



Another



AT THE STAGE COACH INN

"Old Gilman is dead, that good old soul,
We ne'er shall see him more;
He used to wear a long, blue coat
All buttoned down before."

Every traveler who came this way tarried at the Stage Coach Inn. The food and drink were irresistible. Charlie Gilman's Cherry Flip and Cider Royal gave a razor edge to the appetite and those great roasts of wild turkey and partridge, stuffed with chestnuts, that came sizzling from the Dutch oven, made the mouth water. The radiant Aunt Polly Gilman was the cook, and it was said (and no one wished to deny it!) that she had cooked for Royalty. The Stage Coach that made the round trip from New York to Easton twice weekly always pulled in at the Inn for dinner no matter what time of day it was.

The Governor once dined here, after a little party with some friends at the Town Tavern of Azariah Clark's, across the street. The Governor was a diplomat and Azariah came first on his list, because he was an old soldier and influential citizen; but the Governor lingered longest at Gilman's. After a few rounds of those insidious Cider Royals — well, there was no telephone in those days!

Old Gilman had his detractors. A descendent of Daniel Halsey, the singing school-teacher, was asked to write "an appropriate sign" for the Stage

Coach Inn: He obliged with the following:

"Rum, whiskey, brandy, cordial, porter, beer,
Ale, applejack and gin are delt out here,
Diluted, raw or mixed in any measure,
To all consumers, come and act your pleasure,
The above specific will, in time, God knows,
Put to a period all your earthly woes;
Or wou'd you bring life to a splendid close,
Take double slugs, repeated dose on dose;
A panacea this for every ail;
T'will use you up—'twas never known to fail;
Use up your property, e'er scarce you know it,
Use up your character, or sadly blow it;
Use up your health and strength and mind's
repose.

And leave, may hap, your carcass to the crows."

Old Gilman laughed heartily when "the sign" was read to him; "'tis well writ," said he. "And true, indeed. There's some folks that drinks too much, and some folks that eats too much, and one is about as bad as the other."

The Stage Coach Inn was probably the oldest hostelry in these parts. It was built some years before the Revolution, and in an old Essex County mortgage the property is designated as belonging to "Peter Smith." Thomas Baker appears to have been the first Inn-keeper. He kept a grog shop and general store here for a brief time, but left mysteriously for parts unknown and was never heard from again. Gilman's proprietorship, begun about 1794, was terminated by his sudden death. His wife, Aunt Polly, carried on successfully in the old tradition until the Inn was sold to Dr. Joseph Quinby, who converted it into a beautiful homestead.