



Avoid Sippling and Tippling

1683

Jersey Justice In Olden Days

1780

“Joy and Tem’prence and Repose,
Slam the door on the doctor’s nose.”

The Puritans and Quakers advocated temperance, and drank with moderation — at weddings, funerals, christenings, ordinations and public meetings. The favorite drinks were brandy, New England or West India rum, Madeira or Lisbon wines, cordials, Metheglin (a drink made from fermented honey, herbs and water), strong beer and Cider Royal. The latter was rather potent. It was of two kinds—one, made by adding rum and Muscovado sugar to cider and allowed to stand for a year, then bottled with raisins and sealed; the other, a mixture of half cider and mead, fermented together.

William Penn approved the use of rum by men engaged in arduous labors. Quaker meetings warned against “sippling and tippling”. They considered drunkenness a sin, and cautioned against the practice of serving intoxicating liquors at vendues, as it tended to excite bidding and “provoked them at every bid to advance the price”. In 1721, the yearly meeting advised members “to watch against the evil of drinking when it begins to prevail upon them in a general manner”, and

recommended that “strong drink be served but once at funerals and then only to those that came from a distance”.

Rum was a regular part of the rations furnished the army during the Revolution. Extra amounts were allotted to soldiers engaged in hazardous occupations and at celebrations of victories. Prohibition was not recognized as a moral issue, but drunkenness was a “bestly vice”, a sin under the law. In East Jersey, first offenders were fined one shilling, second, two shillings, third, two shillings six pence; and, if unable to pay, they were flogged. Unruly drunkards were put in the stocks until sober. The honesty of village constables was under suspicion of the law-makers, who provided, in the act, that the officer failing to enforce the penalty “should himself be liable in twice the sum set against the guilty party”.

In West Jersey, drunkenness was made a provincial crime under the “Immorality Act”, and the penalty fixed at six shillings; for failure to pay, the offender spent four hours in the stocks.

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