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Old Newport loyalist

a paper read before the Society

Feb. 16, 1920

Katharine Johnstone (Brinley) Wharton

Newport, R.I.

1920

BRINLEY FAMILY

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BULLETIN
OF THE
Newport Historical Society

Number Thirty-two

NEWPORT, R. I.

April, 1920

An Old Newport Loyalist

By

KATHARINE JOHNSTONE WHARTON

*A Paper read before the Society by its President, Rev. RODERICK TERRY, D.D.
February 16, 1920*

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AN OLD NEWPORT LOYALIST

Loyalty is still the same
Whether it win or lose the game.

In its first issue for the new century, the English Spectator published an article called, "Links with the Past," which was followed in succeeding numbers by many anecdotes, recollections and traditions connected with more or less well known people of exceptional longevity, who thus "link the generations each to each." I should like to add my own link to the chain, for I come of a long-lived race and have always been interested in all such questions and researches.

It would be hard to rival one little family history given in the Spectator, which in seven generations goes back to 1540, or the time of Henry the Eighth. My paternal ascendant of the seventh generation, who was born in 1590, lies buried in the aisle of Datchet Church, near Windsor with an inscription, which begins "Here lyeth ye body of Thomas Brinley, Esq., being one of ye Auditors of ye Revenues of ye Kinge Charles ye first and of Kinge Charles ye Second." His great grandson writes in 1755, "As to Pedigree. Thomas

Brinley of s'd Datchet in the County of Bucks, was my Great Grandfather. He dyed in 1661, was Auditor General to both King Charles y'e first and Second, used to ride the north Circuit (not to be thought vain). He was personally known well by their Maj'tys, particularly the old King (I have Considerable of his Maj'ts Table linnen now in the House, how or by what means I don't pretend to know, only as soe mentioned in my Grandfather's pocket book amongst other things) and for his Loyalty was a great sufferer. For obeying his Princes Command to come to him to Oxford, he had all they Could find of his Estate Seized (as hereafter sett forth) and an order from the Then Parliament to apprehend his Person, soe was forst to abscon'd near 4 years, untill his Maj'y King Charles y'e 2'd of Blessed Memory Came to England in 1660, when he was possest of his office again. He was with his Maj'y in his Exile, But being antient upwards of 70 years, dyed in less than a year, soe had little or no benefit, or recompense which he Exspected (and ought to have had) from his Maj'y For the Following loss, and still Due from y'e Crown to his Famely If Common justis Could be destinguisht properly. Had he lived undoubtedly would have happin'd. The Following is ac't of the losses Sustain'd as his will is apparent, That Oliver y'e Usurper deprived him of and by that means me & myne."

His eldest son Francis, born in 1632, went from Barbadoes to Rhode Island in 1652 "with money in his pocket," as an old record says, so something was saved from the wreck. Two of Thomas Brinley's daughters had settled in America. One is described in his will as "dwelling in New England in the ports of America in an Island called Shelter Island." The site of the old Manor house with a large estate is still in the possession of a descendant of, I think, the eighth generation. Another daughter was the wife of William Coddington, afterwards Governor of Rhode Island, and it was in Newport that her brother Francis settled, and there remained, though he made frequent visits to England. "He was, as it were," says the same record, "the organ of intelligence and remittance between the colony and the mother country." A near relative had been lady in waiting to Queen Henrietta Maria, and he may have had some small intercourse with Court circles. The tradition is that through

his means the King gained a more accurate knowledge than he might otherwise have had of the persecutions of the Quakers in New England, and interfered in their behalf. Francis Brinley remained himself a staunch Churchman, but his brother-in-law Coddington was a Quaker, and the estate at Shelter Island held manorial rights and protected such Quakers as took refuge there.

Francis Brinley married Hannah Carr, of the family of Governor Caleb Carr. His elder son Thomas was educated in England and then went to Boston, where in 1681 he was a member of the Ancient and Honourable Company of Artillery, but in 1684 he returned to England, married there and died early of small-pox, one of the few members of the family, who, surviving childhood, have not lived to old age. His wife was Catherine, daughter of John Tage of London. The portraits of John Tage and his wife are still in possession of one of his descendants. His second son having married not to his liking, Francis came again to New England and brought over his elder son's widow with his two grandchildren, when their education was finished, and made his grandson his heir. The granddaughter married William Hutchinson, (Harvard 1702). Francis Brinley died in Boston in 1719, at the age of eighty-seven and was buried in the Churchyard of King's Chapel, of which his son Thomas had been one of the founders. "At a meeting of the Select men of the Town of Boston the 26th of October 1719" says an Entry in the Town Records, permission was granted to William Hutchinson and Francis the grandson "to make a Tomb in the Old burying place, in the same Spot where Mr. Brinley's Relations were formerly buried, for the Interring the Seigneur of ye Family there."

*The following is in the handwriting of Francis of Roxbury, and is evidently memoranda as to the funeral of his grandfather, Francis Brinley (the emigrant), who died in Boston in 1719.

These items are marked off in this way in the original manuscript and a line is drawn through the names of Mrs. Lloyd and daughter Alice.

	†The Governor; Scarf, Gloves & Ring.	
Coll. Byfield & Lady†		
Mr. Niles & wife gloves	Barers viz:	
Mr. Jackson & wife†	Coll. Taylor Coll. Fitch	
Mr. Wolland & wife†	Judge Palmer Mr. Sam'l Lynde	
Mad'm Sylvester†	Mr. Jekyel Cap'n Tim'y Clarke	
Mr. Mayho & wife†		
Henry Lloyd & Miss Eastwick†	Ministers viz:	
Mr. L'Homeadieu†	†Dr. Mather	
Mad'm Hutchinson Shammy " †	†Mr. Miles	
Mr. Craddock & wife†	†Mr. Coleman	
Byfield Lyde†	†Mr. Harris	
Coll. Phipps & Lady†		
The Barers and their wives†	†Dr. Williams	
Nurs Kennet Scarf and gloves†		
Jane Chapman†	To send for Judde & Porters Gloves	
Mrs. Lloyd and daughter Alice†		
	†The Taylor	
Sharper; Nell; & Rose†	†The Shoemaker	
	†Joyner: (Leather &	
Mrs. Warkman†	†Gloves: (Shammy)	
Coll. Dudley & Lady†	†Stockings 2 for myself	
	†Curled Crape	
22 prs. mens	†Buckles 2	
1 doz. & ½ of womens	†97½ yds. Lute string for	
	Scarves	
1 pr. of Boys	†Silk for gound Lineings 52¼ yds.	
1 pr. of Garles		
	†Black girdles & fanns	
1 pr. Shammy for Mrs. Hutchinson	† " Handkerchiefs	
2 pr. of Black for Guy & Nancy	† " Necklaces & Ear Rings	
3 pr. for Sharper; Nell & Rose	†Crape for Hoods	
	†The Grave Digger	
Rings viz:	†Seuchons 10 (Scutechons)	
Relations att Brother	†Muslinc	
Hutchinson's House	†Callemenco	
Att Father Lyde's	†Ferrit 24 yds & ¼	
Coll. Byfield & Lady		
Govern'r		
Barers		
	22	
Mrs. Pearson gloves†		
Mrs. Williams gloves†		
Mrs. Sarah Palmer		
Lute string 55 yds. & ¼ & ½ quarter) Mrs. Oliver Noyes	
Black Love 5¼ yds) Jn Waldo	
Crape 44¼ & ½ quarter) Waldo	
Men's gloves 9 pr. of Kidd att	5-6	
	5 pr. of Lamb att	4-6
	9 pr. of " att	4-6
Woms Gloves 8 pr. of Kidd		
	11 pr. of Lamb.	

The second Francis settled at Roxbury near Boston, where he built a house after the model of his great-grandfather's house at Datchet, but on a smaller scale. He married a daughter of Edward Dyde of Boston, granddaughter of Judge Byfield of Boston, one of the founders of Bristol, R. I., whose mother was a sister or a cousin of Bishop Juxon, who attended King Charles I on the scaffold. Francis Brinley of Roxbury, as he is called in the family, died at seventy-five. His second son, a third Francis, returned to Newport, where he spent a long life, dying in 1816 at eighty-seven. His wife was Aliph, daughter of Godfrey Malbone of Newport. His son Edward, my grandfather, died in September, 1851, at the age of nearly ninety-four having been born in November, 1757. My father, son of his second wife Mary, daughter of George Johnston, died at seventy-one, and I remember hearing an old cousin, who lived to be over ninety, speak of him as one cut off in the flower of his age.

My link with the past is my grandfather, Sir Edward Brinley of Newport, who at this day is to me so living a figure that he seems to give a strange reality even to the far-away time of his youth, though I knew him only as a very old man. But he was still well-made and active, with a fresh colour and bright English-blue eyes, and at ninety-two would start on a six-mile walk with my brother and me as full of cheer and spirit as ourselves.

In the spring of 1775 my grandfather, then scarcely more than a boy, went to Boston to see a brother who was at Harvard College. It was a time of great excitement and a disturbance broke out among the students between the Whigs and Tories. My grandfather and his brother tied sheets together and let themselves out of a window, escaped from Boston, both mounted on the same horse, and joined the British troops who were marching on Lexington. My grandfather went through the war on the British side until the surrender at Yorktown. After this, like so many others, he lived for many years in Nova Scotia, where several members of his family also took refuge. One of his uncles, George Brinley, the grandfather of Mrs. Gore, the novelist, became Commissary-General of the British troops in Canada. John Wentworth, the last Governor of New Hamp-

shire under the Crown, was the brother-in-law of George Brinley, and died in his house in Halifax.

The true history of the Loyalists never has been and never will be told. They belong to the great army of the unsuccessful, who have tried in vain to stop the allotted course of the world, and whose very motives are misconstrued as time goes on. Only in a few half-forgotten pages is it written, how many of those who from birth, education and position, had been among the foremost people in New England, went into voluntary exile after the Revolution. My grandfather came from Loyalists on both sides of the house. His mother's family presented claims to the British government for over six thousand pounds but recovered nothing. His father's family presented no claims. Long afterwards it was found that vouchers for money and supplies furnished to the British army and left in a chest in a loft, were being used as shaving papers by an old great uncle, and in the kitchen by the negro servants. The remaining papers were with difficulty rescued, master and servants being equally surprised that they should be thought of the slightest value. The generation following the Revolution was not careful as to the preservation of Loyalist records, and even fifty or sixty years ago few people in America dreamed of the ardour and interest of the present day in the pursuit of family papers.

My grandfather had many strange adventures and hair-breadth escapes. Once when he was shooting near Newport, with a friend, his companion's gun became foul. My grandfather tried to clean it with the ramrod, but the gun suddenly went off, and the iron ramrod, which had a sort of button at the end of it, passed directly through his body between the ribs. He fell and his distracted friend rushed off for help to the town, about two miles off. My grandfather came to himself, climbed over two stone walls and went to a small house, the only one in the neighborhood. "And I will never forgive that woman, sir," he used to say with a twinkle of the eye while telling the story, "for she would not let me lie down till she had taken her best white counterpane off the bed. Yet I had a very pleasant time there on the whole—all the young ladies came out of town to see me when I was getting well."

At another time a gun burst in his hand. The surgeons declared he must lose his hand or die. "Then, gentlemen," he said, "I will die a whole man." One surgeon whispered, "That's right. I will save your hand." And so he did, though several fingers were useless. When he was long past eighty, he broke three ribs by a fall downstairs. He was bandaged and put to bed. On the second day he insisted on getting up, and there was great ado to persuade him to keep on the bandages, yet he recovered at once as by a miracle. In his age he liked to tell how steady his head had been in his youth, and how he had "often seen Tarleton and the rest of them under the table," but had never himself been entirely overcome. "I have been making a calculation, sir," a friend once said who was dining at my father's, "and you must have drunk enough to float a seventy-four-gun ship. Why do you suppose your head was so unusually strong?" "It was partly an inheritance," said the old man, "but I had one rule which I never broke. I never drank or smoked before dinner." "And what was your dinner hour, sir?" "Anywhere between twelve and two o'clock when I was young." He used to say that life was easier in those days. "A gentleman had not so many troubles as seems to be the case now."

My grandfather however had more than his share of trial and disappointment, but he bore all with the easy gallantry with which he accepted life in general. I do not think he was other than happy. He had a simple genial nature that found pleasure in everything, and was very little affected by the outside world which had passed him by. I think that for him the great Republic scarcely existed. He remained what he had always been, a King's man and Churchman, as became his blood, which had never breathed disloyalty or dissent from the beloved air of Rhode Island.

The fortune of war had gone against him, and he made no outward protest, but he drank always his first glass of wine as a silent toast to his Sovereign. He never talked of his religion, but it was none the less part of his life. He kept the old Feasts and Fasts, and went always twice to church on Sunday, though he regarded an evening Service as little better than a vulgar form or religious dissipation. When the British Army stores in Newport were seized and sold

during the Revolution, the cushions of the ancestral pew in Trinity Church were covered with the red cloth worn by the British soldiers, and this during his lifetime he would not allow to be changed. I remember it moth-eaten and almost black in my childhood.

To us my grandfather was always a delightful companion and many of our small pleasures came from him. His pockets were full of surprises for us, and we especially liked to "make fire" with his tinder-box, for he thought matches a most dangerous invention, and never would use them. I remember the pride I used to feel as a very little child when at a dinner party my grandfather would sometimes send for me at the game course, and making room at his right hand for my high chair, would give me a bit of venison, and a sip of Burgundy, saying that I knew what was good. Then after ten minutes of great enjoyment on his part and mine I was carried off, never dreaming of asking to stay longer. Indulgent as he was, he did not spoil us. I cannot but think, as becometh my age, that in some ways the bringing up of children was wiser in those days. There was little talk of education, but there was a certain training and discipline, a consideration for age, a deference to elders, an obedience to authority which made a better preparation for life than the "*laisser-aller*" of today. And it seems to me a mistake to suppose that children and young people in general resented the perhaps somewhat peremptory rule to which they were accustomed. It was as much a matter of course as the shining of the sun in heaven. If it grew too hot one put up an umbrella, or bore it as well as one might. Of real injustice or unkindness there was as little as there is today, but children were not then considered of the first importance. We knew that small troubles must be borne and that a fuss for nothing would not be tolerated. We were taught also that the most important thing in the world was to be good. We were so taught and so we professed to believe, but in our heart of hearts we knew that the most important and desirable thing in all the world was to be well-born and well-bred. Was not goodness itself easier for such fortunate people? Did not our father and grandfather believe that no gentleman could be base, false, cruel or cowardly.?

As a child who lives beside the sea looks out upon the great waters, and the child of the mountains looks up to the heights, and each is forever somewhat different from the other because of its different surroundings, so is "the basis of the soul" in every human creature built up by early and often unrecognized influences. In my childhood I never remember to have seen any grown person show physical fear, money I hardly ever heard spoken of at all, and certainly never as a source in itself of happiness, nor was it ever supposed possible by those who were about me that any one in any great moment could behave otherwise than unselfishly and well. "*Noblesse oblige*" is not a bad working creed for children. For the rest our early education was much on the old lines. I never remember when I did not know "my Catechism," as we called it, feeling it a personal thing, though there was a feeling of triumph when "the duties" were got through with. I hear they are now going out of fashion. What can be found in their stead, I wonder, for the teaching of prince or peasant? And not the Catechism only, but we learned by heart many a noble and comforting passage of Holy Writ, and much of the best verse, and heard some of the best English literature read aloud before we entirely knew the meaning of the words. So much the more have they always been ours, and as for religion, when the individual need came, there was at hand a sound body of Divinity into which the soul put its own meaning.

Children lose much who are brought up without knowing the deference and reverence, not only shown but felt for age in those days. I hear it often said of late that people used to be old and useless and laid aside at fifty, that mothers were not then as now the companions of their children, that nobody in fact knew how to bring up a family until the Congress of Mothers began, and that women in general were weak and persecuted creatures. Let us not so immoderately condemn the past while giving thanks for the present. Human nature, like "true politeness" in the old Behaviour Book, "remains ever the same." The masterful perhaps used to rule more openly than now, and the weaker were pressed closer to the wall, but on the whole things were pleasant enough. I remember in my childhood

a dozen old relatives and contemporaries of my grandfather who were between seventy-five and ninety years old, and still ruled their households, and their villages or neighborhoods as well, so far as might be, who were consulted in all matters great and small.

What of the Pilgrim Mothers, who, as some one said, "had to bear with the Pilgrim Fathers as well as with all the rest of it," and the mothers of the republic who succeeded them, and are far too little thought of by their Colonial and Revolutionary Daughters? An old lady whose character, cleverness and balance of mind would have made her remarkable anywhere, when over eighty used to keep upon her writing table, not the modern dictionary, but a copy of Butler's Analogy, that by reading a chapter now and then she might convince herself that her faculties were not failing. An old magnate of ninety, hearing with great surprise of the re-marriage of an old friend somewhat younger than himself, sat long in reflection over his fire. Then straightening himself, a splendid patriarchal figure, with snowy hair, and eyes that still gleamed under their shaggy brows, he said, "Well, it is more than a year since I lost my dear —— and I have never even *thought* as yet of putting anybody in her place!"

What imperishable memories and associations one keeps from the heart of childhood! Through all the backward years, in the hush of the Litany, with the prayer that "in due time" we may enjoy the "kindly fruits of the earth," there comes to me a vision of a sunny garden in old Newport with the pungent smell of box and clove pinks in the soft salt air, where as the town bells rang at noon, we used to climb into the quince trees with our luncheon, great slices of brown bread and butter, and saucers heaped high with red and white currants, holding the very warmth and savour of the summer. So, too, from childish days the injunction to "enter into thy closet," means to me one of those high narrow little dressing rooms which used sometimes to be built into the sides of the great fireplaces, its panelled walls painted white, a large arm-chair beside the little window, and a small mahogany table kept sacred to the Bible and books of devotion. This we always called "Aunt G's prayer closet," and this revered great aunt alike by her habits of

life and her wonderful cap, seemed to us to be lifted above the world in general.

But with all the reverence and observance, there was as much real intimacy and affection between youth and age as now. The band of cousins loved to gather at twilight at the knees of the same saintly old personage, and hear her repeat in her sweet thin voice page after page of the sounding lines of Pope's Homer. We loved also the story that followed: how that long, long ago before our fathers were born or thought of, when "the enemy," (the American troops) was marching on the village where her father lived, her mother with her large family of young children had hastily been sent to one of the farms at some distance,— "and then you know, my dears, as we had taken very few servants to the farm we little girls used to help my mother in the morning, for the poor baby fell ill and my mother was full of anxiety and trouble, and the one who rocked the cradle was allowed to have a book. We had very few books there. I scarcely remember any but our Bibles and Prayer-books and the Homer. I loved poetry and I did not mind staying indoors, so I learned a great deal by heart that summer." Then she would make a little pause and we waited in awe for the pathetic ending, "but the poor baby died, my dears—and he was buried in the cornfield. It could not be helped, but I have always felt very badly about it." Happy little baby, to be so soon done with this troublesome world, and to be remembered with love for seventy years!

Life in Newport was very simple in the old days, but the place of modern problems seems to have been filled by the complications of sea voyages. Somebody was always wanting to go somewhere and waiting for a ship and when a sailing was announced to New York or Nova Scotia or England everyone hurries to put up parcels and to write letters to send by private hand. It is impossible now to realize the uncertainty of communication. One of the old letters tells of the long anxiety which followed the news of a sailing from Halifax to Newport. Some weeks had passed when another ship came in, saying that the missing vessel was surely lost. "Wm. Brinley of course gave up his usual Saturday dinner party," says the letter, but happily

official mourning was still delayed, as a week later the missing relatives arrived in New York in an English ship. They had put in somewhere in a gale and had to wait for another vessel, their own being unseaworthy, and after long delay they were obliged to sail for England and so to New York. On one occasion when my grandmother and her sister were on their way to Halifax a great storm arose and all hope of saving the ship was abandoned. After prayers in the cabin one lady said to the other, "would it not be as well to have our boxes up from the hold and change our clothes, and then it will be known that we are people of quality and we shall have proper burial?"

I have heard my father say that one of his most vivid childish memories was the announcement of Peace after the War of 1812. He was a very little fellow and was sleeping in his mother's room. "The old town crier went through the town in the middle of the night proclaiming the News" he said, "and to my amazement and delight my mother jumped out of bed and danced around the room in her nightgown, crying out Peace, Peace, Peace."

I recall many amusing traits of the strong individuality of those old people. One branch of consins lived in a little country neighborhood, where for generations they had been foremost in Church and State, holding certain offices almost as if by right of descent, among others was that of Church Warden. When I was a child the head of the family was far over eighty, but still an imposing figure, in his blue coat with brass buttons, his long white hair lying on his shoulders, and in his whole bearing the unmistakable look of a man accustomed to rule. When he carried the almsbasin in Church there was always a scuffle that the penny might be forthcoming, for the youngest child knew that Uncle "Jeemes," (as some of his contemporaries called him) could not be kept waiting for a moment. And then the old gentleman strode up to his own pew, and we listened, fascinated, to hear in the pauses of the sermon, the chink, chiuk, as he counted over the money.

It is said that people live much longer now than in old times. It is certainly true that the average of little children's deaths is much lower and that numbers are now kept alive who would formerly have died at between forty

and sixty, but with the enormous increase of population, has the average of healthy active people over eighty increased in proportion? Those whom I remember were not kept alive—they lived.

Nearly forty years after my grandfather's death I went to Nova Scotia. It puzzled me to find that with some of the elder people whom I met I had a strange feeling of old association, a fleeting memory which I could not recall. Was it the speech? It was not "American" speech, of course, nor was it any accent I knew in England. It came to me suddenly one day, and I exclaimed, "I know now what it is. My grandfather and the old cousins spoke in that way when I was a child. It must be provincial English of the time of the Revolution."

My grandfather's vigour of constitution was wonderful.

He kept his active habits and found delight as always in his family, his books, and his garden, until within two or three months of his death. Then his strength failed, though he never lost his faculties and spoke always with perfect intelligence to those who came and went about him. A young granddaughter read to him every morning the Psalms for the day, and afterwards a few pages of his beloved Scott or the Life of Wellington. The old man had always been soft-hearted, and although a good fighter he never could have cursed his enemies. "No, no," he would say when David became too emphatic. "Shoot over that, my dear, go on to the next." But he cared for little talk beyond a kindly greeting, and for several weeks lay reviewing the many years behind him. Sometimes he thought himself a child in the nursery, and then a little boy at his first school, playing and quarrelling with his fellows. One name was so often repeated one morning, and there seemed to be so much sparring between the little lads that one of his children said to him, "Father, who was Charley ——? We know the family names, but we never heard of a Charley." "Charley ——, my dear, what do you know about him?" "You were speaking of him, sir." "No, no, I haven't thought of him for fifty years or more. We used to play together and we went to our first school together—and I remember" chuckling again at the recollection, "that we both liked to sit at the end of the bench. He would not give

up and I would not give up, so we often got into trouble. But he died when we were six years old. I don't know where you ever heard of him." Then for hours the old man would go over the Latin grammar which he knew from cover to cover. "And by far the best way to teach it, too," he used to say. Cards had been a part of his daily life since boyhood and he would play game after game with ghostly partners. It was strange to hear familiarly the names of Tarleton and his companions and broken allusions to many a bit of forgotten history. In this way he lived again the scenes of his varied life, and I have often heard my mother lament that no one of those who sat beside his bed ever thought of writing down what he said from day to day, for though much was disjointed and unintelligible, yet much was also of great interest. But those who listened thought little about it or thought they should always remember, and now there is no one who remembers.

He sleeps not under the skies of his beloved birthplace, but on a sunny hillside far away, with his two wives, (who were cousins), amid seven generations of their kindred of Scottish descent. Men of his age and type have utterly passed away, and this eager generation is sure, that with all the amazing discoveries and changes of the last hundred years, this new world in its development is to be filled with a new race far superior to the old. So may it be. I speak not now of the great and splendid names of those who forever light up the nineteenth century, but it will be well for the years that are coming if we can keep the simple faith, the high ideals, the honesty and character, the charm and strength of many of its men and women, little known in life, but who none the less left a lasting impression for good upon those who followed them.

KATHARINE JOHNSTONE WHARTON.

March, 1901.

THE FEKE-JOHNSON WINDOW

On entering the Society's Rooms, one of the first objects to meet the eye is a quaint-looking bow window which juts out from the wall of the corridor leading to the main hall of the building.

The striking contrast here presented between the old and the new cannot fail to arrest and fix the attention of any visitor who has eyes that see and a mind that appreciates. The whole aspect and character of the window is venerable and dignified, and the handsome and well-appointed surroundings serve to accentuate its appearance of antiquity.

The window came into the possession of the Society through the kindness of one of its most highly revered officers, Mr. J. M. K. Southwick, and when the Seventh Day Baptist Church was purchased, in 1884, and became the Society's home, this window was placed in the second story front. We have a photograph showing it in that position. Afterwards, when the new building was erected, in 1902, the old window was relegated temporarily to the basement, and there remained for several years until another highly revered officer of the Society chanced to remark it one day, glimmering faintly through dust and cobwebs, and promptly determined that a window, of all things fitted and fashioned to enjoy the light of day, should no longer be permitted to remain in darkness.

Without stretching the imagination to the breaking point, one might trace in this liberation from confinement of the old window a parallel with certain other liberations from confinement in noisome dungeons, which occurred a very few years before its birth, on the occasion of the storming of the Bastille, in Paris. For our venerable bow window first made its bow to the public in the year of our Lord 1791, in a house occupied by Charles Feke, in those days a promi-

ment pharmacist of Newport. We find, in an address to the Society delivered by the late Mr. J. M. K. Southwick in March, 1886, the following reference to the window:

"The bow window over the door is from the building on Thames street formerly occupied by Dr. Johnson, and I am glad to learn that it has a still further interesting history; for some fifty years ago it was removed from the apothecary shop of Charles Feke, on the Parade, now the property of Augustus Goffe. This building was built in 1794."

But in looking through the files of the *Mercury*, we find, March 3, 1795, the following advertisement:

"SHOE STORE JUST OPENED BY COGGES-
HALL & BURDICK, NEXT DOOR NORTH-
WARD OF MR. CHARLES FEKE'S
APOTHECARY IN THAMES STREET"

As this advertisement is upon June 7, 1796, changed to read "next northward of Mr. James Taylor & Co.'s apothecary shop"—and since in the issue of May 31 this shop is still referred to as that of Mr. Charles Feke, it is evident that between these two dates, May 31 and June 7, 1796, the apothecary shop was removed to Washington Square where the window is first surely found.

In Channing's "Early Recollections of Newport," we find the following reference to the shop:

"I was compelled to relinquish my usual business, and spent much of my time in Mr. Charles Feke's apothecary shop."

The following death notice appears in the *Mercury*, April 27, 1822.

"On Thursday evening, Dr. Charles Feke, in the 72nd year of his age, after an illness of three months, which he bore with that calmness and serenity of mind which philosophy first implants and religion perfects. To man it is not permitted to estimate the perfection of man. But if an integrity which the world could not corrupt; if

a life devoted to the most active benevolence afford a title to respect; if these constitute goodness; he is among the good men made perfect. The loss of this distinguished Philanthropist has left a chasm in our community, which will not be easily filled. In the hearts of his Fellow-Citizens he has left a monument which time cannot moulder or efface. His funeral will take place tomorrow afternoon, immediately after Divine Service, from his late residence in Washington Square."

A specific which appears to have been very popular in those days was the product of Fekke's establishment, and was known as "FEKKE'S BITTERS." After the window had been placed in its present position, an ancient mortar which had formerly belonged to the eminent pharmacist and had been for many years in the possession of the Society, was brought down from the main exhibition hall and placed on the lower shelf of the window. It is reasonable to suppose that this mortar played its part in the manufacture of the famous "FEKKE'S BITTERS."

About the year 1836 the window was the most prominent feature—as shown in the illustration—in the residence of Dr. Cyrus Johnson at No. 56 Thames street, the third house on the east side northward from Washington Square. In Bayles' "History of Newport County" we find the following:

"Dr. Cyrus Johnson, son of Isaiah and Ruth Leonard Johnson, was born at Falmouth, Mass., Oct. 13, 1779. His grandfather was Daniel Johnson, many years judge of the court of Plymouth County, Mass. He seems to have settled first in Saco, then in what was called the District of Maine. In 1810 he came to Newport and remained there till he died, Jan. 17, 1861. Dr. Johnson had an office and dispensary in his residence on the east side of Thames street, the third house above the Parade, for thirty years and probably more. He was a very mild and unobtrusive man."

The following notice appears in the Mercury, May 10, 1822.

DRUGS AND MEDICINES

DR. JOHNSON respectfully informs his Friends and the Public in general, that he has opened an Assortment of Genuine Drugs and Medicines, at his old stand, a few doors north of the Brick Market. . . Where persons wishing Medicines, may depend upon having it put up faithfully, and on the most reasonable terms, and the smallest favor gratefully acknowledged. Medical advice gratis, to those who purchase Medicines.

To Mr. Jonas Bergner, we are indebted for the following:

An hundred years ago or more, long before the era of plate glass, the show windows did not cover the whole width of the building as they do now, and only small articles were displayed on the narrow shelves.

All show windows were covered with shutters at night, and the so-called "Bow-Windows" were considered the most elegant. There were a number of these windows in Newport, but they have all been removed and more pretentious affairs with plate glass have taken their places.

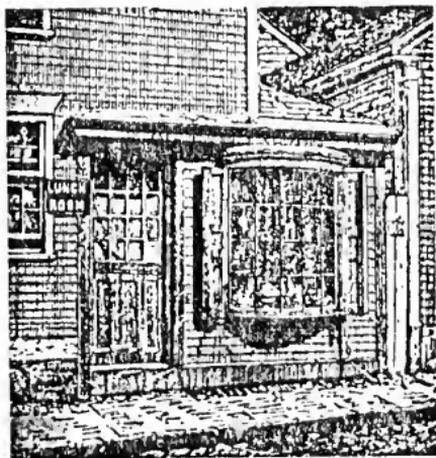
It is safe to say that Dr. Johnson's window is the only one now left that will give us an idea of how they appeared. This window was probably removed from Feke's apothecary shop in Washington Square to Dr. Johnson's shop, then No. 188 Thames street, after Dr. Hazard, who was the successor of Dr. Feke, had moved to his own house near the Court House, in 1831; and when it was fitted in, the old dilapidated shutters that had to be taken down every morning were discarded and a new set of shutters made that were hung on hinges and folded back like outside blinds, and had an iron bar that was also hinged and could be folded back, which made it much more convenient than the old-fashioned arrangement.

The cornice is embellished with dentils, flutes, beaded mouldings, etc., all very beautiful, in very good proportion, and similar to the best examples of colonial doorways from the early part of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Northam, in his notes on "An Interesting Old Neighborhood" in the Daily News of September 17, 1897, makes the following mention of Dr. Johnson:

"Next door was the shop of an intelligent apothecary, but as the people of the neighborhood never would get sick his syrup of squills, paragoric, and Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup frequently evaporated; his stick and ball licorice met with a ready sale from the children of this and adjoining streets. Young, in his 'Night Thoughts' declares: 'An undevout astronomer is mad.' Just before closing his shutters for the night he never failed to gaze for a moment at the firmament, Aurora Borealis, the Milky Way, and even at the Great Bear and Little Dipper, as the case might be, and mentally, if not verbally, prognosticated the weather for the coming day."

Strange is the thought that this venerable old bow window whose life has just been so happily renewed—the prominent feature, the adornment of memorable establishments maintained for the purpose of ministering to and alleviating the ills of mankind—should be linked chronologically with three great and portentous periods of human strife: the French Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Civil War.



THE DR. JOHNSON WINDOW

Now in the Rooms of the Newport Historical Society

SOCIETY NOTES

Since the publication of our January Bulletin, the Society has been made the richer by the following acquisitions:

Two volumes of The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, gift of Miss E. M. Tilley.

The New England Division Red Cross Bulletin.

Coddington Records, Descendants of Isaac, Reuben and Uziah Coddington, of Woodbridge, New Jersey, gift of Herbert C. Coddington.

Life and Times of Washington, by J. F. Schroeder, D. D., gift of Mrs. T. Fred Kaull.

John Brown and One Branch of Descendants, by George Tilden Brown, gift of George Tilden Brown.

Genealogies of Old Families of Concord, Mass., and Austin's Genealogical Dictionary, gifts of Mrs. Charles Edward Potter.

One mustard spoon marked "Ocean House," one pair sugar tongs marked "Ocean House," one painted jug, gifts of Dr. Roderick Terry.

Mrs. Kaull has kindly given us also a very curious walking stick which under simple ma-

nipulation becomes an excellent fishing rod. This is a Japanese curiosity.

Mrs. George Cerio has presented us with a very handsome gold watch, richly jewelled, and of quaint workmanship and design. The value of this object necessitates keeping it in the safe. In common with many other precious things in our possession, this watch will but rarely be exposed to public view. The fact that many of our possessions are thus hidden, and that many of those not hidden still escape the eyes of our visitors, has suggested to us a new departure: a sort of advertisement of our wares: we intend to give space in each successive number of our Bulletin to the story of some prominent object in our collection. The story of the Feke-Johnson Bow Window in this number, is the pioneer of the new enterprise.

At a special meeting of the Society, held on Wednesday, March 17, to receive the report of the Committee on the Liberty Tree, the following pre-

ambles and resolutions were adopted:

Whereas: The lot of land upon which the Liberty Tree stands, of which the Newport Historical Society is trustee, is small and narrow, so that the tree cannot grow upon it, its roots not finding nourishment, and its branches overhanging the streets upon either side, so that if it is to live the tree must be moved; and

Whereas, the Trustee, by the deed of trust, has no authority to move the tree on to any land which the trustee does not control.

Now, therefore, in the hope of having the tree restored and

its life prolonged by the City becoming the trustee and moving the tree to the adjacent Ellery Park,

Be it Resolved, That the committee on the Liberty Tree be and they are hereby authorized in the name and behalf of this Society, to take such steps and to institute such proceedings as they may deem proper and necessary, to secure the appointment of the City of Newport as trustee to execute the trusts created by the deed of William Read, dated April 11, A. D. 1766, relating to a Liberty Tree at the junction of Thames and Farewell Streets and the lot of land therein described.



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