
RELICS *and* MEMORIALS *of* LONDON CITY

In the vicinity of a religious house the signs were often of a semi-pious description, but generally could also have a satirical meaning read into them, much in the same way as holy things were treated in miracle plays. Near every church there was a tavern, and in some cases this was church property. An instance of this still exists at Harmondsworth, Middlesex.

ALL HALLOWS STEYNING, STAR ALLEY

It is probable that when houses first began to cover the marsh surrounding the spring head of the Langbourne—Culver Alley marks the site—the first buildings of any importance were the Saxon church of All Hallows Steyning and the tavern which we know as the London Tavern, backing on to the churchyard. They would then be the outposts of the city within the wall, so that this would be the Fenchurch which in course of time gave its name to the street. Whether it received the affix of “Steyning” from being the only stone-built church at the time is a little doubtful. The name occurs in at least one other church, near Aldermanbury, and it is possible that here, as elsewhere, it records the name of the pious donor; but it is of little consequence. The first definite mention of it is made in 1329, but we know that twenty-four years earlier, when William Wallace was brought to London for trial at Westminster Hall, and execution at Smithfield, he was at first lodged in a tavern in Fenchurch Street, and in all probability it was this tavern. At a later date it bore the name of the King’s Head. It changed with the times; renovated and rebuilt, it became the “London Tavern.” As houses began to be built around the church, the passage way which we know as “Star Alley” was