

Whitman's Block, at the junction of Weybosset and Westminster streets, was a noted feature as a building in my earlier years. It was one of the great things of the day, and was talked about all over the town and state as the Arcade building was twenty or more years later. With the Turks Head on a post as high as a lamp post, the junction became known by that name and is still retained after seventy years of its absence.

Whitman's Block was used for family tenements with the exception of one store at its junction.

### 1812. Henry Cogswell Knight.

Mr. Knight (c. 1788–1835) was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and graduated at Brown University in the class of 1812. He was ordained into the Episcopal Church, but was never settled over any parish. He published several volumes of poetry, a volume on the South, and two volumes of sermons. He was a keen observer of men and things, and is quoted as saying, respecting his own somewhat vacillating career, that he "could not find the right branches of the tree of knowledge by which to climb up." While in college he wrote a series of eleven letters to the "Rhode Island American," which have been collected and annotated by Mr. William R. Staples, of Providence (1866).

The volume is entitled *A Glance at the Town of Providence in 1812*. The quotation given is taken from Chapter IV. *Of Signs*.

Providence river runs through the town near enough north and south for my purpose ; and on the east side runs Main street parallel with it ; at about twenty, thirty, or forty rods distance of gradual rise from the water, runs Back street parallel with Main street. These two, together with Westminster and Weybosset streets, which diverge westerly from the market, form the four cardinal streets of this busy town. . . . On the right hand side of the street [Main street] [I notice] the signs of three leather-workers almost contiguous to each other. The first obtrudes upon the eye a *saddle*, painted upon a swing board ; . . . The next soothes the mind with a *milk-white lambkin*, carved and elevated upon a pedestal ; . . . The last offers you a *couchant reindeer*, with branching antlers ; . . . we approach near the Baptist meeting house ; — there . . . on the left side, an apothecary has perched over his door a *purblind owl*. . . . near the market on cheapside, you espy a *purple cluster of grapes* suspended over the door of an English goods shop. . . . Glance . . . across the street and there is *nature herself*—a *lion pounding in a mortar*. . . . cross over the bridge, and see what there is upon a pillar near the post-office ;—ah ! the Turk's Head—as very like the Grand Turk, I am told, as is the statue at India-Point bridge like our good old Captain Washington. . . . Cross over into Weybosset street . . . when now what think you I see ? a neat little carved and gilded *Rhinoceros*, cruelly suspended by his back before the door of a grocer. . . . You observe near the post-office, whither we have returned, a suspended *hive of bees* ;—this is also above the door of a grocer.

The Court-House is a decent building.

The morals of Providence are probably superiour to those of any other town in this State. The usual order of things, with respect to morality, seems here to be inverted. In most other States the country is more virtuous than the city. Here, a general, and honorable, regard to morality, and a general performance of its duties, such as is found in other respectable towns of this country, appears to prevail. Many years have not elapsed since the market, the street, and the wharves, were little less frequented on the Sabbath, than on other days. You will remember, that the Sabbath in this state is neither regarded by the laws, nor sanctioned by any general religious observance. We saw a few carts entering the town ; but were informed, that the number had yearly decreased for a considerable time, and that the inhabitants were strongly, as well as generally opposed to this indecent intrusion.

The present town of Providence contained in 1790, 6380 inhabitants ; in 1800, 7614, and, in 1810, 10,071.

Providence is the third town in New-England, in its population and commerce, and probably the first as to manufactures. The inhabitants, like those of Salem, have been obliged to combat many disadvantages, but in the end have surmounted them with a spirit of industry, enterprise, and perseverance, rarely displayed. The country around them, particularly in their own State, is generally so lean, as scarcely to supply its inhabitants with food. But the merchants by their activity and prudence have engrossed, to a considerable extent, the custom, and produce, of the neighboring regions of Massachusetts, and Connecticut. They have, also, engaged in several kinds of manufactures with a spirit, and success, unrivalled in this country.