

SOME RHODE ISLAND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE INTEL- LECTUAL LIFE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

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THE history of colonies, ancient and modern, has shown a strikingly uniform experience in one respect. After the strong civilizing forces connected with the first generation of settlers have died away, there has been usually a "dead point" to be passed—if one may use the language of mechanical science—before the results of the civilizing institutions planted in native soil should show themselves. Such a "dead point" is to be observed in the intellectual life of the American colonies, in the century roughly conceived of as closing in 1775; and in the steps which led to the awakening of the colonies from this torpidity, it is certainly a fact of curious interest that the colony of Rhode Island, through the conjunction of certain favorable conditions, was enabled to play a far more influential part than ever before or since.

In all such awakenings, whether in the Italian Renaissance or elsewhere, one finds, as the two essential factors, a competent impulse, generally from without, and a peculiarly prepared or receptive condition, within. In the person of George Berkeley, among others, a very necessary impulse was supplied, in the colony of Rhode Island in the last century; but one cannot fail to be struck with the noteworthy degree in which that colony was congenial soil for the influences transmitted by the English scholar, which may be traced through the widely-separated fields of literature, painting, architecture, science and education.

Among the essentially local conditions which made this result possible, there are three of especial prominence.

One very obvious one is the early impetus given to commercial development at Newport.¹ In several particulars, Boston's commercial operations were larger, but the developing tendencies of New York were not manifested until late in the century,² and in peculiar directions, Newport held a commercial preëminence until the Revolutionary War dealt it an overwhelming blow. The increased material resources for which this fact stood at Newport, were happily considered not as an end in themselves, but as a means to an end, namely, the advancement of art, letters and general culture,—as was indeed the case with the merchant-princes of Florence and Venice. With each new freight sent out, there was a drawing out of the shell of provincial isolation, and with each new freight landed, came a vivifying contact with the world at large. It therefore had already resulted that Newport was far from being a barren wilderness intellectually, when Berkeley arrived there in 1729;—by deliberate purpose from the first, as appears from the papers published by Dr. Fraser in his life of the Dean; perhaps, he says, in order “to establish friendly correspondence with influential New Englanders.”³ The people of Newport “loved learning,”⁴—to quote from the accomplished annalist of the Redwood Library and Trinity Church, Mr. George C. Mason,—“and they had books to feed that love.”⁵ Their ships⁶ “brought to them the best products of the English press, with contributions from Geneva and Amsterdam; books that were read, and discussed, and handed down as heirlooms—mentioned with minuteness in wills—from father to son.”⁷ Another

¹ Weeden's "Economic history of New England," v. 2, p. 583.

² Cf. the interesting comparison between Newport and New York, in Proceedings at Installation of President Low of Columbia College, p. 50.

³ Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 155.

⁴ Mason's "Annals of the Redwood Library," p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ "Rarely did a vessel sail for England without taking out an order for new books." Mason's "Reminiscences of Newport," p. 201.

⁷ Mason's "Redwood Library," pp. 9, 10. In a foot-note, instances are cited from wills before 1734.

phase of Rhode Island society to be noticed, across the Narragansett Bay, in what was long known as the Narragansett Country, was a condition of society not identical indeed with that at Newport, but analogous to it. Though they were themselves largely interested financially in the commercial ventures of Newport, the Narragansett planters, with farms, in some instances of thousands of acres, and with slavery on a large scale, represented "a state of society which," to quote from the careful study¹ made of it by our associate, Dr. Edward Channing, "has no parallel in New England." "The later leaders of Narragansett society,"² says Dr. Channing, "were, for the most part, well-educated men," enjoying "the teachings of the best tutors,"³ and possessing a refinement which was a natural result of their peculiar social development.

There is a second local condition to be noticed; namely, the openness of the colony of Rhode Island to outside influences. Very naturally, as growing out of the circumstances of their settlement, this was in striking contrast with the Puritan colonies by which she was bordered. We are not now concerned with the matter of liberty of conscience in questions of religion, but with the broader subject of freedom of thought in any field; though undoubtedly Berkeley, as the English church dignitary, would have been in 1729 appreciably less welcome at Boston, where there had been the fiercest opposition to the holding of the English church services since 1686, when the liturgy was read here (*i. e.*, in Boston) for the first time,⁴ than in Rhode Island, which was becoming something of a stronghold of the Church of England on this continent.⁵

¹ Channing's "Narragansett planters," p. 23.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ Compare Fraser, in Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 158.

⁴ Sewall's "Diary," May 30, 1686 (5 Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections, v. 5, pp. 142-3.)

⁵ Bishop Perry's "History of the American Episcopal Church," v. 1, pp. 177, 539.

What, however, of Berkeley as the man of letters, the representative on our shores of the Age of Queen Anne in English literature, the man who in 1713 was associated with Steele as one of the contributors of brilliant essays to the *Guardian*, and was in almost equal closeness of association with Pope, Addison and Swift?¹ Mr. Delano A. Goddard, formerly editor of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, in his very thorough review of "The press and literature of the provincial period," in 1881, remarks: "The remarkable literary revival of Queen Anne's reign was little observed or felt here"² (*i. e.*, in Boston). Dr. Palfrey, in his 4th volume, calls attention to the fact that in the 1723 catalogue of what was then the largest library in the province,—the Harvard College library,—one looks in vain for the works of Addison, Pope, Steele, or Swift³; and another representative catalogue of more than eight hundred titles printed in 1734, is also cited by Dr. Palfrey,⁴ wherein "no copy appears, of either Shakespeare or of Milton." But at about this same time, 1723-33, as may be learned from manuscript records of various kinds, there were in private libraries at Newport, such books as Spenser's "Faerie Queene," the first folio edition of 1609; Butler's "Hudibras," James Howell's "Epistolae Holi-Elia-nae," Milton's "Samson Agonistes," and the 1688 edition of Dionysius, in the Greek.⁵ No one of these books was in the Harvard College library, nor did it contain any copy of Ben Jonson. Judge Samuel Sewall, in 1706, while on a journey through Rhode Island, records in his "Diary" the fact of his finding "a folio" edition of Ben Jonson (whether that of 1631, 1641, or 1692, does not

¹ Fraser's "Life of Berkeley" (in "Works," v. 4, ch. 3).

² "Memorial history of Boston," v. 2., p. 413.

³ Palfrey's "New England," v. 4. p. 384.

⁴ *Ibid.* This is "A catalogue of books on all arts and sciences, to be sold at the shop of T. Cox." Boston, 1734.

⁵ Mason's "Redwood Library," pp. 10, 11.

appear), in a Rhode Island country house.¹ Dr. Channing, in his paper on the Narragansett Country, already quoted, says: "McSparran, Fayerweather, and Robinson are said to have possessed large collections of books, and we know that Colonel Updike, who lived in the middle of the last century, had a library" which is described as "full of treasures," naming among other works in it a 1686 edition of the Iliad, in Greek, as well as Pope's translation; a 1520 edition of Theognis, in Greek; Ovid, in Latin; Virgil, Sallust, and Terence, in English translations; Johnson's "Lexicon Chymicum," 1678; Erasmus's Colloquies, in Latin; and Molière's Plays, in an English translation.² Within the last twelve months also, a gift has been made to the Providence Public Library,³ of more than one hundred and fifty pamphlets and other publications, accumulated through five successive generations of this same Updike family, of the utmost interest as showing what matters,—music,⁴ the drama, belles-lettres, English politics, poetry, etc.,—occupied the attention of thinking and reading men in Rhode Island before 1800. It is noteworthy that we find both in the Newport and the Narragansett⁵ communities the conjunction, by no means common in the colonies at that time, of instruction by private tutors representing the best English training, with notable private collections of books. We are therefore not unprepared for Mr. Mason's statement, in showing how naturally the movement came about which resulted in the Redwood Library corporation (and many of the books above named came in due time to that library⁶), that the social surroundings of

¹ 5 Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections, v. 6, p. 167.

² Channing's "Narragansett planters," pp. 7, 8.

³ Fourteenth annual report of the Providence Public Library, p. 5.

⁴ "The gift of an organ to Trinity Church from Dean Berkeley," says Mr. Mason, "quickly followed his departure from Newport." (Mason's "Annals of Trinity Church, Newport," p. 58. See also p. 139.)

⁵ Channing's "Narragansett planters," p. 7.

⁶ Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 11. A catalogue of the several hundred volumes purchased for the library in 1748, fills pages 494 to 514 of the same work.

the people of Newport were such as to cause them to appreciate Dean Berkeley's learning, while, he says, "the Dean found in them congenial companions,—men who could sustain their part in a discussion when they came together,—meeting at first informally, and then as an organized body."¹

What shall we say, however, of Berkeley as the great idealist in philosophy, the formulator of "subjective idealism,"—to use the epithet of Kant,²—the third in rank of all British speculative thinkers, in the judgment of Mr. Royce?³ It is in this very feature that we find the third and last of those local conditions which we have been considering. From the first, the idealistic habit of thought or temper of mind has had its representatives in Rhode Island. In this regard, Ex-President Porter, of Yale University, finds Roger Williams and Berkeley "in many particulars, kindred spirits"⁴; but it is altogether probable that sufficient weight has not hitherto been given to the debt which is due to the Friends, who, when repulsed from the other colonies, found a congenial abiding place in every corner of Rhode Island territory, and by the year 1700 constituted about one-half of its population, "owned nearly one-third of the meeting-houses,"⁵ and held a large percentage of the public offices,—as a natural consequence, of course, largely influencing the thought of the colony.

It is by no means necessary to admire or even to justify all the acts committed by the Quakers in their "invasion" of New England, to be impressed by a certain side of their teachings,—that side doubtless which so appealed to gentle Charles Lamb when he wrote in his "Essays of Elia": "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart; and love

¹ Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 9.

² Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 368.

³ Royce's "Spirit of modern philosophy," p. 93.

⁴ Porter's "Two-hundredth birthday of Berkeley," p. 37.

⁵ Mason's "Trinity Church," p. 10.

the early Quakers."¹ The intellectual attitude held by the Friends towards the "inward light" has indeed repeatedly been the natural starting-point of idealism in thought and life. "As iron sharpeneth iron," so unquestionably the numerous opportunities which Berkeley's contact with these Newport thinkers gave him, for discussions on philosophical subjects,—particularly with his fellow-members of the "Literary and Philosophical Society"² formed in 1730,—afforded him a natural medium for putting into organized form views which he, no doubt, had long held in less definite shape. In "Alciphron," the "largest, and probably the most popular of Berkeley's works,"—to use the language of Dr. Fraser,³—and written wholly during his residence at Newport,⁴ we have what the distinguished writer just cited accurately calls "a fresh proclamation of Berkeley's spiritual philosophy"⁵ and it is one which we can easily believe to have been written, chapter by chapter, after an hour or two of discussion at the "Society," or, when seated, as attested by local and contemporary accounts, at the "Hanging Rocks,"⁶ near Newport, with the ever-sounding sea at his feet, and the most charming of landscapes within reach of his gaze. His "Alciphron," indeed, achieves the double distinction of being cast in the form of dialogues which, to quote Dr. Fraser, the Edinburgh scholar, "are better fitted than any [others] in our language to enable the English reader to realize the

¹ Lamb's "Essays of Elia,"—"A Quakers' meeting."

² Pages 1-30 of Mason's "Annals of the Redwood Library" are devoted to this Society,—its predecessor. At pp. 12-15 are copied the "Rules and regulations" of this Society, which it is instructive to compare with the "Statutes" of the earlier (1705) "Society," at Trinity College, Dublin, to which Berkeley had belonged. Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, pp. 23-5.

³ Berkeley's "Works," v. 2, p. 3.

⁴ 1729-31. It was published in London, on his return, in 1732. An American reprint, under the charge of President Dwight, appeared at New Haven in 1803.

⁵ Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 196.

⁶ Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 168: Porter's "Berkeley," p. 48.

charm of Cicero and Plato"¹; and at the same time, to quote Dr. Porter, the New Haven scholar, are abounding "in local color and allusions." He adds: "One who stands on Honyman's Hill, and turns over its pages, can follow with his eye the several features of the landscape which the author wrought into his pictures of nature and of life. Even a group of fox-hunters rushes across the landscape as Berkeley had seen them many a time in Narragansett."² It is no wonder that his biographer remarks: "The cosmopolitan Berkeley has left curiously few local impressions at any of the places where he lived, perhaps more in Rhode Island than anywhere else."³ The island⁴ still acknowledges that, by his visit, it has been touched with the halo of a great and sacred reputation."⁵

The best of testimony to the indigenous nature of these idealistic tendencies in Rhode Island, and to the peculiarly local conditions which we have enumerated, is found in the fact that on Berkeley's sudden and unexpected return to England they did not die out, nor even languish. Four years later, in 1735,⁶ we find the society rendering its organization more definite, and twelve years later it received incorporation from the General Assembly of the colony,⁷ under the name of "The Company of the Redwood Library." Mr. Mason's exhaustive studies⁸ of these

¹ Berkeley's "Works," v. 2, p. 3.

² Porter's "Berkeley," pp. 48-9.

³ "He appears," says Dr. Porter, "not to have travelled in New England," p. 41. Rev. Joseph Sewall's diary and Benjamin Walker's diary mention him as being at Boston and Cambridge in the month in which he returned to England. (Cited in H. A. Hill's "History of the Old South Church," v. 1, p. 457.)

⁴ Aquidneck, or "Rhode Island"; the island on which Newport is situated. Whitehall, Berkeley's estate, although in 1729 in the corporate limits of Newport, has, since 1743, formed a part of the town of Middletown. For his visits to Narragansett, see below.

⁵ Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 190.

⁶ Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 12.

⁷ R. I. Col. Records, v. 5, p. 227.

⁸ Based almost exclusively on the original records (printed in his volumes) which had often been consulted in manuscript, but are now, fortunately, accessible to students.

early years have enabled us to see more clearly than ever before, not only how wide were the ramifications of Berkeley's influence, through literary and philosophical channels, but also through various artistic and scientific channels; in the one case chiefly of local origin, in the other more closely identified with the company of men who came from England to Rhode Island either with Berkeley or in these same years of his residence at Newport.

For there is an aspect of Berkeley's many-sided character which we have not yet noticed; namely, Berkeley as the promoter of science and art, the Englishman who, in his seven years' absence (1713-1720) on the continent, had placed himself in closest contact with the fruits of the Renaissance in Italy, and who now transmitted the results of this contact not only to England, but to America as well. Among those who were associated with Berkeley in Italy¹ was John Smibert, a Royal Academician.² He had been for some time in Italy, studying there the great masterpieces of Raphael, Titian, Van Dyck and others.³ When Berkeley sailed for America, Smibert sailed with him, enough of an idealist, like himself, to be enchanted,—so we are told,—with Berkeley's far-reaching plan for civilizing the western world. To the very thorough researches of Mr. Augustus T. Perkins, twelve years ago, we owe a most creditable nucleus of a descriptive catalogue⁴ of such portraits from Smibert's hand as can now be identified, found as they are in various portions of Rhode Island, at New Haven, at Worcester, in the Memorial Hall at Cambridge, in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, on the walls of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and else-

¹ Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 153.

² Walpole's "Anecdotes of painting in England," v. 2, p. 673.

³ Walpole, v. 2, p. 673. His copy of Van Dyck's portrait of Cardinal Bentivoglio now hangs in the Memorial Hall at Harvard University. (Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, v. 16, pp. 393-4.)

⁴ Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, v. 16, pp. 393-9, 474-5; v. 17, pp. 94-7.

where here in Boston. There are, besides, many in private ownership in this city and the neighborhood.

The curiously prophetic foot-note in Horace Walpole's account of Smibert (in his "Anecdotes of painting in England"), has a decided interest, considering the date at which it was written. He says: "As our disputes and politics have travelled to America, is it not probable that poetry and painting too will revive amidst those extensive tracts?"¹ Prophetic indeed as regards Rhode Island is this remark, for although Boston became his home at some period² after the sudden departure of Berkeley, Smibert heads a distinguished line of artists who have been identified with Rhode Island, either by birth or residence, in the last one hundred and fifty years,—Cosmo Alexander of Newport, who taught Stuart³; Gilbert Stuart, himself, born in the Narragansett Country; Robert Feke, of Newport⁴; Edward G. Malbone, of Newport; Washington Allston, who studied painting at Newport; and William Morris Hunt, who in comparatively recent years studied there. There seems to be no good reason for believing that Smibert gave lessons (as suggested by Dunlap)⁵ to Copley,—who was apparently a spiritual child of that early American artist, Peter Pelham, as Mr. William H. Whitmore's researches⁶ have shown for us. Yet Copley, like Allston, may have learned from Smibert's work even if not from himself. Allston remarks: "I am grateful to Smibert for the instruction he, or rather his

¹ Walpole's "Anecdotes of painting," v. 2, p. 673.

² During Berkeley's stay at Newport Smibert accompanied the Dean to Narragansett, remaining there some time. Stiles's Connecticut Election Sermon, 1783 ("The United States elevated to glory and honor," pp. 11, 12; Updike's "Narragansett," pp. 523-4). It would appear that some of his portraits of Rhode Island sitters were painted at this time. A letter by Smibert, dated Sept. 22, 1735 (now in the possession of Mr. George C. Mason), shows him to have been then at Boston.

³ Mason's "Gilbert Stuart," pp. 6, 7.

⁴ Tuckerman's "Book of the artists," p. 47.

⁵ Dunlap's "Arts of design," v. 1, p. 22.

⁶ Whitmore's "Notes concerning Peter Pelham," etc., p. 18.

work, gave me."¹ Rhode Island has thus been enabled to make enviable contributions to this phase of æsthetic development.

Architecture is another of the arts, the development of which on our shores has an interesting connection with Berkeley's Italian sojourn. Berkeley's own extensive architectural designs were probably carried back to England with him (and were afterwards known to be preserved in his family)²; but those of Peter Harrison, the English architect, who arrived in Newport during Berkeley's residence there, and who had while in England been associated³ with Sir John Vanbrugh, in the planning and construction of Blenheim House,⁴ are embodied in buildings familiar to us all. Here in Boston, King's Chapel,⁵ erected 1749, and across the Charles, Christ Church,⁶ Cambridge, completed in 1761, perpetuate his name.⁷ Harrison's residence appears to have been for a time at Newport; then in Boston; then, after a brief return to England, in Newport once more, since we find him spoken of in the description of Christ Church, by a former rector, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Hoppin, as "Mr. Peter Harrison, then (1759) residing at Newport, Rhode Island, whose designs of public buildings have been much admired for correct taste."⁸ A letter still

¹ Tuckerman's "Book of the artists," p. 43.

² Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 153.

³ "Memorial history of Boston," v. 4, p. 469; U. S. govt. report on "Public libraries," 1876, pt. 1, p. 15.

⁴ Blenheim House, completed 1715, is described with illustrations in Eccles's "New guide to Blenheim Palace," 14th ed., 1865; also, in the *Cosmopolitan*, Jan., 1890, v. 8, pp. 317-24; *Illustrated London News*, v. 87, pp. 462-6; and Rimmer's "Pleasant spots around Oxford," pp. 206-28.

⁵ "Memorial history of Boston," v. 2, p. 498, v. 4, pp. 469-70; Greenwood's "History of King's Chapel," pp. 110, 118-20.

⁶ "A sermon on the reopening of Christ Church, Cambridge, Mass., * * * with a historical notice," by Rev. Dr. Nicholas Hoppin. Boston, 1858, p. 23.

⁷ "The interior of King's Chapel," says Mr. C. A. Cummings, "was the first in the colony to exhibit real architectural merit." (Memorial history of Boston, v. 4, p. 470.)

⁸ Bishop Perry's "History of the American Episcopal Church," v. 1, p. 589.

It is also corroborated by the language of the manuscript "Record of votes and resolutions," &c., of the King's Chapel Committee in 1749, printed in Greenwood's "King's Chapel," p. 118, namely: "Mr. Harrison of Rhode Island."

preserved, dated November 24, 1759, and signed by a committee of the Society of Christ Church, says: "We have applied to a masterly architect for a plan."¹ In regard to one of the three buildings² with which Harrison enriched the Newport community, which he chiefly made his home, namely, the Redwood Library building, erected 1750, an architect of our own time—Mr. George C. Mason—who had occasion to make professional measurements in 1875 thus testifies: "The building erected by Harrison was most carefully planned and studied; its proportions, details, columns, etc., being in strict accord with the rules of classic architecture."³ It is of interest to note, as confirming the view of early society in Newport already referred to, that Trinity Church, Newport, a most interesting specimen of colonial architecture, was completed in 1726, almost half a dozen years before Harrison's arrival there, and is attributed by Mr. Mason to Richard Munday, of Newport.⁴ The details of this building, as well as the later development of colonial architecture at Providence, give evidence of close study from English models.

The ramifications of Berkeley's influence are seen, however, in science as well as art. In 1729 (in the year of Berkeley's arrival, though not in the same ship⁵), there arrived at Newport the first of a line of several thoroughly well educated physicians who made their home in that town; namely, Dr. Thomas Moffatt,⁶ a native of Edinburgh. His preparation for medical practice was obtained in succession at the University of Edinburgh, and the University of Leyden, a circumstance of some curious interest, as pre-

¹ Bishop Perry's "History of the American Episcopal Church," v. 1, p. 589; Hoppin, p. 23.

² Mentioned by Mr. Mason ("Trinity Church," p. 114).

³ Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 36.

⁴ Mason's "Trinity Church," pp. 43, 51.

⁵ Peters's "Sermon" * * * "on the death of Thomas Moffatt, M.D." (London, 1787), cited in Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 29.

⁶ Mason's "Redwood Library," pp. 27-30; Sabine's "Biographical sketches of loyalists of the American Revolution" (ed. 1864), v. 2, p. 85; the latter account being incorrect in several of its details.

cisely the same order of succession was observed in the medical studies of Dr. Thomas Brett,¹ who arrived at Newport as early as 1735; Dr. William Hunter² (cousin and namesake of one of the most eminent surgeons of that century in Europe), who arrived at Newport in 1752; and, among those native to the soil, Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse,³ born in Newport in 1754, of Quaker parentage, who was chosen in 1783 Hersey Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physic in the Harvard Medical School,—the first to occupy the chair,—and who retained that position until 1812.⁴ A variation from the routine of Edinburgh and Leyden is, however, to be observed in Dr. Sylvester Gardiner, born in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, in 1717, who began practice here in Boston as early as 1761⁵; and Dr. Solomon Drowne, born in Providence, R. I., in 1753,⁶ both of whom pursued their medical studies at London and Paris.⁷ Both Dr. Gardiner and Dr. Waterhouse were honorably connected with movements for prevention against small-pox, by inoculation,⁸ and by vaccination.⁹ To two of these educated physicians, also, we are indebted for the steps making possible Gilbert Stuart's brilliant career,—to Dr. Moffatt, at whose request Stuart's father came over to Rhode Island,¹⁰ and to Dr. Hunter, who first discovered the young painter's genius and gave him commissions.¹¹

¹ Also a member of Berkeley's Society. Mason's "Redwood Library," pp. 16, 17.

² R. I. Hist. Soc. Collections, v. 7, p. 251.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁴ Harvard Quinquennial catalogue, 1890, p. 30.

⁵ Sabine's "Loyalists," v. 1, pp. 459-62.

⁶ Bartlett's "Descendants of John Russell," pp. 111-15.

⁷ Sabine, v. 1, p. 459; Bartlett, p. 111.

⁸ Dr. Gardiner. See his letter to the town of Boston, 1761; Dr. Samuel A. Green's centennial address on the "History of medicine in Massachusetts," p. 78; Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, v. 4, pp. 324-9.

⁹ Dr. Waterhouse. See R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll., v. 7, pp. 259, 60.

¹⁰ Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 28.

¹¹ Mason's "Gilbert Stuart," p. 6.

In the native membership of the "Society," as represented by Henry Collins,¹ James Honyman,² Abraham Redwood,³ and others in Newport, as well as in the case of Daniel Updike,⁴ of the Narragansett Country, one can easily recognize the evidences of the intellectual life above indicated. Down to about the year 1740, it was far otherwise with the northern part of the colony,—Providence and the vicinity. The extraordinary pluck, energy and enterprise by which, chiefly between 1740 and 1760, Stephen Hopkins,—the only Providence man in Berkeley's "Society,"—brought about a complete reversal of the attitude of isolation and torpidity which had heretofore dominated the Providence community, constitutes one of the most interesting chapters in the annals of social development. Through his efforts and those of his associates,⁵ a printing-press was set up, a public market established, the streets paved, a fire department established, a book-store and a public library opened, wharves and docks extended, and a flourishing foreign and domestic commerce built up. By 1760, there were more than eighty-four vessels⁶ owned by Providence merchants, and the next seven years⁷ showed a very striking increase and extension of her commerce. With the rise of her commerce the natural results followed in Providence as elsewhere. Not only was it the case that in due time the ships of the Browns, the Nightingales and the Russells, of Providence, as those of the Malbones of

¹ A native of Newport, 1699; educated in England; a patron of "literature and the fine arts." (Mason's "Redwood Library," pp. 26-7; *Newport Historical Magazine*, v. 2, p. 88.)

² Son of the first rector of Trinity Church, Newport.

³ Donor of the Redwood Library.

⁴ See sketch of him in W. Updike's "History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett," p. 118-19. He was an intimate friend of Berkeley, who was a visitor at his house, and who presented him with a silver coffee pot, still owned in the family. (Updike, p. 119.)

⁵ Foster's "Stephen Hopkins," pt. 1, ch. 5.

⁶ Letter of Moses Brown to Tristram Burges, Jan. 12, 1836. (MS. owned by R. I. Hist. Soc.)

⁷ Report to town, 1767; cited in petition of 1778. (Staples's "Annals of Providence," p. 282.)

Newport, and the Higginsons of Salem,¹ were whitening every sea with their sails, but one begins to recognize the spreading throughout that community also of an enlightened interest, not only in science but in art. This is testified by the notable instances of colonial architecture,² belonging chiefly to the years 1770-1800, which have given Providence in our own day an enviable name among architects, and of colonial furniture³ also; as well as by the notable achievement in astronomy, to be noticed later, and also in what may be properly entitled belles-lettres. The printing-press set up at Providence in 1762 was only in its fifth year when there appeared from it a reprint of the "Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W—y M—e"⁴, etc. Providence, 1766. This is the series of her letters written during Mr. Wortley's residence at Constantinople as English ambassador, and the one which Lord Jeffrey⁵ described as "unrivalled, we think, by any epistolary compositions in our language." One can understand, for instance, the reprinting in the American colonies in the last century, of such a work as Sidney on "Government," or even of Blackstone's "Commentaries," in view of the eager interest in the relations of the colonies to the mother country, which was then fast developing; but the interest which would lead to the reprinting of such a work as these

¹ Batchelor's "Social equilibrium," pp. 280-2; Higginson's "Travellers and outlaws," p. 14; Cleveland's "Voyages of a merchant navigator," pp. 7, 8.

² *American Architect*, v. 21, plate 577; v. 22, plate 610 (1887). Corner and Soderholtz's "Examples of domestic colonial architecture in New England," (1891).

³ Dr. Irving W. Lyon's "Colonial furniture in New England." Dr. Lyon here reprints (pp. 265-6), a "table of prices," for the year 1757, agreed upon by six Providence cabinet-makers engaged in supplying the demand for chests, cases of drawers with "claws," etc. Compare Mason's "Reminiscences of Newport," pp. 49, 50.

⁴ Reprinted from the 4th London edition. The original edition, London, 1763 (the year succeeding the author's death), also suppressed, as in the case of this edition, the full name of the writer;—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 33, p. 259.

⁵ *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1803, v. 2, p. 512; reprinted in Jeffrey's "Contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*," v. 3, p. 561. (1843.)

“Letters” must have been almost purely literary, with no intermingling of practical or ulterior ends. The distinguished founder of our own society, Isaiah Thomas, in his “Catalogue of publications”¹ before 1776, enables us to gain a very vivid idea of the literature which issued from the American printing-presses of that period, and engaged the attention of American readers,—often enough, indeed, a depressingly monotonous succession of funeral sermons on persons killed by lightning, alternated with discourses on total depravity. In view of this tendency, the fact that the following publications were included in a single decade’s issues of the Providence printing-press,—at first under the charge of William Goddard and others, and later of John Carter, an apprentice and associate of Benjamin Franklin at Philadelphia,—is of no little interest :

- (1) 1762 (continued in 1765). “An historical account of the planting and growth of Providence,” by Stephen Hopkins. (In the pages of the *Providence Gazette*.)
- (2) 1763. “Verses on Doctor Mayhew’s Book of observations on the charter and conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.” By a gentleman of Rhode Island colony. Providence: William Goddard, 1763.
- (3) 1764. “The rights of colonies examined.” By Stephen Hopkins. Providence: William Goddard, 1764. (Later ed. 1765.)
- (4) 1766. “Thanksgiving discourse on the repeal of the Stamp Act.” By David S. Rowland. Providence: Sarah Goddard & Co., 1766.
- (5) 1766. “Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W—y M—e.”² Providence: Sarah Goddard & Co., 1766.
- (6) 1768. “Discourse in Providence, July 25, 1768, at the dedication of the tree of liberty.” By Silas Downer. Providence: John Waterman, 1768.
- (7) 1768. “Catalogue of all the books belonging to the Providence Library.” Providence: Waterman & Russell, 1768.
- (8) 1769. “An account of the observation of Venus upon the sun, the third day of June, 1769, at Providence in New England, with some account of the use of these observations.” By Benjamin West. Providence: John Carter, 1769.³

¹ “*Archæologia Americana*,” v. 6, pp. 309-666.

² Already mentioned above.

³ Of the above, only Nos. 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 are in Thomas’s “Catalogue.”

The comprehensive range of this list, comprising as it does, poetry, political science, history, belles-lettres, bibliography and astronomy, would be not at all discreditable to a New England town of 5,000 inhabitants, even in the nineteenth century.

Although the reader will fail to discover in Berkeley's writings any tendency towards historical studies, there is every reason why methods such as his should have left such a tendency behind him in Rhode Island. Not until definite steps have been taken towards the accumulating of written and printed materials in libraries, is any community likely to witness the rise of a local annalist. The earliest of writers within the limits of this colony to undertake any comprehensive account of it for publication were both members of Berkeley's "Society" at Newport,—the Rev. John Callender¹ and Gov. Stephen Hopkins.

How early in life the historical instinct had had a footing in Stephen Hopkins's mind, cannot be certainly known. A strong bent in this direction may have been given to it by his access when a boy to a notable "circulating library,"² for those times, established near the home of his grandparents in the earlier years of the eighteenth century. "He himself began early to collect a library of his own,³ which, says one who was able to examine it, 'was large and valuable for the time.'⁴ "His visits to Newport, begun as early as 1732, and continued without interruption, several times in each year,"⁵ doubtless made him familiar with the treasures of the Redwood Library. "Like Franklin," he and his associates in Providence "found no good bookseller's shop"⁶ in his own town at first, and in consequence,

¹ A native of Boston; a graduate from Harvard College, 1723; author of the first attempt at a historical view of the Rhode Island colony, the "Historical discourse," 1739 (reprinted as v. 4 of the R. I. Hist. Soc. Collections).

² Foster's "Stephen Hopkins," pt. 1, p. 46.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-9.

⁴ C. C. Beaman's "History of Scituate," p. 18.

⁵ Foster's "Stephen Hopkins," pt. 1, p. 127.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, p. 128.

“raised and sent to England a sum of money sufficient to purchase books to furnish a small library,”¹ and before long advanced to the point of making it “a public subscription library,”² apparently as early as 1750. In 1754, a memorial of this early “Providence Library,”—of which the Providence Athenæum³ of our day is the successor,—appears on the records of the General Assembly,⁴ and in 1768, there was printed the catalogue of its books already mentioned;—a very significant commentary on the stage of advancement then reached in that town. “Aside from these two public subscription libraries in this small colony of Rhode Island, there was for some time after the middle of the century only one other in New England outside of Boston.”⁵ Hopkins himself was a close and severe student, “a man,” says Judge Durfee,⁶ “of extraordinary capacity,” “omnivorous of knowledge, which his energetic mind rapidly converted into power,” a characterization which is strikingly confirmed by President John Adams’s⁷ well-known reference to his wide range of reading. He had some very marked qualifications for the task of chronicling the colony’s history, if we may judge from Moses Brown’s testimony. “Holding all abridgments and abridgers,” so runs the account,⁸ “in very low estimation,” “he perseveringly perused” the original sources of information. To him indeed are all subsequent writers indebted for the amassing and preservation of those manuscript sources of Rhode Island history whose treasures have not even yet been fully discovered and made available.

¹ Foster’s “Stephen Hopkins,” p. 129.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, p. 131.

⁴ R. I. Col. Records, v. 5, pp. 373-9.

⁵ Foster’s “Stephen Hopkins,” pt. 1, pp. 47-8, 132-3; U. S. govt. report on “Public libraries,” 1876, pt. 1, pp. 19, 15.

⁶ “Gleanings from the judicial history of Rhode Island,” pp. 92-3.

⁷ John Adams’s “Works,” v. 3, pp. 11, 12.

⁸ Printed in Sanderson’s “Signers,” v. 6, p. 248. As an instance, Thurloe’s “State papers” is mentioned by Hunter as a work which Governor Hopkins “read through and annotated.” (*Newport Historical Magazine*, v. 2, p. 141.)

There is reason to believe that Governor Hopkins's efforts at collecting this manuscript material began quite early in life—perhaps so early as 1740. Most of it was handed over by him to Senator Theodorè Foster, himself a most assiduous antiquarian during the half-century from 1775 to 1825¹. After Governor Hopkins had become convinced that the infirmities of age and other reasons would prevent his completing his original design, he offered to further a similar purpose on the part of Senator Foster, by furnishing him written materials and verbal information. Senator Foster states: "It was agreed that I should, one afternoon in a week, go to his house for that purpose. I accordingly did so for some time."² The pupil whom Governor Hopkins had apparently inspired with his own deep interest, most signally furthered his work of securing original authorities; "not only collecting," says Mr. Samuel G. Arnold,³ the historian who has in our century built upon the labors of both of them, "a very large number of original papers" in addition to those of Governor Hopkins, but making "copies of nearly the whole of the colony records."⁴ The accumulations of both scholars comprise the invaluable collection known as the "Foster Papers," amounting,—originals and copies,—to about one thousand.⁵ They are preserved in eighteen bound volumes,⁶ now in the possession of the Rhode Island Historical Society. When it is remembered that the efforts of these two men preceded the formation of any local historical society in the State, for the collection and preservation of such material, it will be seen how largely they have laid succeeding generations under obligation. Theodore Foster had been since 1800 a corre-

¹ Senator from Rhode Island in the First Congress of the United States, and holding his seat for thirteen years, 1790 to 1803.

² Foster Papers, v. 6, p. 19.

Arnold's "History of Rhode Island," v. 1, pp. v., vi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 1. pp. v., vi.

⁵ R. I. Hist. Soc. Collections, v. 7, p. 8.

⁶ Report on "The library and cabinet of the Rhode Island Historical Society," 1892, pp. 7, 8.

sponding member of the Massachusetts Historical Society,¹ and was one of the founders of the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1822.²

Governor Hopkins's use of his own materials in any connected form was, as already stated, on a scale so limited as to disappoint his own larger expectations, and yet, even in this fragmentary condition, "The planting and growth of Providence,"³ — it has much to attract our interest. It is significant that the very first issue of the *Providence Gazette*, October 20, 1762, contained, among other matters, the first instalment of his history. Later, in 1765, the publication,—interrupted, as the publisher tells us, by the pressure of public duties during the Seven Years' War,⁴—was resumed, and carried through eight numbers of that paper. "A somewhat remarkable degree of critical research and judicial fairness of temper are plainly observable in his historical writings. These are qualities not altogether common among writers of his time."⁵

Almost at the same time that Governor Hopkins was at work on this narrative, his wife's kinsman, Thomas Hutchinson,—not himself a native of Rhode Island, although his ancestor was,—was engaged on his history of the adjoining colony of Massachusetts Bay, a work conspicuous for these same qualities of critical research and judicial fairness, and in the judgment of many scholars,—including our associate, Dr. Jameson,⁶—reaching the highest level of historical writing in this country in that century.

Nor is this catalogue of the Providence Library without its interest, as showing what reading the inhabitants of Providence cared for. Of the Queen Anne literature, already referred to above, it contained full sets of Pope, Swift

¹ Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, v. 1, p. 134-5.

² R. I. Hist. Soc. Collections, v. 1, p. 8.

³ Reprinted (1885) in R. I. Hist. Soc. Collections, v. 7, pp. 15-65.

⁴ *Providence Gazette*, Jan. 12, 1765.

⁵ Foster's "Stephen Hopkins," pt. 1, p. 134.

⁶ Jameson's "History of historical writing in America," pp. 76-9.

and Addison, the *Spectator*, the *Tatler*, and the *Guardian*. It contained Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Milton and Bacon. History is well represented in Thucydides, Plutarch, Sallust, Tacitus, Clarendon, Hume, Burnet, Prince's "New England chronology," etc., as well as Herrera and La Hontan. Other lines of reading are represented by Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Gay's "Beggar's Opera"; others by Coke, Vattel, Puffendorff and Grotius, and Thurloe's "State papers"; others by Baker on the "Microscope," Woodward on "Fossils," Boerhaave on "Chemistry," Sir Isaac Newton's "Principia," and Benjamin Franklin's "Experiments and observations on electricity,"—then of quite recent publication, and in the opinion of Dr. Charles W. Parsons,—a nephew of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes,—of peculiar Rhode Island interest, owing to the very influential character of some suggestions of Newport origin,¹ when brought to Benjamin Franklin's notice.

There is another series of ramifications of Berkeley's influence which is of interest. Just on the eve of his departure for England,² in a hurried letter to his friend, philosophical disciple, and associate in the "Philosophical Society" at Newport,—the Rev. Samuel Johnson, of Stratford, Connecticut, a graduate of Yale College in the class of 1714, and afterwards president of what is now Columbia College,—he wrote: "I have left a box of books with Mr. Kay, to be given away by you—the small English books

¹ R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll., v. 7, pp. 245-7. Dr. Parsons's valuable study of "Early votaries of natural science in Rhode Island,"—the extended scope of which has rendered unnecessary so detailed an examination of that branch of the subject in the present paper as would otherwise have been the case,—traces this influential "hint" in regard to electricity, to William Claggett, of Newport. Compare Ross's "Discourse" at Newport, 1838, pp. 35, 36; Lyon's "Colonial furniture," pp. 251-2.

² This exact date, only roughly conjectured hitherto, even in the biography by Dr. Fraser, is found to have been September 21, 1731, through an entry under that date in an unpublished diary of Benjamin Walker. This manuscript is in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the writer is indebted to Mr. Hamilton A. Hill for a knowledge of it.

where they may be most serviceable among the people, the others as we agreed together."¹

This brief line from a hurried letter is here quoted because it is so thoroughly characteristic of Berkeley's methods. That the definite step taken in 1747 in the incorporation of the members of Berkeley's "Society" as "the Company" of the "Redwood Library" can be with any directness traced to Berkeley, is not probable. This action,² as we have seen, was in accord with the local tendencies in the colony; indeed, there had been a parish library connected with Trinity Church parish,—but open to all the inhabitants of the town,—from a date so early as 1709,³ and very probably earlier. But as to his uninterrupted desire to promote all tendencies towards enlightenment and civilization in the infant colonies, there is no room for doubt. Indeed, both the indirect results of his influence (as in the founding of King's College, now Columbia College)⁴ as well as the acts of deliberate purpose affecting institutions of education outside the borders of Rhode Island, strikingly confirm this view. To the representative college of the Massachusetts Bay colony, Harvard College, he sent, in 1733, a valuable collection of the Greek and Roman classics, "most of them the best editions," says President Quincy;⁵—unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1764. To Yale College he sent in the same year (1733) nearly one thousand volumes,⁶ besides deeding to that college his estate at Whitehall.⁷ That he thought seriously

¹ Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 188.

² The late William Hunter attributes the suggestion to Abraham Redwood himself. *Newport Historical Magazine*, v. 2, p. 88.

³ Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 10; Mason's "Trinity Church," pp. 18, 19.

⁴ Chandler's "Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson"; also, Professor Moses Coit Tyler's chapter in Bishop Perry's "History of the American Episcopal Church," v. 1, p. 539.

⁵ Quincy's "History of Harvard University," v. 2, p. 481.

⁶ Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, pp. 194-5. Porter's "Berkeley," p. 47.

⁷ Porter's "Berkeley," pp. 81-84; See Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, pp. 192-5, where the full text of the deed is printed.

of substituting Rhode Island in place of Bermuda, as the site of the university which it had been his main hope to establish in this western world, appears from a conversation reported by Col. Daniel Updike,¹ thus anticipating by a third of a century the actual establishment of a college in Rhode Island, and unquestionably having an important bearing on the steps leading to it. Obviously this last benignant act of the departing scholar, expressed in his letter to Johnson, was but one of several similar distributions of collections of books, which he plainly regarded as effective civilizing agencies. Mention has incidentally been made of the observation of the transit of Venus in 1769, by Benjamin West,—later in life a professor of astronomy in Rhode Island College,²—at that time a bookseller in Providence, the earlier in order of birth of the two Benjamin Wests³ who attained eminence in the last century. The whole bent in the direction of science given to the developing mind of this American boy (born in 1730,⁴ during Berkeley's residence at Newport, and brought up at Bristol, Rhode Island, where a collaborator of Berkeley's was in charge of a parish of the Church of England⁵), is directly attributed by West's biographer to his access to one of these small collections of imperishable literature, "formed," he says, when Berkeley "distributed his books among the clergy."⁶ "From these works," he adds, "West commenced his acquaintance with the philosophy of Newton," and later, "bent his whole mind" to astronomy. As is well known, the two transits of Venus in the last century

¹ W. Updike's "Memoirs of the Rhode-Island bar," p. 62.

² Triennial catalogue of Brown University, 1886, p. xiii.

³ Benjamin West, the artist, a native of Pennsylvania, was born in 1738.

⁴ In what was then Rehoboth, Mass., adjacent to the Rhode Island line.

⁵ The Rev. John Usher. See reports and abstracts of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1713-83, in Updike's "Episcopal Church in Narragansett," pp. 454-5.

⁶ R. I. Literary Repository, v. 1, Oct., 1814, p. 142. (The paging "142" is a misprint for 342.)

occurred in 1761 and 1769, respectively.¹ The John Winthrop² of that generation, Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in Harvard College, from 1738 to 1779, had, in 1761, observed the transit of that year from the island of Newfoundland.³ In 1769, not only in Cambridge but in Providence, the recurrence of the phenomena was awaited with great interest. The three men who there made most diligent preparation for it were West, the correspondent and collaborator of Winthrop; Stephen Hopkins, whose mathematical training had been extensive,⁴ and who was already a member⁵ of the American Philosophical Society, of Philadelphia; and Joseph Brown, later in life a professor in Rhode Island College,⁶—already in existence, and in the next year (1770)⁷ to be removed to its new location at Providence,—one of the distinguished family who had helped to give Providence its commercial preëminence, and later gave the college its endowment. He was a man whose acquirement of what was in his time regarded as very much more than “a competence,” enabled him most fortunately to gratify a very marked taste for physical science. The instruments to be used in the observation of the transit were made in London by Mr. Brown’s order and at his expense.⁸ The publication in which the account of the operations is narrated, already cited above,

¹ See Proctor’s “Transits of Venus,” pp. 27-92.

² Professor Winthrop was brother-in-law to the Rev. Samuel Fayerweather, rector of St. Paul’s Church, at Narragansett, 1760-74. Updike’s “Episcopal Church at Narragansett,” p. 359; *Popular Science Monthly*, v. 39, p. 481.

³ Described in his pamphlet, “Relation of a voyage from Boston to Newfoundland for the observation of the Transit of Venus, June 6, 1761.” Boston, 1761. See the biographical sketch, with portrait, in *Popular Science Monthly*, v. 39, pp. 721, 837-42.

⁴ Foster’s “Stephen Hopkins,” pt. 1, p. 126; pt. 2, pp. 107-9. Compare also, West’s “Dedication” of his pamphlet, “An account of the observation of Venus,” etc.

⁵ “Transactions of the American Philosophical Society,” v. 1, p. xvii.; elected April 1, 1768.

⁶ “Triennial catalogue” of Brown University, 1886, p. xiii.

⁷ Guild’s “History of Brown University,” p. 13.

⁸ West’s “Account,” p. 11.

was written by Benjamin West. It is a well-printed pamphlet¹ of twenty-two pages, and is provided with a diagram showing the positions of the heavenly bodies. A memoir of the observations² was sent³ by West to the Royal Society of London, to which society, says Mr. Proctor,⁴ "probably as many as four hundred" such memoirs, from different parts of the world, were forwarded.⁵ At Newport, Rhode Island, there were also interested and accomplished observers, on this occasion, the operations⁶ being conducted by Dr. Ezra Stiles, a native of Connecticut,⁷ a graduate from Yale College in 1746, and afterwards, from 1778 to 1795, president of that college, who had since 1755 been settled over a church⁸ in Newport. It is of interest to note that the expense of constructing the instruments there used was borne in part by Abraham Redwood,⁹ the enlightened patron of science as well as literature, and that they were constructed in part by Joseph Harrison, brother¹⁰ of Peter Harrison, the architect, whose connection with the Philosophical Society dated very nearly from Berkeley's time.¹¹ I have thus far failed to find a record of observations of this transit in more than

¹ "Printed by John Carter, at Shakespeare's Head," in Providence.

² An abstract also appears in the "Transactions of the American Philosophical Society," v. 1, p. 97.

³ Rhode Island Literary Repository, v. 1, p. 345.

⁴ Proctor's "Transits of Venus," p. 85.

⁵ The other gentlemen participating with West, Hopkins and Brown, in the Providence observation, were Moses Brown, Jabez Bowen and Capt. John Burrough.

⁶ West's "Account," p. 12.

⁷ See Professor J. L. Kingsley's "Life of Dr. Ezra Stiles," pp. 17, 18, where other scientific researches of Dr. Stiles are recorded.

⁸ Although a resident of Newport for nearly twenty-five years, Dr. Stiles can hardly be said to have been greatly modified by the atmosphere of the place, unfavorable to dogmatism as it was. No hesitation to judge in the premises is apparent in the following entry in one of his interleaved almanacs: "Gen. Ethan Allen of Vermont died and went to Hell this day." (Feb. 13, 1789.) (R. I. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, 1891-2, p. 82.)

⁹ West's "Account," p. 12.

¹⁰ Mason's "Redwood Library," p. 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

four New England localities: Cambridge, Newbury, Providence and Newport,—and Professor Newcomb's very careful study¹ of the transit names no others,—and it is not a little singular that two out of this total of four should be in Rhode Island. West's observation of this transit was only a part of a long career given up to astronomical observations.² In November of the same year (1769), occurred a transit of Mercury, which he also observed,³ undoubtedly with the same instruments.⁴ In July, 1770, also, the appearance of the comet of that year gave him an opportunity of determining its perihelion, from three observations; and in the same year, he observed the satellites of Jupiter. In 1781, he observed the eclipse of the sun⁵ at Providence. Among his other achievements, it may be mentioned, is a table of Jupiter's satellites, from 1760 to 1810, inclusive. "In short," says the writer of the biographical sketch of him, published in 1814, "his whole life seems to have been almost a continued course of mathematical and astronomical labours."⁶ In his "Miscellaneous tracts," a repository of his calculations, he adds, "we find the sun and moon's places, and many eclipses calculated in the years 1778, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783, 1787, 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, together with a great variety of astronomical tables." He received in 1770 the degree of Master of Arts from Harvard College,⁷ apparently on Professor Winthrop's suggestion, as may be inferred from Winthrop's letter to West, of July 19, 1770,⁸ and in 1792, the degree of Doctor of Laws from Rhode

¹ See Professor Simon Newcomb's "Discussions of the transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769," pp. 320, 338, 345, 355, 365, 382 and 397 (1891). Also, Encke's "Der Venusdurchgang von 1769."

² Partially enumerated in Rhode Island Literary Repository, v. 1, pp. 144 (344), 152 (352).

³ Rhode Island Literary Repository, v. 1, p. 145 (345).

⁴ Now preserved in Wilson Hall at Brown University.

⁵ Reported in the "Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences," v. 1, pp. 156-8.

⁶ R. I. Lit. Repository, v. 1, p. 152 (352).

⁷ Harvard Quinquennial Catalogue, 1890, pp. 314-15.

⁸ R. I. Lit. Repository, v. 1, p. 146 (346).

Island College.¹ With the exception of one year, 1787-8, spent at Philadelphia, in intimacy with Franklin,² he passed his entire mature life in Providence. In 1786, he became a member of the faculty of Rhode Island College, which position he held until 1798,³ and in 1787, he was elected to a position in the faculty of Columbia College, which he declined.⁴ He was a member of the American Philosophical Society, and also of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, in whose rooms we are now assembled, being elected in 1781.⁵ The first volume of its "Memoirs" contains papers⁶ by him and by Joseph Brown already mentioned above.

What as to the enduring nature, on Rhode Island soil, of those tendencies towards idealism, in thought and life, which we have already noticed as characterizing the early centuries? To quote from a recent address by a distinguished member of this Society,—Dr. Hale,—this tendency has not, "for any one generation, been without a living witness of the first power and authority within her borders,"⁷—a statement which it is easy to accept in view of notable instances such as Samuel Hopkins, whose remarkable philosophical postulates have recently been so admirably treated by Professor A. V. G. Allen, of Cambridge⁸; William Ellery Channing, descendant of the William Ellery of Berkeley's "Society," the delicacy of whose

¹ Brown University Triennial catalogue, 1886, p. 79.

² R. I. Lit. Repository, v. 1, pp. 154-5 (354-5).

³ Brown University Triennial Catalogue, 1886, p. xiii.

⁴ R. I. Literary Repository, v. 1, p. 355.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 353. "Memoirs of the Am. Acad.," v. 1, p. xxii.

⁶ Vol. 1, pp. 149-50, 156-8, 165-72.

⁷ "Hazard Memorial" address, 1891, p. 22.

⁸ *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec., 1891, v. 68, p. 767-80. It is significant that Dr. Allen recognizes this tendency in the atmosphere of Newport, when he says of Hopkins (p. 780), that "the town made an impression on him." Dr. Fraser's suggestion that Hopkins's teacher and master, Jonathan Edwards, may have come under the influence of Berkeley through being "one of Johnson's pupils at Yale College" (Berkeley's "Works," v. 4, p. 182), encounters the difficulty of the division of what was Yale College, in 1716-20, between Wethersfield and New Haven. (Dexter's "Annals" of Yale College, pp. 123, 218.)

thought gives everywhere almost unmistakable evidences of his hereditary antecedents; Job Durfee, in the view of Dr. Porter¹ of Yale College, a representative of the Berkeleyan doctrine in the present century; and Rowland G. Hazard, a writer who, dying in Rhode Island so recently as 1888, has left a distinct mark on the psychological thought of our time, and a writer of whom his powerful opponent in discussion, John Stuart Mill, wrote: "It is a real pleasure to have you for an antagonist."²

If so noteworthy a stage of advancement was reached in Rhode Island,³ and so noteworthy impulses communicated from her to other colonies, it is certainly a fair question to ask, how it happens that since 1780, she has not merely not held her own, but has been distinctly distanced by many of her sister States.

It will have been noticed that we have thus far said nothing of systems of common-school education. The omission is not the result of oversight, but the consideration of the failure of Rhode Island to act⁴ in this fundamentally important matter has been postponed to this stage of the discussion, because herein lies the explanation of the fact that, notwithstanding the obvious advantages in Rhode Island's favor, on which we have been dwelling, she has, since 1780, failed to hold such preëminence as might reasonably have been expected. So early as 1647, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay colony enacted as follows:—

"y^t learning may not be buried in y^e grave of o^r fath^{rs}

¹ Porter's "Berkeley," p. 38.

² Letter of Nov. 16, 1866. ("Biographical preface" to Hazard's "Essay on language"; ed. 1889, p. xi.)

³ The scope of this paper does not admit of following out the very noteworthy impulses transmitted through Benjamin Franklin's agency, and through his intimate association with Hopkins, Ward, Greene, West, Claggett, Carter and others. Franklin was a man whose influence was very impartially distributed through the different colonies, and in this, Rhode Island had an influential share.

⁴ Failure to act, as a colony, is meant. Sporadic attempts in individual towns are met with at an early date, as at Newport in 1640. (Arnold's "Rhode Island," v. 1, p. 145.) A "Latin school" was opened at Newport in 1716. (Mason's "Trinity Church," p. 37.)

in y^e church & com̄onwealth, the Lord assisting o^r endeavo^rs, — It is therefore ord^red y^t ev^{ry} township in this jurisdiction, aft^r y^e Lord hath increased y^m to y^e number of 50 household^s, shall then forthwth appoint one wth in their towne to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write & read.”¹

The other Puritan colonies followed this example, and by the year 1649, to quote from what the present writer has said elsewhere, “every other New England colony had made education compulsory,”² but in Rhode Island, “the exaggerated form in which the doctrine of separation had come to be held gave the public a succession of religious ministers” who were in too many instances without special training, “and successive generations of children with no opportunities for education.”³

In Massachusetts, the steps taken so early as 1647 in due time had telling effect. The magnificent period from 1830 to 1890, the golden age of Massachusetts,—the period in which the best work of Emerson, of Holmes, of Longfellow, of Whittier, and of Lowell was performed,—is the splendid fruitage of that early act of enlightened, foresight. Rhode Island is a smaller State, it is true, but even setting aside the obvious disadvantage under which the more intelligent elements of its population labored, in 1786–90, in questions depending on the popular vote, one finds there, since the year 1780, nothing even remotely approaching this state of things; nor did we need Mr. Lodge’s summaries as to the distribution of ability in the United States,⁴ to show

¹ Mass. Colonial Records, v. 2, p. 203. Cf. the claims made in Mr. A. S. Draper’s article, *Educational Review*, April, 1892, v. 3, pp. 313–36.

² Foster’s “Stephen Hopkins,” pt. 1, p. 41. It is obvious that the notable advantages of private tutors and private libraries could not, in the nature of the case, be depended on as hereditary in every instance. As the population of Rhode Island increased there was an ever-widening gulf between the educated few and the uneducated mass. There was never, perhaps, a more impressive exemplification of Matthew Arnold’s suggestive declaration as to the true “secret of rich and beautiful epochs in national life” (“*Essays in criticism*,” 1st series, p. 494).

³ Foster’s “Stephen Hopkins,” pt. 1, p. 41.

⁴ The *Century*, Sept., 1891, v. 42, p. 687–94.

us how disappointing, comparatively, have been the Nineteenth Century's achievements in Rhode Island. It is for us to remember, however, that the record is not yet closed; and that if this republic endures, much is yet to be seen; that Rhode Island has already in the last sixty years done much to put itself on a level with its neighboring States, as regards educational advantages; that evidences are abundant, as just cited, to prove that the idealistic tendency is still strong there, and that only the future can reveal what the working of that tendency, under new conditions and more favorable surroundings may develop.

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