Devil Tavern” of his dramatic namesake. We know by common fame, as well as from Boswell, of “the Mitre Tavern in Fleet street, where he loved to sit up late.” Johnson maintained that “a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity.” “There is nothing,” he affirmed, “which
Tavern Days and the Old Taverns of Fitchburg.

has been yet contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as a good tavern or inn." And then he repeated, "with great emotion," Shenstone's lines:

"Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn."

The tavern in the eighteenth century occupied the place of the club of nowadays, with its doors open to all comers. Any stranger might mingle in the general conversation and good cheer of the bar-room, without fear of being considered an intruder. And as the poor Irishman once told Goldsmith, when instructing how to live in London on thirty pounds per year, "By spending two pence at a coffee house, you might be in very good company several hours every day."

The celebrated Rev. Dr. Dwight tells us that in his time "the best old-fashioned New England inns were superior to any modern ones. There was less bustle, less parade, less appearance of doing a great deal to gratify your wishes, than at the reputable modern inns; but much more was actually done, and there was more comfort and enjoyment. In a word, you found in these inns the pleasures of an excellent private house. If you were sick, you were nursed and befriended as in your own family, and your bills were always equitable, calculated on what you ought to pay."

The public hostelry has always played an important part in social and political life, has mirrored the fashions of the times, and has helped to make history. Especially was this true of our early Boston inns, situated at the very center of events, and in the midst of alarms. For Boston was then, at least, the Hub of the colonial universe, and the focus of its patriotism; and the history of its inns and taverns is the history of the whole country and of its growth. They became a popular rendezvous for the patriotic clubs and societies, who listened to the stirring words of Adams, Otis and Hancock, and mixed blue treason to King George in bowls of steaming punch.

The country inn-keeper of the early days was usually the one having the largest house, and therefore might be supposed to be always ready to take in passing travelers of any degree. No special preparations were made, beyond obtaining the necessary license, and guests were treated as members of the family, and the proprietor was more of a farmer than a landlord. Many were known by a military title, either from actual service or from their connection with the militia company.

The first inns were licensed by the General Court, and carried with them the privilege to draw wine and beer for the public. The landlord was not only held amenable to the laws, but he was also protected by them.

In the early days, the price of almost every commodity of life was regulated by law, and a twelvengroats for a meal of victuals, and a penny for a quart mug of beer—the landlord being liable to a fine of ten shillings if a greater charge was made, or the quality of the liquor was not up to a certain standard.

The landlord being forbidden by law to charge more for a meal than a twelvengroats, they never charged less. From the Records of the General Court of Massachusetts, Vol. 1, p. 284, 1640, it appears that "Rich'd Cluffe, for saying,—'Shall I pay twelvengroats for the fragments wh the grandjury roages have left?' was bound to his good behaviour, and fined three pounds, sixe shillings and eight pence, wh was discounted by Rob't Saltonstall upon account." It would appear that Cluffe was so unfortunate as to come to dinner after the grand jury, and, finding only fragments altogether unsatisfactory, demurred to the landlord's bill. He might have come off easily if he
had expressed himself circumspectly, for the Puritan did not dislike the spirit which resisted imposition; but to allow the grand jury to be called "roages" was not to be thought of.

In 1645 the Legislature of Massachusetts adopted the following vote:

"It is ordered that no man shall be allowed to keep a public house of entertainment for strangers or travelers, nor shall any one be a common victualler, taverner, innkeeper, or keeper of a cook shop, vintner, or public seller of wines, ale, beer, strong waters, without allowance in some Quarter Court, in the Shire where such do dwell, upon pain of forfeiture of twenty shillings per week, while they continue without said license; nor shall any such persons as have public houses of entertainment and have licenses, sell beer above two shillings an ale quart; neither shall any such person or persons, formerly named, suffer any to be drunk or drink excessively, or continue tippling above the space of half an hour, in any of their said houses, under penalty of five shillings; for every person found drunk in the said houses or elsewhere shall forfeit ten shillings; and for every excessive drinking he shall forfeit three shillings, four pence; for sitting idle and continuing drinking above half an hour, two shillings, six pence; and it is declared to be excessive drinking of wine when above half a pint of wine is allowed at one time to any person to drink; provided it shall be lawful for any strangers, or lodgers, or any person or persons, in any orderly way, to continue in said houses of common entertainment during meal times, or upon lawful business, what time their occasions shall require."—Mass. Records, Vol. 2, page 100.

The laws at this time were severe, and the conduct of those who resorted to the public tavern was made a matter of official oversight and especial legislation. In 1649 a law was passed, ordering that no person at the tavern should play at shuffleboard or any other play, under pain of forfeiture of twenty shillings from the keeper and five from every person playing. In another law of the same date it is written:

"Nor shall any take tobacco in any inn, or common victual house, except in a private room there, so as the master of said house, nor any guest there, shall take offence thereat; which if any do, then such per-

ros shall forbear, upon pains of two shillings and six pence for every such offence."

It was also forbidden any one to be found at the tavern on Saturday evening.

In 1656, the General Court of Massachusetts, by legislative enactment, made the towns liable to a fine for not sustaining an "ordinary," and in 1660, the town of Concord, for not having a common house of entertainment, was "presented" by the Grand Jury, and for this neglect was fined 2s. and 6d., and admonished "to have a meet person nominated at the next court for such purpose, or it would be subject to a penalty of £5.

The hostelry of our Puritan forefathers must have been a very different institution from its relatives over the water, the haunts of Kit Marlowe, Jack Falstaff and even Will Shakespeare himself. Doubtless its conviviality was of a mild and chastened type, subdued to the character of those stern men of mettle, and tempered with the excuse of duty or expediency.

We read that the tithingman inspected the taverns and made complaint of any disorder he there discovered, and gave in the names of "idle tipplers and gamers," and warned the tavern-keepers to sell no more liquors to any persons whom he knew or fancied were drinking too heavily. John Josselyn complained bitterly that during his visit to New England in 1663, "at houses of entertainment into which a stranger went, he was presently followed by one appointed to that office, who would thrust himself into his company uninvited, and if he called for more drink than the officer thought in his judgment he could soberly bear away, he would presently countermand it and appoint the proportion, beyond which he could not get one drop."

From the establishment of Worcester county, in 1731, the licensing of innholders was under the jurisdiction of
Tavern Days and the Old Taverns of Fitchburg.

the Court of Special Sessions, until its abolishment, and the transferring of this and other county business to the county commissioners. From these records we are able to trace the names of those who were wont in former days to "Welcome the coming, and speed the parting guest." But as no hint of the location of their houses is given in the records, it has required much inquiry, and the facts as here stated are as complete as can be now ascertained.

Torrey says: "In 1761 was opened the first public house ever kept in the precincts of Fitchburg." The record, however, shows that David Page, one of the earliest, if not the first of the settlers, in what was afterwards the town of Fitchburg, had his garrison house at about the present location of the "Gen. Wood place" on Pearl street, now owned by S. S. Holton. Being located on the road by which the principal communication was had between Lunenburg and the new towns above, it was favorably situated to be a convenient stopping place for the few travelers of the day, and we find him duly licensed as an innholder in 1746 and 1747.

John Fitch, from whom this city derives its name, built his house in 1739,—at the extreme north part of the town (now included in the limits of Ashby), at what was known as the "Rendezvous," seven and a half miles above the Lunenburg meeting-house, on the road leading from Lunenburg to Northfield,—and was licensed as an innholder from 1744 to 1766. He had doubtless, earlier than that, been called on,—from his convenient location, being for many years three and a half miles from the nearest neighbor, and in the absence of any other settlement in the immediate vicinity,—"to provide for the needs of man and beast who passed that way;"—as, among the reasons enumerated in his memorial to the General Court in 1749, asking for reimbursement and relief, on account of his losses and sufferings, it is stated that "he had entertained and refreshed travelers."

Samuel Poole, who was located on Mt. Elam road, was an innkeeper from 1759 to 1763, at one of the old garrison houses. Also Isaac Gibson, at his house on Pearl hill, from 1760 to 1776. At these early taverns on the frontier, the weary traveler resting by the wayside found rude accommodations and simple fare. Their supplies could not have been very abundant, or their conveniences very extensive, but they were probably equal to the demands.

Samuel Hunt commenced keeping tavern near the old Page garrison, on Pearl street, in 1750 (eleven years earlier than Torrey states). In 1761, he rebuilt a portion of the house and somewhat enlarged it. Here the advocates of the new town, doubtless, met and consulted as to their plans. Here, also, after their efforts had been crowned with success, the first town meeting was held on the fifth of March, 1764, Landlord Hunt being elected a member of the first Board of Selectmen of the town of Fitchburg. In the winter of 1764—5, the first religious services were held in this tavern, the scattered families assembling for six Sundays to listen to the teaching of the Rev. Peter Whitney. Torrey remarks: "The people of those days were less scrupulous in regard to the place where they met for public worship than we of the nineteenth century are. A tavern then was no better than a tavern now, but they probably thought their Maker regarded more the feelings with which His creatures offered up their petitions and adoration, than the place in which they assembled."

The following summer, Thomas Cowdin, who was destined to be one of the pillars of the new town, moved into the village and purchased the Hunt tavern, and we find him duly licensed from 1765 to 1790. The town meetings continued to be held at the Cowdin tavern until the erec-
tion of the first meeting-house, for which landlord Cowdin gave the land, at corner of Blossom and Crescent streets after which they were held therein.

The spacious rooms of the old tavern also furnished quarters for the first public school, and the first court of justice was also held therein, Landlord Cowdin having procured "a commission in the peace." Torrey mentions the trial of Abel Baldwin "for not duly and constantly attending meeting on the Sabbath." We fear Justice Cowdin would require a larger court-room to contain the offenders in these latter days, if he were here now to enforce that law.

David Boutelle's muster-field, in rear of what is now the American House, including Day, Snow, North, Green streets, etc., was covered with a beautiful growth of pine timber, which was cut off when, in 1774-5, Thomas Cowdin built a large addition to the dwelling which he had purchased, at about the location of the present American House, which he opened as a public house in 1775. Among the established charges of those days we find,

- Dinner, Boiled and Roasted: Seventeen cents.
- Dinner, with only one of these: Fourteen cents.
- Mug of West Indian Flip: Fifteen ½ cents.
- Mug of New England Flip: Twelve ½ cents.

The following extract from the court records of Worcester county is of interest:

"Eliphalet Mace of Fitchburg, in the County of Worcester, Yeoman, being at the bar to answer to an indictment found against him by the Grand Inquest May 27th last, of having with force and arms feloniously did, on September 27th, 1777, steal, take and carry away, against the peace and authority of the government and the people of this state, goods and chattels of Thomas Cowdin and others, viz.:"

- 3 Oranges of the value of 6 Shillings.
- 5 Silk Handkerchiefs of the value of 9 pounds, 12 shillings.
- 2½ yards Toweling of value of 2 pounds, 10 shillings, 6 pence.
- 1 Pound Coffee, of value of 9 Shillings.

Against which indictment said Eliphalet Mace says he will not contend against the government and people. The court having considered the case, orders that Thomas Cowdin be paid treble the value of the articles stolen, being 53 pounds, 12 shillings, and that he pay the costs of prosecution and stand committed until sentence is performed."

The newspaper of the present day did not then exist; the few publications were of scant circulation, the tavern-keeper being usually one of the few subscribers in the town; and of what we deem "news" they contained nothing. Information of current events then came through hearing and talking, not by reading. It was a custom of those days for one man to read aloud to the assembled company, who lined the walls with tipped back chairs, and drank in the story of the progress that was being made in the world, largely from long letters from abroad, and extracts from foreign papers, and what to our modern ideas appears very "dry reading."

They were then justly called "Public Houses," and the men of the town naturally flocked to the taverns as the only place where they could learn the local news, and discuss town affairs; notices of town meetings, elections, new laws, auction notices and bills of sale were posted at the tavern, as legal notices are now printed in the newspapers. The tavern was therefore the news center of the community, and the innkeeper naturally the best informed man in the place, and most influential in local affairs. The taverns were the original business exchanges. In all the old almanacs we find the distances given from tavern to tavern and not from town to town.

It would be of interest could we have a picture of the old Cowdin tavern, with the group of the fathers of the town assembled about its cheerful, open fireplace, discussing the prospect for the crops, hearing the latest news
from Boston, and suggesting what could be done to "boom" the new town.

It was the custom during the nooning, between the Sunday services at the old church, for the worshippers to resort to the tavern. In the summer-time it made an agreeable change to step over from the meeting-house and there in the shade discuss the news and gossip of the town, and incidentally the palate-pleasing beverages for which the tavern was known. In the cold winter months, the comfortable warmth of the tavern fire, and such other attractions as only the tavern could supply, were both appreciated and enjoyed. No fires were ever kindled in the old meeting-house. It was cold and gloomy within in winter, and the congregation was forced to sit shivering through the long service. The women brought with them little foot-stoves, metal boxes that stood on legs and were filled with hot coals at home, affording some warmth during the early part of the service.

The following story is told of Landlord Cowdin:

"The worshippers, resorting to the tavern for coals to replenish their foot-stoves, and gathering about the fireplace, greatly interfered with the preparations for dinner. After many discussions as to how to abolish the trouble without causing ill feeling, a colored man named Mevis (who came to Fitchburg with Capt. Cowdin, and whose name appears on the rolls of Capt. Cowdin's company in the French and Indian war) announced that if they would leave it to him, he would abate the trouble. Accordingly, the next Sunday, just before meeting was out, he placed a kettle full of swill over the fire. The women folks flocked as usual to the cheerful fireplace to warm up, after the chilly forenoon in the unheated meeting-house, and had got nicely seated for their noonday chat when Mevis came in. Stepping between the busy dames, he lifted off the kettle, and taking it through the company, swinging it from side to side, apparently on account of its weight, politely bowing to them, said: 'Don't move; don't move. You ain't in my way.' He quickly routed the company, and was left in possession of the field."

The landlords, previous to the Revolution, gave bonds, as the record reads, "To his Majesty in the sum of fifty pounds, to keep, and render an account of all wine, rum or spirits distilled, and all limes, lemons or oranges taken in for sale, unto the Collection Deputy." (1762.)

John Adams, in a paper on "Innholders," remarks that "Taverners are generally in the country selectmen, assessors, representatives or esquires." This was true of landlord Cowdin, he being for many years one of the leading men of the town, and holding all of the above-named offices.

David Goodridge, located at South Fitchburg, on the Bemis place, received an innholder's license from 1767 to 1776. This would explain the announcement of the post-rider from Worcester, in the Worcester Spy, that "He would make that his stopping-place."

Kendall Boutelle had, from 1764 to 1803, another of the old taverns, at the corner of the Old Turnpike and Rollstone road. An old cellar-hole now marks the spot. The early landlords were among the active patriots of those days, as we find the names of four of them in Capt. Ebenezer Bridge's company of minute men, who started for Lexington in 1775: David Goodridge, Kendall Boutelle, Isaac Gibson and Jacob Upton.

Thomas Cowdin died in 1792, and was succeeded by his wife, Hannah Cowdin, who was duly licensed as an innholder from 1792 to 1797. We find the following bill for the entertainment of the council called to consider the ecclesiastical affairs of the town at the inn of the Widow Hannah Cowdin:
Tavern Days and the Old Taverns of Fitchburg.

FITCHBURG, MASS., Nov. 11th, 1794.

THE VENERABLE COUNCIL'S BILL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 Meals of Victuals</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 1 Shilling, 6d.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Suppers at 1 Shilling</td>
<td>2.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Breakfasts at 1 Shilling</td>
<td>2.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>34 Dinners at 1 Shilling</td>
<td>8.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Suppers at 1 Shilling</td>
<td>1.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Breakfasts at 1 Shilling</td>
<td>.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Lodgings at 4d.</td>
<td>.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horsekeeping</td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>7.50</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$41.03</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Received Payment, 

HANNAH COWDIN.

Ephraim Smith was an innholder in 1767 and 1768; he appears to have been succeeded by Joseph Polly from 1769 to 1776, and by his widow, Dorcas Polly, from 1777 to 1779. This tavern was located on the old Ashburnham road, near the Daniel Works place; an old cellar-hole now marks the spot.

In the early days of the town, "Dean Hill" was the most flourishing part, the early settlers having preferred to "take to the hills." The old Crown Point road, which was the principal route between Boston and Vermont, passed over it, and a tavern was early established on this line of travel. Joseph Flint appears to have been the first to keep it, in 1777, and it was probably located near what was later the old Upton tavern. The next year, 1778, Jacob Upton commenced keeping what was for many years a somewhat noted hostelry, at the "Dean place," now owned by C. L. Fairbanks.

Even in those days they tried to get the best of the landlord. We find a Dr. Ball, boarding at the Upton tavern, so arranging his visits to his patients and neighbors that he might be invited to eat with them without expense to himself. His contract with landlord Upton being that he was to pay a certain sum for meals at which he was present, and to have a certain allowance for every meal when absent; when settlement day arrived he had so shrewdly managed it that the landlord actually owed the doctor. To settle the matter, tradition says it was left out to referees, who decided that it was a fair bargain and the landlord must pay the balance due to the doctor.

Landlord Upton, on one of his trips to Boston, brought back two colored babies, for whom he is said to have paid a bushel of corn; they grew up at the old tavern, and one of them was called Boston Upton, the other Charleston Upton; one ran away when about the age of fourteen or fifteen, the other remained until manhood. On his marriage to a colored girl from Groton, Landlord Upton gave them a grand wedding, and the old tavern was filled with a large company, including many of the leading people of the town. It was an event long after referred to by those who were present. The married couple afterwards removed to Groton, where some of their descendants now reside.

Jedediah Cooper opened a public house in 1773, just over the line in Westminster, and was succeeded by his son, Samuel Cooper, who continued the business until travel was diverted by the building of the turnpike, early in the present century. Landlords Upton and Cooper were among the foremost promoters of the various movements for the proposed new town of Belvoir. Two taverns, a store and a blacksmith shop, with the activity from the travel over the Crown Point road, caused the people of that district to think they were destined to be the center of a thriving community; but they were doomed to disappointment, and that part of the town is now but very little known to a large proportion of our citizens.
At the time of the disturbances of the Shays Insurrection, it is related that Dr. Jonas Marshall was eagerly sought for, but he eluded the searching soldiers by secret¬
ing himself in the cellar of the Upton tavern. Jacob Upton, Jr., son of Landlord Upton, continued the business, as we find him licensed until 1798. Capt. Dean followed him in 1817, but soon went out of the business, as the next year his name is dropped from the list. He continued to occupy the building as a dwelling, which is still standing in a good state of preservation.

In 1798, David Boutelle purchased the old Cowdin tavern, changed the name to the “Boutelle House,” and continued the business until 1803, when the building was removed across the street to about where the Old Colony House now stands, and was later torn down about 1834. The old well-sweep of the Cowdin tavern remained for a number of years as a reminder of the old stand.

Just over the line in Westminster, on the old turnpike, about 1800, John Bigelow kept a tavern.

Phineas Sawyer kept a tavern in 1792 at what is known as the “Payson Williams Place,” on Williams road, now occupied by Edwin S. Burnap.

It is of interest, as showing the depreciation of paper money, that in 1781 Phineas Sawyer was elected collector of taxes, and refusing to serve, was severely fined by the town in the sum of $900, which was considered as being equal to about $10, the usual fine in such cases.

His widow, Mary Sawyer, succeeded him in 1794, and Daniel Putnam, Jr., who had married the daughter of Mr. Sawyer, assumed the management of the tavern in 1796 and continued in charge until 1802, removing to Lunenburg in 1803. The venerable Daniel Putnam of Lunenburg was born in this tavern in 1802. The building is still in a good state of preservation. The small building on the opposite side of the street was used by Landlord Putnam for a store.

Joseph Tilden appears to have followed Mr. Putnam for the year 1803, when his name disappears from the records, and the tavern was discontinued.

A gentleman recalling his first visit to the Hub in his youthful days, in the old family chaise, says: “A journey to Boston in those days usually involved one night at least at a tavern, and that was an event to be talked of long afterward. The one to which we drove up, just as the sun was sinking behind the hills, was a typical country tavern, with its broad piazza, spacious stables, roomy sheds, and high swinging sign. There was a strong smell of lemons impregnating the air as we alighted and entered the wide hall, and a certain other odor, which I have been told since was ‘Santa Cruz.’ My recollection of it is that it was not at all disagreeable. Neither were the smells of cooking that came from some apartments far back in the rear, for our long ride in the pure air of the hills had given us voracious appetites for whatever the extensive resources of the hospitable tavern might set before us.”

Capt. William Brown built a dwelling-house where Dr. Jewett’s residence now stands, about 1783-4. He commenced keeping tavern there in 1801, and continued until 1805. The records of the first parish refer to meetings in Brown’s hall, which was in this building. About this time the cost of beverages is given, as—

Nip of Grog, 6 pence.
Double bowl of Tod, 2 Shillings, 6 pence.
Double bowl of Punch, 8 Shillings.
Nip of Punch, 1 Shilling.
Brandy Sling, 8 pence.

Flip was a popular drink, made of home-brewed beer, sweetened with sugar or molasses, and flavored with a
liberal dash of rum, then stirred with a red-hot loggerhead or flip-dog, which made the liquor foam and gave it a burnt, bitter flavor.

"Where dozed a fire of beechen logs that bred
Strange fancies in its embers, golden red,
And nursed the loggerhead, whose hissing dip,
Timed by nice instinct, creamed the bowl of flip."

When the company was seated before the open fire, one great mug was passed around—a "loving cup"—and so common a drink was it that in the winter-time the loggerhead was always kept in the fire. A too liberal indulgence in this enticing beverage was apt to "set them at loggerheads," an expression frequently made use of now a days, but the origin of which few call to mind.

A stick about six or eight inches in length, flattened at the end for crushing the sugar and stirring up the mixture, known as the "toddy stick," was celebrated for the ringing music it made against the sides of the glass tumblers. The egg-nog stick, split at the end, with a transverse piece of wood inserted, was rapidly whirled round, backward and forward, between the palm of the hands, with many graceful flourishes, by the skillful men of the olden time.

Black-strap—a mixture of rum and molasses—was also a common article of sale. New England rum was the common drink, sold at wholesale at 12½ cents per gallon, and retailed at three or five cents per glass.

Joseph Mayo appears to have followed William Brown, and continued until 1809. The building then became a dwelling-house, and the residence for many years of Capt. Zachariah Sheldon. It is now occupied as a dwelling on Academy street. Timothy Garfield, who lived about where L. Sprague & Co.'s store now is, was duly licensed as an innholder in 1806, only. We also find meetings referred to in the First Parish records, in Garfield's hall, which was without doubt in this building. Paul Wetherbee, 2d, is on the list in 1808, and Paul Boynton in 1817–18–20, but where they hung out their signs, inviting the patronage of the public, is not now known.

The first tavern on the site of the present Fitchburg House was built in 1809, on land purchased of the Fitchburg Factory by Isaiah Putnam, the first landlord. He was a prominent citizen of the town, holding many important offices and representing the town in the legislature. He sold the property in 1816 to Daniel Putnam, but he continued to be licensed as landlord until 1820, when he retired to the Putnam farm, now owned by his grandson, James E. Putnam. Some of our older citizens remember that he was famous as a wrestler. After town meetings, it was the custom to meet in the tavern yard, and the new comers to town were invited to show their skill against various competitors, it being arranged that they should always, if possible, be thrown; and to insure that result, the best wrestlers were kept in reserve until they had expended some of their strength, when Landlord Putnam and others would come forward and finish up the job in quick order. This was for many years a favorite sport, and we have with us to-day one who was reckoned among the champion wrestlers of those days. Landlord Putnam has left the reputation of having kept an excellent tavern, and was naturally a very popular "mine host."

One of the familiar sights of those days was the spring and fall training of the militia; every man between eighteen and forty-five years being obliged to turn out, "armed and equipped as the law directs." The guns, cartridge-boxes and accoutrements were required to be in good order; but as no uniform was prescribed, it was of any style or material that the fancy or ingenuity of the wearer saw fit to adopt. The animal, mineral and vegetable kingdoms
were levied upon for odd and striking effects; remnants of old uniforms from all the old wars being represented, and the variety of colors displayed would have made Joseph's coat of many colors look tame in comparison. Some of our older citizens remember seeing the lines of men drawn up before the old tavern, just before or after taking a drink—or probably both. They were known as the "Rangde-Bangs," or "Slam-Bangs." They had many martial virtues, but like most of mankind, had their weaknesses. They were a bibulous army. One of their favorite marches was to some old tavern, away from the village. The object of the expedition was uniformly the same—"to drink them dry." With that war-cry they were always victorious, capturing the garrison by a combined assault, confiscating all of the stores, and wrecking the magazine. The booty was always paid for when the company recovered its equilibrium, by a levy of about fifty cents per man. The relative increase of cost of such luxuries nowadays will be noticed by those interested.

Thomas Miles, on the old turnpike, near the Westminster line, was licensed from 1802 to 1811, when his farm and tavern were annexed to Westminster by special act of the legislature. This tavern was afterwards kept by Major Stephen W. Webster, well remembered by the older inhabitants of the west part.

In 1811, John Whitcomb built what was afterwards so well known as the "Woodbury Tavern," on the old turnpike, and we find him landlord in 1811-12-13-15. In 1814, Luther Griggs appeared as landlord. Daniel Gerry was the next proprietor for several years, commencing in 1816, followed by Nathan Battles in 1821, and Nathaniel Maynard in 1822, and Solomon C. Pratt in 1824 and 1825; Alfred Flint in 1827, followed by William Woodbury, Sr., in 1828, who continued until 1837; John A. Peckham tried it one year in 1838. William Woodbury, Jr., our venerable fellow citizen, assumed the management the next year, 1839. This was for many years a famous tavern, well known to travelers, and as one of the stations for exchanging horses in the old stage-coach days, was the scene of much activity.

About 1843, Mr. William Woodbury and his brother, Sabin Woodbury, were in charge, and continued until the opening of the Fitchburg Railroad, in 1845, diverted the travel from the old stage road, and the tavern was soon after discontinued. The building was totally destroyed by fire July 2, 1861, as it was supposed by a defective flue, and the present brick dwelling-house was afterwards built on the old site.

Mr. Woodbury has a ready fund of stories of the old tavern days. In 1845, there were just one hundred of the regular established taverns on the route between Boston, Greenfield and Brattleborough. They were frequently only a short distance apart, and entertained many sojourners. The sanded-floored bar-room nightly attracted a jovial company, which grew hilarious as the hours sped, under the inspiration of unlimited flip; but the old landlords never reached the point of following the custom which is said to have prevailed in some of the old German inns, of charging the guests in proportion to the noise they made. Those were the days of the "long nine" cigars, which were evidently not pure Havanas, as they retailed for only one cent apiece. Mr. Woodbury recalls a customer who purchased one of these long nines and tendered a bank bill in payment. It was at the time when there was a great scarcity of change. Reaching back to a shelf behind the bar, the landlord took down a cigar box full of old-fashioned copper cents and gave him his change entirely in these, on the bar. The man took off his hat and
scooped them all from the counter into it, and placing it firmly on his head walked out. What happened when he removed his hat, Mr. Woodbury does not know. He recalls another patron who, calling for the "old New England toddy," poured himself out an extra large glassful, which quickly disappeared, and, handing over fourpence-halfpenny, received back, to his surprise, three cents in change. "Why, how is this?" he exclaimed, "everybody else charges me fourpence-halfpenny!" "O," was the reply, "we always sell cheaper at wholesale!" He accepted the explanation, and, pocketing his three cents, marched out, the bystanders enjoying a hearty laugh at this new way of doing business.

Of the many landlords of the old taverns of the stage coach route from Boston to Brattleborough at the time of Mr. Woodbury’s retirement, he thinks himself the only one now living.*

Many of the old landlords were noted for their dry humor, and were never at a loss for a method of expressing their ideas. The story is told of a Vermont celebrity, that one morning after breakfast, as a stranger was about to depart without paying his bill, "Uncle Peter" walked up to him, and blandly said, "Mister, if you should lose your pocket-book between here and Greenfield, remember you didn’t take it out here."

Joseph Moore was the next proprietor of the Fitchburg tavern in 1821, being followed in 1822 and 1823 by Jacob Jaquith. During the regime of the latter, a scandal caused a disturbance in the Page district, resulting in a visit of the "white caps" of these days to the offenders. A party who was charged with being one of the participants was arrested; at the trial, Landlord Jaquith was called and interrogated as to the report that the crowd had visited his tavern for the purpose of removing the paint and disguises after their return from the expedition; but he was a very discreet "mine host," and appears to have been troubled with a very bad loss of memory (as is sometimes the case in these later days), and could not recall any one coming to the hotel that night. The party was discharged for lack of evidence.

Amos Sheldon, in 1823, secured a lease from Daniel Putnam of the lower tavern, commencing business in the winter of that year. The old day-book of Landlord Sheldon, exhibited at a recent meeting of the society, covering from 1823 to 1827, was examined with much interest. The items charged give a good idea of the prices of those days. We find horse and shay to Ashburnham, 70 cents; horse and shay to Westminster, 44 cents; horse and shay to Lunenburg, 30 cents; horse and wagon to Westminster, 25 cents; horse and shay to Leominster, 38 cents; horse and sleigh to Leominster, 50 cents; pint of beer, 6 cents; punch, 12 cents; one dozen biscuit, 17 cents; lodging, 12 cents; bottle of peppermint, 6 cents; baiting, 25 cents; lodging, 8 cents; board and lodging, 25 cents; hay, 4 cents; dinner, 17 cents; paying post, 6 cents; wine, 6 cents; cider and crackers, 5 cents; cordial, 3 cents; boarding, 3 cents; dinner, 12½ cents; breakfast, 12½ cents; chicken, 5 cents lb.; turkey, 8 cents lb.

The First Parish singers are charged 63c. and 42c. for hall; also, 50c. without candles and 65c. with candles.

The Selectmen of Fitchburg had 2 slings, 15c.; 2 dinners, 30c.; punch, 20c.; spirit, $1.25.

The Second Parish singers—Use of hall with candles, 75c.; two pails of brandy sling, $2.50; hall, 50c.; one pound candles, 15c.

The First Parish—Punch, $1; June 30, 1824, entertainment of Dr. Ware, 80c.

*William Woodbury, Jr., died March 23, 1896, in his 87th year.
Tavern Days and the Old Taverns of Fitchburg.

The Parish Assessors—Punch and sling, 27c.; sling and victuals, 55c.; June 15 to 18, 1824, entertainment, $2.10.

To secure a license as innholder, it was necessary for the applicant to bring to the court sufficient testimony from the selectmen of the town as to his character. The following is a copy of bond required of the early landlords:

"That he shall not suffer or have any playing of cards, dice, tally, bowls, nine-pins, billiards, or any unlawful game or games, in his said house, or yard, or garden; nor shall suffer to remain in his house any person not being of his family on Saturday night after dark, or on the Sabbath day, or during the time of God's public worship; nor shall he entertain as lodgers in his house any strangers, men or women, above the space of forty-eight hours, but such whose names and surnames he shall deliver to one of the selectmen or constable of the town, unless they shall be such as he well knoweth and will ensure for his or their forth coming; nor shall sell any wine to Indians or negroes, or suffer any children, or servants, or other person, to remain in his house tippling or drinking after nine o'clock in the night; nor shall buy, or take to preserve, any stolen goods; nor willingly or knowingly harbor in his house, barn, stable, or otherwise, any rogues, vagabonds, thieves, sturdy beggars, masterless men and women, or notorious offenders whatsoever; nor shall any person whatsoever sell or utter any wine, beer, ale, cider, rum, brandy, or other liquors, for defaulting or by color of his license, nor shall entertain any person or persons to whom he shall be prohibited by law, or by any one of the magistrates of the county, or persons of jolly conversation or given to tippling."

On Sundays, between services, the women and children would eat their lunch in the tavern parlor, and the men would collect in the bar-room and purchase gingerbread and cheese.

Some of our old residents can doubtless remember of being in the bar-room after the morning service, of seeing the old men seated in a semi-circle about the fire, passing a great mug of flip from one to another, and talking of the old wars in which some of them had taken part.

After a great snow-storm, the neighbors would often first break out the paths to the tavern, and the rigors of winter would be forgotten in good fellowship and a mug of something warm.

The landlords were mostly farmers, and the neighbors found a ready market for their hay, grain and produce; they were nearly always men of thrifty yet kindly ways, and popular with their hearty, boisterous, ever changing households. There were no servants in those days, but the "helpers" were all native born and equals. The wives superintended the kitchen, and were generally the cooks; their own and their neighbors' daughters waited on the table; the boys worked in the stable, and man's work, as well as woman's work, was never done.

A vast deal of work and responsibility fell on the woman of the house in the country tavern, which depended so largely for its success and popularity on its table; she had to devote much time and attention to the cooking,—as it has often been said that "the surest way to a man's heart is through his stomach."

Said an old landlady of many years experience, recently, "If it was not one task or duty, it was another." There was little or no Sunday in her life, and just as sure as she did get her meeting things on, ready to go out and hear the parson, extra guests would arrive, and she must, of necessity, spend the morning in cooking meats instead of singing hymns. The church going from which she says she received the most good, was getting her children ready for Sunday school. She adds that the excitement and stir of the life of the country tavern was all that kept the landladies alive. They simply did not have time to think of the amount of work that they were doing. The variety of guests gave opportunity for the study of human nature. There was an interest in con-
structing, out of the imagination, the pasts of the persons concerning whom one knew nothing, but who were one's guests.

There is a lamentable amount of intemperance at the present day in New England, as well as elsewhere, but the number of those who are strictly temperate is much greater than formerly. Many can well remember when the habit of drinking intoxicating liquors was not only fashionable and reputable, but was considered essential to health.

In most private houses the sideboard was to be found liberally furnished with well-filled decanters, and almost everyone imbibed more or less freely and frequently. The morning, mid-day and evening callers were invited to "take a drink," and no urging was necessary. The minister and people deemed it right, and honestly thought they were justified in taking a little, not only for "their stomach's sake, and often infirmities," but for strength to perform daily duties. At weddings and funerals, at church-raisings and ordinations, house-raisings and social gatherings, huskings, in the fields, in the store and in the workshop, a liberal supply of intoxicating drinks was considered proper and healthful. In cold weather, liquors were drunk to promote warmth; and in warm weather, to help keep cool. Crying babies were silenced with hot toddy, then esteemed an infallible remedy for wind in the stomach. The farmer wanted his extra cider for his hoeing or thrashing, and his extra rum for haying; and in the latter work, especially, he hardly thought it possible to get along without it. In fact, upon almost all occasions, it seemed to be considered that liquor was indispensable. In the newspapers of those days, we find advertised, "Real Staff of Life, directly from St. Croix." The cider mug was invariably on the table at meal times; always on the side-board, and too often those who went to the cellar for the supply "drank at the tap."

Every caller, from the minister and doctor to the tramp, was offered the common drink, with the apology, if it was sour, as it sometimes was in the spring,—"It is pretty hard;" to which custom required the response, "It is harder when there is none;"—an assertion that often had more of politeness than of truth.

There is a story of a preacher of those days who thus lectured his parish: "I say nothing, my beloved brethren, against taking a little bitters before breakfast, and after breakfast, especially if you are used to it; what I contend against is this dramming, dramming, dramming, at all hours of the day. There are some men who take a glass at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and at four in the afternoon. I do not propose to contend against old-fashioned customs, my brethren, rendered respectable by time and authority; but this dramming, dramming, is a crying sin in the land."

An hour before the stage coach was due the landlord was to be found in the tap-room, transferring his liquors from demijohns to bottles, setting his glasses in single file, bidding the servants make haste with the dinner or supper, of which there was already premonitory odors of the most appetizing kind. As the minutes to spare were reduced, the servants increased their activity, and the odors became more distinct. No sooner did the host hear the approach of the stage to the doors than, with a parting admonition to the kitchen, he hastened to the porch and stood there with a smiling face, the picture of welcome, as the coach rounded up and the driver threw his reins to the waiting hostlers. A glance at the travelers, as they alighted and were ushered by him into the house, enabled him to mentally assign each to a room,
the advantages of which he would describe ere sending its destined occupant under the pilotage of a servant.

Once in a while a landlord would be found who was noted for his tricks on travelers, one of which was to have the driver call to the passengers, "Stage ready," and compel them to hurriedly leave their scarcely tasted meal, after having paid for the same. The story is told of one "Yankee" passenger who had heard of the game played at a certain tavern, and determined to get the best of both the tricky driver and landlord. Disregarding, therefore, the call to the passengers, he continued at the table and allowed the stage to drive off without him. He did ample justice to the repast, sending out the servants and landlord on this errand and that, and finally rounded off with a call for a bowl of bread and milk; and when it was brought, asked for a spoon; but no spoons were to be found. The landlord was sure there were plenty of silver ones lying on the table when the stage stopped. Our Yankee friend asked him "if he supposed those passengers were going away without something for their money?" The landlord rushed out to the stable and started a man off after the stage, which had gone about three miles. He overtook the stage and said something to the driver in a low tone, who immediately turned about. On arriving at the tavern, the landlord calls to our Yankee friend, who had quietly taken his seat in the coach, "to point out the man who took those spoons." "P'int him out? Sartainly I can. Say, Squire, I paid you for my breakfast, and I calculate I got the value on't. You'll find them spoons in the coffee-pot. Go ahead. All aboard, driver!"

The tavern was open to all comers except Indians, negroes and apprentices. Every indenture of apprentice, girl or boy, contained the clause—"Taverns nor ale-house he shall not frequent except it be about his master's or mistress' business."

In domestic lighting, for nearly the first half of the present century, candles held almost undisputed sway. Old stagers may yet recall the dimly lighted parlor, the fire burning softly in the twilight, where the elders kept blind-man's holiday. The bell is rung, and Mary brings in candles; a pair of moulds in tall brass candlesticks, brightly polished, with snuffers of steel, with jaws that opened and shut with a snap, and something sinister in their appearance. There were also plated candlesticks and snuffers, for occasions of state, with silver branches that suggested the spoils of Jerusalem; but there was a lamp, a stately device of bronze, that towered over the family circle at times, and shed a generous and genial light, when so inclined—but what a demon it was to smoke and to smell!—and it would burn, when it condescended to burn at all, nothing but the very finest sperm oil, at a fabulous price per gallon.

It was a gay winter's scene, as sleigh after sleigh dashed into the tavern barn or shed, and the stiffened driver, after "putting up" his steed, walked quickly to the bar-room, where sat the host behind his cage-like counter, where were ranged the inspiring barrels of Old Medford or Jamaica rum and hard cider. Many of the arrivals were drivers of loads of merchandise to and from the adjoining towns, stopping only for dinner or lodging; some saving teamsters brought fodder for their horses, and a box of food for themselves; paying only ten cents for lodging, and of course something for grog; yet they were welcomed as swelling the volume of business, the host looking for his profits from the liquor he dispensed, and the sleeping-room he sold.

The accommodations were pressed to a degree not tolerated by our present habits; two beds in a room, two lodgers in a bed, was the rule; ten cents being generally
the charge for half a bed; and they got a full-bed’s worth of deep hollows, big billows of live-geese feathers, warm homespun blankets, and patchwork quilts. Sometimes they were more simply quartered. A great fire was kindled in the fireplace of either front room, bar-room or parlor, and around it they gathered in a semi-circle. Many a rough joke was laughed at, and many a story told, ere, with feet to the fire, and their heads on their rolled up buffalo robes, the tired travelers dropped to sleep; but four o’clock found them all bestirring and ready for breakfast (which was served at half-past four in summer, and five in winter), as the teamsters must get on the road early.

Breakfast consisted of beef-steak, mutton-chops, eggs, and often roast chicken, as keeping poultry was a large item in tavern economy. Pie was also often served at breakfast.

Dinner was a regular country repast; there was a loud exchange of news and jokes, and the motto of the old tavern was: “Come in and make yourself at home.”

“The eating was the cream of the earth, sir,” said an old traveler. “I dined last week at Delmonico’s, and my dinner was nothing to the cutlets, the ham and eggs, and johnny-cakes of the old tavern days.”

Many are the stories told at those times. A half-crazy fellow, acting under the delusion that he was a great soldier, and sometimes even a whole army, entered the bar-room where he was well known, and assuringly said to the landlord that he thought he had “sense enough to have a glass of grog;” after some banter the landlord gave him a drink, which he swallowed with a gusto and then calmly remarked that he guessed he hadn’t “cents enough to pay for it,” and departed, leaving the landlord to take the guys of the other guests with the best grace he could.

Beer and whiskey have driven out foaming flip, and no glory is left for him who, a century ago, could have been a hard drinker and also an estimable citizen of this glorious commonwealth. The story is told of a landlord who was noted for his affable smile and capacity for liquor; but alas, he met his fate, for one day he sat down with a guest, before his admirers, to a friendly drinking bout. Long into the night they sat, and when the morning light stole through the windows the stranger went his way, but the landlord was picked up from under the table, and put to bed; and it is said that the neighborhood wept over the downfall of the prominent citizen, beaten by a man from Boston.

Upon Tremont street in Boston there was a restaurant, popular with the city wits. One day a portly, aldermanic man presented himself at the entrance and asked the price of a dinner; one of the wits immediately assumed all of the obsequious airs of a waiter and, taking a tape measure, proceeded to measure the distance around the protuberant waist of the astonished and insulted inquirer, who could hardly believe his sense of hearing when the impudent wit very politely answered, “Price of a dinner, sir? about four dollars, sir, for that size, sir.” Such were the practical jokes of tavern life in the olden days.

The ownership of the Fitchburg tavern was transferred by Daniel Putnam to Nehemiah Giles in 1826, subject to the lease of Landlord Sheldon, and was sold by Mr. Giles in 1828 to Solomon C. Pratt, who, on the expiration of Landlord Sheldon’s lease, in April, 1829, appears to have refused a renewal of the same, and Mr. Pratt assumed the proprietorship, and was himself duly licensed in that year.

At this time, and for many years later, there was a custom at houses of entertainment which appears singular
to the young of the present day. A lot of slippers, of various hues and sizes, were always arranged in a row in the office for the accommodation of the guests during the day or evening. The indispensable boot-jack was brought forth; the high-top boots, then universally worn by men and boys, were removed and taken away to be blacked or greased, and the feet tucked into the easy slipper. The next morning the guest, replacing the slippers in their accustomed place, received his boots in exchange.

The venerable mail-carrier, Henry L. Lawrence, made his first visit to this city in 1826, and recalls his visit to Landlord Sheldon, with whom he stopped overnight. He was then a lad of only fourteen, and was driving a team of two yoke of oxen from Pepperell to Hubbardston with a load of goods. Sheldon helped him with a horse to Woodbury's tavern, and Mr. Woodbury, Sr., rented him a horse to complete his journey, on account of the bad traveling. He was gone three days and two nights, and on his return, inquiring the charge for the horse, was informed, "Oh, about two-and-threepence" (thirty-seven and one-half cents).

In 1828-9 a dwelling-house standing near the site of the present National House, was enlarged and opened as a public house by Amos Sheldon, whose lease of the Fitchburg tavern had expired. He continued until 1831, when the building was removed and the present National House was built by Capt. Zachariah Sheldon, the front and projecting part having a row of six granite pillars from Rollstone hill. The date, 1831, is still to be seen cut at the base of one of the pillars. Capt. Zachariah Sheldon was asked during its erection if he didn't think it quite a risky thing to build such a large tavern in so small a place as Fitchburg,—the new building being much larger than the old Fitchburg tavern. "Oh," he replied, with a confident air, "the town will grow to it." The new house was called the "Nashua River Hotel," and was opened early in 1832 by Harvey Alden, who remained in charge for many years. About this time, "Tom and Jerry" was a favorite beverage. A member of a temperance society was disciplined for intoxication, and gave as his excuse that he hadn't been drinking anything, but had eaten some "Tom and Jerry" with a spoon.

The old landlords were generally a jolly lot, and dearly loved a joke. The following story is a good example: There came one night a furious rapping at the tavern door. Everyone was, of course, abed. The raps continued energetically. The landlord stuck his head out of the window and asked, "What do you want?" "I want to stay here," was the reply. "Well, stay there, then," said Uncle John, and he put the window quickly down. But before the astonished and belated traveler could come to an appreciation of his apparently hopeless situation, Uncle John appeared at the door with his beaming face, and the midnight visitor was soon well fed and asleep in bed.

We find the following in a published letter of a visitor to this city in a newspaper of 1832:

"There are two hotels; both are roomy, well fitted up, and enjoy a large traveling patronage. The stages stop at both; the leading citizens encourage both, and a stranger who has participated in the hospitality of both would hardly be able on a succeeding visit to decide his preference."

In 1832 Capt. Zachariah Sheldon petitioned the town for authority to erect a sign-post opposite Harvey Alden's Hotel on the common, and at the town meeting in August of that year, it was "Voted, that Capt. Z. Sheldon have permission to erect a sign-post on the common, under the direction of the Selectmen with regard to place, kind and style of post and guide-boards, all to be done to their satisfaction; and it is expected to be ornamental to the common."
Solomon C. Pratt, in 1830, leased the Fitchburg tavern to Danforth Lawrence, who had been a clerk for Landlord Pratt. He was succeeded in 1831 by Erastus C. Doolittle, a name well known in stage-coach days. Solomon C. Pratt again resumed the management of the tavern the next year, and we find in the Worcester County Courier, printed at Fitchburg July 15, 1834, the following item:

"The sign which swings in front of the Fitchburg Hotel, indicating that the weary traveler may find accommodations and refreshment within, has lately received a new coat of paint, and now gives a very fine view of Pratt's Hotel; the foreground is occupied by a stage coach, drawn by four blue horses."

The dwelling house at the Capt. Oliver Fox place, at corner of Prichard and Main streets, later the Marshall place, and now the site of the opera house, was fitted up as a public house, and was occupied by Israel Knight in 1838. He was followed by Solomon C. Pratt, who made considerable alteration in the building in 1839. It was later again occupied as a dwelling by Chedorlaomer Marshall; the old building is now standing near the corner of Prichard and Elm streets.

In 1835 Stephen Parker became the next landlord of the Fitchburg tavern, but retired after a short proprietorship. For a single year, 1837, Austin Gleason was at the Nashua River Hotel, but Harvey Alden again resumed charge in 1838. George Whitcomb was landlord of the Fitchburg tavern, commencing in 1839; followed by Aaron F. Beaman in 1840. In 1841 David McIntire was the proprietor, and the Sentinel of September 30, 1841, refers in very complimentary terms to the fine banquet served in "McIntire's best style," at the annual celebration of the Fitchburg Fusiliers.

In 1842 the Washingtonian temperance movement caused much discussion in the matter of licenses. The Sentinel of Friday, April 8, 1842, says:

"The public houses of this town were closed on Saturday last, as was said, for want of licenses to sell spirituous liquors. The front doors were closed and fastened, and the entrances from the stables and sheds were blockaded. Things remained in this way until Monday, town-meeting day, when the subject was brought before the people of the town by a motion to instruct the selectmen to approbate, for licenses to sell liquor, three public houses and one restaurant; which was decided by a vote of six to one in the negative; and on Tuesday morning the houses were opened for the accommodation of the public. During the time the hotels were closed, the stage proprietors, Marshall and Whitcomb, accommodated the stage passengers at their houses. There will be a temperance house established in this town as soon as a house can be obtained."

In June, 1842, Marble Putnam opened the Fitchburg tavern, and it was known as "Putnam's Temperance House." At this hotel we find the meetings in regard to the railroad were called; also the meeting on January 26, 1843, to organize a new church, (Trinitarian), by seceding members of the C. C. church, on the anti-slavery issue.

In a letter dated March 18, 1843, published in the Sentinel, the writer commends the house "as being kept on Washingtonian principles, and everything about the establishment first-class, and one of the best hotels he has ever found in any place."

In 1843 Daniel Moulton succeeded to the upper tavern, and changed the name to the "Washington House." The big sign on the common opposite was remodeled and came out with the new name, "Washington House, D. Moulton, Proprietor," with a large picture of George Washington on horseback. This old sign remained for many years, until it succumbed to the effects of exposure to the wind and storms. In the old hall of this tavern were held the first meetings of Aurora Lodge, on its removal from Leominster to this city in 1845.

Public feeling at this time was greatly aroused on the temperance question, on account of the "Washingtonian movement," and Landlord Moulton became involved in a
lively controversy with Editor Merriam of the Sentinel, and threatened to horsewhip him if he met him on the street. The editor was not, however, to be intimidated, and continued to exercise "the freedom of the press," and there is no record that the threatened chastisement ever took place.

In 1845 Caleb W. Jaquith and W. W. Comee became the next landlords of the old Fitchburg Hotel, then a two-story wooden structure, with an ell containing the dance-hall extending over the driveway to the stables. In this hall were also held the meetings of Aurora Lodge until the fitting up of the rooms in Torrey & Wood's block. On a pole in front of the old tavern swung a sign, inscribed: "Fitchburg Hotel, Jaquith & Comee," with a large spread eagle for a center-piece.

A writer in the New England Washingtonian of January, 1846, says:

"Fitchburg Hotel.—This large and splendid establishment is kept by Messrs. Jaquith & Comee, two standard teetotalers, and gentlemen who perfectly understand the business of keeping a temperance house of the first class. This hotel is situated in the center of the town, on the left-hand side from the depot. If gentlemen traveling are fond of clean beds, an excellent table, gentlemanly attendance and moderate charges, they will be sure to find them beneath the spacious roof of Messrs. Jaquith & Comee."

In the old days, when the snow came in November and remained until March, one of the familiar sights was a long line of large and single sleighs driving into town from all over this section of the country, sometimes from fifty to one hundred couples being in the party, bound for a jolly time at one of the old taverns, at which they had made arrangements. The genial landlord would meet the merry party at the curbstone and assist each couple to alight, with a courtesy and deference peculiar to that day, greeting each couple with a heartiness which convinced them that they were the ones he was especially glad to see, and making all feel entirely at home. After warming up at the cheerful fires, they repaired to the bountiful repast awaiting their coming, and with what a "feast of reason and a flow of soul the time flew."

All of the old taverns were provided with a hall for such occasions, and thither they would repair and trip the light fantastic, and the Virginia reel and other country dances and break-downs were enjoyed until the small hours of the morning, the tireless fiddlers being always provided in the arrangements.

For five years Messrs. Jaquith & Comee had a house full; they also ran the stables in the rear of the hotel, and when night came the tavern yard was full of vehicles of travelers who partook of the hospitality of "mine hosts," while their horses were comfortably provided for in the adjoining stables which, many nights, contained over one hundred horses.

Numerous public dinners and dances, or balls, were given at this house. Many will recall Eliakim Estabrook, a clerk of the Fitchburg tavern for Jaquith & Comee. He officiated as bell-ringer, bar-keeper, and, in fact, a generally useful man about the house; he had a somewhat pompous air, and one might have thought he owned the whole house. He always had a pleasant word for every one, and his hearty welcome to the passengers, whom he always met on the arrival of the stage, gave him an extended acquaintance, and made him popular with the traveling public. The building of the Fitchburg railroad and the location of the depot at the "old city" resulted in the erection of the main part of the present American House, by David Boutelle, in 1845. It was opened in the latter part of that year by Warner and William J. Clifford, but the latter soon after assumed sole management. The Sentinel of January 16, 1846, has a letter signed Rindge, N. H., which reads:
"We would ask liberty to say to all lovers of comfort, good-cheer, and gentlemanly treatment, that if you wish to find the best accommodations for balls, sleighing parties, social dinners, or anything of the kind, go to the American House, Fitchburg. We have tried it, and, as the Yankees say, 'we have traveled some;' and we are satisfied that no hotel, at a distance from a seashore city, can offer better accommodations, a richer, or more ample bill of fare, more elegantly finished or furnished rooms, or more polite and gentlemanly attendants, than were furnished for a sleighing party from our place, at Messrs. Cliffords', at American House, Fitchburg, Mass., and last, though not always least, at a price perfectly satisfactory to all. We would therefore take occasion, while the delicious flavor of the viands remains fresh in our memories (if not in our mouths), to recommend all our traveling friends to give them a call, if for nothing more than to observe the difference between a first-rate hotel and a medium one."

The following item also appears in the same issue:

"Supper at the American House." It will be seen by a notice in another column that arrangements have been made for a temperance festival at above house. From what we have heard concerning the character of the hosts, we feel assured that the establishment will be conducted in the very best manner and on strict temperance principles. The house is now, spacious and convenient, and will, no doubt, gain great favor with the public. We are glad to see the movement on the part of the temperance people, in favor with the public. We are glad to see the movement.

"The Fitchburg Hotel Company, on May 1, 1849, Abiai J. Town, Nathaniel Wood, Ivers Phillips, their associates and successors, were incorporated under the name of the Fitchburg Hotel Company, 'for the purpose of erecting buildings necessary and convenient for a public house.' The corporation was authorized "to hold such real and personal property as may be necessary and convenient for the purpose, not exceeding $60,000 in amount," and it was provided, "If any ardent spirits or intoxicating drinks of any kind whatever shall be sold by said company, or by their agents, lessees, or persons in their employ, contrary to law, in any of said buildings, then this act shall be void."

In 1850 the old Fitchburg tavern was removed to the present soldiers' monument lot, and fitted up for tenements; and the present Fitchburg Hotel building was erected by the Hotel Company, of which Col. Ivers Phillips was president, at a cost of $38,000; and was considered at the time, in the words of a local paper, "in its furnishings not surpassed by any house outside of Boston, some of its rooms being gorgeously furnished." The Sentinel of February 7, 1851, announced that the "Fitchburg Hotel Company had leased the new and splendid building erected by them the past season to David F. McIntire and Caleb W. Jaquith, who will open it in a few weeks. These gentlemen have been favorably known as landlords of the old stand, and their numerous friends all over the country will rejoice at the announcement that they are to resume their old business at the new and commodious building. A good, clean, well-kept public house in an inland town will accomplish more in raising the general character of the town abroad than almost any other thing."

It was opened on March 11, 1851, with a grand public dinner and complimentary ball in the evening, which were notable events, long remembered by all who attended. Cards of invitation were issued, a few of which are still in existence.

"Grand opening supper, given in honor of the opening of the new Fitchburg Hotel, under the proprietorship of Messrs. David F. McIntire and Caleb W. Jaquith.

Dear Sir: The company of yourself with ladies is respectfully solicited at the Fitchburg Hotel, on Thursday, March 11. Assemble at 3,

N. P. Banks was speaker of the house, and Henry Wilson was president of the senate.

Of the committee of arrangements only two survive—Ivers Phillips of Boulder, Col., and J. B. Proctor of Lunenburg. Of the invited guests of honor, Gov. Boutwell is the only survivor.

McIntire & Jaquith continued in charge until April 1, 1853, when both retired from the hotel business, with many complimentary notices from the local papers. In 1852 Phillips & Hammond succeeded to the management of the American House. Mr. Phillips was the father of our present state treasurer, who passed some of his boyhood days in this city.

The popular clerk, Joseph Fairbanks, at the Washington House, was in charge of that hotel after the death of Mr. Moulton until 1853, when Calvin Heywood, an old hotel-keeper in Westminster, removed to this city and became the proprietor, and changed the name to the "Rollstone House," Mr. Fairbanks remaining as clerk.

The Reveille of April 23, 1853, has the following item:

"Fitchburg Hotel. This pleasantly situated, spacious hotel was reopened last Wednesday by Messrs. Albert Morgan of Gloucester, and Charles A. Saunders of Boston."

From items later in the local papers it appears they found it anything but smooth sailing, and soon resigned the helm, and left the town.

The Reveille in 1853 says:

"No liquor is sold at the Fitchburg Hotel, and it is under the direct supervision of the president of the corporation, and is conducted in a manner to rival the best country hotels, and that has always been the reputation of all the Fitchburg public houses. Fitchburg is one of the pleasantest inland towns of the state, and in summer is the favorite resort of those who love the green fields, in connection with the comforts and luxuries of the city, and with business men at all times of the year."

During that year the easterly wing of the American House was built, the first story being intended to supply the demand for stores in that part of the town, and a fine, large hall for social gatherings, etc., provided in the third story.

In 1856 William F. Day was appointed superintendent for the Fitchburg Hotel Company, and in 1857 became proprietor of the house. In 1857 Josiah Stevens was the next landlord of the American House, being succeeded by W. W. Comee in 1858, followed by Ellis & Cushing in 1859, by C. G. and G. R. Cushing in 1860, and by Joseph Waterhouse in 1862, who remained until 1869, when William F. Day again assumed the management, and Gould G. Ruggles became landlord of the Fitchburg Hotel.

Many will remember seeing some of the numerous sleighrides from neighboring towns drive up to the American House, and the genial Col. Day coming out to greet them, assisting each couple to alight, with a courtesy that indicated, in a graceful way, the pleasure of meeting a particular friend.

In 1862 and 1863, George White & Co. were the proprietors of the Rollstone House. On April 13, 1863, a fire nearly destroyed the building, and for many years it was not occupied as a hotel.

The later history of our public houses is too well known to be included in the limits of this article.

Many of the old landlords were large, portly men, the picture of good living, and full of humor and practical jokes. The following story is told of one of these vet-
Tavern Days and the Old Taverns of Fitchburg.

ers: "He was the landlord of a good old-fashioned tavern for nearly forty years. Just where he conceived his 'April-fool joke' was not known, but a gray-haired citizen was caught by it for the twenty-third consecutive year, according to good authority. The hotel was built with the old-style fashionable front, had a piazza running the whole length, from which opened two large doors. In winter these were protected by portable storm-porches, about the width of the doors, and four feet deep. The door opening into the office was in constant use, and it was here the trap was set for the unwary. As the first of April rolled round, the veteran landlord would have the porch of the office door moved along the piazza to the left, so that it faced the blank wall of the house, projecting sufficiently to hide the office door from a person approaching from up street, and making the delusion more effectual. The snare would, perhaps, be hardly set before up came a grocery delivery wagon; the driver leaping from his seat, grabs his basket and bundles, stumbles up the steps, kicks open the door, and rushes into the trap 'all over,' as the heavy weighted door slams behind him.

"Next comes along, perhaps, one of the men of leisure, who thinks to drop in for a chat and learn the news, etc. He opens the door, and deliberately closing it behind him, carefully wipes his feet, and fumbles over the cold clapboards for the door-latch, and then, too late, remembers the 'old, old joke.'

"Next along come a phalanx of travelers. The leader recognizes the plot, as having cost him many a cigar the year before, and resolves on a wholesale slaughter of the rest of the boys. By shrewd tactics he gets them all in a group, half a dozen or more being in the party. 'Now, boys,' says he, 'let's all pile into the office in a bunch

and holler, Hullo, old Jed.' All agree to it. 'Now, charge with a rush!' In a second all but one are floundering in a confused heap in that 4x6 box, while the cause of the commotion slips into the best room, and is well settled before the confused contingent gets unraveled, and with battered hats, and wrath in their eyes, swarm in.

"Thus it went on all day, and the jolly landlord, from his chair in the reading room, chuckled and haw-hawed at the success of his little scheme. It was whispered, however, that, by a deep-laid plot, he was once inveigled into his own trap, and that he had to go down cellar and bring up something to square matters."

With the introduction of railroads and passing away of the stage coaches, most of the old taverns have disappeared; but there are a few still remaining. A friend, in speaking to the writer, recently, on this subject, referred to a carriage drive through this section of the state, last summer, in which he made it a point to look for the old wayside inns, so full of homelike comfort. He found one, only a few miles south of this city, which he described as looking just as it was, probably, fifty years ago. Driving up to the door, he was received by the venerable landlord with an old-fashioned welcome, and after a hearty supper was shown to a large, double room, with its two beds, and whitewashed walls and timbers; everything as neat and clean as wax. The host, after inquiring if anything more could be done for his comfort, left him, saying, "The bell boy is out; the elevator is not running; good-night."
Stage coach and public conveyance is a subject which, at the first view, appears to touch only the surface of society, but it really involves many features of a nation’s social life; and among the customs and manners of by-gone days, there is nothing which offers more interesting association, adventure, good fellowship and fun; than the study of the old-time coaching. A glance at the history of public traveling vehicles shows that our forefathers, in order to travel on land in the early days, had to go on horseback or “foot it.” Stagecoaching in America originated, of course, from the English system, although differing from it in many respects.

In the very old days, when the horse was considered the only fit means of locomotion for the lords of creation, men looked with contempt on the first rude wheeled conveyances, thinking them only fit for women and invalids, though the latter would have had a hard time in the primitive coach.

In England, the first coaches appeared about the time of Queen Elizabeth. A satirical poet of those times wrote thus:

“When Queen Elizabeth came to the crowne,  
A coach in England then was scarcely knowne;  
Then ’twas as rare to see one as to spy  
A tradesman that had never told a lie.”

About 1670 appeared the following announcement in London:

“FLYING MACHINE.”

“All who desire to pass from London to Bath, or any other place on the road, let them repair to the Bell Savage, on Ludgate Hill in London, and the White Lion at Bath, at both of which places they may be received in a stage coach every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, which performs the whole journey in three days (if God permits), and sets forth at five in the morning.”

The announcement drew a crowd to the Bell Savage, even at that early hour in the morning. They eyed the “flying machine” drawn up in the inn yard, ready for its flight, with a wild surmise; with a kindred expression they also eyed the six intrepid passengers who had been received into it. They were all experienced travelers, but were about to try the new idea of going thirty-five instead of twenty miles per day. They probably felt like the passengers by the first railroad train, and had committed themselves to Providence, as provided in the advertisement, booking through to Bath, not very well knowing what they might come to, remembering the roads (so called) of that day. After twice narrowly escaping upsetting and being shaken out of their seven senses before hardly clearing the metropolis, they were “held up” by the celebrated highwayman, Claude Duval, who quickly relieved them of their purses.

In 1672 the six lines of stages running in England caused a great disturbance in the minds of certain people, and a pamphlet was published urging the suppression of the coaches, for the reason that they made transportation so easy that gentlemen came to London on the smallest provocation, whereas before they would only make the journey when absolutely necessary; and then, too, their wives would make great efforts and accompany their husbands, for which purpose great expense for new clothes
and the like was entered into; and when in London the travelers attended the playhouses and got into habits of idleness and love of pleasure. The trips were, however, long and tiresome, the coaches heavy, lumbering vehicles, built with little skill or regard for comfort, and the roads were as yet unimproved. In 1678 the six-horse coach between Edinburgh and Glasgow, a distance of forty-four miles, made the round trip in six days.

The flying coaches of the time of Charles II. between London and the chief towns near by, ordinarily made fifty miles a day in summer and thirty in winter. The fare was twopence-halfpenny per mile in summer, and slightly more in winter,—the bad condition of the roads causing the falling off in speed and making traveling doubly hard; and many a time the poor horses helplessly floundered in the snow, upsetting the coach, and the entire company would have to wait in the midst of a drift until a rescuing party came along; or, sometimes the mud was so deep that the coach would get stuck, and remain at a standstill until a team of cattle could be brought from a neighboring farm to help the struggling horses.

In a work published a few months before the death of Charles the Second, the "Flying Coaches" are extolled as far superior to any similar vehicles ever known in the world. Their velocity is made the subject of special commendation, and triumphantly contrasted with the sluggish pace of the continental posts. But, with boasts like these was mingled the sound of complaint and invective. The interest of large classes had been unfavorably affected by the establishment of the new diligences, and as usual, many persons were, from mere stupidity and obstinacy, disposed to clamor against the innovation, simply because it was an innovation. It was vehemently argued that this mode of conveyance would be fatal to the breed of horses, and to the noble art of horsemanship; that the Thames, which had long been an important nursery of seamen, would cease to be the chief thoroughfare from London up to Windsor, and down to Gravesend; that the saddlers and spurners would be ruined by hundreds; that numerous inns at which mounted travelers had been in the habit of stopping would be deserted, and would no longer pay any rent; that the new carriages were too hot in summer, and too cold in winter; that the passengers were grievously annoyed by invalids and crying children; that the coach reached the inn so late that it was impossible to get supper, and started so early that it was impossible to get breakfast. On these grounds it was gravely recommended that no public coach should be permitted to have more than four horses, to start oftener than once a week, or to go more than thirty miles a day. It was hoped that if this regulation was adopted, all except the sick and the lame would return to the old mode of traveling. Petitions embodying such opinions as these were presented to the king in council, from several companies of the city of London, from several provincial towns, and from the justices of several counties.

The early English novelists give us many interesting details of the coaches of their day, which on some of the roads had arrived at the dignity of being called a "machine;" but this rapid vehicle of four miles an hour was not for common travelers; indeed, very genteel travelers were content with cheaper accommodations. There was a mode of transit which only cost a shilling a day to a passenger, and in conveying him from York to London (190 miles) did not occupy quite a fortnight. This was the conveyance of Roderick Random to the metropolis, and we may believe that the wagon and its occupants have been faithfully portrayed from Smollett's personal recollections.
The coach which Fielding's Parson Adams could outstrip in pace as he walked before it, brandishing his crab stick, was, in twenty or thirty years, to pass into a vehicle whose rapidity was somewhat dangerous upon roads very unscientifically made. Chatterton tells his sister that on his ride outside the stage from Bristol to London, the coachman complimented him upon his courage in sticking upon the roof without holding to the iron. A Prussian clergyman, Charles Moritz, traveling in England in 1782, for the most part on foot, being anxious to return to London, mounts the outside of a "post coach" at Leicester. To him it was a new situation. "I sat nearest the wheel, and the moment that we set off I fancied that I saw certain death await me." The machine seemed to fly; it was a miracle that they still stuck to the coach. "At last, the being continually in fear of my life became insupportable, and as we were going up a hill, and consequently proceeding rather slower than usual, I crept from the top of the coach and got snug in the basket."

The highwayman was especially connected with the stage coach in England for many years. He was in his palmiest days when Fielding ceased to write, and George III. began to reign. In 1761 the "flying highwayman" engrossed the conversation of most of the towns within twenty miles of London, with his three different horses—a gray, a sorrel and a black—and the literature of those days is full of their exploits.

The first coaches to be mounted on springs appeared in 1754, and in 1779 seats were added on the roof for outside passengers. As late as 1754 it was considered quick traveling to reach Manchester, one hundred and eighty-seven miles from London, in four and one-half days, and Edinburgh in ten days in summer and twelve days in winter.

It is claimed that the first regular coach in this country pld between Boston and Salem. Felt's History of Salem says: "Boston, as early as 1716, had a carriage for light purpose to go and come from Newport, R. I., once a fortnight while the ways were passable." The first stage coach went out of Boston May 13, 1718, to Bristol Ferry, R. I.

The Boston News Letter of April 4, 1720, advertises: "Stage line from Boston to Bristol Ferry." The remainder of the journey to Newport was probably by a Rhode Island team. In 1736 the monopoly of the stage service between Newport and Boston was given to Rhode Island parties.

The term "stage" was used to indicate a change of horses; the wagons were covered, but lacked springs. In 1761 a public conveyance was put on the roads out of Boston by Benjamin Stavers of Portsmouth, N. H., and the following is a copy of his announcement in April, 1761:

"For the encouragement of travel between Portsmouth and Boston, a large stage chair, with two horses, well equipped, will be ready by Monday, the 20th inst., to set out from Mr. Stavers', innholder, at the sign of the Earl of Fairfax in this town for Boston, to perform once a week; to lodge at Ipswich the same night, from there through Medford to Charlestown Ferry, to tarry at Charlestown until Thursday morning; so returning to this town the next day, to set out again the morning following. It will be contrived to carry four passengers besides the driver. In case only two persons go they may be accommodated to carry things of bulk and value to make the third and fourth passengers. The price will be twelve shillings six pence, sterling, for each passenger from hence to Boston, and the same rate for conveyance back again, though under no obligation to return in the same week in the same manner. Those who would not be disappointed must enter their names at Mr. Stavers' on Saturdays, any time before nine o'clock in the evening, and pay one-half at entrance, and remainder at the end of the journey.

"As gentlemen and ladies are often at a loss for good accommodations for traveling from hence, and can't return in less than three weeks or a month, it is hoped that this undertaking will meet with suitable encouragement, as they will be wholly freed from the care and charge.
of keeping chairs and horses, or returning them before they have finished their business."

In May, 1763, Stavers started the "Portsmouth Flying Coach," with two horses, to run from Boston through Salem and Newbury with accommodations for six inside passengers. The running time, however, was irregular, depending entirely on the state of the roads. For the purpose of saving the trouble of ferriage, there being no bridges at that early day, the stage and horses were kept at Charlestown.

The first stage for Providence was advertised by Thomas Sabin to leave Lamb's tavern, Boston, July 20, 1767. In 1769 it is announced that the "Providence coaches go twice a week from Providence to Boston, performing their respective stages in a day."

The first stage coach from Boston to New York was set up, leaving June 24, 1772, and intending to go once a fortnight. In the Boston Evening Post of July 6, patronage is solicited, and it is promised that "gentlemen and ladies who choose to encourage this new, useful and expensive undertaking may depend upon good usage, and that the coach will always put up at houses on the road where the best entertainment is provided." The proprietors promised to make it a weekly coach as soon as possible if encouraged in their great undertaking. Notice was given that the coach would leave on next trip July 13, and arrive at New York on the 25th, making thirteen days from one place to the other. But the experiment was not a success, as we find no trace of it in 1773.

Mills and Hicks' British and American Register, published at Boston for the year 1774, says:

"Between Boston and Providence, three stage coaches pass and repass twice a week. "Between Boston and Salem a chaise passes and repasses three times a week. "The Portsmouth chaise, which passes through Newbury, Ipswich and Salem, arrives at Boston on Wednesday evening, sets out again early on Friday morning."

An effort to start a stage from Boston to Worcester appears from an advertisement June 13, 1782, in the Spy, stating: "A gentleman of Boston, having a genteel coach and a span of horses, would be willing to be concerned with some trusty person, capable of driving a stage between Boston and Worcester." No one appears to have accepted this offer.

The first line of stages, a covered Jersey wagon without springs, was established between New York and Philadelphia in 1756, via Perth Amboy and Trenton, making the trip in three days. The following quaint advertisement of the line appears in the Weekly Mercury of March 8, 1759:

"Philadelphia Stage Wagon and New York Stage Boat perform their stages twice a week. John Butler, with his waggon, sets out on Mondays from his house at the sign of the 'Death of the Fox,' in Strawberry Alley, and drives the same day to Trenton Ferry, where Francis Holman meets him, and the passengers and goods being shifted into the waggon of Isaac Fitzrandolph, he takes them to the 'New Blazing Star,' to Jacob Fitzrandolph's, the same day, where Rubin Fitzrandolph, with a boat well suited, will receive them, and take them to New York that night; John Butler, returning to Philadelphia on Tuesday with the passengers and goods delivered to him by Francis Holman, will again set out for Trenton Ferry on Thursday, and Francis Holman, etc., will carry his passengers and goods with the same expedition as above to New York."

In 1766 a new line, modestly called the "Flying Machine," was started, to go through, during the summer months, in two days. Fare, three pence per mile, or twenty shillings for the whole route. In 1771 stage coaches ran between New York and Philadelphia in two days, for the fare of $4; outside passengers, twenty shillings each. But even in 1776 traveling seems to have been very slow between these two most important cities, as appears from the following advertisement:

"This is to give notice to the publick that the Stage waggons kept by John Burrowhill, on Elm street, in Philadelphia, and John Merse-
Stage Coach Days and Stage Coach Ways.

most judicious regarded it scheme was considered visionary and ruinous, and the fare was six dollars, with a stop at Princeton for dinner. except Saturday and Sunday, and the fare was six dollars, southward Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Stages left Jersey City for Philadelphia every morning except Saturday and Sunday, and the fare was six dollars, with a stop at Princeton for dinner. Levi Pease of Shrewsbury, the original projector, and for some time the sole proprietor of the stages from Boston to New York, entered into the enterprise, not only not assisted, but discouraged by all his friends. The scheme was considered visionary and ruinous, and the most judicious regarded it as at least a century in advance of the public wants. Said a solid man of Boston to Capt. Pease: "The time may come when a stage line to Hartford will pay, but not in your day." But with two convenient wagons he commenced business October 20, 1783; a wagon leaving from the sign of the Lamb in Boston (located at site of the present Adams House) every Monday morning at six o'clock, stopping over night at Martin's, in Northborough, passing through Worcester on Tuesday, reaching Rice's, in Brookfield, that night, Somers, Conn., and Hartford on Thursday; the other carriage, leaving Hartford at same time, reaching Boston in four days, the fare being four pence per mile. From Hartford a two-horse carriage made the entire trip without changing horses, and occupied the whole day to New Haven, passengers taking passage from New Haven to New York on board the sloops that plied between the two ports, and thus finishing their journey by water, the time of voyage depending on the weather and wind. Mr. Thomas remarks in the Spy of October 30: "Should these carriages be encouraged, it will be of great advantage to the public, as persons who have occasion to travel between, or to or from either of these places, may be accommodated on very reasonable terms, and will not have the trouble and expense of furnishing themselves with horses."

They were encouraged, and the enterprising proprietors personally acting as drivers and conductors, set about improving the accommodations and arrangements. The stages ran in fair weather and foul, in wind and snow, with passengers and without passengers, punctual as the stars in their course, and in two years the foundation of a successful enterprise had been established.

In 1786 coaches left Boston for Hartford from Levi Pease's inn, opposite the mall, every Monday and Thursday morning at five o'clock, reaching Worcester the first
day, Palmer the second day, Hartford the third day, and New York in three days more; this was the winter arrangement. In summer the stage ran three times a week, by which means (say the owners), "Those who take passage at Boston in the stage which sets out Monday morning may arrive in New York on the Thursday evening following." A letter referring to it says: "By this unparalleled speed a merchant may go to New York and return in less than ten days, which is truly wonderful." The advertisements declare that "It is the most convenient and expeditious way of traveling that can be had in America, and to render it the cheapest the proprietors have lowered the price from four cents to three cents per mile, with liberty for fourteen pounds baggage."

In July, 1788, Levi Pease announced that, after great expense and fatigue, he had completed a stage line from Boston to New York, and that the carriages, which had been both heavy and uneasy, had been hung on springs and would not fatigue more than a private coach. From May to November, three trips per week, and November to May, two trips being made.

The first regular post rider, expressman, newspaper and letter carrier from Boston to Fitchburg was Samuel Farrar of Concord, and he may justly be termed "the father of transportation between Boston and Fitchburg." By the Massachusetts Gazette and the Boston Post-boy and Advertiser, May 27, 1771, it appears that

"Samuel Farrar, rider from Boston to Fitchburg, passes through the following towns, and may be spoke with at the following places, viz.: At the Widow Frothingham's in Charlestown, Cambridge; Newell's in Medway, Buckman's in Lexington, Taylor's in Concord, White's in Acton, Whiting's in Littleton, Pierce's in Groton, Sartell's in Shirley, Stearns' in Lunenburg, Fuller's in Leominster, and Cowden's at Fitchburg, at any of which places gentlemen or others who will please to favour him with their commands shall have it gratefully acknowledged by their humble servant."

The persons whose names are mentioned in the card kept public houses in their respective towns.

Shattuck's History of Concord says: "Public stages were first run out of Boston into the country through Concord, in 1791, by Messrs. John Vose & Co." Wilder's History of Leominster says: "The first stage coach from Leominster to Boston was established by Jotham Johnson in 1790." (He was a brother of Asa Johnson, first postmaster of Leominster.) He continued in the business for several years, running a two-horse, clumsy, covered vehicle, hung on chains, for thorough-braces, making one trip per week. Whitney's History of Worcester County, published in 1793, says of Fitchburg: "From the northwest part of the Connecticut river the people travel much through this place on their way to Boston. They have a stage which goes and comes twice in a week."

I have been unable to find anything to confirm this statement in the publications of that date, Fitchburg not being anywhere mentioned in the stage lists, which in 1793 include the "Leominster Mall Stage, leaving Boston every Wednesday and Saturday at five A. M."

That year was also established the first line of stages between Boston and Groton, which later became the great stage center of this section. The Columbian Centinel of April 6, 1793, has the following:

"New Line of Stages. A stage carriage drives from Robbins' tavern, at Charles River Bridge, on Monday and Friday of each week, passing through Concord and Groton, and arriving at Wyman's tavern in Ashley [Ashby] in the evening of the same day, and after exchanging passengers with the stage carriage from Walpole it returns on Tuesday and Saturday by the same route to Robbins'.

"The Charlestown carriage drives also from Robbins' on Wednesday in every week, and passing through Concord, arrives at Richardson's tavern, in Groton, on the evening of the same day, and then returns on Thursday to Robbins'.

"Another carriage drives from Richardson's tavern, in Groton, on
Stage Coach Days and Stage Coach Ways.

Monday in each week at six o'clock in the morning, and passing by Richardson's tavern, in Concord, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, arrives at Charlestown at three o'clock in the afternoon. From Charlestown, every Tuesday and Thursday at three P. M., and returns back as far as Richardson's tavern, in Concord, and from there the next Monday morning at eight A. M., running again to Charlestown; from there it leaves at six A. M. Saturday, and returns to Groton on the evening of the same day."

Mr. Winthrop's memoir of Hon. Nathan Appleton says: "At early dusk on an October evening in 1794, a fresh, vigorous, bright-eyed boy alighted from a stage coach in Quaker lane (now Congress street), Boston; he had been two days on the road from his home in the town of New Ipswich, N. H.; for the last of the two days the stage coach had brought him all the way from Groton, in Massachusetts, starting for that purpose at an early hour, having stopped at Concord for the passengers to dine, and trundling into Charlestown about the time the evening lamps were lighted. For his first day's journey there was no such expeditious conveyance. The Boston stage in those days did not go any further than Groton in that district. His father's farm horse served his turn for the first six or seven miles, his little brother of ten years having followed as far as Townsend to ride the horse back; from there he had trudged along to Groton on foot, with a bundle-handkerchief in his hand, which contained all his wearing apparel except what he had on his back."

June 15, 1793, notice appeared of the establishment of "a daily line of stages leaving Providence at 5 A. M., and arriving at Boston at two o'clock. Twenty-four excellent horses, six good coaches, and as many experienced drivers, are always provided. The horses are regularly changed at the half-way house at Walpole. Price between Boston and Providence only one dollar, which is one-half the customary price, and 3s. cheaper than any other stage." The proprietor announced that he was "also determined, at the expiration of the present contract for conveying the mail from Providence to Boston, to carry it gratis, which will undoubtedly prevent any further underbidding by the envious. Twenty pounds of baggage free." The rival line of "Mail Stage Carriages" issued their advertisement of three trips per week, adding "Price for each passenger will be nine shillings only, and less if any other person will carry them for that sum; twenty-five pounds of baggage free."

Jotham Johnson announced in the Columbian Informer, published at Keene, N. H., February 4, 1795, that "In winter he would convey passengers in a covered sleigh from Boston to Charlestown, N. H., at three pence per mile, with fourteen pounds baggage gratis."

One summer, about 1795, he tried the experiment of running a weekly stage from Boston to Charlestown, N. H., leaving Boston at an early hour Wednesday, stopping over night at Leominster, reaching Keene Thursday evening, and Charlestown on Friday; returning, reaching Leominster Saturday evening, and leaving for Boston Monday morning. It caused much excitement in the towns along the line, but it was not a success. The roads were very poor and patronage not sufficient, and it was soon abandoned.

In 1800, we find a line of stage coaches made three trips per week between Boston and Worcester, taking the entire day for the journey of forty-four miles. About thirty years later, the projectors of the railroad promised an incredulous public that passengers should make the entire journey in from three to four hours. One hour is now sufficient for the "limited" trains to cover the same distance.

A Boston newspaper of 1802 announces, "Boston and New York Mail Stage starts from King's Inn, Market
Square, every day (Sundays excepted); summer establishment leaving Boston at ten A.M., arriving at Worcester same evening at eight. Leave Worcester at three o'clock next morning, arrive at Hartford at eight P.M. Leave Hartford at three o'clock next morning, arrive at Stamford at three o'clock next morning, reaching New York at noon, same day."

From the White Horse tavern, Boston, went forth the Albany mail stage, passing through Worcester, Brookfield and Northampton to Albany, every Monday and Thursday morning at six, and arriving at Albany every Thursday and Monday at noon, thus occupying seventy-eight hours in a trip which is now accomplished in not far from six hours. Much of this journey, however, was through an inhospitable wilderness, over rough and almost impassable roads, and the experience was a most trying one for the passenger, especially in wintry weather. The route taken to Springfield was over what was called the "western post-road," through the towns of Watertown, Waltham, Weston, East Sudbury, Sudbury, Marlborough, Northborough, Shrewsbury, Worcester, Leicester, Spencer, Brookfield, Palmer and Wilbraham. The distance was rated as one hundred and one miles.

Thomas' Almanac for 1801 says: "Leominster and Lancaster stage leaves Boston Wednesday and Saturday at sunrise, arriving at Leominster at three o'clock, and returning to Boston on Monday and Thursday, arriving there at five P.M." In 1802 it was considered "expeditious traveling" to reach Washington, D. C., from New York city, in a stage seating six persons, in three days; and to Albany, two days and one night were very painfully disposed of for a fare of eight dollars. The Independent Chronicle of April 21, 1803, says:

"Leominster and Greenfield Mail Stage leaves Leominster on Thursdays at six A. M., arrives at Greenfield at seven P. M., and returns Saturday at five A.M., arriving at Leominster at 7 P.M., via Fitchburg, Westminster, Templeton, Gerry, Athol, New Salem, Wendell, Montague and Greenfield, over the turnpike."

The Boston Patriot of same date gives a stage line from Boston to Leominster, via Littleton to Concord, once a week, and via Westford once a week, leaving Boston at five A.M. Wednesday and Saturday, arriving at Concord at eleven A. M., stopping for dinner, leaving at one P.M., arriving at Leominster at seven P.M.

Daniel Webster, in his autobiography, says that in 1804 he hired a seat in a country sleigh that had come down to Boston market, for the journey to his home, adding, "Stage coaches no more ran into the center of New Hampshire at this time than they ran to Baffin's Bay."

Robert B. Thomas, in 1807, says: "Lunenburg stage leaves Boston Thursdays at five A.M., arrives at Lunenburg at five P.M., and returning Tuesdays at six A.M., arrives at Boston at six P.M."

The following advertisement of the well-known "Fall River Line," from the Boston Patriot of August 22, 1809, gives a good idea of the means of communication enjoyed at that time:

"TRUTH—TO THE PUBLIC. The best way from Boston to New York, and from New York to Boston, is by the way of Newport, that remarkably healthy and delightful place, so pleasant and agreeable to travelers, (Norwich way to the contrary, notwithstanding). The proprietors of the Commercial Line of stages from Boston to Newport are desirous of making the traveling and conveyance as easy and as expeditious as possible to all those doing business, as well as to those that travel for pleasure; they are determined to spare no pains in accomplishing this object.

"With a leading breeze, the packets are generally from fifteen to twenty-two hours from New York to Newport, and stages are from ten to eleven hours going to Boston. Frequently gentlemen leave New York in the morning and arrive at Boston the next day, at night. The roads
are good and have excellent accommodations; the stages and horses are
as good as any in America.

The packets belonging to Newport, and kept at New York and
Newport, are thought to be the best in the known world, and are so
acknowledged. They are fast sailers, furnished with elegant accommo-
dations, and with every convenience that can be wanted.

The proprietors of the Commercial Line of stages have established
wagons to go through to Boston and Newport once a week; they
leave Boston Tuesday and Friday, and arrive at Newport Monday and
Thursday, leave Newport and arrive at Boston same time.

The Independent Chronicle of May 1, 1809, gives no-
tice of Boston and Brattleborough stage leaving Boston
Thursdays and Saturdays at five A. M., arrives at West-
minster at eight P. M., and Brattleborough the next day;
returning, leaves Brattleborough Tuesday and Saturday
at four A. M., arrives at Westminster at eight P. M., and
Boston at eight P. M. on Wednesday and Monday, the
route being via West Cambridge, Lexington, Concord,
Stow, Bolton, Lancaster, Leominster, Fitchburg, West-
minster, Templeton, Phillipston, Athol, Orange, Warwick,
Winchester, Hinsdale, N. H., a distance of ninety-six miles.
The Boston, Lancaster and Fitchburg stage left Boston
Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning, and Fitchburg
Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning at five A. M.;
fare, Boston to Lancaster, $1.50; Boston to Fitchburg, $2.12½.

John Melish, a Scotchman, made a tour of the United
States in 1795. An account of his travels was published
in 1812. The following extract gives a picture of those
days:

"Having taken my leave of a number of kind friends in Boston, I
engaged passage by the mail stage for New York, and was called to
take my place at two o'clock in the morning. It is the practice here for
the driver to call on the passenger before setting out, and it is attended
with a considerable degree of convenience to them, particularly when
they set out early in the morning. The mail stages here are altogether
different in construction from the mail coaches in Britain. They are
long machines, hung on leather braces, with three seats across, of a suf-
ficient length to accommodate three persons each, who all sit with their
faces towards the horses. The driver sits under cover, without any
division between him and the passengers; and there is room for a per-
son to sit on each side of him. The driver, by the post-office regula-
tions, must be a white man, and he has charge of the mail, which is
placed in a box below his seat; there is no guard. The passengers' lugg-
age is put below the seats, or tied on behind the stage. They put
nothing on the top, and they take no outside passengers. The stages are
slightly built, and the roof suspended on pillars, with a curtain to be let
down or folded up at pleasure. The conveyance was easy, and in sum-
mer very agreeable, but it must be excessively cold in winter. I took
my place on the fore seat beside the driver. It surprised me to observe
how well-informed this class of people are in America. In my journey
through the New England States, I was highly gratified by the prompt
and accurate answers which they made to my questions; and I resolved
to follow the same plan of obtaining information throughout my tour."

The Boston Patriot of Wednesday, May 26, 1810,
announces a new arrangement of the old Concord and
Leominster Mail Stage: "Leave Boston every Tuesday,
Thursday and Saturday at five A. M., passing the fol-
lowing towns: Cambridge, West Cambridge, Lexington,
north part of Lincoln, Concord, south part of Acton,
Stow, Bolton, Lancaster, Leominster, south part of Fitch-
burg, Westminster, Gardner, Templeton, Gerry, arriving at
Athol same evening, and Brattleborough the next day at
one P. M."

In 1811 the Concord, Harvard and Winchendon stage
commenced leaving Boston Wednesdays and Saturdays,
at seven A. M., passing through Concord over the old
"Union Turnpike," the old Wetherbee tavern in Harvard
being the half-way house from Concord, where horses
were changed, Shirley, Lunenburg, Fitchburg, Ashburn-
ham, arriving at Winchendon the same evening, the
Wednesday stage going no further than Fitchburg.

In the Worcester Spy of April 12, 1820, Josiah Lane
announces that he has sold out his route from Worcester
via Fitchburg to Ashburnham to Charles Stearns of Leominster, who would continue the business. Only one trip per week was made, and the principal support came from the subscriptions to the Worcester weekly newspapers. Mr. Stearns continued this route for many years. The conveyance was a small covered vehicle, accommodating a few passengers. The advertisement referred to has the following: "And he [Mr. Stearns] is recommended by the selectmen of Leominster to the patronage of the public as a man worthy of their confidence and trust." In the same issue of the Spy, Michar R. Ball, (the father of Rev. George S. Ball of Upton, a member of this society,) who was a saddler by trade and a man of much enterprise, has a card, dated April 3, 1820, announcing a new line, "From Leominster to Worcester, through Shirley Village, Harvard, Bolton, Berlin, Northborough and Shrewsbury." It has been claimed that he ran the first line of stages between Fitchburg and Worcester, but the evidence at hand does not appear to sustain the claim. He afterwards removed to Groton, as we find by Green's History that he commenced in 1824 to drive stage from Groton to Amherst, N. H. Later he was one of the owners of the Keene and Worcester stages, passing through Fitchburg.

Col. Ivers Phillips recalls the time when the only public conveyance between Fitchburg and Boston was a two-horse stage, which, leaving Fitchburg Monday morning, returned on Saturday evening by the way of Lunenburg. Leominster and Lunenburg being then places of more importance and business than Fitchburg, the stages came to them two or three times per week, but only the Saturday stage came through to Fitchburg. For many years the only banks in this section were at Worcester. The first bank nearer to Fitchburg was established at Bank Village, in New Ipswich, N. H., and Mr. Abel Downe started a coach to accommodate the bank and Appleton academy.

A writer thus describes the coaches of 1821: "The coach was a rudely constructed carriage, with a body with sharp corners, hung on thorough-braces of leather, with a foot-board for the driver's feet, and a trunk-rack behind, firmly bolted to the axletrees." Soon after this time the new mode of hanging the foot-board and trunk-rack was invented, by which they were both hung from the body of the coach, and for which a patent was granted.

Various forms of vehicles were later used. Abraham Russell, of Cumberland, Md., introduced a coach carrying sixteen passengers, but it was found to be too cumbersome, and was followed by a Trenton coach much lighter in construction, and almost egg-shape. This gave way to the Troy coach, carrying nine inside and two outside passengers; but the famous Concord coach, first built at Concord, N. H., in 1827, was found to be far in advance of any of the others, and soon became the almost universal traveling coach until the days of the railroads. It has been pronounced the "most perfect wagon for travel ever built."

The American Statesman, of Boston, September 14, 1824, gives Boston and Brattleborough stage line, via Fitchburg and Hinsdale, ninety-six miles; leaving Boston Thursday and Saturday at five A. M., arriving at Westminster at eight P. M.; returning, arriving in Boston Wednesday and Monday at three P. M.

In 1825, the American Stage Register says, the Boston, Concord, Harvard, Fitchburg and Winchendon accommodation stage leaves Boston on Tuesdays and Thursdays at eight A. M., arriving at Fitchburg at five P. M., and on Saturday leaving Boston at five A. M., running through to Winchendon, arriving there at six P. M.; returning, leaving Winchendon on Fridays at six A. M., and Fitch-
burg Monday, Wednesday and Friday at eight A. M., arriving in Boston at five P. M.; passing through Lexington, Boxborough, Sterling, Lunenburg and Ashburnham. Fare: Boston to Concord, $1.00; to Harvard, $1.50; to Lunenburg, $1.75; to Fitchburg, $2.00; to Winchendon, $2.75.

Proprietors: Shepard, Brown & Company, Boston; J. Wakefield, Concord, and D. Putnam, Fitchburg. In that year the Ashburnham and Worcester mail stage is given as leaving Ashburnham on Tuesday at eight A. M., arriving in Worcester at five A. M., returning, leaving on Wednesday at eleven A. M., reaching Ashburnham at nine P. M., passing through West Boylston, Sterling, Lancaster and Leominster and Fitchburg. The fare is given as $1.50. Charles Stearns, proprietor.

The Boston Advertiser says:

"In 1827, when careful inquiries for ascertaining the amount of travel and transportation were made on the Providence and Western route, preparatory to a determination of the question of the practicability of maintaining railroads, it was reported that the number of passengers conveyed that year between Boston and Providence by the Commercial and Citizens daily line of stage coaches, was 24,800, and that in the same year 1706 tons of merchandise were transported between the two cities in baggage wagons, and 3400 in sea vessels, passing around Cape Cod, a distance of two hundred and ten miles, the distance by turnpike being but forty-two miles."

The only inland navigation in the state was on the Middlesex canal, on which was a packet-boat, which left Charlestown for Chelmsford every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, returning on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

A distinguished English traveler in 1828 says: "Seven and one-half miles per hour from Boston to Providence, which I record as being considerably the quicker rate of traveling we met with anywhere in America."

January 1, 1828, Fitchburg and Leominster, Lancaster and Boston accommodation stage left Fitchburg Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, arriving at Boston at six P. M. Returning, leaving Boston on alternate days at nine A. M., reaching Fitchburg at three P. M. The route was through Bolton, Stow, Waltham, Watertown and Cambridge. Another line, known as the Boston, Lancaster and Fitchburg accommodation stage, left Doolittle's, Brattle street, Boston, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, at nine A. M., reaching Fitchburg at six P. M., returning, leaving A. Sheldon's tavern, Fitchburg, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at seven A. M., arriving in Boston at three P. M.; proprietor, Pitch of Lancaster; the fare from Boston to Fitchburg, $2.12½; to Lancaster, $1.50. The proprietors announce that they have furnished themselves with good horses and carriages, careful and obliging drivers, and are determined that there shall be nothing wanting on their part to make the travelers comfortable.

Badger and Porter's Stage Register, in 1829, has:

"Mail stage leaving Boston for Fitchburg Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at two A. M. (via Cambridge, Waltham, Lancaster and Leominster,) and from Fitchburg to Athol, where the line divided, one going to Brattleborough and one to Greenfield, both to Albany, arriving in Albany on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, (the stages from Albany reaching Boston at same time,) also a stage for Fitchburg, Keene and Rutland, Vermont, leaving Boston Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at four A. M. Also mail stage, leaving Boston for Fitchburg, through to Bennington, to Albany Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 2 A. M.; due in Boston Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings. Fitchburg Accommodation stage leaving Boston Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 9 A. M., due in Fitchburg at three P. M.; returning, leaving Fitchburg Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at ten A. M.; due in Boston at six P. M. Also another leaving Boston at seven A. M. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and due in Fitchburg at three P. M. Returning, leaving Fitchburg on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at six A. M., due in Boston at two P. M."

The first stage line to Lowell, by the way of Groton, was established in 1829. The Groton Herald, May 1, 1830, announces:
reach the packets before their hour of starting, four P. M., dining on board; meals extra; dinner, fifty cents; breakfast and tea, thirty-eight cents." In October the fare was increased to six dollars, and land carriage is stated to be forty-three miles.

Capt. Basil Hall, in his "Travels in North America," in 1828 and 1829, gives a very graphic description of a stage ride from Albany, over the present route of the Boston & Albany railroad. After describing the scenery, the ravines, the gorges, and high, rocky hills, the winding of the rapid river, he said: "These Yankees talk of constructing a railroad over this route; as a practical engineer, I pronounce it simply impossible." But, only a few years later, the "iron horse" was smoothly ascending the mountains, several hundred feet rise in twenty miles, snorting up the heavy grades, notwithstanding the English traveler and engineer had pronounced it an impossibility. He also says:

"There is no posting in any part of the United States; travelers must either go by the public stage or take their own horses and carriages; or they may hire an extra, which is the nearest approach to posting in this country. On the road between Albany and Niagara, where there is much travel, an extra exclusive, as it is called, may be hired to go at whatever rate, up to a certain limit, the traveler pleases. I made arrangements with the proprietor of one of the regular stages for a special stage entirely for myself and family, all the way from Albany to Niagara, three hundred and twenty-four miles, for one hundred and fifteen dollars. It was stipulated that we might go the whole distance in three days, or, if agreeable, we might take three weeks. When we chose to make any deviation from the direct stage line, another carriage was to be hired, and paid for by us. In no part of America are there any such facilities for traveling as was found on the road in question."

His description is a very interesting picture of the country and means of travel at that date.

The Fitchburg Gazette of December 29, 1831, has the following:

In 1829 the Albany coach via Greenfield and Troy left Boston Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and arrived in Albany on the third day to dine, a distance of one hundred and sixty miles; fare, six dollars. The "Mail Line" to Albany via Northampton left Boston Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and arrived at Albany the next days at seven P. M.; distance, one hundred and sixty-nine miles; fare to Northampton, four dollars and fifty cents; to Albany, eight dollars and seventy-five cents; the extra fare by the "Mail" being on account of the quicker time. The stage fare between Boston and Worcester was two dollars, and it was currently believed that if a railroad was ever built, the fare would not be over fifty cents. The "Boston and New York Mail Coach" left Boston daily at one P. M., arriving at Hartford the next morning at six, in New Haven at two P. M., and in New York at six P. M. the second day.

The stage fare from Boston to Portland, Me., was eight dollars. The extent of the stage business is shown by the fact that in 1829 there were seventy-seven lines starting from Boston. The number had been increased to one hundred and six in 1832, and they were all driving a flourishing business.

In the Boston Transcript of September, 1830, we find the advertisement of the "New York and Boston Steam Packet Line, only forty miles land carriage; from Providence to New York daily (Sundays excepted); fare, five dollars. Stages leave Boston daily at five A. M., and
"The subscriber gives notice to all persons desiring conveyance from Fitchburg, through Ashby, New Ipswich, Mason Village, Wilton, Milford, to Amherst, N. H., or are willing to entrust him with the transaction of any business, that he shall start from Fitchburg at 9 A. M. Tuesday, and from Amherst on Wednesday at half-past seven A. M. each week; that application for seats can be made to B. S. Doolittle and Harvey Alden, the respective keepers of the two hotels in Fitchburg, and at Kimball's Hotel in Amherst. 

NOAH ANDREWS."

The Fitchburg Gazette of August 9, 1831, says:
"During the past week the enterprising proprietors of the Citizens' Line of stages have added another team to their line, making a daily line of it; this is in addition to the line leaving Boston at six A. M. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; arriving here at four P. M. In either of these stages the traveler will find a commodious seat. The gentlemen connected with this line are prompt and obliging, and their horses and coaches need no compliment." The same paper of January 17, 1832, says: "Business has been so good that daily communication with Boston was much needed, and a fair prospect was opened for its continued increase."

The Gazette of February 21 says: "Three years ago an accommodation stage arrived three times a week, from Boston, but no stage passed through the town. Now there are two stages running through the town to Keene, one to Brattleborough, one to Worcester, three to Boston, one to Lowell, one to Concord, one to Amherst, N. H."

The Gazette, May 28, announces, "A new line of stages, leaving Alden's Nashua River Hotel Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, at eleven A. M., on arrival of the stage from Keene and Winchendon, and arrive at Lowell at four P. M.; T. A. Staples, proprietor, H. L. Lawrence, driver."

The Keene Sentinel, in 1832, has the following: "Fitchburg and Keene stages leave Boston daily at five A. M., with frequent relays of six horses the whole distance. Better fed and disciplined horses, more accommodating drivers, and more convenient and elegant coaches, are not met on any of our long-established routes. All of the lines, we have no doubt, are prompt in their arrangements, but we can confidently speak of this line, which by their great velocity of speed have brought Keene so near to the metropolis of New England."

March 5, 1832, the following advertisement appears: "Boston, Fitchburg, Brattleborough and Albany daily stages, except Saturday, leave Boston at four A. M., and arrive at Brattleborough that evening."

The number who traveled in those days, either for business or pleasure, was comparatively small, and when a man traveled, he was supposed to be very forehanded, or else that he represented some very wealthy institution or corporation. The usual price for carrying passengers on the old coaches was from six to ten cents per mile, according to the speed and accommodations. If a person had to ride on the roof of the coach, when there were seats for from nine to fifteen persons, he could go for six cents a mile. If he was an inside passenger, while there were accommodations for twelve, he must pay ten cents a mile. In the dead of winter, it was much pleasanter to be an inside passenger; but on a warm June day, when the cool breezes came, it was much pleasanter to be an outsider. Whenever the coach stopped for meals, the passenger had to pay eighteen and three-fourths cents for breakfast or supper, and twenty-five cents for his dinner. If he wanted a stimulating beverage, he had to pay six cents for a glass of French brandy, three cents for a glass of gin or Jamaica rum, and two cents for a glass of whiskey. If he purchased a cigar, he generally paid one cent for one made of domestic tobacco, or three cents if he took a warranted Havana cigar."
The *Gazette* of January 3, 1832, says: "Mr. Estabrook, agent at Keene, has long been familiar with this employment, and he urged the first stage through Fitchburg to Keene, and has suggested many improvements since." The same paper, on the 21st of February of that year, referring to Keene stages via Fitchburg, says: "The hills of this route are not so frequent and so difficult of ascent as to be wearisome, nor the valleys so extended and so large as to be monotonous. Nature seems to have aided the schemes of designing men in providing the basis and materials for excellent roads, which (in the very worst seasons) are never so bad as scarcely to retard at all the hurrying progress of the crowded coaches."

Shattuck’s History of Concord says: "There are now (1833) an average of forty stages which arrive and depart weekly, employing sixty horses between Boston and Groton, and carrying about three hundred and fifty passengers,—one hundred and fifty having passed in one day."

In those days, when travelers met with people on the highway, both saluted one another with a certain dignified and formal courtesy. All of the children were regularly taught at school "to make their manners" to strangers. The salute was a respect for age and authority, which was then taught to the young. To salute travelers was as well a duty as a decency. A child who did not "make his manners" to a stranger on the high road was deemed a low fellow; a stranger who did not acknowledge this civility was esteemed of no respectability. It may be remarked that men of the highest rank in those days were particular in their attentions to all, especially to children, and the emphasis of a stranger's courtesy was generally the measure of his station.

The decadence of this old highway politeness is thus explained by a writer of these days: "When people plod-
shows the great change in the mode and time of travel which has taken place in the last sixty years. The rivalry between the stage lines in those days was very keen. The Tremont Mail Stage Company, between Boston and Providence, in its bid for public patronage, said in the Traveller:

"Stages leave Boston every morning at five, and Providence at seven o'clock. Also, steamboat mail leaves Providence every day on the arrival of the boats, and arrives in Boston from one to three hours in advance of the principal part of the stages of the Citizens' line.

N. B. It will be seen by reference to several papers of the city that the Citizens' Stage Company have broken out with a new advertisement, purporting that they are running the only stages from this city to Providence, to connect with the boats, evidently designed to give the impression in full that the Tremont Mail Stage Company had been beaten off the route, which had reinstated them in full possession of the whole line, and given them another opportunity to monopolize and impose upon passengers, as has been their custom at all times when a good, wholesome opposition has not kept them within proper bounds. As they have practiced such a course of deception upon us so long, we pay no regard to such foul-tongued imposition, other than to say that we have made very large additions to our former stock, which enables us to run more regular, with much better stock and coaches, and in less time to and from the boats, on an average, than any other line on the route."

The Union line announced that it was

"Slow and sure, but always on time; fare only two dollars; no racing allowed. The proprietors of this line boast not of their speed, though in this respect not inferior to any other. When passengers wish to proceed at a faster than the usual rate, the teams are driven through in less than six hours, by skillful and obliging drivers, who never fail to please. Stages leave Brigham's, Hanover street, at five o'clock every morning, except Sunday, and on that day at nine A. M. The accommodation stage leaves same hour every day but Sunday, at eleven A. M."

Charles Sumner, writing in February, 1834, says:

"We started from Boston at half-past three o'clock Monday morning, with twelve passengers and their full complement of baggage on board, and with six horses. The way was very dark, so that, though I rode with the driver, it was some time before I discovered that we had six horses. Light overtook us at Newton Falls, about ten miles from the city; breakfasted at Natick, sixteen miles, part of us; then, for thirty miles, rode in a crazy wagon; after that I rode sixteen miles alone in a gig, driving a horse that Rosinante would not have owned as a kinsman, over roads almost impassable to the best of animals. Every step my horse took was caused by a blow from my whip. It was thus I rode, literally working my passage as much as he who drove the horse on the canal. My shoulder is lame from whipping the poor brute. I arrived at Thompson, the first town we enter in Connecticut, about three o'clock P. M., about sixty miles from Boston. Here we dined and again started weary on our way, with forty miles of heavy traveling before us. Changed horses every sixteen miles. The moon was up, making the road less gloomy than it otherwise would have been; but even this deserted us before we arrived at Hartford, which was not until three o'clock Tuesday morning, having been on the road twenty-three hours. I sat with the driver all the time. The cold was benumbing during that night, so much so that the experienced driver complained. At eleven o'clock A. M. started from Hartford for New Haven, route of forty miles, where we arrived at eight o'clock in the evening."

From New Haven to New York he went by steamboat, and thence to Baltimore by boat and rail; from Baltimore to Washington by stage, taking from half-past eight A. M. until night to cover the thirty-eight miles of distance. This was Charles Sumner's first visit to Washington, and the following, from one of his letters, is of interest:

"Calhoun will speak to-morrow. I shall probably hear him, and he will be the last man I shall ever hear speak in Washington. I probably shall never come here again. I have little or no desire to ever come here again in any capacity. Nothing that I have ever seen of politics has ever made me look upon them with any feeling other than loathing."

An American traveler in Scotland relates the following unique experience of the division of travel into first, second and third class: He contracted for a "first class passage" in a stage coach going up in the mountains at a charge of two pounds. On the trip he noticed that a
"second class passenger," who had paid only one pound fare, and a "third class passenger," who had paid ten shillings, were riding in the same coach and enjoying the same privileges as himself. He naturally failed to see where the difference came between the "classes," and considered that he had been imposed on, until the coach reached the foot of a long and very steep hill, when the horses stopped and the driver called out: "First class passengers keep your seats; second class passengers get out and walk; third class passengers get out and push." He adds, "You can rest assured I rode in state to the top of that hill."

In 1834 there was the "Boston and Albany Line of stages, via Fitchburg, through in two days," Horace Brown being the agent in Boston; he was also the agent for the lines through Bolton, Lancaster, Leominster, Fitchburg and Keene. Fare at this time, Boston to New York city, was announced at eight dollars. In 1834 there was a steamboat, "The Herald," running on the Merrimac river from Lowell to Nashua, N. H., for conveyance of passengers.

The fifty years from 1784 to 1834 may be described as the "era of the stage coach" in the United States.

Commencing in 1802, for three years the national government ran a line of stages between Philadelphia and New York city, carrying mail and passengers, netting a profit of twelve thousand dollars. The building of railroads suggested the transfer of mails from the stage lines; but a good idea of what the new railroads were is shown by the protest entered by them, in 1835, to the condition in the mail contracts, requiring a schedule time of thirteen miles per hour, between New York and Philadelphia, as being too fast!

The Fitchburg Directory of 1835 has the following list of stages:

Boston, Fitchburg and Keene Mail stage, leaving Boston every day, Saturdays excepted, at two A.M., arrives at Fitchburg at half-past ten A.M., and Keene at seven P.M.; leaves Keene every day, Sunday excepted, at four A.M., arrives at Fitchburg at half-past eleven A.M., and Boston at seven P.M. Fare, Boston to Fitchburg, one dollar and fifty cents; Fitchburg to Keene, one dollar and fifty cents.

Boston, Lancaster and Fitchburg, accommodation, arrives from Boston Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at four P.M.; leaves Fitchburg Monday, Wednesday and Friday at seven A.M.; arrives at Boston at two P.M.; fare, Fitchburg to Boston, two dollars.

Fitchburg and Worcester Mail stage (intersecting with the Keene and Lowell stages), leaves Worcester Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at seven A.M., and arrives at Fitchburg at half-past ten A.M.; leaves Fitchburg Monday, Wednesday and Friday at half-past eleven A.M.; arrives at Worcester at four P.M.; fare, one dollar and twenty-five cents.

Fitchburg, Groton and Lowell Mail stages, leave Lowell Monday, Wednesday and Friday at seven A.M.; leave Fitchburg the following days at half-past eleven A.M.; arrive at Worcester at four P.M.; fare, one dollar and fifty cents.

Lowell and Springfield Mail stages, leave Lowell Monday, Wednesday and Friday at three A.M.; arrive at Fitchburg at eight A.M., Springfield at seven P.M.; leave Springfield the following days at two A.M.; arrive at Fitchburg at two P.M., Lowell at eight P.M.; fare to Lowell, one dollar and fifty cents; to Springfield, three dollars.

Ashburnham and Worcester Post, leaves Fitchburg every Tuesday at nine A.M., and arrive from Worcester the following day at three P.M.

Stage drivers mentioned are, Locke Woodward, Leonard Day, Timothy Underwood and J. Whitcomb. Stage proprietor, Aaron Flower; stage agent, Walter Johnson.

The stage agent, now an obsolete functionary, was a man of much consequence and was established in many taverns as a necessary, and almost immovable, piece of bar-room furniture.

Torrey's History, in 1835, says: "The town has daily communication by means of mail stages with Boston, Keene and Lowell; stages departing three times a week for Springfield and Worcester, and returning on alternate
days. Accommodation stages also pass daily between this place and Boston." We find the following advertisement:

"PITCHBURG, LOWELL AND BOSTON RAILROAD Lmrc.—Through in five and one-half hours, and no mistakes. Leave Fitchburg Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at one P. M., through Lunenburg, Groton, Westford, North Chelmsford, to Lowell, in season for the five o'clock train of cars for Boston, Andover and Haverhill; arrive at Boston the same evening at half-past six o'clock; returning, leave Boston Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at seven A. M., and arrive at Fitchburg at one P. M.

"At Fitchburg the stages intersect with stages for Ashburnham, Winchendon, Brattleborough and Albany; also for Leominster, Sterling, West Boylston and Worcester. Passengers by this route will find fine horses and coaches, and careful and obliging drivers, with reasonable fare; so the traveling public will find it for their ease and comfort to give the proprietors a liberal share of patronage.

For the proprietors,

JOB B. WEBBER."

Lowell, February 6, 1840.

In the lists of stages published in Boston Directory of 1842, we find:

"Albany line, via Fitchburg, Keene, Burlington, Brattleborough and Greenfield, leaving Boston daily, except Sunday, at four A. M. Fitchburg Accommodation, via Lancaster, leaving Boston Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, at eight A. M."

Fitchburg and Boston Accommodation stages and Railroad line advertises, August 20, 1844:

"Leaving Fitchburg Monday, Wednesday and Friday at one P. M., via Lunenburg, Groton, Littleton, Acton and Concord, being the best route to Concord. Office at Putnam's Fitchburg Hotel. Thomas A. Staples, proprietor; H. L. Lawrence, driver."

In the Boston Directory of 1844 appears the following:

"The Boston & Fitchburg railroad terminates in the center of that town; is about forty-five miles in length, and is now being constructed. It has been completed to Waltham, and it is calculated that the whole road will be finished in the autumn of this year."

In the Directory of 1846 we find the following:

"The first passenger train for Fitchburg left Warren bridge on Wednesday last at seven A. M., and reached that town, forty-nine miles from Boston, at half-past nine, stopping at the way stations."

One of our prominent citizens, speaking to the writer of his first arrival in this city, in 1846, by stage from New Hampshire, describes the busy scene as he remembers it: "The whole square opposite the Fitchburg Hotel, filled with stages of the various lines, running from here north and west in connection with the railroad, then just completed, gave to the town an appearance of great activity, and made it very attractive to the visitor."

In common with the other towns of New England, a great change occurred in Fitchburg in consequence of the construction of railroads. Many people recall the days of four, six and eight horse loads of the products of the farm, which passed through the town on their way to Boston, returning with groceries and other necessaries. The roads were sometimes filled with teams, and often the noon hour saw a long line of wagons drawn up before the taverns. In 1846, the following were the stages leaving Fitchburg:

Keene, via Ashburnham, Winchendon, Fitzwilliam and Troy, at ten A. M.; G. E. Hall and A. Nicholas, drivers.

Keene, via Ashby, Rindge, Fitzwilliam and Troy, at ten A. M.; C. Whitcomb and H. Hodskin, drivers.

Keene, via Ashby, New Ipswich, Jaffrey and Marlborough, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at ten A. M.; C. W. Fling, driver.

Lowell and Nashua, via Lunenburg and Groton, Monday, Wednesday and Friday at one P. M.; Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at four P. M.; Mr. Fuller, driver.

Athol, via Westminster, Gardner, Templeton and Phillipston, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, four P. M.; S. Carleton, driver.

Winchendon, via Ashburnham, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at four P. M.; L. Lakin, driver.

Peterborough, N. H., Monday, Wednesday and Friday at ten A. M.; George D. Hurlburt, driver.

Worcester, via Leominster, Sterling and West Boylston, Monday,
Wednesday and Friday at four P. M., Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at one A. M. S.

Heywood's Gazetteer, published in 1847, says:

"In a brief history of Fitchburg, published by one of its friends in 1793, it is stated with a laudable degree of satisfaction that 'at present they have a stage which runs between there and Boston, and goes and comes twice a week,' we, as faithful chroniclers, in 1846, say that the staging between Fitchburg and Boston has much improved since 1793; the horses are of a different cast altogether; they are stouter and stronger, although they drink nothing but water, and breakfast, dine and sup on pine wood and sea-coal. Their common gait is twenty miles per hour, but push them and they'll go forty. They 'go and come' three or four times a day, instead of twice in a week, and the stages are so contrived as to carry one hundred inside passengers instead of nine; when extras are required, a thousand may travel with ease and safety.'"

The Fitchburg Directory of 1848 gives the Fitchburg and Jaffrey stage, leaving Fitchburg on the arrival of the first train of cars from Boston, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, passing through Ashby, New Ipswich, intersecting there with stages from Manchester and Nashua, and to Temple and Peterborough. Lemuel Long, driver.

In the next year's Directory, Mr. Long appears as the driver of the depot stage, and until his death was the mail contractor between the depot and the post-office.

On January 18, 1850, we find the advertisement: "Fitchburg and Manchester, N. H., stages, leaving Fitchburg on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, on the arrival of the cars. H. N. Porter, driver."

In 1856 appears the advertisement of what was probably the last regular stage line from Fitchburg. The Fitchburg and Templeton stage, via Westminster, South Gardner and East Templeton; leaving Templeton every morning at 9:30, arriving at Fitchburg at 11:45, connecting with the Boston and Worcester trains; returning, leaving Fitchburg at 6:15, on the arrival of the last train. Sibley & Brown, proprietors, and Mr. Childs driver.

The stage driver was a man of much consequence, and so looked up to that the driver of the Salem coach hardly exaggerated his position when he roared out angrily to a hungry passenger who wanted him to drive faster, "While I drive this coach, I am the whole United States of America."

In the days before the introduction of railroads there lived a certain tavern-keeper, named Ramsay, who was the proprietor of all the stage coaches in his region. His house was a fine, spacious, old-fashioned inn, where one was sure to find cleanliness and comfort, the best of everything that a rich country could afford, and plenty of it. Squire Ramsay had become rich, and was respected by all his neighbors. Unfortunately, however, he became also a little too fond of his "pure old rye." His friends felt the necessity of cautioning him against this besetting sin; but the squire, being a high-spirited old colt, required careful handling. Finally, it was agreed that the doctor of the place, one of his oldest friends, should deal with him in the most delicate manner possible. The doctor thought best to approach his friend in the way of a parable, as Nathan did David, and felt certain of success. At their next interview he led the conversation intentionally to the subject of stage coaches—how long they would last, etc. "Now, Mr. Ramsay," said he, "suppose you had a fine, well-built old coach, that had done good
service and was yet sound, though perhaps a little shak-ling, and the seams a little opened; would you put it to a team of fiery young horses, on the roughest part of the road, or would you put it to a team of steady old stagers, and on the smoothest part of the road you could find?" "Well, Doctor," said the squire, in perfect igno-
rence of the doctor's drift, "If I had such a stage as you describe, I would soak it!" The doctor was silenced; but, whether from the advice of his friends or the promptings of his own good sense, the squire ceased to run the "old coach" so hard, and died highly esteemed and respected.

It is impossible to give the names of all the old "knights of the whip," who were once the connecting links between this place and the outside world, but among those most frequently mentioned by our older resi-
dents are those referred to in the following pages.

At one time the stage business of this vicinity was owned by Chedorlaomer Marshall, Josiah Whitcomb and Gardner E. Hall, Mr. Marshall having the general manage-
ment of the business, and living in the house built by Oliver Fox, standing on the present site of the opera house, with the stables in the rear. They had twenty coaches, besides wagons, and over one hundred horses were used on their route, which were stationed along the line, that frequent changes might insure arrivals on schedule time. It was the custom, during the spring months, when the deep mud of the roads rendered traveling very bad, and the use of the coaches impracticable, to substitute for them open wagons with three or four seats, without any cover, and known as "mud wagons." The contract for carrying the mail in those days required that the vehicles should all be hung on thorough-braces of a certain kind.

The repeal of the Corn Laws in England in 1846 aroused great interest, especially in Canada, and it being

before the days of the telegraph, in order to convey the news as quickly as possible, Ginery Twichell and Chedor-
laomer Marshall, who were great personal friends, entered into a competition as to which would get the news into Montreal first, Mr. Marshall going over the regular coach route through Ashburnham, and Twichell going from Worcester, over the other route. On the arrival of the steamer in Boston, early in the forenoon, a special locomotive left over the Fitchburg railroad, and was in
charge of David Chambers (who also ran the first locomotive over the road) and Samuel Felton, superintendent of the road. The trip to Fitchburg was made in fifty-one minutes, a speed not since equalled.

Mr. Marshall had been waiting for three days for the news, with a horse harnessed night and day, and a man sleeping in the kitchen ready for the hitch into a sleigh, which was at once made, and Mr. Marshall started. The horse will be remembered by old residents, "Old Buck," then a fine dapple gray, which lived to an old age and became per-
fectly white.

The trip to Ashburnham center was made in twenty-seven minutes, and Windsor, Vt., a distance of ninety miles,
was reached that night, Mr. Marshall arriving in Montreal long before Mr. Twichell. Mr. Marshall was a man of great executive ability, and very popular with his patrons. After the days of stage coaches he engaged largely in the mail-contract business.

Benjamin West, or "Uncle Ben," as he was called by the boys, drove the extra stage between Fitchburg and Keene. During the building of the Cheshire railroad he drew all the timbers for the bridges on the road. His stable stood near the site of the present millinery store of C. H. Doten. He was interested in another enterprise with C. Marshall; they contracted to furnish all of the Irishmen the company wanted for the building of the road, for a
stated sum per man. Marshall would be at the ports in Boston when the ships arrived, hire the men, bring them here, and West would take them along the road where needed. Mr. West and his brother Charles did a large business, dealing in wood. They cut thousands of cords from a lot on Pearl hill, to be burned on the locomotives. For several years they used a thirty horse-power wood sawing machine on the lines of the railroad companies in New England.

Josiah Whitcomb, or “Uncle Si,” as he was familiarly known, was famous for his good whips, the stock being of whalebone, nicely balanced with a long raw-hide lash, and he took great pride in his ability to handle his six horses, and crack his whip. With him, as was frequently the case, stage-driving was hereditary; his father and grandfather having preceded him on the same line.

Gardner E. Hall, one of the owners, drove a coach, and after the Cheshire railroad was built and the stage business discontinued, he was given a passenger train, and made as efficient a conductor as he had stage-driver. His partner, Marshall, said of him, “He was never known to ‘knock down,’ and was honest in all his dealings.”

One of the stage routes to Boston was owned by Gen. Holman of Bolton, Col. Lowe, and Gen. Jewett of Fitchburg. Among the popular drivers were Leonard Day, Freeman Smith, Charles Smith, Joe Maynard and others.

Sylvanus Wood, the veteran expressman, was a very popular driver, and famous for being always on time. He drove for many years from Fitchburg to Brattleborough, and brought the first passengers from up the line who made the trip over the railroad. He had a fund of stories of the old stage days, and used to relate that a party of nabobs of Brattleborough, arriving by train from Boston, were very anxious to get home. Mounting the stage, they reached Athol, where they changed to a team of four white horses, as ugly as sin and who would go like the evil one. Squire Bradley of Brattleborough bet a supper for the party that Wood would drive to the next town, six miles distant, in half an hour. The party had stopped at each road house, and had “Tom and Jerry” or “hot flip,” and were ready for any fun or excitement. Wood drew up his lines, cracked his whip, and away they went at a break-neck speed, and in just twenty-eight minutes arrived at the place named. At Brattleborough that night, the party had their supper and a great time, and in fact, “painted the town red.” Passengers were anxious to ride by Wood’s stage. One day, coming in with his own coach and two extras, well filled, he found a large party awaiting him at Westminster. Nothing daunted, he hired the landlord to help him out, and came into Fitchburg with twenty-eight passengers and about a ton of baggage on his own coach, and the others with about the same. The proprietor, Marshall, expostulated with him, somewhat, for overloading the coaches. Mr. Wood started out from Fitchburg the day before Thanksgiving in 1847, with eighty-five passengers, four coaches being required. This was probably the largest number of passengers ever leaving Fitchburg by coach in one day. He continued to drive until February 1, 1849, when he entered the express business, continuing until his death last year. The close attention paid by him to his business is shown by the fact that when the Hon. Rodney Wallace drove him to Gardner, two years ago, to attend the reunion of the old stage drivers and teamsters, Mr. Wood remarked, “I have not been over the road since I drove over it forty years ago.”

The Worcester, Fitchburg and Keene Stage Line was owned at one time by Col. Staples. Among the drivers was Samuel L. Woodward, who is thus described: “He had a very clear head, a round, cheerful, happy face, a plump person and a frank, hearty manner, united with a
suaviter in modo,” (very popular characteristics, by the way). He was afterwards employed by Adams & Co. as one of the first drivers of their Boston wagon, and continued for many years, and was very successful in working up business for the new line, talking to the bankers and merchants with signal success.

The last of the old stage drivers now living in this city is Henry L. Lawrence,* whose first route was from Fitchburg to Groton, commencing to drive when sixteen years of age. He later drove from Fitchburg to Lowell, then to Harvard and Boston, and from Petersham to Groton. During the building of the Fitchburg railroad he drove to the terminus as the road progressed, and after its opening to this city was transferred to the route from Templeton to Fitchburg. On the opening of the Vermont & Massachusetts railroad he entered the employ of the railroad company, and served as conductor for several years. For the last ten years he was mail agent from the depot to the post-office, succeeding Lemuel Long; and Henry and his assistant, “Old Peter,” were both familiar sights on our streets.

Joseph Cushing drove the stage from Boston to Peterborough, N. H., and was also one of the famous fast riders of the pony-express, established between Boston and Montreal, his section extending from Fitchburg to Keene, a distance of forty-four miles, which he was expected to cover in four hours.

Ward Webber, another of the old drivers, could always be depended upon to make up any lost time on the road, and arrive at the end of the trip on time. The mail stage usually carried only six passengers, the other coaches taking nine passengers inside and two on the driver’s seat. The fare was higher by the mail coach, which was expected to rattle over the road at about ten miles per hour, than by the accommodation lines, as they were called. Frequently a fleet horse and chaise was called into service to overtake the stage, by belated passengers, if applied for within half an hour after the departure of the coach.

Harrison Bryant of Leominster was one of the old drivers of the Brattleborough line, covering the thirty-five miles from Lancaster to Boston in seven hours, leaving Lancaster at one o’clock in the afternoon, and returning, leaving Boston at one o’clock in the morning. At that time the Keene and Brattleborough stage lines met, and made their stopping place at Capt. Er Balch’s old Leominster tavern, and going over the same turnpike to Boston. He also later drove from Fitchburg to Boston on the Keene line, making the run in about six hours, shifting horses four times. The return trip left Boston at four A. M., and he very seldom failed to drive up to the tavern in Fitchburg while the twelve o’clock bell was ringing. Another driver here took the coach, which reached Keene at seven o’clock in the evening.

It was the custom to send a man with a one-horse chaise about the city, to pick up the passengers who were off from the regular route. Bryant later drove on nearly all the other lines of this vicinity; he also went to Norwich for Ginery Twichell, who sent ten Concord coaches to transport the passengers and baggage to and from the Norwich line of boats, between that city and seven miles below, where they were stopped by the ice. Mr. Bryant drove one of these coaches, and as they all went over the route together by night, each with its lanterns lighted, they looked like a caravan. Later he went to Vermont, where he drove from Rutland over the Green mountains for five years, covering during that time over seventy thousand miles. The winters were severe, and

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*Mr. Lawrence died December 19, 1895, aged eighty-seven years.
snow drifts eight to ten feet deep. The farmers along the line kept the road well shovelled out, which he repaid by taking the children back and forth to the little district school without charge. Mr. Bryant never used tobacco or liquor, he never had a smash-up, or injured a passenger. It used to be the custom for the passengers to jump off at a tavern and run in to get their toddy. It was always, "Come, driver, come in and have something." At first he used to decline, but the landlords complained, saying he was taking a shingle off of the house. He compromised by apparently joining them, keeping his glass covered up with his hand, so that they could not see that he had no toddy in it. He left staging for a short time and went to farming in Athol. The third day of farmer's life, standing in a field, he saw the stage drive by; the driver gave him a salute and cracked his whip; the horses sprang ahead on the gallop, and the passengers on top waved to him. The old coach bounded over the road, and soon disappeared behind the turn. He began to feel lonesome and homesick, and wanted to get back on the box, guiding the leaders. The old-time love for the business was too much for him, and he packed his carpet-bag, and in two days was back on the seat, leaving the miles behind him. The hardest day in the week to get through was Sunday, when he missed the old swaying motion of the coach, which was to him as soothing as the rocking of a cradle to an infant. He was a born stage-driver, and covered over 135,000 miles on his various routes. After moving to Leominster he was engaged in the livery business. The stage-driver of the olden time was an important personage, with his spanking team of horses, and was generally on terms of intimacy with every prominent person on his route. Many of them after their retirement from the box were leading, progressive business men. The arrival and departure of the coach called out a large attendance. The skill exhibited in handling their teams of four or six horses was an inspiring sight. The smoking, high mettled steeds, dashing up to the door at full speed—the reins so handled that the wheels just grazed the door stone—and stopping with the rapidity of an electric shock at exactly the right spot. The driver, when he stood at the bar of the hotel with his long coach whip under his arm, and his long drab overcoat coming down to his heels, looked like one of the old English coachmen just stepped out of a frame of a picture of early times. The drivers were generally fine specimens of muscular manhood, and although proverbially good-natured, were men not to be trifled with by presuming individuals. In the words of an old stage-driver who, for many years, drove his four or six horses, making his seventy-two miles daily in sunshine, rain, and snow, and who could give some account of the occupants of every house on his route:—"You see in those days, the stage-drivers were smart and ambitious like, and pretty jealous of each other, for to see who would hitch up the best team, make the best time, and catch the most passengers. It made no difference to our pocket-books, as we were on wages; but somehow, when you were on top of a shiny stage with four or oftener six good horses and all full inside and out, you felt as if you owned the whole concern, passengers and all. We were bound to make our trips in just so many hours, go fast or go slow. When we lost time on any part of the road we tried to make it up, every driver looking out sharp that none of the others got ahead of him; what a sight of bags, bundles and band-boxes they did lug; how folks would crowd around and ask questions; they appeared to think a stage-driver knew all that was going on in the world, and they were about right; he did in those days. The long pulls up the hills,
and the rush of the coach and four or six horses down the other side, made the journey exciting and interesting."

The Concord coach, with its oval body, its lofty driver's seat, its mighty thorough-brace springs, and leather-lined interior, was the Pullman car of sixty years ago. The iron railing that ran around the vehicle's top enclosed the big box, little box, bandbox and bundle of the travelers, who were expected to keep a sharp lookout for their hair-covered trunks or sole-leather portmanteaus, and see that they were safely strapped to the rack behind the coach, or deposited in the boot beneath the driver's seat. Smaller articles were taken inside, including the large pasteboard bandboxes in which the brides carried the Leghorn straw bonnets, then the rage.

The old stage-drivers belonged to a race which has nearly passed away; and what a race they were, with bear-skin caps, and overcoats, with their teams covered with ivory rings; coaches kept always neat and clean, with their magnificent horses. They acquired a way of thinking, all characteristic, and were sententious in their speech, expressing words with a terseness that many a stump speaker might envy. They possessed in a marked degree that faculty called "horse sense." They were character readers, knowing well not only every horse of their team, but also, generally, every man who rode on the stage for a couple of hours. They did not mind exposure, heat and cold being received by them as a part of their work, and although, generally, men whose word could be fully relied on, they did enjoy guying a passenger. What stories they could tell, and what jokes they would pass!

Holmes has graphically delineated the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table;" how felicitously could he have described the autocrat of the tavern stable. The old Sudbury tavern has been immortalized by Longfellow, but no reference is made to its most important appendage, the bustling and important stage-driver. The autocrat of all the Russians never assumed his imperial throne with half the airs of the stage autocrat in mounting his throne, the stage-box. Every look, every gesture, every order, impressed the crowd of rustics with a profound idea of his importance; these attentions were always vastly pleasing to the "knight of the whip," as, with a flourish, he gathered up his ribbons and cracked the whip over his impatient team. The driver's bugle—having not a key, and on which the driver could not play a tune, only skips—to a boy awakened by its distant sound at early dawn, made the sweetest of music. To be an actual stage-driver was the extreme ambition of many a country boy.

In addition to the conveyance of passengers, the driver had a multitude of other duties to perform on his route. There were messages to deliver, bills and notes to collect or pay, and articles to purchase, besides the business of delivering to banks and brokers packages of money for redemption, deposit or exchange. In fact, the old stage-drivers claim to have been the "original expressmen." The profits of the errand business were the driver's perquisites. Many of them accumulated considerable property, and were what was called "well-to-do," and were often either whole or part owners of their teams. Their system of errand business was almost entirely in their hands or hats. A stage-driver's hat, in those days, when the monstrous "bell crown" was the fashion, was usually filled with letters and parcels; some of them used to claim that they became bald-headed prematurely, in consequence.

The stage coach was considered the "crack" institution, worthy of illustration by the best artists. In England a highly spirited picture, usually a colored engraving representing the mail coach, crowded with passengers inside and out, drawn by four or six fine horses, dashing over
the highway at a spanking rate, was considered as worthy of a place in gentlemen's houses during the first quarter of the present century. The taste and skill of good artists were tested to depict the team in every possible situation—in the act of changing for relays, or pawing the ground at the starting place, snuffing eagerly the morning air, impatient to be off; or in the more unfortunate fix of an overturn or break-down.

Had it been suggested to the old time stage-driver that two parallel iron rails and "a tea-kettle on wheels" would at some future day dethrone him, and render staging not only unfashionable but obsolete, he would have stared in astonishment or smiled in pity upon the speaker as either a fool or a madman;—he regarded the stage coach as indispensable, as we now think the railroad.

A well-known Worcester clergyman relates the following story, at his own expense, of a stage-coach experience. In his younger days he was tramping through the White mountains with a companion who was also a clergyman. One day they mounted the driver's seat of a stage coach, and found the driver an interesting character, loaded with good stories. The three speedily became friendly, and it was with reluctance that they parted at the end of the journey. "I'm glad ter hev met yer, fellars," says the driver, in farewell. "Yer see, I' hevn't seen a man this summer, excepting ministers."

The establishment of an opposition line often resulted in bitter rivalry between the companies, and cuts in rates, but not often did it go so far as evidenced by the following story told of the Boston and Providence stages: "A line called the New Pilot Line was started, and competition became very brisk between it and the old line, which from the cut in rates was losing money, and one of the principal owners was very much exercised thereat. One morning, some forty or fifty horses used on the Pilot Line coaches were found poisoned in their stables; suspicion was directed to the gentleman in question, and evidence was not wanting to connect him with it. The Pilot Line employed Jeremiah Mason, a famous lawyer of his day, to prosecute the case. He happened to live on the same street with the suspected man, and one evening he went to see him. It was not known what transpired between the parties, but the next morning the suspected man was found dead in his bed. He had poisoned himself as, presumably, he had the horses."

Many of the veterans were remarkably expert in exercising their lash. The story is told of a driver, noted for his dexterity, who wagered the drinks with a gentleman on the outside seat that he would, on passing the first flock of fowls within reach of his lash, decapitate any bird the gentleman might select, provided the passenger would be answerable for all damages; the other conditions being that the driver should not relinquish his reins or seat, nor check the speed of his horses. He was soon put to the test, for, on passing a farmhouse, a flock of hens, convoyed by a stately rooster, was approached. As the coach passed at full speed, the driver was directed to try his skill on the rooster. Quick as thought the unerring lash flashed through the air, encircling the neck of the hapless chanticleer, and his glittering head flew across the road, to the dismay of the astonished hens.

Longfellow refers to his first introduction to the "Wayside Inn" at Sudbury about 1840 as follows: "The stage left Boston at about three o'clock in the morning, reaching the Sudbury tavern for breakfast, a considerable portion of the route being traveling in total darkness, and without your having the least idea who your companions inside might be."

He also refers to his experience with the accommodation stage between Boston and Portland, that took two
days for the journey. In winter the accommodation was nothing more than an ordinary sleigh, furnished with sides of coarse barking, which madly plunged into the cradle-holes or slowly struggled through the deep snow-drifts, like "a ship in a heavy sea."

Railways, when first started, were all operated by horse power, and it was generally supposed that any one could run his own car over them by paying toll, as a coach on a turnpike; but Stephenson's invention soon led to the adoption of steam power.

The first steamboat for passenger service on Long Island Sound ran between Providence and New York, in 1822, the boats making the trip from town to town in twenty-three hours, which was regarded as monstrous fast time. On one of the early trips, a lay-to for some slight repairs, off Point Judith, attracted the country people to the supposed wreck. Their amazement at the apparently burning boat suddenly sliding away through the water without the aid of sails, caused many to whisper that his "Satanic Majesty" had a hand in it, and perhaps was on board in person. With this new means of conveyance this route quickly became the favorite one for travel between Boston and New York, eighteen or twenty stage coaches being often required each way per day for the forty mile journey from Boston to Providence. Said an editor of the Providence Gazette, at that time: "We were rattled from Boston to Providence in four hours and fifty minutes; if any one wants to go faster he may send to Kentucky and charter a streak of lightning."

The fare between Providence and Boston being three dollars, an opposition line started, making a cut to two dollars and a half. A bitter fight followed, each side meeting the drops of the other until the new line reached fifty cents; when the old line offered to make trips every day with their stage filled with the first passengers who were at the starting place, with no charge for the trip. The new line met this by a free ride and a good dinner, free to their passengers at their journey's end. The old line promptly added a bottle of wine to the ride and dinner. A well-known, jolly good fellow left Boston one Monday morning, had a pleasant ride to Providence, enjoyed his dinner and wine, and promptly presented himself Wednesday morning for the third trip, and ended his sixth trip Saturday night in Boston, to learn that a compromise of a two dollar rate had been adopted.

A lady in a neighboring town thus describes her father's journey to New York in her younger days, before the date of railroads: "After an affectionate farewell to his family he went to some town in the county, took the stage to Albany, then down the Hudson river by sail-boat to New York; returning by sailing vessel to Providence, and from there by his own team home, his man having been waiting three days for the vessel. The journey was the common talk of every man, woman and child in town."

With the advent of the locomotive, the day of the stage coach was ended. The steam car, with its marvelous accession of speed and power, told its story to New England, and the old favorite was doomed. It fell, never to rise, and with its fall came a change so great that it is almost impossible for us, of a later generation, to even imagine what old New England was.

The ideas of those days, as to the proper construction of a railway, are shown in the words of a report to the legislature of Massachusetts January 16, 1829: "It is found that the cost of a continuous stone wall, laid so deep in the ground as not to be moved by the effects of the frost, and surmounted by a rail of split granite about a foot in thickness and depth, with a bar of iron on top of it of sufficient thickness for the carriage wheels to run," etc.
The Boston Courier of June 27, 1827, had the following editorial: "Alcibiades, or some other great man of antiquity, it is said, cut off his dog's tail that the quidnuncs might not become extinct from want of excitement. Some such notion, no doubt, moved one or two of our national and experimental philosophers to get up the project of a railroad from Boston to Albany, a project which every one knows, who knows the simplest rule of arithmetic, to be impracticable, but at an expense little less than the market value of the whole territory of Massachusetts; and which, if practicable, every person of common sense knows would be as useless as a railroad from Boston to the moon." When the idea of constructing the Old Colony railroad was first advanced a public meeting was held at Quincy to protest against it. One speaker stated that the opening of such communication with Boston would affect the price of oats, and destroy the business of the stage proprietor who carried six or eight passengers to and from the city every day. Dorchester was equally opposed to the road, and the people there desired to have the tracks laid only in the outskirts of the town. The records of Quincy are said to contain, in black and white, the protest of a much worked-up citizen against allowing the Old Colony railroad to pass through the town, on the ground that the noise would prevent his hens from laying.

The American Traveller, of 1830, says of railroad travel: "We have frequent accounts of the great rage for riding on the Baltimore railroad, and of the facilities at present offered the travelers for that purpose." The Fitchburg Gazette of September 6th, 1831, contained the following: "We learn that transportation of passengers upon the Baltimore & Ohio railroad will hereafter be by locomotive steam engine; the cars will now be conveyed by engine just constructed, fully capable of transporting twenty tons, including weight of the cars and one hundred and fifty passengers."

Simon Cameron prophesied in 1834 that the child was born who would be able to breakfast in Harrisburg and take supper in Philadelphia; and his prediction was considered a good subject for raillery. A person can travel five times faster now than Mr. Cameron dared prophesy. Once it cost a politician no small labor and pains to journey to Washington. Hannibal Hamlin's route in 1842 was from his home to Portland by stage; from Portland to Boston by boat; to Norwich by rail, crossing the sound to Greenport, where he took the Long Island railroad to New York; from New York to Philadelphia by rail, making the remainder of the journey by stage or boat, as best he could.

A traveler from Boston fifty years ago, to reach Chicago, left the Boston and Worcester station at seven A. M., arriving at Albany the same day. The New York Central was not then in operation, and eight days, at an expense of five dollars each, for fare and board, was spent upon the Erie Canal, between Albany and Buffalo; the rest of the trip was made via the great lakes, the traveler reaching Chicago in twenty-one days from Boston. Upon his arrival there he found it a comparative wilderness, with land salable at one dollar and a quarter per acre in what is now the heart of the second city of the United States.

In 1833 there was only one railroad in New England. A daily mail coach was sufficient for the travel between Boston and Providence, the great New England thoroughfare; the trip was made by the mail coach in one day, and by the accommodation coach in two days; it was seldom either coach was filled. The mail coach was occupied by the few to whom time was more important than money. Traveling by stage coach, although tedious,
especially when the roads were bad, was not without its attractions. Those who were fellow-passengers, even if strangers to one another, gradually entered into conversation, and there was usually some one acquainted with the route and able to impart interesting information concerning the localities through which they passed. There was a sense of freedom; an abundant enjoyment of the surroundings, and commonly, a disposition to be obliging and considerate by giving up the best seats to the ladies; by consenting to the admission or exclusion of fresh air, or by the convenient arrangement of the feet. Of course, the least amiable qualities of human nature would sometimes assert themselves, and selfish people would improve the opportunities for making all of the passengers uncomfortable; but the air of the stage-coach was generally surcharged with good humor.

Ralph Waldo Emerson used to relate the following anecdote: "A lady deeply veiled and dressed in mourning was riding in a stage-coach in Vermont, opposite to whom sat a small, sharp-featured, black-eyed woman, who began catechising her thus: 'Have you lost friends?' 'Yes, I have.' 'Was they near friends?' 'Yes, they was.' 'How near?' 'A husband and a brother.' 'Where did they die?' 'Down in Mobile.' 'What did they die of?' 'Yellow fever.' 'How long was they sick?' 'Not very long.' 'Was they sea-faring men?' 'Yes.' 'Did you save their chists?' 'Yes, I did.' 'Was they hopefully pious?' 'I hope and trust so.' 'Well, if you got their chists, and they was hopefully pious, you have much to be thankful for.'" The stress laid on the "chists," and the placing of their rescue before the piety of the husband and brother, as reasons for thankfulness, struck Emerson as exceedingly characteristic of a certain class of Yankees, and infinitely mirth-provoking. The story is told of a very fat gentleman who instructed some one to purchase two seats for him in a coach, that he might have plenty of room, and when he came to the coach found that one seat was inside and one on top.

The memory of the old stage coach is very pleasant to many of our older people. There are a few of the old, time-honored vehicles resting tranquilly in barns, occasionally disturbed to have their weather-beaten sides retinted, their dash-boards polished, and creaking axles lubricated, that they may be used on some special occasion; and as it dashes through the streets with a happy, gaily attired company, bound on a pleasure-trip, it attracts the attention of the rushing tide of people, among whom may be those who recognize it as the old coach in which they saw the bride and groom set out on their wedding journey long years ago.

Many of the old stage-drivers bitterly opposed the railroads in every way; one of them declaring that "his coach was big enough to carry all who could afford to travel between Bridgeport and New York." A driver from Pittsburg to Washington, ridiculing the locomotive, offered to bet a thousand dollars that no man could build a machine that could drag a coach from Washington to Baltimore quicker than his favorite team of iron grays. Of him it was said, that "He could leave Philadelphia on a six-horse coach, with a hot johnny-cake in his pocket, and reach Pittsburg before it could grow cold." Some of the opponents of the railroad claimed that canal conveyance (which was three or four miles per hour) was quicker; that the smoke of the locomotive would be a terrible nuisance. It was boldly declared that a gale of wind would stop the progress of the train, and that there was no practical advantage in a railway over a canal. Another gave it as his opinion that no engine could go in the night-time; because, he added, more scripturally than pertinently, "The night-time is a period when no man can work." Another remarked,
"We are told that we are to gallop at the speed of twelve miles an hour, with the aid of the devil, in the form of the locomotive, sitting as postillion in the forehouse, and an honorable member sitting behind him to stir up the fire and keep it at full speed. I will show they cannot go six; I may be able to show that we can keep up with them by the canal. Thus, sir, I prove that locomotive engines cannot move more than four and one-fourth miles per hour, and I will show the whole scheme to be bottomed on deception and fallacy."

Peter Parley's "First Book on History," (used as a school-book sixty years ago,) in the chapter on Maryland, says: "The people are building what is called a railroad: this consists of iron bars laid down along the ground, and made fast, so that carriages with small wheels may run upon them with facility. In this way one horse will be able to draw as much as ten horses on a common road. A part of the railroad is already done, and if you choose to take a ride upon it you can do so. You enter a car something like a stage, and then you will be drawn along by two horses at a speed of twelve miles per hour." This description, written for children, sixty years ago, gives an idea of railroading at that time.

While the principal railways in Massachusetts were in process of construction, and passenger trains were run over only a portion of the contemplated route, the stage lines were not entirely relinquished, but connected the temporary termini of the railroads, and pieced out the travel to the intended end of the route. Public sympathy for the stage-drivers was universal and hearty. Many of them had served in that capacity from youth to advanced age. Some had driven the stage for twenty, thirty, yes, forty years upon the same route, and become as it were "established institutions" with hosts of friends. Joseph Wyman, who run the stage between Boston and Medford, had the remark-

able record of driving for thirty-four years continuously, twice a day, without an accident of any kind.

As a matter of policy, if not of simple justice, the new companies made it a point generally to give employment to, or in some other way favor, the drivers whose lines the railway had supplanted. Many were made conductors, depot-masters, and baggage-masters; others were given the "freedom of the road," and allowed to travel without charge, a privilege they turned to good account. They were thus partly compensated for their constantly diminishing fares, their passes over the railroad enabling them to continue their errand business between the metropolis and the principal places on their routes.

Dickens delighted to portray stage-coach journeys, and has given us two each in Nicholas Nickleby and Pickwick, (and also the Wellers') and others in Copperfield and Great Expectations. And as we read the vivid description in Martin Chuzzlewit of Tom Pinch's journey from Salisbury to London, and Washington Irving's delightful sketch of "The Stage Coach," we wish that we might ride through life on the box seat of a mail coach, along smooth roads, and with a strong, steady hand to guide the horses! That we might live in a land where it is always bright May, where fields are always a-bloom, and where care and sorrow never come. But there are rough spots in every road; sometimes the driver loses his grip, the sun goes behind a cloud, the leader takes a stumble, and we find that even riding on a box seat is not an unmixed pleasure.

If we consider what a journey of sixty years ago was, we more clearly realize the great changes that have since taken place. Traveling then was a matter requiring preparation and forethought; one did not then leave the house for the place of business, and on the decision of a few minutes start on a journey of fifty or one hundred
miles, without intimation to the household—who know nothing of our absence from town until the return to dinner at about the usual hour—but a careful packing of the trunk was attended to; the coach office was visited the evening previous to the journey, that a seat might be secured, and notice given to call at the house for a passenger through;—much like the selection of a state-room on shipboard or berth in a sleeping car at the present time.

The coach office had an atmosphere of travel; its furniture and belongings savored of dust and distance; the whips, and box-coats with big buttons, like wide-awake eyes, hanging from the pegs on the walls, had a look of resting from travel, but ready to jump down and be off at a moment's notice; the walls were covered with hand-bills and advertisements, headed with the names of distant cities; wood-cuts of well-filled stage-coaches, drawn at an incredibly rapid rate over dusty roads by prancing teams of long-tailed horses, with drivers on the boxes, flourishing whips with most unnecessary length, considering the apparent activity of the animals.

With the would-be traveler there was a preparation and anticipation, pleasant or dismal, as the case might be, but always exciting, with ever recurring speculation as to to-morrow's weather; the table is laid for breakfast over night; repeated inquiries are made as to whether sundry articles have been packed, and discussion as to the keeping a light burning all night; but examination of the box in the oven-mouth showing the tinder quite dry, it is deemed safe to trust to flint and steel for light in the morning. The alarm clock is attended to, that it may fall into convulsions promptly at three o'clock; and with a last admonition to the servant girl not to oversleep, he betakes himself to slumber at a late hour at night.

Then the morning—the noisy spluttering of the alarm clock; the half awakening; the striving to collect one's thoughts; the sudden bounding out of bed when the remembrance of the day's journey flashes on the mind; striking a light by the means of the tinder-box; hastily drawing aside the curtains and peering out into the cool air to look at the gray morning, to see what the weather is like; the running to call the cook and leaving the light at her door; the hurried toilet by lamplight; the last strapping of the trunk; the opening it to put in some forgotten but necessary article; forcing one's self to eat the hastily prepared breakfast, with oft-repeated injunctions from the members of the family to be careful of this or that parcel, and not to forget that message or errand. The care for one's health is enjoined, and if the traveler is young, and the absence from home is to be for any extended time, a due regard for sound morals is inculcated.

The young people, exhilarated by the unusual bustle, are running in and out with false alarms that the stage is coming. First, an early milk cart causes the traveler to leave talking, drop his knife and fork, jump from the table, wiping his mouth in a hurry to kiss the female part of the group; the mistake is laughed at, and then, perhaps, a market wagon causes another hurried leaving-taking. Finally, a low, heavy rumble, gradually growing louder and mingling with the unmistakable rattle, the sharp cracking of a whip, and a loud "Whoa!" announces the arrival of the stage. The burly driver and stage-office runner seize the trunk between them, and the last words of parting are said. The driver opens the door with a twist and a jerk, and the traveler enters the dim interior of the coach; the iron steps are put up with a sharp clang, the door shut with violence; the driver mounts the box, gathers up the reins, calls cheerily to his
team, and the stage moves off with a roll and clatter of
the iron-shod horses' feet mingling with the last good-
byes of the group of friends who stand at the doorstep,
the father holding aloft a flaming lamp which casts a
flickering glare over the scene, and the passengers settling
themselves back in their seats for the day's journey.

At this early hour the street is silent, except for the
rattle of the coach; and deserted, except by an occasional
laborer bound for his daily toil. The signs over the shop
doors look very queer in the dim light; the stage dashes
onward through the streets, in which the houses grow
more and more scattered; then the coach runs smoothly
along the wide turnpike road, the gray light increases and
grows ruddy, and the features of the passengers can be
distinguished by each other. As they slowly climb up the
hill they meet market wagons whose drivers give a hearty
greeting. Dashing along, they soon meet the farmers, who
have already commenced their long day's toil; the mowers
stop half way in their swath, and turn to gaze at the
coach; the men in the cornfield lean on their hoes and
stare after it; the women in the yard turn back their
sun-bonnets and peep over the clothes-line, and the girls in
the farm-house run briskly to the window.

After leaving the nine-mile house, where breakfast is
again partaken, they soon overtake groups of ruddy,
barefooted children, carrying little tin pails or small Indian
baskets, bound for the little brown school-house yonder,
at the fork of the roads; they all bow and courtesy with
more energy and good-will than grace, and so do the
urchins at the school-house as they pass it, who are all
bareheaded as well as barefooted, and shade their eyes
with their arms, and stare at the passengers after making
their manners.

The cows look up as the stage passes their pastures,
whisk their tails and resume their feeding, but every colt
whinnies and follows to the limit of his paddock until,
frightened and indignant at the crack of the driver's
whip, he starts away from the roadside fence on a furious
gallop, then wheels about and stands with head and tail
erect, snorting in wonder and defiance. The cool, balmy
air of the country, the sight of the pleasant, shady
woods, of the rich meadows, the fields of grain waving
in a gentle breeze and glittering with dewdrops, the sing-
ing of the birds, and the rapid motion of the coach, are
delightful and exhilarating. The passengers have become
acquainted, and conversation has become general and ani-
mated; the weather, the crops, politics and religion, are
all duly discussed.

Way-passengers are taken up from time to time and
set down again. Frequently arriving at neat little vil-
lages, the driver gives warning blasts on his horn that
the right of way must be given to the United States mail,
and drives up at a round trot in front of the store where
the post-office is kept. During the changing of the mail,
they sit at the coach window and watch the postmaster
and his clerk rapidly assorting the packages, while the
customers, who are postponed to the imperious haste of
Uncle Sam, lean over the counters and beguile the wait of
from seven to fifteen minutes staring at the showy adver-
tisements of cordials and pills. Several small boys linger
around the store door, walking gingerly with bare feet on
the coarse gravel, glancing furtively at the coach, hoping
some of the passengers may want a drink of water, and
thus give them an opportunity to earn a few pennies by
bringing it. The driver meanwhile waters his horses from
a bucket, chiding them when they try to put their noses
into it out of turn, and dashes the frothy leavings upon
the feet of the leaders. The travelers gaze at the quiet,
ishy streets of the village, wondering whether they
would like to live there, and soliloquize on the inhabit-
ants.
The driver again mounts the box, clicks to his horses, and away they go; descending a gentle slope they enter a long, level plain, and with crack of the whip, away they speed at a swift gallop, the horses tossing their heads and rattling their harnesses as if in exhilaration at the rapidity of the motion; while the driver, holding whip and reins in one hand, takes off his hat with the other, and, resting it on his knees, pulls out his handkerchief and wipes his forehead, partly because he has a habit of doing it, and partly because it is well to show the passengers how cool he is and how easy it is to drive a four-in-hand when you have had as much experience as he has. Having done this leisurely—otherwise the effect would be materially impaired—he replaces his handkerchief, puts on his hat, squares his elbows, cracks his whip again, and on they speed as merrily as before. Approaching the town where an exchange of horses is to be made, the driver commences to undo the buckle which keeps his ribbons together, and prepares to throw them off the moment he stops at the tavern yard where the fresh horses are waiting with blankets on. The change is quickly made. In the meantime the driver and most of the passengers alight to stretch their cramped limbs and lubricate their dry throats. A very slight excuse avails for even the clergymen and ladies to take a sip of the excellent punch which the landlord has prepared. Again mounting the coach, the driver gathers up his reins, the helpers haul off the blankets, and with a cheery “All right,” off they go.

The arrival at the stopping place for dinner is an important event, and the landlord on the sound of the approaching stage repairs to the tavern door, where, with smiling, cheerful face and hearty greeting, he welcomes the passing traveler who, with sharpened appetite, is ready to do full justice to the abundant and substantial fare provided. There is no hurry, as ample time is allowed, and the dinner hour passes with many a laugh and story, in vivid contrast with the “Ten minutes for refreshments,” and the rush and jam of the railroad “quick lunch” of the later days. Resuming their seats, refreshed, they enter the last stage of their day’s travel; and despite the fatigue—as they begin to feel with Geoffrey Crayon, that “it is a comfort to shift one’s position and be bruised in a new place”—they remember with regret that they are nearing their journey’s end.

At last, from the top of a high hill, they see far away in the distance the outlines of the town for which they are bound. Rolling, pitching, rattling, the flying coach descends the hill at a headlong rate, in pursuit of the galloping team whose sixteen white feet seem sixteen times that number from the window as they go; swiftly revolving wheels grinding through the gravel and hissing through the sand, leaving behind them for many rods a long, trailing cloud of dust, which glistens in the slanting, ruddy sunbeams, like the golden sand of an African river. The passengers look forward to the dispersion of their little company with regret, and tell each other how much they have enjoyed the trip and the acquaintances formed, and express the hope that they may meet again.

Now, in the twilight, they are driving over a long bridge, and through the streets; the clocks of the town are striking eight; strange buildings tower on either hand, and over the doors of brilliantly lighted shops are unfamiliar names; suddenly the coach stops, swaying on its springs at the door of a strange tavern. A porter rushes out and opens the door; with good-byes to their companions, they are at their journey’s end. Such a coach journey would never do in this age of speed; and if we were fitted with wings to fly, it is much to be doubted if even the swiftness of that means of progression would satisfy the cravings for rapid transit of the present generation.
But it was not such a highly interesting and pleasurable thing to tumble out of bed on a cold winter's morning, climb on top of a coach in the dark, and be whirled through the coming morning, with the thermometer flirting with the zero point. It may have had a tendency to improve the race to have one's nose turn blue with cold, and one's knees shake together as they were jolted over the rough country road in a long drive to get to the city. Most people, however, would prefer, at the present time, to get up later and take the train. What would our forefathers have said to a suggestion of the possibility of the vestibule trains of the present day, with their parlor, dining and sleeping cars, lighted by electricity, provided with every convenience, and rushing through the country at the rate of a mile a minute; of covering a distance of three thousand miles without changing cars?

The stage-coach business reached its greatest development in this country in the establishment of the great overland stage lines to California, which were in the fullness of their glory in the days just before the building of the railways, when, says a writer of that date, "there was such staging as no one ever saw anywhere else." The gold discoveries in California and Colorado led men to brave the dangers and privations of long journeys into what was then nearly an unknown region. There was not a mile of railroad west of St. Joseph, Mo. From there to California, over two thousand miles, the traveler had to proceed slowly for seventeen hundred miles through an arid region, inhabited by great bands of warlike and roving Indians, and subject to terrific storms in winter. The only means of transportation was by mule, horse or ox team, and the route for hundreds of miles was marked by the graves of those who had perished on the way. The average time from St. Joseph, Mo., to California, was two and one-half months.

The first through stage line was established in 1858, over the "Butterfield route," following nearly the present route of the Southern Pacific; the first stage leaving St. Joseph September 16, arriving at San Francisco October 10, making 24 days, 18 hours, for the journey. The contract with the government called for a monthly service, which became fortnightly the following year, and continued until the breaking out of the war. The Central route was opened in 1859, and became a daily service on the first of July, 1861, with a government subsidy of a million dollars. Horace Greeley gives an interesting description of the route in his "Overland Journey," in 1859, and the story of his experience with Hank Monk was for years told and retold by every driver and traveler on the road.

In 1862-3, the business passed into the management of Ben Holliday. He extended and improved it until it became one of the greatest enterprises in this country owned by one man. His whole extent of staging contracts was two thousand seven hundred and sixty miles, and to conduct it required six thousand horses and mules and about two hundred and sixty coaches. His name is so identified with the "overland stages," that they are seldom referred to without recalling his connection therewith. Stations were established every ten miles, with sometimes a village of log or turf cabins, but often only the solitary stables where the stock tenders had the fresh horses ready harnessed—only about five minutes being required to make the shift. At every other station there was an eating-house. The stages ran closely on schedule time, and arrived at the stations with such promptness that the keepers had the meals all cooked and warm as the stage drove up, all the way to Salt Lake City.

At every fifth station a new driver mounted the box, who seldom left his seat during the fifty mile drive. He
was the autocrat of the road, and oracle of the people at
the stations, everything on the road giving way to the
stage, it being the unwritten law that the coach carrying
the mail and passengers must not be delayed. Starting
out into the darkness of the night, he found, perhaps, the
next lonely station looted, the stock tenders killed or car-
ried away captive; then, pushing on with his tired team,
he found the same thing repeated at the next station;
and then, perchance, had to make a running fight for
their lives before the drive was ended. In case of accident
or trouble, the drivers were sometimes obliged to take
the return stage back without sleep or rest. No wonder
they sometimes fell asleep on the box, the team contin-
uously going at full speed over the ground.

Every fifty miles a blacksmith shop and a small grocery
store were established. The fare from the Missouri river to
Denver was one hundred and seventy-five dollars, to Salt
Lake City three hundred and fifty, and to California five
hundred. The expenses were enormous and the losses on
account of the Indians, in one year, were over half a mil-
ion dollars. The regularity of the service, considering the
many chances and uncertainties encountered, was such as
to call forth the admiration of all who saw it. The trip
from the Missouri river to Denver, 650 miles, in five days,
by a heavy coach with ponderous mails and six to four-
ten passengers, was a great triumph of stage management.
Many felt like Mark Twain's Jack, who, having made the
trip, had the utmost confidence in Mr. Holliday's ability
to overcome any obstacle. When Jack was told that Moses
with great skill had guided the children of Israel through
the wilderness in forty years, he exclaimed "Forty years—
only three hundred miles—Humph! Ben Holliday would
have brought them through in thirty-six hours."

Mr. Holliday visited the line about twice a year, and
passed over the road with a rapidity and disregard of
expense and rules characteristic of his irrepressible nature.
In 1864 or '65 he made the quickest trip overland that it
was possible for one to make before the distance was short-
ened by railroads, causing himself to be driven from Salt
Lake to Atchison, 1220 miles, in six and a half days, and
only twelve days and two hours from San Francisco to
Atchison. The trip probably cost him $20,000 in wear
and tear of coaches and injury and loss of horses by the
rapid driving. Samuel Bowles in his "Across the Conti-
nent," in 1865, says: "Our ride by the overland mail
stages will always be a chief feature in the history of our
journey across the continent. We drove at an average of
six miles an hour, including all stops, sometimes making
full ten miles per hour, in an easy and commodious Con-
cord coach. Such are in use all through this route, and
with horses as sprightly and in as good condition as you
ever rode after in the good old days of staging the Con-
necticut river valley. We were whirled over the moun-
tains and through the dry and dusty plains of this
uninhabited and uninhabitable region,—rarely passing a
house except the stage stations, never seeing a wild bird,
as there are none,—as rapidly and regularly as we could
over macadamized roads amid a compact civilization."

"There is no stage-driving left in the States—I doubt
if there ever was any—at all comparable to this in per-
fection of discipline, in celerity and comfort, and in man-
ipulation of the reins."

"Think of a stage road one hundred miles long,
from Carson to Placerville, watered
as city streets are watered, to lay the dust for the trav-
eler; yet this luxury is performed throughout nearly the
entire route, day by day, all through the summer season."

In 1867 the Kansas Pacific was pushing westward
over the grassy hills of Kansas, and the Union Pacific
was sweeping its arms of iron up the valley of the Platte,
while the Central Pacific had climbed the Sierra Nevada
and was laying its iron trail across the Humboldt desert. At this time Wells, Fargo & Co. took possession of the fast shortening stage lines connecting these railways. To facilitate the transportation between the eastern and western termini of the railways, they purchased the largest number of stage coaches ever sold on one order. Thirty of the largest and finest Concord coaches ever built, with harnesses and furnishings complete, were shipped from Concord, N. H., on a special train, to run to the terminus of the tracks of the Union Pacific railway on express time. The bill of this shipment was nearly $40,000, and the freight was not less than $6000. So fast were the tracks of the railways pushed forward, that many of these coaches were never used as intended, but were sold to companies operating short lines to the mining camps.

The epitaph of Horace Greeley's stage-driver reads thus:
"Sacred to the memory of Hank Monk, the whitest, biggest-hearted, and best known stage-driver of the West, who was kind to all and thought ill of none; he lived in a strange era, and was a hero; and the wheels of his coach are now ringing on the golden streets.

"Long ago at the end of the route,
The stage pulled up and the folks stepped out.
They have all passed under the tavern door—
The youth and his bride, and the gray three-score.
Their eyes were weary with dust and gleam,
The day had gone like an empty dream.
Soft may they slumber, and trouble no more
For their eager journey, its jolt and roar,
In the old coach over the mountain."

"Good-night to all of the old Kings of the Road!—
Who sleep till the blast of the bugle of God.
In feverish noon, on the highway of strife,
Make the driver's old rule the law of your life—
Keep the track if you can, but mid-day or mid-night,
Whatever you do, always turn to the right."