

London Streets and Associations.

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Shop signs of London's early days played a most necessary part in identification and definition of citizen's places of business, since the more convenient method of numbering houses and shops was not yet introduced or rarely used until the late eighteenth century. Very curious and often more ornamental signs still to be seen in Lombard Street would form a very interesting and separate study. Let me name a few instances of association of name and sign—e.g. Hand and Cock or Hancock, Fountain for Drinkwater; two cocks for Cox; cobweb and spider for Cobster. Ashtree growing out of a cask or turn for Ashturn; deer and ring for Deering or Dearing.

Animals were also used, mostly by hostelrys which retain them until now. Red, White and Blue Lion; Blue Boar, the Barge and House of York; the White Hart of Richard III. Some signs were so large and weighty that they were a menace to the buildings as well as the passersby. The popular signs were multiplied. A hundred years ago we had 38 Angels for thoroughfares, 25 Bells, 25 Blue Anchors, 13 Frying Pans, 17 Half Moons—and why a half moon was preferred to a full moon or a new moon, is debatable. One can see, of course, that we actually do see more half moons than we do new or even full moons. There were 37 Red Lion signs, 28 Roses, 18 Sugar Loaf, 17 Swan, 22 Castles and 16 of "The Cock to Maiden head." The latter was very popular in Elizabethan days, although it is seldom used now unless for a joke.

Bride Lane, which is off Fleet Street was said to get its name from old St. Bride's Well. This was exhausted according to writings in 1831 on the occasion of George IV's coronation, a number of men from a hotel in Bridge Street, Blackfriars, being engaged in filling thousands of bottles of the sanctified fluid—presumably tea.

Churches cannot be ignored for streets leading to them were named after them, and in this connection Virgin and Apostle would often be found in olden days until the time of the Reformation, since when many changes of names have been given. Some examples of this are that of Bride Lane. St. Bride's Church is in this lane (the name dedicated is a corruption of an Irish Saint Bridget), and was rebuilt by Wren after the Great Fire in 1680. It was disfigured by galleries but its interior was singularly light and attractive. The church has since been reduced to a shell, but the very fine spire—226 feet high—remains. By reason of its proximity to Fleet Street, it was peculiarly associated with the Press. Gates erected by the Newspaper Society in 1936 in memory of Valentine Knapp are untouched.

The grave of Benjamin Annable is under the tower—he was known in his day for the bell-ringing records, and was said to be the best ringer that was ever known in the world. One newspaper stated that until his time, ringing was only called an art, but from the strength of his great genius, he married it to the mathematics to become a science. This man in figures and ringing, was like a Newton in Philosophy, a Ratcliffe in Physics, a Hardwick in wisdom and a Shakespeare in writing. On November 2nd, 1946, London's oldest Society—the College of Youths, founded in the sixteenth century, placed a wreath on the grave of Benjamin Annable.

Other literary men associated with St. Bride's Church were Sir John Denham, the poet praised by Johnson, who was interred in the Church, and Richard Lovelace who, dying in Gunpowder Alley, Shoe Lane, in extreme poverty, was also buried there in 1658. Quotations from his poems are known to all lovers of literature—e.g.:

"I could not love thee, dear, so much
Loved I not honour more."

Whitefriars Street takes its name from the Carmelite monastery founded there in 1241, which covered practically the whole district from this point, from Fleet Street to the

Thames. It had a large church, but it was destroyed in 1545 and the Hall of the Priory eventually became Whitefriars Theatre.

St. Mary-le-Strand is situated at the top of the Strand in the original site of the famous maypole. Charles Dicken's father was married in this church in 1809. The previous church was pulled down by the Lord Protector of Somerset in 1549 to use in the construction of Somerset House. The present church was erected between 1776 and 1786. It was used for the Royal Academy Exhibition, and for the meetings of the Royal Society until 1856.

St. Paul's Cathedral.

It is surprising to note in early history that one of the important streets of that time, and the street that was the centre for the life of the Town, and a clearing house for gossip, was not a street at all—it was the middle aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral, which by degrees had become less of a sacred building and rather a mixture of Royal Exchange market and promenade. It was the rendezvous of the smart and flashy folk of that time, as in the later days were the Mall, Vauxhall, Rotten Row and Bond Street, and it was known among its inhabitants as "Mediterraneo."

John Earle described it as the land's epitome, or you may call it the lesser isle of Great Britain. He describes the noise in it, like that of bees, mixed of wagging tongues and feet; it is a king of still roar, or loud whisper, and the best sign of a temple in it is that it is a thieves sanctuary, which rob more safely in a crowd than a wilderness, whilst every searcher is a bush to hide them.

Some make it a preface to their dinner, but thriftier men make it their ordinary and board very cheap. Ben Johnson in "Every Man Out of His Humour" has some scenes set in Paul's Walk, in which the characters bring their dogs, and stick on the pillars notices of wanting servants.

Porters and messengers claimed a sort of right-of-way through the Cathedral and some tradesmen even stabled their donkeys in its recesses. The old phrase—"Dining with Duke Humphrey"—meaning going without dinner, originated with the custom of spending the pre-dinner hour in promenading the middle aisle. At the dinner-hour when the crowd dispersed, the penniless, having no means of dining, continued to walk up and down past the tomb supposed to be that of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester and were facetiously called "members of his retinue."

Another interesting piece written advises Gallant, a notable figure at that time, if he would be in the fashion to observe the suits and costumes worn by the most dashing, and to bring his tailor with him, who behind a pillar will note the material and colour and design, and turn him out in the latest mode. Just as it is today, when various spies visit the collections of Paris costumiers and make mass productions of their models.

St. Paul's Cathedral stands in the heart of the City and it is the third Cathedral on that site. The first was a Saxon edifice, the second was Norman to begin with and afterwards had early English additions, and the third and present one was built by Sir Christopher Wren.

At one time the revenue from the estate on which Bunhill Fields burial ground still remains, was paid to the Canon of St. Paul's. Bunhill Fields is in City Road, and it is said that men were living there in pile dwellings when Christ was born in Bethlehem, and stone tools have been picked up which were dropped long before them, in what is now Clerkenwell Road.

It became the home of the doctors long before Harley Street, and many centuries have passed since the watchmakers, jewellers and opticians made Clerkenwell their home. It has been the home of ancient and modern crusaders and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem and Evangelists inspired by John Weslev.

M.B.M.

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