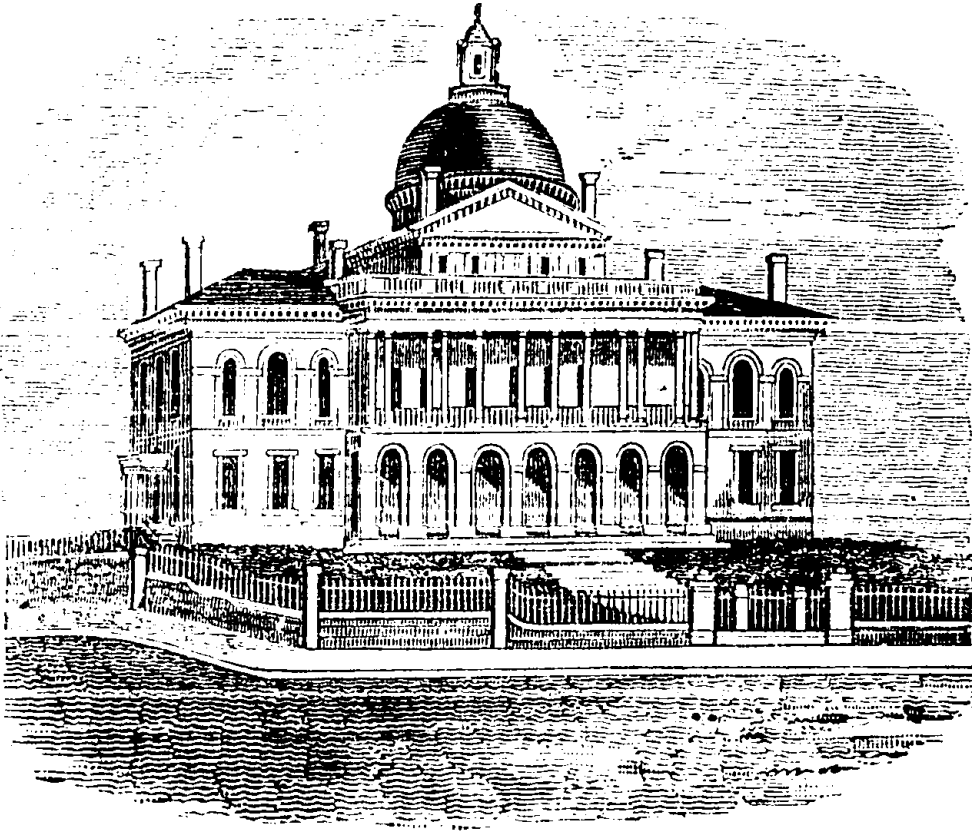


# HISTORY OF BOSTON.



BY ROBIN CARVER.

BOSTON :

LILLY, WAIT, COLMAN, AND HOLDEN.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

*Old manners and customs. Hackney coaches. Fashion of dress. Marriage custom. Wigs and powder. Taking tea. Articles of apparel. Butcher's shop. Amusing anecdote. Old State House. Whipping post. Beacon Hill.*

1. My little friends desire, I suppose, to learn something of the manners and customs of the Bostonians in old times. They now walk about the streets, and see every where signs of wealth and luxury. Rich dresses pass them on every side; and they sometimes see a bonnet, which costs enough to have furnished a whole dress, for the great-grandmother of the dashing belle who wears it.

2. They see a great many private carriages and hackney coaches. Before the revolution, there was only a single Hack in the town. This was called the Burling Coach, and was first set up in 1762, by a royalist, who afterwards left

Boston with the British troops. The next public Hack first flourished about forty-three years ago. It was a small post-chaise, drawn by a couple of grey horses, and used to stand for customers at the head of State street.

3. Eighty years ago, red cloaks, wigs and cocked hats, were the usual dress of gentlemen. Few wore boots, except military men. Buckles were the only shoe fastenings: strings were worn only by those who could get nothing else. In winter, round coats were in fashion, made stiff with buckram, and in front reaching to the knees. Before the revolution, boys were dressed with wigs and cocked hats. Think what a figure any little boy of your acquaintance would make in such a costume! But in the dress of our time, he would have looked just as queerly to a boy of 1770.

4. It was formerly usual for the bride and bridegroom, with the bride-maids and groomsmen attending, to go to church together for three successive Sundays, after the wedding, with a change of dress each day. The bridegroom, for instance, would appear on the first Sunday in white broadcloth, the second in blue and gold, the third in peach-bloom and pearl buttons.

5. Till within thirty-five years, gentlemen wore powder. Many of them were in the habit of sitting half an hour or more, every day, in the barber's chair, to have their hair craped; suffering torture from the hot curling-tongs, and the awkward pulling of the barber. When there was a great party, and they could not engage a barber on the same day,

ladies were sometimes dressed the day before, and slept in easy chairs, to keep their hair from being tumbled. It was then the fashion, for ladies to send word to their friends that they would visit them; it was not the custom to wait to be invited. They went to take tea about four o'clock, and in summer never staid after candle light.

6. Half-boots were first worn in Boston about forty years ago, having been introduced by a gentleman from the South. About thirty years since gentlemen wore scarlet coats, with black velvet collars, and very expensive buttons, made of mock pearl, cut steel, or painted glass. About their wrists they wore lace ruffles, and their neck cloths were edged with lace. Flannel was first used here next to the skin, by Lord Percy's regiment, which had its encampment on the common in the autumn of 1774. In the whole town, at that time, there was hardly flannel enough to be bought for this single regiment.

7. In another part of the book you will read of the magnificent stone Market, which now forms one of the first ornaments of the city. A hundred years ago, there was no large meat-market in the town; but there were four shops in which meat was sold. One of them was near the corner of State street. When a person wished for a piece of meat, he was obliged to give a day's notice before hand, and put his name down for what he wanted.

8. Outside of the meat shop in State street was a large hook, on which carcasses used to be hung. A little man,

who was a justice of the peace, came one day for some meat, but was civilly told that all of it had been engaged. Several nice large pieces were lying about, and the good justice was inquisitive as to the purchasers. One piece that he coveted very much, had been bought by a tradesman ; and the testy justice said that he would ‘ send the fellow a salad for his lamb.’

9. The meat buyer happened to be in debt to the town for his last tax-bill, and the man of law sent to him for its immediate payment. This vexed the meat buyer exceedingly, and he determined to be revenged. A few days afterwards they met accidentally, in the same shop. The tradesman turned to the justice, and told him he was ‘ happy of an opportunity to return his kindness ;’ which he did by seizing him, and suspending him by the waistband of his breeches, to the butcher’s hook. Here he hung till some of the bystanders took pity on him, and assisted him down.

10. The Old State House was anciently the Exchange. The lower floor, where the Post Office and Reading Room now are, was formerly an open space, with the exception of two small apartments, used as offices of the clerks of the court. There was a range of pillars to support the floor above. The House of Representatives occupied the centre. The east end was occupied by the Senate ; from thence a large flight of steps descended into State street, and over these was the balcony, from which the sheriff used to proclaim the governor. At the west end was a stairway, an

entry and a lobby. The lower floor of the State House was a convenient place of assembling on election days, and ministers from the country, and other strangers, used to meet there and interchange their civilities.

11. A little below the State House, nearly opposite the corner of Devonshire street, stood the whipping post, at which offenders used to be publicly beaten. An immense cage on wheels was afterwards used. Culprits were caged in the jail yard, which was on the spot where the new stone Court House is building, and were drawn into State street. Here they were brought out, one by one, and whipped on the top of the cage. The upper part was also a pillory. This barbarous custom of public whipping has been abolished only about thirty-three years.

12. Beacon Hill received its name from a beacon, which was formerly erected on its summit. It was about seventy feet high. Sixty-five feet from the ground, an iron was fixed about five feet in length, at the extremity of which was an iron frame-work, fitted to receive a half barrel filled with combustibles.

13. This beacon is said to have been raised about the year 1746, when an attack was expected from the French; and when about eleven thousand troops are said to have been collected in Boston. In 1789 the beacon was blown down, and a brick circular pillar erected in its place, on a square stone foundation, whose sides were ornamented with lettered slates, which are still preserved in the new State House. This pillar was removed some years since.