

the business in time for the fact to be recorded in *Kent's Directory* for 1818. For there we find once more:

'Johnson, J. Assayer of ore & metals, 7 Maiden la Wood Str.' while the next entry is:

'Johnson, P. N., practical mineralogist, 8 Maiden la Wood St.' which entries continue until 1821.

The explanation of this is that Percival had for long been a young man with ideas and the necessary initiative and energy to carry them out. He had chafed under the restrictions of his father's business with its continuous burden of uniform routine. He knew of a greatly improved form of assay balance which would give much more accurate results than the old-fashioned ones employed by his father. He listened with impatience when his father explained that the market did not want greater accuracy in the assays, since that would inevitably reduce the margins from which the brokers and other merchants derived their living. He had also read all he could about the new sciences of geology and mineralogy. He had listened to the talk of the prospectors who came to Maiden Lane with samples. He had heard the scientists who were friendly with his father and with his brother-in-law Thomas Cock. On the one hand he wanted to launch out for himself; on the other he saw himself tied to a relatively small business out of which he and his three brothers and three sisters were likely to have to draw a living. He did not like the prospect, and so when the partnership of 1817 broke up and his father decided to come back to the business, he determined to start for himself. But he had nowhere to go and anyhow could not leave his father alone with no one to help him. Providentially the little house, No. 8 Maiden Lane at the corner of Staining Lane, was empty and he was able to rent it at once. He probably continued to live at his father's premises next door and use No. 8 only for the reception of such new clients as he was able to attract. Any assaying that might come his way must have been done at the parental bench, while he lent a hand with his father's job. The latter had given him his blessing, and £150, which he said was all the business

could afford. This carried matters forward until July 1821, when George Richard reached the age of 14 and could come into the business as an apprentice. Unlike his elder brothers, he was not brought in under the auspices of the Worshipful Company but just joined up at the bench and took up his freedom by patrimony at the proper time on August 6th, 1828. The settling down of the new apprentice relieved Percival of his day-to-day responsibilities towards his father and he was enabled to further his ambitions and to provide better accommodation for his growing business by moving in February 1822 to an empty house at 79 Hatton Garden. There he progressed in building up what eventually became the great business of Johnson, Matthey & Co Ltd, and the story of that progress, having been told in full detail elsewhere, will not be repeated here. It must however be emphasised that the new business was completely independent of the old, indeed later a strong competitor with it, and no bond existed between the two until, over a century later, events forced the creation of one.

On June 23rd, 1821, a further tragedy overtook the Johnson family in the sudden death of their youngest daughter Martha at the age of 15 years, from a heart attack during the night. She was, it appears, a very charming girl (Mrs Wood says that she and Charles were the only handsome members of the family) and her loss was another severe blow to her parents. She was buried in Stoke Newington churchyard, where her epitaph is:

'Sacred to the memory of Martha, daughter of John and Mary Johnson of this parish, who died June 23rd 1821 aged fifteen years and nine months.

Forgive blest shade the tributary tear,
Which mourns thy exit from a world like this,
Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here
And staid thy progress to the realms of bliss.'

The next event in the family was a happier one, the marriage of the elder surviving daughter Mary Ann to John Hornby Maw in August 1826 at Stoke Newington. Says her daughter Anne Mary: 'My mother wore a myrtle-green pelisse and with