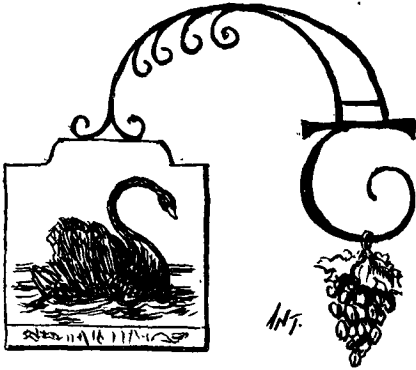


CHAPTER VII.

The Old Inns, & the Coaching Days.



HE prominence given in these "Pictures of Old Bradford" to the inns and hotels of bygone times, is not by reason of any interest attaching to them as mere beer-drinking places.

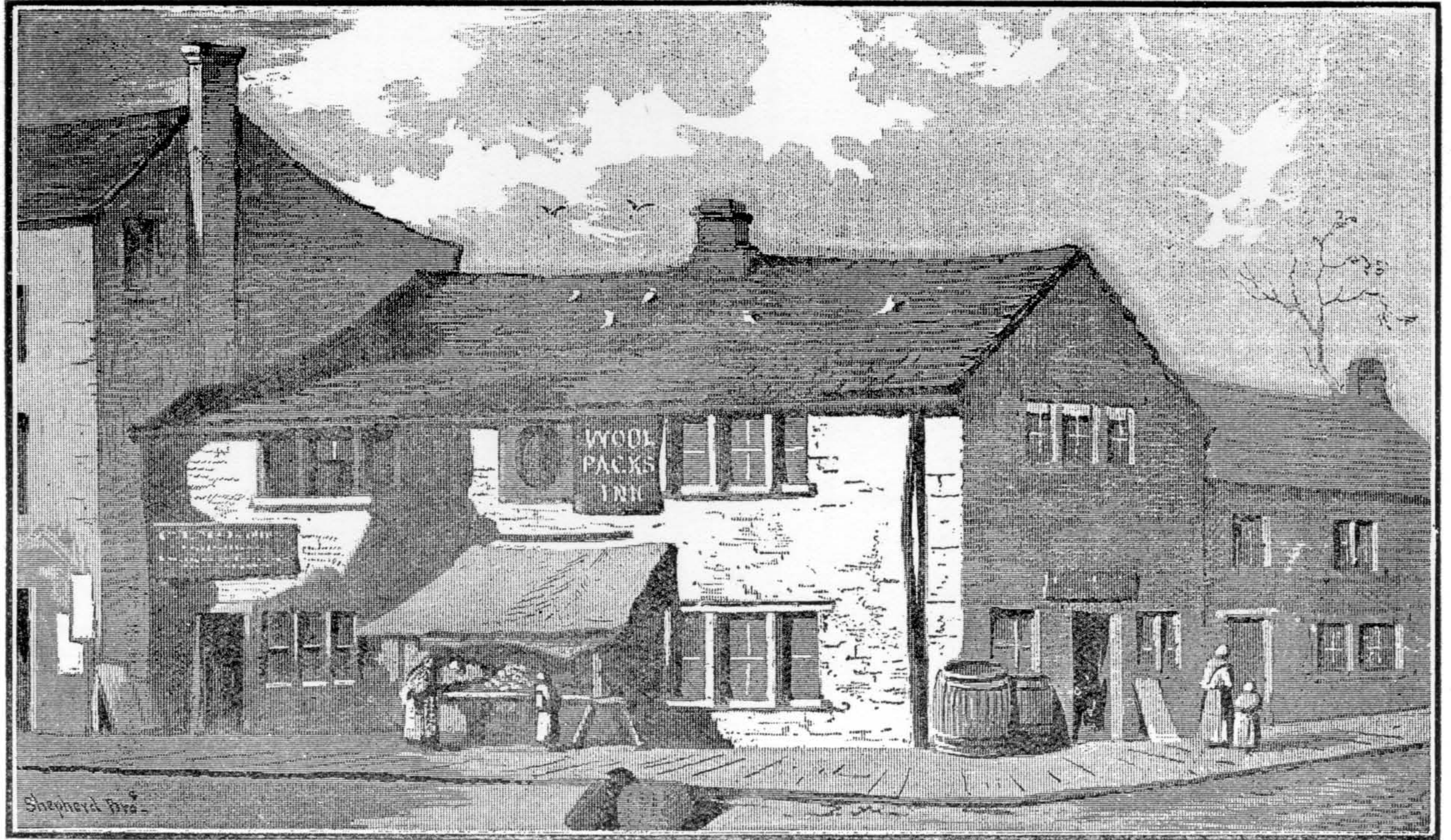
Their associations are of a totally different and higher character. The old style of hostelry is, however, now a

thing of the past. The conditions are altogether changed; the erection of large and fashionable hotels in connection with railway stations, and the formation of political clubs having rendered their existence unnecessary, except in country towns and villages. In bygone years, a genuine old hostelry was both a serviceable and a necessary institution, not only supplying ease, comfort and refreshment to "man and beast" as no other place could, but even giving birth to movements and projects that have developed in our day into organisations of a most useful and indispensable character.

The Court Rolls of the fourteenth century reveal some curious facts concerning the drinking customs of that far off period. It would seem that drunkenness was not then regarded as a misdemeanour, nor were any restrictions placed upon landlords as to the hours when they should open or close their houses. Anyone could start a public house, with the sanction of the Manor Court, on payment of a shilling for license. Indeed, the only restriction made was as to the quality of the liquor brewed, which had to be tasted, before being offered for sale, by a person specially appointed for the post, and who was called the "ale-taster." It is not a little singular that the man who discharged the duties of this office was named William Nutbrowne, and that there were also innkeepers or "hostilers" of the same name, and perhaps, of the same family, some of whom were fined for selling ale not up to quality.*

In the Parish Church Registers for the latter part of the seventeenth century mention is made of a Jeremy Bower who kept "Ye Swanne," and who was also a tanner and barber, ("hair-beard"); but where "Ye Swanne" was located, or what was its rank among the other inns of the town is left for conjecture.

* See Paper by Mr. Empsall, in *Bradford Antiquary* (Vol. I.)



THE WOOL PACKS INN.

The Pack-Horse, Westgate, was an inn that would be flourishing in those days. It stood at the junction of the pack-horse roads that communicated with the outside world, and was then a very *Tabard* of the "Canterbury Tales" type. Then the old Back Lane, running parallel with Westgate, was a very hive of industry; thrifty housewives bringing their spinning wheels to their doors on summer days, and turning over, as only women can, the newest gossip of the town.

At the close of last century there were not less than fifty public-houses in the town—certainly more than were requisite for the population. Some of them it would seem were not so well conducted as they ought to have been, for good Vicar Crosse found it necessary to present a memorial to the Licensing Justices sitting at Halifax against licenses being granted to ten of them.

The following list of hotels, inns, and taverns in Bradford in 1822, with the names of their several occupiers, will be of interest to some of our readers. Several of them were flourishing until very recently; some have changed from the hostelry to the dramshop, but it will be seen that nearly all of them have been completely swept out of existence.

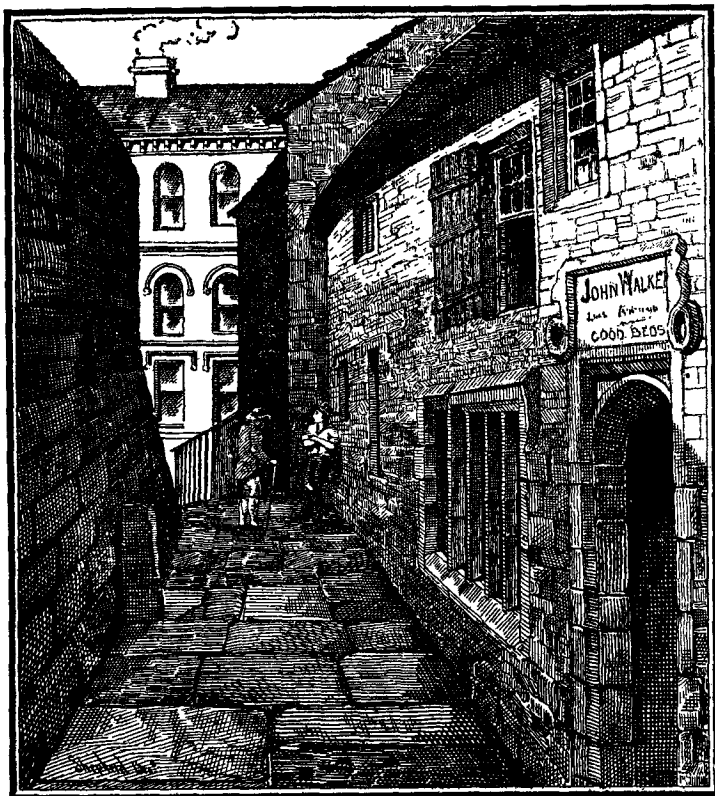
HOTELS, INNS, AND TAVERNS IN BRADFORD IN THE YEAR 1822, AND
BY WHOM KEPT.

Angel, The	...	Westgate	...	William Lister.
Beehive	...	Do.	...	Benjamin Kaye.
Bishop Blaize	...	Kirkgate	...	Hannah Clough.
Boar's Head	...	Market Street	...	Josh. Pollard.
Bowling Green	...	Bridge Street	...	Joseph Ward.
Boy and Barrel	...	Westgate	...	Benjamin Wardman.
Britannia	...	Market Street	...	James Field.
Brown Cow...	...	Kirkgate	...	William Wagstaff.
Bull's Head	...	Westgate	...	Jere Illingworth.
Cock and Bottle	...	Barker-end	...	John Thornton.
Dog and Shovel	...	Kirkgate	...	John Wright.
Duke of Wellington	...	High Street	...	Joshua Taylor.
Fleece, The	...	Bank Street	...	Samuel Lupton.
Fox and Hounds	...	North Wing	...	Maggie Bell.
Hare and Hounds	...	Westgate	...	James Forrest.
Hope and Anchor	...	Bank Street	...	Sylvester Forrest.
Horse Shoes	...	Tyrrel Street	...	Eunice Clayton.
King's Head	...	Westgate	...	George Storey.
Lord Nelson	...	Northgate	...	John Bell.
New Inn	...	Tyrrel Street	...	James Wade.
Old Bishop Blaize	...	Westgate	...	Joshua Lumb.
Old Crown	...	Ivegate	...	George Lumb.
King's Arms	...	Westgate	...	John Raper.
Nag's Head	...	Kirkgate	...	Nicholas Mason.
Royal Oak	...	Kirkgate	...	William Baxter.
Pack Horse	...	Westgate	...	Samuel Pawson.
Rawson's Arms	...	Market Street	...	Francis Snow.
Roebuck, The	...	Sunbridge	...	Martha Midgley.
Salutation, The	...	Market Street	...	Robert Smith.
Saracen's Head	...	Westgate	...	Timy Green.
Ship, The	...	Well Street	...	Timothy Rhodes.
Shoulder of Mutton	...	Kirkgate	...	Elizabeth Wilson.
Sun, The	...	Sunbridge	...	Benjamin Robertshaw.

HOTELS, INNS AND TAVERNS—(continued).

Talbot, The	Kirkgate	Rebecca Wood.
Unicorn, The	Ivegate	Robert Clough.
White Horse	Kirkgate	John Gibson.
White Lion	Kirkgate	Joshua Bowron.
White Swan... ..	Market Street ...	John Bradford.

Interesting reminiscences are doubtless associated with many of the old "publics" above named. The "Church Steps Inn" was said to



Back of the Church Steps Inn.

be the oldest licensed house in Bradford. The most attractive part of the building, to the antiquary, was that to be seen in the "ginnel" at the back leading from the old Church Steps to Church Bank. This was all that remained of the ancient portion of the inn, the part fronting to Bolton Road being comparatively modern. In a corner of one of the old rooms was to be seen that relic of bygone times, the old chair in which the eccentric verger, Jonas Tasker, and many of his

predecessors used to sit, and preside over select coteries of old Bradfordians who met nightly to discuss the fates of nations, or retail the small talk of the town. Hither, too, gathered the ringers of the church bells to tell of their exploits when commemorating some national or important local event, for which they were wont to receive extra "allowance"—a well merited boon, poor fellows, for they were but wretchedly remunerated for their ordinary toil. In one of the old churchwarden's account books occurs the item—"Paid the ringers for all the year, 2s. 6d." A more liberal payment, however, was made when the number of bells was increased in Dr. Scoresby's time.

Sixty years ago the "Steps Inn" had the reputation of being a well-accustomed house. For a long period it was frequented by the members of a club called the "Church Steps Society." To this society the town was indebted for the upholding of the once famous Bishop Blaize festivals. Long after the last great celebration in honour of this saint, in 1825, the members of this society commemorated the event by dining together on the memorable 3rd of February.

The Church Steps, the old Inn, and its neighbour the Old Grammar School building were all swept away—all except their traditions—to make room for the new Post Office.

The Bowling Green Hotel, in Bridge Street, was a fine sample of an old English hostelry, with its large open frontage, balcony, bay windows, and its unlimited accommodation for "man and beast." For many years it ranked as the best inn of the town, and no relic of the "olden time" was missed so much as this when its demolition became a stern necessity. It is uncertain when the Bowling Green began its existence, but sufficient evidence exists to date it back to the seventeenth century. Thomas Wright, of Birkenshaw, who was born in 1736, says in his autobiography—"Thomas Wright, my paternal grandfather (after whom I suppose I was named), sometime kept the Bowling Green Inn, in Bradford, where, after he married my grandmother, he lived and died with credit and esteem amongst his neighbours. John Wright, my father, was born at the Bowling Green Inn."

In 1750, the place was entirely re-built, and by an agreement between John Woolmer, the owner, and John Crosley, the occupier, it was arranged that when completed, a lease for twenty-one years should be executed, the rent to be £39 per annum, payable at Whitsuntide and Martinmas, and that the said John Woolmer should pay all taxes and impositions except window money, and that the said John Crosley should be "bound to the usual and customary conditions for the good management of the said inn, and the good husbandry of the land."

At the beginning of the present century, Mrs. Fryer was the landlady of the Bowling Green, but about 1815, Mr. Joseph Ward took the house, and after his death, his widow kept it on for some time. The next landlord was Mr. Joseph Baxter, who fully sustained its