

{margin note: REV-TRIPP}

Beginning at the corner of Berkeley and Boylston Sts. we walked down Boylston St. toward Arlington. This area is filled with all kinds of shops and stores. On the right are several clothing stores -- Plotkin Bros. with a new store front -- many other stores that hadn't remodeled their exteriors, or interiors either.

We passed by Schrafft's, which was on the other side of the street, which looks like every other Schrafft's Restaurant. They haven't remodeled or attempted to modernize their exterior.

On the left, soon after we began our walk up the street, we passed a book store which has a table or two with books on it for browsing. People often stop there and go through the books; I've done so myself.

We passed by several travel concerns, that is, not only travel agencies but concerns that book your passage over to Europe and other parts of the world, and passed a number of shops that can be entered down in the basement, cleaning establishment, shoe shop, that kind of thing, on the same side of the street we were on.

Finally we came to the corner of the street, with the church, of which I am associate minister, on the left, and the famous Shreve, Crump & Low, jewelry and high-grade household furnishings store. We stood on the corner and looked down Boylston St. a little further without going any further. I commented about the new Waldorf Cafeteria and commented on the fact that it was only two stores removed from the Hayes-Bickford.

We then turned up Arlington St., walked by the church on the left. On the right are the Public Gardens, surrounded by an old wrought iron fence, and then we turned left on Newbury, passing the .. a church on the right, Emmanuel Church on the right, and a number of very high-class, conservative, and distinguished shops on the left, including Schwarz Toy Shop and Brooks Bros., famous clothing store, and a number of women's shops.

On the right also were a couple of restaurants that are quite famous in this particular area, 29 and 39 Newbury St., run by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wallace, where very good food at reasonable prices is served.

We then reached the corner and turned left up Berkley St. , looking across the street at what used to be the Museum of Natural History, and commenting on the fact that it is now a very modern clothing store and a place where women with means or without go and spend all their money. We passed several nice little shops on the left on our side of the street, a little silversmith's shop, a delicatessen, and down in the basement on the corner a toy and joke shop which one passes as he enters one of the subway entrances.

Actually, before we arrived at those places, instead of going back to Boylston St. we turned left and went down the alley which divides the block in half. As we walked down the alley we noticed a lot of debris on the sidewalk, some of it in barrels, some of it loose on the sidewalk. A number of men working. One couldn't help but notice the numerous fire escapes on the back sides of buildings on both sides of the alley. We looked into the windows of the buildings we walked by and noticed several offices and in one place a dressmaking shop with numerous girls working at machines. Then, as we approached Arlington St. again we came across the church parking lot which is filled with cars parked at angles, just barely squeezed into the area allotted to them, enough to leave the alley free for trucks, some of them very large trucks, to deliver merchandise to the stores. On the left, just before we reached the corner, we passed the Ritz-Carlton parking lot filled with cars, most of which are the more expensive models, becoming the people who stay at the Ritz-Carleton.

When we reached Boylston St. we hesitated a little bit to wait for the traffic and then crossed the street and walked onto the Public Gardens, which was filled as usual with pigeons scurrying about, a few people. I was surprised that there were so few people. This is an active shopping area. This is Friday morning, or close to noon-time, when you would expect quite a few women to be out shopping around, but apparently it's a little too early for that, since the stores are open Friday night, or some of them are, especially the food stops. We stood there and looked across the Gardens and the Boston Common, looking at the buildings on Beacon Hill, noticing the State House, in the foreground and background the new Court buildings, and also the silhouette of the roof-tops of many of the old-fashionable houses and dwelling places on Beacon Hill.

We turned and retraced our steps back across the street and to the church.

As I say, there were very few people around the streets, few in the sense that I expected a great many more. As we approached the church I noticed one man coming out of the doorway. I didn't recognize him at first, but he appeared well-dressed and a man of position. I believe he was Mr. Kahn who is manager of the building which adjoins the church office building. He was the only one I saw that I recognized, except that when we went through the alley I waved to our assistant sexton here at the church. I noticed a few people, both in the Gardens and on the street, a few well-dressed women, a few men apparently businessmen going from one appointment to another..As we came down Berkeley St. approaching Boylston I did notice 3 young fellow walking along; I just assumed they were students,taking a break between classes perhaps.

M.R:Are there any particular type of people who seemed to frequent this area here?

Yes, especially at noon-time you see quite a few students, not on this particular corner of Arlington and Boylston, but as you get toward Berkley and then go on up into Copley Sq. you see a great many students. We have a secretarial school just removed several doorways from the church office building. You often see the young women going in and out, apparently talking secretarial courses. Across the street at Schrafft's you often see a number of well-dressed women, apparently with good but expensive tastes, quite a few apparent business men. As soon as you go around the corner toward the Statler you run into more businessmen going in and out of the Ntl. Shawmut Bank, and people attending conventions at the Hotel Statler, etc.

(about the sidewalk)

Yes. The sidewalk is cement, as far as material composition is concerned. The sidewalk on the side of Boylston St. adjoining the church is a very wide sidewalk. I remember this particularly because about 7 or 8 years ago when I was still an assistant here at the church we had a robbery,and the robbers broke in at night and took a safe that requires four men to carry. They apparently took it across this wide sidewalk and put it in a truck without being seen, which surprised me. Ioften have to check with one of the other staff members about snow removal, and it's a real problem because the sidewalk is so wide in this particular area adjoining the church.

(sidewalks in the rest of the area through which they walked)

Well, they're in fairly good condition. They're warped somewhat by rapidly changing temperatures, frost and that sort of thing. Every now and then when we complain or others complain the city does send down somebody to make repairs to squares of cement which have been broken up by weather.

(same composition and broken up by weather.

No. The sidewalk on Arlington St. is about half the width of the sidewalk out here. I'm absolutely sure if it was of the same composition. I have the feeling that it's cement all the way around. It seems to me that further down on Arlington St. there is some brick but I've forgotten.

(sounds)

As we were walking down Boylston St. I did hear a horn peep. That was the only one I happened to notice. You're conscious of the sound of trucks and busses passing by occasionally. I didn't hear any other unusual sounds that I noticed in particular. There were no sirens from fire engines, ambulance or police cars. There was some wind. It was relatively quiet compared to other times of the day.

(smells)

I didn't notice any particular exhaust fumes or any particular smells. Probably because where I spend so much of my time in this particular area I wouldn't notice it anyway, unless it was unusual.

(signs)

Yes. I commented about the fact that two of the signs outside two different business concerns were still illuminated which surprised me a little bit. The sun was out, it was a nice, clear, crisp day, and either they forgot to turn them off or this is their practice -- to always leave the signs on to draw the eye to them rather than to other signs on the street. One particular sign was a Chambers Drug Store; the sign is out almost in the middle of the sidewalk. Here again, as you look at this sign and realize that it is far removed from the front of the building, that is mounted on sort of an independent post in the middle of the sidewalk, you realize how very wide the sidewalk is on the side of Boylston St. It must be at least twice as wide as it is on the other side.

Another sign was attached to a building. It sticks out quite far, projects out well over the sidewalk, was also illuminated, was Purdy's Photography Studio sign, as I recall.

(signs in the area, in general, pleasant, unpleasant?)

I haven't noticed any that seem to me particularly objectionable. I just have the feeling that many of them have been there for a long while and have been refurbished or modernized. I don't think they're out of keeping. None of them are especially large except this Chamber Drug Store sign which is out in the middle of the sidewalk.

(any part in which there was more than one area?)

On Boylston St. there are a great many more signs apparent. They are larger, project out from the buildings, in two cases they were lighted, than there are on Newbury St. where everything is done in conservative taste. The window displays, the exterior of the buildings, the signs are more moderate in size and fewer in number.

I'd say it was split up in particular areas where there was a concentration of signs as you approach Berkeley St. going down toward Copley Sq. on Boylston -- there seemed to be more signs from the middle of the block down to Berkeley than there are going the other way. It's interesting that this particular area that we walked through today is part of the so-called reclaimed Back Bay. And the Arlington St. Church was the first major building to be erected on the reclaimed Back Bay. I don't think until you've seen a picture of the area when it was first settled with homes and a few buildings in those days and begin to realize how much it has changed in character and appearance since, say 1861 or so, or 1865, that you begin to notice that above and in back of some of the store fronts are the remains of some of the old dwelling houses that used to be in this area.

Boylston St. seems to have a character of moderate business appearance, in the sense that there are stores here but they seem in reasonable good taste, and yet when you go over on Newbury St. you get the feeling that there is a change of character there, that everything is much more dignified and conservative, high priced stores, higher grade of stores and business concerns on Newbury in comparison to Boylston St. You also get a feeling of contrast of new and old when you look down the alley through which we walked. Especially at night you have the sense of this church which is about 90 years old on your left, and as you look down through the alley by all these old buildings, you look right at the

New England Mutual Life Insurance Bldg. which is new, light in color and brightly illuminated in comparison to the church and some of the other buildings which are made of brown stone, sandstone, dark, and not illuminated. So you can get a sense of contrast in character there.

(sense or order?)

If you mean neatness in appearance, perhaps of buildings, uniformity and that sort of thing, I have the feeling that the scene on Newbury St. is much more orderly, and the types of buildings, the architecture and the material consistency, is much in harmony than it is on Boylston St. where you get quite a contrast of new store fronts vs. old store fronts, brick vs. wood, metal vs. brick and wood, and so on.

(Boylston St. of somewhat disorder in this regard?)

Yes, somewhat in comparison to Newbury St., but not chaotic. I would say it was in transition gradually. The stores are improving their fronts and perhaps there will be some uniformity or more uniformity ten years hence than there is now.

(continuity? Is there a sense of progression all the way around; somewhat similar uses, architecture?)

I don't think their contrasts are so great that it gives you the feeling that this is a hodge-podge of every kind of architecture, although I think if you were to examine things closely you might get that feeling, where you have the old store fronts and the contrast of materials and so on. But, on the whole, as you look down you don't get that feeling at all. It's rather pleasant. I've always liked this section, ever since I first became familiar with it about 14 years ago. Although it has undergone some change, I feel the change has been a progressive one toward a blending and uniformity of buildings rather than of strange contrast and conflicts of colors, size and shapes.

(How does this particular area fit in with your conception of Boston? would this particular area be a part of your characterization of Boston?)

Yes, I think it would. You think of Boston as an old city, as being conservative, extremely conservative, slow in general improvements and progress. I would say that this would perhaps stand in the middle of a contrasting picture. It isn't a sight of dilapidated, improvements to sidewalks, lighting, buildings and the like. I feel at ease in this part of the city. You don't feel ashamed that the buildings are falling down around you, yet

you wish that more progress could be made, especially when you think of the fact that there are so few modern office buildings in the city of any size, and I understand Boston has not put up any new office buildings for something like 20 or almost 30 years, with the exception of the two insurance buildings up in Back Bay area.

(You think this might be a nice place for a new office building?)

Yes. I'm a little partial probably to the Back Bay Project which was proposed a number of years ago and which apparently was turned down tax reasons. Those who were sponsoring it asked for a tax abatement, that is, they would not be required to pay taxes until the project was complete and the buildings occupied by those who would be paying rent. And this special request was not granted, and the project fall through because of financial problems.

----- has always been for me a quiet ground, the bottle of the city. You walk along any of the avenue that moves up to Central Park especially, I guess this one also, you battle the crowds. Then you get to the park and all of a sudden things are quiet and it's a different world. Even the wall around it -- the chaos is moving. . .  
What fat little pigeons! Real parasites!