

News, Notes and Queries

2nd Item

The Governor of Goletta, member of the Board, having his residence in the same Goletta, will be charged with the fulfilment of all Quarantine measures taken for Tunisian and foreign war and merchant ships and he will be assisted, for this purpose, by Consular Agents residing in Goletta who will take the Title of Deputies of Public Health. The duties of the Governor of Goletta will be determined later in full detail.

3rd Item

H.M. promises to assign a sum of money to money to meet all the expenses which will be considered necessary by the Board of Health for the fulfilment of the measures taken.

4th Item

The day of the regular meeting is fixed on Thursday of every week. The Council asked Mr. Tulin as President to communicate to Mr. Read, British Consul, who is absent, the day fixed for the meeting every week.

Established and concluded as above.
Signatures on the original.

G. A. Tulin—Juan B. sa Rizzo
Sau. De Martino—S. D. Heap
H. Nyssen in place of my father
Twgni—De Berner—Alex Deval
In Arabic—Mohamud Kaja.
True copy.

JOEL MONTAGUE

THE HOUSEHOLD OF A STUART PHYSICIAN

IN THE county town of Warwick, just outside the medieval East Gate, there is an attractive late seventeenth-century house, with a modest brick façade, that was the home of Dr. William Johnston and his wife, Ann, for more than a quarter of a century. The house is today known as Landor House, for it was there that the Victorian poet, Walter Savage Landor, was born in 1775. However, the house was built for William Johnston M.D., in 1692-93, after he had already had some years of medical practice in the town¹ and he lived there with Ann and their nine children, of whom all but the eldest were born in the house,² until his death³ in 1725 at the great age of eighty-two. Ann survived her husband by eight years and lived on in the house until 1733, when she died⁴ aged eighty-four. We know something of their appearance, for both William and Ann Johnston's portraits have survived (Plates I and II); he is dressed in academic robes⁵ of uncertain origin, with his books and a skull in the background, while Ann's pose suggests from the unnatural position of her hands and arms that the artist may have intended her to clutch a musical instrument of some kind.

In September 1692, Dr. Johnston made an agreement⁶ with Roger Hurlbutt, a Warwick carpenter and builder, to take down an existing house on the Smith Street site and erect the building (now called Landor House) for a total sum of £142. Their agreement specified that in its 'carved Canteleivers and Cornishes', as well as its doors, Dr. Johnston's house was to be 'in all respects as good as Mr. Blisset's', who was a local woollen draper.⁷ The physician's door mouldings were to be made of Warwickshire stone, from Shrewley, some four miles distant. Roger Hurlbutt provided two versions⁸ of his plan for Dr. Johnston's consideration with a balustrade



Figure 2
Ann Johnston



Figure 1
William Johnston, M.D.

and alternative windows on the right-hand half of the façade, but this design was obviously not that chosen by Dr. Johnston. Hurlbutt also agreed to a date—1 June 1693—by which he would have completed his work, some nine months after the signing of the indenture.

The physician's house was to have five dwelling rooms on the ground floor, a central hall with a parlour and withdrawing room on the east side and a second parlour and study for William Johnston on the opposite side of the hall. In addition there was a kitchen, brewhouse and dairy. On the first floor there was the 'Best Chamber' over the central hall, with three bedrooms in each wing. There were also three garrets, with 'Luthern' windows, on the top floor, and a 'stair case of good sound well seasoned oake with railles and banisters . . . to lead out of the hall up to the garrets and to land upon a Gallery on the first floor'. William Johnston paid Hurlbutt for his work in twelve instalments between March and June 1693.

Although it is fascinating to know how a late seventeenth-century physician's house came to be built, it is even more interesting for Dr. Johnston's house as it is possible to reconstruct to a large extent its internal appearance and to have some indication of the medical practitioner's life in a provincial town at this period. When William Johnston died he left Ann a widow of considerable fortune, and when she died eight years later she in her turn bequeathed this fortune chiefly for charitable purposes, to provide apprenticeships and clothing for the poor of Warwick. To administer her charity there were three Trustees, who were also Ann Johnston's executors—James Fish, a cartographer, Thomas Bree, a physician, and Francis Smith, the builder-architect of Stonleigh Abbey, all Warwick men. The Trustees had an inventory made,⁹ room by room, of all the Johnstons' possessions, both personal and household, and they then recorded¹⁰ during a six-year period (1733-39) the prices for which all these items were sold, ranging from the great silver coffee-pots and jewels to clothes-lines and mouse-traps.

An intriguing glimpse of the Stuart medical practitioner emerges from a study of the inventory, in which various personal and professional possessions of William Johnston were carefully catalogued. Amongst his medical instruments were a 'tweezer case' sold for 1s, a lancet case and scissors sold for 2s to Mr. Hall's man, 'ye silver syringe' (13s. 0d.) and 'ye Chirurgeons case of Instruments' (12s. 6d.), while a marble mortar and glass pestle were worth 3s. William Johnston had gained a gold medal of unspecified origin during his lifetime and this was sold for '3 li', while another medal, of silver, fetched 10s. His books in the study were sold for £12, but no list of titles has survived. However, the Trustees listed his papers and letters¹¹ in 1736, and included 'Medicinal books to cure all distempers' among his possessions. From their list of his papers, which filled numerous boxes, the Trustees commented with feeling that there were 'vast numbers of Letters and various mixt accounts being endless to peruse'; these included a great many letters from patients, which have unfortunately not survived. The large quantity of 'Pamphlets and wast paper' in William Johnston's study may be gauged from the high price of 10s. 6d. which a Mr. Hopkinson paid to the Trustees in 1733. Dr. Johnston's silver-hilted sword and old cane were bought for 12s. by the Warwick Castle gunsmith, Nicholas Paris. Even his spitting-pot found a purchaser.

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The room which William Johnston used as his study was purpose-built and it was mentioned in detail in the specifications of the house prepared by Roger Hurlbutt. It was to be partitioned off from the west parlour, to have two windows and its own staircase that led directly up to the garrets. The study was simply furnished; it contained a large hanging press with two drawers for the physician's clothes and also one 'Good' chest of drawers, valued at 12s., as well as two square tables and two chairs.

The Johnston's hall, a large, stone-floored, rectangular room, was apparently sparsely furnished and contained a 'Great Oval' table as well as another table, with two long forms, where perhaps those waiting to see Dr. Johnston may have sat. The room was heated with a fire-grate, while six wood 'sconces' and an old lantern provided light. The smaller hall table was a 'square Spanish' (i.e. mahogany) one, and it was sold for 3s. 6d. (6d. less than its estimated value) to the wife of Francis Smith, one of the Trustees. Far more comfortably furnished was the withdrawing room, which was an ante-room to the most important ground-floor room, the parlour. The most valuable item in the withdrawing room was 'one Looking Glass', valued at a guinea, but the room also contained an elbow chair and six other cane chairs with six red velvet cushions. The only example of a slate table was in this room, which, like other rooms in the house, also had curtains, valance, wall-hangings and hearth equipment listed, as well as sconces and window-shutters.

The ground-floor parlour, on the east side of the hall, was the most comfortably furnished of all the Johnston family's living rooms, and yet its contents were less than half the value of the furniture which the three main bedrooms possessed. In the parlour there were eight 'kain' chairs, each with a yellow silk cushion to match the two yellow silk window seats, and in addition a black card table and corner table. The most valuable object in the parlour, and one of the most highly appraised individual items in the whole house, was a clock and case, valued at five pounds. Dr. Johnston's parlour clock is likely to have been of the Dutch type, with a pendulum in a long case. However, perhaps the portraits were among the most interesting contents of the parlour. These comprised the 'Chimney Peece Picture' and 'Mrs. Heyingtons Picture' valued at one guinea each and also 'the Drs. and Mrs. Johnstons Pictures', valued at two guineas each. The chimney-piece picture* was most probably that of the cherubic infant, perhaps their eldest son, William, while 'Mrs. Heyington' was Ursula Heighington, their eldest daughter and fifth child.

Perhaps surprisingly, the bedrooms of the Johnston family contained furniture of far greater value than that listed in their ground-floor rooms. The most sumptuously furnished room, with total contents worth £30 12s. 6d., (a quarter of the whole value of the household effects) was the 'Best Chamber'. Its great 'wrought' (carved or decorated) bed, valued at £12 7s. 6d., had hangings lined with satin and a quilt to match. It had a down bed, bolster and two pillows (weighing in all eighty-two pounds), with a quilted mattress and pair of blankets. The room also contained a cedarwood 'cabinet', a square table and a mirror. The six black cane chairs and the two matted (plaited rush) elbow chairs had an attractive range of cushions to make them more comfortable, and in the choice of colours the taste of Ann Johnston was presumably

*A portrait of an infant with a dog affixed to a chimney-piece in London House, has survived.

exercised. There were two blue satin cushions, one that was wrought (embroidered) and two made of green tabby (watered silk fabric), that matched the room's green window curtains and valances.

The best chamber, the only room with a floor carpet listed, was decorated with tapestry hangings, highly appraised at £3 0s. 0d. There were five pictures of small value as well as three coloured and two white alabaster figurines. In addition to the usual fire implements, the best chamber also had a 'twigen' fire screen. A further indication of the Johnstons' personal tastes was the tea-table with its copper tea-kettle, lamp and stand that were among the contents of the best chamber. This bedroom also had one of the household's three close-stools, fitted with a pewter pan and valued at 2s. 6d.

In the rear bed-chamber, overlooking the garden and directly above the kitchen, there were some of the more unusual items of furniture, including one 'scrutone' (escritoire or writing cabinet) 'under ye clock', the eight-day clock itself (a very valuable item at £7 0s. 0d.) and 'one Great Skrewtone' that was new and made of 'walnut'. This room also had a close-stool with a pewter pan, as well as a bed with green curtains and counterpane. In other respects the furniture and furnishings of the kitchen chamber were unremarkable.

In yet another bedroom—the south-facing Corner Chamber—it is possible to gain a good impression of how a bedroom in a physician's house in the late Stuart period was furnished. The bed curtains were lined with yellow silk to match the quilt, and this colour was echoed in the six yellow silk cushions and the yellow figure 'on ye mantle peece'. It is not known which member of the Johnston family was its occupant, but this corner room had a 'very good Bewrow' with an elbow chair and cushion, as well as four cane chairs and a close-stool. A corner cupboard, chest of drawers and a dressing box provided necessary storage, and a 'Great Glass' valued at 18s. indicates the general affluence in which Dr. William Johnston and his family lived in Warwick.

The only bedroom ascribed in the inventory to a particular member of the Johnston family is that known as 'Miss Heyingtons Roome'. It was one of the smaller, rear-facing bedrooms with more modest contents. Ursula Heighington's bed had brown drapery, lined with 'Callicoe' rather than the satin of her parents' bed or the silk described in the Corner Chamber. She had a feather bed, bolster, two pillows, two blankets and a counterpane as bed coverings, with two old cane chairs to sit on. Her only luxury appears to have been a couch with squab and pillows (used as a day-bed); the room does not seem to have had wall hangings.

The Johnston Trustees, in addition to listing the living room and chamber furniture, also carefully inventoried the large items of kitchen, brewhouse and dairy equipment, as well as the builder's material that remained in the yard. The contents of the brewhouse were as valuable as the furniture of the parlour, for the brewing equipment comprised one large copper furnace, valued at £6 15s. 0d., and a smaller one, as well as a great mashing tub and two long wooden spouts. When the kitchen equipment was inventoried only the large items, such as six big pewter dishes worth £2. 3s. 4d. or the jack with its stone weight, were listed. However, during the six years (1733-39) when William and Ann Johnston's goods were sold, there were a great many other personal and domestic possessions sold.

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An indication of William Johnston's comparative wealth may be found in the inventory of his silver, which was listed separately from the household goods and furniture. His large tankard was sold for £8 2s. 6d., a 'little' one for £4 2s. 0d., while the large 'Coffey Pot' realized £8 5s. 0d. A silver teapot, three salvers, porringers, a chafing-dish with its own lamp, and various spoons, forks and cups were also listed, while a group of silver items, weighing forty-four ounces, which comprised a set of casters, a silver salver, a small teat pot and a porringer, was sold for £11 7s. 4d., in 1736. A 'great 2 handled cup' was sold for £5 10s. 0d., a 'soop Ladle' for £1 14s. 0d., silver spoons for 10s. each, a 'half round' snuff box for 10s. a little oval one for 8s., and a little silver looking glass for 8s. also; these were some of the many silver objects owned by the Johnstons. William Johnston seems to have retained considerable sums in gold and old coins; he had 7s. 7d. worth of 'Little Old Money in 3 pences & Groats etc' in a little bag, £7 10s. 0d. worth of old gold money and '14 peeces of Old Gold weighing 2:15: 10' worth £10 11s. 10d.

As well as his silver and furniture, Ann Johnston's jewellery provided further evidence of the prosperity of this Warwick practitioner. Her 'old' diamond necklace was sold for ten guineas, her diamond ear-rings for six guineas, some gold buttons for £2 5s. 6d., as well as other items including diamond collets, a jasper and crystal bracelet, and an enamelled locket. Ann Johnston also had an interesting variety of at least fifteen rings, listed separately by the Trustees, including gold rings, three diamond rings, one with two rose diamonds, a ruby and a crystal and another with a diamond and two 'turcoises'. There was also a large amount of old gold plate worth £176 15s. 0d. William Johnston himself owned two gold watches, one valued at £9 0s. 0d. and the other at nine guineas, as well as a silver watch that was sold for £3 0s. 0d. In addition his 'Gold Chain wth 5 agats and a seale' was worth £3 8s. 0d.

The Warwick physician had a 'charriot' and 'little equipage' listed as the vehicles of his coach-house, presumably used for visiting his more distant patients. Unfortunately, little is known of those whom he treated, but his practice comprised certain of the county's gentry and he was the local medical attendant of Lady Conway,¹² wife of the Secretary of State, during her pregnancy in 1680.

From the details of his house, furniture and personal possessions it is apparent that William Johnston was an affluent and presumably successful medical practitioner. He is not in any way a well-known national figure, but he may well be a typical provincial physician of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

1. COHEN, R. A., 'Documents concerning Dr. William Johnston, physician, of Warwick', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 1962, 78.
2. Warwick County Record Office, DR 447/1.
3. Warwick County Record Office, DR446/2.
4. Warwick County Record Office, DR446/2.

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5. COHEN, *op. cit.*
6. Warwick County Record Office, WA6/116.
7. *Victoria History of the County of Warwick*, vol. VIII, p. 430.
8. Warwick County Record Office, WA6/116.
9. Warwick County Record Office, WA6/122.
10. Warwick County Record Office, WA6/121.
11. Warwick County Record Office, WA6/117.
12. COHEN, *op. cit.*

JOAN LANE

THE KING'S EVIL IN OXFORDSHIRE

IN THE Seventeenth-century heyday of the Royal Touch, the Oxfordshire village of Stanton St. John felt amply the rigours of scrofula, the King's Evil. Its residents looked eagerly to the possibility of cure by the Touch. The practice of touching for scrofula by English sovereigns was performed from Edward the Confessor to Queen Anne, while the Hanoverians by and large refrained from following in kind.¹ The exiled Stuarts, meanwhile, continued to accommodate applications tendered them, claiming Divine Right and pressing suit for return to their rightful position.

The question of efficacy of the royal cure need not detain us unduly. Esmond R. Long, dealing some years ago with the question of the decline of tuberculosis,² put this issue in its proper perspective. He pointed out that those patients who did not respond to the suggestion content of the touching ceremony would still, in all likelihood choose the least traumatic among a range of equally efficacious modes of therapy; heroic cures versus the king's golden angel or touch piece, bestowed with a prayer.

Evidence bearing on the problem of therapeutic efficacy, in patients where no extant records indicate relapse, and where it seems likely that the actual pathology ranged over a variety of lymphadenitides, must therefore remain at best highly presumptive. But the historian may wish to extract from patient histories a more general sense of scrofula sufferers' subsequent state(s) of health. It would, therefore, be interesting to have information on the subsequent lifespan and the frequency of repeating—relapse followed by additional intervention in the form of the Touch.

We should like to draw attention to a source of evidence for such a study which has apparently been used only infrequently by medical historians.³ English parish registers, such as those of Stanton St. John, provide records not only of baptisms, marriages, and deaths, but also the issuing by churchmen of certificates attesting to the eligibility of parishioners for the King's Touch. Such indigenous measures became necessary when the king was called upon to touch large numbers of patients in one session. Expenses were thereby also curtailed. The Rector was charged with the duty of ensuring a complement of properly needy patients, sufferers more desirous perhaps of the cure for their lymphadenitis than of Shakespeare's 'golden stamp about their necks'. The clergyman qualifies, then, as one of the earliest indigenous health officers concerned with the appropriate local distribution of health care.

Published accounts of the scrofula entries in the Stanton St. John registers have been scarce and, to some extent, misleading in that those we have found fail to indicate the accessibility of such registers. An early such account, for example, is found