

FREE QUAKER MEETING HOUSE.

THE WETHERILL FAMILY.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD PHILADELPHIAN.

The following is from the pen of a venerable Philadelphian, who has seen his eightieth year, and who now resides in New York. We publish it with pleasure, and say to our correspondent that we should be glad to hear from him again. Communications from any of our older readers, who can contribute anything to our knowledge of past local history, have always been and always will be welcome.—EDITORS SUNDAY DISPATCH.

To the Editors of the Sunday Dispatch:—
The following article I cut from the New York Sun, of the 7th inst.:

A CURIOUS INSCRIPTION.—We copy the following passage from the letter of an intelligent correspondent from Philadelphia:

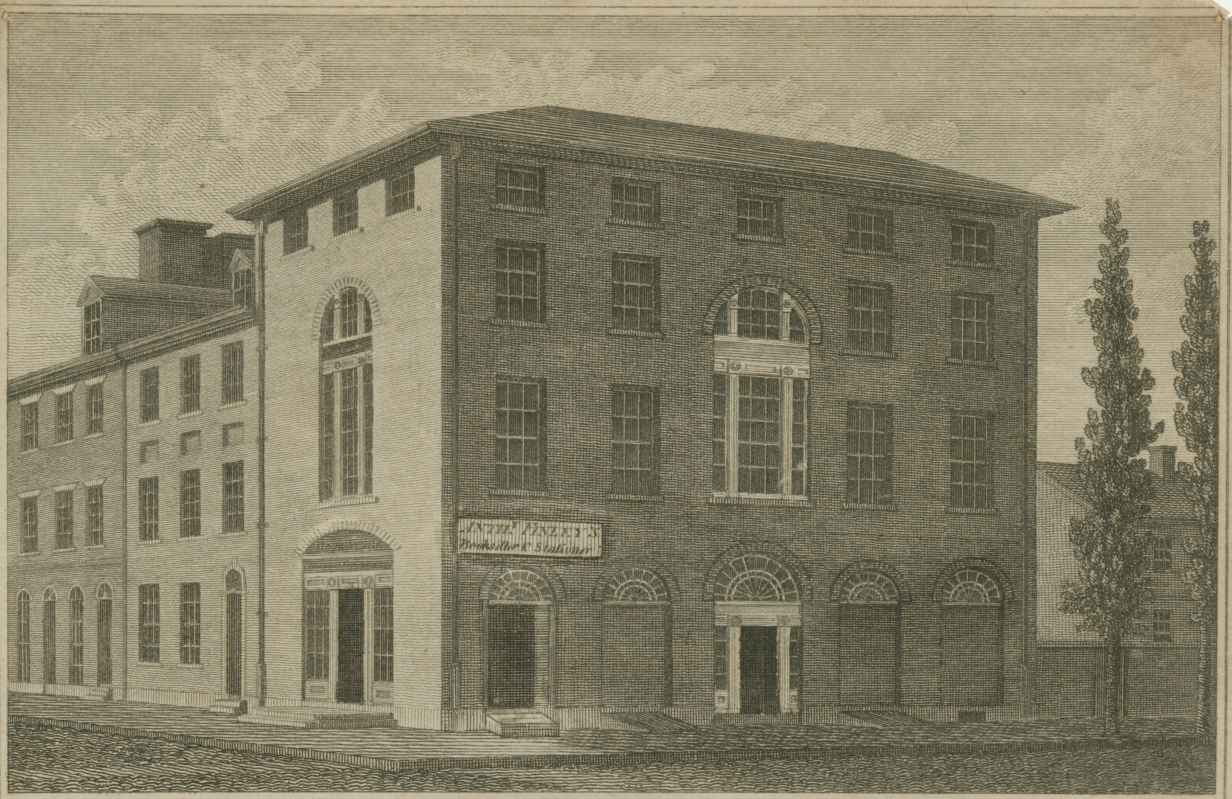
"It is well known that certain Quakers, from whom, among others, the Wetherills in Philadelphia descended, were unwilling to remain non-combatants in the time of our revolution. They took up arms in defence of freedom and country, and were separated from the real Quaker community accordingly. But they adhered, nevertheless, to their Quakerism—at least, so they maintained—and called themselves Free Quakers. They established a meeting house on the northwest corner of Arch and Fifth streets. All the Free Quakers and their descendants are gone, so that the property now belongs to no one, and the State of Pennsylvania will be obliged to provide by special legislation for the case. But it is to be hoped that the curious inscription in the frontispiece of the building will be allowed to remain. Nothing historical ought unnecessarily to be destroyed by man. Time does that work quickly enough. The inscription runs thus:

By general subscription
for the
Free Quakers.
Erected in the year
of our Lord, 1783,
of the Empire 8.

"What is the history of this Empire? Was it put there by inadvertence, or after reflection? What suggested it? The poet or orator may call any extensive country, under a united government, an empire, though it have no emperor at its head, while kingdom always points to a king or queen, except, indeed, when we speak of the kingdoms of nature; but the calling of the United States, in the lapidary style of an inscription, an empire, seems to require investigation. No Philadelphian could give me a clue. Those whom I saw did not even know of this strange inscription."—Columbia South Carolinian.

I believe I can give a "clue," and am pleased with the occasion to explain a small historical item. When the inscription stone was placed in its proper position, in front of the meeting-house, at the N. W. corner of Fifth and Arch streets, I was a lad of some twelve years of age. I was standing one day near the building with my grandfather. The elder Samuel Wetherill was present. He appeared to be the sole director of the same. Gervis Weiss, scrivener and conveyancer, who resided in Arch street, opposite Christ church burial ground, came up and inquired of Mr. Wetherill, why he used the term *Empire*? "I'll tell ye, friend Weiss," replied Samuel Wetherill the elder; "these United States are destined to become the Empire of the Western World, and that is the reason it is so expressed." Yet very young, these words made an everlasting impression on my mind; and now, after seventy-two years, an opportunity is offered to explain the reason of employing the word "Empire." "We had giants in those days"—I mean patriots. Friend Wetherill, now almost forgotten, ranked with Washington, Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and your own Mifflin and Rush. Oh! that we had such men now; all the "isms" that we are plagued with would soon shrink into insignificance, and *E Pluribus Unum* would shine in all its brilliancy. But let us not despair—the same Good Power that carried us most successfully through the war of the Revolution, will still hold his shield over the destinies of America; and millions unborn will bend the knee in grateful thankfulness for his kindness and protection over our beloved country.

Apropos. I knew Samuel Wetherill the elder in after years; he was highly respected, and ranked with the Democratic party in politics. He carried on the business of oils, paints, &c., in a frame building, on the east side of North Front street, near Arch street, where the same business is still continued in a new brick building. Over the front door of the "old shop," so called in former days, was placed a carved wooden head, which was always in motion, turning to the right or left; it was a



ANTHY FINLEY'S BOOK STORE,

Corner of Chestnut and Tenth Streets Philadelphia.

marked spot by all passers. When in your city, two years ago, I was passing by, and, remembering the figure, was tempted to enter the store and inquire about the head. I was informed that it was still preserved, and it was taken from a shelf and shown to me. Should I once more visit Philadelphia, I will call at your office and give you some reminiscences of times gone by. Yours, &c.

AN OLD PHILADELPHIAN.

New York, Aug. 12, 1855.

OLD COINS.—At the last meeting of the Historical Society, the question was asked, "Can any information be obtained in reference to the coinage of the piece known as the *Jersey Horsehead*?" These coins are now becoming quite scarce, and we are not aware that any account of the person who made them, or the place where they were made, is in existence.—In 1786 there was an act passed by the Legislature to establish the coinage of copper in this State, and the issuing of the "Horsehead" was doubtless under that act. Upon the obverse is the "Horsehead" surmounting the plough encircled by the words "NOVA CÆSAREA," and the date "1787;" on the reverse is a heart-shaped shield, surrounded by the words "*E Pluribus Unum*." These coins bear date two years before the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, and in consequence of which the State law was superseded. Will not some one take the trouble to hunt up the facts in reference to this coinage?

A few days since we found a large quantity of copper coins, most of which were those which passed so current in 1837. Some however were very old and interesting. One which we presume was issued in the days of Franklin, has for its obverse a *sun-dial*, underneath which is "*Mind Your Business*," and above is "*Tempus fugit*," on the reverse is a chain composed of thirteen links, surrounding the words "Time is money." The thirteen links doubtless refer to the United States, and as there is no date, we presume that it was issued shortly after the Declaration of Independence.

These old coins are curious and interesting, and cabinets of them are richly prized. Each has its history, and if attention were paid to the subject, much of value would be lost ere it is swept into the oblivion of the past.—Burlington Gazette.

Mr. Justus, carpenter, tells me he contracted for and built the above picture store and house adjoining on Chestnut per account of Hopkins and Earle & Sellers &c.

C.P.

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