

For the public and private entertainments so often alluded to, there was no great variety of food. The market was supplied in a very different degree from that which is enjoyed at present. When the troops and fleet, on some of the occasions mentioned invaded the town by thousands, their consumption almost created a famine in the land; on one occasion beef rose to two shillings and sixpence per pound, and butter to five. Except in these extreme cases, the absolute necessities of life were abundant. Corned beef, pork, and salted codfish, far more frequently formed the dishes of all classes than fresh meat. For delicacies and variety anxious housekeepers were driven to ingenious devices in cooking. The same species of meat was dressed in many ways; and preserved fruits took a high rank at the table, especially during the winter season. Poultry early came into fashion; and for game a porcupine was considered as the right thing. For vegetables each man was either dependent upon the produce of his own garden, or if he should live in the middle of the town, where gardens could not be, he might purchase from the public gardener, if he had any disposable produce.

The butchers' meat was carried round to the customer in the ordinary tray by boys, or on small carts drawn by dogs; as was also the bread baked at the two chief bakeries.

Thus were the original settlers supplied with food. Unfortunately for themselves there was no lack of that which they might drink. Pure water, indeed, was abundant, and pumps were placed at the most convenient spots, at which the public could fill their pails when they pleased. This was a sad annoyance to the immediate neighborhood, for there was no cessation of the noise of the pump-handle, and to an almost incessant wrangling between the lads and half-grown girls who were sent for the morning and evening supply. But the appetite of Halifax was not satisfied by such simple liquid. It was too easily obtained to be held of much value, and a craving for stimulants early became the crying evil of the town. Wines and strong liquors were brought in great abundance to the market, and found a ready sale. It was an unhappy circumstance, and exercised its baneful influence, to a very large extent, upon men of all ages and ranks. On this it is alike needless and useless now to descant. The bare fact is enough.