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**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
SELF-REVEALED**

WILLIAM CABELL BRUCE

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Volume I

Introduction

In reading the life of Benjamin Franklin, the most lasting impressions left upon the mind are those of versatility and abundance. His varied genius lent itself without effort to the minutest details of such commonplace things as the heating and ventilation of rooms, the correction of smoky chimneys and naval architecture and economy. His severely practical turn of mind was disclosed even in the devices with which he is pictured in his old age as relieving the irksomeness of physical effort—the rolling press with which he copied his letters, the fan which he worked with his foot in warm weather as he sat reading, the artificial hand with which he reached the books on the upper shelves of his library. But, sober as Franklin's genius on this side was, it proved itself equal to some of the most exacting demands of physical science; and above all to the sublime task, which created such a world-wide stir, of reducing the wild and mysterious lightning of the heavens to captivity, and bringing it down in fluttering helplessness to the earth. It was a rare mind indeed which could give happy expression to homely maxims of plodding thrift, and yet entertain noble visions of universal philanthropy. The stretch between Franklin's weighty observations on Population, for instance, and the bright, graceful bagatelles, with which his pen occasionally trifled, was not a short one; but it was compassed by his intellect without the slightest evidence of halting facility. It is no exaggeration to say that this intellect was an organ lacking in no element of power except that which can be supplied by a profound spiritual insight and a kindling imagination alone. *The Many-Sided Franklin*, the title of the essay by Paul Leicester Ford, is a felicitous touch of description. The life, the mind, the character of the man were all manifold, composite, marked by spacious breadth and freedom. It is astonishing into how many different provinces his career can be divided. Franklin, the Man of Business, Franklin, the Philosopher, Franklin, the Writer, Franklin, the Statesman, Franklin, the Diplomatist, have all been the subjects of separate literary treatment. As a man of business, he achieved enough, when the limitations of his time and environment are considered, to make him a notable precursor of the strong race of self-created men, bred by the later material expansion of America. As a scientist, his brilliant electrical discoveries gave him for a while, as contemporary literature so strikingly evinces, a position of extraordinary pre-eminence. As a writer, he can claim the distinction of having composed two productions, *The Autobiography* and *The Way to Wealth*, which are read the world over. Of his reputation as a statesman it is enough to remark that his signature is attached to the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance between the United States and France, the Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and the United States, and the Federal Constitution. Of his labors as a diplomatist it may be said that, if it is true that, without the continuous assistance of France, our independence would not have been secured, it is perhaps equally true that, without his wisdom, tact and European prestige, we should never have retained this assistance, so often imperilled by the jealousy and vanity of his colleagues as well as by the usual accidents of international intercourse. His life was like a full five-act play—prophetic prologue and stately epilogue, and swelling scene imposed upon swelling scene, until the tallow chandler's son, rising from the humblest levels of human fortune to the highest by uninterrupted gradations of invincible success, finally becomes the recipient of such a degree of impressive homage as has rarely been paid to anyone by the admiration and curiosity of mankind.

To such a diversified career as this the element of mere longevity was, of course, indispensable. Renown so solid and enduring as that of Franklin and acquired in so many different fields was not a thing to be achieved by a few fortunate strokes. He did not awake

one morning, as did Byron, to find himself famous; though his fame in the province of electrical science travelled fast when it once got under way. Such a full-orbed renown could be produced only by the long gestation of many years of physical vigor and untiring activity. With the meagre opportunities afforded by colonial conditions for the accumulation of wealth, there had to be an extended period of unflagging attention to Poor Richard's saying: "Many a little makes a mickle." To this period belong some things that the self-revelation of the *Autobiography*, unselfish as it is, cannot dignify, or even redeem from moral squalor, and other things which even the frankness itself of the *Autobiography* is not frank enough to disclose. Then there is the unique story, imprinted upon the face of Philadelphia to this day, of his fruitful exertions as Town Oracle and City Builder. Then there is the episode of scientific inquiry, all too brief, when the prosperous printer and tradesman, appraising wealth at its true value, turns away from his printing press and stock of merchandise to give himself up with enthusiastic ardor to the study of electrical phenomena. Then there is the long term of public employment, beginning with the Clerkship of the Pennsylvania Assembly and not ending until, after many years of illustrious public service as legislator, administrator, diplomatic agent and foreign minister, Franklin complains in a letter to Dr. and Mrs. John Bard that the public, not content with eating his flesh, seems resolved to pick his bones.

The amount of work that he did, the mass of results that he accomplished, during the long tract of time covered by his life, is simply prodigious. Primarily, Franklin was a man of action. The reputation that he coveted most was, as he declared, in a letter to Samuel Mather, that of a doer of good. Utility was the standard set by him for all his activities, and even his system of ethics did not escape the hard, griping pressure of this standard. What he aimed at from first to last, whether in the domain of science, literature or government, was practical results, and men, as they are known to experienced and shrewd, though kindly, observers of men, were the agencies with which he sought to accomplish such results. He never lost sight of the sound working principle, which the mere academician or closet philosopher is so prone to forget, that the game cannot be played except with the chess-men upon the board. But happily for the world few men of action have ever bequeathed to posterity such abundant written records of their lives. When Franklin desired to promote any project or to carry any point, he invariably, or all but invariably, invoked the aid of his pen to attain his end. To write for money, or for the mere pleasure of writing, or even for literary fame was totally alien to the purposes for which he wrote. A pen was to him merely another practical instrument for forwarding some private aim of his or some definite public or political object, to which his sympathies and powers were committed, or else but an aid to social amusement. As the result of this secondary kind of literary activity, he left behind him a body of writings of one kind or another which enables us to measure far more accurately than we should otherwise have been able to do the amount of thought and performance crowded into those eventful years of lusty and prolific existence. In the Library of Congress, in the Library of the American Philosophical Society, in the Library of the University of Pennsylvania, in numerous other collections in both hemispheres are found the outflowings of a brain to which exuberance of production was as natural as rank vegetation to a fat soil. Nor should it be forgotten that many of his papers have perished, which, if still extant, would furnish additional proofs of the fertility of his genius and swell the sum of pleasure and instruction which we derive from his works. With the sigh that we breathe over the lost productions of antiquity might well be mingled another over the papers and letters which were confided by Franklin, on the eve of his mission to France, to the care of Joseph Galloway, only to fall a prey to ruthless spoliation and dispersion. To look forward to a long winter evening enlivened by the missing letters that he wrote to his close friends, Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph's, "the good Bishop," as he called him, Sir Edward Newenham, of the Irish Parliament, and Jan Ingenhousz, physician to Maria Theresa, would alone, to one familiar with his correspondence, be as inviting a

prospect as could be held out to any reader with a relish for the intimate letters of a wise, witty and humorous letter-writer.

The length of time during which the subtle and powerful mind of Franklin was at work is, we repeat, a fact that must be duly taken into account in exploring the foundations of his celebrity. "By living twelve years beyond David's period," he said in one of his letters to George Whatley, "I seem to have intruded myself into the company of posterity, when I ought to have been abed and asleep." He was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 6 (old style), 1706, and died in the City of Philadelphia on April 17, 1790. At the time of his birth, Anne was in the fourth year of her reign as Queen of England, and Louis XIV. was King of France. Only eighty-five years had elapsed since the landing at Plymouth. More than three years were to elapse before the battle of Malplaquet, more than five years before the publication of the first *Spectator*, twenty years before the publication of *Gulliver's Travels*. Franklin's name was an honored one not only in his native land but beyond seas before any of the other great men who signed the Declaration of Independence had emerged from provincial obscurity. His birth preceded that of Washington by twenty-six years, that of John Adams by thirty years, that of Jefferson by thirty-seven years. Coming into the world only fifteen years after the outbreak of the witchcraft delusion at Salem, he lived to be a member of the Federal Convention and to pass down to us as modern in spirit and purpose as the American House of Representatives or the American Patent Office. He, at least, is a standing refutation of the claim that all the energetic tasks of human life are performed by young men. He was seventy years of age when he arrived in France to enter upon the laborious diplomatic career which so signally increased the lustre of his fame and so gloriously prospered our national fortunes; and he was seventy-nine years of age when his mission ended. But even then, weighed down though he was by the strong hand of time and vexed by diseases which left him little peace, there was no danger that he would be classed by anyone with the old townsmen of whom Lord Bacon speaks "that will be still sitting at their Street doore though thereby they offer Age to Scorne." After his return from France, he lived long enough to be thrice elected President of the State of Pennsylvania and to be a useful member of the Convention that framed the Federal Constitution; and only twenty-four days before his death he wrote the speech of Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim on the petition of the Erika, or Purists for the abolition of piracy and slavery which is one of the happiest effusions of his satirical genius.

Multos da annos is a prayer, we may readily believe, that is often granted by the Gods with a scornful smile. In the case of Franklin, even without such a protracted term of life as was his portion, he would still have enjoyed a distinguished place in the memory of men, but not that broad, branching, full-crowned fame which makes him one of the most conspicuous landmarks of the eighteenth century.

And fully in keeping with the extent of this fame was the extent of his relationship to the social and intellectual world of his time. The main background of his life, of course, was American—Lake Champlain, the St. Lawrence, the Charles, the Connecticut, the Hudson, the Delaware and the Ohio rivers; the long western reaches of the Atlantic; the dark curtain of firs and hemlocks and primeval masses of rock which separated the two powers that ceaselessly struggled for the mastery of the continent, and rarely lifted except to reveal some appalling tragedy, chargeable to the French and their dread ally, the Red Indian; Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Fort Duquesne—all the internal features and surroundings in a word of the long, narrow strip of English territory between Boston and Philadelphia with which he was so familiar, and over which his influence was asserted in so many ways. With the exception of his brief sojourn in London in his youth, his whole life was passed in the Colonies until he was fifty-one years of age. Before he sailed for England in 1757, upon his first foreign mission, the circumstances of his career had been such as to make him generally

known to the people of the Colonies. His *Almanac*, his *Gazette*, his pithy sayings, his humorous stories, his visits to Boston, attended by the formation of so many wayside friendships, his postal expeditions, the printing presses set up by him at many different points, his private fortune, his public services, his electrical experiments were all breath for the trump of his fame. He knew Colonial America as few Colonial Americans knew it. He was born and reared in Boston, and, after his removal to Philadelphia, he revisited his native city at regular intervals. "The Boston manner, turn of phrase, and even tone of voice, and accent in pronunciation, all please, and seem to refresh and revive me," he said in his old age in a letter to the Rev. John Lathrop. Philadelphia, the most populous and opulent of the colonial towns, was his lifelong place of residence. In the *Autobiography* he refers to it as "A city I love, having lived many years in it very happily." He appears to have been quite frequently in New York. His postal duties took him as far south as Williamsburg, and the Albany Congress drew him as far north of New York as Albany. He was in the camp of Braddock at Frederick, Maryland, just before that rash and ill-starred general set out upon his long, dolorous march through the wilderness where disaster and death awaited him. Facts like these signify but little now when transit from one distant point to another in the United States is effected with such amazing rapidity, but they signified much under the crude conditions of colonial life. Once at least did Franklin have his shoulder dislocated by an accident on the atrocious roads of Colonial New England. Once he was thrown into the water from an upset canoe near Staten Island. His masterly answers, when examined before the House of Commons, showed how searchingly conversant he was with everything that related to America. For some of our most penetrating glances into colonial life we are indebted to his writings; particularly instructive being his observations upon population in the Colonies, the economic condition and political temper of their people and the characteristics and habits of the Indians. It was a broad experience which touched at one extreme the giddy and artificial life of Paris, on the eve of the French Revolution, and at the other the drunken Indian orgies at the conclusion of the treaty at Carlisle which Franklin has depicted in the *Autobiography* with a brush worthy of Rembrandt in these words: "Their dark-colour'd bodies, half naked, seen only by the gloomy light of the bonfire, running after and beating one another with firebrands, accompanied by their horrid yellings, form'd a scene the most resembling our ideas of hell that could well be imagin'd."

But the peculiar distinction of Franklin is that his life stands out vividly upon an European as well as an American background. It is interesting to contrast the scene at Carlisle with the opera in honor of the Comte du Nord, at which he was present, during the French mission. "The House," he says in his *Journal of the Negotiation for Peace with Great Britain*, "being richly finish'd with abundance of Carving and Gilding, well Illuminated with Wax Tapers, and the Company all superbly drest, many of the Men in Cloth of Tissue, and the Ladies sparkling with Diamonds, form'd altogether the most splendid Spectacle my Eyes ever beheld." Until the august figure of Washington filled the eye of mankind, Franklin was the only American who had ever won a solid and splendid European reputation. The opportunity had not yet arisen for the lively French imagination to declare that he had snatched the sceptre from tyrants, but the first half of Turgot's tremendous epigram had been realized; for the lightning he had snatched, or rather filched, from the sky. It may well be doubted whether any one private individual with such limited pecuniary resources ever did as much for the moral and intellectual welfare of any one community as Franklin did for pre-revolutionary Philadelphia; but it was impossible that such aspirations and powers as his should be confined within the pale of colonial provincialism. His widespread fame, his tolerant disposition, his early residence in England, his later residence there for long periods, his excursions into Scotland and Ireland and Continental countries, the society of men of the world in London and other great cities combined to endow him with a character truly cosmopolitan which was

to be still further liberalized by French influence. During his life, he crossed the Atlantic no less than eight times. After 1757 the greater part of his life was spent abroad. Of the eighty-four years, of which his existence was made up, some twenty-six were passed in England and France. He was as much at home on The Strand as on Market Street in Philadelphia. The friendships that he formed in England and France were almost as close as those that he had formed in Pennsylvania with his cronies, Hugh Roberts and John Bartram. He became so thoroughly domesticated in England during his periods of sojourn in that country that he thought of remaining there for the rest of his life, and yet, if the Brillons had only been willing to confer the hand of their daughter upon his grandson, William Temple Franklin, he would contentedly have died in France. If there ever was an American, if there ever was a citizen of the world, if there ever was a true child of the eighteenth century, it was he. His humanitarian sympathies, his catholic temper, his generous, unobstructed outlook enabled him without difficulty to adjust himself with ease to the genius of every people with whom he was brought into familiar contact. In America he was such a thorough American in every respect that Carlyle is said to have termed him on one occasion, "The Father of all the Yankees." In England he was English enough to feel the full glow of her greatness and to see her true interests far more clearly than she saw them herself. He had too many Anglo-Saxon traits to become wholly a Frenchman when he lived in France, but he became French enough to truly love France and her people and to be truly beloved by them. In the opinion of Sainte-Beuve he is the most French of all Americans.

I. Franklin's Moral Standing And System

Until a comparatively recent period totally false conceptions in some respects of Franklin's character were not uncommon. To many he was merely the father of a penurious, cheese-paring philosophy, and to no little extent the idea prevailed that his own nature and conduct corresponded with its precepts. There could be no greater error. Of the whole science of prudential economy a master indeed he was. His observations upon human life, in its pecuniary relations, and upon the methods, by which affluence and ease are to be wrested from the reluctant grasp of poverty, are always sagacious in the highest degree. Poor Richard is quite as consummate a master of the science of rising in the world as Aristotle is of the Science of Politics or Mill of the Science of Political Economy. Given health and strength, a man, who faithfully complied with his shrewd injunctions and yet did not prosper, would be as much a freak of nature as a man who thrust his hand into the fire and yet received no physical hurt. The ready and universal assent given to their full truth and force by human experience is attested by the fact that *The Way to Wealth*, or *The Speech of Father Abraham*, "the plain, clean old Man with white Locks" in which Franklin, when writing one of the prefaces of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, condensed the wit and wisdom, original and second hand, of that incomparable manual of *The Art of Material Success*, has, through innumerable editions and reprints, and translations into every written tongue from the French to the Russian and Chinese, become almost as well known to the entire civilized globe as the unbroken strain of the martial airs of England. So well calculated, it was thought, was it to promote sound principles of diligence and frugality that it was, we are told by Franklin, reprinted in England, to be set up in the form of a broadside in houses, and, when translated into French, was bought by the clergy and gentry of France for distribution among their poor parishioners and tenants. But so far from being the slave of a parsimonious spirit was Franklin that it would be difficult to single out any self-made man who ever formed a saner estimate of the value of money than he did or lived up to it more fearlessly. In seeking money, he was actuated, as his early retirement from business proved, only by the high-minded motive to self-enrichment which is so pointedly expressed in the lines of Burns:

"Not for to hide it in a hedge,

Nor for a train attendant,

But for the glorious privilege

Of being independent."

No sooner did he accumulate a sufficient fortune to provide for the reasonable wants of his family and himself than he proceeded to make this fortune the handmaid of some of the higher things of life—wholesome reading, scientific research, public usefulness, schemes of beneficence. In 1748, when he was in the full flush of business success and but forty-two years of age, he deliberately, for the sake of such things, retired from all active connection with business pursuits. In a letter to Abiah Franklin, his mother, shortly after he found himself free forever from the cares of his shop, he speaks of himself in these words: "I enjoy, thro' Mercy, a tolerable Share of Health. I read a great deal, ride a little, do a little Business for myself, more for others, retire when I can, and go into Company when I please; so the Years roll round, and the last will come; when I would rather have it said, *He lived Usefully*, than *He died Rich*." About the same time, he wrote to William Strahan, a business correspondent, that the very notion of *dying worth* a great sum was to him absurd, and just the same as if a man should run in debt for one thousand superfluities, to the end that, when

he should be stripped of all, and imprisoned by his creditors, it might be said, he *broke worth* a great sum. On more than one occasion, when there was a call upon his public zeal, his response was generous to the point of imprudence. The bond that he gave to indemnify against loss the owners of the wagons and horses procured by his energy and address for Braddock's expedition led to claims against him to the amount of nearly twenty thousand pounds, which would have ruined him, if the British Government had not rescued him after long delay from his dreadful situation. Without hesitation he entered during his first mission to England into a personal engagement that an act taxing the estate of the Proprietaries of Pennsylvania in common with the estates of the People of Pennsylvania would not result in any injustice to the Proprietaries. On a later occasion, in order to prevent war between Great Britain and her Colonies, he was willing to bind himself, to the whole extent of his private fortune, to make pecuniary reparation for the destruction of the tea cast into Boston harbor, if the Province of Massachusetts did not do so. One of his last acts before leaving America for his mission to France was to place the sum of three or four thousand pounds, which was a large part of this fortune, and all the ready money at his command, at the disposal of Congress. His salary as President of Pennsylvania was all given or bequeathed by him to public objects. The small sums, to which he became entitled as one of the next of kin of his father and his cousin, Mrs. Fisher, of Wellingborough, England, he relinquished to members of the family connection who needed them more than he did. Once, though a commercial panic was prevailing, he pledged his credit to the extent of five thousand pounds for the purpose of supporting that of a London friend. His correspondence nowhere indicates any degree of pecuniary caution in excess of the proper demands of good sense. On the contrary, it furnishes repeated testimony to his promptitude in honoring the solicitations of private distress or subscribing to public purposes. Conspicuously unselfish was he when the appeal was to his public spirit or to his interest in the general welfare of mankind. Among his innumerable benefactions was a gift of one thousand pounds to Franklin College, Pennsylvania. When he invented his open stove for the better warming of rooms, he gave the model to his friend, Robert Grace, who found, Franklin tells us in the *Autobiography*, the casting of the plates for the stove at his furnace near Philadelphia a profitable thing. So far from begrudging this profit to his friend, he wrote his interesting *Account of the New-invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces* to promote the public demand for the invention. A London ironmonger made some small changes in the stove, which were worse than of no value to it, and reaped, Franklin was told, a little fortune by it. "And this," he says in the *Autobiography*, "is not the only instance of patents taken out for my inventions by others, tho' not always with the same success, which I never contested, as having no desire of profiting by patents myself, and hating disputes." When he was actually engaged in the business of printing, a similar motive, so far as public spirit went, led him to offer to print a treatise by Cadwallader Colden on the *Cause of Gravitation* at his own expense and risk. If he could be the means of communicating anything valuable to the world, he wrote to Colden, he did not always think of gaining nor even of saving by his business.

That the character of Franklin should ever have been deemed so meanly covetous is due to *Poor Richard's Almanac* and the *Autobiography*. The former, with its hard, bare homilies upon the Gospel of Getting on in Life and its unceasing accent upon the duty of scrimping and saving, circulated so long and so widely throughout the Colonies that the real Franklin came to be confused in many minds with the fictitious Poor Richard. Being intended mainly for the instruction and amusement of the common people, whose chief hope of bettering their condition lay in rigid self-denial, it is naturally keyed to unison with the ruder and austerer principles of human thrift. As to the *Autobiography*, with its host of readers, the only Franklin known to the great majority of persons, who have any familiarity with Franklin at all, is its Franklin, and this Franklin is the one who had to "make the night joint-laborer with the day,"

breakfast on bread and milk eaten out of a two-penny earthen porringer with a pewter spoon, and closely heed all the sage counsels of *Poor Richard's Almanac* before he could even become the possessor of a china bowl and a silver spoon. It is in the *Autobiography* that the story of Franklin's struggle, first for the naked means of subsistence, and then for pecuniary competency, is told; and the harsh self-restraint, the keen eye to every opportunity for self-promotion, and the grossly mechanical theory of morals disclosed by it readily give color to the notion that Franklin was nothing more than a sordid materialist. It should be remembered that it is from the *Autobiography* that we obtain the greatest part of our knowledge of the exertions through which he acquired his fortune, and that the successive ascending stages, by which he climbed the steep slopes that lead up from poverty and obscurity, are indelibly set forth in this lifelike book with a pen as coarse but at the same time as vivid and powerful as the pencil with which Hogarth depicts the descending stages of the Rake's Progress. And along with these facts it should also be remembered that the didactic purpose by which the *Autobiography* was largely inspired should be duly allowed for before we draw too disparaging inferences about Franklin from anything that he says in that book with respect to his career.

It is a curious fact that almost every reproach attaching to the reputation of Franklin is attributable to the candor of the *Autobiography*. It is true that in the political contests between the Proprietary and Popular Parties in Colonial Pennsylvania he was often visited with virulent abuse by the retainers of the Proprietaries. This was merely the dirty froth brought to the surface by every boiling pot. It is also true that, after the transmission of the Hutchinson letters to New England, he was the object of much savage censure at the hands of British Tories. But this censure, for the most part, was as empty as the ravings of the particular bigot who indorsed on the first page of a volume of letters in the Public Record Office, in London, a statement that the thirteen letters of Doctor Franklin in the volume were perhaps then "only precious or Important so far as they prove and discover the Duplicity, Ingratitude, and Guilt of this Arch Traitor whom they unveil and really unmask Displaying him as an accomplish'd Proficient in the blacker Arts of Dissimulation and Guile." Not less hollow was the invective with which the distempered mind of Arthur Lee assailed the character of Franklin when they were together in France. Nor can it be denied that in such Rabelaisian *jeux d'esprit* as Polly Baker's Speech, the Letter on the Choice of a Mistress, and the Essay on Perfumes, dedicated to the Royal Academy of Brussels, in the *naïveté* which marked Franklin's relations to his natural son, William Franklin, and to his natural son's natural son, William Temple Franklin, and in the ease with which he adopted in his old age the tone, if not the practices, of French gallantry, we cannot but recognize a nature too deficient in the refinements of early social training, too physically ripe for sensual enjoyment and too unfettered in its intellectual movements to be keenly mindful of some of the nicer obligations of scrupulous conduct. In moral dignity, Franklin was not George Washington, though there was no one held in higher honor by him. "If it were a Sceptre, he has merited it, and would become it," he said in bequeathing a fine crab-tree walking stick to Washington, whom he termed "My friend, and the friend of mankind." If for no other reason, Franklin was not Washington because he lacked the family traditions and early social advantages of Washington, and perhaps Washington might have been more like Franklin, if he had had some of Franklin's humor. While the resemblance is limited, Franklin does resemble in some respects Jefferson who was too scientific in spirit and too liberal in his opinions not to be a little of a skeptic and a heretic himself. But nothing can be more certain than the fact that Franklin was esteemed by his contemporaries not only a great but a good man. We pass by the French extravagance which made him out a paragon of all the virtues as well as the *plus grand philosophe du siècle*; for the French were but mad idolaters where he was concerned. It is sufficient for our purposes to limit ourselves to his English and American panegyrists. Referring to Franklin's humble

birth, Benjamin Vaughan, a dull but good man, wrote to him that he proved “how little necessary all origin is to happiness, virtue, or greatness.” In another place, Vaughan speaks of the “affection, gratitude and veneration” he bears to Franklin. To the sober Quaker, Abel James, the author of the *Autobiography* was the “kind, humane, and benevolent Ben. Franklin” whose work almost insensibly led the youth “into the resolution of endeavoring to become as good and eminent” as himself. In urging Franklin to complete the story of his life, he added: “I know of no character living, nor many of them put together, who has so much in his power as thyself to promote a greater spirit of industry and early attention to business, frugality, and temperance with the American youth.” As Franklin’s letters bring to our knowledge friend after friend of his, among the wisest and best men of his day, on both sides of the Atlantic, we begin to ask ourselves whether anyone ever did have such a genius for exciting the sentiment of true, honest friendship in virtuous and useful men. His correspondence with Catherine Ray, Polly Stevenson, and Georgiana Shipley, though several of his letters to the first of the three are blemished by the freedom of the times and vulgar pleasantries, demonstrates that his capacity for awakening this sentiment was not confined to his own sex. Inclined as he was in his earlier and later years, to use Madame Brillion’s phrase, to permit his wisdom to be broken upon the rocks of femininity, unbecoming his advanced age and high position as was the salacious strain which ran through his letters to this beautiful and brilliant woman, as we shall see hereafter, nothing could illustrate better than his relations to Polly Stevenson how essentially incorrupt his heart was when his association was with any member of the other sex who really had modesty to lose. Such was the pure affection entertained for him by this fine woman that, after the death of her celebrated husband, Dr. William Hewson, she removed from London to Philadelphia with her children to be near the friend, little less than a father, who had lavished upon her all that was best in both his mind and heart. There is much in the life of Franklin to make us believe that his standards of sexual morality were entirely too lax, but there is everything in it, too, to make us believe that he would not only have been incapable of seducing female innocence but would have been slow to withhold in any regard the full meed of deferential respect due to a chaste girl or a virtuous matron. It is hard to repress a smile when we read under the head of “Humility” in his *Table of Virtues*, just below the words, in which, under the head of “Chastity,” he deprecates the use of “venery” to the injury of one’s own or another’s peace or reputation, the injunction for his own guidance, “imitate Jesus and Socrates.” All the same, it is a fact that one person, at any rate, Jane Mecom, his sister, even thought him not unworthy to be compared with our Saviour. “I think,” she said, “it is not profanity to compare you to our Blessed Saviour who employed much of his time while here on earth in doing good to the body as well as souls of men.” Elizabeth Hubbard, the stepdaughter of his brother John, even warned him that, if he was not less zealous in doing good, he would find himself alone in heaven. Through all the observations of his contemporaries vibrates the note that he was too wise and benevolent to belong to anything less than the entire human race. Jonathan Shipley, “The Good Bishop,” suggested as a motto suitable to his character, “his country’s friend, but more of human kind.” Burke called him “the lover of his species.” By Sir Samuel Romilly he was pronounced “one of the best and most eminent men of the present age.” Chatham eulogized him in the House of Lords as one “whom all Europe held in high Estimation for his Knowledge and Wisdom, and rank’d with our Boyles and Newtons; who was an Honour, not to the English Nation only, but to Human Nature.” In one of his works, Lord Kames spoke of him as “a man who makes a great figure in the learned world; and who would make a still greater figure for benevolence and candor, were virtue as much regarded in this declining age as knowledge.” Less formal was the heartfelt tribute of Dr. Samuel Cooper, of Massachusetts, after many years of intercourse: “Your friendship has united two things in my bosom that seldom meet, pride and consolation: it has been the honor and the balm of my life.” And

when towards the close of Franklin's life he wrote to George Washington, "In whatever State of Existence I am plac'd hereafter, if I retain any Memory of what has pass'd here, I shall with it retain the Esteem, Respect, and Affection, with which I have long been, my dear Friend, yours most sincerely," he received a reply, which was not only a reply, but the stately, measured judgment of a man who never spoke any language except that of perfect sincerity. "If," said Washington, "to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know, that you have not lived in vain." "And I flatter myself," he continued, "that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be recollected with respect, veneration, and affection by your sincere friend." These were credentials indeed for the old printer to take with him on his journey to the bright orbs which it was a part of his early religious fantasies to believe were swayed by Gods intermediate in the scale of intelligent existence between ourselves and the "one Supreme, most Perfect Being, Author and Father of the Gods themselves."¹

It is, we repeat, the *Autobiography* which is mainly responsible for the unfavorable impressions that have been formed about the character of Franklin. It is there that we learn what heady liquor his sprightly mind and free spirit quaffed from the cup of boyhood and what errata blurred the fair, fresh page of his early manhood. It is there that he has told us how, as the result of his written attacks upon the Established Order, Puritan Boston began to consider him in an unfavorable light "as a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satyr"; how his indiscreet disputations about religion caused him to be pointed at with horror by good people in the same starch town as an infidel or atheist; how he availed himself of a fraud in the second indentures of apprenticeship between his brother and himself to claim his freedom before his time was up; how, in distant London, he forgot the troth that he had plighted to Deborah Read; how he attempted familiarities with the mistress of his friend Ralph which she repulsed with a proper resentment; how he broke into the money which Mr. Vernon had authorized him to collect; how he brought over Collins and Ralph to his own free-thinking ways; how he became involved in some foolish intrigues with low women which from the expense were rather more prejudicial to him than to them. It is in the *Autobiography* also that we learn from him how he thought that the daughter of Mrs. Godfrey's relation should bring him as his wife enough money to discharge the remainder of the debt on his printing house even if her parents had to mortgage their house in the loan office; how partly by sheer force and pinching economy and partly by dexterity and finesse, sometimes verging upon cunning, he pushed himself further and further along the road to fortune, and finally how he was so successful with the help of his *Art of Virtue*, despite occasional stumblings and slips, in realizing his dream of moral perfection as to be able to write complacently upon the margin of the *Autobiography*, "nothing so likely to make a man's fortune as virtue." It is things like these in the *Autobiography* that have tended to

¹ The superlative eulogy of Franklin is that of Josiah Quincy, Junior, who expressed his conviction in his journal that Franklin was one of the wisest and best of men upon earth; one, of whom it might be said that this world was not worthy. Of course, no man capable of creating such a conviction as this was safe from "the wolf's black jaw and the dull ass' hoof." Capefigue in his *Memoirs of Louis XVI.* called Franklin "one of the great charlatans" of his age. This is the language of a man who finds a phrase and thinks he has found a fact. Arthur Lee said on one occasion that Franklin was "the meanest of all mean men, the most corrupt of all corrupt men"; but this was merely the froth of a rabid mental condition. Stephen Sayre wrote to Capellen that Franklin was a "great villain," but Sayre had unsuccessfully solicited office from Franklin. Besides, this extraordinary character seems to have nearly, if not quite, answered Franklin's description of a man who has neither good sense enough to be an honest man nor wit enough for a rogue. The only one of Franklin's slanderers whose arrow hit anywhere near the mark was an anonymous French poet who termed him "Caméléon Octogénaire."

create in minds, which know Franklin only in this narrative, the idea that he was a niggard, a squalid utilitarian, and even a little of a rogue; though the same *Autobiography* witnesses also that he was not so engrossed with his own selfish interests as not to find time for the enlarged projects of public utility which to this day render it almost impossible for us to think of Philadelphia without recalling the figure of Franklin. *Si monumentum requiris circumspice*, was the proud inscription placed over the grave of Sir Christopher Wren in the city where his genius had designed so many edifices. The same inscription might be aptly placed over the grave of Franklin in Christ Church yard in the city where his public spirit and wisdom laid the foundations of so much that has proved enduring.

There is unquestionably a shabby side to the *Autobiography*, despite the inspiring sacrifice of his physical wants which Franklin made in his boyhood to gratify his intellectual cravings, the high promptings which the appetites and unregulated impulses of his unguarded youth were powerless to stifle, the dauntless resolution and singleness of purpose with which he defied and conquered his adverse star, the wise moderation of his hour of victory, the disinterested and splendid forms of social service to which he devoted his sagacious and fruitful mind, his manly hatred of injustice and cruelty, his fidelity to the popular cause which neither flattery could cajole nor power overawe. In its mixture of what is noble with what is ignoble the *Autobiography* reminds us of the merchandise sold at the new printing-office near the Market in Philadelphia, where Franklin conducted his business as a printer and a merchant, where his wife, Deborah, assisted him by folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop and purchasing old linen rags, and where his mother-in-law, Mrs. Read, compounded her sovereign remedy against the itch and lice. Now it was a translation of Cato's *Moral Distichs* or a pamphlet against slavery fresh from his own press, now it was a copy of some devotional or useful work which the last packet had brought over from London, now it was a lot of goose feathers, or old rags, or a likely young negro wench. But on the whole we cannot help thinking that the calm view, which Franklin himself, in the cool of the evening of his life, takes of the early part of his existence, was, with some qualifications, not far wrong. Notwithstanding the dangerous season of youth and the hazardous situations, in which he was sometimes placed among strangers, when he was remote from the eye and advice of his sterling father, Josiah Franklin, he believed, as we know from the *Autobiography*, that he had not fallen into any "willful gross immorality or injustice"; and, start as the student of Franklin may at times at things which might chill for the moment the enthusiasm of even such a Boswellian as the late John Bigelow, to whose editorial services the reputation of Franklin is so deeply indebted, he is likely in his final estimate to find himself in very much the same mood as that which impelled Franklin in the *Autobiography* to make the famous declaration, so true to his normal and intensely vital nature, that, were it offered to his choice, he "should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some faults of the first." Be this as it may, it is at least safe to say that it is very unfair to judge the character of Franklin by the *Autobiography* without bearing in mind one of the leading motives by which he was induced to write his own life. To his great honor it can be said that to do good in the higher social sense, to promote the lasting interests of humanity, to free the march of the race from every handicap, every impediment, whether arising in or outside of ourselves, to instruct, to enlighten, were the dominant incentives, the mellow, yet commanding passions of his existence. Like many another philosopher before and since, in his zeal to subserve the general interest he forgot himself. If other young men treading in his footsteps could be deterred by the warnings of his errors from becoming involved in the mistakes and moral lapses in which his youth and inexperience were involved, he was willing, though not without some misgivings, to lay before them and the whole world all the details of these errors. In composing the *Autobiography*, he was influenced to no little degree by the spirit of a man

who bequeaths his own body to the surgeons for the advancement of science. If his reputation suffered by his tender of himself as a *corpus vile* for the benefit of future generations, he was prepared to take this risk, as he was prepared to take the risks of the two electric shocks, which nearly cost him his life, in the promotion of human knowledge. It is impossible for anyone, who is not familiar with the perfect lack of selfish reserve brought by Franklin to the pursuit of truth or the universal interests of mankind, to understand the extent to which, in composing the *Autobiography*, he was moved by generous considerations of this sort. In no other production of his did he show the same disposition to turn the seamier side of his existence to the light for the simple reason that no other production of his was written with the same homiletic purpose as the *Autobiography*. And, if this purpose had not been so strong upon him, how easy it would have been for him by a little judicious suppression here and a few softening touches there to have altered the whole face of the *Autobiography*, and to have rendered it as faithless a transcript of the slips and blots of his life as are most autobiographies of human beings—even those of men who have enjoyed a high repute for moral excellence—in their relations to the indiscretions, the follies and the transgressions of their immaturer years! At any rate, of the offences of Franklin, mentioned in the *Autobiography*, may be said what cannot be said of the similar offences of many men. He handsomely atoned for them all so far as the opportunity to atone for them arose. It was undoubtedly a serious breach of the moral law for him to have begotten William Franklin out of lawful wedlock, and in the impartial affection, which he publicly bestowed upon his illegitimate son and his legitimate daughter, we see another illustration of his insensibility to the finer inflections of human scruples. But when we see him accept this illegitimate son as if he had come to him over his right shoulder instead of his left, take him under his family roof, give him every advantage that education and travel could confer, seek an honorable alliance for him, put him in the way to become the Governor of Colonial New Jersey, even affectionately recognize his illegitimate son as a grandson, we almost feel as if such ingenuous naturalism had a kind of bastard moral value of its own.

The *Autobiography* is interesting in every respect but in none more so than in relation to the System of Morals adopted by Franklin for his self-government in early life, when, to use his own words in that work, he “conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection.” This project once formed, he went about its execution in a manner as strictly mechanical as if he had been rectifying a smoky chimney or devising a helpful pair of glasses for his defective eyesight. The virtues were classified by him under thirteen heads: Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquillity, Chastity and Humility. These terms were all tabulated by him in a little pocketbook kept for that especial purpose, and to each virtue the close attention of a week was successively given by him. If an offence was committed by him on a certain day, it was entered by a little black mark under that date opposite the affronted virtue. The object was to so concentrate his vigilance upon each virtue in turn and to so strengthen his capacity to resist every temptation to violate it as to finally render its practice habitual and instinctive. The plan in spirit was not unlike the system of prudential algebra to which he told Joseph Priestley, many years afterwards, that he resorted when his judgment was in a state of uncertainty about some problem. In one column he would jot down on a piece of paper all the *pros* of the case, and in another all the *cons*, and then, by appraising the relative value of each *pro* and *con* set down before his eye, and cancelling equivalent considerations, decide upon which side the preponderance of the argument lay. Even Franklin himself admits that his plan for making an automatic machine of virtue did not work in every respect. Order he experienced extreme difficulty in acquiring. Indeed, this virtue was so much against his grain that he felt inclined to content himself with only a partial measure of fidelity to it, like the man, he said in the *Autobiography*, who, though at first desirous of having his whole ax

bright, grew so tired of turning the grindstone on which it was being polished that when the smith, who was holding it, remarked that it was only speckled, and asked him to turn on, he replied, "But I think I like a speckled ax best." The Humility, too, which Franklin acquired, he was disposed to think was more specious than real. Pride, he moralizes in the *Autobiography*, is perhaps the hardest of our natural passions to subdue, and even, if he could conceive that he had completely overcome it, he would probably, he thought, be proud of his humility. This reminds us of his other observation in the *Autobiography* that he gave vanity fair quarter wherever he met with it, and that, in many cases, it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life. In the effort, however, to acquire Humility, Franklin did, he informs us in the same work, acquire, as time wore on, the habit of expressing his opinions in such conciliatory forms that no one perhaps for fifty years past had ever heard a dogmatic expression escape him. "And to this habit (after my character of integrity)," he declares, "I think it principally owing that I had early so much weight with my fellow citizens when I proposed new institutions, or alterations in the old, and so much influence in public councils when I became a member; for I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my points." On the whole, even though Franklin did find Order and Humility not easy of attainment, he was very well satisfied with the results of his plan for imparting the force of habit to virtue. In his seventy-ninth year the former tradesman sat down to count deliberately his moral gains. To his "little artifice" with the blessing of God he owed, he felt, the constant felicity of his life until that time. To Temperance he ascribed his long-continued health and what was still left to him of a good constitution; to Industry and Frugality the early easiness of his circumstances and the acquisition of his fortune with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to Sincerity and Justice the confidence of his country and the honorable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state that he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper and that cheerfulness in conversation which made his company still sought for and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. From other expressions of his in the *Autobiography* we are left to infer that he believed that Frugality and Industry, by freeing him from the residue of the debt on his printing house and producing affluence and independence, had made more easy the practice of sincerity and justice and the like by him.

So highly did Franklin esteem his method that he intended to follow it up with a treatise, to be known as the *Art of Virtue*, containing a practical commentary upon each of the virtues inserted in his little book, and showing just how anyone could make himself virtuous, if he only had a mind to. In this treatise, it was his desire, he says in the *Autobiography*, to expound the doctrine that vicious actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden but forbidden because they are hurtful, the nature of man alone considered, and that it is therefore to the interest of everyone to be virtuous who wishes to be happy even in this world. "I should from this circumstance," he said, "(there being always in the world a number of rich merchants, nobility, states, and princes, who have need of honest instruments for the management of their affairs, and such being so rare), have endeavoured to convince young persons that no qualities were so likely to make a poor man's fortune as those of probity and integrity." The thought was more fully developed in a letter to Lord Kames, dated May 3, 1760.

I purpose likewise [he said], a little work for the benefit of youth, to be called the *Art of Virtue*. From the title I think you will hardly conjecture what the nature of such a book may be. I must therefore explain it a little. Many people lead bad lives that

would gladly lead good ones, but know not *how* to make the change. They have frequently *resolved* and *endeavoured* it; but in vain, because their endeavours have not been properly conducted. To expect people to be good, to be just, to be temperate, &c., without *shewing* them *how* they should *become* so, seems like the ineffectual charity mentioned by the Apostle, which consisted in saying to the hungry, the cold, and the naked, “Be ye fed, be ye warmed, be ye clothed,” without shewing them how they should get food, fire, or clothing.

Most people have naturally *some* virtues, but none have naturally *all* the virtues. To *acquire* those that are wanting, and secure what we acquire, as well as those we have naturally, is the subject of *an art*. It is as properly an art as painting, navigation, or architecture. If a man would become a painter, navigator, or architect, it is not enough that he is *advised* to be one, that he is *convinced* by the arguments of his adviser, that it would be for his advantage to be one, and that he resolves to be one, but he must also be taught the principles of the art, be shewn all the methods of working, and how to acquire the habits of using properly all the instruments; and thus regularly and gradually he arrives, by practice, at some perfection in the art.

The virtue, which this new art was to fabricate, was obviously too much in keeping with the national tendency to turn over tasks of every sort to self-directed machinery. The *Art of Virtue*, however, was never actually penned, owing to the demands of private and public business upon Franklin’s time, and the world was consequently left to get along as it best could with virtue of the old impulsive and untutored type. We are also apprised in the *Autobiography* that the *Art of Virtue* itself was to be but an incident of a great and extensive project which likewise never reached maturity for the same reasons that arrested the completion of that work. This project was the formation of a United Party for Virtue, to be composed of virtuous men of all nations under the government of suitable good and wise rules. The conditions of initiation into this body, which was to move on sin and debt throughout the world with embattled ranks and flying banners, were to be the acceptance of Franklin’s final religious creed, of which we shall have something to say presently, and the continuous practice for thirteen weeks of Franklin’s moral regimen; and the members were to engage to afford their advice, assistance and support to each other in promoting one another’s interests, business and advancement in life. For distinction, the association was to be called The Society of the Free and Easy, “free, as being, by the general practice and habit of the virtues, free from the dominion of vice; and particularly by the practice of industry and frugality, free from debt, which exposes a man to confinement, and a species of slavery to his creditors.” It is in the *Autobiography* also that Franklin states that he filled the spaces between the remarkable days in the calendar in his *Poor Richard’s Almanac* with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality, “as the means,” he declared, “of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want, to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, *it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright*.”²

² Franklin was as fearless in applying his ethical principles to himself as to others. After telling his sister Jane in a letter, dated Dec. 30, 1770, that he trusted that no apprehension of removal from his office as Postmaster would make the least alteration in his political conduct, he uses these striking words: “My rule, in which I have always found satisfaction, is, never to turn aside in public affairs through views of private interest; but to go straight forward in doing what appears to me right at the time, leaving the consequences with Providence. What in my younger days enabled me more easily to walk upright, was, that I had a trade, and that I knew I could live upon little; and thence (never having had views of making a fortune) I was free from avarice, and contented with the plentiful supplies my business afforded me. And now it is still more easy for me to preserve my freedom and integrity, when I consider that I am almost at the end of my journey, and therefore need less to complete the

This prudential view of morality also found utterance in other forms in the writings of Franklin. In the first of the two graceful dialogues between Philocles, the Man of Reason and Virtue, and Horatio, the Man of Pleasure, which appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the former warns the latter in honeyed words that he would lose even as a man of pleasure, if, in the pursuit of pleasure, he did not practice self-denial, by taking as much care of his future as his present happiness, and not building one upon the ruins of the other; all of which, of course, was more epigrammatically embodied in that other injunction of Poor Richard, “Deny self for self’s sake.” No wonder that Horatio was so delighted with a theory of self-denial, which left him still such a comfortable margin for sensual enjoyment, that, when Philocles bids him good night, he replies: “Adieu! thou enchanting Reasoner!”

“Money makes men virtuous, Virtue makes them happy”; this is perhaps an unfair way of summarizing Franklin’s moral precepts, but it is not remote from fairness. “Truth and Sincerity,” he had written in his *Journal of a Voyage from London to Philadelphia*, when he was but twenty years of age, “have a certain distinguishing native lustre about them, which cannot be perfectly counterfeited; they are like fire and flame, that cannot be painted.” It would have been well for the moralist of later years to have remembered this statement when he made up his mind to contract the habit of moral perfection. His Milton, from which he borrowed the *Hymn to the Creator* that is a part of his *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*, might have told him,

“Virtue could see to do what Virtue would

By her own radiant light, though sun and moon

Were in the flat sea sunk,”

or in those other words from the same strains of supernal melody,

“If Virtue feeble were

Heaven itself would stoop to her.”

In teaching and pursuing a system of morals, which was nothing but a scheme of enlightened selfishness, dependent for its aliment upon pecuniary ease and habit, he was simply faithful to a general conception of life and character entirely too earthbound and grovelling to satisfy those higher intuitions and ideals which, be the hard laws of our material being what they may, not only never permit our grosser natures to be at peace, but reject with utter disdain the suggestion that they and our vices and infirmities are but offshoots of the same parent stock of selfishness. It cannot be denied that, as a general rule, a man with some money is less urgently solicited to commit certain breaches of the moral law than a man with none, or that we should be in a bad way, indeed, if we did not have the ply of habit as well as the whisper of conscience to assist us in the struggle between good and evil that is ever going on in our own breasts. But the limited freedom from temptation, secured by the possession of money, and the additional capacity for resisting temptation, bred by good habits, are, it is hardly necessary to say, foundations too frail to support alone the moral order of the universe. Beyond money, however conducive it may be in some respects to diminished temptation, there must be something to sweeten the corrupting influence of money. Beyond good habits, however desirable as aids to virtue, there must be something to create and sustain good habits. This thing no merely politic sense of moral necessity can ever be. Franklin’s idea of supplying our languid moral energies with a system of moral practice as material as a go-cart

expense of it; and that what I now possess, through the blessing of God, may, with tolerable economy, be sufficient for me (great misfortunes excepted), though I should add nothing more to it by any office or employment whatsoever.”

or a swimming bladder is one, it is safe to say, upon which neither he nor anyone else could build a character that would, as Charles Townsend might have said, be anything but “a habit of lute string—a mere thing for summer wear.” His *Art of Virtue* was a spurious, pinchbeck, shoddy substitute for the real virtue which has its home in our uninstructed as well as our instructed moral impulses; and for one man, who would be made virtuous by it, ten, we dare say, would be likely to be made shallow formalists or canting scamps. It is a pity that Poor Richard did not make more of that other time-honored maxim, “Virtue is its own reward.”

Indeed, we shrewdly suspect that even Franklin’s idea that he was such a debtor to his factitious system of moral practice was not much better than a conceit. The improvement in his moral character, after he first began to carry the virtues around in his pocket, is, we think, far more likely to have been due to the natural decline of youthful waywardness and dissent, the discipline of steady labor, the settling and sober effects of domestic life and the wider vision in every respect in our relations to the world which comes to us with our older years. It is but just to Franklin to say that, even before he adopted his “little artifice,” his character as respects the virtues, which he specifically names as having had a hand in producing the constant felicity of his life, namely, Temperance, Industry, Frugality, Sincerity and Justice was, so far as Temperance, Industry and Frugality were concerned, exceptionally good, and, so far as Sincerity and Justice were concerned, not subject to any ineffaceable reproach. In truth, even he, we imagine, would have admitted with a laugh, accompanied perhaps by a humorous story, that the period of his life, before his dream of moral perfection was formed, when he was so temperate as to be known to his fellow printers in London as the “Water American,” and to be able to turn from the common diet to the vegetarian, and back again, without the slightest inconvenience, would compare quite favorably with the period of his life, after his dream of moral perfection had been formed, when he had to confess on one occasion to Polly Stevenson that he had drunk more at a venison feast than became a philosopher, and on another to his friend, John Bartram that, if he could find in any Italian travels a recipe for making Parmesan cheese, it would give him more satisfaction than a transcript of any inscription from any old stone whatever. How far the effect of his moral regimen was to strengthen the virtues of Silence, Resolution, Moderation, Cleanliness and Tranquillity we lack sufficient materials for a judgment. These, assuming that Cleanliness must have gone along with such an eager propensity for swimming as his, were all native virtues of his anyhow we should say. But as to Chastity the invigorating quality of the regimen is certainly open to the most serious doubt. There is only too much in the correspondence which has survived him to give color to the statement of John Adams that even at the age of seventy-odd he had neither lost his love of beauty nor his taste for it. When we bear this in mind and recall what he had to say in the *Autobiography* about the “hard-to-be-governed passion of youth,” which frequently hurried him into intrigues with low women that fell in his way before he resolved to acquire the habit of chastity with the aid of his book, we realize that the artificial scaffolding, which he proposed to build up around his character, reasonably enough broke down at just the point where the natural vigor of his character was the weakest.

In point of sexual morality, Franklin was no better than the Europe of the eighteenth century; distinctly worse than the America of that century. His domestic affections were uncommonly strong, but the notable peculiarity about his domestic life is that he was not a whit less soberly dutiful in his irregular than in his regular family connections, and always acted as if the nuptial ceremony was a wholly superfluous form, so far as a proper sense of marital or paternal obligation, or the existence of deep, unreserved affection, upon the part of a husband or father, went. His lack of scruples in this respect almost reminds us of the question put by his own Polly Baker, when she was prosecuted the fifth time for giving birth to a bastard:

“Can it be a crime (in the nature of things, I mean) to add to the king’s subjects, in a new country, that really wants people?” Apparently no ceremony of any kind ever preceded his union with Deborah, though accompanied by circumstances of cohabitation and acknowledgment which unquestionably rendered it a valid, binding marriage, in every respect, under the liberal laws of Pennsylvania. He simply remarks in the *Autobiography*, “I took her to wife, September 1, 1730.” The artlessness with which he extended the full measure of a father’s recognition to William Franklin excited comment abroad as well as at home, and, together with the political wounds inflicted by him upon the official arrogance and social pride of the Proprietary Party in Pennsylvania, was mainly responsible for the opprobrium in which his memory was held in the higher social circles of Philadelphia long after his death. So far as we know, there is nothing in his utterances or writings to indicate that the birth of William Franklin ever caused him the slightest shame or embarrassment. His dignity of character, in its way, it has been truly said by Sydney George Fisher, was as natural and instinctive as that of Washington, and, in its relations to illegitimacy, for which he was answerable, seems to have felt the lack of conventional support as little as our first parents, in their pristine state, did the lack of fig leaves. He accepted his natural son and William Temple Franklin, William’s natural son, exactly as if both had come recommended to his outspoken affection by betrothal, honest wedding ring and all. The idea that any stigma attached to either, or that they stood upon any different footing from his legitimate daughter, Sarah Bache and her children, was something that his mind does not appear to have harbored at all. His attitude towards them was as unblushingly natural and demonstrative, to get back to the Garden of Eden, as the mutual caresses of Adam and Eve before the Fall of Man. William was born a few months after the marriage of Franklin and Deborah, and his father, so far as we can see, took him under his roof with as little constraint as if his introduction had been duly provided for in the marriage contract. Indeed, John Bigelow, who is always disposed, in the spirit of Franklin’s own limping lines on Deborah, to deem all his Joan’s faults “exceedingly small,” rather ludicrously observes: “William may therefore be said to have been born in wedlock, though he was not reputed to be the son of Mrs. Franklin.” So identified did he become with all the other members of Franklin’s household that Franklin in his letters not only frequently conveyed “Billy’s” duty to his “mother” and “Billy’s” love to his “sister” but on one occasion at least even “Billy’s” duty to his “grandmother,” Mrs. Read, the mother of Mrs. Franklin. As the boy outgrew his pony, of which we obtain a pleasant glimpse in a “lost” notice in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, we find Franklin in a letter to his own mother, Abiah Franklin, in which he couples the name of “Billy” in the most natural way with that of his daughter Sally, saying: “Will is now nineteen years of age, a tall proper Youth, and much of a Beau.” It was with William Franklin, when Governor of New Jersey, that Sally took refuge at the time that her father’s house in Philadelphia was threatened with destruction by a Stamp Act mob; and it was to him shortly afterwards, when the tide of popular approval was again running in favor of Franklin, then the agent of Pennsylvania at London, that she dispatched these joyful words: “Dear Brother:—*The Old Ticket forever! We have it by 34 votes! God bless our worthy and noble agent, and all his family!*” Through the influence of his father the son obtained a provincial commission which brought him some military experience, and also filled the office of Postmaster at Philadelphia, and afterwards the office of Clerk of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. He was with Franklin when the latter sent his kite on its memorable flight into the skies; when he visited Braddock’s camp; and when he conducted his military expedition against the murderous Indians. When Franklin sailed for England in 1757, William accompanied him with the view of obtaining a license from the Inns of Court, in which he had already been entered by the former, to practice as a barrister. Abroad, he still remained his father’s inseparable companion, living with him, accompanying him in his travelling excursions, attending him, when he was so signally

honored at Cambridge and Oxford, even poring with him over the parish records and gravestones at Ecton from which Franklin sought to rescue such information as he could about his humble ancestors, who could not have excited his curiosity more keenly, if they had all been Princes of the Blood. What the two learned at Ecton of the abilities and public spirit of Thomas, an uncle of Franklin, and a man of no little local prominence, suggested such a close resemblance between the uncle and nephew that William Franklin remarked: "Had he died on the same day, one might have supposed a transmigration." Alexander Carlyle in his *Autobiography* has something to say about an occasion at Doctor Robertson's house in Edinburgh when the pair as well as Hume, Dr. Cullen, Adam Smith and others were present. The son, Carlyle tells us, "was open and communicative, and pleased the company better than his father; and some of us observed indications of that decided difference of opinion between father and son which in the American War alienated them altogether." The favorable impression made by William Franklin on this company at this period of his life, he also made on William Strahan, of whom we shall have much more to say. "Your son," Strahan wrote to Franklin's wife, "I really think one of the prettiest young gentlemen I ever knew from America." Indeed, even in extreme old age the handsome presence, courtly manners and quick intelligence of William Franklin won their way at any social gathering. Speaking of an occasion on which he had met him, Crabbe Robinson says in his *Diary*, "Old General Franklin, son of the celebrated Benjamin was of the party. He is eighty-four years of age, has a courtier-like mien, and must have been a very fine man. He is now very animated and interesting, but does not at all answer to the idea one would naturally form of the son of the great Franklin."³ A few days after the departure of Franklin from England in August, 1762, the son was married to Miss Elizabeth Downes, of St. James Street, "a very agreeable West India lady," if her father-in-law may be believed. Before the marriage took place, he had been appointed, in the thirty-second year of his age, Governor of New Jersey. If the appointment was made, as has been supposed, to detach Franklin from the Colonial cause, it failed, of course, to produce any such result, but it did have the effect of completely bringing over William Franklin to the Loyalist side, when the storm finally broke, and Franklin pledged his life, his fortune and his sacred honor to the patriot cause. As the Revolution drew on, William Franklin became a partisan of the British Government, and, when he still held fast to his own office, in spite of the dismissal of his father from his office as Deputy Postmaster-General for the Colonies, Franklin wrote to him bluntly: "But you, who are a thorough Courtier, see everything with Government Eyes." The son even disregarded what was practically a request from the father that he should give up an office, which was becoming more and more complicated with the arbitrary measures of the English Ministry, and had been year after year a drain upon the purse of the father. Then followed his ignominious arrest as a Tory by the New Jersey Assembly, his defiant vaunt "*Pro Rege* and *Patria* was the motto I assumed, when I first commenced my political life, and I am resolved to retain it till death shall put an end to

³ In a paper on William Franklin, read before the New Jersey Historical Society on Sept. 27, 1848, William A. Whitehead sketches him in this manner: "He was of a cheerful, facetious disposition; could narrate well entertaining stories to please his friends; was engaging in his manners, and possessed good conversational powers. He lived in the recollection of those who saw him in New Jersey as a man of strong passions, fond of convivial pleasures, well versed in the ways of the world, and, at one period of his life not a stranger to the gallantries which so frequently marred the character of the man of that age. He was above the common size, remarkably handsome, strong and athletic, though subject to gout towards the close of his life." His writings, Whitehead thought, though perhaps less remarkable than might be expected from his advantages of education and association, gave evidence of literary attainments which compared favorably with those of most of the prominent men of that day in the Colonies. If *The Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania from its Origin* is one of them, as has been supposed, we can only say that it at least hardly deserves such praise. The unassimilated material scattered through its pages reminds us of nothing so much as feather pellets and fragments of bone that have passed unchanged through the gastric tract of a hawk.

my mortal existence,” his breach with his father, his rancorous activity as the President of the Board of Associated Loyalists, which drew down on him the suspicion of having abetted at least one murderous outrage, and his subsequent abandonment of America for England, where he died long after the war, a pensioner of the British Crown. With the breach between father and son, ended forever the visits that the members of the Franklin family in Philadelphia had been in the habit of paying from time to time to the Colonial Governor, the personal intercourse between the two, which, upon the part of the father, we are told by William Strahan, was at once that of a friend, a brother and an intimate and easy companion, and such filial letters as the one, for example, in which William Franklin wrote to Franklin that he was extremely obliged to him for his care in supplying him with money, and should ever have a grateful sense of that with the other numberless indulgences that he had received from his parental affection. After the restoration of peace between the two waning countries, overtures of reconciliation were made by William Franklin. “I ... am glad,” his father wrote, “to find that you desire to revive the affectionate Intercourse, that formerly existed between us. It will be very agreeable to me; indeed nothing has ever hurt me so much and affected me with such keen Sensations, as to find myself deserted in my old Age by my only Son; and not only deserted, but to find him taking up Arms against me, in a Cause, wherein my good Fame, Fortune and Life were all at Stake.” Then with an uncertain touch of the native sense of justice, which was so deeply seated in his breast, he continued: “I ought not to blame you for differing in Sentiment with me in Public Affairs. We are Men, all subject to Errors. Our Opinions are not in our own Power; they are form’d and govern’d much by Circumstances, that are often as inexplicable as they are irresistible. Your Situation was such that few would have censured your remaining Neuter, *tho’ there are Natural Duties which precede political ones, and cannot be extinguish’d by them.*” Responding to a statement in this same letter that the writer would be glad to see him when convenient, but would not have him come to Paris at that time, William Franklin had a brief interview with his father at Southampton, when the latter was returning, after the restoration of peace between Great Britain and the United States, full of gratified patriotism, as well as of years and infirmities, to the land from which the son was an outcast. That immedicable wound, however, was not to be healed by one or even by many interviews, and, while Franklin did subsequently devise his lands in Nova Scotia to William Franklin and release him from certain debts, he could not refrain from a bitter fling in doing so. “The part he acted against me in the late war, which is of public notoriety,” the will ran, “will account for my leaving him no more of an estate he endeavoured to deprive me of.”

Again that remorseless moral system, in comparison with which the flimsy moral system of the *Autobiography* is, to use Bismarck’s figure, but a lath painted to look like iron, had reminded one, who had had the temerity to violate its ordinances, that what is now as luscious as locusts may shortly be as bitter as coloquintida.

Surely there are few things in history more pathetic than that the relationship, for which the father had set aside the world and the world’s law, and to which the incalculable workings of human love had almost communicated the genuineness and dignity of moral legitimacy, should have been the one thing to turn to ashes upon the lips of a life blessed with prosperity and happiness almost beyond the measure of any that the past has brought home to us!⁴

⁴ The judgment of Franklin himself as to how far his life had been a fortunate one was freely expressed in a letter to his friend John Sargent, dated Jan. 27, 1783. “Mrs. Sargent and the good Lady, her Mother,” he said, “are very kind in wishing me more happy Years. I ought to be satisfy’d with those Providence has already been pleas’d to afford me, being now in my seventy-eighth; a long Life to pass without any uncommon Misfortune, the greater part of it in Health and Vigor of Mind and Body, near Fifty Years of it in continu’d Possession of the Confidence of my Country, in public Employments, and enjoying the Esteem and affectionate, friendly Regard

It has been suggested that Franklin had another natural child in the wife of John Foxcroft. In a letter to the former, Foxcroft acquaints him that “his daughter” had been safely brought to bed, and had presented the writer with a sweet little girl, and in several letters to Foxcroft Franklin speaks of Mrs. Foxcroft as “my daughter.” “God send my Daughter a good time, and you a Good Boy,” are the words of one of them. The suggestion has been rejected by Albert Henry Smyth, the accomplished editor of Franklin’s writings, on chronological grounds which, it seems to us, are by no means conclusive. The term, “daughter,” however, standing alone, would certainly, under any circumstances, be largely deprived of its significance by the fact that Franklin, in his intercourse with other women than Mrs. Foxcroft, seems in the course of his life to have been addressed, in both English and French, by every paternal appellation from Pappy to *Très cher Papa* known to the language of endearment.⁵ Moreover, so singularly free from self-consciousness was he in relation to his own sexual vagaries, so urgent were his affectionate impulses, that it is hard to believe that he could have been the father of such an illegitimate daughter when there is no evidence to show that, aside from a little concession to the jealousy of Mrs. Franklin, he treated her exactly as he did his acknowledged daughter, Sally.

The unsophisticated relations of Franklin to William Franklin were also his relations to William Temple Franklin, who was born in England, when his father was in that country with Franklin during the latter’s first mission abroad. The mother of his father is unknown, and so is his own. Silence was one of the virtues enjoined on Franklin by his little book, and was an innate attribute of his strong character besides. The case was certainly one, in which, if he had been reproached by his father, William Franklin could have found an extenuating example very near at hand, even if not very readily available for the purposes of recrimination. But there is nothing to lead us to believe that Franklin was more concerned about the second bar sinister in his coat of arms than the first. On the contrary, his affection appropriated his little grandson with a promptitude which reminds us of the story told in one of his letters to his wife about the boy who asked another boy, when the latter was crying over a pennyworth of spilt vinegar, for fear that his mother would whip him, “Have you then got ne’er a Grandmother?” Almost, if not, from the very beginning, Franklin, and not William, was Temple’s real father, and, after William became estranged from Franklin, the grandson thenceforth occupied the place in the heart of the latter which the son had previously occupied, or one, if anything, even warmer. When William was appointed Governor of New Jersey, and sailed away with his bride to his province, Temple, then about two years old, was left in London. As he grew older, he was placed by his grandfather, after the return of the grandfather to England in 1764, in a school near London from which he often came to visit the latter at Mrs. Stevenson’s house at No. 7 Craven Street. After one of these visits, Franklin writes to William, “Temple has been at home with us during the Christmas Vacation from School. He improves continually, and more and more engages the Regard of all that are acquainted with him, by his pleasing, sensible, manly Behaviour.” On another occasion, in settling an account with William Franklin he says proudly, after referring to outlays required by the maintenance and education of Temple, “But that his Friends will not grudge when they see him.” For a time, Temple was an inmate of the Craven Street House. When Franklin returned to Philadelphia in 1775, he took him with him, and turned him over to William Franklin, whose family name the youth, until then known as William

of many wise and good Men and Women, in every Country where I have resided. For these Mercies and Blessings I desire to be thankful to God, whose Protection I have hitherto had, and I hope for its Continuance to the End, which now cannot be far distant.”

⁵ For instance, in a letter to Elizabeth Partridge Franklin signs himself “Your affectionate Papah,” and in a letter to Madam Conway, “Your affectionate Father (as you do me the Honor to call me),” and in a letter to Miss Flainville, “Your loving Papa.”

Temple, assumed for the future. Temple, however, after spending some happy months in New Jersey, was soon again with his grandfather at Philadelphia for the purpose of attending the College of Philadelphia, and here he was when Franklin was on the point of setting out on his mission to France. When he did sail, Temple, then sixteen or seventeen years of age, and Benjamin Franklin Bache, the oldest son of Franklin's daughter, Sally, a boy of seven, accompanied him; it being the purpose of Franklin to place Temple at some foreign university, with the design of ultimately making a lawyer of him, and Benjamin at some school in Paris.⁶ Governor Franklin, who was a prisoner in Connecticut, did not hear of the departure of his father until several weeks after the three had sailed. "If," he wrote to his wife, "the old gentleman has taken the boy with him, I hope it is only to put him into some foreign university."

Abroad, the idea of giving Temple a legal education was first deferred, and then finally dismissed. His grandfather, with an infinite amount to do, and with no clerical help provided by Congress to assist him in doing it, was constrained to employ him as his private secretary, without any aid except that of a French clerk, who was paid a salary of fifty louis per annum. Engaging in person, endowed to some degree with the vivacity of his grandfather and father, speaking French much better than his grandfather, possessed of fair abilities and attentive to his duties, he appears to have filled the post of secretary creditably, though Congress, for one reason or another, could never be induced to recognize his appointment officially. Later on, when John Adams, John Jay, Henry Laurens and Franklin were appointed with Jefferson, who declined to serve, Commissioners to negotiate peace with Great Britain, he became their Secretary at an annual salary of one thousand pounds, but the vain, pathetic efforts of the grandfather, both before and after his return to America from France, when too much time had been lost for Temple to resume the thought of taking up the study of law, to obtain some secondary diplomatic, or other, position in the public service for the grandson, make up one of the despicable chapters in the history of Congress. Remarkable as it now seems, at one time there was even an effort on foot in America to oust Temple from his position as the private secretary of Franklin. It called forth a remonstrance in a letter from the latter to Richard Bache, his son-in-law, which is not only deeply interesting because of its stirring, measured force of expression, but also because of the tenderness for Temple which it manifests.

I am surprised to hear [he said] that my grandson, Temple Franklin, being with me, should be an objection against me, and that there is a cabal for removing him. Methinks it is rather some merit, that I have rescued a valuable young man from the danger of being a Tory, and fixed him in honest republican Whig principles; as I think, from the integrity of his disposition, his industry, his early sagacity, and uncommon abilities for business, he may in time become of great service to his country. It is enough that I have lost my *son*; would they add my *grandson*? An old man of seventy, I undertook a winter voyage at the command of the Congress, and for the public service, with no other attendant to take care of me. I am continued here in a foreign country, where, if I am sick, his filial attention comforts me, and, if I die, I have a child to close my eyes and take care of my remains. His dutiful behaviour towards me, and his diligence and fidelity in business, are both pleasing and useful to me.

⁶ In a letter from Paris to Jan Ingenhousz, dated Apr. 26, 1777, Franklin told Ingenhousz that he had brought Temple with him from America "partly to finish his Education, having a great Affection for him, and partly to have his Assistance as a Secretary."

The same indulgent estimate of Temple's capacity is also indicated in a letter to Samuel Huntington in which Franklin requested Congress to take his grandson under his protection. After stating that Temple seemed to be qualified for public foreign affairs "by a sagacity and judgment above his years, and great diligence and activity, exact probity, a genteel address, a facility in speaking well the French tongue, and all the knowledge of business to be obtained by a four years' constant employment in the secretary's office," he added: "After all the allowance I am capable of making for the partiality of a parent to his offspring, I cannot but think he may in time make a very able foreign minister for Congress, in whose service his fidelity may be relied on."

A thing most earnestly desired by Franklin was the marriage of Temple to a daughter of Madame Brillon, who sometimes referred to Temple as "M. Franklinet." So ardent was the chase upon his part that he even assured the mother that he was ready to spend the rest of his life in France if the only obstacle to the union was the fear that Temple would return to America with him. Mademoiselle Brillon does not seem to have been inclined to let Temple despair but her parents were unwilling to give their consent. Madame Brillon declared that it would have been sweet to her heart and most agreeable to M. Brillon to have been able to form a union which would have made but one family of the Brillons and the Franklins, and that they liked Temple, and believed that he had everything requisite to make a man distinguished, and to render a woman happy, but they must have, she said, a son-in-law who would be in a situation to succeed her husband in his office, and who was also a man of their religion. This was in reply to a letter from Franklin in which he proposed the match, and had said of Temple, "He is still young, and perhaps the partiality of a father has made me think too highly of him, but it seems to me that he has the stuff in him to make in time a distinguished man." After reading the letters from Franklin about his grandson, we can readily believe that Lafayette did not exaggerate when he wrote to Washington that Franklin loved his grandchild better than anything else in the world. Even when Temple was some twenty-four years of age, Franklin in one of his letters addresses him as "My Dear Child" and signs himself, "Your loving Grandfather." While the two remained in France, the old man improved every opportunity to advance the fortunes of the younger one, matrimonial or otherwise. When his legs grew too gouty to enable him to keep pace in mounting the stairways at Versailles with the other foreign ministers, it was by Temple that he was represented at Court *levées*. By him Temple was also introduced to Voltaire, and enjoyed the unusual honor of having that great man with an expressive gesture say to him: "My child, God and Liberty! Recollect those two words." To Temple, too, was delegated by our envoys the office of handing to Vergennes the memorial proposing an alliance between France, Spain and the United States, and it was he who actually delivered to Lafayette, on behalf of his grandfather, the handsome sword with which Congress had honored the former. When the olive branch extended by William Franklin to Franklin was accepted by him, Temple was sent over by him to William in England for a season as the best peace-offering in the gift of the sender. "I send your Son over to pay his Duty to you," he wrote to William. "You will find him much improv'd. He is greatly esteem'd and belov'd in this Country, and will make his Way anywhere." A letter written to Temple, during his absence on this occasion, by his grandfather, in which his grandfather pathetically complains of his silence, is another minor proof of the devotion felt by Franklin for Temple. And there is every reason to believe that the feeling was fully returned; for even the prospect of being united to the daughter of Madame Brillon, with the full sanction of his grandfather, was not sufficient to reconcile Temple to the thought of being left behind in France by him. So far from being heeded by Congress was the request of Franklin that some public office be conferred upon Temple that the latter was even displaced in his secretaryship by another person without a line of notice from Congress to his grandfather. And when the two arrived in America, after they had

lingered long enough at Southampton for William Franklin to transfer to his son a farm of some six hundred acres at Rancocas, in the State of New Jersey, purchased for Temple by Franklin. Temple fared no better at the hands of the American Government than in France. His efforts, first, to secure the Secretaryship of the Federal Convention of 1787, and, afterwards, to obtain some appointment under the administration of Washington, met with no success, despite all that his grandfather could do for him. For a while he lived on his *Terre*, as Franklin called it, at Rancocas, but, after the death of Franklin, who did not forget him in his will, he became restless, and wandered back to the Old World, where he delayed so long the publication of his grandfather's writings, bequeathed to him by the latter, that he was strongly but unjustly suspected for a time of having been bribed by the British Government to suppress them. His slender literary qualifications for giving the proper perspective to such a mass of material had simply stood appalled at the magnitude of their task.

II. Franklin's Religious Beliefs

Closely akin to Franklin's system of morals were his views about Religion. Scattered through his writings are sentences full of gratitude to God for His favor in lifting him up from such a low to such a high estate, in bringing him substantially unscathed through the graver dangers and baser temptations of human life, and in affording him the assurance that the divine goodness, of which he had received such signal proofs in his career, would not cease with his death. In the *Autobiography*, after alluding in modest terms to the poverty and obscurity, in which he was born and bred, and the affluence and reputation subsequently won by him, he says:

And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I owe the mentioned happiness of my past life to His kind providence, which lead me to the means I used and gave them success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not *presume*, that the same goodness will still be exercised toward me, in continuing that happiness, or enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done; the complexion of my future fortune being known to Him only in whose power it is to bless to us even our afflictions.

These words, though they occur in the work which Franklin tells us was written when he was not dressed for a ball, he well knew would be read by other eyes than those of the son for whom they were primarily intended; but one of his familiar letters to his wife, written some years before the *Autobiography* was begun, contains expressions equally devout; associated on this occasion, however, with the aspirations for the welfare of his fellow creatures which constituted the real religion of his life.

God is very good to us both in many Respects [he wrote]. Let us enjoy his Favours with a thankful & chearful Heart; and, as we can make no direct Return to him, show our Sense of his Goodness to us, by continuing to do Good to our Fellow Creatures, without Regarding the Returns they make us, whether Good or Bad. For they are all his Children, tho' they may sometimes be our Enemies. The Friendships of this World are changeable, uncertain, transitory Things; but his Favour, if we can secure it, is an Inheritance forever.

With respect to the successful issue, to which a manifest Providence had, after so many vicissitudes and perils, conducted the American Revolution, he wrote to Josiah Quincy in words as solemn as a *Te Deum*:

Considering all our Mistakes and Mismanagements, it is wonderful we have finished our Affair so well, and so soon. Indeed, I am wrong in using that Expression, "*We have finished our Affair so well*". Our Blunders have been many, and they serve to manifest the Hand of Providence more clearly in our Favour; so that we may much more properly say, *These are Thy Doings, O Lord, and they are marvellous in our Eyes*.

Franklin might well have seen the hand of Providence in the momentous result for which he had dared so much and labored so long, and which meant so much to human history, but its shaping power over the destiny of even such a Murad the Unlucky as his hapless nephew, Benny Mecom, is recognized by him in a letter to his beloved sister, Jane Mecom, and her husband when Benny had gone off to seek his fortune as a printer in Antigua. "After all," he concludes, "having taken care to do *what appears to be for the best*, we must submit to God's

providence, which orders all things really for the best.” On another occasion, in an ingenious paper on Water Spouts, the sage philosopher, seeing in the benign manner in which the waters of the ocean rid themselves of salt, in the process of evaporation, the same God that the poor Indian sees in the clouds or hears in the wind, impressively exclaims: “He who hath proportioned and given proper Qualities to all Things, was not unmindful of this. Let us adore Him with Praise and Thanksgiving.” There are certain human feelings which rise in moments of uncommon stress or fervor from the profoundest depths of our being to our lips and take on the form and rhythm of sonorous religious utterance, if for no better reason, because no other language is lofty or musical enough to serve aptly the purposes of such supreme occasions; and this is true even of an individuality so meagrely spiritual as that of Franklin.

Other expressions of the same character furnish a religious or quasi-religious setting to Franklin’s thoughts upon his own dissolution. To his brave and cheerful spirit, which experienced so little difficulty in accommodating its normal philosophy to all the fixed facts and laws of existence, death was as natural as life—a thing not to be invited before its time but to be accepted with un murmuring serenity when it came. The only certain things in this world, he said in his home-spun way, are death and taxes.

It is the will of God and nature [he wrote in his fifty-first year to Elizabeth Hubbard, after the death of his brother John] that these mortal bodies be laid aside, when the soul is to enter into real life. This is rather an embryo state, a preparation for living. A man is not completely born until he be dead. Why then should we grieve, that a new child is born among the immortals, a new member added to their happy society?

We are spirits. That bodies should be lent us, while they can afford us pleasure, assist us in acquiring knowledge, or in doing good to our fellow creatures, is a kind and benevolent act of God. When they become unfit for these purposes, and afford us pain instead of pleasure, instead of an aid become an incumbrance, and answer none of the intentions for which they were given, it is equally kind and benevolent, that a way is provided by which we may get rid of them. Death is that way. We ourselves, in some cases, prudently choose a partial death. A mangled painful limb, which cannot be restored, we willingly cut off. He who plucks out a tooth, parts with it freely, since the pain goes with it; and he, who quits the whole body, parts at once with all pains and possibilities of pains and diseases which it was liable to, or capable of making him suffer.

Our friend and we were invited abroad on a party of pleasure, which is to last forever. His chair was ready first, and he is gone before us. We could not all conveniently start together; and why should you and I be grieved at this, since we are soon to follow, and know where to find him? Adieu.

It was a sane, bright conception of human destiny indeed which could convert the grim ferryman of the Styx into little more than an obsequious chairman, waiting at the portals of life until it suited the convenience of his fare to issue from them.

That Being [he wrote to George Whitefield] who gave me Existence, and thro’ almost three-score Years has been continually showering his Favours upon me, whose very Chastisements have been Blessings to me; can I doubt that he loves me? And, if he loves me, can I doubt that he will go on to take care of me, not only here but hereafter? This to some may seem Presumption; to me it appears the best grounded Hope; Hope of the Future, built on Experience of the Past.

The same thought is repeated in a letter to William Strahan, followed, however, by the dig which he rarely failed to give to his Tory friend, "Straney," when he had the chance:

God has been very good to you, from whence I think you may be *assured* that he loves you, and that he will take at least as good care of your future Happiness as he has done of your present. What Assurance of the *Future* can be better founded than that which is built on Experience of the *Past*? Thank me for giving you this Hint, by the Help of which you may die as chearfully as you live. If you had Christian Faith, *quantum suff.*, this might not be necessary; but as matters are it may be of Use.

This hopeful outlook continued until the end. In a letter to his "dear old friend," George Whatley, which was written about five years before the writer's death, he adds a resource borrowed from his scientific knowledge to the other resources of his tranquil optimism.

You see [he said] I have some reason to wish, that, in a future State, I may not only be *as well as I was*, but a little better. And I hope it; for I, too, with your Poet, *trust in God*. And when I observe, that there is great Frugality, as well as Wisdom, in his Works, since he has been evidently sparing both of Labour and Materials; for by the various wonderful Inventions of Propagation, he has provided for the continual peopling his World with Plants and Animals, without being at the Trouble of repeated new Creations; and by the natural Reduction of compound Substances to their original Elements, capable of being employ'd in new Compositions, he has prevented the Necessity of creating new Matter; so that the Earth, Water, Air, and perhaps Fire, which being compounded form Wood, do, when the Wood is dissolved, return, and again become Air, Earth, Fire, and Water; I say that, when I see nothing annihilated, and not even a Drop of Water wasted, I cannot suspect the Annihilation of Souls, or believe, that he will suffer the daily Waste of Millions of Minds ready made that now exist, and put himself to the continual Trouble of making new ones. Thus finding myself to exist in the World, I believe I shall, in some Shape or other, always exist.

In a letter to M. Montaudouin in 1779, in reply to one from that friend applying to him the prayer of Horace for Augustus, he remarked: "Tho' the Form is heathen, there is good Christian Spirit in it, and I feel myself very well disposed to be content with this World, which I have found hitherto a tolerable good one, & to wait for Heaven (which will not be the worse for keeping) as long as God pleases." But later on, when seven more years of waning strength had passed, he wrote to his friend Jonathan Shipley, the Bishop of St. Asaph's:

I still have Enjoyment in the Company of my Friends; and, being easy in my Circumstances, have many Reasons to like living. But the Course of Nature must soon put a period to my present Mode of Existence. This I shall submit to with less Regret, as, having seen during a long Life a good deal of this World, I feel a growing Curiosity to be acquainted with some other; and can chearfully, with filial Confidence, resign my Spirit to the conduct of that great and good Parent of Mankind, who created it, and who has so graciously protected and prospered me from my Birth to the present Hour.

At times, his unfailing humor or graceful fancy even plays lambently over the same stern prospect. In a letter to Mrs. Hewson, written four years before his death, he mentions cards among his amusements, and then adds:

I have indeed now and then a little compunction in reflecting that I spend time so idly; but another reflection comes to relieve me, whispering, "*You know that the soul is immortal; why then should you be such a niggard of a little time, when you have a whole eternity before you?*" So, being easily convinced, and, like other reasonable

creatures, satisfied with a small reason, when it is in favour of doing what I have a mind to do, I shuffle the cards again and begin another game.

“We were long fellow labourers in the best of all works, the work of Peace,” he wrote to David Hartley, when the writer was on the point of returning to America from France. “I leave you still in the field, but having finished my day’s task, I am going home *to go to bed!* Wish me a good night’s rest, as I do you a pleasant evening.” This was but another way of expressing the thought of an earlier letter of his to George Whatley, “I look upon Death to be as necessary to our Constitution as Sleep. We shall rise refreshed in the Morning.”

Your letter [he said to another friend, Thomas Jordan] reminds me of many happy days we have passed together, and the dear friends with whom we passed them; some of whom, alas! have left us, and we must regret their loss, although our Hawkesworth (the compiler of the South Sea discoveries of Capt. Cook) is become an *Adventurer* in more happy regions; and our Stanley (the eminent musician and composer) gone, “where only his own *harmony* can be exceeded.”

Many of these letters, so full of peace and unflinching courage, it should be recollected, were written during hours of physical debility or grievous pain.

Every sheet of water takes the hue of the sky above it, and intermixed with these observations of Franklin, which were themselves, to say the least, fully as much the natural fruit of a remarkably equable and sanguine temperament as of religious confidence, are other observations of his upon religious subjects which were deeply colored by his practical genius, tolerant disposition and shrewd insight into the imperfections of human institutions and the shortcomings of human character. With the purely theological and sectarian side of Religion he had no sympathy whatever. It was a source of regret to him that, at a time in his boyhood, when he was consuming books as insatiably as the human lungs consume oxygen, he should have read most of the treatises “in polemic divinity,” of which his father’s little library chiefly consisted. In a letter to Strahan, when he was in his thirty-ninth year, he said that he had long wanted a judicious friend in London to send him from time to time such new pamphlets as were worth reading on any subject, “religious controversy excepted.” To Richard Price he imparted his belief that religious tests were invented not so much to secure Religion itself as its emoluments, and that, if Christian preachers had continued to teach as Christ and His Apostles did, without salaries, and as the Quakers did even in his day, such tests would never have existed. “When a Religion is good,” he asserted, “I conceive that it will support itself; and, when it cannot support itself, and God does not take care to support, so that its Professors are oblig’d to call for the help of the Civil Power, it is a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one.” A favorite saying of his was the saying of Richard Steele that the difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England is that the one pretends to be infallible and the other to be never in the wrong. “Orthodoxy is my doxy and Heterodoxy your doxy,” is a saying which has been attributed to him as his own. His heart went out at once to the Dunkers, when Michael Welfare, one of the founders of that sect, gave, as his reason for its unwillingness to publish the articles of its belief, the fact that it was not satisfied that this belief would not undergo some future changes for the better with further light from Heaven.

This modesty in a sect [he remarks in the *Autobiography*] is perhaps a singular instance in the history of mankind, every other sect supposing itself in possession of all truth, and that those who differ are so far in the wrong; like a man traveling in foggy weather, those at some distance before him on the road he sees wrapped up in the fog, as well as those behind him, and also the people in the fields on each side, but near him all appears clear, tho’ in truth he is as much in the fog as any of them.

The great meeting-house built at Philadelphia, when George Whitefield had worked its people into a state of religious ecstasy by his evangelistic appeals, and the circumstances, under which Franklin was elected to fill a vacancy among the Trustees, appointed to hold this building, were two things of which he speaks with obvious pleasure in the *Autobiography*. The design in erecting the edifice, he declares, was not to accommodate any particular sect but the inhabitants of Philadelphia in general, “so that even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mohammedanism to us, he would find a pulpit at his service.” The Trustees to hold this building were each the member of some Protestant sect. In process of time, the Moravian died, and then there was opposition to the election of any other Moravian as his successor. “The difficulty then was,” Franklin tells us, “how to avoid having two of some other sect, by means of the new choice.

“Several persons were named, and for that reason not agreed to. At length one mention’d me, with the observation that I was merely an honest man, and of no sect at all, which prevail’d with them to chuse me.”

The manner in which Franklin came to occupy this position of sectarian detachment is also set forth in the *Autobiography*. On his father’s side, he was descended from sturdy pietists, to whom the difference between one sect and another did not mean merely polemical warmth, as in Franklin’s time, but the heat of the stake. In the reign of Bloody Mary, Franklin’s great-great-grandfather kept his English Bible open and suspended by tapes, under the concealing cover of a joint-stool, and, when he inverted the stool to read from the pages of the book to his family, one of his children stood at the door to give timely warning of the approach of the dreaded apparitor. In the reign of Charles the Second, the religious scruples of Franklin’s father and his Uncle Benjamin, before they crossed the sea to Boston, had been strong enough to induce them to desert the soft lap of the Church of England for the harried conventicles of the despised and persecuted Non-Conformists. To the earlier Franklins Religion meant either all or much that it meant to men in the ages when not Calculating Skill, but, as Emerson tells us, Love and Terror laid the tiles of cathedrals. But Benjamin Franklin was not a scion of the sixteenth century, nor even of the seventeenth, but of the searching and skeptical eighteenth. Some of the dogmas of the creed, in which he was religiously educated by his father, such as the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation and the like appeared to him unintelligible, others doubtful, he declares in the *Autobiography*. The consequence was that he early absented himself from the public assemblies of the Presbyterian sect in Philadelphia, Sunday being his “studying day,” though he never was, he says, without some religious principles.

I never doubted, for instance, the existence of the Deity; that he made the world, and govern’d it by his Providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man; that our souls are immortal; and that all crime will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter. These I esteem’d the essentials of every religion; and, being to be found in all the religions we had in our country, I respected them all, tho’ with different degrees of respect, as I found them more or less mix’d with other articles, which, without any tendency to inspire, promote, or confirm morality, serv’d principally to divide us, and make us unfriendly to one another.

And then he goes on to inform us that, as Pennsylvania increased in people, and new places of worship were continually wanted, and were generally erected by voluntary contributions, his mite for such purposes, whatever might be the sect, was never refused. This impartial attitude towards the different religious sects he maintained in every particular throughout his life, and from his point of view he had no reason to be dissatisfied with the result, if we may believe John Adams, who tells us: “The Catholics thought him almost a Catholic. The Church

of England claimed him as one of them. The Presbyterians thought him half a Presbyterian, and the Friends believed him a wet Quaker.” “Mr. Franklin had no—” was as far as Adams himself got in stating his own personal opinion about Franklin’s religious views. To have been regarded as an adherent of every sect was a compliment that Franklin would have esteemed as second only to the declaration that he was merely an honest man and of no sect at all. It is certainly one of the most amusing facts narrated in the *Autobiography* that such a man, only a few years after religious bigotry had compelled him to fly from New England, the land for which Poor Richard, on one occasion, safely predicted a year of “*dry Fish and dry Doctrine*,” should have been invited by Keimer, the knavish eccentric of the *Autobiography*, to become “his colleague in a project he had of setting up a new sect.”

George Whitefield appears to have come nearer than anyone else to the honor of reducing Franklin to a definite religious status. For this celebrated man he seems to have felt an even warmer regard than that which he usually entertained for every clergyman who was a faithful exponent of sound morals. He begins one of his letters to his brother, John Franklin, with a reference to Whitefield, and then he laconically adds: “He is a good Man and I love him.” In the *Autobiography* he certifies that, in his opinion, Whitefield was in all his conduct “a perfectly *honest man*.” But even Whitefield’s call to the unconverted, which awakened the conscience of Philadelphia to such a degree “that one could not walk thro’ the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street,” failed to bring Franklin within the great preacher’s fold. “He us’d, indeed, sometimes to pray for my conversion, but never had the satisfaction of believing that his prayers were heard. Ours was a mere civil friendship, sincere on both sides, and lasted to his death.” These are the statements of the *Autobiography*. And a mere civil friendship Franklin was inflexibly determined to keep it; for we learn from the same source that, when Whitefield answered an invitation to Franklin’s house by saying that, if Franklin made that kind offer for Christ’s sake, he would not miss of a reward, the reply promptly came back: “*Don’t let me be mistaken; it was not for Christ’s sake, but for your sake.*” “One of our common acquaintance,” says Franklin, “jocosely remark’d, that, knowing it to be the custom of the saints, when they received any favour, to shift the burden of the obligation from off their own shoulders, and place it in heaven, I had contriv’d to fix it on earth.” It may truly be said, however, that nothing is recorded of the persuasive eloquence of Whitefield more amazing than the fact that it once swept Franklin for a moment off the feet on which he stood so firmly. He had made up his mind not to contribute to one of Whitefield’s charitable projects which did not meet with his approval—but let Æsop tell the story in his own characteristic way:

I happened soon after to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the coppers. Another stroke of his oratory made me asham’d of that, and determin’d me to give the silver; and he finish’d so admirably, that I empty’d my pocket wholly into the collector’s dish, gold and all.

But Franklin was not long in recovering his equipoise and in again wondering why Whitefield’s auditors should so admire and respect him notwithstanding “his common abuse of them, by assuring them they were naturally *half beasts and half devils*.” Whitefield, he thought, made a great mistake in publishing his sermons; for *litera scripta manet* and affords a full opportunity for criticism and censure. If the sermons had not been published, Whitefield’s proselytes would have been left, Franklin believed, to feign for him as great a variety of excellences as their enthusiastic admiration might wish him to have possessed. A

Deist, if anything, Franklin was when Whitefield first came to Philadelphia, and a Deist, if anything, he was when Whitefield left it for the last time. When the latter wrote in his *Journal*, “*M. B. was a deist, I had almost said an atheist*,” Franklin, indisposed to be deprived of all religious standing, dryly commented: “That is *chalk*, I had almost said *charcoal*.” A man, he tells us in the *Autobiography*, is sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than when he has plenty, perhaps through fear of being thought to have but little, and it is possible that religious faith may sometimes be influenced by the same kind of sensitiveness. The truth of the matter was that as respects theological tenets and sectarian distinctions Franklin was an incurable heretic, if such a term is appropriate to the listless indifference to all dogmas and sects rarely broken except by some merry jest or gentle parable, like his Parable against Persecution or his Parable of Brotherly Love, with which he regarded every sour fermentation of the *odium theologicum*. When he heard that a New Englander, John Thayer, had become a Catholic, the worst that he could find it in his heart to say was: “Our ancestors from Catholic became first Church-of-England men, and then refined into Presbyterians. To change now from Presbyterianism to Popery seems to me refining backwards, from white sugar to brown.” In commenting in a letter to Elizabeth Partridge, formerly Hubbard, a year or so before his own death on the death of a friend of theirs, he uses these words:

You tell me our poor Friend Ben Kent is gone; I hope to the Regions of the Blessed, or at least to some Place where Souls are prepared for those Regions. I found my Hope on this, that tho’ not so orthodox as you and I, he was an honest Man, and had his Virtues. If he had any Hypocrisy it was of that inverted kind, with which a Man is not so bad as he seems to be. And with regard to future Bliss I cannot help imagining, that Multitudes of the zealously Orthodox of different Sects, who at the last Day may flock together, in hopes of seeing (mutilated) damn’d, will be disappointed, and oblig’d to rest content with their own Salvation.

Franklin’s Kingdom of Heaven was one into which there was such an abundant entrance that even his poor friend, Ben Kent, could hope to arrive there thoroughly disinfected after a brief quarantine on the road.⁷ But it is in his *Conte* that the spirit of religious charity, by which this letter is animated, is given the sparkling, graceful form with which his fancy readily clothed its creations when form and finish were what the workmanship of the occasion required. Montrésor who is very sick, tells his curé that he has had a vision during the night which has set his mind entirely at rest as to his future. “What was your vision?” said the good priest. “I was,” replied Montrésor, “at the gate of Paradise, with a crowd of people who wished to enter. And St. Peter asked each one what his religion was. One answered, ‘I am a Roman Catholic.’ ‘Ah, well,’ said St. Peter, ‘enter, and take your place there among the Catholics.’ Another said, that he belonged to the Anglican Church. ‘Ah, well,’ said St. Peter, ‘enter and take your place there among the Anglicans.’ Another said that he was a Quaker. ‘Enter,’ said St. Peter, ‘and take your place among the Quakers.’ Finally, my turn being come, he asked me what my religion was. ‘Alas!’ replied I, ‘unfortunately poor Jacques Montrésor has none.’ ‘That is a pity,’ said the Saint, ‘I do not know where to place you; but enter all the same; and place yourself where you can.’”

Perhaps, however, in none of Franklin’s writings is his mental attitude towards religious sects and their varied creeds and organizations disclosed with such bland *insouciance* and delicate

⁷ Kent was evidently something of a character. In a letter to his friend Mrs. Catherine Greene, in 1764, Franklin said: “Mr. Kent’s compliment is a very extraordinary one, as he was obliged to kill himself and two others in order to make it; but, being killed in imagination only, they and he are all yet alive and well, thanks to God, and I hope will continue so as long as, dear Katy, your affectionate friend, B. Franklin.”

raillery as in his letter to Mason Weems and Edward Gantt. Weems was the famous parson Weems whose legendary story of the cherry tree and the hatchet made for many years such a sublime *enfant terrible* of Washington, and Gantt was a native of Maryland who was destined in the course of time to become a chaplain of the United States Senate. In this letter, after acknowledging a letter from Weems and Gantt telling him that the Archbishop of Canterbury would not permit them to be ordained, unless they took the oath of allegiance, he says that he had obtained an opinion from a clergyman of his acquaintance in Paris that they could not be ordained there, or that, if they were, they would be required to vow obedience to the Archbishop of Paris. He next inquired of the Pope's Nuncio whether they might not be ordained by the Catholic Bishop in America, but received the answer that the thing was impossible unless the gentlemen became Catholics. Then, after a deprecatory statement that the affair was one of which he knew very little, and that he might therefore ask questions or propose means that were improper or impracticable, he pointedly adds: "But what is the necessity of your being connected with the Church of England? Would it not be as well, if you were of the Church of Ireland?" The religion was the same, though there was a different set of Bishops and Archbishops and perhaps the Bishop of Derry, who was a man of liberal sentiments, might give them orders as of the Irish Church. If both Britain and Ireland refused them (and he was not sure that the Bishops of Denmark or Sweden would ordain them unless they became Lutherans), then, in his humble opinion, next to becoming Presbyterians, the Episcopal Clergy of America could not do better than follow the example of the first Clergy of Scotland, who, when a similar difficulty arose, assembled in the Cathedral, and the Mitre, Crosier and Robes of a Bishop being laid upon the Altar, after earnest prayers for direction in their choice, elected one of their own number; when the King said to him: "*Arise, go to the Altar, and receive your Office at the Hand of God.*" If the British Isles were sunk in the sea, he continued (and the surface of the Globe had suffered greater changes), his correspondents would probably take some such method as this, and persistence in the denial of ordination to them by the English Church came to the same thing. A hundred years later, when people were more enlightened, it would be wondered at that men in America, qualified by their learning and piety to pray for, and instruct, their neighbors, should not be permitted to do it until they had made a voyage of six thousand miles out and home to ask leave of a cross old gentleman at Canterbury who seemed, by the account of his correspondents, to have as little regard for the souls of the People of Maryland as King William's Attorney-General Seymour had for those of the People of Virginia, when, in reply to the reminder of the Reverend Commissary Blair of William and Mary College that the latter had souls to be saved as well as the People of England, he exclaimed: "*Souls! damn your Souls. Make Tobacco.*"

Here we have Franklin absolutely *in puris naturalibus* as respects the sacerdotal side of Religion, lavishing upon his correspondents in a single letter a series of half-serious, half-mocking sentiments flavored with some of his best intellectual qualities, and doubtless leaving them in a teasing state of uncertainty as to whether he intended to ridicule them or not. In the light of such a letter as this, the reader will hardly be surprised to learn that he did not quit the world until he had put on record his high opinion of heretics. After asking Benjamin Vaughan in one of his letters about a year and a half before his death, to remember him affectionately to the "honest" heretic, Doctor Priestley, he said:

I do not call him *honest* by way of distinction; for I think all the heretics I have known have been virtuous men. They have the virtue of fortitude, or they would not venture to own their heresy; and they cannot afford to be deficient in any of the other virtues, as that would give advantage to their many enemies; and they have not, like orthodox sinners, such a number of friends to excuse or justify them.

Holding these views about heretics, it is natural that Franklin should at times have stigmatized religious bigotry as it deserved. In his *Remarks on a Late Protest*, when he was being assailed for one of the most creditable acts of his life, his unsparing denunciation of the murder of hapless Indians by the Paxton Boys, he had a fearless word to say about “those religious Bigots, who are of all Savages the most brutish.” And it would be difficult to find a terser or more graphic picture of religious discord than this in one of his letters to Jane Mecom:

Each party abuses the other; the profane and the infidel believe both sides, and enjoy the fray; the reputation of religion in general suffers, and its enemies are ready to say, not what was said in the primitive times, Behold how these Christians love one another,—but, Mark how these Christians hate one another! Indeed, when religious people quarrel about religion or hungry people about their victuals, it looks as if they had not much of either among them.

Not only did Franklin have no sympathy with sects and their jarring pretensions but he had little patience with either doctrinal theology or ecclesiastical rites and forms of any sort. Even after he decided to keep away from public worship on Sundays, he still retained [he said], a sense of its utility, when rightly conducted, and continued to pay regularly his annual subscription to the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia which he had attended. Later, he was induced by its pastor to sit now and then under his ministrations; once he states, as if with a slight elevation of the eyebrows, for five Sundays successively, but it all proved unedifying, since not a single moral principle was inculcated or enforced; the aim of the preacher seeming to be rather to make them good Presbyterians than good citizens. At length the devout man took for his text the following verse from the fourth chapter of the Philippians: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely or of good report, if there be any virtue, or any praise, think on these things.” Now, thought Franklin, in a sermon on such a text we cannot miss of having some of the “morality” which was to him the entire meat of religion. But the text, promising as it was, had been subjected to such merciless dessication that it resolved itself into five points only “as meant by the apostle, viz.: 1. Keeping holy the Sabbath day. 2. Being diligent in reading the holy Scriptures. 3. Attending duly the publick worship. 4. Partaking of the Sacrament. 5. Paying a due respect to God’s ministers.” Franklin was disgusted, gave this preacher up entirely, and returned to the use of the *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion* which he had previously composed for his own private devotions. Subsequently, however, he was again enticed to church by the arrival in Philadelphia from Ireland of a young Presbyterian minister, named Hemphill, who preached good works rather than dogma in excellent discourses, apparently extemporaneous, and set off with an attractive voice. This minister was soon formally arraigned for heterodoxy by the old orthodox clergy who were in the habit of paying more attention to Presbyterian doctrine than Franklin was, and found a powerful champion in Franklin, who, seeing that Hemphill, while an “elegant preacher,” was, for reasons that afterwards became only too patent, a poor writer, wrote several pamphlets and an article in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in his behalf. Unfortunately, when the war of words was at its height, Hemphill, who afterwards confessed to Franklin that none of the sermons that he preached were of his own composition, was proved to have purloined a part, at any rate, of one of his sermons from Dr. Foster, of whom Pope had written,

“Let modest Foster, if he will excel

Ten metropolitans in preaching well.”

The Synod found against him, but so agreeable to Franklin was the all too-brief taste that he had enjoyed of good works that he adhered to Hemphill to the last. “I stuck by him,

however,” he says, “as I rather approv’d his giving us good sermons compos’d by others, than bad ones of his own manufacture, tho’ the latter was the practice of our common teachers”; among whom he doubtless included the dreary shepherd who had made so little out of the verse in the fourth chapter of Philippians. Everything found its practical level in that mind at last. It might be added that Franklin’s stand on this occasion was but in keeping with a final word of counsel which he wrote many years afterwards to his daughter Sally, when he was descending the Delaware on his way to England. After enjoining upon her especial attention her Book of Common Prayer, he continued: “Yet I do not mean you should despise sermons, even of the preachers you dislike, for the discourse is often much better than the man, as sweet and clear waters come through very dirty earth.”

After the Hemphill disappointment, he ceased to attend the church in which his *protégé* had come to grief, though he continued to subscribe to the support of its minister for many years. He took a pew in an Episcopal Church, Christ Church, and here he was careful that his family should regularly worship every Sunday, notwithstanding the fact that he was too busy again with his studies on that day to worship there himself, or placed too much confidence in his *Art of Virtue and Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion* to feel the need for doing so. Here too his daughter and his son Francis who died in childhood were baptized, and here his wife and himself were buried. While he rarely attended the services at this church, he was one of its mainstays in every pecuniary sense.

In more than one particular, Franklin was lax in France where he was only liberal in America. At any rate he was even less of a Sabbatarian in the former country than he was in the latter. As respects observance of the Sabbath, he fully fell in with French usages and was in the habit of setting apart the day as a day for attending the play or opera, entertaining his friends, or amusing himself with chess or cards. One of Poor Richard’s maxim’s was: “Work as if you were to live a hundred years, pray as if you were to die to-morrow,” and, while Franklin was not the person to pray in just that rapt fashion, he seems to have thought rather better of prayer than of other religious ceremonies. In the letter of caution to his daughter Sally, from which we have already quoted, he tells her, “Go constantly to church, whoever preaches. The act of devotion in the Common Prayer Book is your principal business there, and if properly attended to, will do more towards amending the heart than sermons generally can do. For they were composed by men of much greater piety and wisdom, than our common composers of sermons can pretend to be.” He promptly repelled an intimation of his sister Jane that he was opposed to divine worship with the statement that, so far from thinking that God was not to be worshipped, he had composed and written a whole book of devotions for his own use; meaning his *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*. This statement always brings back to us the reply of Charles Sumner, when he was very sick, and was asked whether he was prepared to die, viz. that he had read the Old Testament in the Greek version. A glance at the “First Principles,” with which the book begins, would hardly, we fear, have allayed the fears of Jane. That Franklin should ever, even at the age of twenty-two, have composed anything in the way of a creed so fanciful, not to say fantastic, is nothing short of an enormity, even more startlingly out of harmony with his usually sound and sure-footed intelligence than the whimsical letter to General Charles Lee, in which, on the eve of the American Revolution, he advised a return to bows and arrows as efficient instruments of modern warfare. “I believe,” commences the creed, “there is one supreme, most perfect Being, Author and Father of the Gods themselves. For I believe that Man is not the most perfect Being but one, rather that as there are many Degrees of Beings his Inferiors, so there are many Degrees of Beings superior to him.” Then, after quite a lengthy preamble, follows this Confession of Faith:

Therefore I think it seems required of me, and my Duty as a Man, to pay Divine Regards to SOMETHING.

I conceive then, that The INFINITE has created many beings or Gods, vastly superior to Man, who can better conceive his Perfections than we, and return him a more rational and glorious Praise.

As, among Men, the Praise of the Ignorant or of Children, is not regarded by the ingenious Painter or Architect, who is rather honour'd and pleas'd with the approbation of Wise Men & Artists.

It may be that these created Gods are immortal; or it may be that after many Ages, they are changed, and others Supply their Places.

Howbeit, I conceive that each of these is exceeding wise and good, and very powerful; and that Each has made for himself one glorious Sun, attended with a beautiful and admirable System of Planets.

It is that particular Wise and Good God, who is the author and owner of our System, that I propose for the object of my praise and adoration.

Under the same head of "First Principles," there is a slight flavor of the *Art of Virtue*: "Since without Virtue Man can have no Happiness in this World, I firmly believe he delights to see me Virtuous, because he is pleased when he sees Me Happy."

That one of the sanest, wisest, and most terrene of great men, and a man, too, who was not supposed in his time to have any very firm belief in the existence of even one God, should, young as he was, have peopled the stellar spaces with such a hierarchy, half pantheistic, half feudal as this, is, we take it, one of the most surprising phenomena in the history of the human intellect. James Parton surmises that the idea probably filtered to Franklin, when he was a youth in London, through Dr. Pemberton, the editor of the third edition of the *Principia*, from a conjecture thrown out in conversation by Sir Isaac Newton. It reappears in Franklin's *Arabian Tale*. "Men in general," says Belubel, the Strong, "do not know, but thou knowest, that in ascending from an elephant to the infinitely Great, Good, and Wise, there is also a long gradation of beings, who possess powers and faculties of which thou canst yet have no conception."

The next head in the book of devotions is "Adoration," under which is arranged a series of liturgical statements, accompanied by a recurrent note of praise, and preceded by an invocation and the following prelude in the nature of a stage direction:

Being mindful that before I address the Deity, my soul ought to be calm and serene, free from Passion and Perturbation, or otherwise elevated with Rational Joy and Pleasure, I ought to use a Countenance that expresses a filial Respect, mixed with a kind of Smiling, that Signifies inward Joy, and Satisfaction, and Admiration.⁸

The liturgical statements are followed by another direction that it will not be improper now to read part of some such book as Ray's *Wisdom of God in the Creation*, or Blackmore on the *Creation*, or the Archbishop of Cambray's *Demonstration of the Being of a God*, etc., or else to spend some minutes in a serious silence contemplating on those subjects. Then follows another direction calling for Milton's glorious *Hymn to the Creator*; then still another calling for the reading of some book, or part of a book, discoursing on, and inciting to, Moral Virtue; then a succession of resonant supplications, adjuring the aid of the particular Wise and Good God, who is the author and *owner* (or subfeudatory) of our System, in Franklin's efforts to

⁸ We are informed by Franklin in the *Autobiography* that he inserted on one page of his "little book" a "scheme of employment for the twenty-four hours of a natural day." The opening injunction of this plan of conduct brings the wash-basin and the altar into rather amusing juxtaposition: "Rise, wash, and address *Powerful Goodness!*"

shun certain vices and infirmities, and to practice certain virtues; all of the vices, infirmities and virtues being set forth in the most specific terms with the limpidity which marked everything that Franklin ever wrote, sacred or profane. One of the supplications was that he might be loyal to his Prince and faithful to his country. This he was until it became impossible for him to be loyal to both. Another was that he might avoid lasciviousness. The prayer was not answered; for William Franklin, on account of whose birth he should have received twenty-one lashes under the laws of Pennsylvania, was born about two years after it was framed. Creed and liturgy end with a series of thanks for the benefits which the author had already received. Both creed and liturgy, we are told by James Parton, were recorded with the utmost care and elegance in a little pocket prayer-book, and the liturgy Franklin practiced for many years. For a large part of his life, he bore his book of devotions and his book of moral practice about on his person wherever he went, as if they were amulets to ward off every evil inclination upon his part to yield to what he calls in the *Autobiography* "the unremitting attraction of ancient habits."

It is likewise a fact that, notwithstanding the high opinion that he expressed to his daughter Sally of the Book of Common Prayer, he undertook at one time to assist Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Le Despencer in reforming it. The delicious incongruity of the thing is very much enhanced when we remember that a part of Sir Francis' religious training for the task consisted in the circumstance that, in his wilder days, he had been the Abbot of Medmenham Abbey, which numbered among its godless monks—named the Franciscans after himself—the Earl of Sandwich, Paul Whitehead, Budd Doddington and John Wilkes. Over the portals of this infamous retreat was written "Do what you please," and within it the licentious invitation was duly carried into practice by perhaps the most graceless group of blasphemers and libertines that England had ever known. However, when Sir Francis and Franklin became collaborators, the former had, with advancing years, apparently reached the conclusion that this world was one where a decent regard should be paid to something higher than ourselves in preference to giving ourselves up unreservedly to doing what we please, and intercourse, bred by the fact that Sir Francis was a Joint Postmaster-General of Great Britain at the same time that Franklin was Deputy Postmaster-General for America, led naturally to a co-operative venture on their part. Of Sir Francis, when the dregs of his life were settling down into the bottom of the glass, leaving nothing but the better elements of his existence to be drawn off, Franklin gives us a genial picture. Speaking of West Wycombe, Sir Francis' country seat, he says: "But a pleasanter Thing is the kind Countenance, the facetious and very intelligent Conversation of mine Host, who having been for many Years engaged in publick Affairs, seen all Parts of Europe, and kept the best Company in the World, is himself the best existing." High praise this, indeed, from a man who usually had a social equivalent for whatever he received from an agreeable host! Franklin took as his share of the revision the Catechism and the Psalms. Of the Catechism, he retained only two questions (with the answers), "What is your duty to God?" and "What is your duty to your neighbor?" The Psalms he very much shortened by omitting the repetitions (of which he found, he said, in a letter to Granville Sharp, more than he could have imagined) and the imprecations, which appeared, he said, in the same letter, not to suit well the Christian doctrine of forgiveness of injuries and doing good to enemies. As revised by the two friends, the book was shorn of all references to the Sacraments and to the divinity of Our Lord, and the commandments in the Catechism, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds, and even the Canticle, "All ye Works of the Lord," so close to the heart of nature, were ruthlessly deleted. All of the Apostle's Creed, too, went, except, to use Franklin's words, "the parts that are most intelligible and most essential." The *Te Deum* and the *Venite* were also pared down to very small proportions. Some of the other changes assumed the form of abridgments of the services provided for Communion, Infant Baptism, Confirmation, the Visitation of the Sick and the Burial of the

Dead. Franklin loved his species too much, we may be sure, not to approve unqualifiedly the resolution of Sir Francis to omit wholly “the Commination, and all cursing of mankind.” Nor was a man, whose own happy marriage had begun with such little ceremony, likely to object strongly to the abbreviation of the service for the solemnization of Matrimony upon which Sir Francis also decided. In fine, the whole of the Book of Common Prayer was reduced to nearly one half its original compass. The preface was written by Franklin. Judging from its terms, the principal motive of the new version was to do away with the physical inconvenience and discomfort caused in one way or another by long services. If the services were abridged, the clergy would be saved a great deal of fatigue, many pious and devout persons, unable from age or infirmities to remain for hours in a cold church, would then attend divine worship and be comfortable, the younger people would probably attend oftener and more cheerfully, the sick would not find the prayer for the visitation of the sick such a burden in their weak and distressed state, and persons, standing around an open grave, could put their hats on again after a much briefer period of exposure. Other reasons are given for the revision, but the idea of holding out brevity as a kind of bait to worship is the dominant one that runs through the Preface. It is written exactly as if there was no such thing in the world as hallowed religious traditions, associations or sentiments, deep as Human Love, strong as Death, to which an almost sacrilegious shock would be given by even moderate innovations. “The book,” Franklin says in his letter to Granville Sharp, “was printed for Wilkie, in St. Paul’s Church Yard, but never much noticed. Some were given away, very few sold, and I suppose the bulk became waste paper. In the prayers so much was retrenched that approbation could hardly be expected.” In America, the Abridgment was known as “Franklin’s Prayer Book,” and, worthless as it is, in a religious sense, since it became rare, Franklin’s fame has been known to give a single copy of it a pecuniary value of not less than one thousand dollars. The literary relations of Franklin to devotion began with a Creed as eccentric as the Oriental notion that the whole world is upheld by a cow with blue horns and ended with partial responsibility for a Prayer Book almost as devoid of a true religious spirit as one of his dissertations on chimneys. He was slow, however, to renounce a practical aim, when once formed. The abridged Prayer Book was printed in 1773, and some fourteen years afterwards in a letter to Alexander Small he expressed his pleasure at hearing that it had met with the approbation of Small and “good Mrs. Baldwin.” “It is not yet, that I know of,” he said, “received in public Practice anywhere; but, as it is said that Good Motions never die, perhaps in time it may be found useful.”

Another incident in the relations of Franklin to Prayer was the suggestion made by him in the Federal Convention of 1787 that thenceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on the deliberations of the Convention, should be held every morning before the Convention proceeded to business. “In this Situation of this Assembly, groping, as it were, in the dark to find Political Truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, Sir,” he asked, “that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our Understandings?” The question was a timely one, and was part of an eloquent and impressive speech, but resulted in nothing more fruitful than an exclamatory memorandum of Franklin, indignant or humorous we do not know which, “The convention, except three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary!”

It is only when insisting upon the charitable and fruitful side of religion that Franklin has any wholesome or winning message to deliver touching it; but, when doing this, his utterances are often edifying in the highest degree. In an early letter to his father, who believed that the son had imbibed some erroneous opinions with regard to religion, after respectfully reminding his father that it is no more in a man’s power to think than to look like another, he used these words:

My mother grieves that one of her sons is an Arian, another an Arminian. What an Arminian or an Arian is, I cannot say that I very well know. The truth is, I make such distinctions very little my study. I think vital religion has always suffered, when orthodoxy is more regarded than virtue; and the Scriptures assure me, that at the last day we shall not be examined what we *thought*, but what we *did*; and our recommendation will not be, that we said, *Lord! Lord!* but that we did good to our fellow creatures. (See Matt. xxv.)

These convictions he was destined to reaffirm over and over again in the course of his life. They were most elaborately stated in his forty-eighth year in a letter to Joseph Huey. He had received, he said, much kindness from men, to whom he would never have any opportunity of making the least direct return, and numberless mercies from God who was infinitely above being benefited by our services. Those kindnesses from men he could therefore only return on their fellow men, and he could only show his gratitude for these mercies from God by a readiness to help God's other children and his brethren. For he did not think that thanks and compliments, though repeated weekly, could discharge our real obligations to each other and much less those to our Creator. He that for giving a draught of water to a thirsty person should expect to be paid with a good plantation, would be modest in his demands compared with those who think they deserve Heaven for the little good they do on earth. The faith Huey mentioned, he said, had doubtless its use in the world; but he wished it were more productive of good works than he had generally seen it; he meant real good works, works of kindness, charity, mercy and public spirit; not holiday keeping, sermon reading or hearing, performing church ceremonies, or making long prayers, filled with flatteries and compliments, despised even by wise men and much less capable of pleasing the Deity. The worship of God was a duty; the hearing reading of sermons might be useful, but if men rested in hearing and praying, as too many did, it was as if a tree should value itself on being watered and putting forth leaves though it never produced any fruit.

Your great Master [he continued] tho't much less of these outward Appearances and Professions than many of his modern Disciples. He prefer'd the *Doers* of the Word, to the meer *Hearers*; the Son that seemingly refus'd to obey his Father, and yet perform'd his Commands, to him that profess'd his Readiness, but neglected the Work, the heretical but charitable Samaritan, to the uncharitable tho' orthodox Priest and sanctified Levite; & those who gave Food to the hungry, Drink to the Thirsty, Raiment to the Naked, Entertainment to the Stranger, and Relief to the Sick, tho' they never heard of his Name, he declares shall in the last Day be accepted, when those who cry Lord! Lord! who value themselves on their Faith, tho' great enough to perform Miracles, but have neglected good Works, shall be rejected.

And then, after a word about the modesty of Christ, he breaks out into something as much like a puff of anger as anything that his perfect mental balance would allow; "But now-a-days we have scarce a little Parson, that does not think it the Duty of every Man within his Reach to sit under his petty Ministrations." Altogether, the Rev. Mr. Hemphill never stole, and few clergymen ever composed, a more striking sermon on good works than this letter. And this was because the doctrines that it preached belonged fully as much to the province of Human Benevolence as of Religion.

A pretty sermon also was the letter of Franklin to his sister Jane on Faith, Hope and Charity. After quoting a homely acrostic, in which his uncle Benjamin, who, humble as his place on Parnassus was, fumbled poetry with distinctly better success than the nephew, had advised Jane to "raise *faith* and *hope* three stories higher," he went on to read her a lecture which is too closely knit to admit of compression:

You are to understand, then, that *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* have been called the three steps of Jacob's ladder, reaching from earth to heaven; our author calls them *stories*, likening religion to a building, and these are the three stories of the Christian edifice. Thus improvement in religion is called *building up* and *edification*. *Faith* is then the ground floor, *hope* is up one pair of stairs. My dear beloved Jenny, don't delight so much to dwell in those lower rooms, but get as fast as you can into the garret, for in truth the best room in the house is *charity*. For my part, I wish the house was turned upside down; 'tis so difficult (when one is fat) to go up stairs; and not only so, but I imagine *hope* and *faith* may be more firmly built upon *charity*, than *charity* upon *faith* and *hope*. However that may be, I think it the better reading to say—

“Raise faith and hope one story higher.”

Correct it boldly, and I'll support the alteration; for, when you are up two stories already, if you raise your building three stories higher you will make five in all, which is two more than there should be, you expose your upper rooms more to the winds and storms; and, besides, I am afraid the foundation will hardly bear them, unless indeed you build with such light stuff as straw and stubble, and that, you know, won't stand fire. Again, where the author says,

“Kindness of heart by words express,”

strike out *words* and put in *deeds*. The world is too full of compliments already. They are the rank growth of every soil, and choak the good plants of benevolence, and beneficence; nor do I pretend to be the first in this comparison of words and actions to plants; you may remember an ancient poet, whose works we have all studied and copied at school long ago.

“A man of words and not of deeds
Is like a garden full of weeds.”

'Tis a pity that good works, among some sorts of people, are so little valued, and good words admired in their stead: I mean seemingly pious discourses, instead of humane benevolent actions.

To the Rev. Thomas Coombe Franklin expressed the opinion that, unless pulpit eloquence turned men to righteousness, the preacher or the priest was not merely sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, which were innocent things, but rather like the cunning man in the Old Bailey who conjured and told fools their fortunes to cheat them out of their money.

The general spirit of these various utterances of Franklin on vital religion were sarcastically condensed in a remark of Poor Richard: “Serving God is doing good to Man, but praying is thought an easier serving, and therefore most generally chosen.”

In forming an accurate conception of the influences by which the mind of Franklin was brought into its posture of antagonism or indifference to the doctrinal side of religion, it is necessary to take into consideration not only the innate attributes of his intellect and character but also the external pressure to which his opinions were subjected in his early life. It was the religious intolerance and proscriptive spirit of the Puritan society, in which he was born and reared, which drove him, first, into dissent, and then, into disbelief. Borne the day he was born, if tradition may be believed, though the ground was covered with snow, to the Old South Church in Boston, and baptized there, so that he might escape every chance of dying an unregenerate and doomed infant, he grew into boyhood to find himself surrounded by conditions which tended to either reduce the free impulses of his nature to supine or sullen submission or to force him into active revolt. It is hard to suppress a smile when he tells us in

the *Autobiography* that his father, who doubtless knew the difference between an Arian and an Arminian even better than his mother, intended to devote him as the tithe of his sons to the service of the Church. He smiles himself when he adds with a trace of his former commercial calling that his uncle Benjamin approved of the idea and proposed to give him all his shorthand volumes of sermons “as a stock” Franklin supposed, “to set up with.” The intention of Josiah was soon abandoned, and Benjamin became the apprentice of his brother James, the owner and publisher of the Boston *Courant*, the fourth newspaper published in America. During the course of this apprenticeship, first, as a contributor to the *Courant*, under the *nom de plume* of Silence Dogood, and, then, as its publisher in the place of his brother, who had incurred the censure of the Puritan Lord Brethren, he was drawn into the bitter attack made by it upon the religious intolerance and narrowness of the times. During its career, the paper plied the ruling dignitaries of the Boston of that day with so many clever little pasquinades that the Rev. Increase Mather was compelled to signify to the printer that he would have no more of their wicked *Courants*.

I that have known what New England was from the Beginning [he said] can not but be troubled to see the Degeneracy of this Place. I can well remember when the Civil Government would have taken an effectual Course to suppress such a *Cursed Libel!* which if it be not done I am afraid that some *Awful Judgment* will come upon this Land, and the *Wrath of God will arise, and there will be no Remedy.*

Undaunted, the wicked *Courant* took pains to let the public know that, while the angry minister was no longer one of its subscribers, he sent his grandson for the paper every week, and by paying a higher price for it in that way was a more valuable patron than ever. The indignation of another writer, supposed to be Cotton Mather, lashed itself into such fury that it seemed as if the vile sheet would be buried beneath a pyramid of vituperative words. “The *Courant*,” he declared, was “a notorious, scandalous” newspaper, “full freighted with nonsense, unmannerliness, railery, prophaneness, immorality, arrogance, calumnies, lies, contradictions, and what not, all tending to quarrels and divisions, and to debauch and corrupt the minds and manners of New England.” For a time, the Church was too much for the scoffers. James Franklin was not haled for his sins before the Judgment seat of God, as Increase Mather said he might be, speedily, though a young man, but he was, as we shall hereafter see more in detail, reduced to such a plight by the hand of civil authority that he had to turn over the management of the *Courant* to Benjamin, whose tart wit and literary skill made it more of a cursed libel than ever to arbitrary power and clerical bigotry.

The daring state of license, into which the sprightly boy fell, during his connection with the *Courant*, is clearly revealed in the letter contributed by Silence Dogood to it on the subject of Harvard College. In this letter, she tells how the greater part of the rout that left Harvard College “went along a large beaten Path, which led to a Temple at the further End of the Plain, call’d, *The Temple of Theology.*” “The Business of those who were employed in this Temple being laborious and painful, I wonder’d exceedingly,” she said, “to see so many go towards it; but while I was pondering this Matter in my Mind, I spy’d *Pecunia* behind a Curtain, beckoning to them with her Hand, which Sight immediately satisfy’d me for whose Sake it was, that a great Part of them (I will not say all) travel’d that Road.” While the *Courant* was running its lively course, young Franklin was shunning church on Sundays, reading Shaftesbury and Anthony Collins, and drifting further and further away from all the fixed shore-lights of religious faith.

Then came the hegira, which ended, as all the world knows, at Philadelphia. The first place curiously enough, in which the fugitive slept after reaching that city, was the great Quaker Meeting House, whither he had been swept by the concourse of clean-dressed people, that he

had seen walking towards it, when he was sauntering aimlessly about the streets of his new home, shortly after his arrival. "I sat down among them," he says in the *Autobiography*, "and, after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy thro' labour and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continu'd so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me." The halcyon calm of this meeting offers a strange enough contrast to the "disputatious turn" which had been engendered in him as he tells us by his father's "books of dispute about religion" before he left Boston.

The state of mind with respect to religion that he brought with him to Philadelphia is thus described by him in the *Autobiography*:

My parents had early given me religious impressions, and brought me through my childhood piously in the Dissenting way. But I was scarce fifteen, when, after doubting by turns of several points, as I found them disputed in the different books I read, I began to doubt of Revelation itself. Some books against Deism fell into my hands; they were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle's lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations.

Before the inevitable reaction set in, we obtain from the *Autobiography* a few other items of religious or semi-religious interest. A passing reference has already been made to Keimer's invitation to Franklin to unite with him in founding another sect. He had been so often trepanned by Franklin's Socratic method of argument that he had finally come to entertain a great respect for it. He was to preach the doctrines, and his co-laborer was to confound all opponents. As he was in the habit of wearing his beard at full length, because somewhere in the Mosaic Law it was said, "Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard"; and was also in the habit of keeping the seventh day as his Sabbath, he insisted that these two habits of his should be enjoined as essential points of discipline upon the adherents of the new creed. Franklin agreed to acquiesce in this upon the condition that Keimer would confine himself to a vegetable diet. The latter consented, and, though a great glutton, ate no animal food for three months. During this period, their victuals were dressed and brought to them by a woman in their neighborhood who had been given by Franklin a list of forty dishes, to be prepared for them at different times, in all which there was neither fish, flesh nor fowl. "The whim," he declared, "suited me the better at this time from the cheapness of it, not costing us above eighteen pence sterling each per week." At the termination of three months, however, Keimer could live up to his Pythagorean vow no longer, invited two of his women friends and Franklin to dine with him, and ordered a roast pig for the occasion. Unfortunately for his guests, the pig was placed a little prematurely upon the table, and was all consumed by him before they arrived. With the disappearance of the pig, the new sect came to an end too.

As sharp as the contrast between Franklin's spirit and the dove-like peace that brooded over the Great Quaker Meeting House, was the contrast between it and that of the self-devoted nun, whom he was once permitted to visit in the garret, in which she had immured herself, of his lodging house in Duke Street, London, opposite the Romish Chapel. As there was no nunnery in England, she had resolved to lead the life of a nun as nearly as possible under the circumstances. Accordingly she had donated all her estate to charitable uses, reserving only twelve pounds a year to live on, and out of this sum she still gave a great deal to charity, subsisting herself on water gruel only, and using no fire but to boil it. For many years, she had been allowed to live in her garret free of charge by successive Catholic tenants of the house, as they deemed it a blessing to have her there. A priest visited her to confess her every day. When asked how she could possibly find so much employment for a confessor, she

replied: "Oh! It is impossible to avoid *vain thoughts*." Franklin found her cheerful and polite and of pleasant conversation. Her room was clean, but had no other furniture than a mattress, a table with a crucifix and book, a stool, which she gave him to sit on, and a picture over the chimney of Saint Veronica, displaying her handkerchief, with the miraculous figure of Christ's bleeding face on it, which she explained to Franklin, of all the persons in the world, with great seriousness. She looked pale, but was never sick. "I give it," says Franklin in the *Autobiography*, "as another instance on how small an income, life and health may be supported." At no period of his existence, was he less likely to be in sympathy with the ascetic side of religion than at this. Indeed, while in London at this time, believing that some of the reasonings of Wollaston's *Religion of Nature*, which he was engaged in composing at Palmer's Printing House in Bartholomew Close, where he was employed as a printer, were not well founded, he wrote *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, and dedicated it to his rascalion friend, James Ralph, whose own ideas about Liberty may be inferred from the fact that he had deserted his family in Philadelphia to seek his fortune in England. This pamphlet Franklin afterwards came to regard as one of the *errata* of his life, and, of the one hundred copies of it that were printed, he then burnt all that he could lay his hands on except one with marginal notes by Lyons, the author of *The Infallibility of Human Judgment*. The argument of the pamphlet, as Franklin states it in the *Autobiography*, was that, as both virtue and vice owed their origin to an infinitely wise, good and powerful God, "nothing could possibly be wrong in the world," and vice and virtue were empty distinctions. Franklin's efforts to suppress the piece were, naturally enough, ineffectual, for there was an inextinguishable spark of vitality in almost everything that he ever wrote.

These utterances make it apparent enough that the religious character of Franklin was subject to too many serious limitations to justify even early American patriotism in holding him up as an exemplar of religious orthodoxy, although our incredulity is not necessarily overtaken by the statement of Parson Weems that, when Franklin was on his death-bed, he had a picture of Christ on the Cross placed in such a situation that he could conveniently rest his eyes upon it, and declared: "That's the picture of Him who came into the world to teach men to love one another." This kind of a teacher, divine or human, could not fail to awaken in him something as nearly akin to religious reverence as his nature was capable of entertaining. But his mental and moral constitution was one to which it was impossible that the supernatural or miraculous element in Religion could address a persuasive appeal. "In the Affairs of this World, Men are saved, not by Faith, but by Want of it," said Poor Richard, and it was with the affairs of this World that Franklin was exclusively concerned. When he visited the recluse in her Duke Street garret, it was not the crucifix and book, nor the picture over the chimney of Saint Veronica and her handkerchief that arrested his attention, nor was it the self-sacrificing fidelity of the lonely figure under harsh restrictions to a pure and unselfish purpose. It was rather the small income, with its salutary lesson of frugality for the struggling world outside, on which she contrived to support life and health. If he deemed a set of sectarian principles to be whimsical, as he did some of those professed by the Quakers, he humored them in the spirit of his wife who, he reminded his daughter in one of his letters, was in the habit of saying: "*If People can be pleased with small Matters, it is a Pity but they should have them.*" Few men have ever been more familiar with the Scriptures than he. Some of his happiest illustrations were derived from its pictured narratives and rich imagery, but the idea that God had revealed His purposes to His children in its pages was one not congenial with his sober and inquisitive mental outlook; and equally uncongenial was the idea, which of all others has exercised the profoundest degree of religious influence upon the human heart, that Christ, the only begotten son of our Lord, was sent into the world to redeem us from our sins with His most precious blood. Even his belief in the existence of a superintending Providence and a system of rewards and punishments here or hereafter for our moral conduct was a more

or less vague, floating belief, such as few thoroughly wise, well-balanced and fair-minded men, who have given any real thought to the universe, in which they lived, have ever failed to form to a greater or less degree. In a word, of that real, vital religion, which vivifies even the common, dull details of our daily lives, and irradiates with cheerful hope even the dark abyss, to which our feet are hourly tending, which purifies our hearts, refines our natures, quickens our sympathies, exalts our ideals, and is capable unassisted of inspiring even the humblest life with a subdued but noble enthusiasm, equal to all the shocks of existence—of this religion Franklin had none, or next to none. He went about the alteration of the Book of Common Prayer exactly as if he were framing a constitution for the Albany Congress or for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. That the alterations were to be shaped by any but purely practical considerations, that deep religious feeling has unreasoning reservations which intuitively resent the mere suggestion of change, he does not seem to have realized at all. Religion to him was like any other apparatus, essential to the well-being of organized society, a thing to be fashioned and adapted to its uses without reference to anything but the ordinary principles of utility. “If men are so wicked as we now see them *with religion*, what would they be *if without it*?” was a question addressed by him in his old age to a correspondent whom he was advising to burn a skeptical manuscript written by the former.

At the age of twenty, Franklin came back from London to Philadelphia, and it was then that the reaction in his infidel tendencies took place. From extreme dissent he was brought by a process of reasoning, as purely inductive as any that he ever pursued as a philosopher, to believe that he had wandered off into the paths of error, and should make his way back to the narrow but safer road. Under his perverting influence, his friend Collins had become a free-thinker, and Collins had soon acquired a habit of sopping with brandy, and had never repaid to him the portion of Mr. Vernon’s money which he had borrowed from him. Under the same influence, his friend, Ralph had become a free-thinker, and Ralph had been equally faithless in the discharge of his pecuniary obligations to him. Sir William Keith, the Colonial Governor of Pennsylvania, whose fair promises, as we shall see, had led him on a fool’s errand to London, was a free-thinker, and Sir William had proved an unprincipled cozenor. Benjamin Franklin himself was a free-thinker, and Benjamin Franklin had forgotten the faith that he plighted to Deborah Read, and had converted Mr. Vernon’s money to his own use. The final result, Franklin tells us, was that his pamphlet on *Liberty and Necessity* appeared now not so clever a performance as he once thought it, and he doubted whether some error had not insinuated itself unperceived into his argument, so as to infect all that followed, as was common with metaphysical reasonings. From this point, the drift to the *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*, the little book of moral practice, the *Art of Virtue*, the Rev. Mr. Hemphill and Christ Church was natural enough.

We might add that the views upon which Franklin’s mind finally settled down after its recoil from his pamphlet on *Liberty and Necessity* persisted until his last day. In a letter to Ezra Stiles, written but a little over a month before his death, he made the following statement of his faith:

You desire to know something of my Religion. It is the first time I have been questioned upon it. But I cannot take your Curiosity amiss, and shall endeavour in a few Words to gratify it. Here is my Creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable Service we render to him is doing good to his other Children. That the soul of Man is immortal, and will be treated with Justice in another Life respecting its Conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental Principles of all sound Religion, and I regard them as you do in whatever Sect I meet with them.

As to Jesus of Nazareth, my Opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the System of Morals and his Religion, as he left them to us, the best the World ever saw or is likely to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting Changes, and I have, with most of the present Dissenters in England, some Doubts as to his Divinity; tho' it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an Opportunity of knowing the Truth with less Trouble. I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that Belief has the good Consequence, as probably it has, of making his Doctrines more respected and better observed; especially as I do not perceive, that the Supreme takes it amiss, by distinguishing the Unbelievers in his Government of the World with any peculiar Marks of his Displeasure.

I shall only add, respecting myself, that, having experienced the Goodness of that Being in conducting me prosperously thro' a long life, I have no doubt of its Continuance in the next, though without the smallest conceit of meriting such Goodness.

It is amusing to compare this letter written in America to the President of Yale College with what Franklin had previously written to Madame Brillon, when she objected to the marriage of her daughter to William Temple Franklin partly on the score of religious incompatibility: "These are my ideas. In each Religion, there are certain essential things, and there are others that are only Forms and Modes; just as a loaf of Sugar may happen to be wrapped up in either brown, or white or blue Paper, tied up with either red or yellow hempen or worsted twine. In every instance the essential thing is the sugar itself. Now the essentials of a good Religion consist, it seems to me, in these 5 Articles viz." Then ensues a statement of practically the same fundamental tenets as those that he afterwards laid before Ezra Stiles; except that, when he wrote to Madame Brillon, he was not certain whether we should be rewarded or punished according to our deserts in this life or in the life to come. He then adds: "These Essentials are found in both your Religion and ours, the differences are only Paper and Twine."

Dr. Priestley, in his *Autobiography*, laments that a man of Dr. Franklin's general good character and great influence should have been an unbeliever in Christianity, and should also have done as much as he did to make others unbelievers. Franklin acknowledged to this friend that he had not given as much attention as he ought to have done to the evidences of Christianity, and, at his request, Priestley recommended to him several books on the subject, which he does not seem to have read. As Priestley himself rejected the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, Original Sin and Miraculous Inspiration, and considered Christ to be "a mere man," though divinely commissioned and assisted, his fitness for the office of winning Franklin over to Christianity might well have been questioned. He belonged to the same category as Dr. Richard Price, that other warm friend of Franklin, who came into Franklin's mind when Sir John Pringle asked him whether he knew where he could go to hear a preacher of *rational* Christianity.

Franklin, it passes without saying, had his laugh at Religion as he had at everything else at times. "Some have observed," he says of the clergy in his *Apology for Printers*, "that 'tis a fruitful Topic, and the easiest to be witty upon of all others." For the earliest outbreak of his humor on the subject, we are indebted to William Temple Franklin. Young Benjamin found the long graces uttered by his father before and after meals rather tedious. "I think, father," said he one day after the provisions for the winter had been salted, "if you were to say grace over the whole cask, once for all, it would be a vast saving of time." Some of his later jests, at the expense of Religion, read as if they were conceived at the period, upon which his vow of silence called a halt, when, according to the *Autobiography*, he was getting into the habit of

prattling, punning and joking, which only made him acceptable to trifling company. Others, however, have the earmarks of his humorous spirit in its more noteworthy manifestations. When he was off on his military excursion against the Indians, his command had for its chaplain a zealous Presbyterian minister, Mr. Beatty, who complained to him that the men did not generally attend his prayers and exhortations. When they enlisted, they were promised, besides pay and provisions, a gill of rum a day, which was punctually served out to them, half in the morning, and the other half in the evening.

I observ'd [says Franklin in the *Autobiography*] they were as punctual in attending to receive it; upon which I said to Mr. Beatty, "It is, perhaps, below the dignity of your profession to act as steward of the rum, but if you were to deal it out and only just after prayers, you would have them all about you." He liked the tho't, undertook the office, and, with the help of a few hands to measure out the liquor, executed it to satisfaction, and never were prayers more generally and more punctually attended; so that I thought this method preferable to the punishment inflicted by some military laws for non-attendance on divine service.

The efficacy itself of prayer also elicited some bantering comments from him. Alluding to the prayers offered up in New England for the reduction of Louisburg, he wrote to John Franklin:

Some seem to think forts are as easy taken as snuff. Father Moody's prayers look tolerably modest. You have a fast and prayer day for that purpose; in which I compute five hundred thousand petitions were offered up to the same effect in New England, which added to the petitions of every family morning and evening, multiplied by the number of days since January 25th, make forty-five millions of prayers; which, set against the prayers of a few priests in the garrison, to the Virgin Mary, give a vast balance in your favour.

If you do not succeed, I fear I shall have but an indifferent opinion of Presbyterian prayers in such cases, as long as I live. Indeed, in attacking strong towns I should have more dependence on *works*, than on *faith*; for, like the kingdom of heaven, they are to be taken by force and violence; and in a French garrison I suppose there are devils of that kind, that they are not to be cast out by prayers and fasting, unless it be by their own fasting for want of provisions.

We can readily imagine that more than one mirth-provoking letter like this from the pen of Franklin passed into the general circulation of Colonial humor.

As for the humorist, he did not fail to return to the subject a little later on, when Louisburg, after being bandied about between English and French control, was again in the hands of the English. "I congratulate you," he said to Jane Mecom, "on the conquest of Cape Breton, and hope as your people took it by praying, the first time, you will now pray that it may never be given up again, which you then forgot."

In his *A Letter from China*, he makes the sailor, who is supposed to be narrating his experiences in China, say that he asked his Chinese master why they did not go to church to pray, as was done in Europe, and was answered that they paid the priests to pray for them that they might stay at home, and mind their business, and that it would be a folly to pay others for praying, and then go and do the praying themselves, and that the more work they did, while the priests prayed, the better able they were to pay them well for praying.

After expressing his regret in a letter from New York to Colonel Henry Bouquet, the hero of the battle of Bushy Run, that because of business he could enjoy so little of the conversation of that gallant officer at Philadelphia, he exclaimed: "How happy are the Folks in Heaven,

who, 'tis said, have nothing to do, but to talk with one another, except now and then a little Singing & Drinking of Aqua Vitæ."

His leniency in relation to the Sabbath also vented itself in a jocose letter to Jared Ingersoll:

I should be glad to know what it is that distinguishes Connecticut religion from common religion. Communicate, if you please, some of these particulars that you think will amuse me as a virtuoso. When I travelled in Flanders, I thought of our excessively strict observation of Sunday; and that a man could hardly travel on that day among you upon his lawful occasions without hazard of punishment; while, where I was, every one travelled, if he pleased, or diverted himself in any other way; and in the afternoon both high and low went to the play or the opera, where there was plenty of singing, fiddling and dancing. I looked around for God's judgments, but saw no signs of them. The cities were well built and full of inhabitants, the markets filled with plenty, the people well-favoured and well clothed, the fields well tilled, the cattle fat and strong, the fences, houses, and windows all in repair, and no Old Tenor (paper money) anywhere in the country; which would almost make one suspect that the Deity is not so angry at that offence as a New England Justice.

The joke sometimes turns up when we are least expecting it, if it can be said that there is ever a time when a flash of wit or humor from Franklin surprises us. In a letter to Richard Price, asking him for a list of good books, such as were most proper to inculcate principles of sound religion and just government, he informs Price that, a new town in Massachusetts having done him the honor to name itself after him, and proposing to build a steeple to their meeting-house, if he would give them a bell, he had advised the sparing themselves the expense of a steeple for the present and that they would accept of books instead of a bell; "sense being preferable to sound." There is a gleam of the same sort in his revised version of the Lord's Prayer; for, almost incredible as the fact is, his irreverent hand tinkered even with this most sacred of human petitions. "Our Liturgy," he said, "uses neither the *Debtors* of Matthew, nor the *indebted* of Luke, but instead of them speaks of *those that trespass against us*. Perhaps the Considering it as a Christian Duty to forgive Debtors, was by the Compilers thought an inconvenient Idea in a trading Nation." Sometimes his humor is so delicate and subtle that even acute intellects, without a keen sense of the ludicrous, mistake it all for labored gravity. This is true of his modernized version of part of the first chapter of Job, where, for illustration, for the words, "But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face," he suggests the following: "Try him;—only withdraw your favor, turn him out of his places, and withhold his pensions, and you will soon find him in the opposition." It is a remarkable fact that more than one celebrated man of letters has accepted this exquisite parody as a serious intrusion by Franklin into a reformatory field for which he was unfitted. We dare say that, if Franklin could have anticipated such a result, he would have experienced a degree of pleasure in excess of even that which he was in the habit of feeling when he had successfully passed off his Parable against Persecution on some one as an extract from the Bible.

There is undeniably a lack of reality, a certain sort of hollowness about his religious views. When we tap them, a sound, as of an empty cask, comes back to us. They are distinguished by very much the same want of spontaneous, instinctive feeling, the same artificial cast, the same falsetto note as his system of moral practice and his *Art of Virtue*. Indeed, to a very great degree they are but features of his system of morals. That he ever gave any sincere credence to the written creed of his youth, with its graded Pantheon of Gods, is, of course, inconceivable. This was a mere academic and transitional conceit, inspired by the first youthful impulses of his recession from extreme irreligion to lukewarm acquiescence in

accepted religious conventions. Nor can we say that his belief in a single Deity was much more genuine or vital, confidently as he professed to commit himself to the wisdom and goodness of this Deity. There is nothing in his writings, full of well-rounded thanksgiving and praise as they sometimes are, to justify the conclusion that to him God was anything more than the personification, more or less abstract, of those cosmic forces, with which he was so conversant, and of those altruistic promptings of the human heart, of which he himself was such a beneficent example. The Fatherhood of God was a passive conception to which his mind was conducted almost solely by his active, ever-present sense of the Brotherhood of Man.

But it is no greater misconception to think of Franklin as a Christian than to think of him as a scoffer. He was no scoffer. A laugh or a smile for some ceremonious or extravagant feature of religion he had at times, as we have seen, but no laugh or smile except such as can be reconciled with a substantial measure of genuine religious good-faith. It was never any part of his purpose to decry Religion, to undermine its influence, or to weaken its props. He was too full of the scientific spirit of speculation and distrust, he was too practical and worldly-wise to readily surrender the right of private judgment, or to give himself over to any form of truly devotional fervor, but he had entirely too keen an appreciation of the practical value of religion in restraining human vices and passions and promoting human benevolence to have any disposition to destroy or impair its sway. The motive of his existence was not to unsettle men, nor to cast them adrift, nor to hold out to them novel projects of self-improvement, not rooted in fixed human prepossessions and experience, but to discipline them, to free them from social selfishness, to keep them in subjection to all the salutary restraints, which the past had shown to be good for them. Of these restraints, he knew that those imposed by Religion were among the most potent, and to Religion, therefore, he adhered, if for no other reason, because it was the most helpful ally of human morality, and of the municipal ordinances by which human morality is enforced. From what he said to Lord Kames, it seems that he regarded his *Art of Virtue* as a supplement to Religion, though really with more truth it might be asserted that it was Religion which was the supplement to his *Art of Virtue*.

Christians [he said] are directed to have faith in Christ, as the effectual means of obtaining the change they desire. It may, when sufficiently strong, be effectual with many: for a full opinion, that a Teacher is infinitely wise, good, and powerful, and that he will certainly reward and punish the obedient and disobedient, must give great weight to his precepts, and make them much more attended to by his disciples. But many have this faith in so weak a degree, that it does not produce the effect. Our *Art of Virtue* may, therefore, be of great service to those whose faith is unhappily not so strong, and may come in aid of its weakness.

How little Franklin was inclined to undervalue Religion as a support of good conduct is, among other things, shown by the concern which he occasionally expressed in his letters, when he was abroad, that his wife and daughter should not be slack in attending divine worship. One of his letters to Sally of this nature we have already quoted. Another to his wife expresses the hope that Sally "continues to love going to Church," and states that he would have her read over and over again the *Whole Duty of Man* and the *Lady's Library*. In another letter to his wife, he says: "You spent your Sunday very well, but I think you should go oftner to Church." Fortified as he was by his *Art of Virtue*, he felt that church attendance was but a matter of secondary importance for him, but he was eager that his wife and daughter, who had not acquired the habitude of the virtues as he had, should not neglect the old immemorial aids to rectitude.

Even to the levity, with which religious topics might be handled, he set distinct limits. He had no objection to a good-humored joke at the expense of their superficial aspects even if it was a little broad, but with malignant or derisive attacks upon religion he had no sympathy whatever. In the *Autobiography*, he denounces with manifest sincerity, as a wicked travesty, the doggerel version of the Bible, composed by Dr. Brown, who kept the inn, eight or ten miles from Burlington, at which he lodged overnight, on his first journey from Boston to Philadelphia. Nothing that he ever wrote is wiser or sounder than the letter which he addressed to a friend, dissuading him from publishing a “piece,” impugning the Doctrine of a Special Providence. In its utilitarian conceptions of religion and virtue, in the emphasis placed by it upon habit as the best security for righteous conduct, in the cautious respect that it manifests for the general sentiments of mankind on religious subjects, we have a concise revelation of his whole attitude towards Religion, when he was turning his face seriously towards it.

By the Argument it contains against the Doctrines of a particular Providence [he said], tho’ you allow a general Providence, you strike at the Foundation of all Religion. For without the Belief of a Providence, that takes Cognizance of, guards, and guides, and may favour particular Persons, there is no Motive to Worship a Deity, to fear its Displeasure, or to pray for its Protection. I will not enter into any Discussion of your Principles, tho’ you seem to desire it. At present I shall only give you my Opinion, that, though your Reasonings are subtile, and may prevail with some Readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general Sentiments of Mankind on that Subject, and the Consequence of printing this Piece will be, a great deal of Odium drawn upon yourself, Mischief to you, and no Benefit to others. He that spits against the Wind, spits in his own Face.

But, were you to succeed, do you imagine any Good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous Life, without the Assistance afforded by Religion; you having a clear Perception of the Advantages of Virtue, and the Disadvantages of Vice, and possessing a Strength of Resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common Temptations. But think how great a Proportion of Mankind consists of weak and ignorant Men and Women, and of inexperience’d, and inconsiderate Youth of both Sexes, who have need of the Motives of Religion to restrain them from Vice, to support their Virtue, and retain them in the Practice of it till it becomes *habitual*, which is the great Point for its Security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is, to your Religious Education, for the Habits of Virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent Talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a Rank with our most distinguish’d Authors. For among us it is not necessary, as among the Hottentots, that a Youth, to be receiv’d into the Company of men, should prove his Manhood by beating his Mother.

I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the Tyger, but to burn this Piece before it is seen by any other Person; whereby you will save yourself a great deal of Mortification from the Enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a good deal of Regret and Repentence.

III. Franklin, The Philanthropist And Citizen

It may be that, if Franklin had asked the angel, who made the room of Abou Ben Adhem rich, and like a lily in bloom, whether his name was among the names of those who loved the Lord, the angel might have replied: "Nay not so"; but there can be no question that like Ben Adhem Franklin could with good right have added,

"I pray thee then,

Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

As we have said, the desire to promote the welfare of his fellow-creatures was the real religion of his life—a zealous, constant religion which began with his early manhood and ceased only with his end. This fact reveals itself characteristically in a letter written by him to his wife just after he had narrowly escaped shipwreck off Falmouth Harbor on his second voyage to England. "Were I a Roman Catholic," he said, "perhaps I should on this occasion vow to build a chapel to some saint; but as I am not, if I were to vow at all, it should be to build a *light house*."

The weaker side of human character was, in all its aspects, manifest enough to his humorous perceptions. In an amusing paragraph in the *Autobiography*, he tells us how once in his youth he irresolutely adhered to his vegetarian scruples, even when his nose was filled with the sweet savor of frying fish, until he recollected that he had seen some smaller fish removed from their stomachs. Then thought he, "If you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you." "So convenient a thing," he adds, "it is to be a *reasonable creature*, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do." On another occasion, he was so disgusted with the workings of human reason as to regret that we had not been furnished with a sound, sensible instinct instead. At intervals, the sly humor dies away into something like real, heartfelt censure of his kind, especially when he reflects upon the baleful state of eclipse into which human happiness passes when overcast by war. Among other reasons, he hated war, because he deprecated everything that tended to check the multiplication of the human species which he was almost ludicrously eager to encourage. No writer, not even Malthus, who was very deeply indebted to him, has ever had a keener insight into the philosophy of population, and no man has ever been a more enthusiastic advocate of the social arrangements which furnish the results for the application of this philosophy. In one of her letters to him, we find his daughter, Sally, saying: "As I know my dear Papa likes to hear of weddings, I will give him a list of my acquaintance that has entered the matrimonial state since his departure." And in one of his letters to his wife, when he was in England on his first mission, he wrote: "The Accounts you give me of the Marriages of our friends are very agreeable. I love to hear of everything that tends to increase the Number of good People."⁹ The one thing in French customs that appears to have met with his disapproval was the inclination of French mothers to escape the burdens of maternity. In a letter to George

⁹ In his Plan for Settling Two Western Colonies in North America, Franklin says ruefully that, if the English did not flow westwardly into the great country back of the Appalachian Mountains on both sides of the Ohio, and between that river and the Lakes, which would undoubtedly (perhaps in less than another century) become a populous and powerful dominion, and a great accession of power either to England or France, the French, with the aid of the Indians, would, by cutting off new means of subsistence, discourage marriages among the English, and keep them from increasing; thus (if the expression might be allowed) killing thousands of their children before they were born.

Whatley, he ventured the conjecture that in the year 1785 only one out of every two infants born in Paris was being nursed by its own mother.

Is it right [he asked] to encourage this monstrous Deficiency of natural Affection? A Surgeon I met with here excused the Women of Paris, by saying, seriously, that they *could not* give suck; “*Car,*” *dit il*, “*Elles n’ont point de tetons.*” (“For,” said he, “They have no teats.”) He assur’d me it was a Fact, and bade me look at them, and observe how flat they were on the Breast; “they have nothing more there,” said he, “than I have upon the Back of my hand.” I have since thought that there might be some Truth in his Observation, and that, possibly, Nature, finding they made no use of Bubbies, has left off giving them any. I wish Success to the new Project of assisting the Poor to keep their Children at home [Franklin adds later in this letter] because I think there is no Nurse like a Mother (or not many), and that, if Parents did not immediately send their Infants out of their Sight, they would in a few days begin to love them, and thence be spurr’d to greater Industry for their Maintenance.

Among his most delightful observations are these on marriage in a letter to John Sargent:

The Account you give me of your Family is pleasing, except that your eldest Son continues so long unmarried. I hope he does not intend to live and die in Celibacy. The Wheel of Life, that has roll’d down to him from Adam without Interruption, should not stop with him. I would not have one dead unbearing Branch in the Genealogical Tree of the Sargents. The married State is, after all our Jokes, the happiest, being conformable to our natures. Man & Woman have each of them Qualities & Tempers, in which the other is deficient, and which in Union contribute to the common Felicity. Single and separate, they are not the compleat human Being; they are like the odd Halves of Scissors; they cannot answer the End of their Formation.

Equally delightful are his observations upon the same subject in a letter to John Alleyne after Alleyne’s marriage:

Had you consulted me, as a Friend, on the Occasion, Youth on both sides I should not have thought any Objection. Indeed, from the matches that have fallen under my Observation, I am rather inclin’d to think, that early ones stand the best Chance for Happiness. The Tempers and habits of young People are not yet become so stiff and uncomplying, as when more advanced in Life; they form more easily to each other, and hence many Occasions of Disgust are removed. And if Youth has less of that Prudence, that is necessary to conduct a Family, yet the Parents and elder Friends of young married Persons are generally at hand to afford their Advice, which amply supplies that Defect; and, by early Marriage, Youth is sooner form’d to regular and useful Life; and possibly some of those Accidents, Habits or Connections, that might have injured either the Constitution, or the Reputation, or both, are thereby happily prevented.

Particular Circumstances of particular Persons may possibly sometimes make it prudent to delay entering into that State; but in general, when Nature has render’d our Bodies fit for it, the Presumption is in Nature’s Favour, that she has not judg’d amiss in making us desire it. Late Marriages are often attended, too, with this further Inconvenience, that there is not the same Chance the parents shall live to see their offspring educated. “*Late Children,*” says the Spanish Proverb, “*are early Orphans.*” A melancholy Reflection to those, whose Case it may be! With us in America, Marriages are generally in the Morning of Life; our Children are therefore educated

and settled in the World by Noon, and thus, our Business being done, we have an Afternoon and Evening of chearful Leisure to ourselves; such as your Friend at present enjoys. By these early Marriages we are blest with more Children; and from the Mode among us, founded in Nature, of every Mother suckling and nursing her own Child, more of them are raised. Thence the swift Progress of Population among us, unparallel'd in Europe.

Then, after speaking of the fate of many in England who, having deferred marriage too long, find at length that it is too late to think of it, and so live all their lives in a situation that greatly lessens a man's value, he comes back to what seems to have been a favorite course of illustration of his in relation to marriage. "An odd Volume of a Set of Books you know is not worth its proportion of the Set, and what think you of the Usefulness of an odd Half of a Pair of Scissors? It can not well cut anything. It may possibly serve to scrape a Trencher." With these views about marriage, it is not surprising to find Franklin employing in a letter to Joseph Priestley such language about war as this:

Men I find to be a Sort of Beings very badly constructed, as they are generally more easily provok'd than reconcil'd, more disposed to do Mischief to each other than to make Reparation, much more easily deceiv'd than undeceiv'd, and having more Pride and even Pleasure in killing than in begetting one another; for without a Blush they assemble in great armies at Noon-Day to destroy, and when they have kill'd as many as they can, they exaggerate the Number to augment the fancied Glory; but they creep into Corners, or cover themselves with the Darkness of night, when they mean to beget, as being asham'd of a virtuous Action. A virtuous Action it would be, and a vicious one the killing of them, if the Species were really worth producing or preserving; but of this I begin to doubt.

In the same letter, he suggests to the celebrated clergyman and philosopher to whom he was writing that perhaps as the latter grew older he might look upon the saving of souls as a hopeless project or an idle amusement, repent of having murdered in mephitic air so many honest, harmless mice, and wish that to prevent mischief he had used boys and girls instead of them.¹⁰

Nor are these by any means the only sentences in Franklin's writings in which he expressed his disgust for the human passions which breed war. A frequently repeated saying of his was that there hardly ever existed such a thing as a bad peace or a good war. "All Wars," he declared to Mrs. Mary Hewson, after the establishment of peace between Great Britain and her revolted colonies, "are Follies, very expensive, and very mischievous ones. When will Mankind be convinced of this, and agree to settle their Differences by Arbitration? Were they to do it, even by the Cast of a Dye, it would be better than by Fighting and destroying each other."

I join with you most cordially [he wrote six months later to Sir Joseph Banks] in rejoicing at the return of Peace. I hope it will be lasting, and that Mankind will at

¹⁰ The existence of so much evil and misery in the world was a stumbling-block to Franklin as it has been to so many other human beings. In a letter to Jane Mecom, dated Dec. 30, 1770, he told her that he had known in London some forty-five years before a printer's widow, named Ilive, who had required her son by her will to deliver publicly in Salter's Hall a solemn discourse in support of the proposition that this world is the true Hell, or place of punishment for the spirits who have transgressed in a better place and are sent here to suffer for their sins as animals of all sorts. "In fact," Franklin continued, "we see here, that every lower animal has its enemy, with proper inclinations, faculties, and weapons, to terrify, wound, and destroy it; and that men, who are uppermost, are devils to one another; so that, on the established doctrine of the goodness and justice of the great Creator, this apparent state of general and systematical mischief seemed to demand some such supposition as Mrs. Ilive's, to account for it consistently with the honour of the Deity."

length, as they call themselves reasonable Creatures, have Reason and Sense enough to settle their Differences without cutting Throats; for, in my opinion, *there never was a good War, or a bad Peace*. What vast additions to the Conveniences and Comforts of Living might Mankind have acquired, if the Money spent in Wars had been employed in Works of public utility! What an extension of Agriculture, even to the Tops of our Mountains: what Rivers rendered navigable, or joined by Canals: what Bridges, Aqueducts, new Roads, and other public Works, Edifices, and Improvements, rendering England a compleat Paradise, might have been obtained by spending those Millions in doing good, which in the last War have been spent in doing Mischief; in bringing Misery into thousands of Families, and destroying the Lives of so many thousands of working people, who might have performed the useful labor!

The same sentiments are repeated in a letter to David Hartley:

What would you think of a proposition, if I sh'd make it, of a family compact between England, France and America? America wd be as happy as the Sabine Girls, if she cd be the means of uniting in perpetual peace her father and her husband. What repeated follies are these repeated wars! You do not want to conquer & govern one another. Why then sh'd you continually be employed in injuring & destroying one another? How many excellent things might have been done to promote the internal welfare of each country; What Bridges, roads, canals and other usefull public works & institutions, tending to the common felicity, might have been made and established with the money and men foolishly spent during the last seven centuries by our mad wars in doing one another mischief! You are near neighbors, and each have very respectable qualities. Learn to be quiet and to respect each other's rights. You are all Christians. One is *The Most Christian King*, and the other *Defender of the Faith*. Manifest the propriety of these titles by your future conduct. "By this," says Christ, "shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another." "Seek peace, and ensue it."

We make daily great Improvements in *Natural*, there is one I wish to see in *Moral* Philosophy [he wrote to Richard Price] the Discovery of a Plan, that would induce & oblige Nations to settle their Disputes without first Cutting one another's Throats. When will human Reason be sufficiently improv'd to see the Advantage of this!

The aspiration is again voiced in a letter to Joseph Priestley:

The rapid Progress *true* Science now makes, occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the Height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the Power of Man over Matter. We may perhaps learn to deprive large Masses of their Gravity, and give them absolute Levity, for the sake of easy Transport. Agriculture may diminish its Labour and double its Produce; all Diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting even that of Old Age, and our Lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the antediluvian Standard. O that moral Science were in as fair a way of Improvement, that Men would cease to be Wolves to one another, and that human Beings would at length learn what they now improperly call Humanity!

Mixed with Franklin's other feelings about war, as we have seen, was a profound sense of its pecuniary wastefulness. It was the greediest of all rat-holes, an agency of impoverishment worse even than the four specified in Poor Richard's couplet,

“Women and Wine, Game and Deceit,

Make the Wealth small and the Wants great.”

When [he asked Benjamin Vaughan] will princes learn arithmetic enough to calculate, if they want pieces of one another’s territory, how much cheaper it would be to buy them, than to make war for them, even though they were to give a hundred year’s purchase? But, if glory cannot be valued, and therefore the wars for it cannot be subject to arithmetical calculation so as to show their advantage or disadvantage, at least wars for trade, which have gain for their object, may be proper subjects for such computation; and a trading nation, as well as a single trader, ought to calculate the probabilities of profit and loss, before engaging in any considerable adventure. This however nations seldom do, and we have had frequent instances of their spending more money in wars for acquiring or securing branches of commerce, than a hundred years’ profit or the full enjoyment of them can compensate.

A celebrated philosophical writer, Franklin said in the *Propositions Relative to Privateering*, which he communicated to Richard Oswald, had remarked that, when he considered the destruction to human life, caused by the slave trade, so intimately connected with the industry of the sugar islands, he could scarce look on a morsel of sugar without conceiving it spotted with human blood. If this writer, Franklin added, had considered also the blood of one another which the white nations had shed in fighting for these islands, “he would have imagined his sugar not as spotted only, but as thoroughly dyed red.” As for Franklin himself, he was satisfied that the subjects of the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia, who had no sugar islands, consumed sugar cheaper at Vienna and Moscow, with all the charge of transporting it after its arrival in Europe, than the citizens of London or of Paris. “And I sincerely believe,” he declared, “that if France and England were to decide, by throwing dice, which should have the whole of their sugar islands, the loser in the throw would be the gainer.” The future expense of defending the islands would be saved, the sugar would be bought cheaper by all Europe, if the inhabitants of the islands might make it without interruption, and, whoever imported it, the same revenue might be raised by duties on it at the custom houses of the nation that consumed it. “You know,” Franklin observed in his famous letter to his daughter Sally on the Order of the Cincinnati, “everything makes me recollect some Story.” As respects war, the inevitable story turned up in one of his letters to Priestley:

In what Light [he said] we are viewed by superior Beings, may be gathered from a Piece of late West India News, which possibly has not yet reached you. A young Angel of Distinction being sent down to this world on some Business, for the first time, had an old courier-spirit assigned him as a Guide. They arriv’d over the Seas of Martinico, in the middle of the long Day of obstinate Fight between the Fleets of Rodney and De Grasse. When, thro’ the Clouds of smoke, he saw the Fire of the Guns, the Decks covered with mangled Limbs, and Bodies dead or dying; the ships sinking, burning, or blown into the Air; and the Quantity of Pain, Misery, and Destruction, the Crews yet alive were thus with so much Eagerness dealing round to one another; he turn’d angrily to his Guide, and said: “You blundering Blockhead, you are ignorant of your Business; you undertook to conduct me to the Earth, and you have brought me into Hell!” “No, sir,” says the Guide, “I have made no mistake; this is really the Earth, and these are men. Devils never treat one another in this cruel manner; they have more Sense, and more of what Men (vainly) call *Humanity*.”

But how little acrid misanthropy there was in this lurid story or in any of the indignant utterances occasionally wrung from Franklin by the sanguinary tendencies of the human race

is clearly seen in this very letter; for, after working up his story to its opprobrious climax, he falls back to the genial level of his ordinary disposition:

But to be serious, my dear old Friend [he adds], I love you as much as ever, and I love all the honest Souls that meet at the London Coffee-House. I only wonder how it happen'd that they and my other Friends in England came to be such good Creatures in the midst of so perverse a Generation. I long to see them and you once more, and I labour for Peace with more Earnestness, that I may again be happy in your sweet society.

The truth is that Franklin was no Timon of Athens, and no such thing as lasting misanthropy could find lodgment in that earth-born and earth-loving nature which fitted into the world as smoothly as its own grass, its running water, or its fruitful plains. If for many generations there has been any man, whose pronouncement, *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto*, was capable of clothing that trite phrase with its original freshness, this man was Franklin. The day, when the word went out in the humble Milk Street dwelling of his father that another man child was born, was a day that he never regretted; the long years of rational and useful existence which followed he was willing, as has been told, to live all over again, if he could only enjoy the author's privilege of correcting in the second edition the *errata* of the first; in his declining years he could still find satisfaction in the fact that he was afflicted with only three mortal diseases; and during his last twelve months, when he was confined for the most part to his bed, and, in his paroxysms of pain, was obliged to take large doses of laudanum to mitigate his tortures, his fortitude was such as to elicit this striking tribute from his physician, Dr. John Jones:

In the intervals of pain, he not only amused himself with reading and conversing cheerfully with his family, and a few friends who visited him, but was often employed in doing business of a public as well as private nature, with various persons who waited on him for that purpose; and, in every instance displayed, not only that readiness and disposition of doing good, which was the distinguishing characteristic of his life, but the fullest and clearest possession of his uncommon mental abilities; and not unfrequently indulged himself in those *jeux d'esprit* and entertaining anecdotes, which were the delight of all who heard him.

To the very last his wholesome, sunny spirit was proof against every morbid trial. Dr. Jones tells us further that, even during his closing days, when the severity of his pain drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe that he was afraid that he did not bear his sufferings as he ought, acknowledged his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from that Supreme Being who had raised him from small and low beginnings to such high rank and consideration among men, and made no doubt but his present afflictions were kindly intended to wean him from a world, in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned to him.

It is plain enough that in practice as well as in precept to Franklin life was ever a welcome gift to be enjoyed so long as corporeal infirmities permit it to be enjoyed, and to be surrendered, when the ends of its institution can no longer be fulfilled, as naturally as we surrender consciousness when we turn into our warmer beds and give ourselves over to our shorter slumbers. The spirit in which he lived is reflected in the concluding paragraph of his *Articles of Belief* in which, with the refrain, "Good God, I thank thee!" at the end of every paragraph except the last, and, with the words, "My Good God, I thank thee!" at the end of the last, he expresses his gratitude to this God for peace and liberty, for food and raiment, for corn and wine and milk and every kind of healthful nourishment, for the common benefits of air and light, for useful fire and delicious water, for knowledge and literature and every useful art, for his friends and *their* prosperity, and for the fewness of his enemies, for all the

innumerable benefits conferred on him by the Deity, for life and reason and the use of speech, for health and joy and every pleasant hour. Those thanks for his friends and *their* prosperity was Franklin indeed at his best. On the other hand, the spirit in which he regarded and met the hour of his dissolution is vividly reflected in the lines written by him in his seventy-ninth year:

“If Life’s compared to a Feast,
Near Four-score Years I’ve been a Guest;
I’ve been regaled with the best,
And feel quite satisfyd.
‘Tis time that I retire to Rest;
Landlord, I thank ye!—Friends, Good Night.”

These lines, unsteady upon their poetic feet as they are like all of Franklin’s lines, may perhaps be pronounced the best that he ever wrote, but they are not so good as his celebrated epitaph written many years before when the hour at the inn of existence was not so late:

“The Body
of
Benjamin Franklin
Printer,
(Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding,)
Lies here, food for worms.
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more,
In a new
And more beautiful edition,
Corrected and amended
By
The Author.”

So far as we can see, the only quarrel that Franklin had with existence was that he was born too soon to witness many important human achievements, which the future had in store. He was prepared to quit the world quietly when he was duly summoned to do so. The artist who was to paint his portrait for Yale College, he said a few days before his death to Ezra Stiles, must not delay about it, as his subject might slip through his fingers; but it was impossible for such an inquisitive man to repress the wish that, after his decease, he might be permitted to revisit the globe for the purpose of enjoying the inventions and improvements which had come into existence during his absence: the locomotive, the steamship, the Morse and Marconi telegraphs, the telephone, the autocar, the aeroplane, the abolition of American slavery, Twentieth Century London, Paris and New York.

I have been long impressed [he said in his eighty-third year to the Rev. John Lathrop] with the same sentiments you so well express, of the growing felicity of mankind, from the improvements in philosophy, morals, politics, and even the conveniences of common living, by the invention and acquisition of new and useful utensils and instruments, that I have sometimes almost wished it had been my destiny to be born two or three centuries hence. For invention and improvement are prolific, and beget more of their kind. The present progress is rapid. Many of great importance, now

unthought of, will before that period be produced; and then I might not only enjoy their advantages, but have my curiosity gratified in knowing what they are to be. I see a little absurdity in what I have just written, but it is to a friend, who will wink and let it pass, while I mention one reason more for such a wish, which is, that, if the art of physic shall be improved in proportion with other arts, we may then be able to avoid diseases, and live as long as the patriarchs in Genesis; to which I suppose we should make little objection.

Such complete adjustment to all the conditions of human existence, even the harshest, as Franklin exhibited, would, under any circumstances, be an admirable and inspiring thing; but it becomes still more so when we recollect that he prized life mainly for the opportunity that it afforded him to do good. To his own country he rendered services of priceless importance, but it would be utterly misleading to think of him as anything less—to use a much abused term of his time—than a Friend of Man.

“Il est ...

Surtout pour sa philanthropie,

L’honneur de l’Amérique, et de l’humanité.”

That was what one of his French eulogists sang, and that is what his contemporaries generally felt, about him, and said of him with a thousand and one different variations. It was the general belief of his age that his enlightened intelligence and breadth of charity placed him upon a plateau from which his vision ranged over the wants, the struggles and the aberrations of his fellow beings everywhere, altogether unrefracted by self-interest or national prejudices. He might have scores to settle with Princes, Ministers, Parliaments or Priests, but for the race he had nothing but light and love and compassion. To the poor he was the strong, shrewd, wise man who had broken through the hard incrustations of his own poverty, and preached sound counsels of prudence and thrift as general in their application as the existence of human indigence and folly. To the liberal aspirations of his century, he represented, to use his own figure, the light which all the window-shutters of despotism and priest-craft were powerless to shut out longer. To men of all kinds his benevolent interest in so many different forms in the welfare and progress of human society, his efforts to assuage the ferocity of war, the very rod, with which he disarmed the fury of the storm-cloud, seemed to mark him as a benignant being, widely removed by his sagacity and goodness from the short-sighted and selfish princes and statesmen of his day whose thoughts and aims appeared to be wholly centred upon intrigue and blood.

It was in perfect sincerity that Edmund Burke appealed to Franklin not only as a friend but as the “lover of his species” to assist him in protecting the parole of General Burgoyne. How well he knew the man may be inferred from his declaration, when it was suggested that selfish considerations of personal safety had brought Franklin to France. “I never can believe,” he said, “that he is come thither as a fugitive from his cause in the hour of its distress, or that he is going to conclude a long life, which has brightened every hour it has continued, with so foul and dishonorable flight.”

If Franklin is not mistaken, his career as a lover of his species can be traced back to a very early circumstance. In one of his letters, in his old age, to Samuel Mather, the descendant of Increase and Cotton Mather, he states that a mutilated copy of Cotton Mather’s *Essays to do Good*, which fell in his way when he was a boy, had influenced his conduct through life, and that, if he had been a useful citizen, the public was indebted for the fact to this book. “I have always set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good*, than on any other kind of reputation,” he remarks in the letter. “The noblest question in the world,” said Poor Richard,

“is what good may I do in it.” But, no matter how or when the chance seed was sown, it fell upon ground eager to receive it. It was an observation of Franklin that the quantity of good that may be done by one man, if he will make a business of doing good, is prodigious. The saying in its various forms presupposed the sacrifice of all studies, amusements and avocations. No such self-immolation, it is needless to affirm, marked his versatile and happy career, yet rarely has any single person, whose attention has been engaged by other urgent business besides that of mankind, ever furnished such a pointed example of the truth of the observation.

The first project of a public nature organized by him was the Junto, a project of which he received the hint from the Neighborhood Benefit Societies, established by Cotton Mather, who, it would be an egregious error to suppose, did nothing in his life but hound hapless wretches to death for witchcraft. The Junto founded by Franklin, when he was a journeyman printer, about twenty-one years of age, was primarily an association for mutual improvement. It met every Friday evening, and its rules, which were drafted by him, required every member in turn to produce one or more queries on some point of morals, politics or natural philosophy, to be discussed by its members, and once every three months to produce and read an essay of his own writing on any subject he pleased. Under the regulations, the debates were to be conducted with a presiding officer in the chair, and in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth without fondness for dispute or desire for victory. Dogmatism and direct contradiction were made contraband, and prohibited under small pecuniary penalties. With a few rough strokes Franklin etches to the life in the *Autobiography* all the first members of the association. We linger just now only on his portrait of Thomas Godfrey, “a self-taught mathematician, great in his way, and afterward inventor of what is now called Hadley’s Quadrant. But he knew little out of his way, and was not a pleasing companion; as, like most great mathematicians I have met with, he expected universal precision in everything said, or was forever denying or distinguishing upon trifles, to the disturbance of all conversation. He soon left us.” All of the first members except Robert Grace, a young gentleman of some fortune, derived their livelihood from the simple pursuits of a small provincial town, but all in one way or another were under the spell exerted by a love of reading, or something else outside of the dull treadmill of daily necessity. From the number of journeymen mechanics in it the Junto came to be known in Philadelphia as the Leathern Apron Club. An applicant for initiation had to stand up and declare, with one hand laid upon his breast, that he had “no particular disrespect” for any member of the Junto; that he loved mankind in general, of whatsoever profession or religion; that he thought no person ought to be harmed in his body, name or goods for mere speculative opinion, or for his external way of worship, that he loved the truth for the truth’s sake, and would endeavor impartially to find and receive it, and communicate it to others. In all this the spirit of Franklin is manifest enough.

Quite as manifest, too, is the spirit of Franklin in the twenty-four standing queries which were read at every weekly meeting with “a pause between each while one might fill and drink a glass of wine,” and which propounded the following interrogatories:

Have you read over these queries this morning, in order to consider what you might have to offer the Junto touching any one of them viz:?

1. Have you met with anything in the author you last read, remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto, particularly in history, morality, poetry, physic, travels, mechanic arts, or other parts of knowledge?
2. What new story have you lately heard agreeable for telling in conversation?

3. Hath any citizen in your knowledge failed in his business lately, and what have you heard of the cause?
4. Have you lately heard of any citizen's thriving well, and by what means?
5. Have you lately heard how any present rich man, here or elsewhere, got his estate?
6. Do you know of a fellow-citizen, who has lately done a worthy action, deserving praise and imitation; or who has lately committed an error, proper for us to be warned against and avoid?
7. What unhappy effects of intemperance have you lately observed or heard; of imprudence, of passion, or of any other vice or folly?
8. What happy effects of temperance, prudence, of moderation, or of any other virtue?
9. Have you or any of your acquaintance been lately sick or wounded? if so, what remedies were used, and what were their effects?
10. Whom do you know that are shortly going voyages or journeys, if one should have occasion to send by them?
11. Do you think of anything at present, in which the Junto may be serviceable to *mankind*, to their country, to their friends, or to themselves?
12. Hath any deserving stranger arrived in town since last meeting, that you have heard of?; and what have you heard or observed of his character or merits?; and whether, think you, it lies in the power of the Junto to oblige him, or encourage him as he deserves?
13. Do you know of any deserving young beginner lately set up, whom it lies in the power of the Junto anyway to encourage?
14. Have you lately observed any defect in the laws of your *country*, of which it would be proper to move the legislature for an amendment?; or do you know of any beneficial law that is wanting?
15. Have you lately observed any encroachment on the just liberties of the people?
16. Hath anybody attacked your reputation lately?; and what can the Junto do towards securing it?
17. Is there any man whose friendship you want, and which the Junto, or any of them, can procure for you?
18. Have you lately heard any member's character attacked, and how have you defended it?
19. Hath any man injured you, from whom it is in the power of the Junto to procure redress?
20. In what manner can the Junto or any of them, assist you in any of your honorable designs?
21. Have you any weighty affair on hand in which you think the advice of the Junto may be of service?
22. What benefits have you lately received from any man not present?
23. Is there any difficulty in matters of opinion, of justice, and injustice, which you would gladly have discussed at this time?

24. Do you see anything amiss in the present customs or proceedings of the Junto, which might be amended?

These queries render it obvious that the Junto in actual operation far transcended the scope of a mere association for mutual improvement. Such a strong desire was entertained by its members to bring their friends into it that Franklin finally suggested that each member should organize a separate club, secretly subordinate to the parent body, and in this way help to extend the sphere of the Junto's usefulness; and this suggestion was followed by the formation of five or six such clubs with such names as the Vine, the Union and the Band, which, as time went on, became centres of agitation for the promotion of public aims.

Cotton Mather would scarcely have regarded a club with such liberal principles as the Junto as an improvement upon its prototype, the Neighborhood Benefit Society. But, between the answers to the standing queries of the Junto, its essays, its debates, the declamations, which were also features of its exercises, the jolly songs sung at its annual meeting, and its monthly meetings during mild weather "across the river for bodily exercise," it must have been an agreeable and instructive club indeed. It lasted nearly forty years, and "was," Franklin claims in the *Autobiography*, "the best school of philosophy, morality and politics that then existed in the province." A book, in which he entered memoranda of various kinds in regard to it, shows that he followed its proceedings with the keenest interest.

Is self interest the rudder that steers mankind?; can a man arrive at perfection in this life?; does it not, in a general way, require great study and intense application for a poor man to become rich and powerful, if he would do it without the forfeiture of his honesty?; why does the flame of a candle tend upward in a spire?; whence comes the dew that stands on the outside of a tankard that has cold water in it in the summer time?

—such are some of the questions, thoroughly racy of Franklin in his youth, which are shown by this book to have been framed by him for the Junto. After the association had been under way for a time, he suggested that all the books, owned by its members, should be assembled at the room, in which its meetings were held, for convenience of reference in discussion, and so that each member might have the benefit of the volumes belonging to every other member almost as fully as if they belonged to himself. The suggestion was assented to, and one end of the room was filled with such books as the members could spare; but the arrangement did not work well in practice and was soon abandoned.

No sooner, however, did this idea die down than another shot up from its stump. This was the subscription library, now the Philadelphia City Library, founded by Franklin. In the *Autobiography*, he speaks of this library as his first project of a public nature; but it seems to us, as we have already said, that the distinction fairly belongs to the Junto. He brought the project to the attention of the public through formal articles of association, and, by earnest efforts in an unlettered community, which, moreover, had little money to spare for any such enterprise, induced fifty persons, mostly young tradesmen, to subscribe forty shillings each as a contribution to a foundation fund for the first purchase of books, and ten shillings more annually as a contribution for additional volumes. Later, the association was incorporated. It was while soliciting subscriptions at this time that Franklin was taught by the objections or reserve with which his approaches were met the "impropriety of presenting one's self as the proposer of any useful project, that might be suppos'd to raise one's reputation in the smallest degree above that of one's neighbors, when one has need of their assistance to accomplish that project." He, therefore, kept out of sight as much as possible, and represented the scheme as that of a number of friends who had requested him to submit it to such persons as they thought lovers of reading. This kind of self effacement was attended with such happy

consequences that he never failed to adopt it subsequently upon similar occasions. From his successful experience, he says in the *Autobiography*, he could heartily recommend it. "The present little sacrifice of your vanity," to use his own words, "will afterwards be amply repaid. If it remains a while uncertain to whom the merit belongs, some one more vain than yourself will be encouraged to claim it, and then even envy will be disposed to do you justice by plucking those assumed feathers, and restoring them to their right owner." Alexander Wedderburn's famous philippic, of which we shall have something to say further on, did not consist altogether of misapplied adjectives. Franklin *was* at times the "wily American," but usually for the purpose of improving the condition of his fellow creatures in spite of themselves.

The library, once established, grew apace. From time to time, huge folios and quartos were added to it by purchase or donation, from which nobody profited more than Franklin himself with his insatiable avidity for knowledge. The first purchase of books for it was made by Peter Collinson of London, who threw in with the purchase as presents from himself Newton's *Principia* and the *Gardener's Dictionary*, and continued for thirty years to act as the purchasing agent of the institution, accompanying each additional purchase with additional presents from himself. Evidence is not wanting that the first arrival of books was awaited with eager expectancy. Among Franklin's memoranda with regard to the Junto we find the following: "When the books of the library come, every member shall undertake some author, that he may not be without observations to communicate." When the books finally came, they were placed in the assembly room of the Junto; a librarian was selected, and the library was thrown open once a week for the distribution of books. The second year Franklin himself acted as librarian, and for printing a catalogue of the first books shortly after their arrival, and for other printing services, he was exempted from the payment of his annual ten shillings for two years.

Among the numerous donations of money, books and curiosities made to the library, were gifts of books and electrical apparatus by Thomas Penn, and the gift of an electrical tube, with directions for its use, by Peter Collinson, which proved of incalculable value to science in the hands of Franklin who promptly turned it to experimental purposes. When Peter Kalm, the Swedish naturalist, was in Philadelphia in 1748, "many little libraries," organized on the same plan as the original library, had sprung from it. Non-subscribers were then allowed to take books out of it, subject to pledges of indemnity sufficient to cover their value, and to the payment for the use of a folio of eight pence a week, for the use of a quarto of six pence, and for the use of any other book of four pence. Kalm, as a distinguished stranger, was allowed the use of any book in the collection free of charge. In 1764, the shares of the library company were worth nearly twenty pounds, and its collections were then believed to have a value of seventeen hundred pounds. In 1785, the number of volumes was 5487; in 1807, 14,457; in 1861, 70,000; and in 1912, 237,677. After overflowing more contracted quarters, the contents of the library have finally found a home in a handsome building at the northwest corner of Locust and Juniper Streets and in the Ridgway Branch Building at the corner of Broad and Christian Streets. But, never, it is safe to say, will this library, enlarged and efficiently administered as it is, perform such an invaluable service as it did in its earlier years. "This," Franklin declares in the *Autobiography*, "was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It is become a great thing itself, and continually increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defence of their privileges."

Franklin next turned his attention to the reform of the city watch. Under the existing system, it was supervised by the different constables of the different wards of Philadelphia in turn. The Dogberry in charge would warn a number of householders to attend him for the night. Such householders as desired to be wholly exempt from the service could secure exemption by paying him six shillings a year, which was supposed to be expended by him in hiring substitutes, but the fund accumulated in this way was much more than was necessary for the purpose and rendered the constableness a position of profit. Often the ragamuffins gathered up by a constable as his aids were quite willing to act as such for no reward except a little drink. The consequence was that his underlings were for the most part tippling when they should have been moving around on their beats. Altogether, they seem to have been men who would not have been slow to heed the older Dogberry's advice to his watchmen that, if one of them bid a vagrom man stand, and he did not stand, to take no note of him, but to let him go, and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God that he was rid of a knave.

To this situation Franklin addressed himself by writing a paper for the Junto, not only setting forth the abuses of the existing system but insisting upon its injustice in imposing the same six shilling tax upon a poor widow, whose whole property to be guarded by the watch did not perhaps exceed the value of fifty pounds, as upon the wealthiest merchant who had thousands of pounds' worth of goods in his stores. His proposal was the creation of a permanent paid police to be maintained by an equal, proportional property tax. The idea was duly approved by the Junto, and communicated to its affiliated clubs, as if it had arisen in each of them, and, though it was not immediately carried into execution, yet the popular agitation, which ensued over it, paved the way for a law providing for it which was enacted a few years afterwards, when the Junto and the other clubs had acquired more popular influence.

About the same time, the same indefatigable propagandist wrote for the Junto a paper, which was subsequently published, on the different accidents and defaults by which houses were set on fire, with warnings against them, and suggestions as to how they might be averted. There was much public talk about it, and a company of thirty persons was soon formed, under the name of the Union Fire Company, for the purpose of more effectively extinguishing fires, and removing and protecting goods endangered by them. Under its articles of agreement, every member was obliged to keep always in good order, and fit for use, a certain number of leather buckets, with strong bags and baskets for transporting goods, which were to be brought to every fire; and it was further agreed that the members of the company were to meet once a month and spend a social evening together in the discussion and interchange of such useful ideas as occurred to them upon the subject of fires. The formation of this company led to the formation of one company after another until the associations became so numerous as to include most of the inhabitants of Philadelphia who were men of property. It was still flourishing more than fifty years after its establishment, when its history was narrated in the *Autobiography*, and Franklin and one other person, a year older than himself, were the only survivors of its original members. The small fines, paid by its members as penalties for absence from its monthly meetings, had been used to such advantage in the purchase of fire-engines, ladders, fire-hooks and other useful implements for the different companies that Franklin then questioned whether there was a city in the world better provided than Philadelphia with the means for repressing incipient conflagrations. Indeed, he said, since the establishment of these companies, the city had never lost by fire more than one or two houses at a time; and often flames were extinguished before the house they threatened had been half consumed.

"Ideas will string themselves like Ropes of Onions," Franklin once declared. This was certainly true of the plans which his public spirit devised for the improvement of Philadelphia. The next thing to which his hand was turned was the creation of an academy. In

1743, he drew up a proposal for one, but, being disappointed in his efforts to persuade the Reverend Mr. Peters to act as its head, he let the project lie dormant for a time. While it remained so, remembering Poor Richard's maxim that leisure is time for doing something useful, he passed to the organization of a system of military defenses for the Province and the founding of a Philosophical Society. Of the former task we shall speak hereafter. The latter was initiated by a circular letter from him to his various learned friends in the Northern Colonies, proposing the formation of a society for the purpose of promoting a commerce of speculation, discovery and experimentation between its members with regard to scientific interests of every sort. A correspondence with the Royal Society of London and the Dublin Society and "all philosophical experiments that let light into the nature of things, tend to increase the power of man over matter, and multiply the conveniences or pleasures of life" were among the things held out in the proposal. Colonial America was far more favorable to practical activity than to philosophical investigation, but the society, nevertheless, performed an office of no little usefulness. When Franklin built a new wing to his residence in Philadelphia, after his return from Paris, he provided a large apartment on the first floor of this addition for the accommodation of the American Philosophical Society into which this Society had been merged. When he made his will, he was the President of the new society, and he bequeathed to it his *History of the Academy of Sciences*, in sixty or seventy volumes quarto; and, when he died, one of its members, Dr. William Smith, pronounced an eulogy upon his character and services. The wing of his house, in which space was set apart for the society, was itself, in its precautions against fire, one worthy of a vigilant and enlightened philosopher. None of the woodwork of one room, for instance, communicated with the woodwork of any other. Franklin thought, however, that the staircases should have been of stone, and the floors tiled as in Paris; and that the roof should have been either tiled or slated.¹¹

When the Philosophical Society of his early life had been founded, and the restoration of peace between Great Britain and her enemies had diverted his mind from his plans for the military protection of Philadelphia, he turned again to the slumbering Academy. His first step was to secure the assistance of a considerable number of active friends, of whom the Junto furnished a good part, and his next to write and publish a pamphlet entitled *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*. In this pamphlet he was careful, as usual, to bring his aim forward rather as that of a group of public-spirited gentlemen than of himself. It was distributed gratuitously among the most prominent citizens of Philadelphia, and, as soon as he thought that their minds had been reduced to a receptive condition by its appeal, he solicited subscriptions for the establishment and maintenance of the Academy, payable in five annual instalments. Four thousand pounds were subscribed, and Franklin and Tench Francis, the attorney-general of the province, and the uncle of Sir Philip Francis, of Junius fame, were appointed by the subscribers to draw up a constitution for the government of the foundation. This was drafted and signed; a house was hired, masters were engaged, and the institution was promptly opened. So fast did the scholars increase that need was soon felt for a larger school-edifice. This was happily found in the great building which had sprung up at the sound of Whitefield's voice as if at the sound of Amphion's lyre. By an arrangement between the Trustees for the building, of whom Franklin was one, and the Trustees for the Academy, of whom Franklin was also one, the building was deeded to the latter Trustees, upon the condition that they would discharge the indebtedness with which it was burdened,

¹¹ The American Philosophical Society Held at Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge was formed in 1769 by the union of the Philosophical Society founded by Franklin, which, after languishing for many years, was revived in 1767, and The American Society Held at Philadelphia for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge; and Franklin, though absent in England, was elected its first President.

keep forever open in it a large hall for occasional preachers, according to the original intent of its builders, and maintain a free school for the instruction of poor children. With some internal changes, and the purchase of an addition to its site, the edifice was soon, under the superintendence of Franklin, made ready for the use of the Academy. Afterwards, the Trustees for the Academy were incorporated, and the institution received various donations from British friends, the Proprietaries and the Provincial Assembly, and, finally, grew into the University of Pennsylvania. Franklin was one of its Trustees for more than forty years, and had, he says in the *Autobiography*, the very great pleasure of seeing a number of the youth, who had received their education in it, distinguished by their improved abilities, serviceable in public stations and ornaments to their country.

In none of his creations did Franklin display a keener interest than in the Academy. From its inception until he embarked upon his second voyage to England, his correspondence contains frequent references to it. One of his most earnest desires was to secure the celebrated Episcopal clergyman, Dr. Samuel Johnson, of Connecticut, afterwards the president of King's College, New York, as its Rector. A salary of one hundred pounds sterling per annum, the opportunity to deliver a lecture now and then in the large hall, set apart for what might in our day be called "tramp" preachers, until he could collect a congregation strong enough to build him a church, the usual marriage and christening fees, paid by persons of the best social standing, the occasional presents bestowed by wealthy individuals upon a minister of their liking, and the opening that, as time went on, the change of residence might afford to his son, who in the beginning might be employed as a tutor at a salary of sixty or seventy pounds per annum, were the allurements with which the reverend doctor was approached by Franklin. To the doctor's objection that another Episcopal church in Philadelphia might sap the strength of the existing one, the resourceful tempter replied with the illustration, which has been so much admired:

I had for several years nailed against the wall of my house a pigeon-box, that would hold six pair; and, though they bred as fast as my neighbours' pigeons, I never had more than six pair, the old and strong driving out the young and weak, and obliging them to seek new habitations. At length I put up an additional box with apartments for entertaining twelve pair more; and it was soon filled with inhabitants, by the overflowing of my first box, and of others in the neighbourhood. This I take to be a parallel case with the building a new church here.

In spite of everything, however, Doctor Johnson proved obdurate to Franklin's coaxing pen.

The Academy was opened in 1749. In a letter to Jared Eliot in 1751, Franklin informs us that the annual salaries paid by it were as follows: The Rector, who taught Latin and Greek, two hundred pounds, the English Master, one hundred and fifty pounds, the Mathematical Professor, one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and three assistant tutors each, sixty pounds. The annual fee paid by each pupil was four pounds. With one of the persons who did act as Rector, Franklin seems to have been on intimate terms. This was David Martin, who, after a brief incumbency, died suddenly of a quinsy, and was buried in much state. In a letter to William Strahan, Franklin speaks of him as "Honest David Martin,... my principal Antagonist at Chess." Vice-Provost at one time was Francis Alison, whom Franklin in a letter to Jared Eliot in 1755 introduced as his "particular friend," and twenty or more folio pages, large paper, well filled on the subjects of Agriculture, Philosophy, Eliot's own Catholic Divinity and various other points of learning equally useful and engaging. With still another Rector, Dr. William Smith, Franklin's relations were at first very friendly, but afterwards, when Smith espoused the cause of the Proprietary Party and began to abuse Franklin unstintedly, became so constrained that the two ceased to be on speaking terms. In an early letter to

Smith, before Smith became Rector, Franklin said that he should be extremely glad to see and converse with him in Philadelphia, and to correspond with him after he settled in England; “for,” he observed, “an acquaintance and communication with men of learning, virtue, and public spirit, is one of my greatest enjoyments.” In the same letter, Franklin stated that the mathematical school was pretty well furnished with instruments, and that the English library was a good one, and included a middling apparatus for experimental philosophy, which they purposed to complete speedily. The library left by James Logan, the accomplished Quaker, to the public, “one of the best collections in America,” in the opinion of Franklin, was also shortly to be opened. Indeed, Franklin was in hopes, he further declared, that in a few years they would see a perfect institution. In another letter to Smith, written a few days later, he said in reference to a paper on *The Ideal College of Mirania* written by Smith, “For my part, I know not when I have read a piece that has more affected me; so noble and just are the sentiments, so warm and animated the language.” He was too frank a man, however, not to express the wish that the author had omitted from this performance certain reflections upon the discipline and government of Oxford and Cambridge Universities and certain outbreaks of resentment against the author’s adversaries. “In such cases,” he remarked, “the noblest victory is obtained by neglect, and by shining on.” He little knew how soon he would be called upon to reckon his own rede. A few years later, Franklin thanks Whitefield for a generous benefaction to the German school. “They go on pretty well,” he writes, “and will do better,” he adds dryly, in terms which make it apparent enough that the honeymoon of early prepossession was over, “when Mr. Smith, who has at present the principal Care of them, shall learn to mind Party-writing and Party Politicks less, and his proper Business more; which I hope time will bring about.” In the succeeding November he was not even on speaking terms with Smith. This fact was communicated by him to Peter Collinson in a letter with this statement about Smith: “He has scribbled himself into universal Dislike here; the Proprietary Faction alone countenances him a little; but the Academy dwindles, and will come to nothing if he is continued.” A few weeks later in another letter to Collinson the case against Smith is stated more specifically: “Smith continues still in the Academy; but I imagine will not much longer, unless he mends his Manners greatly, for the Schools decline on his Account. The Number of Scholars, at present, that pay, not exceeding 118, tho’ they formerly were 200.” From a letter to David Hall, written by Franklin during his second sojourn in England, it would appear that Smith was quicker to pay off debts of resentment than any other kind. In this letter the writer tells Hall that Osborne, the London bookseller, had asked him whether he would be safe in selling to Smith “a large Cargo of Books,” and that he had told Osborne that he believed that his “Townsmen who were Smith’s Creditors would be glad to see him come back with a Cargo of any kind, as they might have some Chance of being paid out of it.” Smith on his part did not fail to do all in his power to keep Franklin from shining on. In a letter to Caleb Whitefoord shortly after his second return from England in 1762, Franklin borrowed a phrase from a line in *The New Foundling Hospital for Wit*. “The Piece from your own Pencil,” he said, “is acknowledg’d to bear a strong and striking Likeness, but it is otherwise such a picture of your Friend, as Dr. Smith would have drawn, *black, and all black*.” But when it comes to what Franklin in the *Autobiography* calls “negrofying,” he, though he had very little inclination for that kind of competition, was no mean artist himself, if it was an antagonist like Smith upon whose face the pigment was to be laid.

I do not wonder at the behaviour you mention of Dr. Smith towards me [he wrote to Polly Stevenson], for I have long since known him thoroughly. I made that Man my Enemy by doing him too much Kindness. ‘Tis the honestest Way of acquiring an Enemy. And, since ‘tis convenient to have at least one Enemy, who by his Readiness to revile one on all Occasions, may make one careful of one’s Conduct, I shall keep

him an Enemy for that purpose; and shall observe your good Mother's Advice, never again to receive him as a Friend. She once admir'd the benevolent Spirit breath'd in his Sermons. She will now see the Justness of the Lines your Laureate Whitehead addresses to his Poets, and which I now address to her:

“Full many a peevish, envious, slanderous Elf

Is, in his Works, Benevolence itself.

For all Mankind, unknown, his Bosom heaves;

He only injures those, with whom he lives,

Read then the Man;—does *Truth* his Actions guide,

Exempt from *Petulance*, exempt from *Pride*?

To social Duties does his Heart attend,

As Son, as Father, Husband, Brother, *Friend*?

Do those, who know him, love him? If they do,

You've *my* Permission: you may love him too.”

Several months later some observations upon the character of Doctor Smith, equally emphatic, found their way into a letter from Franklin to William Strahan. “Dr. Kelly in his Letter,” he said in regard to a letter to Strahan in which Dr. Kelly, a fellow of the Royal Society, had indicated very plainly what he thought of Dr. Smith, “appears the same sensible, worthy, friendly Man I ever found him; and Smith, as usual, just his Reverse.—I have done with him: For I believe nobody here (Philadelphia) will prevail with me to give him another Meeting.” In his preface to the speech of Joseph Galloway, Franklin even refers to Smith as “the Poisoner of other Characters.” In one of his letters William Franklin referred to him as “that Miscreant Parson Smith.” An obscure, or comparatively obscure, person, who is so unfortunate as to have a feud with a great man, is likely to experience some difficulty in obtaining justice at the hands of Posterity which is always ready to retain any number of clever brushes to whitewash the latter and to smear a black coat over the former. But it must be admitted that anyone who quarrelled with such a social, genial, well-balanced being as Franklin cannot hope to escape a very strong presumption that the fault was his own. There is evidence, at any rate, that, on one occasion, when Smith was in England, and had written a letter to Dr. Fry, the President of St. John's College, Oxford, in which Franklin was aspersed, the latter was induced to meet him at Strahan's house, and succeeded in drawing from him, after the letter to Dr. Fry had been read over, paragraph by paragraph, an acknowledgment that it contained many particulars in which the writer had been misled by wrong information, and that the whole was written with too much rancor and asperity. Indeed, Smith even promised that he would write to Dr. Fry admitting the respects in which his statements were false; but, when pressed by Strahan to write this letter on the spot, he declined to do so, though stating that he would call upon Strahan in a day or so and show it to him before it was sent; which he never did. On the contrary, when subsequently questioned at Oxford concerning his promise to write such a letter, he “denied the whole, & even treated the question as a Calumny.” So wrote Dr. Kelly to Strahan in the letter already mentioned by us. “I make no other comment on this behaviour,” said Dr. Kelly further, “than in considering him (Smith) extremely unworthy of the Honour, he has received, from our University.” The fact that, despite all this, at Franklin's death, Dr. Smith, at the request of the American Philosophical Society, made Franklin's character and career the subject of an eulogistic

address is certainly calculated to induce us all to unite in the prayer of Franklin in his *Articles of Belief* to be delivered from “Anger (that momentary Madness).”

Dr. Smith proved to be one fly in the Academy gallipot. The other was the extent to which the Latin School was pampered at the expense of the English School which was very close to the heart of Franklin. Its insidious encroachments steadily went on until finally the English School scarcely had a foothold in the institution at all. The result was that in 1769 it had been reduced from its first flourishing condition, when, if Franklin may be believed, the Academy was attended by some little boys under seven, who could deliver an oration with more propriety than most preachers, to a state of bare sufferance. The exercises in English reading and speaking, once the delight of the Trustees and of the parents and other relations of the boys, when these boys were trained by Mr. Dove, the English Master, with all the different modulations of voice required by sense and subject, languished after his resignation on account of his meagre salary, and at length, under the blighting neglect of the Trustees, were wholly discontinued. The English school, to use Franklin’s forcible expression, was simply starved.

All this was set forth in a long, dignified and able remonstrance which he wrote in nearly his best manner some ten months before his death when his body was racked at times by excruciating pains. In this paper, he narrated with uncommon clearness and skill the gradual succession of influences and events by which the English School had been reduced to a condition of atrophy, and contended that the intentions of the founders of the Academy had been ruthlessly and unconscionably abused. When we recall the circular letter in which he proposed the establishment of the Academy and the fact that it is by no means lacking in deference to the dead languages, which still held the human mind in bondage so firmly, we cannot but feel that the founders of the Academy were not quite so alive to the supreme importance of the English School as Franklin would make out. The truth was that a long time was yet to elapse before the minds of educated men could become emancipated enough to see that a living language, which they are using every day, is quite as worthy of consideration, to say the least, as one which fulfills its highest function in perfecting that use with its own rare discipline, strength and beauty. Franklin saw this before most men of his time, first, because his own lack of academic training saved him from many of the narrowing effects of tradition and routine, and, secondly, because it was idle to expect any but a severely practical view of the relative importance of the dead languages and English from a man who did not shrink from even testing the readiness of the public mind to give its assent to radical alterations in the Lord’s Prayer and the Episcopal Prayer Book. Be this as it may, Franklin did not hesitate in this paper to express in the strongest terms his sense of the inutility of Latin and Greek as parts of the course of instruction at the Academy, and, of course, a picturesque illustration of his proposition was duly forthcoming.

At what Time [he said], Hats were first introduced we know not, but in the last Century they were universally worn thro’-out Europe. Gradually, however, as the Wearing of Wigs, and Hair nicely dress’d prevailed, the putting on of Hats was disused by genteel People, lest the curious Arrangements of the Curls and Powdering should be disordered; and Umbrellas began to supply their Place; yet still our Considering the Hat as a part of Dress continues so far to prevail, that a Man of fashion is not thought dress’d without having one, or something like one, about him, which he carries under his Arm. So that there are a multitude of the politer people in all the courts and capital cities of Europe, who have never, nor their fathers before them, worn a hat otherwise than as a *chapeau bras*, though the utility of such a mode of wearing it is by no means apparent, and it is attended not only with some expense, but with a degree of constant trouble.

The still prevailing custom of having schools for teaching generally our children in these days, the Latin and Greek languages, I consider therefore, in no other light than as the *Chapeau bras* of modern Literature.

Poor Richard had his word to say about the man who “was so learned, that he could name a horse in nine languages: so ignorant that he bought a cow to ride on.”

This, however, was not the spirit in which Franklin sought to recruit the deficiencies of his own education—an effort which proved so extraordinarily successful that we are inclined to think that in the pedagogic insight as well as extensive knowledge, disclosed in the circular letter proposing the establishment of the Academy, the “Idea of the English School Sketch’d Out For The Consideration Of The Trustees Of The Philadelphia Academy,” and “The Observations Relative To The Intentions Of The Original Founders Of The Academy In Philadelphia” we have the most striking proofs after all of the natural power and assimilative capacity of a mind which, be it recollected, never had any teacher but itself after its possessor became ten years of age.

In the *Autobiography* we are told by Franklin that he was unable to remember when he could not read, that he was sent to the grammar school in Boston when he was eight years of age, that, after he had been at this school for not quite one year, though in that time he had become the head of his class, and had even been advanced to the next class above it,¹² he was shifted by his father to a school for writing and arithmetic in Boston, kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brownell; that under Brownell he acquired fair writing pretty soon, but made no progress in arithmetic, and that, at ten years of age, he was taken home to assist his father in his business as a tallow chandler and soap boiler. Such was all the education except what was self-imparted that the founder of the University of Pennsylvania had to draw upon when he outlined the future courses of instruction of the Academy.

But this self-imparted education was no mean one. Putting altogether out of sight the general reading to which during a large part of his youth Franklin devoted every moment left him by his duties, when he was about sixteen years of age, having been made ashamed on some occasion of his ignorance of figures, he went through the whole of Cocker’s *Arithmetic* by himself with the greatest ease, and followed the feat up by acquainting himself with such little geometry as was contained in Seller’s and Shermy’s books on Navigation. Some ten or eleven years later, he renewed the study of languages; for, short as was his connection with the Boston grammar school, he had obtained from it some knowledge of Latin. He quickly mastered French, so far as to be able to read French books with facility. Italian he learned by refusing to play chess with a friend who was also learning it, except upon the condition that the victor in every game was to have the right to impose upon his defeated adversary tasks in Italian which the latter was to be bound in point of honor to perform before the next bout. “As we play’d pretty equally,” says Franklin, “we thus beat one another into that language.” With a little painstaking, he afterwards acquired enough Spanish to read Spanish books too. Then it was that, after acquiring this knowledge of French, Italian and Spanish, he was surprised to find on looking over a Latin testament that he had so much more familiarity with Latin than he imagined. This encouraged him to apply himself to that language again, which he did with the more success, now that the three modern languages had smoothed his way.

From these circumstances [he observes in the *Autobiography*], I have thought that there is some inconsistency in our common mode of teaching languages. We are told

¹² As a token of his sense of obligation to the instruction derived by him in his boyhood from a free Boston grammar school, Franklin bequeathed the sum of one hundred pounds sterling to the free schools of that city, subject to the condition that it was to be invested, and that the interest produced by it was to be annually laid out in silver medals, to be awarded as prizes.

that it is proper to begin first with the Latin, and, having acquir'd that, it will be more easy to attain those modern languages which are deriv'd from it; and yet we do not begin with the Greek, in order more easily to acquire the Latin. It is true that, if you can clamber and get to the top of a staircase without using the steps, you will more easily gain them in descending; but certainly, if you begin with the lowest you will with more ease ascend to the top; and I would, therefore offer it to the consideration of those who superintend the education of our youth, whether since many of those who begin with the Latin quit the same after spending some years without having made any great proficiency, and what they have learnt becomes almost useless, so that their time has been lost, it would not have been better to have begun with the French, proceeding to the Italian, etc.; for, tho', after spending the same time, they should quit the study of languages and never arrive at the Latin, they would, however, have acquired another tongue or two, that, being in modern use, might be serviceable to them in common life.

Even if some design for the benefit of the public did not originate with Franklin, it was likely to fall back ultimately upon him for success. When Dr. Thomas Bond undertook to establish a hospital in Philadelphia, he was compelled by the chariness with which his requests for subscriptions were received, before it was known how Franklin felt about the project, to come to Franklin with the admission that he had found that to put any such public project through in Philadelphia it was necessary to enlist his support. The response was not only a subscription by Franklin but also the inevitable appeal from his hand, pointing out the need for the hospital. After a stroke from that wand, the rock began to yield water more abundantly, but not so copiously that Franklin did not see that legislative aid was necessary as well as private liberality. The country voters, as is usual still in such cases in America, were inclined to think that the townsfolk were enjoying more than their just share of the blessings of civil society. They alleged that the hospital would be of exclusive benefit to the city, and even doubted whether the movement met with the general approval of the townsfolk themselves. Franklin's claim that two thousand pounds would be raised by voluntary subscriptions they regarded as highly extravagant. This was cue enough for his quick wit. A bill was introduced by him into the General Assembly providing that, when the private contributors had organized under the charter granted by it, and had raised two thousand pounds by voluntary subscription, for the free maintenance of the sick poor in the hospital, then the Speaker, upon that fact being certified to his satisfaction, should draw his warrant on the Treasurer of the Province for the payment of two thousand pounds, in two yearly payments, to the treasurer of the hospital, to be applied to its establishment. With the lubricant supplied by this timely condition, the bill slid smoothly down all the legislative grooves. Even the sincerest support of a good legislative measure is not more ardent to all appearances than the specious support sometimes given to such a measure by a member of the Legislature who is opposed to it but sees, or thinks he sees, that it will never become a law, even though he should vote for it. The opponents of Franklin's bill, conceiving that they had a chance to acquire the credit of generosity without paying the pecuniary penalty, agreed to its enactment, and, on the other hand, the condition, by affording to private subscribers the prospect of having their contributions practically doubled from the public purse, furnished them with an additional motive to give. The private contributions even exceeded the sum fixed by the condition, and the credit with which the legislative adversaries of the bill had to content themselves was not that of deceitful but of real bounty. "I do not remember any of my political manœuvres," Franklin complacently declares in the *Autobiography*, "the success of which gave me at the time more pleasure, or wherein, after thinking of it, I more easily excus'd myself for having made some use of cunning." We experience no difficulty in condoning this cunning when we realize that its fruit was the Pennsylvania Hospital, which,

after many years of rare usefulness, is still one of the chief institutions of Philadelphia. It is gratifying to feel that its history has not been unworthy of the admirable inscription which Franklin wrote for its corner-stone:

In the year of Christ MDCCLV, George the Second happily reigning (for he sought the happiness of his people), Philadelphia flourishing (for its inhabitants were public spirited), this building, by the bounty of the government, and of many private persons, was piously founded for the relief of the sick and miserable. May the God of Mercies bless the undertaking.

The Reverend Gilbert Tennent, one of whose sermons caused Whitefield to say, “Never before heard I such a searching sermon; he is a son of thunder, and does not regard the face of man,” was not so fortunate as Dr. Bond when he asked Franklin to assist him in obtaining subscriptions for the erection of a new meeting-house in Philadelphia, for the use of a congregation drawn from among the Presbyterians, who were originally disciples of Whitefield. Franklin says that he absolutely refused to do so because he was unwilling to make himself disagreeable to his fellow-citizens by soliciting contributions from them too frequently. The truth in part, we suspect, was that his zealous interest was not easily excited in any meeting-house where even a missionary sent by the Mufti of Constantinople to preach Mohammedanism to the people of Philadelphia would not find a pulpit at his service. But, if this incident has any general significance, it may be accepted as evidence that, though Franklin might contribute nothing else upon such an occasion, he was prepared to contribute a good joke. When Tennent found that he could get no other kind of assistance from him, he asked him to give him at least his advice. What followed would suffer in telling if not told as the *Autobiography* tells it:

That I will readily do [said Franklin], and, in the first place, I advise you to apply to all those whom you know will give something; next, to those whom you are uncertain whether they will give anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and, lastly, do not neglect those who you are sure will give nothing, for in some of them you may be mistaken. He laugh’d and thank’d me, and said he would take my advice. He did so, for he ask’d of *everybody*, and he obtain’d a much larger sum than he expected, with which he erected the capacious and very elegant meeting-house that stands in Arch Street.

Other services rendered by Franklin to Philadelphia related to the better paving and lighting of its streets. These streets were laid out with great regularity, but, being wholly unpaved, were mere quagmires in winter and stifling stretches of dust in summer. So bad was their condition as a rule that Philadelphia came to be known among the country people around it as “Filthy-dirty.” Franklin, when he lived near the Jersey Market, witnessed with concern the miserable plight of its patrons as they waded about on either side of it in mire deep enough to have prompted the observation of Napoleon, based upon his campaigns in Poland, that mud should be accounted a fifth element. A step was taken when a stretch of ground down the middle of the market was paved with brick. This offered a firm footing, when once attained, but, before a pedestrian could attain it, he might be overshoes in wet clay. By tongue and pen, Franklin at length succeeded in having the spaces between the market and the foot pavements of the streets flanking it laid with stone. The result was that for a season a market woman could reach the market dry-shod, but, in the course of time, the pavements became loaded with mud shaken off the wheels of passing vehicles, and this mud, after being thus deposited, was allowed, for lack of street cleaners, to remain where it fell. Here was an inviting situation, indeed, for such a municipal housewife as Franklin. Having hunted up a poor, industrious man, who was willing to contract for the sum of sixpence per month, per house,

to sweep up and carry away the dirt in front of the houses abutting on these pavements, he wrote and published a paper setting forth the marked advantages to the neighborhood that would result from such a small expenditure—the reduced amount of mud that people would carry around on their shoes, the readier access that customers would have to the shops near the market, freedom from wind-borne dust and other kindred benefits not likely to escape the attention of a man to whom even the dust of unpaved streets suggested the following reflections in the *Autobiography*:

Human felicity is produc'd not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day. Thus, if you teach a poor young man to shave himself, and keep his razor in order, you may contribute more to the happiness of his life than in giving him a thousand guineas. The money may be soon spent, the regret only remaining of having foolishly consumed it; but in the other case, he escapes the frequent vexation of waiting for barbers, and of their sometimes dirty fingers, offensive breaths, and dull razors; he shaves when most convenient to him, and enjoys daily the pleasure of its being done with a good instrument.

A copy of the paper was sent to each house affected by its proposals, every householder agreed to pay his sixpence, and the sense of comfort experienced by the entire population of Philadelphia in the more commodious use of the market prepared their minds for the bill which Franklin later introduced into the Assembly providing for the paving of the whole city. He was on the point of embarking on his second voyage to England when this was done, and the bill was not passed until after he was gone, and then with an alteration in his method of assessing the paving cost which his judgment did not deem an improvement; but the bill as passed contained a further provision for lighting as well as paving the streets of Philadelphia which he did deem a great improvement. The merit of first suggesting the hospital Franklin is studious to tell us, though ascribed to him, was due to Dr. Bond. So likewise he is quick to admit that the honor of giving the first impulse to municipal lighting in Philadelphia did not belong to him, as had been supposed, but to John Clifton, who had placed a private lamp at his own door. Franklin simply followed Clifton's example; but, when the city began to light its streets, his fertile mind did bring forward a novel idea which proved a highly useful one. Instead of the globes imported from London which became so black and opaque from smoke for lack of air, when the lamps were lighted, that they had to be cleaned every day, and which, moreover, were totally wrecked by a single blow, he suggested that the coverings for the city lamps should be composed of four flat panes, with a long funnel above and inlets below for the free circulation of air. The result was a covering that remained untarnished until morning and was not involved in complete ruin by a single fracture.

Such were some of the principal achievements of Franklin for the benefit of Philadelphia. It is not easy to magnify unduly their significance when we bear in mind that they were all crowded into a period of some thirty years during the greater part of which he was faithfully heeding Poor Richard's maxim, "Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee"; to say nothing of the claims upon his time of political duties and scientific studies and experiments. Franklin was not the Romulus of Philadelphia; nor was he its Augustus, who found it of brick and left it of marble. There was solid brick enough in the structure of American colonial life, but little marble. However, it can at least be said of him that rarely has any single private individual, with no great fortune, and with no control over the public purse except what is conferred by the favor of public opinion won by personal intelligence and public spirit, laid the foundations of so much that was of lasting and increasing utility to an infant community destined to become one of the populous and opulent cities of the world. In how many other respects his sympathy with human interests in their broader relations made its influence felt in Colonial America we can only conjecture, but in many ways, in addition to those already

mentioned, its fructifying results have been brought home to us. It was at his instance that the merchants of Philadelphia sent the ship *Argo* to the Arctics to discover a Northwest Passage. Kalm, the Swedish botanist, when he came to Pennsylvania, found in him a most helpful friend and patron. He labored untiringly to obtain for Bartram, the American naturalist, the recognition which he richly merited. One of the proudest days of his life was when his eager exertions in behalf of silk culture in Pennsylvania were rewarded by the knowledge that the Queen of England had not only graciously condescended to accept a sample of Pennsylvania silk tendered to her by him but proposed to wear it in the form of a dress. During his third sojourn in England, the hospital at home was frequently reminded of the strength of his concern for its welfare by gifts and suggestions more valuable than gifts. To him was entrusted the commission of purchasing a telescope and other instruments for the Astronomical School at Harvard College. To the library of Harvard he occasionally forwarded parcels of books, either his own gifts or gifts from his friends. In addition to his zealous efforts in the latter part of his life in behalf of negro emancipation and the relief of the free blacks, he was for several years one of the associates charged with the management of the Bray Fund for the conversion of negroes in the British plantations. He was also a trustee of the Society for the benefit of poor Germans, one of the objects of which was the establishment of English schools in the German communities which had become so numerous in Pennsylvania. It was high time that this object should receive the attention of the Englishry of the province as one of his letters indicates.

I remember [he said in 1753 in a letter to Richard Jackson] when they [the Germans] modestly declined intermeddling in our Elections, but now they come in Drovers and carry all before them, except in one or two Counties.

Few of their Children in the Country learn English. They import many Books from Germany; and of the six Printing-Houses in the Province, two are entirely German, two half German half English, and but two entirely English. They have one German Newspaper, and one half-German. Advertisements, intended to be general, are now printed in Dutch and English. The Signs in our Streets have Inscriptions in both Languages, and in some places only German. They begin of late to make all their Bonds and other legal Instruments in their own Language, which (though I think it ought not to be) are allowed good in our Courts, where the German Business so increases, that there is continued need of Interpreters; and I suppose in a few Years they will also be necessary in the Assembly to tell one half of our Legislators what the other half say.¹³

As we are said to be indebted to Jefferson for the introduction into America of the Lombardy poplar so it is said that we are indebted to Franklin for the domestication of the yellow willow so useful in the manufacture of wicker-work. The story is that his observant eye noted the sprouts, which a willow basket from abroad had put forth, when refreshed by the water of a creek into which it had been tossed, and that he was at pains to plant some of them on a lot in

¹³ In an earlier letter to James Parker, Franklin commented on the "Dutch" immigration into Pennsylvania very much as a Californian was afterwards in the habit of doing on the Chinese immigration to our Pacific coast. The "Dutch" under-lived, and were thereby enabled, he said, "to under-work and under-sell the English." In his essay on *The Increase of Mankind*, he asked: "Why should the *Palatine Boors* be suffered to swarm into our Settlements, and, by herding together, establish their Language and Manners, to the Exclusion of ours?" Expressions in his letter to Jackson, which we do not mention in our text, make it manifest enough that he gravely doubted whether the German population of Pennsylvania could be relied upon to assist actively in the defence of the Province in the event of its being invaded by the French. However, after suggesting some means of improving the situation, he is compelled to conclude with these words: "I say, I am not against the Admission of Germans in general, for they have their Virtues. Their Industry and Frugality are exemplary. They are excellent Husbandmen; and contribute greatly to the Improvement of a Country."

Philadelphia. Apparently, he was the first person, too, to introduce the rhubarb plant into America. He obtained seed of the broom-corn on one of his visits to Virginia, and took care to disseminate it in Pennsylvania and other Colonies. When the Pennsylvania farmers were skeptical about the value of plaster, he framed in that substance on the surface of a conspicuous field the words: "this has been plastered," which were soon rewritten in vegetation that rose legibly above the general level of its surroundings. One of his suggestions was an "office of insurance" on the mutual assessment plan against losses from storms, blights, insects, etc., suffered by farmers. Among his essays is a concise but highly instructive one on Maize, or Indian Corn, which was well calculated to make known to the world a plant now hardly less prized by the American for its general usefulness than the date-palm is by the Arab. John Adams informs us in his *Diary* that, on one occasion, when in Massachusetts, Franklin mentioned that Rhenish grape-vines had been recently planted at Philadelphia, and had succeeded very well, whereupon his host, Edmund Quincy, expressed the wish that he could plant some in his own garden. A few weeks later Quincy received a bundle of the Rhenish slips by sea from Franklin, and a little later another by post.

Thus [diarizes Adams, at the time a young man of but twenty-four, when the difficulty with which the slips had been procured by Franklin came to his knowledge] he took the trouble to hunt over the city (Philadelphia) and not finding vines there, he sends seventy miles into the country, and then sends one bundle by water, and, lest they should miscarry, another by land, to a gentleman whom he owed nothing, and was but little acquainted with, purely for the sake of doing good in the world by propagating the Rhenish vines through these provinces. And Mr. Quincy has some of them now growing in his garden. This is an instance, too, of his amazing capacity for business, his memory and resolution: amidst so much business as counselor, postmaster, printer, so many private studies, and so many public avocations too, to remember such a transient hint and exert himself so in answer to it, is surprising.

If Adams had only known Franklin better at the time when these words were penned, which was long before his analysis of Franklin's motives could be jaundiced by jealousy or wounded self-love, he might have added that this incident was also an illustration of that unfailing good-nature which made the friendship of Franklin an ever-bubbling well-spring of kindly offices. "Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me," one of the petitions in the "little prayer," prefixed to Franklin's manual of self-discipline, expressed an aspiration which, in addition to more impressive forms of fulfilment, was realized many times over in the innumerable small offerings of good feeling that he was in the habit of laying from time to time upon the altar of friendship. In recounting the benefactions, which he bestowed upon his fellow-creatures by his public spirit and private benevolence, it is hard to refrain from speculating as to what he might have accomplished, if his wealth had only, like that of Andrew Carnegie, been commensurate with his wisdom and philanthropic zeal. Then, in truth, would have been united such agencies as have not often worked together for the amelioration of human society. But independent as Franklin was, according to the pecuniary standards of Colonial America, he was in no position to contribute money lavishly to any generous object. When he gave it, he had to give it in such a way as to make it keep itself going until it had gone far by its own mere cumulative energy. This is very interestingly brought out in a letter from him, when at Passy, to Benjamin Webb, a distressed correspondent, to whom he was sending a gift of ten louis d'ors.

I do not pretend [he said] to *give* such a Sum; I only *lend* it to you. When you shall return to your Country with a good Character, you cannot fail of getting into some Business, that will in time enable you to pay all your Debts. In that Case, when you

meet with another honest Man in similar Distress, you must pay me by lending this Sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the Debt by a like operation, when he shall be able, and shall meet with such another opportunity. I hope it may thus go thro' many hands, before it meets with a Knave that will stop its Progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford *much* in good works, and so am obliged to be cunning and make the most of a *little*.

It is to be hoped that Webb was but the first link in the golden chain which this letter sought to fashion.

It is a remarkable fact that Franklin also endeavored to give even posthumous efficacy to this same idea of economizing pecuniary force. By a codicil to his will, he created two funds of one thousand pounds each, one for the benefit of the inhabitants of the town of Boston, and the other for the benefit of the inhabitants of the town of Philadelphia. The selectmen and the ministers of the oldest Episcopalian, Congregational and Presbyterian churches in Boston were to be the trustees for the management of the Boston fund, and the City Corporation was to manage the Philadelphia fund. The amounts were to be respectively lent in sums not exceeding sixty pounds sterling, nor less than fifteen pounds, for any one person, in the discretion of the respective managers, to such young married artificers, under the age of twenty-five years, as should have served an apprenticeship in the respective towns and have faithfully fulfilled the duties stipulated for in their indentures, upon their producing certificates to their good moral character from at least two respectable citizens, and bonds executed by themselves and these citizens, as sureties, for the repayment of the loans in ten equal annual instalments, with interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum. If there were more applicants than money, the proportions, in which the sums would otherwise have been allotted, were to be ratably diminished in such a way that some assistance would be given to every applicant. As fast as the sums lent were repaid, they were again to be lent out to fresh borrowers. If the plan was faithfully carried out for one hundred years, the fond projector calculated that, at the end of that time, the Boston, as well as the Philadelphia, fund, would amount to one hundred and thirty-one thousand pounds, of which he would have the managers of the Boston fund lay out in their discretion one hundred thousand pounds in public improvements; the remaining thirty-one thousand pounds to be lent out as the original one thousand pounds was for another hundred years. At the end of the second term, Franklin calculated that, mishaps aside, the sum would be four million and sixty-one thousand pounds sterling, of which he bequeathed one million sixty-one thousand pounds to the inhabitants of Boston absolutely, and three million pounds to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts absolutely; not presuming, he said, to carry his views further. At the end of the first one hundred years, if the purpose was not already executed, the City Corporation was to use a part of the fund accumulated for the benefit of the inhabitants of Philadelphia in piping the water of Wissahickon Creek into that city, and the testator also recommended that the Schuylkill should be made completely navigable. In other respects the conditions of the two gifts were the same. An English lawyer characterized the famous will by which Peter Thellusson tried to circumvent the legal rule against perpetuities as "posthumous avarice." If Franklin, too, kept his hand clenched after he left the world, it was not in the vainglory of family pride nor from the mere sordid, uncalculating love of treasured wealth, but only that he might open it as "bounty's instrument," when overflowing full, for the purpose of conferring upon men a far richer largess of beneficence than it had been capable of conferring in life. Changes in industrial conditions defeated his intentions with respect to artificers, and the Philadelphia fund proved far less crescive than the Boston one, but both have proved enough so to illustrate the procreative quality of money upon which Franklin was so fond of dilating. The Boston fund, including the sum applied at the end of the first one hundred years

to the use of Franklin Union, amounted on January 1, 1913, to \$546,811.39, and the Philadelphia fund, including the amount applied to the use of Franklin Institute, amounted on January 1, 1913, to \$186,807.06. Poor Richard certainly selected a most effective way this time for renewing the reminder with which he ended his *Hints for those that would be Rich*.

“A Penny sav’d is Twopence clear

A Pin a Day is a groat a year.”

With the expanding horizon, which came to Franklin in 1757, when he was drawn off into the world-currents of his time, came also larger opportunities for promoting the welfare of the race. There was a double reason why he should not be tardy in availing himself of these opportunities. He was both by nature and training at once a philosopher and a philanthropist. “God grant,” he fervently exclaimed in a letter to David Hartley in 1789, “that not only the Love of Liberty, but a thorough Knowledge of the Rights of Man, may pervade all the Nations of the Earth, so that a Philosopher may set his Foot anywhere on its Surface, and say ‘This is my country,’” To Joseph Huey he wrote in the letter, from which we have already freely quoted, that the only thanks he desired for a kindness which he had shown the former was that he should always be equally ready to serve any other person who might need his assistance, and so let good offices go round; “for Mankind,” Franklin added, “are all of a Family.” During his third sojourn in England, he entered earnestly into a scheme for supplying the islands of Acpy-nomawée and Tovy-poennammoo, “called in the maps New Zealand,” which contained no useful quadrupeds but dogs, with fowls, hogs, goats, cattle, corn, iron and other commodities of civilized life. The portion of the appeal for pecuniary aid for this purpose, which was borrowed from his pen, after beginning with the statement that Britain itself was said to have originally produced nothing but sloes, adapts itself, as all his writings of this kind usually did, to both the unselfish and selfish instincts of his readers. It was the obligation, he insisted, of those, who thought it their duty to ask bread and other blessings daily from Heaven, to show their gratitude to their great Benefactor by the only means in their power, and that was by promoting the happiness of his other children. *Communiter bona profundere Deum est*. And then trade always throve better when carried on with a people possessed of the arts and conveniences of life than with naked savages.

As events moved along apace, and Franklin found himself in a world, once again ravaged and ensanguined by war, the triple birth of human folly, greed and atrocity, his heart, irrevocably enlisted as it was in the American cause, went out into one generous effort after another to establish at least a few peaceful sanctuaries where the nobler impulses and aims of human nature might be safe from the destructive rage of its malignant passions. In 1779, when our Minister to France, he issued instructions to the captains of all armed ships holding commissions from Congress not to molest, in any manner, the famous English navigator, Captain Cook, on his return from the voyage of discovery into unknown seas upon which he had been dispatched before the Revolutionary War. This act was handsomely acknowledged by the British Government. One of the gold medals, struck in honor of Captain Cook, was presented to Franklin by the hand of Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, and the British Admiralty Board also sent him a copy of the Captain’s book, with its “elegant collection of plates,” and a very polite letter from Lord Howe stating that the gift was made with the express approval of the King. In the same year similar instructions were given by Franklin for the protection of the vessel that was that year to transport the supplies which were annually conveyed from Europe to the Moravian Mission on the coast of Labrador. And later the same ægis was likewise extended over the ship which was expected to bear provisions and clothing from the charitable citizens of Dublin for the relief of suffering in the

West Indies. Of the rule that “free ships shall make free goods,” Franklin said in a letter to J. Torris, an agent for American cruisers at Dunkirk, “This rule is itself so reasonable, and of a nature to be so beneficial to mankind, that I cannot but wish it may become general.” Nor did he stop there. In this letter, such was his confidence that Congress would approve the new rule that he notified Torris that, until he had received its orders on the subject, he should condemn no more English goods found by American cruisers in Dutch vessels, unless contraband of war. How unqualifiedly he was disposed to recognize the neutrality of all such goods is evidenced by other letters of his, too, written when he was in France. But to him also belongs the peculiar glory of insisting that non-combatants should be exempt from the lamentable penalties of war.

I approve much [he said in a letter in 1780 to Charles W. F. Dumas] of the Principles of the Confederacy of the Neutral Powers, and am not only for respecting the Ships as the House of a Friend, tho’ containing the Goods of an Enemy, but I even wish for the sake of humanity that the Law of Nations may be further improv’d, by determining, that, even in time of War, all those kinds of People, who are employ’d in procuring subsistence for the Species, or in exchanging the Necessaries or Conveniences of Life, which are for the common Benefit of Mankind, such as Husbandmen on their lands, fishermen in their Barques, and traders in unarm’d Vessels, shall be permitted to prosecute their several innocent and useful Employments without interruption or Molestation, and nothing taken from them, even when wanted by an Enemy, but on paying a fair Price for the same.

This principle, as well as a stipulation against privateering, was actually made a part of the treaty of amity and commerce between Prussia and the United States, which was signed shortly before Franklin returned to America from the French Mission, and it was not for the lack of effort on his part that similar articles were not inserted in all the treaties between the United States and other European countries that were entered into about the same time.

For the practice of privateering he cherished a feeling of intense abhorrence. It behoved merchants, he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan, “to consider well of the justice of a War, before they voluntarily engage a Gang of Ruffians to attack their Fellow Merchants of a neighbouring Nation, to plunder them of their Property, and perhaps ruin them and their Families, if they yield it; or to wound, maim, or murder them, if they endeavour to defend it. Yet these Things are done by Christian Merchants, whether a War be just or unjust; and it can hardly be just on both sides. They are done by English and American Merchants, who, nevertheless, complain of private Thefts, and hang by Dozens the Thieves they have taught by their own Example.” Rarely have the injurious results of privateering been presented with more force than they were by Franklin in his *Propositions Relative to Privateering*, sent to Richard Oswald—the industrial loss involved in the withdrawal of so many men from honest labor, “who, besides, spend what they get in riot, drunkenness, and debauchery, lose their habits of industry, are rarely fit for any sober business after a peace, and serve only to increase the number of highwaymen and housebreakers”; and the pecuniary ruin into which their employers are drawn by inability, after the enjoyment of rapidly acquired wealth, to adjust the habits formed by it to normal conditions. “A just punishment,” Franklin adds, “for their having wantonly and unfeelingly ruined many honest, innocent traders and their families, whose subsistence was employed in serving the common interests of mankind.” And after all, he further said, as in the case of other lotteries, while a few of the adventurers secured prizes, the mass, for reasons that he stated very clearly, were losers.

We have already seen how strongly his mind leaned in the direction of arbitration as the proper method for settling international differences.

But a grave error it would be to think of Franklin as merely a wise, placid, humane Quaker, or as simply a benignant, somewhat visionary Friend of Man. He knew what the world ought to be, and might be made to be, but he also knew what the world was, and was likely for some time to be. He resembled the Quaker in his shrewd capacity to take care of himself, in his love of thrift and of all that appertains to the rational and useful side of life, and especially in his broad, unreserved, human sympathies. It was for this reason that, though not a Quaker himself, he could usually count with more or less certainty upon the support of Quakers in his public undertakings and political struggles. But rigid, dogged scruples like those which made an effort in Franklin's time to coerce a Pennsylvania Quaker into taking up arms as impotent, as a rule, as blows upon an unresisting punch-bag were wholly out of keeping with such a character as Franklin's. For all that was best in the enthusiastic philanthropy of the French, too, he had no little affinity, but what Lecky has called his "pedestrian intellect" saved him from inane dreams of patriarchal innocence and simplicity in a world from which Roland was to hurry himself because it was too polluted with crime.

It was a good story that Franklin's Quaker friend, James Logan, told of William Penn. He was coming over to Pennsylvania as the Secretary of Penn, when their ship was chased by an armed vessel. Their captain made ready for an engagement, but said to Penn that he did not expect his aid or that of his Quaker companions, and that they might retire to the cabin, which they all did except Logan, who remained on deck, and was quartered to a gun. The supposed enemy proved to be a friend, and, when this fact was announced by Logan to Penn and the other refugees below, Penn rebuked him for violating the Quaker principle of non-resistance. Nettled by being reproved before so many persons, Logan replied, "*I being thy servant, why did thee not order me to come down? But thee was willing enough that I should stay and help to fight the ship when thee thought there was danger.*" Franklin abhorred the Medusa locks of war, and loved the fair, smiling face of peace as much as any Quaker, but, when there was peril to be braved, he could always be relied upon to incur his share.

Both in point of physique and manliness of spirit he was well fitted for leadership and conflict. Josiah, the father of Franklin, we are told in the *Autobiography*, had "an excellent constitution of body, was of middle stature, but well set, and very strong." The description was true to Franklin himself. He is supposed to have been about five feet and ten inches high, was robustly built, and, when a printer at Watts' printing house in London, could carry up and down stairs in each hand a large form of types which one of his fellow printers could carry only with both hands. In his boyhood he was as eager as most healthy-minded boys are to go off to sea; but his father already had one runaway son, Josiah the younger, at sea, and had no mind to have another. However, living as he did near the water, Benjamin was much in and about it, and learnt early to swim well and to manage boats.

When in a boat or canoe with other boys [he says in the *Autobiography*], I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally a leader among the boys, and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, tho' not then justly conducted.

He then tells us how, under his direction, a band of his comrades, late in the afternoon, when no one was about, "like so many emmets," abstracted all the stones collected for the foundation of a new building and constructed with them a wharf on a quagmire for the convenience of the marauders when fishing. The authors of the mischief were discovered.

“Several of us,” says Franklin, “were corrected by our fathers; and, though I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinced me that nothing was useful which was not honest.”¹⁴

Another incident in Franklin’s youth, indicative of the way in which leadership was apt to be conceded in moments of perplexity to his hardihood, is narrated in the journal of his first voyage from England to America, and arose when he and two companions, after wandering about the Isle of Wight until dark, were anxiously endeavoring to make their way back across an intercepting creek to their ship, the *Berkshire*, which was only awaiting the first favoring breeze to be up and away. On this occasion, he stripped to his shirt, and waded through the waters of the creek, and at one time, through mud as well up to his middle, to a boat staked nearly fifty yards offshore; the wind all the while blowing very cold and very hard. When he reached the boat, it was only to find after an hour’s exertions that he could not release it from its fastenings, and that there was nothing for him to do but to return as he came. Then, just as the unlucky trio were thinking of looking up some haystack in which to spend the night, one of them remembered that he had a horseshoe in his pocket. Again the indomitable Franklin waded back to the boat, and this time, by wrenching out with the shoe the staple by which it was chained to the stake, secured it, and brought it ashore to his friends. On its way to the other shore, it grounded in shoal water, and stuck so fast that one of its oars was broken in an effort to get it off. After striving and struggling for half an hour and more, the party gave up and sat down with their hands before them in despair. It looked as if after being exposed all night to wind and weather, which was bad, they would be exposed the next morning to the taunts of the owner of the boat and the amusement of the whole town of Yarmouth; which was worse. However, when their plight seemed utterly hopeless, a happy thought occurred to them, and Franklin and one of his companions, having got out into the creek and thus lightened the craft, contrived to draw it into deeper water.

Still another incident brings into clear relief the resolute will of the youthful Franklin. It is told in the *Autobiography*. He was in a boat on the Delaware with his free-thinking and deep-drinking friend, Collins, who had acquired the habit of “sotting with brandy,” and some other young men. Collins was in the state pictured by one or more of the cant phrases descriptive of an inebriate condition which were compiled with such painstaking thoroughness by Franklin in his “Drinker’s Dictionary” for the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. It became Collins’ turn to row, but he refused to do it. “I will be row’d home,” said Collins. “We will not row you,” said Franklin. “You must, or stay all night on the water just as you please,” said Collins. The others said: “Let us row; what signifies it?” But Franklin’s mind was soured by Collins’ past misconduct, and he refused to do so. Thereupon Collins swore that he would make him row or throw him overboard, and advanced towards him and struck at him. As he did so, Franklin clapped his hand under Collins’ crotch, and, rising, pitched him headforemost into the river. Knowing that Collins was a good swimmer, he felt little concern about him; so the boat was rowed a short distance from Collins, and with a few timely strokes removed slightly out of his reach whenever he attempted to board it; he being asked each time whether he would consent to row.

He was ready to die with vexation [says Franklin], and obstinately would not promise to row. However, seeing him at last beginning to tire, we lifted him in and brought him home dripping wet in the evening. We hardly exchange’d a civil word afterwards, and a West India captain, who had a commission to procure a tutor for the sons of a

¹⁴ Another sidelight upon the character of Franklin in his boyhood is found in connection with the caution in regard to England that he gave to Robert Morris in 1782, when the Revolutionary War was coming to an end. “That nation,” he said, “is changeable. And though somewhat humbled at present, a little success may make them as insolent as ever. I remember that, when I was a boxing boy, it was allowed, even after an adversary said he had enough, to give him a rising blow. Let ours be a douser.”

gentleman at Barbadoes, happening to meet with him, agreed to carry him thither. He left me then, promising to remit me the first money he should receive in order to discharge the debt; but I never heard of him after.

The debt was for money that Franklin had lent to Collins, when in straits produced by his dissipated habits, out of the vexatious sum collected by Franklin for Mr. Vernon, which cost him so much self-reproach until remitted to that gentleman.

The firmness exhibited by Franklin on this occasion he never failed to exhibit in his later life whenever it was necessary for him to do so. Even John Adams, in 1778, though he had worked himself up to the point of charging Franklin with downright indolence and with the “constant policy never to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ decidedly but when he could not avoid it,” admitted in the same breath that Franklin had “as determined a soul as any man.” If anyone doubts it, let him read the letters written by Franklin upon the rare occasions when he felt that, as a matter of justice or sober self-respect, he could not escape the duty of holding up the mirror of candid speech to the face of misconduct. On these occasions, his rebuke was like a bitter draught administered in a measuring glass, not a drop too much, not a drop too little. Witness his letter of March 12, 1780, to Captain Peter Landais in reply to the demand of that captain that he should be again placed in command of the *Alliance*.

The demand, however [Franklin wrote], may perhaps be made chiefly for the sake of obtaining a Refusal, of which you seem the more earnestly desirous as the having it to produce may be of service to you in America. I will not therefore deny it to you, and it shall be as positive and clear as you require it. No one has ever learnt from me the Opinion I formed of you from the Enquiry made into your conduct. I kept it entirely to myself. I have not even hinted it in my Letters to America, because I would not hazard giving to any one a Bias to your Prejudice. By communicating a Part of that Opinion privately to you it can do you no harm for you may burn it. I should not give you the pain of reading it if your Demand did not make it necessary. I think you, then, so imprudent, so litigious and quarrelsome a man, even with your best friends, that Peace and good order and, consequently, the quiet and regular Subordination so necessary to Success, are, where you preside, impossible. These are matters within my observation and comprehension, your military Operations I leave to more capable Judges. If therefore I had 20 Ships of War in my Disposition, I should not give one of them to Captain Landais.

All the higher forms of intellectual or moral power suggest the idea of reserve force, and of nothing is this truer than the self-controlled indignation of a really strong man like Franklin or Washington.

What Franklin did for Philadelphia, when peace prevailed, we have already seen; what he did for it, when threatened by war, remains to be told. In 1747, England was involved in a struggle with France and Spain, and the city lay at the mercy of French and Spanish privateers, all the efforts of Governor Thomas to induce the Quaker majority in the Assembly to pass a militia law and to make other provision for the security of the Province having proved wholly futile. Under these circumstances, Franklin wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled *Plain Truth*, for the purpose of arousing the people of the Province to a true sense of their perilous predicament.

The pamphlet [Franklin tells us in the *Autobiography*], had a sudden and surprising effect, and we can readily believe it, for rarely has an alarum been more artfully sounded. In its pages is to be found every artifice of persuasion that could be skillfully used by an adroit pamphleteer for the purpose of playing upon the fears of his readers

and inciting them to determined measures of self-defense. It began by pointing out the causes which had brought about an entire change in the former happy situation of the Province, namely its increased wealth, its defenseless condition, the familiarity acquired by its enemies with its Bay and River through prisoners, bearers of flags of truce, spies, and, perhaps, traitors, the ease with which pilots could be employed by these enemies and the known absence of ships of war, during the greatest part of the year, ever since the war began, from both Virginia and New York. That the enemies of the Province might even then have some of their spies in the Province could not be seriously doubted, it declared, for to maintain such spies had been the practice of all nations in all ages, as for example the five men sent by the Children of Dan to spy out the land of the Zidonians, and search it. (Book of Judges, Chap. XVIII, V. 2). These men, while engaged in their enterprise, met with a certain idolatrous priest of their own persuasion (would to God no such priests were to be found among the Pennsylvanians!) And, when they questioned him as to whether their way would be prosperous, he among other things said unto them, *Go in Peace; before the Lord is your Way wherein you go.* (It was well known that there were many priests in the Province of the same religion as those who, of late, encouraged the French to invade the mother country). *And they came, (Verse 7) to Laish, and saw the People that were therein, how they dwelt CARELESS, after the Manner of the Zidonians,* quiet and secure. They *thought* themselves secure no doubt; and, as they *never had been* disturbed, vainly imagined they *never should*. It was not unlikely that some saw the danger they were exposed to by living in that careless manner; but it was not unlikely, too, that if these publicly expressed their apprehensions, the rest reproached them as timorous persons, wanting courage or confidence in their Gods, who (they perhaps said) had hitherto protected them. But the spies (Verse 8) returned, and among other things said to their countrymen (Verse 9), *Arise that we may go up against them; for we have seen the Land and behold it is very good! When ye go, ye shall come unto a People SECURE* (that is a people that apprehend no danger, and therefore have made no provision against it; great encouragement this), *and to a large Land, and a Place where there is no Want of any Thing.* What could they desire more? Accordingly we find, continued *Plain Truth*, in the succeeding verses that *six hundred Men* only, *appointed with Weapons of War*, undertook the conquest of this *large Land*; knowing that 600 men, armed and disciplined, would be an overmatch, perhaps, for 60,000 unarmed, undisciplined, and off their guard. And when they went against it, the idolatrous priest (Verse 17) *with his graven Image, and his Ephod, and his Teraphim, and his molten Image* (plenty of superstitious trinkets) joined with them, and, no doubt, gave them all the intelligence and assistance in his power; his heart, as the text assures us, *being glad*, perhaps, for reasons more than one. And now what was the fate of poor Laish? The 600 men, being arrived, found, as the spies had reported, a people quiet and secure. (Verses 20, 21). *And they smote them with the Edge of the Sword, and burnt the City with fire; and there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon*—not so far from Zidon, however, as *Pennsylvania* was from *Britain*; and yet we are, said *Plain Truth*, more careless than the people of *Laish*!

Having awakened in this clever fashion the slumbering strings of sectarian hatred and religious association, the author of *Plain Truth* brings the same sure and compelling touch to the other points of his theme: the danger that the Iroquois might, from considerations set forth in the pamphlet with telling force, be wholly gained over by the French; which meant deserted plantations, ruin, bloodshed and confusion; the folly and selfishness of the view that Rural Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia did not owe each other mutual obligations of

assistance; the ruin in which commerce, trade and industry were certain to be involved by the occlusion of the Delaware; the probability that the enemy, finding that he could come higher and higher up the river, seize vessels, land and plunder plantations and villages, and return with his booty unmolested, might finally be led to believe that all Pennsylvanians were Quakers, against all defence, from a principle of conscience, and thus be induced to strike one bold stroke for the city and for the whole plunder of the river.

Then, after dispatching with a few practical observations the fallacy that the expense of a vessel to guard the trade of the Province would be greater than any loss that the enemy could inflict upon the Province at sea, and that it would be cheaper for the Government to open an insurance office and to pay every such loss, the pamphlet presents a harrowing description of the fate that would befall Philadelphia if it passed into the hands of the enemy. It is all limned with the minuteness of a Dutch painting; the confusion and disorder; the outcries and lamentations; the stream of outgoing fugitives (including citizens reputed to be rich and fearful of the torture), hurrying away with their effects; the wives and children hanging upon the necks of their husbands and fathers and imploring them to be gone; the helplessness of the few that would remain; the sack; the conflagration. But what, asked *Plain Truth*, would the condition of the Philadelphians be, if suddenly surprised without previous alarm, perhaps in the night? Confined to their houses, they would have nothing to trust to but the enemy's mercy. Their best fortune would be to fall under the power of commanders of King's ships, able to control the mariners; and not into the hands of licentious privateers. Who could without the utmost horror conceive the miseries of the latter, when their persons, fortunes, wives and daughters would be subject to the wanton and unbridled rage, rapine and lust of negroes, mulattoes and others, the vilest and most abandoned of mankind? And then in a timely marginal note *Plain Truth* tells how poor Captain Brown, for bravely defending himself and his vessel longer than the ragged crew of a Spanish privateer expected, was barbarously stabbed and murdered, though on his knees begging quarter!

It would not be so bad for the rich, said *Plain Truth*. The means of speedy flight were ready to their hands, and they could lay by money and effects in distant and safe places against the evil day. It was by the middling people, the tradesmen, shopkeepers and farmers of the Province and city that the brunt would have to be borne. They could not all fly with their families, and, if they could, how would they subsist? Upon them too the weight of the contributions exacted by the enemy (as was true of ordinary taxes) would rest. Though numerous, this class was quite defenceless as it had neither forts, arms, union nor discipline, and yet on whom could it fix its eyes with the least expectation that they would do anything for its security? Not on that wealthy and powerful body of people, the Quakers, who had ever since the war controlled the elections of the Province and filled almost every seat in the Assembly. Should the Quakers be conjured by all the ties of neighborhood, friendship, justice and humanity to consider the obligations that they owed to a very great part of the people who could have no confidence that God would protect those that neglected the use of rational means for protecting themselves, and the distraction, misery and confusion, desolation and distress which might possibly be the effect of their unreasonable predominancy and perseverance, yet all would be in vain; for the Quakers had already been by great numbers of the people petitioned in vain. The late Governor of the Province did for years solicit, request and even threaten them in vain. The council had twice remonstrated with them in vain. Their religious prepossessions were unchangeable, their obstinacy invincible.

The manner in which Franklin makes his strictures on the Quakers in this pamphlet keen enough to shame them into letting the other elements of the population of the Province have the use of enough of the public money to enable them to protect both themselves and the

Quakers and yet not keen enough to make the Quakers thoroughly incensed as well as obstinate is one of the notable features of *Plain Truth*.

The prospect of the middling people of the Province, the pamphlet continues, was no better, if they turned their eyes to those great and rich men, merchants and others, who were ever railing at the Quakers, but took no one step themselves for the public safety. With their wealth and influence, they might easily promote military ardor and discipline in the Province and effect everything under God for its protection. But envy seemed to have taken possession of their hearts, and to have eaten out and destroyed every generous, noble, public-spirited sentiment, and rage at the disappointment of their little schemes for power gnawed their souls, and filled them with such cordial hatred to their opponents that any proposal, by the execution of which the latter might receive benefit as well as themselves, was rejected with indignation.

However, if the city and Province were brought to destruction, it would not be for want of numerous inhabitants able to bear arms in their defence. It was computed that the Province had at least (exclusive of the Quakers) 60,000 fighting men, acquainted with firearms, many of them hunters and marksmen, hardy and bold. All they lacked was order, discipline and a few cannon. At present they were like the separate filaments of flax before the thread is formed, without strength because without connection; but union would make them strong and even formidable. Many of the inhabitants of the Province were of the British race, and, though the fierce fighting animals of those happy islands were said to abate their natural fire and intrepidity, when removed to a foreign clime, yet, with their people this was not so. Among the inhabitants of the Province likewise were those brave men whose fathers in the last age made so glorious a stand for Protestantism and English liberty, when invaded by a powerful French Army, joined by Irish Catholics, under a bigoted Popish King; and also thousands of that warlike nation whose sons had ever since the time of Cæsar maintained the character he gave their fathers of uniting the most obstinate courage to all the other military virtues—the brave and steady Germans.

Poor Richard, of course, had to have his proverb in war as well as peace. Were the union formed, and the fighting men of the Province once united, thoroughly armed and disciplined, the very fame of strength and readiness, *Plain Truth* thought, would be a means of discouraging the enemy, “for,” said Franklin, “‘tis a wise and true Saying, that *One Sword often keeps another in the Scabbard*. The Way to secure Peace is to be prepared for War.”

After these weighty maxims, this remarkable pamphlet ends with the statement that, if its hints were so happy as to meet with a suitable disposition of mind from the countrymen and fellow citizens of the writer, he would, in a few days, lay before them a form of association for the purposes mentioned in the pamphlet, together with a practical scheme for raising the money necessary for the crisis without laying a burthen on any man.

Like

“The drum,

That makes the warrior’s stomach come,”

was *Plain Truth* with its sudden and surprising effect. Agreeably with the popular response to it, Franklin drafted articles of association, after consulting with others, and issued a call for a citizen’s rally in the Whitefield meeting-house. When the citizens assembled, printed copies of the articles had already been struck off, and pens and ink had been distributed throughout the hall. Franklin then harangued the gathering a little, read and explained the articles, and handed around the printed copies. They were so eagerly signed that, when the meeting broke up, there were more than twelve hundred signatures, and this number, when the country

people were subsequently given an opportunity to sign, swelled to more than ten thousand. All the signers furnished themselves as soon as they could with arms, organized into companies and regiments, chose their own officers, and met every week for military training. The contagion spread even to the women, and, with money raised by their own subscriptions, they procured silk colors for the companies, set off with devices and mottoes furnished by Franklin himself, who had a peculiar turn for designing things of that sort. The next step was for the officers of the companies, constituting the Philadelphia regiment, to meet and choose a colonel. They did so, and selected the only man, or almost the only man, so far as we know, who has ever, in the history of the American Militia, conceived himself to be unfit for the office of colonel, and that is Benjamin Franklin. "Conceiving myself unfit," says Franklin in the *Autobiography*, "I declin'd that station, and recommended Mr. Lawrence, a fine person, and man of influence, who was accordingly appointed." But between building and equipping a battery on the river below Philadelphia, and manipulating Quaker scruples, Franklin had his hands quite as full as were those of Colonel Lawrence. At that time, whether the souls of men were to be saved by the erection of a church or their bodies to be destroyed by the erection of a battery, resort was had to a lottery. Franklin himself, for instance, was twice appointed by the vestry of Christ Church the manager of a lottery for the purpose of building a steeple and buying a chime of bells for that church. A lottery, therefore, was proposed by him to defray the expense of building and equipping the battery. The suggestion was eagerly acted upon, and, with the current of popular enthusiasm running so swiftly, the lottery soon filled, and a battery with merlons framed of logs and packed with earth was rapidly erected. The problem was how to get the necessary ordnance. Some old cannon were bought in Boston, a not over-sanguine request for some was made of the stingy Proprietaries, Richard and Thomas Penn, an order was given to other persons in England to purchase in case the request was not honored, and Colonel Lawrence, William Allen, Abram Taylor and Franklin were dispatched to New York by the association to borrow what cannon they could from Governor George Clinton. Fortunately for Pennsylvania, the cockles of that Governor's heart were of the kind that glow and expand with generous benevolence when warmed by the bottle. At first, he refused peremptorily to let the embassy have any cannon, but, later on when he sat at meat, or rather drink, with the members of his council, there was, we are told by Franklin in the *Autobiography*, great drinking of Madeira wine, as the custom of New York then was. With the progress of the dinner, he softened by degrees, and said that he would lend six. After a few more bumpers, he advanced to ten, and, at length, he very good-naturedly conceded eighteen. They were fine cannon, eighteen-pounders, with their carriages, and were soon transported and mounted on the battery in Pennsylvania, where the associators kept a nightly guard while the war lasted; and where, among the rest, Franklin regularly took his turn of duty as a common soldier.

The activity of Franklin at this juncture not only won him a high degree of popularity with his fellow-citizens but also the good will of the Governor of Pennsylvania and his Council, who took him into their confidence, and consulted with him whenever it was felt that their concurrence was needed by the association. When they approved his suggestion that a fast should be proclaimed for the purpose of invoking the blessing of Heaven upon the association, and it was found that no such thing had ever been thought of in Pennsylvania before, he even fell back upon his New England training, and drew up a proclamation for the purpose in the usual form which was translated into German, printed in both English and German, and circulated throughout the Province. The fast day fixed by the paper gave the clergy of the different sects in Pennsylvania a favorable opportunity for urging the members of their flocks to enroll themselves as members of the association, and it was the belief of Franklin that, if peace had not soon been declared, all the religious congregations in the

Province except those of the Quakers would have been enlisted in the movement for the defence of the Province.

The most interesting thing, however, connected with this whole episode was the conduct of the Quakers. James Logan, true to his former principles, wrote a cogent address to his Fellow-Friends justifying defensive war, and placed sixty pounds in Franklin's hands with instructions to him to apply all the lottery prizes that they might win to the cost of the battery. Other Friends also, perhaps most of the younger ones, were in favor of defence, but many Friends preferred to keep up silently the semblance of conformity with their dogma about war, though ready enough to have it refined away by Franklin's astuteness, which had a gift for working around obstacles when it could not climb over or break through them. That the Quakers, as a body, even if they did not relish his new-born intimacy with the executive councillors, with whom they had had a feud of long standing, were not losing much of their placidity over the proposition to protect their throats and chattels against their will, an ambitious young gentleman, who wished to displace Franklin, as the Clerk of the Quaker Assembly, soon learnt. Like the generous Maori of New Zealand, who refrained from descending upon their English invaders until they had duly communicated to them the hour of their proposed onset, he advised Franklin (from good will he said) to resign as more consistent with his honor than being turned out. He little realized apparently that he was attempting to intimidate one of the grimmest antagonists that ever entertained the robust American ideas about public office, the manner in which it is to be sought, and the prehensile tenacity, with which it is to be clung to, when secured. But for the fact that Franklin was always a highly faithful and efficient officeholder, and the further fact that he gave his entire salary, as President of Pennsylvania, to public objects, he would not fall far short of being a typical American officeholder of the better class, as that class was before the era of civil-service reform. On a later occasion, when his resignation as Deputy Postmaster-General for America was desired, he humorously observed in a letter to his sister, Jane, that he was deficient in the Christian virtue of resignation. "If they would have my Office," he said, "they must take it." And, on another later occasion, he strongly advised his son not to resign his office, as Governor of New Jersey, because, while much might be made of a removal, nothing could be made of a resignation. As long as there was a son, or a grandson of his own, with no fear of the inclination of political competitors to pry into skeleton closets, or a relative of any sort to enjoy the sweets of public office, Franklin appears to have acted consistently upon the principle that the persons whose qualifications we know best, through the accident of family intimacy, are the persons that are likely to confer the highest degree of credit upon us when we appoint them to public positions.

With this general outlook upon the part of Franklin in regard to public office, the young man, who wished to be his successor, as clerk, soon found that there was nothing left for him to do except to go off sorrowfully like the young man in the Scriptures.

My answer to him [says Franklin in the *Autobiography*] was, that I had read or heard of some public man who made it a rule never to ask for an office, and never to refuse one when offer'd to him. "I approve," says I, "of his rule, and will practice it with a small addition; I shall never *ask*, never *refuse*, nor ever *resign* an office." If they will have my office of clerk to dispose of to another, they shall take it from me. I will not, by giving it up, lose my right of some time or other making reprisals on my adversaries.

Franklin never actually refused an office except when its duties could be discharged only from what was virtually his death-bed, and he never resigned an office, though he was removed from one under circumstances which furnished a fine illustration, indeed, of how

much can be made of a removal. On the other hand, he did not keep his vow of never asking for an office; for melancholy to relate, like a raven eying a sick horse, we find him forehanded enough, when it was manifest that Mr. Elliot Benger, the Deputy Postmaster-General of America, was about to pay his last debt to nature, to apply for the reversion of his office before the debt was actually paid, and to offer, through Chief Justice Allen of Pennsylvania, the sum of three hundred pounds in perquisites and contingent fees and charges for it. Indeed, Benger, though “tho’t to be near his end” by Franklin, when the latter first set to work to succeed him, did not die until more than two years afterwards.¹⁵ As we shall see hereafter, to Franklin, as an officeholder, was honorably allotted even the state of supreme beatitude under the spoils system of politics which consists in holding more than one public office at one time.

The young aspirant for Franklin’s place had nothing but his generous motives to soothe his disappointment, for at the next election Franklin was unanimously elected clerk as usual. Indeed, Franklin had reason to believe that the measures taken for the protection of Pennsylvania were not disagreeable to any of the Quakers, provided that they were not required to participate actively in them. The proportion of Quakers sincerely opposed to resistance, he estimated, after having had a chance to look the field over, was as one to twenty-one only.

His long contact with the Assembly, as its clerk, had afforded him excellent opportunities for observing how embarrassed its Quaker majority, which loved political power quite as much as it detested war and Presbyterians, was, whenever applications were made to the Assembly for military grants by order of the Crown, and to what subtle shifts this majority was compelled to resort on such occasions to save its face; ending finally in its voting money simply for the “King’s use,” and never inquiring how it was spent. Sometimes the demand was not directly from the Crown, and then the conflict, that is being perpetually renewed between eccentric human opinions and the inexorable order of the universe, became acute, indeed, as, for instance, when this majority was urged by Governor Thomas to appropriate a sum of money with which to buy powder for the military needs of New England. Money to buy powder nakedly the Quakers were not willing to vote, but they appropriated three thousand pounds to be put into the hands of the Governor for the purchase of bread, flour, wheat or other *grain*. Some members of the Governor’s Council, desirous of still further embarrassing the Assembly, advised him not to accept provisions instead of powder, but he replied: “I shall take the money, for I understand very well their meaning; other grain is gunpowder.” Gunpowder he accordingly bought, and the Quakers maintained a silence as profound as that which lulled Franklin to sleep in their great meeting-house when he first arrived in Philadelphia. The esoteric meaning of this kind of language was, of course, not likely to be lost upon a man so prompt as Franklin to take a wink for a nod. With his practical turn of mind, he was the last person in the world to boggle over delphic words when they

¹⁵ Franklin certainly set an example on this occasion of the vigilant regard to the future which he afterwards enjoined in such a picturesque way upon Temple, when he was counselling the latter not to let the season of youth slip by him unimproved by diligence in his studies. “The Ancients,” he said, “painted *Opportunity* as an old Man with Wings to his Feet & Shoulders, a great Lock of Hair on the forepart of his Head, but bald behind; whence comes our old saying, *Take Time by the Forelock*; as much as to say, when it is past, there is no means of pulling it back again; as there is no Lock behind to take hold of for that purpose.” The advice of similar tenor in a somewhat later letter from Franklin to Temple has a touch of poetry about it. “If this Season is neglected,” he said, “it will be like cutting off the Spring from the Year.” So quick was the sympathy of Franklin always with youthful feelings and interests that he never grew too old for the application to him of Emerson’s highly imaginative lines,
 “The old wine darkling in the cask,
 Feels the bloom on the living vine.”

were clear enough for him to see that they gave him all that he wanted. So, when it was doubtful whether the Quakers in the Union Fire Company would vote a fund of sixty pounds for the purchase of tickets in the lottery, remembering the incident, which has just been related, he said to his friend, Syng, one of its members, "If we fail, let us move the purchase of a fire-engine with the money; the Quakers can have no objection to that; and then, if you nominate me and I you as a committee for that purpose, we will buy a great gun, which is certainly a *fire engine*." But there was no real danger of the fund not being voted. The company consisted of thirty members, of whom twenty-two were Quakers. The remaining eight punctually attended the meeting, at which the vote was to be taken. Only one Quaker, Mr. James Morris, appeared to oppose the grant. The proposition, he said, with the confidence that usually marks statements in a democratic community about the preponderance of popular opinion, ought never to have been made, as Friends were all against it, and it would create such discord as might break up the company. At any rate, he thought that, though the hour for business had arrived, a little time should be allowed for the appearance of other members of the company, who, he knew, intended to come for the purpose of voting against the proposition. While this suggestion was being combated, who should appear but a waiter to tell Franklin that two gentlemen below desired to speak with him. These proved to be two of the Quaker members of the company. Eight of them, they said, were assembled at a tavern just by, who were ready to come and vote for the proposition, if they should be needed, but did not desire to be sent for, if their assistance could be dispensed with. Franklin then went back to Mr. Morris, and after a little seeming hesitation—for at times he had a way of piecing out the skin of the lion with the tail of the fox—agreed to a delay of another hour. This Mr. Morris admitted was extremely fair. Nobody else came, and, upon the expiration of the hour, the proposition was carried by a vote of eight to one. Franklin was a thoroughly normal man himself, but his wit, patience and rare capacity for self-transformation usually enabled him to deal successfully with any degree of abnormality in others, however pronounced. "Sensible people," he once said to his sister Jane, "will give a bucket or two of water to a dry pump, that they may afterwards get from it all they have occasion for."

The next time that Franklin crosses the stage of war is when General Braddock and his men, in the buskins of high tragedy, are moving to their doom. It had been reported to the General that, not only had the Pennsylvania Assembly refused to vote money for the King's service, but that the Pennsylvanians themselves had sold provisions to the French, declined to aid in the construction of a road to the West, and withheld wagons and horses sorely needed by the expedition; and the General had just been compelled to settle down for a time in the temper of a chafed bull at Frederick, Maryland, for the want of wagons and horses to transport his army to Fort Duquesne, which he afterwards told Franklin could hardly detain him above three or four days on his triumphant progress to Niagara and Frontenac. Forts, he seemed to think, to recall Franklin's simile, could be taken as easily as snuff. Under these circumstances, the Pennsylvania Assembly decided to ask Franklin to visit Braddock's camp, ostensibly as Deputy Postmaster-General, for the purpose of arranging a plan, by which the General could effectively keep in postal touch with the Colonial Governors, but really for the purpose of removing the prejudices which the General had formed against Pennsylvania. And a pleasant April journey that must have been for the mounted Franklin through Pennsylvania and Delaware, and over "the green-walled hills of Maryland," with his son, and the Governors of New York and Massachusetts, also mounted, as his companions. That such a brave company, as it passed through the mild vernal air of that delightful season from stage to stage of its itinerary, experienced no dearth of hospitable offices, we may rest assured. One Maryland gentleman, the "amiable and worthy" Colonel Benjamin Tasker, who entertained Franklin and William Franklin on this journey with great hospitality and kindness at his

country place, even pleasantly claimed that a whirlwind, which Franklin made the subject of a most graphic description in a letter to Peter Collinson, had been got up by him on purpose to treat Mr. Franklin.

It was probably the energy and resource of Franklin that were really responsible for Braddock's defeat, paradoxical as this may sound. When that brave but rash and infatuated general and his officers found that only twenty-five wagons could be obtained in Virginia and Maryland for the expedition, they declared that it was at an end; not less than one hundred and fifty wagons being necessary for the purpose. Their hopes, however, were revived when Franklin remarked that it was a pity that the army had not landed in Pennsylvania, as almost every farmer in that Colony had his wagon. This observation was eagerly pounced upon by Braddock, and Franklin was duly commissioned to procure the needed wagons. With such consummate art did he, in an address published by him at Lancaster, partly by persuasion, and partly by threats, work upon the feelings of the prosperous farmers of York, Lancaster and Cumberland Counties that in two weeks the one hundred and fifty wagons, with two hundred and fifty-nine pack-horses, were on their way to Braddock's camp. Nay more; with the aid of William Franklin, who knew something of camp life and its wants, he drew up a list of provisions for Braddock's subaltern officers, whose means were too limited to enable them to victual themselves comfortably for the march, and induced the Pennsylvania Assembly to make a present of them to these officers. The twenty parcels, in which the provisions were packed, were each placed upon a horse and presented to a subaltern together with the horse itself. The twenty horses and their packs arrived in camp as soon as the wagons, and were very thankfully received. The kindness of Franklin in procuring them was acknowledged in letters to him from the colonels of the two regiments composing Braddock's army in the most grateful terms, and Braddock was so delighted with his services in furnishing the wagons and pack-horses that he not only thanked him repeatedly, craved his further assistance, and repaid him one thousand pounds of a sum amounting to some thirteen hundred pounds which he had advanced, but wrote home a letter in which, after inveighing against the "false dealings of all in this country," with whom he had been concerned, he commended Franklin's promptitude and fidelity, and declared that his conduct was almost the only instance of address and fidelity which he had seen in America. The balance of the amount that Franklin advanced he was never able to collect.

It is foreign to the plan of this book to describe the horrors of the sylvan inferno in which the huddled soldiers of Braddock stood about as much chance of successfully retaliating upon their flitting assailants as if the latter had been invisible spirits. It is enough for our purpose to say that, as soon as the wagoners, whom Franklin had gathered together, saw how things were going, they each took a horse from his wagon, and scampered away as fast as his steed could carry him, leaving too many wagons, provisions, pieces of artillery, stores and scalps behind them to make it worth the while of the victors to pursue them. Franklin states in the *Autobiography* that, when Braddock, with whom he dined daily at Frederick, spoke of passing from Fort Duquesne to Niagara, and from Niagara to Frontenac, as lightly as a traveller might speak of the successive inns at which he was to bait on a peaceful journey, he conceived some doubts and fears as to the event of the campaign. He might well have done so, for he knew, if Braddock did not, what a nimble, painted and befeathered Indian in the crepuscular shades of the primeval American forest was. We also learn from the *Autobiography* that when the Doctors Bond came to Franklin to ask him to subscribe to fireworks, to be set off upon the fall of Fort Duquesne, he looked grave, and said that it would be time enough to prepare for the rejoicing when they knew that they had occasion to rejoice. All this was natural enough in a man whose temper was cautious, and who had dined daily for some time with Braddock. "The General presum'd too much, and was too secure.

This the Event proves, but it was my Opinion from the time I saw him and convers'd with him." These were the words of Franklin in a letter to Peter Collinson shortly after the catastrophe. But, when we remember his written assurance in his Lancaster address to the Pennsylvania farmers that the service, to which their wagons and horses would be put, would be light and easy, and above all the individual promises of indemnity, tantamount to the pledge of his entire fortune, which he gave to these farmers, we cannot help feeling that Franklin's doubts and fears were not quite so strong as he afterwards honestly believed them to be, and that his second sight in this instance was, perhaps, somewhat like that of the clairvoyant, mentioned in the letter, contributed by his friend, Joseph Breintnal to one of his Busy-Body essays, who was "only able to discern Transactions about the Time, and for the most Part after their happening." Apart from the evidence afforded by the expedition that, if Braddock had been as able a general as Franklin was a commissary, its result would have been different, its chief interest to the biographer of Franklin consists in the light that it sheds upon the self-satisfied ignorance of American conditions and the complete want of sympathy with the Americans themselves which subsequently aided in rendering the efforts of Franklin to secure a fair hearing in London for his countrymen so difficult. When Franklin ventured to express apprehension that the slender line of Braddock's army, nearly four miles long, might be ambushed by the Indians, while winding its way through the woods, and be cut like a thread into several pieces, Braddock smiled at his simplicity and replied, "These savages may, indeed, be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the King's regular and disciplin'd troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression." He saw enough before he was fatally wounded to realize that the very discipline of his British soldiers was their undoing, when contending with such a mobile and wily foe as the Indian in the forest, and that a few hundred provincials, skulking behind trees, and giving their French and Indian antagonists a taste of their own tactics, were worth many thousands of such regulars even as his brave veterans. That he came to some conclusion of this kind before the close of his life we may infer from what Captain Orme told Franklin and what Franklin tells us in the *Autobiography*.

Captain Orme [says Franklin], who was one of the general's aids-de-camp, and, being grievously wounded, was brought off with him, and continu'd with him to his death, which happen'd in a few days, told me that he was totally silent all the first day, and at night only said "*Who would have thought it?*" That he was silent again the following day, saying only at last, "*We shall better know how to deal with them another time*"; and dy'd in a few minutes after.

There was not to be another time for this intrepid but reckless soldier, who, true to the broad, red banner of England, died like a bulldog with his iron jaws set to the last, but the first time might have sufficed for his task if he had only taken Franklin's hint, or freely consulted the advice of George Washington and the other provincial officers who accompanied him, or had not reduced his army merely to the condition of legs without eyes by treating the hundred Indians, invaluable as guides and scouts, whom George Croghan had brought to his aid, with such neglect and slights that they all, by successive defections, gradually dropped away from him.

In the *Autobiography* Franklin contrasts the conduct of the British on their way from the sea to the unbroken wilderness with the conduct of the French allies when making their way from Rhode Island to Yorktown. The former, he says, from their landing till they got beyond the settlements, plundered and stripped the inhabitants, totally ruining some poor families, besides insulting, abusing and confining such persons as remonstrated. This was enough, he adds, to put the Americans out of conceit of such defenders, if they had really wanted any. The French, on the other hand, though traversing the most inhabited part of America for a

distance of nearly seven hundred miles, occasioned not the smallest complaint for the loss of a pig, a chicken, or even an apple. Perhaps this was partly because the people gratefully gave them everything that they wanted before there was any occasion to take it. But it was the pusillanimous misbehavior of Colonel Dunbar, left by Braddock in the rear of his army to bring along the heavier part of his stores, provisions and baggage which converted disaster into disgrace. As soon as the fugitives from the battle reached his camp, the panic that they brought with them was instantly imparted to him and his entire force. Though he had at his command more than a thousand men, he thought of nothing better to do than to turn his draft horses to the purposes of flight, and to give all his stores and ammunition to the flames. When he reached the settlements, he was met with requests from the Governors of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania that he would station his troops on the frontier of those states so as to protect them from the fury of the savages, but, so far from stopping to protect anybody else, not one jot of speed did he abate until, to use Franklin's words, "he arriv'd at Philadelphia, where the inhabitants could protect him." "This whole transaction," declares the *Autobiography*, "gave us Americans the first suspicion that our exalted ideas of the prowess of British regulars had not been well founded."

When Dunbar did abandon the shelter which he had found at Philadelphia, it was only to give the people of Pennsylvania a parting whiff of his quality. He promised Franklin that, if three poor farmers of Lancaster County would meet him at Trenton, where he expected to be in a few days on his march to New York, he would surrender to them certain indentured servants of theirs whom he had enlisted. Although they took him at his word, and met him at Trenton, at considerable sacrifice of time and money, he refused to perform his promise.

The defeat of Braddock and its consequences left the province fully exposed to Indian incursions, and again its ablest and most public-spirited man was compelled to take the lead in providing for its defense. His first act was to draft and push through the Assembly a bill for organizing and disciplining a militia. Each company was to elect a captain, a lieutenant and an ensign, subject to the confirmation of the Governor, and the officers, so elected, of the companies forming each regiment, were to elect a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel and a major for the regiment, subject to the same confirmation. But nothing about the bill is so interesting as the further evidence that it affords of Franklin's finesse in the management of Quakers. The Articles of Association, provided for in the Act, were to be purely voluntary, and nothing in the Act was to be taken as authorizing the Governor or the military officers mentioned in it to prescribe any regulations that would in the least affect such of the inhabitants of the Province as were scrupulous about bearing arms, either in their liberties, persons or estates. There is almost a gleam of the true Franklin humor in the recital in the Act, which, though other parts of the Act safeguarded the Quaker crotchet as to fighting, made the Quaker majority in the Assembly admit that there were some persons in the Province who had been disciplined in the art of war, and even—strange as that might be—conscientiously thought it their duty to fight in defense of their country, their wives, their families and estates. The Militia Act was followed by Franklin's *Dialogue between X Y and Z* explaining and defending it. This paper is garnished with apt references to the Bible, and, as a whole, is written with much vivacity and force. Its object was to convince the English, Scotch-Irish and German Pennsylvanians that they should fight to keep their own scalps on their heads even though they could not do this without accomplishing as much for the Quakers. "For my part," says Z, "I am no coward, but hang me if I'll fight to save the *Quakers*." "That is to say," says X, "you won't pump ship because 'twill save the rats, as well as yourself." And to Z's suggestion that, if the Act was carried into execution, and proved a good one, they might have nothing to say against the Quakers at the next election, X, no unknown quantity, but

Franklin himself, replies with this burst of eloquent exhortation which makes us half doubt Franklin when he says that he was not an orator:

O my friends, let us on this occasion cast from us all these little party views, and consider ourselves as *Englishmen* and *Pennsylvanians*. Let us think only of the service of our king, the honour and safety of our country, and vengeance on its murdering enemies. If good be done, what imports it by whom 'tis done? The glory of serving and saving others is superior to the advantage of being served or secured. Let us resolutely and generously unite in our country's cause, (in which to die is the sweetest of all deaths) and may the God of Armies bless our honest endeavours.

When the defeat of Braddock first became known to Governor Morris, he hastened to consult with Franklin about the proper measures for preventing the desertion of the back counties of Pennsylvania, and he even went so far as to offer to make him a general, if he would undertake to conduct a force of provincials against Fort Duquesne. Franklin had, or with his wise modesty affected to have, a suspicion that the offer was inspired not so much by the Governor's confidence in his military abilities as by the Governor's desire to utilize his great personal influence for the purpose of enlisting soldiers and securing money to pay them with; and that, perhaps, without the taxation of the Proprietary estates. The suspicion we should say was groundless. In the land of the blind the one-eyed mole is king, and the probability is that the Governor was actuated by nothing more than the belief that in a province, where there were no seasoned generals, a man with Franklin's talents, energy and resource would be likely to prove the best impromptu commander that he could find. If so, his calculations came to nothing, for Franklin, who always saw things as they were, could discern no reason why he should be unfit to be a colonel and yet fit to be a general. When, however, the Militia Act had been passed, and Z had been silenced by X, and military companies were springing up as rapidly as mushrooms in a Pennsylvania meadow, he did permit himself to be prevailed upon by the Governor to take charge of the northwestern frontier of the Province, and to bend his energies to the task of enlisting soldiers and erecting forts for its protection. He did not think himself qualified for even this quasi-military post, but posterity has taken the liberty of differing from him in this regard. Having speedily rallied five hundred and sixty men to his standard, and called his son, who had had some military training, to his side, as his aide-de-camp, he assembled his little army at Bethlehem, the chief seat of the Moravians, and divided it into three detachments. One he sent off towards the Minisink to build a fort in the upper part of the exposed territory, another he sent off to build a fort in the lower part of the same territory, and the third he conducted himself to Gnadenhutten, a Moravian village, recently reduced to blood and ashes by the Indians, for the purpose of erecting a third fort there.

When he reached Bethlehem, he found that not only had the Moravian brethren, who, he had had reason to believe, were conscientiously averse to war, erected a stockade around the principal buildings of the town, and purchased a supply of arms and ammunition for themselves in New York, but that they had even placed a quantity of stones between the windows of their high houses, to be thrown down by their women upon the heads of any Indians by whom these buildings might be invested. "Common sense, aided by present danger, will sometimes be too strong for whimsical opinions," dryly comments Franklin in the *Autobiography*.

How death kept his court in that tortured land may be inferred from an incident recorded by Franklin in the *Autobiography*. Just before he left Bethlehem for Gnadenhutten, eleven farmers who had been driven from their plantations by the Indians obtained from him each a gun with a suitable supply of ammunition, and returned to their homes to fetch away their cattle. Ten of the eleven were killed by the Indians. The one who escaped reported that they

could not discharge their guns because the priming had become wet with rain—a mishap which the Indians were too dexterous to allow to befall their pieces. The same rain descended upon Franklin and his men on their march from Bethlehem to Gnadenhutten, and disabled their guns too, but fortunately, though at one point they had to pass through a gap in the mountains which their foes might well have turned to deadly account, they were not attacked on the march. Once arrived at Gnadenhutten, as soon as the detachment had sheltered itself under rude huts, and interred with more decent completeness the massacred victims, who had been only half buried by their demoralized neighbors, it proceeded to fell trees and to erect a fort, or rather stockade, with a circumference of four hundred and fifty-five feet. “How bow’d the woods beneath their sturdy stroke,” was not more aptly written of the peasants whom Gray’s *Elegy* has immortalized, than it might have been of the seventy brawny axemen in Franklin’s camp, two of whom could by Franklin’s watch in six minutes cut down a pine fourteen inches in diameter. In a week, in spite of drenching rains, a stockade had been constructed of sufficient strength, flimsy as it was, to fend off cannonless Indians. It consisted of palisades eighteen feet long, planted in a trench three feet deep, loopholes, and a gallery, at an elevation of six feet around its interior, for its defenders to stand on and take aim through the loopholes. When it had been finished, a swivel gun was mounted at one of its angles and discharged to let the Indians know that the garrison was supplied with such pieces. They were not far off; for when Franklin began, after he had furnished himself with a place of refuge, in case of retreat, to throw out scouting parties over the adjacent country, he found that they had been watching his movements from the hills with their feet dangling in holes, in which, for warmth, fires, made of charcoal, had been kindled. With their fires going in this way, there was neither light, flame, sparks, nor even smoke, to betray their presence; but it would seem that they were too few in numbers to feel that they could hazard an attack upon the stockade-builders.

The impression left upon the mind by this expedition is that it was managed by Franklin with no little good sense and efficiency, though it does seem to us that a man who never lacked the capacity to invent any mechanical device called for by his immediate needs ought to have been too provident to find himself in a narrow defile with guns as impotent as those of the ten poor farmers who had perished that very day. It was inexcusable in Poor Richard at any rate to forget his own saying, “For want of a Nail the Shoe was lost; for want of a Shoe the Horse was lost; and for want of a Horse the Rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the Enemy; all for want of care about a Horse-shoe Nail.” In his instructions, before he left Bethlehem, to Captain Vanetta, in relation to certain operations, which the latter was to undertake with a separate force against the Indians, Franklin, though he said nothing about trusting in God, took care to warn the captain to keep his powder dry. The expedition was cut short by a letter from the Governor and letters from Franklin’s friends in the Assembly urging him to attend the sessions about to be held by that body. There was no reason why he should not do so; for the three forts were completed, and the country people, relying upon the protection afforded by them, were content to remain on their farms; and especially too as Colonel Clapham, a New England officer, conversant with Indian warfare, had accepted the command in the place of Franklin, and had been introduced by the latter to his men as a soldier much better fitted to lead them than himself. But Franklin, though he had never been engaged in battle, found on his return to Philadelphia that he had won a military prestige upon which he could not easily turn his back. He was elected colonel of the Philadelphia regiment under such circumstances that he was unable to again decline the honor of a colonelcy on the score of unfitness. His regiment consisted of about twelve hundred presentable men, with an artillery company, furnished with six brass field-pieces, which the company had become expert enough to fire off twelve times in a minute.

The first time [says Franklin in the *Autobiography*] *I reviewed my regiment they accompanied me to my house, and would salute me with some rounds fired before my door, which shook down and broke several glasses of my electrical apparatus. And my new honour proved not much less brittle; for all our commissions were soon after broken by a repeal of the law in England.*

If, however, his colonelcy had not been marked by any considerable effusion of blood, he had acquired fame enough to arouse the intense jealousy of Thomas Penn, the Proprietary. When Franklin was on the point of setting out on a journey to Virginia, the officers of his regiment took it into their heads to escort him out of town as far as the Lower Ferry. This ceremonious proceeding was unexpectedly sprung upon him; otherwise, he says, he would have prevented it, being naturally averse to all flourishes of that sort. As it was, just as he was getting on horseback, the officers, thirty or forty in number, came to his door, all mounted, and in their uniforms, and, as soon as the cavalcade commenced to move, made things worse by drawing their swords and riding with them naked the entire distance to the Lower Ferry. The Proprietary, when he heard of the incident, was deeply affronted. No such honor, forsooth, he declared, had ever been paid to him, when in the Province, nor to any of his Governors, and was only proper when due homage was being paid to princes of the blood royal; all of which Franklin innocently tells us might be so for aught such a novice in matters of this kind as he knew. So aroused indeed was the Proprietary by the affair, coming as it did on the heels of the grudge that he already owed Franklin for his part in insisting that the Proprietary estates should sustain their just share of the common burden of taxation, that he even denounced Franklin to the British ministry as the arch obstructionist of measures for the King's service, citing the pomp of this occasion as evidence of the fact that Franklin harbored the intention of taking the government of the Province out of his hands by force. His malice, in fact, did not stop short even of an effort to deprive Franklin of his office as Deputy Postmaster-General for the Colonies; with no effect, however, except that of eliciting a gentle admonition to Franklin from Sir Everard Fawkener, the British Postmaster-General.

Thus ended for a time the military career of Franklin amid the crash of his electrical apparatus and the gleam of unfleshed swords. Susceptible of subdivision as his life is, it would hardly justify a separate chapter on Franklin the Soldier; but, all the same, by the splendidly efficient service rendered by him to Braddock, by his pamphlet, *Plain Truth*, by his Articles of Association and his battery, by his X Y Z dialogue and Militia Act, by his tact in conciliating and circumventing the awkward Quaker conviction that "peace unweaponed conquers every wrong," and by the energy and sound judgment brought by him to the expedition to Gnadenhutten he had established his right to be considered in war as well as in peace the man whose existence could be less easily spared than that of any other Pennsylvanian. There is a pleasure in speculating on the turn that his future might have taken if the terms in which Braddock recommended him to the favor of the Crown had been followed by the fall of Fort Duquesne instead of the battle of the Monongahela. While in his relations to Braddock's expedition he was influenced, as he always was in every such case, mainly by generous public spirit, yet it is manifest, too, that he was fully alive to the significance that his first helpful contact with such a British commander as Braddock might have for his own self-advancement.

The sterner stuff in the character of Franklin, however, was to be still further tried. During the year succeeding his second return from England in 1762, the minds of the people in the western counties of Pennsylvania, and especially of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, whose passions were easily deflected into channels of religious fanaticism, were inflamed almost to madness by Indian atrocities, and this mental condition resulted in an act of abominable butchery, such as has rarely blackened even the history of the American Indian himself.

Living not far from the town of Lancaster, on the Manor of Conestoga, was the remnant of what had once been a considerable tribe of the Six Nations. The members of this tribe sent messengers to welcome the first English settlers of Pennsylvania with presents of venison, corn and furs, and entered into a treaty of friendship with William Penn which, in the figurative language of the savage, was to last “as long as the Sun should shine, or the Waters run in the Rivers,” and which in point of fact was faithfully observed by both parties. In the course of time, as the whites purchased land from them, and hemmed them in more and more closely, they settled down upon a part of the Manor assigned to them by William Penn which they were not allowed by the Provincial Government to alienate, and here they lived on terms of unbroken amity with their white neighbors. In the further course of time, the tribe dwindled to such an extent that there were only twenty survivors, seven men, five women, and eight children of both sexes, whose means of subsistence were supplied to some extent by mendicancy and the chase, but mainly by the sale to the whites of the brooms, baskets and wooden ladles made by the women. The oldest of the band, a man named Shehaes, was old enough to have been present when the original chain of friendship between the tribe and William Penn was brightened by a second treaty between the same contracting parties. The youngest were infants. There is good reason to believe that at least one or two of the band had been in secret commerce with the hostile Indians whose shocking barbarities had filled the souls of such of the Pennsylvania borderers as had not been tomahawked, carried off into captivity or driven from their homes with sensations little short of frenzied desperation. On Wednesday, the 14th of December, 1763, fifty men from the territory about Paxton, a small town in Pennsylvania, on the Susquehanna above Conestoga, all mounted, and armed with firelocks, hangers and hatchets, descended upon the squalid huts of this band, about dawn, and slaughtered in cold blood three men, two women and a young boy—the only members of the vagabond band whom they found at home. The firelocks, hangers and hatchets were all used in perpetrating the bloody work, and the miserable victims were scalped and horribly mangled besides. Shehaes himself was cut to pieces in his bed. Then, after seizing upon such booty as was to be found, and applying the torch to most of the huts, the murderers rode away through the snow-drifts to their homes. A shudder of horror passed through the whites in the vicinity, and a cry of bitter lamentation went up from the younger survivors of the band when they returned to the sickening spot, where the charred bodies of their parents and other relations, looking as one observer said like half burnt logs, told the hideous story.

We had known the greater part of them from children [said Susannah Wright, a humane white woman, who resided near the spot], had been always intimate with them. Three or four of the women were sensible and civilized, and the Indians’ children used to play with ours, and oblige them all they could. We had many endearing recollections of them, and the manner of effecting the brutal enormity so affected us, that we had to beg visitors to forbear to speak of it.

The public officials of the Province appear to have faithfully performed their duty immediately after the tragedy. The survivors were gathered together by the sheriff of Lancaster, and placed in the workhouse for safety. A hundred and forty other friendly Indians, who had been converted by the Moravians, fearing that they might be visited with just such violence, had found, before the descent upon Conestoga, shelter near Philadelphia, at the public expense, under the guidance of a good Moravian minister. The Governor, John Penn, issued a proclamation calling upon all the civil and military officers of the Colony and all His Majesty’s other liege subjects to do their duty. But the Governor soon found that he was reckoning with that Scotch-Irish temper, which, at its highest point of rigidity, is like concrete reinforced with iron rods, and which in this instance was more or less countenanced by the sympathy of the entire Province. Despite the proclamation of the Governor under the

great seal of the Colony, the incensed frontiersmen, now fired by the fresh taste of blood as well as by the original conviction of the settlements from which they came that an angry God had turned his face from the inhabitants of Pennsylvania, because they had not smitten, hip and thigh, and utterly destroyed the red-skinned Amorites and Canaanites, again assembled, and riding into Lancaster, armed as on the previous occasion, broke in the door of its workhouse and dispatched every solitary one of the poor wretches who had escaped their pitiless hands. Thereupon, they mounted their horses, huzzaed in triumph, and rode off unmolested. The whole thing was like the flight of the pigeon-hawk, so swift and deadly was it; for, within ten or twelve minutes after the alarm was given, the borderers were again in their saddles. By a large part of the population of the Province the deed was applauded as the infliction of just vengeance upon a race which had many unspeakable enormities to answer for in its relations to the whites; by the people of the Province generally, except the Quakers, it was but languidly condemned, and the proclamations of the Governor proved to be mere paper trumpets, for all the efforts of the Government to bring the criminals to justice were wholly unsuccessful.

But there was one man in the Province, and he not a Quaker either, to whom justice, mercy and law had not lost their meaning. In his *Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County*, Franklin, in words as burning as any ever inspired by righteous wrath, denounced with blistering force the assassins and their crimes. Anger, Lord Bacon tells us, makes even dull men witty. Just indignation in this case lifted one of the soberest and most self-contained of men to the level of impassioned feeling and of almost lyrical speech. With a firm yet rapid hand, Franklin sketched the history of the tribe, its peaceful intercourse with the whites, its decline until it numbered only the twenty creatures whom he brings vividly before us with a few familiar strokes of individual description, the infamous circumstances that attended the destruction of defenseless weakness in hut and workhouse. Then, along with illustrations of clemency and magnanimity derived from many different historical and national sources, and even from the annals of semi-civilized and barbarous communities, and graphically contrasted with the conduct of the ruthless men who had wreaked their will upon the Conestoga villagers, male and female, and their children, he poured out a tide of scathing execration upon the heads of the malefactors which showed as nothing else in all his life ever showed how deep were the fountains that fed the calm flow of his ordinary benevolence.

O, ye unhappy Perpetrators of this horrid Wickedness! [he exclaimed, rising with a natural crescendo of exalted feeling even into the sublimated province of the apostrophe] reflect a Moment on the Mischief ye have done, the Disgrace ye have brought on your Country, on your Religion, and your Bible, on your Families and Children! Think on the Destruction of your captivated Country-folks (now among the wild *Indians*) which probably may follow, in Resentment of your Barbarity! Think on the Wrath of the United *Five Nations*, hitherto our Friends, but now provoked by your murdering one of their Tribes, in Danger of becoming our bitter Enemies. Think of the mild and good Government you have so audaciously insulted; the Laws of your King, your Country, and your God, that you have broken; the infamous Death that hangs over your Heads; for Justice, though slow, will come at last. All good People everywhere detest your Actions. You have imbrued your Hands in innocent Blood; how will you make them clean? The dying Shrieks and Groans of the Murdered, will often sound in your Ears. Their Spectres will sometimes attend you, and affright even your innocent Children! Fly where you will, your Consciences will go with you. Talking in your Sleep shall betray you, in the Delirium of a Fever you yourselves shall make your own Wickedness known.

These were honest, fearless words, but, so far as we know, the Erynnes did not plant any stings of conscience in the breasts of the men from Paxton District whom Franklin elsewhere in this Narrative described as the Christian white savages of Paxton and Donegal. On the contrary, several hundred men from the same region, armed with rifles and hatchets, and clad in hunting shirts, marched towards Philadelphia with the avowed purpose of killing the Moravian Indians who had found refuge in its vicinity. The city was reduced to a state of terror, and Governor Penn, like his predecessors, could think of nothing more expedient to do than to invoke the advice and assistance of Franklin. He accordingly made Franklin's house his headquarters, and freely consulted with him touching every defensive measure required by the crisis. Again Franklin formed an association for the protection of Philadelphia; and, under his auspices, the citizens of Philadelphia were enrolled into nine companies, six of infantry, two of horse, and one of artillery. "Governor Penn," he afterwards declared in a letter to Lord Kames, "made my house for some time his headquarters, and did everything by my advice; so that, for about forty-eight hours, I was a very great man; as I had been once some years before, in a time of public danger." On came the insurgents until they reached Germantown, seven miles from the city. Here they were met by four citizens, of whom Franklin was one, who had been requested by the Governor and his Council to confer with them. While the conference was pending, Franklin's regiment, supported by a detachment of King's troops, remained in the city under arms, and even young Quakers labored incessantly to complete the intrenchments around the barracks, in which the menaced Indians with their Moravian shepherd had been placed. Indeed, now that the waves of the Presbyterian invasion were lapping his own doorsill, the Quaker of every age in Philadelphia appears to have entirely lost sight of the duty of non-resistance. The conference satisfied the insurgents that graver work was ahead of them than that of slaying and scalping old men, women and children, and they retraced their steps. "The fighting face we put on," said Franklin, in his letter to Lord Kames, "and the reasonings we used with the insurgents,... having turned them back and restored quiet to the city, I became a less man than ever; for I had, by these transactions, made myself many enemies among the populace." He had, indeed, but not one whose enmity was not more honorable to him than the friendship of even all his host of friends.

Nor did the eagerness of Franklin to bring the Paxton assassins to justice cease with the conference at Germantown. Though pamphlets were sold in the streets of Philadelphia lauding their acts, and inveighing against all who had assisted in protecting the Moravian Indians, though the Governor himself was weak or wicked enough to curry political favor with the party which approved the recent outrages, Franklin still inflexibly maintained that the law should be vindicated by the condign punishment of the Paxton ringleaders. In another place we shall see what his resolute stand cost him politically.

IV. Franklin's Family Relations

When we turn from Franklin's philanthropic zeal and public spirit to his more intimate personal and social traits, we find much that is admirable, not a little that is lovable, and some things with quite a different aspect. His vow of self-correction, when he had sowed his wild oats and reaped the usual harvest of smut and tares, was, as we have intimated, retrospective as well as prospective. He violated his obligations, as his brother James' apprentice, by absconding from Boston before his time was up, and added aggravation to his original offence by returning to Boston, and exhibiting his genteel new suit, watch and silver money to his brother's journeymen, while he descanted to them upon the land of milk and honey from which he had brought back these indicia of prosperity; his brother all the time standing by grum and sullen, and struggling with the emotions which afterwards caused him to say to his stepmother, when she expressed her wish that the brothers might become reconciled, that Benjamin had insulted him in such a manner before his people that he could never forget or forgive it. In this, however, he was mistaken, as Franklin tersely observes in the *Autobiography*. Some ten years subsequently, on his return from one of his decennial visits to Boston, Franklin stopped over at Newport, to see this brother, who had removed thither, and he found him in a state of rapid physical decline. The former differences were forgotten, the meeting was very cordial and affectionate, and, in compliance with a request, then made of him by James, Franklin took James' son, a boy of ten, as an apprentice, into his own printing house at Philadelphia. Indeed, he did more than he was asked to do; for he sent the boy for some years to school before putting him to work. Afterwards, when the nephew became old enough to launch out into business on his own account, Franklin helped him to establish himself as a printer in New England with gifts of printing materials and a loan of more than two hundred pounds. Thus was the first *deleatur* of pricking conscience duly heeded by Franklin, the Printer; the first *erratum* revised. And it is but just to him to say that the *erratum*, if the whole truth were told, was probably more venial than his forgiving spirit allowed him to fully disclose. Under the indentures of apprenticeship, it was as incumbent upon the older brother to abstain from excessive punishment as it was upon the younger not to abscond. Franklin, in the *Autobiography*, while stating that James was passionate and often beat him, also states that James was otherwise not an ill-natured man, and finds extenuation for his brother's violence in the fear of the latter that the success of the Silence Dogood letters might make the young apprentice vain, and in the fact that the young apprentice himself was perhaps too saucy and provoking. Franklin almost always had a word of generous palliation for anyone who had wronged him. The chances, we think, distinctly are that the real nature of the relations between James and Benjamin are to be found not in the text of the *Autobiography* but in the note to it in which its author declares that the harsh and tyrannical treatment of his brother might have been a means of impressing him with that aversion to arbitrary power which had stuck to him through his whole life. Nor should it be forgotten that the younger brother did not bring the Canaan south of the Delaware, nor the watch and other evidences of the good fortune that he had found there, to the attention of James' journeymen until James, whom he had called to see at the printing house, where these journeymen were employed, had received him coldly, looked him all over, and turned to his work again. There is the fact besides, if Franklin is to be permitted to testify in his own behalf, that, when the disputes between the two brothers were submitted to their father, whose good sense and fairness frequently led him to be chosen as an arbitrator between contending parties, the judgment was generally in Benjamin's favor; either, he says, because he was usually in the right (he fancied) or else was a better pleader. Another *erratum* was

revised when, after plighting his troth to Deborah Read on the eve of his first voyage to London, and then forgetting it in the distractions of the English capital, he subsequently married her. Still another was revised when he discharged the debt to Mr. Vernon, which occasioned him so much mental distress. The debt arose in this manner: On his return journey to Philadelphia, after his first visit to Boston, he was asked by Mr. Vernon, a friend of his brother, John, who resided at Newport, to collect the sum of thirty-five pounds currency due to Mr. Vernon in Pennsylvania, and to keep it until Mr. Vernon gave him instructions about its remittance. The money was duly collected by Franklin on his way to Philadelphia, but unfortunately for him his youthful friend Collins, before his departure from Boston, had decided to remove to Pennsylvania, too, and proceeding from Boston to New York in advance of him, was his companion from New York to Philadelphia. While awaiting Franklin's arrival at New York, Collins drank up and gambled away all his own money. The consequence was that Franklin had to pay his lodging for him at New York and defray all his subsequent expenses. The journey to Philadelphia could be completed only with the aid of the Vernon debt, and, after the two reached Philadelphia, Collins, being unable to obtain any employment because of his bad habits, and knowing that Franklin had the balance of the Vernon collection in his hands, repeatedly borrowed sums from him, promising to repay them as soon as he was earning something himself. By these loans the amount collected for Mr. Vernon was finally reduced to such an extent that Franklin was at a painful loss to know what he should do in case Mr. Vernon demanded payment. The thought of his situation haunted him for some years to come, but happily for him Mr. Vernon was an exception to the saying of Poor Richard that creditors are a superstitious sect, great observers of set days and times. He kindly made no demand upon Franklin for quite a long period, and in the end merely put him in mind of the debt, though not pressing him to pay it; whereupon Franklin wrote to him, we are told by the *Autobiography*, an ingenuous letter of acknowledgment, craved his forbearance a little longer, which was granted, and later on, as soon as he was able to do so, paid the principal with interest and many thanks. Just why Mr. Vernon was such an indulgent creditor the *Autobiography* does not reveal. If, as Franklin subsequently wrote to Strahan, the New England people were artful to get into debt and but poor pay, Mr. Vernon at any rate furnishes evidence that they could be generous lenders. Perhaps Mr. Vernon simply had his favorable prepossessions like many other men who knew Franklin in his early life, or perhaps he had some of Franklin's own quick sympathy with the trials and struggles of youth, and was not averse to lending him the use, even though compulsory, of a little capital, or, perhaps, he was restrained from dunning Franklin by his friendship for Franklin's brother.

The *erratum* into which Franklin fell in writing and publishing his free-thinking dissertation on *Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, which was dedicated to his friend Ralph, he revised, as we have seen, by destroying all the copies upon which he could lay his hands and also, we might add, by a counter pamphlet in which he recanted and combated his own reasonings. In his unreflecting hours he mixed the poison; in his more reflective hours he compounded the antidote.

Franklin was guilty of another *erratum* when Ralph found that it was one thing to have an essay on Liberty dedicated to him by a friend and another thing to have the friend taking liberties with his mistress. This *erratum* was never revised by Franklin unless upon principles of revision with which Ralph himself at least could not find fault, as the history of the *erratum* is told in the *Autobiography*. The young woman in this case was a milliner, genteelly bred, sensible, lively, and of most pleasing conversation. Ralph, who, until Pope brought him back with a disillusioning thud to the dull earth by a shaft from the *Dunciad*, imagined himself to be endowed with an exalted poetic genius, read plays to her in the evenings, and finally formed a *liaison* with her. They lived together for a time, but, finding

that her income was not sufficient to sustain them both and the child that was the fruit of the connection, he took charge of a country school where he taught ten or a dozen boys how to read and write at sixpence each a week, assumed Franklin's name because he did not wish the world to know that he had ever been so meanly employed, recommended his mistress to Franklin's protection, and, in spite of every dissuasive that Franklin could bring to bear upon him, including a copy of a great part of one of Young's satires, which set forth in a strong light the folly of courting the Muses, sent to Franklin from time to time profuse specimens of the *magnum opus* over which he was toiling. In the meantime, the milliner, having suffered on Ralph's account in both reputation and estate, was occasionally compelled to obtain pecuniary assistance from Franklin. The result was that he grew fond of her society, and, presuming upon his importance to her, attempted familiarities with her which she repelled with a proper resentment, and communicated to Ralph, who, on his next return to London, let Franklin know that he considered all his obligations to him cancelled. As these obligations consisted wholly of sums that Franklin had lent to Ralph, or advanced on Ralph's account from time to time out of his earnings from his vocation as a printer, Franklin, we suppose, might fairly conclude, in accordance with Ralph's method of reasoning, that he had revised the *erratum* by duly paying the penalty for it in terms of money, even if in no other form of atonement. At the time, he consoled himself with the reflection that Ralph's cancellation of obligations, which he had no means of paying, was not very material, and that Ralph's withdrawal of his friendship at least meant relief from further pecuniary loans. He does not say so, but exemption from further instalments of the laboring epic must have counted for something too. The cross-currents of human existence, however, were destined to again bring Ralph and Franklin into personal intercourse. It was after Franklin had arrived in England in 1757 as the agent of the People of Pennsylvania and Ralph, not a Homer or Milton, as he had fondly hoped to be, but a historian, pamphleteer and newspaper writer of no contemptible abilities, had gotten beyond the necessity of doing what Pope in a truculent note to the *Dunciad* had charged him with doing, namely, writing on both sides of a controversy on one and the same day, and afterwards publicly justifying the morality of his conduct. Indeed, he had gotten far enough beyond it at this stage of his life to be even a sufferer from the gout, and, remarkable as it may seem, in the light of the manner in which he had paid his indebtedness to Franklin, to be equal to the nicety of returning to the Duke of Bedford one hundred and fifty of the two hundred pounds that the Duke of Bedford had contributed to the support of the *Protestor*, a newspaper conducted by Ralph in the interest of the Duke of Bedford against the Duke of Newcastle. The *Autobiography* states that from Governor Denny Franklin had previously learned that Ralph was still alive, that he was esteemed one of the best political writers in England, had been employed in the dispute between Prince Frederick and the King, and had obtained a pension of three hundred a year; that his reputation was indeed small as a poet, Pope having damned his poetry in the *Dunciad*, but that his prose was thought as good as any man's. A few months after receiving this information, Franklin arrived in England, and Ralph called on him to renew the tie sundered for some thirty years. One sequel was a letter from Franklin to his wife in which he wrote to her as follows:

I have seen Mr. Ralph, and delivered him Mrs. Garrigues's letter. He is removed from Turnham Green, when I return, I will tell you everything relating to him, in the meantime I must advise Mrs. Garrigue not to write to him again, till I send her word how to direct her letters, he being unwilling, for some good reasons, that his present wife should know anything of his having any connections in America. He expresses great affection for his daughter and grandchildren. He has but one child here.

Other *errata* of Franklin were due to the amorous disposition over which he took such little pains to draw the veil of delicacy and reserve. Sexual ardor has doubtless exerted quite as

imperious a dominion in youth over some other great men, but none of them have been so willing to confess the overbearing force of its importunities. Speaking of the time prior to his marriage, when he was twenty-four years of age, Franklin says in the *Autobiography*: "In the meantime, that hard-to-be-governed passion of youth hurried me frequently into intrigues with low women that fell in my way, which were attended with some expense and great inconvenience, besides a continual risque to my health by a distemper which of all things I dreaded, though by great good luck I escaped it." It was to his son, strangely enough, that this chapter of his personal history was unfolded. Franklin was writing a word of warning as well as of hope for his posterity, and he painted himself, as Cromwell wished to be painted, wart and all.

For such *errata* as these there was no atonement to be made except in the sense of self-degradation likely, in the case of every self-respecting man, to follow the illicit gratification of strong physical appetites, and this Franklin had too ingenuous a way of looking at sexual irregularity to feel very acutely. The only real reinforcement that a nature like his could find against what Ferdinand in the *Tempest* calls the suggestions of "our worsen genius" was the sedative influence of marriage, its duties, its responsibilities, and its calm equable flow of mutual affection; and Franklin was early married and found in marriage and the human interests that cluster about it an uncommon measure of satisfaction and happiness.

It is an old, old story, that story of Benjamin and Deborah told in the *Autobiography*. It began on the memorable Sunday morning, when the runaway apprentice, shortly after landing at the Market Street wharf in Philadelphia, hungry, dirty from his journey, dressed in his working clothes, and with his great flap pockets stuffed with shirts and stockings, passed up Market Street before the eyes of his future wife, which were alit with merriment as he passed, clasping a great puffy Philadelphia roll under each arm and eating a third. She saw him from her father's door as he went by, presenting this "awkward, ridiculous appearance," and little realized that the ludicrous apparition which she saw was not only to be her lifelong consort, but, stranger as he then was to every human being in Philadelphia, was in coming years to confer upon that city no small part of the heritage of his own imperishable renown.

The pair were soon brought into close relations with each other. Keimer, the printer, with whom Benjamin found employment, could not lodge Benjamin in his own house for lack of furniture; so he found lodging for him with Mr. Read, Keimer's landlord and Deborah's father. And Benjamin was now in a very different plight from that in which she had first seen him; for he was earning a livelihood for himself, and his chest with better clothes in it than those that he had on when he was eating his roll under such difficulties had come around to him by sea. He was not long in forming "a great respect and affection" for Deborah, which he had some reason to believe were reciprocated by her. Courtship followed, but he was on the point of setting out for London on the fool's errand which Governor Keith had planned for him, he and Deborah were but a little over eighteen, and her mother thought that it would be more convenient for the marriage to take place on his return, after he had purchased in London the printing outfit that he was to buy upon the credit of Governor Keith, who really had no credit. "Perhaps, too," adds Franklin, "she thought my expectations not so well founded as I imagined them to be."

The fateful day came when the annual ship between London and Philadelphia was to sail. Of the fond parting we have no record except Franklin's old fashioned statement that in leaving he "interchang'd some promises with Miss Read." These promises, so far as he was concerned, were soon lost to memory in the lethean cares, diversions and dissipations of eighteenth century London. By degrees, Franklin tells us, he forgot his engagements with Miss Read, and never wrote more than one letter to her, and that to let her know that he

was not likely to return soon. “This,” he says, “was another of the great *errata* of my life, which I should wish to correct if I were to live it over again.” Another of those *errata* of his life, he might have added, in regard to which, like his use of Mr. Vernon’s money, his approaches to Ralph’s mistress, and his commerce with lewd wenches, the world, with which silence often passes as current as innocence, would never have been the wiser, if he had not chosen, as so few men have been sufficiently courageous and disinterested to do, to make beacons of his own sins for others to steer their lives by. He did return, as we know, but Miss Read was Miss Read no longer. In his absence, her friends, despairing of his return after the receipt of his letter by Deborah (how mercilessly he divulges it all), had persuaded her to marry another, one Rogers, a potter, “a worthless fellow, tho’ an excellent workman, which was the temptation to her friends.” With him, however, Franklin tells us, “she was never happy, and soon parted from him, refusing to cohabit with him or bear his name, it being now said that he had another wife.” One more concise statement from Rogers’s marital successor, and Rogers disappears as suddenly as if shot through a stage trap-door. “He got into debt, ran away in 1727 or 1728, went to the West Indies, and died there.” At that time, the West Indies seem to have been the dust-pan into which all the human refuse of colonial America was swept.

In a letter to his friend Catherine Ray, in 1755, Franklin told her that the cords of love and friendship had in times past drawn him further than from Rhode Island to Philadelphia, “even back from England to Philadelphia.” This statement, we fear, if not due to the facility with which every good husband is apt to forget that his wife was not the first woman that he fell in love with, must be classed with Franklin’s statement in the *Autobiography* that Sir Hans Sloane persuaded him to let him add an asbestos purse owned by Franklin to his museum of curiosities, his statement in a letter to his son that he was never sued until a bill in chancery was filed against him after his removal from the office of Deputy Postmaster-General, and his statement made at different times that he never asked for a public office. We know from Franklin’s own pen that it was he who solicited from Sir Hans Sloane the purchase, and not Sir Hans Sloane who solicited from him the sale, of the asbestos purse; we know from the *Autobiography* that he was sued by some of the farmers to whom he gave his bond of indemnity at the time of Braddock’s expedition long before his removal from the office of Deputy Postmaster-General, and we know, too, as the reader has already been told, that he sought Benger’s office, as Deputy Postmaster-General of the Colonies, before death had done more than cast the shadow of his approach over Benger’s face. There is a vast difference between the situation of a man, who relies upon his memory for the scattered incidents of his past life, and that of a biographer whose field of vision takes them all in at one glance. It is true that Franklin did not know, before he left London, that Deborah had married, but the reasons he gives in the *Autobiography* for desiring to return to Philadelphia are only that he had grown tired of London, remembered with pleasure the happy months that he had spent in Pennsylvania, and wished again to see it. The fact is that he did not renew his courtship of Deborah until the worthless Rogers had left the coast clear by fleeing to the West Indies, and he himself had in a measure been thrown back upon her by rebuffs in other directions. His circuitous proposal after his return to a young relative of Mrs. Godfrey, who with her husband and children occupied a part of his house, was, as described in the *Autobiography* more like a negotiation for a printing outfit than ordinary wooing. If the love that he brought to this affair had been the only kind of which he was capable, his most ardent biographer, and every biographer seems to adore him more or less in spite of occasional sharp shocks to adoration, might well ask whether his love was not as painfully repellent as his system of morals. The incident would lose some of its hard, homely outlines if clothed in any but the coarse, drab vesture of plain-spoken words with which Franklin clothes it.

Mrs. Godfrey [he says in the *Autobiography*] projected a match for me with a relation's daughter, took opportunities of bringing us often together, till a serious courtship on my part ensu'd, the girl being in herself very deserving. The old folks encourag'd me by continual invitations to supper, and by leaving us together, till at length it was time to explain. Mrs. Godfrey manag'd our little treaty. I let her know that I expected as much money with their daughter as would pay off my remaining debt for the printing house, which I believe was not then above a hundred pounds. She brought me word they had no such sum to spare; I said they might mortgage their house in the loan-office. The answer to this, after some days, was, that they did not approve the match; that, on inquiry of Bradford, they had been informed the printing business was not a profitable one; the types would soon be worn out, and more wanted; that S. Keimer and D. Harry had failed one after the other, and I should probably soon follow them; and, therefore, I was forbidden the house, and the daughter shut up.

Whether this was a real change of sentiment or only artifice, on a supposition of our being too far engaged in affection to retract, and therefore that we should steal a marriage, which would leave them at liberty to give or withhold what they pleas'd, I know not; but I suspected the latter, resented it, and went no more. Mrs. Godfrey brought me afterward some more favorable accounts of their disposition, and would have drawn me on again; but I declared absolutely my resolution to have nothing more to do with that family. This was resented by the Godfreys; we differ'd, and they removed, leaving me the whole house.

This affair, however, Franklin tells us, turned his thoughts to marriage. He accordingly looked the matrimonial field, or rather market, over, and, to use his own euphemism, made overtures of acquaintance in other places; but he soon found, he further tells us, that, the business of a printer being generally thought a poor one, he was not to expect money with a wife unless with such a one as he should not otherwise think agreeable. Then it was that his heart came back to Deborah, sitting forlorn in the weeds of separation, though not unquestionably in the weeds of widowhood; for it was not entirely certain that Rogers was dead. A friendly intercourse had been maintained all along between Franklin and the members of her family ever since he had first lodged under their roof, and he had often been invited to their home, and had given them sound practical advice. It was natural enough, therefore, that he should pity Miss Read's unfortunate situation (he never calls her Mrs. Rogers), dejected and averse to society as she was, that he should reproach himself with his inconstancy as the cause of her unhappiness, though her mother was good enough to take the whole blame on herself because she had prevented their marriage before he went off to London, and was responsible for the other match, and that compassion and self-accusation should have been gradually succeeded by tenderness and rekindled affection. The result was a marriage as little attended by prudential considerations as any that we could readily imagine; and the words in which Franklin chronicles the event are worthy of exact reproduction:

Our mutual affection was revived, but there were now great objections to our union. The match was indeed looked upon as invalid, a preceding wife being said to be living in England; but this could not easily be prov'd, because of the distance; and, tho' there was a report of his death, it was not certain. Then, tho' it should be true, he had left many debts, which his successor might be call'd upon to pay. We ventured, however, over all these difficulties, and I took her to wife, September 1st, 1730. None of the inconveniences happened that we had apprehended; she proved a good and faithful helpmate, assisted me much by attending the shop; we throve together, and have ever mutually endeavour'd to make each other happy.

This paragraph from the *Autobiography* does not contain the only tribute paid by Franklin to his wife as a faithful helpmeet. Elsewhere in that work we find this tribute too: “We have an English proverb that says, ‘*He that would thrive, must ask his wife.*’ It was lucky for me that I had one as much dispos’d to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me chearfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-makers, etc., etc.” His letters are of the same tenor. In one to her after the repeal of the Stamp Act, he wrote, “Had the Trade between the two Countries totally ceas’d, it was a Comfort to me to recollect, that I had once been cloth’d from Head to Foot in Woolen and Linnen of my Wife’s Manufacture.” Many years after Deborah’s death, he used these words in a letter to Miss Alexander: “Frugality is an enriching Virtue; a Virtue I never could acquire in myself; but I was once lucky enough to find it in a Wife, who thereby became a Fortune to me. Do you possess it? If you do, and I were 20 Years younger, I would give your Father 1,000 Guineas for you.” And then he adds with the playful humor which came to him as naturally as a carol to the throat of a blithe bird: “I know you would be worth more to me as a Ménagere, but I am covetous, and love good Bargains.” Win an industrious and prudent wife, he declared on another occasion, and, “if she does not *bring* a fortune, she will help to *make one*.” And when his daughter Sally married Richard Bache, he wrote to her that she could be as serviceable to her husband in keeping a store, if it was where she dwelt, “as your Mother was to me: For you are not deficient in Capacity, and I hope are not too proud.” Sixteen years after his marriage, in a rhyming preface to Poor Richard’s *Almanac*, he even penned this grateful jingle:

“Thanks to kind Readers and a careful Wife,
With plenty bless’d, I lead an easy Life.”

Careful, however, as she had been in her earlier years, Deborah spent enough, as she became older and more accustomed to easy living, to make him feel that he should say a word of caution to her when the news reached him in London that Sally was about to marry a young man who was not only without fortune but soon to be involved in business failure. He advises her not to make an “expensive feasting Wedding,” but to conduct everything with the economy required by their circumstances at that time; his partnership with Hall having expired, and his loss of the Post Office not being unlikely. In that event, he said, they would be reduced to their rents and interest on money for a subsistence, which would by no means afford the chargeable housekeeping and entertainments that they had been used to. Though he himself lived as frugally as possible, making no dinners for anybody, and contenting himself with a single dish, when he dined at home, yet such was the dearness of living in London in every article that his expenses amazed him.

I see too [he continued], by the Sums you have received in my Absence, that yours are very great, and I am very sensible that your Situation naturally brings you a great many Visitors, which occasion an Expence not easily to be avoided especially when one has been long in the Practice and Habit of it. If we were young enough to begin Business again [he remarks a little later in this letter], it might be another Matter,—but I doubt we are past it; and Business not well managed ruins one faster than no Business. In short, with Frugality and prudent Care we may subsist decently on what we have, and leave it entire to our Children:—but without such Care, we shall not be able to keep it together; it will melt away like Butter in the Sunshine; and we may live long enough to feel the miserable Consequences of our Indiscretion.

Eighteen months later, with studied good-feeling, he tells her that, if he does not send her a watch, it will be because the balance on his Post Office account was greatly against him, owing to the large sums that she had received. But Mrs. Franklin was failing, and a few years

later, when her memory and other faculties had been enfeebled by paralysis, he found it necessary to give a keener edge to admonition in one of his letters to her. Referring to her disgust with the Messrs. Foxcroft, because they had not supplied her with money to pay for a bill of exchange for thirty pounds, he opened his mind to her with almost cruel bluntness as follows:

That you may not be offended with your Neighbours without Cause; I must acquaint you with what it seems you did not know, that I had limited them in their Payments to you, to the sum of Thirty Pounds per Month, for the sake of our more easily settling, and to prevent Mistakes. This making 360 Pounds a Year, I thought, as you have no House Rent to pay yourself, and receive the Rents of 7 or 8 Houses besides, might be sufficient for the Maintenance of your Family. I judged such a Limitation the more necessary, because you never have sent me any Account of your Expences, and think yourself ill-used if I desire it; and because I know you were not very attentive to Money-matters in your best Days, and I apprehend that your Memory is too much impair'd for the Management of unlimited Sums, without Danger of injuring the future Fortune of your daughter and Grandson. If out of more than 500 £ a Year, you could have sav'd enough to buy those Bills it might have been well to continue purchasing them. But I do not like your going about among my Friends to borrow Money for that purpose, especially as it is not at all necessary. And therefore I once more request that you would decline buying them for the future. And I hope you will no longer take it amiss of Messrs. Foxcrofts that they did not supply you. If what you receive is really insufficient for your support satisfy me by Accounts that it is so, and I shall order more.

Like an incision in the rind of a beech, which spreads wider and wider with each passing year, is, as a rule, every human failing, as time goes on, and poor Mrs. Franklin, now that senile decay was setting in, seems to have been but another confirmation of this truth. But faithful wife that she was, after the receipt of this letter from her husband, she was scrupulous enough to send him receipts as well as accounts; for in the early part of the succeeding year he writes to her: "I take notice of the considerable Sums you have paid. I would not have you send me any Receipts. I am satisfy'd with the Accounts you give." His letter to her about the Foxcrofts was doubtless not more pointed than the occasion required. In no scales was the salutary medicine of reproof ever weighed more exactly than in his. This letter begins as usual, "My Dear Child," and, after conveying its rebuke, lapses into the old happy, domestic strain. "I am much pleased," he said, "with the little Histories you give me of your fine boy (one of her grandsons) which are confirmed by all that have seen him. I hope he will be spared and continue the same Pleasure and Comfort to you, and that I shall ere long partake with you in it." One instance, perhaps, of inattention to money-matters upon the part of Mrs. Franklin, which helped to produce the climax of this letter, was in the case of a certain Sarah Broughton, who, if we may judge from a single specimen of her spicy humor, was something of a tartar. On July 1, 1766, she wrote to Franklin that his wife owed her a certain sum of money and also the price of a bed, which she had kept for two years, but now wanted to return, because there had been a decline in the price of feathers. She had written, the writer said, a letter to Mrs. Franklin on the subject, but had received the reply from her "that she did not know me, and that I might write to you she was an hegehog." "Now sir," continued Franklin's correspondent, "I don't think her a hegehog but in reallity she has shot a great many quills at me, but thank Heaven none of them has or can hurt me as I doubt not that your known justice will induce you to order the above sum of seven pounds, seven shillings paid." The keen eye that Mrs. Franklin had in this instance to fluctuations in the market price of an article, which her husband and herself had frequently bought and sold at their

shop in the past, shows plainly enough that, even when she was on the eve of her grand climacteric, the thrifter instincts of her early life were not wholly dead. Nor does she seem to have reserved all her quills for obdurate creditors. From the Diary of Daniel Fisher we obtain the following entry:

As I was coming down from my chamber this afternoon a gentlewoman was sitting on one of the lowest stairs which were but narrow, and there not being room enough to pass, she rose up and threw herself upon the floor and sat there. Mr. Soumien and his wife gently entreated her to arise and take a chair, but in vain; she would keep her seat, and kept it, I think, the longer for their entreaty. This gentlewoman, whom though I had seen before I did not know, appeared to be Mrs. Franklin. She assumed the airs of extraordinary freedom and great humility, lamented heavily the misfortunes of those who are unhappily infected with a too tender or benevolent disposition, said she believed all the world claimed a privilege of troubling her Pappy (so she usually calls Mr. Franklin) with their calamities and distresses, giving us a general history of many such wretches and their impertinent applications to him.

Just what all this meant is not entirely clear. Perhaps it was only real sympathy excited by the harassments to which her husband, whom she devotedly loved, was incessantly subjected by his public activity, his reputation for wise counsel, and his ever-increasing renown. Perhaps it was the mere jealousy of affection inspired by her sense of her own unfitness in point of education and intellectual companionship to be the wife of a man whose doorstep could be so haunted. After this incident the diarist became Franklin's clerk, and lived in his house—a footing which enabled him to give us a truer insight than we should otherwise have had as to the extent to which William Franklin was at one time a festering thorn in the side of Mrs. Franklin.

Mr. Soumien [Fisher diarizes] had often informed me of great uneasiness and dissatisfaction in Mr. Franklin's family in a manner no way pleasing to me, and which in truth I was unwilling to credit, but as Mrs. Franklin and I of late began to be friendly and sociable I discerned too great grounds for Mr. Soumien's reflection, arising solely from the turbulence and jealousy and pride of her disposition. She suspecting Mr. Franklin for having too great an esteem for his son in prejudice of herself and daughter, a young woman of about 12 or 13 years of age, for whom it was visible Mr. Franklin had no less esteem than for his son young Mr. Franklin. I have often seen him pass to and from his father's apartment upon business (for he does not eat, drink or sleep in the house) without the least compliment between Mrs. Franklin and him or any sort of notice taken of each other, till one day as I was sitting with her in the passage when the young gentleman came by she exclaimed to me (he not hearing): "Mr. Fisher, there goes the greatest villain upon earth." This greatly confounded and perplexed me, but did not hinder her from pursuing her invectives in the foulest terms I ever heard from a gentlewoman.

It is pleasant, however, to state that in time Deborah's dislike for William Franklin seems to have considerably abated. In 1767, her husband could write to her, "I am glad you go sometimes to Burlington. The Harmony you mention in our Family and among our Children gives me great Pleasure." And before this letter was written, William Franklin had availed himself of an opportunity to testify his dutiful readiness to extend his protection to her. It was when she had just taken possession of the new house, built by her during her husband's absence in England, and his enemies, availing themselves of the brief unpopularity incurred by him through recommending his friend, John Hughes, as a stamp collector, had aroused the feeling against him in Philadelphia to the point of rendering an attack upon this house not

improbable. As soon as William Franklin, then Governor of New Jersey, heard of the danger, to which his father's wife and daughter were exposed, he hastened to Philadelphia to offer them a refuge under his own roof at Burlington. Mrs. Franklin permitted her daughter to accept the offer, but undauntedly refused to accept it herself. This is her own account of the matter to her husband divested of its illiteracy.

I was for nine days [she said] kept in a continual hurry by people to remove, and Sally was persuaded to go to Burlington for safety. Cousin Davenport came and told me that more than twenty people had told him it was his duty to be with me. I said I was pleased to receive civility from anybody; so he staid with me some time; towards night I said he should fetch a gun or two, as we had none. I sent to ask my brother to come and bring his gun also, so we turned one room into a magazine; I ordered some sort of defense upstairs, such as I could manage myself. I said, when I was advised to remove, that I was very sure you had done nothing to hurt anybody, nor had I given any offense to any person at all, nor would I be made uneasy by anybody; nor would I stir or show the least uneasiness, but if any one came to disturb me I would show a proper resentment. I was told that there were eight hundred men ready to assist any one that should be molested.

Indeed, after his marriage, the correspondence of William Franklin indicates that, if the relations of Mrs. Franklin to him were not altogether what Franklin would fain have had them, that is the relations of Hagar rather than of Sarah, he at least bore himself towards her with a marked degree of respectful consideration. His letters to her were subscribed, "Your ever dutiful son," and, in a letter to his father, he informs him that he and his wife were "on a visit to my mother." When Deborah died, he was the "chief mourner" in the funeral procession, and, in a subsequent letter to his father, he speaks of her as "my poor old mother." After the paralytic stroke, which "greatly affected her memory and understanding," William Franklin expressed the opinion that she should have "some clever body to take care of her," because, he said, she "becomes every day more and more unfit to be left alone." No cleverer body for the purpose, of course, could be found than her own daughter, who came with her husband to reside with and take care of her. In his letter to Franklin announcing her death, William Franklin used these feeling words: "She told me when I took leave of her on my removal to Amboy, that she never expected to see you unless you returned this winter, for that she was sure she should not live till next summer. I heartily wish you had happened to have come over in the fall, as I think her disappointment in that respect preyed a good deal on her spirits." Poor Richard's *Almanac* had sayings, it is hardly necessary to declare, suitable for such an occasion. "There are three faithful friends; an old wife, an old dog, and ready money." "A good wife lost is God's gift lost."

In the light of what we have narrated, it is obvious that there were occasions in Franklin's nuptial life when it was well that he was a philosopher as well as a husband. "You can bear with your own Faults, and why not a fault in your Wife?," is a question that he is known to have asked at least once, and he did not have to leave his own doorstep to find an application for his injunction, "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards." But if there was defect of temper there was never any defect of devotion upon the part of the jealous, high-spirited, courageous wife. It is true that she had no place in the wider sphere of her husband's existence. She did not concern herself even about such a political controversy as that over the Stamp Tax except to say like the leal wife she was that she was sure that her husband had not done anything to hurt anybody.

You are very prudent [he said to her on one occasion] not to engage in Party Disputes. Women never should meddle with them except in Endeavour to reconcile their

Husbands, Brothers, and Friends, who happen to be of contrary Sides. If your Sex can keep cool, you may be a means of cooling ours the sooner, and restoring more speedily that social Harmony among Fellow-Citizens, that is so desirable after long and bitter Dissensions.

Her interest in her husband's electrical studies probably ceased when he wrote to her as follows with reference to the two bells that he had placed in his house in such a position as to ring when an iron rod with which they were connected was electrified by a storm cloud: "If the ringing of the Bells frightens you, tie a Piece of Wire from one Bell to the other, and that will conduct the lightning without ringing or snapping, but silently." She never became equal even to such social standing as her husband acquired for himself by his talents and usefulness in Philadelphia; and she would have been a serious clog upon him in the social circles to which he was admitted in Great Britain and on the Continent, if her aversion to crossing the ocean had not been insurmountable. Her letters are marked by a degree of illiteracy that make the task of reading them almost like the task of reading an unfamiliar foreign tongue; but it should be recollected that in the eighteenth century in America it was entirely possible for a person to be at once illiterate and a lady. Even Franklin with his *penchant* for simplified spelling must have felt, after meditating some of Deborah's written words, that the orthographical line had to be drawn somewhere. The following letter from her to her husband, dated October ye 29, 1773, and transcribed exactly as written is neither better nor worse than the rest of her epistles to her husband:

My Dear Child:—I have bin verely much distrest aboute you as I did not aney letter nor one word from you nor did I hear one word from oney bodey that you wrote to so I muste submit and inde (?) to submit to what I am to bair I did write by Capt Folkner to you but he is gon down and when I read it over I did not lik t and so if this donte send it I shante like it as I donte send you aney news now I dont go abroad.

I shall tell you what Consernes my selef our youngest Grandson is the forced child us a live he has had the Small Pox and had it very fine and got a brod a gen. Capt All will tell you aboute him and Benj Franklin Beache, but as it is so difficall to writ I have deserd him to tell you, I have sent a squerel for your friend and wish her better luck it is a very fine one I have had very bad luck they one kild and another run a way all thow they are bred up tame I have not a Caige as I donte know where the man lives that makes them my love to Salley Franklin my love to all our Cusins as thow menshond remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Weste doe you ever hear anything of Ninely Evans as was.¹⁶ I thanke you for the silke and hat it at the womons to make it up but have it put up as you wrote (torn) I thonke it it is very pritty; what was the prise? I desier to give my love to everybodey (torn) I shold love Billey was in town 5 or 6 day when the child was in the small pox Mr. Franklin (torn) not sene him yit I am to tell a verely pritey thing about Ben the players is cume to town and they am to ackte on Munday he wanted to see a play he unkill Beache had given him a doler his mama asked him wuther he wold give it for a ticket, or buy his Brother a neckles he sed his Brother a necklas he is a charmm child as ever was Borne my Grand cheldren are the Best in the world Sally will write I cante write aney mor I am your a feckshone wife,

¹⁶ This lady, whose father was Lewis Evans, of Philadelphia, a surveyor and map-maker, was a god-daughter of Deborah, and, according to a letter from Franklin to Deborah, dated July 22, 1774, fell little short of being ubiquitous. He wrote: "She is now again at Tunis, where you will see she has lately lain in of her third Child. Her Father, you know, was a geographer, and his daughter has some connection, I think, with the whole Globe; being born herself in America, and having her first Child in Asia, her second in Europe, and now her third in Africa."

D. Franklin.

But, in spite of the qualifications we have stated, there was a place after all, even aside from the joint care of the shop, in which the pair throve so swimmingly together, that Deborah could occupy in the thoughts of a man with such quick, strong affections, such liberality of mind and such a keen interest in the ordinary concerns of life as we find in Franklin. This place becomes manifest enough when we read the letters that passed between the two.

A more considerate, loving wife than these letters show her to have been it would be hard to conceive. Napoleon said of his marshals that only one of them loved him, the others loved the Emperor. The devotion of Deborah to her husband is all the more noteworthy because it appears to have been but slightly, if at all, influenced by his public distinction. Her attachment was to Franklin himself, the early lover with whom she had "interchanged promises" when but a girl, and who, after deserting her for a time, had come back to her in her desolation like day returning to the dark and lonely night, the business comrade to whom her industry and prudence had proved in effect a fortune, the most admired and beloved man in the circle of her social relationships, the patient, dutiful, affectionate friend and husband, the father of her daughter and son. Inarticulate as were her struggles with syntax and orthography, she was to him the most faithful of correspondents. Long after she had reached an age when the fond diminutives of early married life are usually exchanged for soberer language, she addressed him in her letters as "My Dear Child," and sometimes as "My Dearest Dear Child." "I am set down to confab a little with my dear child," was the way in which she began one of her letters, "Adue my dear child, and take care of your selef for mamey's sake as well as your one," was the way in which she ended another. So frequently, too, did she write to him when they were separated from each other that he repeatedly acknowledged in his replies her extraordinary constancy as a correspondent; on one occasion writing to her: "I think nobody ever had more faithful Correspondents than I have in Mr. Hughes and you.... It is impossible for me to get or keep out of your Debts." When they had been married over twenty-seven years, he thanks her in one of his letters for writing to him so frequently and fully, and, when they had been married nearly forty years, he wrote to her that he thought that she was the most punctual of all his correspondents. And not only did she write often enough to him to elicit these acknowledgments, but her letters afford ample evidence that to lack a letter from him when she expected one was nothing less than a bitter disappointment to her. "I know," he said in a letter to her, "you love to have a Line from me by every Packet, so I write, tho' I have little to say." We have already seen how her failure to hear from, or of, him led her on one occasion to end her plaint with words strong enough to express resignation to the very worst trial to which human life is subject. On another occasion she wrote: "Aprill 7 this day is Cumpleet 5 munthes senes you lefted your one House I did reseve a letter from the Capes senes that not one line I due suppose that you did write by the packit but that is not arived yit." The same hunger for everything that related to him, no matter how trivial, finds utterance in her petition in another letter that he *would* tell her *hough* his poor *armes* was and *hough* he was on his *voia*g and *hough* he *air* and *ever*ey thing is with him *wich* she wanted *ver*ey much to know. Nor did her affection limit itself to letters. Whenever he was absent from her and stationary whether at Gnadenhutten, or London, his table was never wanting in something to remind him of home and of the attentive wife whose domestic virtues in spite of her deficiencies of education gave home so much of its meaning.

We have enjoyed your roast beef [he wrote to her from Gnadenhutten] and this day began on the roast veal. All agree that they are both the best that ever were of the kind. Your citizens, that have their dinners hot and hot, know nothing of good eating.

We find it in much greater perfection when the kitchen is four score miles from the dining room.

The apples are extremely welcome, and do bravely to eat after our salt pork; the minced pies are not yet come to hand, but I suppose we shall find them among the things expected up from Bethlehem on Tuesday; the capillaire is excellent, but none of us having taken cold as yet, we have only tasted it.

Other letters of his written from Gnadenhutzen testify that she missed no opportunity, so long as he was in the wilderness, to send him something better than the salt pork, to which her apples were such a brave sequel, to relieve the harsh privations of camp life for himself and his brother officers. He tells her in one of his letters that all the gentlemen send their compliments. "They drink your health at every meal, having always something on the table to put them in mind of you." Even when the Atlantic was between them, his life was kept continually refreshed by the same bountiful stream of supplies. A menu, made up of the items that she sent him, might well have softened the heart of even such a rank, swashbuckling enemy of the American Colonies as Dr. Johnson, who loved a good dinner even more than he hated the Americans. Dried venison, bacon, smoked beef, apples, cranberries, nuts, Indian and buckwheat meal, and peaches, dried with and without their skins, are all mentioned in his acknowledgments of her favors. Some of the nuts and apples he presented on one occasion to Lord and Lady Bathurst "a very great lady, the best woman in England," accompanied by a brief note which borrowed the point of its graceful pleasantry from the effort of Great Britain to tax the Colonies without their consent:

"Dr. Franklin presents his respectful compliments to Lord Bathurst, with some American nuts; and to Lady Bathurst, with some American apples; which he prays they will accept as a tribute from that country, small indeed, but *voluntary*."

Franklin's first absence from his wife in England lasted some five years, his second some ten; and such was Deborah's passionate attachment to him that it can scarcely be doubted that, if he had not, during these periods of absence, cheated himself and her from year to year with the idea that his business would soon permit him to return to Philadelphia, she would have joined him despite her aversion to the sea. This aversion was natural enough under the maritime conditions of that time; for even Franklin, whose numerous transatlantic voyages were usually attended by fair weather, and who was an uncommonly resourceful sailor, left behind him the statement that he never crossed the ocean without vowing that he would do so no more.¹⁷ As it was, the frequently recurring expectation upon her part that a few months

¹⁷ A readable essay might be written upon the sea-voyages of Franklin. The sloop, in which he absconded from Boston, in 1723, was favored with a fair wind, and reached New York in three days. His voyage from Philadelphia to Boston in 1724 lasted for about a fortnight. The "little vessel," in which he sailed, he tells us in the *Autobiography*, "struck on a shoal in going down the bay, and sprung a leak." "We had," Franklin says, "a blustering time at sea, and were oblig'd to pump almost continually, at which I took my turn." The cabin accommodations and abundant sea stores that fell to the lot of Ralph and himself, under circumstances already mentioned by us, on their voyage from Philadelphia to England in 1724, in the *London-Hope*, Captain Annis, were rare windfalls; but the voyage was marked by a great deal of bad weather. The return voyage of Franklin from London to Philadelphia in 1726, in the *Berkshire*, Captain Clark, including *obiter* delays on the south coast of England, consumed the whole interval between July 21 and Oct. 12. All the incidents of this long voyage were entered in the Journal kept by him while it was under way, and there are few writings in which the ordinary features of an ocean passage at that time are so clearly brought before the reader: the baffling winds, the paralyzing calms; the meagre fare; the deadly *ennui*; and the moody sullenness bred by confinement and monotony. The word "helm-a-lee," Franklin states, became as disagreeable to their ears as the sentence of a judge to a convicted malefactor. Once he leapt overboard and swam around the ship to "wash" himself, and another time he was deterred from "washing" himself by the appearance of a shark, "that mortal enemy to swimmers." For a space his ship was in close enough companionship for several days with another ship for the

more would restore her husband to his home checked any thought that she may have had of making a voyage to England. There is no evidence that she ever harbored any such intention. An interesting feature of Franklin's life in England in his maturer years is the effort of his friend Strahan to induce Mrs. Franklin to come over to that country with Sally and to take up her permanent residence there with her husband. As to Sally, it began with the half jocular, half serious, proposal from Franklin to Strahan, before the former left Pennsylvania for London in 1757, that Sally, then but a mere child, and Strahan's son should make a match of it. "Please to acquaint him," Franklin asked of Strahan on one occasion, after saying that he was glad to hear so good a character of his son-in-law, "that his spouse grows finely and will probably have an agreeable person. That with the best natural disposition in the world, she discovers daily the seeds and tokens of industry, economy, and, in short, of every female virtue, which her parents will endeavour to cultivate for him." Some years later he added that Sally was indeed a very good girl, affectionate, dutiful and industrious, had one of the best hearts, and though not a wit, was, for one of her years, by no means deficient in understanding. Many years later, after time and the cares of motherhood had told on her, a keen observer, Manasseh Cutler, is so ungallant as to speak of this daughter as "a very gross and rather homely lady," but there is evidence that, even if she was never the superbly handsome woman that James Parton says she was, yet in the soft bloom of her young womanhood the prediction of her father that she would have an agreeable person was unquestionably fulfilled.

When Franklin passed over to England as the agent of the people of Pennsylvania, Strahan became so fond of him that an earnest effort to fix the whole family in England as a permanent place of residence followed almost as a matter of course, and he not only formally opened up his feelings on the subject to Franklin but indited a letter to Mrs. Franklin which he appears to have believed would prove an irresistible masterpiece of persuasive eloquence. This letter is one of the topics upon which Franklin repeatedly touches in his correspondence with Deborah. In a letter to her of January 14, 1758, he tells her that their friend Strahan had offered to lay him a considerable wager that a letter that Strahan had written would bring her immediately over to England, but that he had told Strahan that he would not pick his pocket, for he was sure that there was no inducement strong enough to prevail with her to cross the seas. Later he wrote to her, "Your Answer to Mr. Strahan was just what it should be. I was much pleas'd with it. He fancy'd his Rhetoric and Art would certainly bring you over." Finding that he was unable himself to persuade Mrs. Franklin to settle down in England,

masters of the two vessels, accompanied by a passenger in each instance, to exchange visits. On his second voyage, of about thirty days, to England, in 1757, the packet, in which he was a passenger, easily outstripped the hostile cruisers by which she was several times chased, but wore about with straining masts just in time to escape shipwreck on the Scilly rocks. Of his return to America in 1762, he wrote to Strahan from Philadelphia: "We had a long Passage near ten Weeks from Portsmouth to this Place, but it was a pleasant one; for we had ten sail in Company and a Man of War to protect us; we had pleasant Weather and fair Winds, and frequently visited and dined from ship to ship." At the end of his third voyage to England in 1764, Franklin wrote to Deborah from the Isle of Wight that no father could have been tenderer to a child than Captain Robinson had been to him. "But we have had terrible Weather, and I have often been thankful that our dear Sally was not with me. Tell our Friends that din'd with us on the Turtle that the kind Prayer they then put up for thirty Days fair Wind for me was favourably heard and answered, we being just 30 Days from Land to Land." Of his return voyage to America in 1775, he wrote to Priestley: "I had a passage of six weeks, the weather constantly so moderate that a London wherry might have accompanied us all the way." His thirty-day voyage to France in 1776 proved a rough and debilitating one to him at his advanced age, but Captain Wickes was not only able to keep his illustrious passenger out of the Tower, but to snatch up two English prizes on his way over. We need say no more than we have already incidentally said in our text of the seven weeks that Franklin gave up to his pen and thermometer on his return voyage to America in 1785. After the passage, he wrote to Mrs. Hewson that it had been a pleasant and not a long one in which there was but one day, a day of violent storm, on which he was glad that she was not with them.

Strahan urged Franklin to try his hand, and the letter in which Franklin reports this fact to his wife makes it apparent enough that Strahan had the matter deeply at heart.

He was very urgent with me [says Franklin] to stay in England and prevail with you to remove hither with Sally. He propos'd several advantageous Schemes to me, which appear'd reasonably founded. His Family is a very agreeable one; Mrs. Strahan a sensible and good Woman, the Children of amiable Characters, and particularly the young Man (who is) sober, ingenious and industrious, and a (desirable) Person. In Point of Circumstances there can be no Objection; Mr. Strahan being (now) living in a Way as to lay up a Thousand Pounds every Year from the Profits of his Business, after maintaining his Family and paying all Charges. I gave him, however, two Reasons why I could not think of removing hither, One, my Affection to Pennsylvania and long established Friendships and other connections there: The other, your invincible Aversion to crossing the Seas. And without removing hither, I could not think of parting with my Daughter to such a Distance. I thank'd him for the Regard shown us in the Proposal, but gave him no Expectation that I should forward the Letters. So you are at liberty to answer or not, as you think proper. Let me however know your Sentiments. You need not deliver the Letter to Sally, if you do not think it proper.

She did answer, but we are left to infer from a subsequent letter from Franklin to her, in which he alludes to this letter of hers, that, if Strahan was disappointed by his failure to bring about the migration of the Franklins, his disappointment was largely swallowed up in the shock experienced by his literary vanity in finding that his elaborate appeal had not drawn her over. We cannot share his disappointment, whatever it was, when we recollect that to Sally's marriage to Richard Bache we are indebted for more than one descendant of Franklin whose talents and public services have won an honorable place in the history of the nation.

It is gratifying to state that no one can read either Franklin's letters to Deborah or to other persons without feeling unqualifiedly assured that he entertained a sincere and profound affection for the good wife whose heart was for nearly fifty years fastened upon him and his every want with such solicitous tenderness. His married life was distinguished to such an eminent degree by the calm, pure flow of domestic happiness that for that reason, if for no other, we find it impossible to reconcile ourselves to the protean facility with which, in his old age, he yielded to the seductions of French love-making. The interval, to say the least, is long between the honest apples, which his own good American wife sent him from time to time, when he was in London, and the meretricious apples which Madame Brillon thought that "King John" i. e. M. Brillon might be decent enough to offer to some extent to his neighbors when they were all together in Paradise where we shall want for nothing. If one wishes fully to realize how little fettered was the mind of Franklin by local ideals and conventions and how quick it was, like the changeful face of the sea, to mirror all its external relations, one has but to read first Franklin's letters to his wife, as thoroughly Anglo-Saxon as any ever penned in an English manse, and then his letters to Madame Brillon, and the exquisite bagatelle, as thoroughly French as the Abbé Morellet's "Humble Petition presented to Madam Helvétius by her Cats," in which he told Madame Helvétius of the new connection formed by Deborah with M. Helvétius in the Elysian Fields. There is every reason to believe that Franklin's marriage vow was never dishonored during Deborah's life, lax as his conduct was before his marriage and lax as his diction at least was after her death. In the Diary from which we have already quoted quite liberally, Fisher, after narrating the extraordinary manner in which Deborah bewailed the troubles of her "Pappy," observes, "Mr. Franklin's moral character is good, and he and Mrs. Franklin live irreproachably as man and wife." Franklin's

loyalty to his wife is also evidenced by a letter from Strahan to Deborah in which he uses these words:

For my own part, I never saw a man who was, in every respect, so perfectly agreeable to me. Some are amiable in one view, some in another, he in all. Now Madam, as I know the ladies here consider him in exactly the same light I do, upon my word I think you should come over, with all convenient speed, to look after your interest; not but that I think him as faithful to his Joan as any man breathing; but who knows what repeated and strong temptation may in time, and while he is at so great a distance from you, accomplish?

This interrogatory was, perhaps, the rhetorical stroke upon which Strahan relied to give the *coup de grâce* to Mrs. Franklin's abhorrence of the sea. It was certainly calculated to set a jealous-minded wife to thinking. But it seems to have had as little effect upon Deborah as the other artifices of this masterly letter. The terms "his Joan" in it were doubtless suggested by Franklin's song, *My Plain Country Joan*, one verse of which, as good, or rather as bad, as the rest, was as follows:

"Some faults we have all, and so has my Joan,
But then they're exceedingly small;
And, now I am used, they are like my own,
I scarcely can see 'em at all,
My dear friends,
I scarcely can see 'em at all."

Another indication of the marital fidelity of which Strahan speaks is found in a letter from Franklin to Deborah after his second return from England in which he said: "I approve of your opening all my English Letters, as it must give you Pleasure to see that People who knew me there so long and so intimately, retain so sincere a Regard for me." But it would be grossly unjust to Franklin to measure the degree of his attachment to his Joan by the fact merely that he preserved inviolate the nuptial pledge which a man of honor can fairly be expected as a matter of course to observe scrupulously. Not only the lines just quoted by us but the general character of his married life demonstrates that the only thing that he ever regretted about his intercourse with Deborah was that his own censurable conduct should have made her for a time the wife of anyone but himself.

In his correspondence with his friend Catherine Ray, there are two pleasing references to Deborah.

Mrs. Franklin [one reads] was very proud, that a young lady should have so much regard for her old husband, as to send him such a present (a cheese). We talk of you every time it comes to table. She is sure you are a sensible girl, and a notable housewife, and talks of bequeathing me to you as a legacy; but I ought to wish you a better, and hope she will live these hundred years; for we are grown old together, and if she has any faults, I am so used to 'em that I don't perceive 'em; as the song says [and then, after quoting from his *Plain Country Joan* the stanza which we have quoted, he adds:]. Indeed, I begin to think she has none, as I think of you. And since she is willing I should love you, as much as you are willing to be loved by me, let us join in wishing the old lady a long life and a happy.

The other reference to Deborah occurs in a letter to Miss Ray, written after Franklin's return from a recent visit to New England, in which he describes his feelings before reaching

Philadelphia. "As I drew nearer," he said, "I found the attraction stronger and stronger. My diligence and speed increased with my impatience. I drove on violently, and made such long stretches, that a very few days brought me to my own house, and to the arms of my good old wife and children."

It is to Franklin's own letters to his wife, however, that we must resort to appreciate how fully he reciprocated her affection. Illiterate as her letters were, they were so full of interest to him that he seems to have re-read as well as read them. In one letter to her, for example, after his arrival in England in 1757, he tells her, "I have now gone through all your agreeable letters, which give me fresh pleasure every time I read them." And that he was quick to feel the dearth of such letters we have testimony in the form of a playful postscript to one of his letters to her of the preceding year when he was at Easton, Pennsylvania. The special messenger, he said, that had been dispatched to Philadelphia with a letter from him to her, as well as letters from other persons to their wives and sweethearts, had returned "without a scrap for poor us."

The messenger says [he continues] he left the letters at your house, and saw you afterwards at Mr. Duché's, and told you when he would go, and that he lodged at Honey's, next door to you, and yet you did not write; so let Goody Smith (a favorite servant of theirs) give one more just judgment, and say what should be done to you. I think I won't tell you that we are well, nor that we expect to return about the middle of the week, nor will I send you a word of news; that's poz.

The letter ends, "I am your *loving* husband"; and then comes the postscript: "I have *scratched out the loving words*, being writ in haste by mistake, *when I forgot I was angry*."

His letters to her bear all the tokens of conjugal love and of a deep, tranquil domestic spirit. At times, he addresses her as "My Dear Debby," and once as "My Dear Love," but habitually as "My Dear Child." This was the form of address in the first of his published letters to her dated December 27, 1755, and in his last, dated July 22, 1774. "I am, dear girl, your loving husband," "I am, my dear Debby, your ever loving husband," are among the forms of expression with which he concludes. The topics of his letters are almost wholly personal or domestic. They illustrate very strikingly how little dependent upon intellectual congeniality married happiness is, provided that there is a mutual sense of duty, mutual respect and a real community of domestic interests.

In one of his London letters, he informs her that another French translation of his book had just been published, with a print of himself prefixed, which, though a copy of that by Chamberlin, had so French a countenance that she would take him for one of that lively nation. "I think you do not mind such things," he added, "or I would send you one."¹⁸ To politics he rarely refers except to reassure her when uneasiness had been created in her mind by one of the reckless partisan accusations which husbands in public life soon learn to rate at their real value but their wives never do. "I am concern'd that so much Trouble should be given you by idle Reports concerning me," he says on one occasion. "Be satisfied, my dear, that while I have my Senses, and God vouchsafes me this Protection, I shall do nothing unworthy the Character of an honest Man, and one that loves his Family."

As a rule his letters to Deborah have little to say about the larger world in which he moved when he was in England. If he refers to the Royal Family, it is only to mention that the Queen had just been delivered of another Prince, the eighth child, and that there were now six

¹⁸ A copious note on the leading portraits of Franklin will be found in the *Narrative and Critical History of America*, edited by Justin Winsor, vol. vii., p. 37. The best of them resemble each other closely enough to make us feel satisfied that we should recognize him at once, were it possible for us to meet him in life on the street.

princes and two princesses, all lovely children. After the repeal of the Stamp Act lifted the embargo laid by patriotic Americans on importations of clothing from England, he wrote to Deborah that he was willing that she should have a new gown, and that he had sent her fourteen yards of Pompadour satin. He had told Parliament, he stated, that, before the old clothes of the Americans were worn out, they might have new ones of their own making. "And, indeed," he added, "if they had all as many old Cloathes as your old Man has, that would not be very unlikely, for I think you and George reckon'd when I was last at home at least 20 pair of old Breeches." To his own fame and the social attentions which he received from distinguished men abroad he makes only the most meagre allusion.

The agreeable conversation I meet with among men of learning, and the notice taken of me by persons of distinction, are the principal things that soothe me for the present, under this painful absence from my family and friends. Yet those would not keep me here another week, if I had not other inducements; duty to my country, and hopes of being able to do it service.

Thus he wrote to his wife about four months after he arrived in England in 1757. A few weeks later, he said:

I begin to think I shall hardly be able to return before this time twelve months. I am for doing effectually what I came about; and I find it requires both time and patience. You may think, perhaps, that I can find many amusements here to pass the time agreeable. 'Tis true, the regard and friendship I meet with from persons of worth, and the conversation of ingenious men, give me no small pleasure; but at this time of life, domestic comforts afford the most solid satisfaction, and my uneasiness at being absent from my family, and longing desire to be with them, make me often sigh in the midst of cheerful company.¹⁹

The real interest of Franklin's correspondence with his wife consists in the insight that it gives us into his private, as contrasted with his public, relations. His genius, high as it rose into the upper air of human endeavor, rested upon a solid sub-structure of ordinary stone and cement, firmly planted in the earth, and this is manifest in his family history as in everything else. The topics, with which he deals in his letters to Deborah, are the usual topics with which a kind, sensible, practical husband and householder, without any elevated aspirations of any kind, deals in his letters to his wife. There was no lack of common ground on which she and he could meet in correspondence after the last fond words addressed by him to her just before he left New York for England in 1757 had been spoken, "God preserve, guard and guide you." First of all, there was his daughter Sally to whom he was lovingly attached. In a letter to his wife, shortly before he used the valedictory words just quoted, he said: "I leave Home, and undertake this long Voyage more chearfully, as I can rely on your Prudence in the Management of my Affairs, and Education of my dear Child; and yet I cannot forbear once more recommending her to you with a Father's tenderest Concern." From this time on, during his two absences in England, Sally seems to have ever been in his thoughts. There are several references to her in one of his earliest letters to Deborah after he reached England in 1757.

I should have read Sally's French letter with more pleasure [he said], but that I thought the French rather too good to be all her own composing.... I send her a French Pamela. I hear [he further said] there has a miniature painter gone over to

¹⁹ Franklin was frequently the recipient of one of the most delightful of all forms of social attention, an invitation to a country house in the British Islands. On Oct. 5, 1768, he writes to Deborah that he has lately been in the country to spend a few days at friends' houses, and to breathe a little fresh air. On Jan. 28, 1772, after spending some seven weeks in Ireland and some four weeks in Scotland, he tells the same correspondent that he has received abundance of civilities from the gentry of both these kingdoms.

Philadelphia, a relation to John Reynolds. If Sally's picture is not done to your mind by the young man, and the other gentleman is a good hand and follows the business, suppose you get Sally's done by him, and send it to me with your small picture, that I may here get all our little family drawn in one conversation piece.

This idea was not carried out because, among other reasons, as he subsequently informed Deborah, he found that family pieces were no longer in fashion.²⁰ In this same letter there is a gentle caress for Sally.

Had I been well [he said], I intended to have gone round among the shops and bought some pretty things for you and my dear good Sally (whose little hands you say eased your headache) to send by this ship, but I must now defer it to the next, having only got a crimson satin cloak for you, the newest fashion, and the black silk for Sally; but Billy (William Franklin) sends her a scarlet feather, muff, and tippet, and a box of fashionable linen for her dress.

In other letters there are repeated indications of the doting persistency with which his mind dwelt upon his daughter. But the softest touch of all is at the end of one of them. After speaking of the kindness, with which Mrs. Stevenson, Polly Stevenson's mother, had looked after his physical welfare, he adds: "But yet I have a thousand times wish'd you with me, and my little Sally with her ready Hands and Feet to do, and go, and come, and get what I wanted." All these allusions to Sally are found in his letters to Deborah during his first mission to England. But little Sally was growing apace, and, when he returned to England on his second mission in 1764, there was soon to be another person with an equal, if not a superior, claim upon her helpful offices. We have already quoted from his letter to Deborah warning her against "an expensive feasting wedding." In this letter he says of Sally's fiancé, Richard Bache:

I know very little of the Gentleman or his Character, nor can I at this Distance. I hope his Expectations are not great of any Fortune to be had with our Daughter before our Death. I can only say, that if he proves a good Husband to her, and a good Son to me, he shall find me as good a Father as I can be:—but at present I suppose you would agree with me, that we cannot do more than fit her out handsomely in Cloaths and Furniture, not exceeding in the whole Five Hundred Pounds, of Value. For the rest, they must depend as you and I did, on their own Industry and Care: as what remains in our Hands will be barely sufficient for our Support, and not enough for them when it comes to be divided at our Decease.

Hardly, however, had the betrothal occurred before it was clouded by business reverses which had overtaken the prospective son-in-law. These led to a suggestion from the father that may or may not have been prompted by the thought that a temporary separation might bring about the termination of an engagement marked by gloomy auspices.

In your last letters [he wrote to Deborah], you say nothing concerning Mr. Bache. The Misfortune that has lately happened to his Affairs, tho' it may not lessen his Character as an honest or a Prudent man, will probably induce him to forbear entering hastily into a State that must require a great Addition to his Expence, when he will be less able to supply it. If you think that in the meantime it will be some Amusement to Sally to visit her Friends here (in London) and return with me, I should have no

²⁰ Speaking of a portrait of Sally in a letter to Deborah from London in 1758, Franklin says: "I fancy I see more Likeness in her Picture than I did at first, and I look at it often with Pleasure, as at least it reminds me of her."

Objection to her coming over with Capt. Falkener, provided Mrs. Falkener comes at the same time as is talk'd of. I think too it might be some Improvement to her.

Poor Richard had incurred considerable risks when he selected his own mate, and, all things considered, he acquiesced gracefully enough in the betrothal of his daughter to a man of whom he knew practically nothing except circumstances that were calculated to bring to his memory many pat proverbs about the folly of imprudent marriages. If, therefore, his idea was to enlist the chilling aid of absence in an effort to bring the engagement to an end, fault can scarcely be found with him. We know from one of William Franklin's letters that the friends of the family had such misgivings about the union as to excite the anger of Deborah. The suggestion that Sally should be sent over to England did not find favor with her, and in a later letter Franklin writes to her, "I am glad that you find so much reason to be satisfy'd with Mr. Bache. I hope all will prove for the best." And all did prove for the best, as the frequency with which Richard Bache's name occurs in Franklin's will, to say nothing more, sufficiently attests. When the marriage was solemnized, Franklin's strong family affection speedily crowned it with his full approval. In due season, the fact that the contract was a fruitful one is brought to our notice by a letter from him to his wife in which he tells his "Dear Child," then his wife for nearly forty years, that he had written to Sally by Captain Falkener giving her Sir John Pringle's opinion as to the probability of Sally's son having been rendered exempt from the smallpox by inoculation. Thenceforth there is scarcely a letter from the grandfather to the grandmother in which there is not some mention made of this grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache, the rabid Jeffersonian and editor of after years, whose vituperative editorials in the *Aurora* recall Franklin's statement in the latter part of his life that the liberty of the press ought to be attended by the ancient liberty of the cudgel. "I am glad your little Grandson," says one letter, "recovered so soon of his Illness, as I see you are quite in Love with him, and your Happiness wrapt up in his; since your whole long Letter is made up of the History of his pretty Actions." In a subsequent letter to Deborah, he passes to the boy's father, who had come over to England, where his mother and sisters resided, and was on the point of returning to Philadelphia. "Mr. Bache is about returning. His Behaviour here has been very agreeable to me. I have advis'd him to settle down to Business in Philadelphia, where I hope he will meet with Success. I mentioned to you before, that I saw his Mother and Sisters at Preston, who are genteel People, and extreemly agreeable." In the same letter, he tells Deborah that he has advised Bache to deal in the ready money way though he should sell less.

He may keep his Store [he said] in your little North Room for the present. And as he will be at no expence while the Family continues with you, I think he may, with Industry and Frugality, get so forward, as at the end of his Term, to pay his Debts and be clear of the World, which I much wish to see. I have given him £200 Sterl'g to add something to his Cargo.

It is not long before he is writing to Deborah about "Sister Bache and her amiable Daughters." Like the commerce of material gifts, which his wife and himself kept up with each other, when separated, are the details about his godson, William Hewson, the son of his friend Polly, which he exchanges with Deborah for details about his grandson, who came to be known, it seems, as "the Little King Bird," and the "Young Hercules."

In Return for your History of your *Grandson* [he wrote to her on one occasion], I must give you a little of the History of my *Godson*. He is now 21 Months old, very strong and healthy, begins to speak a little, and even to sing. He was with us a few Days last Week, grew fond of me, and would not be contented to sit down to Breakfast without coming to call *Pa*, rejoicing when he had got me into my Place. When seeing me one Day crack one of the Philada Biscuits into my Tea with the Nut-

crackers, he took another and try'd to do the same with the Tea-Tongs. It makes me long to be at home to play with Ben.

Indeed, by this time, Franklin had become such a fatuous grandfather that he ceases to call his grandson Ben and speaks of him as "Benny Boy" when he does not speak of him as "the dear boy."

In the fulness of time, Richard and Sally Bache were destined to be the parents of numerous children. When Franklin returned from his mission to France, the youngest of them soon became as devoted to him as had been Billy Hewson, or the youthful son of John Jay, whose singular attachment to him is referred to in one of his letters to Jay. In the same description, in which Manasseh Cutler speaks in such sour terms of the person of Mrs. Bache, he tells us that, when he saw her at Franklin's home in Philadelphia, she had three of her children about her, over whom she seemed to have no kind of command, but who appeared to be excessively fond of their grandpapa. Indeed, all children who were brought into close companionship with Franklin loved him, and instinctively turned to him for responsive love and sympathy. Men may be the best judges of the human intellect, but children are the best judges of the human heart.

Francis Folger, the only legitimate child of Franklin except Sally, is not mentioned in his correspondence with his wife. The colorless Franky who is was not this child. Franklin's son was born a year after the marriage of Franklin and Deborah in 1730, and died, when a little more than four years of age, and therefore long before the date of the earliest letter extant from Franklin to Deborah. Though warned but a few years previously by an epidemic of smallpox in Philadelphia, which had been accompanied by a high rate of mortality, Franklin could not make up his mind to subject the child to the hazards of inoculation. The consequence was that, when a second epidemic visited the city, Francis contracted the disease, and died. Franklin, to use his own words to his sister Jane Mecom, long regretted him bitterly, and also regretted that he had not given him the disease by inoculation.

All, who have seen my grandson [he said in another letter to his sister] agree with you in their accounts of his being an uncommonly fine boy, which brings often afresh to my mind the idea of my son Franky, though now dead thirty-six years, whom I have seldom since seen equaled in every thing, and whom to this day I cannot think of without a sigh.

But Sally and his grandson were far from being the only persons who furnished material for Franklin's letters to his wife. These letters also bring before us in many ways other persons connected with him and Deborah by ties of blood, service or friendship. He repeatedly sends his "duty" to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Read, and when he is informed of the death of "our good mother," as he calls her, he observes, "'Tis, I am sure, a Satisfaction to me, that I cannot charge myself with having ever fail'd in one Instance of Duty and Respect to her during the many Years that she call'd me Son." "My love to Brother John Read and Sister, and cousin Debbey, and young cousin Johnny Read, and let them all know, that I sympathize with them all affectionately," was his message to her relations in the same letter.

Some of his letters conveyed much agreeable information to Deborah about his and her English relations. Of these we shall have something to say in another connection.

"Billy," William Franklin, is mentioned in his father's letters to Deborah on many other occasions than those already cited by us; for he was his father's intimate companion during the whole of the first mission to England. He appears to have truly loved his sister, Sally, and is often mentioned in Franklin's letters to Deborah as sending Sally his love or timely gifts. If he really presented his duty to his mother half as often as Franklin reported, she had no cause

to complain of his lack of attention. That her earlier feelings about him had undergone a decided change, before he went to England with his father, we may infer from one of Franklin's letters in which, in response to her "particular inquiry," he tells her that "Billy is of the Middle Temple, and will be call'd to the Bar either this Term or the next." Some seven years later, he tells her that it gave him pleasure to hear from Major Small that he had left her and Sally and "our other children" well also.

Mention of Peter, his negro servant, is also several times made in Franklin's letters to Deborah. In one letter, written when he was convalescing after a severe attack of illness, he tells Deborah that not only had his good doctor, Doctor Fothergill, attended him very carefully and affectionately, and Mrs. Stevenson nursed him kindly, but that Billy was of great service to him, and Peter very diligent and attentive. But a later letter does not give quite so favorable a view of Peter, after the latter had inhaled a little longer the free air of England.

Peter continues with me [said Franklin] and behaves as well as I can expect, in a Country where they are many Occasions of spoiling servants, if they are ever so good. He has a few Faults as most of them, and I see with only one Eye, and hear only with one Ear; so we rub on pretty comfortably.

These words smack of the uxorious policy recommended to husbands by Poor Richard. The same letter gives us a glimpse of another negro servant, who was even more strongly disposed than Peter to act upon the statement in Cowper's *Task* that slaves cannot breathe in England.

King, that you enquire after [says Franklin], is not with us. He ran away from our House, near two Years ago, while we were absent in the Country; But was soon found in Suffolk, where he had been taken in the Service of a Lady, that was very fond of the Merit of making him a Christian, and contributing to his Education and Improvement. As he was of little Use, and often in Mischief, Billy consented to her keeping him while we stay in England. So the Lady sent him to School, has taught him to read and write, to play on the Violin and French Horn, with some other Accomplishments more useful in a Servant. Whether she will finally be willing to part with him, or persuade Billy to sell him to her, I know not. In the meantime he is no Expence to us.

And that was certainly something worth noting about a servant who could play upon the French horn.

But it is of Goody Smith, the servant in the Franklin household at Philadelphia, whose judgment was invoked upon the failure of Deborah to answer her husband's letter from Easton, that mention is most often made in the portions of Franklin's letters to his wife which relate to servants. In a letter to Deborah from Easton, he expresses his obligations to Goody Smith for remembering him and sends his love to her. In another letter to Deborah, when he was on his way to Williamsburg in Virginia, he says, "my Duty to Mother, and love to Sally, Debby, Gracey, &c., not forgetting the Goodey." Subsequently, when in England, he tells Deborah:

I have order'd two large print Common Prayer Books to be bound on purpose for you and Goodey Smith; and that the largeness of the Print may not make them too bulky, the Christnings, Matrimonies, and everything else that you and she have not immediate and constant Occasion for, are to be omitted. So you will both of you be repriv'd from the Use of Spectacles in Church a little longer.

In another letter from England, Franklin mentions that he sends Deborah a pair of garters knit by Polly Stevenson who had also favored him with a pair. "Goody Smith may, if she pleases," he adds, "make such for me hereafter, and they will suit her own fat Knees. My Love to her." And love to her he sends again when he hears that she is recovering from an illness. Franklin likewise refers several times in his letters to Deborah to another servant, John, who accompanied him on his return to England in 1764, but the behavior of this servant seems to have been too unexceptionable for him to be a conspicuous figure in his master's letters. They were evidently a kind master and mistress, Franklin and Deborah. "I am sorry for the death of your black boy," he wrote to her on one occasion from London, "as you seem to have had a regard for him. You must have suffered a good deal in the fatigue of nursing him in such a distemper."

Over and over again in his letters to Deborah, Franklin approves himself a "lover of his friends" like his friend Robert Grace. He sends his love to them individually, and he sends his love to them collectively. Even during a brief absence, as when he was off on his military expedition, his letters to Deborah are sprinkled with such messages as "our Compliments to Mrs. Masters and all enquiring Friends," "My Love to Mr. Hall" (his business partner), "Give my hearty Love to all Friends," "Love to all our friends and neighbours." During another brief absence in Virginia, he sends his respects to "Mrs. Masters and all the Officers and in short to all Philadelphia." In a later letter to Deborah, written from Utrecht, the form of his concluding words on the previous occasion is made still more comprehensive. "My Love," he said, "to my dear Sally, and affectionate Regards to all Pennsylvania." In one of his letters from England, he wrote, "Pray remember me kindly to all that love us, and to all that we love. 'Tis endless to name names," and on still another occasion, in asking Deborah to thank all his friends for their favors, which contributed so much to the comfort of his voyage, he added, "I have not time to name Names: You know whom I love and honour." He had such troops of friends that he might well shrink from the weariness of naming them all. Indeed, he scarcely writes a letter to Deborah that does not bear witness to the extent and warmth of his friendships. When he left Philadelphia for England in 1757, about a dozen of his friends accompanied him as far as Trenton, but, in the letter to Deborah which informs us of this fact, he does not give us the names of any of them. This letter was written from Trenton. Mrs. Grace and "Dear Precious Mrs. Shewell," Mrs. Masters, "Mrs. Galloway & Miss," Mrs. Redman, Mrs. Graeme, Mrs. Thomson, Mrs. Story, Mrs. Bartram, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Hilborne all come in at one time, as well as other ladies whom he does not name, for his best respects, in return for friendly wishes that they had transmitted to him through Deborah. In another letter he sends his love to "our dear precious Polly Hunt and all our kind inquiring friends." Friends escorted him to Trenton when he was on his way to England in 1757, friends bestowed all sorts of gifts on him to render his voyage comfortable, Mr. Thomas Wharton even lending him a woollen gown which he found a comfortable companion in his winter passage; friends did him the honor to drink his health in the unfinished kitchen of the new house built in his absence; and friends "honored" the dining-room in this home "with their Company." When he heard of the convivial gathering in the unfinished kitchen, he wrote to Deborah, "I hope soon to drink with them in the Parlour," but there is a tinge of dissatisfaction in his observations to Deborah on the gathering in the dining-room.

It gives me Pleasure [he said] that so many of my Friends honour'd our new Dining Room with their Company. You tell me only of a Fault they found with the House, that it was too little, and not a Word of anything they lik'd in it: Nor how the Kitchen Chimneys perform; so I suppose you spare me some Mortification, which [he adds with a slight inflection of sarcasm] is kind.

His dear friend, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Duffield, Neighbor Thomson, Dr. and Mrs. Redman, Mrs. Hopkinson, Mr. Duché, Dr. Morgan and Mr. Hopkinson are other friends mentioned in a later letter of his to Deborah. In the same letter, he rejoices that his “good old Friend, Mr. Coleman, is got safe home, and continues well.” Coleman, as we shall see, was one of the two friends who had come to his aid in his early manhood when he was sued and threatened with ruin by his creditors. The death of the dear, amiable Miss Ross, “our Friend Bond’s heavy loss,” the disorder that had befallen “our friend Kinnersley” and other kindred facts awaken his ready sympathy; presents of books, seeds and the like, as well as messages of love and respect, remind his friends how freshly green his memory of them is.

The letters have much to say, too, about the presents to Deborah and Sally which were almost incessantly crossing the outflowing currents of apples and buckwheat meal from Philadelphia. These presents are far too numerous to be all specified by us, but some perhaps it may not be amiss to recall. In one letter, he writes to Deborah that he is sending her a large case marked D. F. No. 1 and a small box marked D. F. No. 2, and that in the large case is another small box containing some English china, viz.: melons and leaves for a dessert of fruit and cream, or the like; a bowl remarkable for the neatness of the figures, made at Bow near London, some coffee cups of the same make, and a Worcester bowl, ordinary. In the same box, to show the difference of workmanship, he said, there was something from all the china works in England and one old true china basin mended of an odd color, four silver salt ladles, newest but ugliest fashion, a little instrument to core apples, another to make little turnips out of great ones and six coarse diaper breakfast cloths. The latter, he stated, were to be spread on the tea table, for nobody breakfasted in London on the naked table but on the cloth set a large tea board with the cups. In the large case were likewise some carpeting for a best room floor, and bordering to go along with it, also two large fine Flanders bed-ticks, two pair of large superfine fine blankets, two fine damask table-cloths and napkins, and forty-three ells of Ghentish sheeting Holland, all of which Deborah had ordered of him; also fifty-six yards of cotton, printed curiously from copper plates, a new invention, to make bed and window curtains, and seven yards of chair bottoms printed in the same way very neat. “These were my Fancy,” Franklin remarks, “but Mrs. Stevenson tells me I did wrong not to buy both of the same Colour.” In the large case, too, were seven yards of printed cotton, blue ground, to make Deborah a gown.

I bought it by Candlelight, and lik’d it then [the letter said], but not so well afterwards. If you do not fancy it, send it as a Present from me to sister Jenny. There is a better Gown for you, of flower’d Tissue, 16 yards, of Mrs. Stevenson’s Fancy, cost 9 Guineas; and I think it a great Beauty. There was no more of the Sort, or you should have had enough for a *Neglige* or Suit.

There is also Snuffers, Snuff Stand, and Extinguisher of Steel, which I send for the Beauty of the Work. The Extinguisher is for Spermaceti Candles only, and is of a new Contrivance, to preserve the Snuff upon the Candle.

Small box No. 2 contained cut table glass of several sorts. After stating its contents, Franklin adds, “I am about buying a compleat Set of Table China, 2 Cases of silver handled Knives and Forks, and 2 pair Silver Candlesticks; but these shall keep to use here till my Return, as I am obliged sometimes to entertain polite Company.”

But there is nothing in this letter equal in interest to the paragraph that brings to our mental eye the handsome, buxom figure of Deborah herself.

I forgot to mention another of my Fancyings, *viz.*: a Pair of Silk Blankets, very fine. They are of a new kind, were just taken in a French Prize, and such were never seen in England before: they are called Blankets, but I think will be very neat to cover a Summer Bed, instead of a Quilt or Counterpane. I had no Choice, so you will excuse the Soil on some of the Folds; your Neighbour Forster can get it off. I also forgot, among the China, to mention a large fine Jugg for Beer, to stand in the Cooler. I fell in Love with it at first Sight; for I thought it look'd like a fat jolly Dame, clean and tidy, with a neat blue and white Calico Gown on, good natur'd and lovely, and put me, in mind of—Somebody. It has the Coffee Cups in its Belly,²¹ pack'd in best Chrystal Salt, of a peculiar nice Flavour, for the Table, not to be powder'd.

The receipt of such a case and box as these was doubtless an event long remembered in the Franklin home at Philadelphia. In a subsequent letter from Franklin to Deborah, the following gifts to Sally are brought to our attention:

By Capt. Lutwidge I sent my dear Girl a newest fashion'd white Hat and Cloak, and sundry little things, which I hope will get safe to hand. I now send her a pair of Buckles, made of French Paste Stones, which are next in Lustre to Diamonds. They cost three Guineas, and are said to be cheap at that Price.

These were but a few of the many gifts that Deborah and Sally received from Franklin, when he was in London. In their relations to their own households, philosophers are frequently not unlike the ancient one, who, when told by a messenger that his house was on fire, looked up for a minute from his task to say impatiently that his wife attended to all his domestic affairs. This is not true of Franklin, who was wholly free from the crass ignorance and maladroit touch which render many husbands as much out of place in their own houses as the officious ass in *Æsop's* fable was in his master's dining-hall. Even the fences, the well and the vegetable garden at times are mentioned in his letters to Deborah, and his mechanical skill stood him in good stead as a householder. He knew how the carpets should be laid down, what stuff should be purchased for curtains in the blue chamber, and by what kind of hooks they should be fastened to the curtain rails, and the number of curtains at each window that the London fashions required. In one letter he gives Deborah minute instructions as to how the blue room in his Philadelphia home was to be painted and papered. In a subsequent letter, after saying that he was glad to hear that certain pictures were safe arrived at Philadelphia, he adds, "You do not tell me who mounted the great one, nor where you have hung it up."

In his relations to his home, at any rate, we can discern nothing of the lack of order, with which he was so frank in reproaching himself. During the time that he was detained in New York by Lord Loudon, he several times had occasion to send a message to his wife about something that he had left behind in his house at Philadelphia, or in his house at Woodbridge in New Jersey, and nothing could be more exact than his recollection as to just where each thing was. He writes for his best spectacles; he had left them on the table, he said, meaning at Woodbridge. In the right hand little drawer under his desk in Philadelphia was some of the

²¹ The only blot upon the useful labors of Jared Sparks, as the editor of Franklin's productions, is the liberties that he took with their wording. Sometimes his alterations were the offspring of good feeling, sometimes of ordinary puristic scruples, and occasionally of the sickly prudery which led our American grandfathers and grandmothers to speak of the leg of a turkey as its "drum-stick." The word "belly" appears to have been especially trying to his nice sense of propriety. One result was these scornful strictures by Albert Henry Smyth in the Introduction to his edition of Franklin's writings: "He is nice in his use of moral epithets; he will not offend one stomach with his choice of words. Franklin speaks of the Scots 'who entered England and *trampled on its belly* as far as Derby,'—'marched on,' says Sparks. Franklin is sending some household articles from London to Philadelphia. In the large packing case is 'a jug for beer.' It has, he says, 'the coffee cups in its belly.' Sparks performs the same abdominal operation here."

Indian Lady's gut-cambric; it was to be rolled up like a ribbon, wrapt in paper and placed in the Indian seal skin hussiff, with the other things already in it, and the hussiff was to be forwarded to him. It would be an acceptable present to a gimcrack great man in London that was his friend. In certain places on his book-shelves at Woodbridge, which he precisely locates, were the *Gardener's Dictionary*, by P. Miller, and the *Treatise on Cydermaking*. They were to be delivered to Mr. Parker.

Occasional shadows, of course, fall across the happy and honored life reflected in Franklin's letters to Deborah. We cannot have the evening, however soft and still, without its fading light; or, as Franklin himself put it in one of these letters, "we are not to expect it will be always Sunshine." Strenuous and absorbing as were his public tasks during each of his missions to England; signalized as the latter were by the honors conferred on him by ancient seats of learning, and the attentions paid him by illustrious men; charming and refreshing as were his excursions for health and recreation about the British Islands and on the Continent, and his hours of social relaxation in the country houses of England, Scotland and Ireland; supplied as he was at No. 7 Craven Street with every domestic comfort that the assiduous management of Mrs. Stevenson—who even took care that his shirts should be well-aired as Deborah directed—could provide, his thoughts, now and then, as we have seen, tristfully reverted to his home on the other side of the Atlantic. Some six months after his arrival in England in 1757, he expressed the hope that, if he stayed another winter, it would be more agreeable than the greatest part of the time that he had spent in England. Some two months after his return to England in 1764, he writes to Deborah that he hopes that a few months—the few months slid into ten years—will finish affairs in England to his wish, and bring him to that retirement and repose, with his little family, so suitable to his years, and which he has so long set his heart upon. Some four years later, he wrote to Deborah:

I feel stronger and more active. Yet I would not have you think that I fancy I shall grow young again. I know that men of my Bulk often fail suddenly: I know that according to the Course of Nature I cannot at most continue much longer, and that the living even of another Day is uncertain. I therefore now form no Schemes, but such as are of immediate Execution; indulging myself in no future Prospect except one, that of returning to Philadelphia, there to spend the Evening of Life with my Friends and Family.

There was a time when he loved England and would perhaps have contentedly lived and died there, if his Lares and Penates could have been enticed into taking up their abode there. With his broad, tolerant, jocund nature, he was, it must be confessed, not a little like a hare, which soon makes a form for itself wherever it happens to crouch. The homesickness, which colors a few of his letters, is to no little extent the legacy of illness. But much as he was absent from home, alchemist as he always was in transmuting all that is disagreeable in life into what is agreeable, or at least endurable, the family hearthside never ceased to have a bright, cheerful glow for his well-ordered, home-loving nature.

Grave illness was more than once his lot during his mission to England.²² Shortly after his arrival in that country in 1757, he was seized with a violent attack of sickness, accompanied by delirium, which left him in an invalid condition for quite a time. From the account that he gives of the cupping, vomiting and purging that he underwent, under the care of good Doctor Fothergill, there would seem to have been no lack of opportunity for the escape of the

²² The maladies to which Franklin was subject, and the spells of illness that he experienced, like everything else relating to him, have been described in detail by at least one of his enthusiastic latter-day biographers. We are content, however, to be classed among those biographers in whose eyes no amount of genius can hallow an ague or glorify a cutaneous affection.

disease, which, judging by the amount of bark that he took in substance and infusion, was probably some form of malarial fever. This attack gives a decidedly valetudinary tone to one of his subsequent letters to Deborah. "I am much more tender than I us'd to be," he said, "and sleep in a short Callico Bedgown with close Sleeves, and Flannel close-footed Trousers; for without them I get no warmth all Night. So it seems I grow older apace." Deborah's health, too, about this time was not overgood, for, a few months later, he writes to her: "It gives me Concern to receive such frequent Acc's of your being indisposed; but we both of us grow in Years, and must expect our Constitutions, though tolerably good in themselves, will by degrees give way to the Infirmities of Age." Shortly after Franklin's arrival in England in 1764, he was seized with another attack of illness, but he was soon able to declare that, thanks to God, he was got perfectly well, his cough being quite gone, and his arms mending, so that he could dress and undress himself, if he chose to endure a little pain. A few months later, he says it rejoices him to learn that Deborah is freer than she used to be from the headache and the pain in her side. He himself, he said, was likewise in perfect health. Again he writes to Deborah in the succeeding year: "I congratulate you on the soon expected Repeal of the Stamp Act; and on the great Share of Health we both enjoy, tho' now going in Four-score (that is, in the fourth score)." He was not allowed, however, to indulge long the spirit of congratulation, for, a few months later, one of his letters to Deborah brings to our knowledge the fact that he had been very ill. After his recovery from this illness, he does not seem to have been attacked by anything again while in England, beyond a fit or so of the gout, and in 1768 he readily assents to the statement of Deborah that they were both blessed with a great share of health considering their years, then sixty-three. A few years more, however, and Franklin's correspondence indicates plainly enough that this statement was no longer applicable to Deborah. In the letter last-mentioned, her husband writes to her that he wonders to hear that his friends were backward in bringing her his letters when they arrived, and thinks it must be a mere imagination of hers, the effect of some melancholy humor she happened then to be in; and some four years afterwards he recommends to her a dietary for the preservation of her health and the improvement of her spirits. But both were then beyond repair, and, two years later, she was in the Elysian fields where, despite what was reported, as we shall see, by Franklin to Madame Helvétius about his Eurydice and M. Helvétius, it is impossible to believe that she, faithful, loving creature that she was, did anything but inconsolably await his coming.

Of course, we are not wholly dependent upon Franklin's letters to Deborah for details relating to Sally and Richard Bache. A very readable letter of his is the one written by him to Sally from Reedy Island on his way to England in 1764. Its opening sentences bring home to us anew the multitude of his friends and the fervid enthusiasm of their friendship.

Our good friends, Mr. Galloway, Mr. Wharton, and Mr. James, came with me in the ship from Chester to New Castle and went ashore there [he said]. It was kind to favour me with their good company as far as they could. The affectionate leave taken of me by so many friends at Chester was very endearing. God bless them and all Pennsylvania.

Then, after observing that the natural prudence and goodness of heart, with which God had blessed Sally, made it less necessary for him to be particular in giving her advice, Franklin tells her that the more attentively dutiful and tender she was towards her good mama the more she would recommend herself to him, adding, "But why should I mention *me*, when you have so much higher a promise in the commandments, that such conduct will recommend you to the favour of God." After this, he warns her that her conduct should be all the more circumspect, that no advantage might be given to the malevolence of his political enemies,

directs her to go constantly to church and advises her in his absence to acquire those useful accomplishments, arithmetic and book-keeping.

In his next letter to Sally, he tells her that he has met her husband at Preston, where he had been kindly entertained for two or three days by her husband's mother and sisters, whom he liked much. The comfort that this assurance gave to a wife, who had never met her husband's relatives, can be readily appreciated. He had advised Bache, he said, to settle down to business in Philadelphia, where he would always be with her; almost any profession a man has been educated in being preferable, in his opinion, to an office held at pleasure, as rendering him more independent, more a freeman, and less subject to the caprices of superiors. This means, of course, that the Baches, too, were looking for a seat in the Post-Office carryall, in which room was found for so many of Franklin's relations and *protégés*.

By Industry & Frugality [Franklin further said], you may get forward in the World, being both of you yet young. And then what we may leave you at our Death may be a pretty Addition, tho' of itself far from sufficient to maintain & bring up a Family. It is of the more Importance for you to think seriously of this, as you may have a Number of Children to educate. 'Till my Return you need be at no Expence for Rent, etc, as you are all welcome to continue with your Mother, and indeed it seems to be your Duty to attend her, as she grows infirm, and takes much Delight in your Company and the Child's. This Saving will be a Help in your Progress: And for your Encouragement I can assure you that there is scarce a Merchant of Opulence in your Town, whom I do not remember a young Beginner with as little to go on with, & no better Prospects than Mr. Bache.

Ben of course is not overlooked. "I am much pleas'd with the Acc' I receive from all Hands of your dear little Boy. I hope he will be continu'd a Blessing to us all." It must have been a great gratification to him to learn that Betsey, William Franklin's wife, as well as Deborah, had stood as godmother for the child. In his next letter to Sally, acknowledging the receipt of a pleasing letter from her, he states that he is glad that she has undertaken the care of the housekeeping, as it would be an ease to her mother, especially if she could manage to her approbation. "That," he commented significantly, "may perhaps be at first a Difficulty."²³ It would be of use to her, he continued, if she would get a habit of keeping exact accounts, and it would be some satisfaction to him to see them, for she should remember, for her encouragement in good economy, that, whatever a child saves of its parents' money, will be its own another day. "Study," the letter concludes, "Poor Richard a little, and you may find some Benefit from his Instructions." These letters were all written from London. The rest of Franklin's letters to Sally alone were written from Passy. In the first he says that, if she knew how happy her letters made him, and considered how many of them miscarried, she would, he thought, write oftener. A daughter had then been added to the members of the Bache household, and that he had a word to pen about her goes almost without saying. He expresses the hope that Sally would again be out of the city during the hot months for the sake of this child's health, "for I begin to love the dear little creature from your description of her," he said. This was the letter in which Sally was so pointedly scored for not living more simply and frugally.

²³ "I must mention to you," Sally said in a letter to her father, dated Oct. 30, 1773, "that I am no longer housekeeper; it gave my dear mama so much uneasiness, and the money was given to me in a manner which made it impossible to save anything by laying in things beforehand, so that my housekeeping answered no good purpose, and I have the more readily given it up, though I think it my duty, and would willingly take the care and trouble off of her, could I possibly please and make her happy."

I was charmed [he declared] with the account you gave me of your industry, the table cloths of your own spinning, &c.; but the latter part of the paragraph, that you had sent for linen from France, because weaving and flax were grown dear, alas, that dissolved the charm; and your sending for long black pins, and lace, and *feathers!* disgusted me as much as if you had put salt into my strawberries. The spinning, I see, is laid aside, and you are to be dressed for the ball! You seem not to know, my dear daughter, that, of all the dear things in this world, idleness is the dearest, except mischief.

Then Ben as usual comes in for notice. As he intended him for a Presbyterian as well as a Republican, he had sent him to finish his education at Geneva, Franklin stated.

He is much grown [he continues] in very good health, draws a little, as you will see by the enclosed, learns Latin, writing, arithmetic, and dancing, and speaks French better than English. He made a translation of your last letter to him, so that some of your works may now appear in a foreign language.

A few sentences more, with regard to her second son, Will, and another topic and there is a regurgitation of his disgust over Sally's extravagance.

When I began [he said] to read your account of the high prices of goods, "a pair of gloves, \$7; a yard of common gauze, \$24, and that it now required a fortune to maintain a family in a very plain way," I expected you would conclude with telling me, that everybody as well as yourself was grown frugal and industrious; and I could scarce believe my eyes in reading forward, that "there never was so much pleasure and dressing going on," and that you yourself wanted black pins and feathers from France to appear, I suppose, in the mode! This leads me to imagine, that it is perhaps not so much that the goods are grown dear, as that the money is grown cheap, as everything else will do when excessively plenty; and that people are still as easy nearly in their circumstances, as when a pair of gloves might be had for half a crown. The war indeed may in some degree raise the prices of goods, and the high taxes which are necessary to support the war may make our frugality necessary; and, as I am always preaching that doctrine, I cannot in conscience or in decency encourage the contrary, by my example, in furnishing my children with foolish modes and luxuries. I therefore send all the articles you desire, that are useful and necessary, and omit the rest; for, as you say you should "have great pride in wearing anything I send, and showing it as your father's taste," I must avoid giving you an opportunity of doing that with either lace or feathers. If you wear your cambric ruffles as I do, and take care not to mend the holes, they will come in time to be lace, and feathers, my dear girl, may be had in America from every cock's tail.

Franklin's last letter to Sally was written from Passy, and contains the inimitable strictures on the Order of the Cincinnati, to which we shall hereafter return, but nothing of any personal or domestic interest.

Two of the letters of Franklin are written to Sally and her husband together. "Dear Son and Daughter," is the way he begins, and one ends, "I am ever my dear Children, your affectionate Father."

Both of these letters were written from Passy. One of them, in addition to letting the parents know that Ben promised to be a stout, as well as a good, man, presents with no little pathos the situation of the writer on the eve of his departure from France for Philadelphia in 1785. After mentioning his efforts to engage some good vessel bound directly for Philadelphia,

which would agree to take him on board at Havre with his grandsons, servants and baggage, he sketches this lugubrious picture of himself.

Infirm as I am, I have need of comfortable Room and Accommodations. I was miserably lodg'd in coming over hither, which almost demolish'd me. I must be better stow'd now, or I shall not be able to hold out the Voyage. Indeed my Friends here are so apprehensive for me, that they press me much to remain in France, and three of them have offer'd me an Asylum in their Habitations. They tell me I am here among a People who universally esteem and love me; that my Friends at home are diminish'd by Death in my Absence; that I may there meet with Envy and its consequent Enmity which here I am perfectly free from; this supposing I live to compleat the Voyage, but of that they doubt. The Desire however of spending the little Remainder of Life with my Family, is so strong, as to determine me to try, at least, whether I can bear the Motion of a Ship. If not, I must get them to set me on shore somewhere in the Channel, and content myself to die in Europe.

This is melancholy enough, but the wonderful old man weathered out the voyage, and contrived on the way to write three elaborate treatises on practical subjects which, good as they are of their kind, the general reader would gladly exchange for the addition of a few dozen pages to the *Autobiography*. In his last years, he was like the mimosa tree, dying, to all appearances, one year, and the next throwing out fresh verdurous branches from his decaying trunk.

Among the writings of Franklin are also letters to Richard Bache alone. The first is dated October 7, 1772, and begins, "Loving Son." But loving son as Bache was, Franklin was too indisposed to encourage pecuniary laxity in a son-in-law, who had to make his way in the world, not to remind him that there remained five guineas unpaid, which he had had of him just on going away. "Send it in a Venture for Ben to Jamaica," he said. The next letter to Bache relates to the hospitable Post-office. Bache, he says, will have heard, before it got to hand, that the writer had been displaced, and consequently would have it no longer in his power to assist him in his views relating to the Post-office; "As things are," he remarked, "I would not wish to see you concern'd in it. For I conceive that the Dismissing me merely for not being corrupted by the Office to betray the Interests of my Country, will make it some Disgrace among us to hold such an Office."

The remainder of Franklin's letters to Bache, with the exception of a letter introducing to him Thomas Paine, the author of *Common Sense*, were written from Passy. One of them had something pungent but just enough to say about Lee and Izard and the cabal for removing Temple. Sally declared on one occasion that she hated all South Carolinians from B (Bee, a member of Congress from South Carolina) to Izard. This letter discloses the fact that Ben had been placed at school at Geneva in "*the old thirteen United States of Switzerland*," as the writer calls them. It is signed "I am your affectionate father." Another letter indicates that Franklin had sent a profile of the growing boy to his parents, so that they could see the changes which he had undergone in the preceding four years. This letter also expresses the willingness of the grandfather to give at his expense to William, Bache's second son, the best education that America could afford. In his next and last letter to Bache, Franklin makes these comments upon Ben which not only show how much he loved him but how quietly his temperament could accept even such a disappointment as his failure to secure the merited office for Temple.

Benny continues well, and grows amazingly. He is a very sensible and a very good Lad, and I love him much. I had Thoughts of bringing him up under his Cousin, and fitting him for Public Business, thinking he might be of Service hereafter to his

Country; but being now convinc'd that *Service is no Inheritance*, as the Proverb says, I have determin'd to give him a Trade that he may have something to depend on, and not be oblig'd to ask Favours or Offices of anybody. And I flatter myself he will make his way good in the World with God's Blessing. He has already begun to learn the business from Masters [a printer and a letter founder] who come to my House, and is very diligent in working and quick in learning.

Two letters to the boy himself are among Franklin's published writings. The first is couched in sweet, simple terms, suited to the age of his youthful correspondent, and the second is interesting only as evidencing how closely the grandfather scanned the drawings and handwriting of his grandson, and as emphasizing the importance that he always attached to arithmetic and accounts as elements of an useful education.

Sally's reply to her father's rebuke, on account of the modish vanities, that she asked of him, was quite spirited.

How could my dear papa [she said] give me so severe a reprimand for wishing a little finery. He would not, I am sure, if he knew how much I have felt it. Last winter (in consequence of the surrender of General Burgoyne) was a season of triumph to the Whigs, and they spent it gayly; you would not have had me, I am sure, stay away from the Embassadors' or Gerard's entertainments, nor when I was invited to spend a day with General Washington and his lady; and you would have been the last person, I am sure, to have wished to see me dressed with singularity: Though I never loved dress so much as to wish to be particularly fine, yet I never will go out when I cannot appear so as to do credit to my family and husband.

Apparently, Sally was not always so unsuccessful as she was on this occasion in her efforts to secure something to wear, suitable to her situation as the daughter of a very distinguished citizen of Philadelphia in easy circumstances. Nothing, she once wrote to her father, was ever more admired than her new gown. It is obvious, however, that Franklin was resolved that his daughter at least should heed and profit by what Father Abraham had to say in his discourse about the effect of silks, satins, scarlet and velvets in putting out the kitchen fire. In his will, he bequeathed to her the picture of Louis XV., given to him by the King, which was set with four hundred and eight diamonds, "requesting, however, that she would not form any of those diamonds into ornaments either for herself or daughters, and thereby introduce or countenance the expensive, vain, and useless fashion of wearing jewels in this country." The outer circle of the diamonds was sold by Sally, and on the proceeds she and her husband made the tour of Europe.

When Franklin returned from his second mission, it was to reside with his daughter and son-in-law in the new house with the kitchen, dining-room and blue chamber mentioned in his letters to Deborah. Cohabitation with the Baches proved so agreeable that he wrote Polly Hewson that he was delighted with his little family. "Will," he told Temple, "has got a little Gun, marches with it, and whistles at the same time by way of Fife." There are also some amusing observations in a later letter of his to Temple on a letter written by Ben to Temple, when Temple was at the house of his Tory father in New Jersey, but which was never sent.

It was thought [said Franklin] to be too full of Pot hooks & Hangers, and so unintelligible by the dividing Words in the Middle and joining Ends of some to Beginnings of others, that if it had fallen into the Hands of some Committee it might have given them too much Trouble to decypher it, on a Suspicion of its containing Treason, especially as directed to a Tory House.

An earlier letter from Franklin to Polly Hewson about Ben is marked by the same playful spirit. "Ben," the grandfather said, "when I delivered him your Blessing, inquired the Age of Elizabeth [Mrs. Hewson's daughter] and thought her yet too young for him; but, as he made no other Objection, and that will lessen every day, I have only to wish being alive to dance with your Mother at the Wedding."

After his arrival in America, Franklin was appointed Postmaster-General of the Colonies by Congress, and this appointment gave Richard Bache another opportunity to solicit an office from his father-in-law. With his usual unfaltering nepotism, Franklin appointed him Deputy Postmaster-General, but subsequently Congress removed him, and there was nothing for him to do but to court fortune in business again, with such aid as Franklin could give him in mercantile circles in France. In the latter years of Franklin's life, there was a very general feeling that he had made public office too much of a family perquisite, and this feeling weakened Richard Bache's tenure on the Post Office, and helped to frustrate all Franklin's plans for the public preferment of Temple and Benjamin Franklin Bache. Much as Washington admired Franklin the latter was unable to obtain even by the most assiduous efforts an office under his administration for either of them.

When Franklin's ship approached Philadelphia on his return from Paris, it was his son-in-law who put off in a boat to bring him and his grandsons ashore, and, when he landed at Market Street wharf, he was received by a crowd of people with huzzas and accompanied with acclamations quite to his door.

After his return he again took up his residence with the Baches in the same house as before, and there is but little more to say about the members of the Bache family. There are, however, some complimentary things worth recalling that were said of Sally by some of her French contemporaries.

She [Marbois wrote to Franklin in 1781] passed a part of last year in exertions to rouse the zeal of the Pennsylvania ladies; and she made on this occasion such a happy use of the eloquence which you know she possesses, that a large part of the American army was provided with shirts, bought with their money or made by their hands. If there are in Europe [he also said] any women who need a model of attachment to domestic duties and love for their country, Mrs. Bache may be pointed out to them as such.

The Marquis de Chastellux tells us that she was "simple in her manners," and "like her respectable father, she possesses his benevolence."

Of course, from the letters of Franklin himself we obtain some insight into the domestic conditions by which he was surrounded in his home during the last stages of his existence. To John Jay and Mrs. Jay he wrote, shortly after his arrival in America, that he was then in the bosom of his family, and found four new little prattlers, who clung about the knees of their grandpapa, and afforded him great pleasure. It is a peaceful slope, though near the foot of the hill, which is presented to our eyes in these words written by him to Jan Ingenhousz:

Except that I am too much encumber'd with Business, I find myself happily situated here, among my numerous Friends, plac'd at the Head of my Country by its unanimous Voice, in the Bosom of my Family, my Offspring to wait on me and nurse me, in a House I built 23 Years since to my Mind.

A still later letter, in which he speaks of Sally, tends to support the idea that it was not his but William Franklin's fault that the reconciliation, which was supposed to have taken place between father and son abroad, was not sufficiently complete to repress the acrid reference made by Franklin in his will to the fact that his son had been a Loyalist.

I too [he wrote to his friend, Mather Byles] have a Daughter, who lives with me and is the Comfort of my declining Years, while my Son is estrang'd from me by the Part he took in the late War, and keeps aloof, residing in England, whose Cause he *espous'd*; whereby the old Proverb is exemplified;

“My Son is my Son till he take him a Wife;

But my Daughter's my Daughter all Days of her Life.”

We are the quicker to place the blame for the recrudescence of the former bitterness upon William Franklin because the life of Franklin is full of proofs that he had a truly forgiving disposition.²⁴ It is a fact, however, that his unrelenting antipathy to Loyalists is the one thing in his career unworthy of a sense of justice and breadth of intellectual charity, otherwise well-nigh perfect. We cannot but regret that anything should have shaken the poise of a character which Lecky has truthfully termed “one of the calmest and best balanced of human characters.” But it is not given even to a Franklin to see things in their ordinary colors through a blood-red mist, and quite as true as any saying that Poor Richard ever conceived or borrowed is *Acerrima proximorum odia*.

In still another letter, one to Madame Brillon, he says, “A dutiful and affectionate Daughter, with her Husband and Six Children compose my Family. The Children are all promising, and even the youngest, who is but four Years old, contributes to my Amusement”; and, about a year and a half before his death, he records in a letter to Elizabeth Partridge, the “Addition of a little good-natured Girl, whom I begin to love as well as the rest.” In yet another letter, this time to his friend, Alexander Small, after the birth of this little girl, there is a revelation of the domestic quietude in which his long life closed. “I have,” he said, “seven promising grandchildren by my daughter, who play with and amuse me, and she is a kind attentive nurse to me when I am at any time indisposed; so that I pass my time as agreeably as at my age a man may well expect, and have little to wish for, except a more easy exit than my malady seems to threaten.” By this time, Benjamin Franklin Bache was old enough to be turning to the practical purposes of self-support the knowledge of printing which he had acquired in France. “I am too old to follow printing again myself,” wrote Franklin to Mrs. Catherine Greene, “but, loving the business, I have brought up my grandson Benjamin to it, and have built and furnished a printing-house for him, which he now manages under my eye.” The type used by Benjamin in his business were those which his grandfather had cast with the aid of

²⁴ The entire conduct of Franklin towards his son after the dismissal of the father from office by the British Government seems to have been thoroughly considerate and decorous. His wish that William Franklin would resign his office as Governor of New Jersey, which he could not hold without pecuniary loss to his father, and without apparent insensibility to the indignity to which his father had been subjected, was delicately intimated only. Even after William Franklin became a prisoner in Connecticut in consequence of his disloyalty to the American cause, Franklin, while giving Temple some very good practical reasons why he could not consent that he should be the bearer of a letter from Mrs. William Franklin to her husband, takes care to tell Temple that he does not blame his desire of seeing a father that he had so much reason to love. At this time he also relieved with a gift of money the immediate necessities of Mrs. William Franklin. The temper of his letters to Temple, when Temple went over to England from France, at his instance, to pay his duty to William Franklin, was that of settled reconciliation with his son. “Give my Love to your Father,” is a message in one of these letters. When he touched at Southampton on his return from his French mission, William Franklin, among others, was there to greet him. In the succeeding year we find Franklin asking Andrew Strahan to send him a volume and to present his account for it to his son. But on one occasion during the last twelve months of his life, he speaks of William no longer as “my son” but as “William Franklin.” On the whole, it would appear that it was not so much the original defection of the son from the American cause as the fact that he kept aloof from the father, after the return of the father from France, which was responsible for the asperity with which the latter refers in his will to the political course of William Franklin during the Revolution.

his servants in Paris, and had employed in printing the brilliant little productions penned by his friends and himself, which created so much merriment in the *salon* of Madame Helvétius.

The seven children of Sarah Bache were Benjamin Franklin Bache, who married Margaret Marcoe, William Hartman Bache, who married Catharine Wistar, Eliza Franklin Bache, who married John Edward Harwood, Louis Bache, who married first Mary Ann Swift, and then Esther Egee, Deborah Bache, who married William J. Duane, Richard Bache, who married Sophia B. Dallas, a daughter of Alexander J. Dallas, and Sarah Bache, who married Thomas Sargeant.

Besides being a good husband, father and grandfather, Franklin was also a good son. His father, Josiah, had seven children by his first wife, Anne, and ten by his second, Abiah Folger, Franklin's mother. Of this swarm, we are told by the *Autobiography* that Franklin could remember thirteen children sitting at one time at his father's table, who all grew up to be men and women, and married. Franklin himself was the youngest son, and the youngest child but two. In few subjects was his adult interest keener than in that of population, and the circumstances of his early life were certainly calculated to stimulate it into a high degree of precocious activity. It is a pleasing portrait that he paints of his father for us in the *Autobiography*. After describing his physique in the terms already quoted by us, Franklin says:

He was ingenious, could draw prettily, was skilled a little in music, and had a clear pleasing voice, so that when he played psalm tunes on his violin and sung withal, as he sometimes did in an evening after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear. He had a mechanical genius too, and, on occasion, was very handy in the use of other tradesman's tools; but his great excellence lay in a sound understanding and solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and publick affairs. In the latter, indeed, he was never employed, the numerous family he had to educate and the straitness of his circumstances keeping him close to his trade; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading people, who consulted him for his opinion in affairs of the town or of the church he belonged to, and showed a good deal of respect for his judgment and advice: he was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties. At his table he liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbour to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just, and prudent in the conduct of life; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table, whether it was well or ill-dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavour, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind, so that I was bro't up in such a perfect inattention to those matters as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me, and so unobservant of it, that to this day if I am asked I can scarce tell a few hours after dinner what I dined upon. This has been a convenience to me in travelling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed, tastes and appetites.

A story is credited to Josiah by Franklin which is quite in the manner of the son. When Charles the First ordered his proclamation authorizing sports on Sunday to be read in all churches, many clergymen complied, some refused and others hurried it through as indistinctly as possible. But a certain clergyman to the surprise of his congregation read it distinctly. He followed the reading, however, with the Fourth Commandment, *Remember to*

keep holy the Sabbath Day, and then said, “Brethren, I have laid before you the Command of your King, and the Commandment of your God. I leave it to yourselves to judge which of the two ought rather to be observed.”

It is to be wished that Franklin could have given us in the *Autobiography* a companion portrait of his mother also; but this he has not done. He tells us little more than that she was the daughter of Peter Folger, a resident of Nantucket, had, like her husband, an excellent constitution, and suckled all her ten children—a point of capital importance with her son. Franklin further tells us that he never knew either his father or his mother to have any sickness but that of which they died, he at eighty-nine and she at eighty-five. They were both buried in Boston, and rested for many years under a monument, erected over their graves by Franklin, with a happy inscription from his pen, until this monument, having fallen into a state of dilapidation, was replaced in 1827 by a more durable one, erected by a number of citizens of Boston, who were desirous, as their supplementary inscription states, of reminding succeeding generations that he was born in Boston. In his inscription, Franklin, true to his ideals, states with pride that Josiah and Abiah lived lovingly together in wedlock fifty-five years, and, without an estate, or any gainful employment, by constant labor and industry, with God’s blessing, maintained a large family comfortably, and brought up thirteen children and seven grandchildren reputably. In the light of the altered domestic standards of the present time, it requires some little effort, after reading these words, to accept the subsequent statement in the inscription that Josiah was not only a pious but a “prudent” man.

Peter Folger was evidently regarded by Franklin with distinct favor because of his tolerant characteristics. The flower of tolerance did not often lift up its head in the frigid air of what some one has wittily styled the “ice age” of New England history. In the *Autobiography*, Franklin speaks of Folger as one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honourable mention is made by Cotton Mather, in his church history of that country, entitled *Magnolia Christi Americana*, as “a godly, learned Englishman,” if he remembers the words rightly.

I have heard [the *Autobiography* goes on] that he wrote sundry small occasional pieces, but only one of them was printed, which I saw now many years since. It was written in 1675, in the home-spun verse of that time and people, and addressed to those then concerned in the government there. It was in favour of liberty of conscience, and in behalf of the Baptists, Quakers, and other sectaries that had been under persecution, ascribing the Indian Wars, and other distresses that had befallen the country, to that persecution, as so many judgments of God to punish so heinous an offense, and exhorting a repeal of those uncharitable laws. The whole appeared to me as written with a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom. The six concluding lines I remember, though I have forgotten the two first of the stanza; but the purport of them was, that his censures proceeded from good-will, and, therefore, he would be known to be the author,

“Because to be a libeller (says he)

I hate it with my heart;

From Sherburne town, where now I dwell,

My name I do put here;

Without offense your real friend,

It is Peter Folgier.”

Verses like these, it is to be feared, call for somewhat the same spirit of toleration as that which Folger himself exhibited towards the Baptists and Quakers, but they were well worthy

of remembrance, at any rate, for the brave and enlightened spirit by which they were informed.²⁵

Peter Folger's plainness of speech seems to have been a family characteristic. In a letter to his sister Jane, written in his last years, Franklin told her frankly that, if there had been a misunderstanding between her and one of her relations, he should have concluded that it was her fault, "for I think our Family," he said, "were always subject to being a little Miffy." Then, as was his habit, when he had discharged the disagreeable duty of saying something slightly censorious, he brings the stress of his good nature to bear upon his pen just a little harder than usual.

By the way [he asked] is our Relationship in Nantucket worn-out? I have met with none from thence of late years, who were disposed to be acquainted with me, except Captain Timothy Foulger. They are wonderfully shy. But I admire their honest plainness of Speech. About a year ago I invited two of them to dine with me. Their answer was, that they would, if they could not do better. I suppose they did better; for I never saw them afterwards, and so had no Opportunity of showing my Miff, if I had one.

The letters from Franklin to his father and mother are few in number but not lacking in interest. To the one to Josiah, in which he made the heinous confession that his mind was not very clear as to the difference between Arianism and Arminianism, we have already adverted. In this letter, besides the burden of defending his religious orthodoxy before a very stern tribunal, he had to assume the burden of satisfying his good mother that there was nothing odious in the principles and practices of the Freemasons; and this in the face of the fact that one of their rules was not to admit women into their lodges. Another letter, which begins "Honoured Father and Mother," and ends, "Your affectionate and dutiful son," discourses in quite a learned fashion upon various remedies that might take the place of the ebbing *vis medicatrix naturæ* which had served the aged pair so well for such a long span of years; but the son is careful to say that he hopes that his parents will consider his advice upon such subjects only as marks of his good will and put no more of it in practice than should happen to agree with their doctor's directions. Another letter, beginning "Honoured Mother," deals with topics of a very different nature from either religious dogmas or the *sapo philosophorum* of his medicinal communication. Cousin Josiah Davenport and his spouse had arrived at Philadelphia hearty and well. He had met them the evening before at Trenton, thirty miles off, and had accompanied them to town. How gracious, we may remark, was the old Pennsylvania hospitality which sometimes greeted the coming guest thirty miles away, and, instead of speeding the parting guest, sometimes followed him for as great a distance when he was going!

They [Franklin continued] went into their own house on Monday, and I believe will do very well, for he seems bent on industry, and she appears a discreet, notable young woman. My wife has been to see them every day, calling in as she passes by; and I suspect has fallen in love with our new cousin; for she entertains me a deal, when she comes home, with what Cousin Sally does, and what Cousin Sally says, what a good contriver she is, and the like.

In his next letter to Abiah, Franklin sends her one of his far-famed almanacs, and then adds, "I send you also a moidore enclosed, which please to accept towards chaise hire, that you

²⁵ Altogether Peter Folger must have been a man of sterling sense and character. He was one of the five Commissioners appointed to survey and measure the land on the Island of Nantucket, and in the order of appointment the following provision was inserted: "Whatsoever shall be done by them, or any three of them, *Peter Folger being one*, shall be accounted legal and valid."

may ride warm to meetings this winter.” From the moidore he passes to infantile complaints which it must have pained the heart of the mother of ten children to hear had carried off many children in Philadelphia that summer, and then, after just a word about Cousin Coleman and two of the outspoken Folgers, he has this to say about Sally: “Your granddaughter is the greatest lover of her book and school, of any child I ever knew, and is very dutiful to her mistress as well as to us.”

In one of her letters to her son Abiah tells him that she is very weak and short-breathed, so that she can’t sit up to write much, although she sleeps well at night, and her cough is better, and she has a pretty good stomach to her victuals. In the same letter, she also says: “Pray excuse my bad writing and inditing, for all tell me I am too old to write letters.” No courtier could have framed a more graceful response to this appeal, let alone the sincerity of filial respect and love.

We received your kind Letter of the 2d Instant [wrote Franklin] and we are glad to hear you still enjoy such a Measure of Health, notwithstanding your great Age. We read your Writing very easily. I never met with a Word in your Letters but what I could readily understand; for, tho’ the Hand is not always the best, the Sense makes everything plain.

The numerous family details in this letter render it the most interesting of Franklin’s letters to his mother. They had concluded, he said, to sell at the first good opportunity a negro slave and his wife, who appear to have been guilty of some thievery, “for we do not like Negro Servants,” he declared. For the sake of human consistency, it is to be hoped that the pair were sold long before he became the President of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, and assailed the African slave trade with such telling raillery. But, to sell all one’s own negroes, and then to enter upon a perfervid course of agitation for the enfranchisement of one’s neighbor’s negroes, without compensation, was a thing of not uncommon occurrence in American history, so long as the institution of slavery lasted. Will (William Franklin), he tells Abiah, had acquired a habit of idleness on the expedition against Canada, but had begun of late to apply himself to business, and he hoped would become an industrious man. “He imagin’d his Father,” said Franklin, “had got enough for him, but I have assured him that I intend to spend what little I have myself, if it please God that I live long enough; and, as he by no means wants Sense, he can see by my going on, that I am like to be as good as my Word.”

Sally [he says] grows a fine Girl, and is extremely industrious with her Needle, and delights in her Book. She is of a most affectionate Temper, and perfectly dutiful and obliging to her Parents, and to all. Perhaps I flatter myself too much, but I have Hopes that she will prove an ingenious, sensible, notable, and worthy Woman, like her Aunt Jenny. She goes now to the Dancing-School.

After Franklin decamped from Boston as a boy, he rarely again saw his parents, but, down to the days of their respective deaths, he kept in touch with them immediately, through his own correspondence with them, and also mediately through his correspondence with his sister Jane. “You have mentioned nothing in your letter of our dear parents,” he observes in one of his letters to her. “Dear Sister, I love you tenderly for your care of our father in his sickness,” he writes to her on another occasion. And, finally, when Abiah, “home had gone and ta’en her wages,” he sent these feeling words to this same sister and her husband:

Dear Brother and Sister, I received yours with the affecting news of our dear good mother’s death. I thank you for your long continued care of her in her old age and

sickness. Our distance made it impracticable for us to attend her, but you have supplied all. She has lived a good life, as well as a long one, and is happy.

Josiah left an estate valued at twenty-four hundred dollars. Some years after his death, when Franklin happened to be in Boston, an old man produced a bond, executed by the father for about fifteen or seventeen pounds, and asked the son to pay it. This Franklin declined to do, taking the position that, as he had never received any share of his father's estate, he did not think himself obliged to pay any of the debts due by it. Another reason, as he afterwards stated in a letter to his sister Jane, in which the incident was mentioned, was that he considered the matter one rather for the attention of his brother John, the administrator of his father, than himself. But, in this same letter, nevertheless, he sent these instructions to Jane: "If you know that Person, I wish you would now, out of Hall's Money (a sum that was to be collected for him and to be given to her) pay that Debt; for I remember his Mildness on the Occasion with some Regard." A soft answer, we know, tends to turn away wrath, but it is not often, we imagine, that mildness proves such an effective policy for the collection of a stale debt.

"Dear kindred blood! How I do love you all!" the exclamation of Daniel Webster, might as well have issued from the great, loving heart of Franklin. Like the brethren of Joseph, the son of Jacob, pretty much all of his contemporary relations came to share in one way or another in the good fortune of the only prosperous member of the family. Franklin was too young to have ever met the two brothers of his father, who lived and died in England—John, the Banbury dyer, with whom Franklin's paternal grandfather, Thomas resided in his old age, and with whom Franklin's father served an apprenticeship, and Thomas, the Ecton forerunner of Franklin himself, whom we have already mentioned. But his paternal uncle, Benjamin, who followed Franklin's father to New England, and lived in the same house with him for some years, Franklin did know, and brings before us quite clearly in the *Autobiography*. He was bred a silk dyer in England, was an ingenious and very pious man, we are assured by his nephew, and died at a great age. It was to the warm affection that existed between this uncle, whose grandson, Samuel Franklin, was one of Franklin's correspondents, and Franklin's father that Franklin owed his Christian name. Besides being a dyer, a great attender of sermons of the best preachers, "which he took down in his shorthand," he was, the *Autobiography* states, a poet, and "also much of a politician; too much, perhaps, for his station."

In his agreeable life of Franklin, Parton has this to say of the uncle's poetry books.

The poetry books of Uncle Benjamin, which are still in perfect preservation, though it is a hundred and eighty years since he bought the first of them, are neatly written and carefully indexed. Many of the pieces are acrostics, and several are curiously shaped on the page-dwindling or expanding in various forms, according to the quaint fancy of the poet.

No true poet, of course, ever had the patience to index his poems, and the best that can be said of the uncle as a poet is that, though he did not reach even the lowest slopes of Parnassus, he attained a point distinctly nearer to its base than the nephew ever did. Every family event seems to have been a peg for him to hang a verse upon, and among his lines are these sent across the Atlantic in return for something from the pen of his nephew who was at that time about seven years of age:

"'Tis time for me to throw aside my pen,
When hanging sleeves read, write, and rhyme like men,
This forward spring foretells a plenteous crop;

For, if the bud bear grain, what will the top!
 If plenty in the verdant blade appear,
 What may we not soon hope for in the ear!
 When flowers are beautiful before they're blown,
 What rarities will afterward be shown."

The uncle was living in New England when Josiah, Franklin's brother, who had run away to sea, and who had not been heard from for nine years, turned up again in Boston. That was a domestic event of entirely too much importance to be unsung by an uncle at once pious and poetical. So, after some vigorous references to the Deity, who

"Stills the storm and does Asswage
 Proud Dreadfull seas Death-Threatning Rage,"

the honest poet breaks out into this invocation in which he had every right to believe that the long-lost Josiah would heartily join:

"O Let men praise this mighty Lord,
 And all his Wondrous Works Record;
 Let all the Sons of men, before
 Whose Eyes those Works are Done, Adore."

But his rhymes appear to have fallen upon an ear deaf to the appeals of both piety and poetry, for one of the poet's poetry books contains this resentful entry:

"The Third part of the 107 psalm, Which Follows Next, I composed to sing at First meeting with my Nephew Josiah Franklin, But being unaffected with Gods Great Goodn^s: In his many preservations and Deliverances, It was coldly Entertain'd."

The extent to which his uncle Benjamin had been a politician in England was brought home to Franklin by a curious incident when he was in London. A second-hand book dealer, who knew nothing of the relationship between the two, offered to sell him a collection of pamphlets, bound in eight volumes folio, and twenty-four volumes, quarto and octavo, and containing all the principal pamphlets and papers on political topics, printed in England from the Restoration down to the year 1715. On examining them, Franklin was satisfied from the handwriting of the tables of contents, memoranda of prices and marginal notes in them, as well as from other circumstances, that his Uncle Benjamin was the collector, and he bought them. In all probability, they had been sold by the uncle, when he emigrated from England to New England more than fifty years before.

The *Autobiography* does not mention the fact that Franklin had at least one aunt on the paternal side, but he had. In a letter in the year 1767 to Samuel Franklin, the grandson of his Uncle Benjamin, after stating that there were at that time but two of their relations bearing the name of Franklin living in England, namely, Thomas Franklin, of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, a dyer, and his daughter, Sally, Franklin asserts that there were besides still living in England Eleanor Morris, an old maiden lady, the daughter of Hannah, the sister of Franklin's father, and Hannah Walker, the granddaughter of John, the brother of Franklin's father, and her three sons. No Arab was ever made happier by the reception of a guest than was Franklin by the discovery of a new Franklin. In 1781, when a lady at Königsberg, who was the granddaughter of a John Franklin, communicated to him certain facts about her family history, he replied in terms that left her no footing for a claim of relationship, but

added affably, "It would be a Pleasure to me to Discover a Relation in Europe, possessing the amiable Sentiments express'd in your Letter. I assure you I should not disown the meanest." One of the statements of this letter was that he had exact accounts of every person of his family since the year 1555, when it was established in England. Such a thing as sensitiveness to his humble origin or the social obscurity of his kinsfolk could find no lodgment in a mind so capacious, a heart so kind, or a nature so full of manly self-respect as his. To say nothing more, he was too much of a philosopher not to realize how close even the high-born nobleman, when detached from privilege and social superstition, is to the forked radish, to which elemental man has been likened. It is true that he once wrote to his sister Jane that he would not have her son Peter put the Franklin arms on soap of his making, and this has been cited as evidence that even Franklin had his petty modicum of social pride. The imputation overlooks the reason that he gave, namely, that to use the Franklin coat of arms for such a purpose would look too much like an attempt to counterfeit the soap formerly made by Peter's uncle John. It was Franklin's true pride of character that disarmed the social arrogance which might otherwise have rendered him less triumphantly successful than he was in winning his way into the favor of the most accomplished men, and the most beautiful and elegant women, in France.

With regard to his generous conduct to his brother James we have already spoken. Of Jemmy, James' son, who became Franklin's apprentice at James' request, we have a view in a letter from Franklin to his sister Jane in which he uses Jemmy as an illustration of how unreasonably her son Benny, when Mr. Parker's apprentice, might have complained of the clothes furnished to him by his master.

I never knew an apprentice [he said] contented with the clothes allowed him by his master, let them be what they would. Jemmy Franklin, when with me, was always dissatisfied and grumbling. When I was last in Boston, his aunt bid him go to a shop and please himself, which the gentleman did, and bought a suit of clothes on my account dearer by one half than any I ever afforded myself, one suit excepted; which I don't mention by way of complaint of Jemmy, for he and I are good friends, but only to show you the nature of boys.

What a good friend he proved to Jemmy, when the latter became his own master, we have seen. The *erratum* of which Franklin was guilty in his relations to his brother James was fully corrected long before he left a will behind him conferring upon James' descendants the same measure of his remembrance as that conferred by him upon the descendants of his brother Samuel and his sisters.

Four of Franklin's brothers died young, and Josiah, his sea faring brother, perished at sea not long after he excited the dudgeon of his uncle Benjamin by his indifference to his uncle's line of thanksgiving.

As long as Franklin's brothers John and Peter were engaged, as their father had been, in the business of making soap and candles, Franklin assisted them by obtaining consignments of their wares from them, and advertising these wares in his newspaper, and selling them in his shop. Later, when he became Deputy Postmaster-General of the Colonies, he made John postmaster at Boston and Peter postmaster at Philadelphia. Referring to a visit that he paid to John at Newport, Franklin says in the *Autobiography*, "He received me very affectionately, for he always lov'd me." When John died in 1756 at the age of sixty-five, some years after his brother Benjamin had thoughtfully devised a special catheter for his use, the latter wrote to his sister Jane, "I condole with you on the loss of our dear brother. As our number grows less, let us love one another proportionably more." John's widow he made postmistress at Boston in her husband's place.

Peter Franklin died in 1766 in the seventy-fourth year of his age. As soon as the news of Peter's death reached Franklin in London, he wrote a most feeling letter to Peter's widow, Mary.

It has pleased God at length [he said] to take from us my only remaining Brother, and your affectionate Husband, with whom you have lived in uninterrupted Harmony and Love near half a Century.

Considering the many Dangers & Hardships his Way of Life led him into, and the Weakness of his Constitution, it is wonderful that he lasted so long. It was God's Goodness that spared him to us. Let us, instead of repining at what we have lost, be thankful for what we have enjoyed.

He then proceeds, in order to allay the widow's fears as to her future, to tell her that he proposes to set up a printing house for her adopted son to be carried on in partnership with her, and to further encourage this son if he managed well.²⁶

Of Franklin's brother Samuel, we know but little.

Franklin's oldest sister, Elizabeth Dowse, the wife of Captain Dowse, lived to a very great age, and fell into a state of extreme poverty. When he was consulted by her relations in New England as to whether it was not best for her to give up the house in which she was living, and to sell her personal effects, he sent a reply full of wise kindness.

As having their own way is one of the greatest comforts of life to old people [he said], I think their friends should endeavour to accommodate them in that, as well as in anything else. When they have long lived in a house, it becomes natural to them; they are almost as closely connected with it, as the tortoise with his shell; they die, if you tear them out of it; old folks and old trees, if you remove them, it is ten to one that you kill them; so let our good old sister be no more importuned on that head. We are growing old fast ourselves, and shall expect the same kind of indulgences; if we give them, we shall have a right to receive them in our turn.

And as to her few fine things, I think she is in the right not to sell them, and for the reason she gives, that they will fetch but little; and when that little is spent, they would be of no further use to her; but perhaps the expectation of possessing them at her death may make that person tender and careful of her, and helpful to her to the amount of ten times their value. If so, they are put to the best use they possibly can be.

I hope you visit sister as often as your affairs will permit, and afford her what assistance and comfort you can in her present situation. *Old age, infirmities, and poverty*, joined, are afflictions enough. The *neglect* and *slights* of friends and near relations should never be added. People in her circumstances are apt to suspect this sometimes without cause; *appearances* should therefore be attended to, in our conduct towards them, as well as *realities*.

And then follows the sentence which indicates that, apart from the value, which belonged to his advice on any practical point, there was good reason why his views about sister Dowse's house and finery should be entitled to peculiar respect. "I write by this post to cousin Williams," he said, "to continue his care, which I doubt not he will do."

²⁶ That Peter Franklin had some of the ability of his famous brother we may infer from a long letter written to him by Franklin in which the latter, after acknowledging the receipt of a ballad by Peter, descants upon the superiority of the old, simple ditties over modern songs in lively and searching terms which he would hardly have wasted on a man of ordinary intelligence.

This letter was addressed to his sister Jane. In another to her, written a few weeks later, he said, "I am glad you have resolved to visit sister Dowse oftener; it will be a great comfort to her to find she is not neglected by you, and your example may, perhaps, be followed by some others of her relations." In the succeeding year, when he was settled in England, he writes to his sister Jane, "My wife will let you see my letter, containing an account of our travels, which I would have you read to sister Dowse, and give my love to her."

Another sister of Franklin, Mary, married Captain Robert Holmes. He was the master of a sloop that plied between Boston and the Delaware, and, when he heard at New Castle that his run-a-way brother-in-law was living in Philadelphia, he wrote to him begging him to return to Boston, and received from him a reply, composed with so much literary skill that Governor Keith of Pennsylvania, when the letter was shown to him by Holmes, declared that the writer appeared to be a young man of promising parts, and should be encouraged. Mrs. Holmes died of cancer of the breast, which is responsible for the only occasion perhaps on which Franklin was ever known to incline his ear to the virtues of a nostrum.

We have here in town [he wrote to his sister Jane] a kind of shell made of some wood, cut at a proper time, by some man of great skill (as they say), which has done wonders in that disease among us, being worn for some time on the breast. I am not apt to be superstitiously fond of believing such things, but the instances are so well attested, as sufficiently to convince the most incredulous.

Another sister of Franklin, Lydia, married Robert Scott, but our information about her is very meagre.

This is also true of Anne Harris, still another sister of his. We do know, however, that some of her family wandered away to London before Franklin left America on his mission to France, and that one of them took pains to apprise him of her urgent wants after he arrived there. She was, she said, "Obliged to Worke very hard and Can But just git the common necessarys of life," and therefore had "thoughts of going into a family as housekeeper ... having lived in that station for several years and gave grate satisfaction." With a curious disregard to existing conditions, quite unworthy of her connection with her illustrious relative, she even asked him to aid her in securing the promotion of her son in the British Navy.

A daughter of this sister, Grace Harris, married Jonathan Williams, a Boston merchant engaged in the West India trade, who enjoyed the honor of acting as the moderator of the meetings held at Faneuil Hall in 1773 for the purpose of preventing the landing of the odious tea. She must have been an elated mother when she received from her uncle in 1771 a letter in which he spoke of her two sons in these terms:

They are, I assure you, exceeding welcome to me; and they behave with so much Prudence, that no two young Men could possibly less need the Advice you would have me give them. Josiah is very happily employ'd in his Musical Pursuits. And as you hinted to me, that it would be agreeable to you, if I employ'd Johnathan in Writing, I requested him to put my Accounts in Order, which had been much neglected. He undertook it with the utmost chearfulness and Readiness, and executed it with the greatest Diligence, making me a compleat new Set of Books, fairly written out and settled in a Mercantile Manner, which is a great Satisfaction to me, and a very considerable service. I mention this, that you may not be in the least Uneasy from an Apprehension of their Visit being burthensome to me; it being, I assure you, quite the contrary.

It has been wonderful to me to see a young Man from America, in a Place so full of various Amusements as London is, as attentive to Business, as diligent in it, and keeping as close at home till it was finished, as if it had been for his own Profit; and as if he had been at the Public Diversions so often, as to be tired of them.

I pray God to keep and preserve you and yours, and give you again, in due time, a happy Sight of these valuable Sons.

The same favorable opinion of these two grandnephews found expression in a letter from Franklin to his sister Jane. Josiah, he said, had attained his heart's desire in being under the tuition of Mr. Stanley (the musical composer), who, though he had long left off teaching, kindly undertook, at Franklin's request, to instruct him, and was much pleased with his quickness of apprehension, and the progress he was making, and Jonathan appeared a very valuable young man, sober, regular and inclined to industry and frugality, which were promising signs of success in business. "I am very happy in their Company," the letter further stated.

With the help of Franklin, Jonathan, one of these two young men, became the naval agent of the United States at Nantes, when Franklin was in France. Later, he was charged by Arthur Lee with improperly retaining in his hands in this capacity upwards of one hundred thousand livres due to the United States, and Franklin insisted that Arthur Lee should make good his charge.

I have no desire to screen Mr. Williams on account of his being my Nephew [he said] if he is guilty of what you charge him with. I care not how soon he is deservedly punish'd and the family purg'd of him; for I take it that a Rogue living in (a) Family is a greater Disgrace to it than one *hang'd out* of it.

But, when steps were taken by Franklin to have the accounts passed upon by a body of disinterested referees, Lee haughtily refused to reduce his vague accusation to a form sufficiently specific to be laid before them. After John Adams succeeded Silas Deane, Franklin and himself united in executing an order for the payment to Williams of the balance claimed by him, but Adams had been brought over to the suspicions of Lee to such an extent that the order provided that it was not to be understood as an approval of the accounts, but that Williams was to be responsible to Congress for their correctness. With such impetuosity did Adams adopt these suspicions that, in a few days after his arrival at Paris, when he had really had no opportunity to investigate the matter, he concurred with Lee in ordering Williams to close his existing accounts and to make no new ones. This, of course, was equivalent to dismissal from the employment. Franklin, probably realizing not only the hopelessness of a contest of one against two, but the unwisdom from a public point of view of feeding the flame of such a controversy, united with his colleagues in signing the order.²⁷

²⁷ The first letter from the Commissioners to Jonathan Williams, dated Apr. 13, 1778, simply asked him to abstain from any further purchases as naval agent, and to close his accounts for the present. It was not until May 25, 1778, that a letter was addressed to him by the Commissioners expressly revoking his authority as naval agent on the ground that Congress had authorized William Lee to superintend the commercial affairs of America in general, and he had appointed M. Schweighauser, a German merchant, as the person to look after all the maritime and commercial interests of America in the Nantes district. In signing the letter, Franklin took care to see that this clause was inserted: "It is not from any prejudice to you, Mr. Williams, for whom we have a great respect and esteem, but merely from a desire to save the public money, to prevent the clashing of claims and interests, and to avoid confusion and delays, that we have taken this step." The result was that, instead of the uniform commission of two per cent., charged by Williams for transacting the business of the naval agency, Schweighauser, whose clerk was Ludlow Lee, a nephew of Arthur Lee, charged as much as five per cent. on the simple delivery of tobacco to the farmers-general. Later Williams, who was an expert accountant, was restored to the position which he had really filled with blameless integrity and efficiency. After his return to America, his

A bequest of books that he made to Williams is one among many other still more positive proofs that his confidence in his grandnephew was never impaired, and it is only fair to the memory of Adams to suppose that, if he ever had any substantial doubts about Williams' integrity, they were subsequently dispelled, for when President he appointed Williams a major of artillery in the federal army; an appointment which ultimately resulted in his being made the first Superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point. The quarrel, however, did neither Franklin nor the American cause any good. It gave additional color to the accusation that he was too quick to billet his relatives upon the public, and had the effect also of intensifying the dissensions between our representatives in France which constitute such a painful chapter in the history of the American Revolution. To make things worse, Jonathan failed in business, before he left France, and had to obtain a *surséance* against his creditors through the application of his granduncle to the Count de Vergennes.

Franklin's sister, Sarah, did not long survive her marriage to Joseph Davenport. Her death, Franklin wrote to his sister Jane, "was a loss without doubt regretted by all that knew her, for she was a good woman." It was at his instance that Davenport removed to Philadelphia, and opened a bakery where he sold "choice middling bisket," and occasionally "Boston loaf sugar" and "choice pickled and spiced oisters in cags."

There is a letter from Franklin to Josiah Davenport, the son of Sarah Davenport, written just after the failure of the latter in business which shows that, open as the door of the Post Office usually was to members of the Franklin family, it was sometimes slammed with a bang in the face of a *mauvais sujet* of that blood. Franklin advises Josiah not to think of any place in the Post Office.

The money you receive [he said] will slip thro' your Fingers, and you will run behind hand imperceptibly, when your Securities must suffer, or your Employers. I grow too old to run such Risques, and therefore wish you to propose nothing more of the kind to me. I have been hurt too much by endeavouring to help Cousin Ben Mecom. I have no Opinion of the Punctuality of Cousins. They are apt to take Liberties with Relations they would not take with others, from a Confidence that a Relation will not sue them. And tho' I believe you now resolve and intend well in case of such an Appointment, I can have no Dependence that some unexpected Misfortune or Difficulty will not embarras your Affairs and render you again insolvent. Don't take this unkind. It is better to be thus free with you than to give you Expectations that cannot be answered.

So Josiah, who was keeping a little shop at the time, like the famous office-seeker, who is said to have begun by asking Lincoln for an office and to have ended by asking him for a pair of trousers, had to content himself with a gift of four dozen of Evans' maps, "which," said Franklin in his letter, "if you can sell you are welcome to apply the Money towards Clothing your Boys, or to any other Purpose."

But, of all Franklin's collateral relatives, the one that he loved best was his sister Jane, the wife of Edward Mecom. She survived her brother four years, dying at the age of eighty-two, and, from her childhood until his death, they cherished for each other the most devoted affection. Her letters show that she was a woman of uncommon force of character and mind, and the possessor of a heart so overflowing with tenderness that, when she heard of the birth of Mrs. Bache's seventh child, she even stated to her brother in her delight that she was so

career was an eminent one. He is termed by General George W. Cullum in his work on the campaigns and engineers of the War of 1812-15 the father of the Engineer Service of the United States. In the same work, General Cullum also speaks of his "noble character."

fond of children that she longed to kiss and play with every clean, healthy one that she saw on the street. Mrs. Bache, she thought, might yet be the mother of twelve children like herself, though she did not begin so young.

In a letter written to her by Franklin from Philadelphia just after he reached his majority, and when she was a fresh girl of fourteen, he reminds her that she was ever his peculiar favorite. He had heard, he said, that she was grown a celebrated beauty, and he had almost determined to give her a tea table, but when he considered that the character of a good housewife was far preferable to that of being only a pretty gentlewoman he had concluded to send her a spinning wheel, as a small token of his sincere love and affection. Then followed this priggish advice:

Sister, farewell, and remember that modesty, as it makes the most homely virgin amiable and charming, so the want of it infallibly renders the most perfect beauty disagreeable and odious. But, when that brightest of female virtues shines among other perfections of body and mind in the same person, it makes the woman more lovely than an angel.

The spinning wheel was a fit symbol of the narrow, struggling life, which was to be Jane Mecom's portion, and which would have imposed upon her a load heavier than she could have borne if her good Philadelphia genius had not always been by her side, either in person or by his watchful proxy, Jonathan Williams, the father of his grandnephew of that name, to sustain her fainting footsteps. Children she had, and to spare, but they were all striking illustrations of the truth, uttered by the Virginia planter, who affirmed that it is easier for one parent to take care of thirteen children than it is for thirteen children to take care of one parent. Nothing could be more beautiful than the relations between brother and sister; on the one side a vigilant sympathy and generosity which never lost sight for a moment of the object of their affectionate and helpful offices; on the other a grateful idolatry, slightly tinged with the reserve of reverence. Clothes, flour, firewood, money were among the more direct and material forms assumed by Franklin's assistance, given not begrudgingly and frugally, but always with the anxious fear, to no little extent justified by Jane's own unselfish and self-respecting reticence, that she was not as frank as she might be in laying before him the real measure of her necessities. "Let me know if you want any assistance," he was quick to ask her after his return from England in 1775, signing the letter in which he made the request, "Your very loving brother." "Your bill is honoured," he writes to her on another occasion after his return from France to Philadelphia. "It is impossible for me always to guess what you may want, and I hope, therefore, that you will never be shy in letting me know wherein I can help to make your life more comfortable."

How has my poor old Sister gone thro' the Winter? [he inquired of Jonathan Williams, the younger]. Tell me frankly whether she lives comfortably, or is pinched? For I am afraid she is too cautious of acquainting me with all her Difficulties, tho' I am always ready and willing to relieve her when I am acquainted with them.

It is manifest that at times he experienced a serious sense of difficulty in doing for her as much as he was disposed to do, and once, when she had thanked him with even more than her usual emphasis for a recent benefaction, he parried her gratitude with one of the humorous stories that served him for so many different purposes. Her letter of extravagant thanks, he said, put him in mind of the story of the member of Parliament who began one of his speeches with saying he thanked God that he was born and bred a Presbyterian; on which another took leave to observe that the gentleman must needs be of a most grateful disposition, since he was thankful for such very small matters. The truth is that her pecuniary condition was such that gifts, which might have seemed small enough to others, loomed large to her. Many doubtless were the shifts to which she had to resort to keep her large family going.

When her brother was in London on his second mission, he received a letter from her asking him for some fine old linen or cambric dyed with bright colors, such as with all her own art and the aid of good old Uncle Benjamin's memoranda she had been unable, she said, to mix herself. With this material, she hoped that she and her daughter Jenny, who, with a little of her assistance, had taken to making flowers for the ladies' heads and bosoms with pretty good acceptance, might get something by it worth their pains, if they lived till next spring. Her language was manifestly that of a person whose life had been too pinched to permit her to deal with the future except at very close range. Of course, her request was complied with. The contrast between her situation in life and that of her prosperous and distinguished brother is brought out as clearly as the colors that she vainly sought to emulate in a letter written by her to Deborah, when she hears the rumor that Franklin had been made a Baronet and Governor of Pennsylvania. Signing herself, "Your ladyship's affectionate sister, and obedient humble servant," she wrote:

Dear Sister: For so I must call you, come what will, and if I do not express myself proper, you must excuse it, seeing I have not been accustomed to pay my compliments to Governor and Baronet's ladies. I am in the midst of a great wash, and Sarah still sick, and would gladly be excused writing this post, but my husband says I must write, and give you joy, which we heartily join in.

This was in 1758 when Franklin and other good Americans rarely alluded to England except as "home"; but sixteen years later the feelings of Jane Mecom about baronetcies and colonial governorships had undergone such a change—for she was a staunch patriot—that, when it was stated in a Boston newspaper that it was generally believed that Franklin had been promoted by the English Government to an office of superior importance, he felt that it was necessary to write to her as follows:

But as I am anxious to preserve your good opinion, and as I know your sentiments, and that you must be much afflicted yourself, and even despise me, if you thought me capable of accepting any office from this government, while it is acting with so much hostility towards my native country, I cannot miss this first opportunity of assuring you, that there is not the least foundation for such a report.

You need not [he said on one occasion to Jane] be concern'd, in writing to me, about your bad Spelling; for, in my Opinion, as our Alphabet now Stands, the bad Spelling, or what is call'd so, is generally the best, as conforming to the Sound of the Letters and of the Words. To give you an Instance: A Gentleman receiving a Letter, in which were these Words,—*Not finding Brown at hom, I delivard your meseg to his yf*. The Gentleman finding it bad Spelling, and therefore not very intelligible, called his Lady to help him read it. Between them they pick'd out the meaning of all but the *yf*, which they could not understand. The lady propos'd calling her Chambermaid: for Betty, says she, has the best knack at reading bad Spelling of anyone I know. Betty came, and was surprised, that neither Sir nor Madam could tell what *yf* was. "Why," says she, "*yf* spells *Wife*; what else can it spell?" And, indeed, it is a much better, as well as shorter method of spelling *Wife*, than by *doubleyou, i, ef, e*, which in reality spells *doubleyifey*.

The affectionate interest felt by Franklin in his sister extended to her husband and children. Some of his letters were written to Jane and Edward Mecom jointly, and he evidently entertained a truly fraternal regard for the latter. The fortunes of the children he endeavored to promote by every means in his power. Benny Mecom was placed by him as an apprentice with his partner in the printing business in New York, Mr. Parker, and one of his most admirable letters is a letter to his sister Jane, already mentioned by us, in which he comments

upon a complaint of ill-treatment at the hands of Mr. Parker which Benny had made to her. The wise, kindly and yet firm language in which he answers one by one the heads of Benny's complaint, which was obviously nothing more than the grumbling of a disaffected boy, lacks nothing but a subject of graver importance to be among the most notable of his letters. On the whole, it was too affectionate and indulgent in tone to have keenly offended even such parental fondness as that which led Poor Richard to ask, in the words of Gay,

“Where yet was ever found the mother
Who'd change her booby for another?”

But occasionally there is a sentence or so in it which makes it quite plain that Franklin was entirely too wise not to know that the rod has a function to perform in the management of a boy. Referring to Benny's habit of staying out at night, sometimes all night, and refusing to give an account of where he had spent his time or in what company, he said,

This I had not heard of before though I perceive you have. I do not wonder at his correcting him for that. If he was my own son I should think his master did not do his duty by him if he omitted it, for to be sure it is the high road to destruction. And I think the correction very light, and not likely to be very effectual, if the strokes left no marks.

In the same letter, there is a sly passage which takes us back to the part of Jacques' homily which speaks of

“The whining schoolboy with his satchel,
And shining morning face creeping like snail,
Unwillingly to school.”

I did not think it anything extraordinary [Franklin said] that he should be sometimes willing to evade going to meeting, for I believe it is the case with all boys, or almost all. I have brought up four or five myself, and have frequently observed that if their shoes were bad they would say nothing of a new pair till Sunday morning, just as the bell rung, when, if you asked them why they did not get ready, the answer was prepared, “I have no shoes,” and so of other things, hats and the like; or, if they knew of anything that wanted mending, it was a secret till Sunday morning, and sometimes I believe they would rather tear a little than be without the excuse.

Franklin had dipped deeply into the hearts of boys as well as men.

When Benny became old enough to enter upon business for himself, his uncle put him in possession of a printing outfit of his own at Antigua with the understanding that Benny was to pay him one third of the profits of the business; the proportion which he usually received in such cases. Apparently there was every promise of success: an established newspaper, no competing printer, high prices and a printer who, whatever his faults, had come to be regarded by Mr. Parker as one of his “best hands.” But the curse of Reuben—instability—rested upon Benny. Taking offence at a proposal of his uncle respecting the distribution of the profits of the business, really intended to pave the way, when Benny had conquered his “flighty unsteadiness of temper,” to a gift of the whole printing outfit to him, the nephew insisted that his uncle should name some certain price for the outfit, and allow him to pay it off in instalments; for, though he had, he said, a high esteem for his uncle, yet he loved freedom, and his spirit could not bear dependence on any man, though he were the best man living. Provoked by a delay in answering this letter, for which one of Franklin's long journeys was responsible, Benny again wrote to his uncle, stating that he had formed a fixed

resolution to leave Antigua, and that nothing that could be said to him would move or shake it. Leave Antigua he did, and, when we next hear of him, it is through a letter from Franklin to Jane in which he tells her that Benjamin had settled his accounts with him, and paid the balance due him honorably, and had also made himself the owner of the printing outfit which had been shipped back from Antigua to Philadelphia.

From this time on until Benny slid down into the gulf of insolvency; owing his uncle some two hundred pounds, and leaving assets that the latter reckoned would scarce amount to four shillings in the pound, he seems to have had no success of any sort except that of winning the hand of a girl for whom Franklin and Deborah had a peculiar partiality. This was after Benny had returned to Boston and, as a bookseller as well as a printer, had begun life anew with a loan from his uncle, and with good credit.

When he was “near being married” his uncle wrote to Jane:

I know nothing of that affair, but what you write me, except that I think Miss Betsey a very agreeable, sweet-tempered, good girl, who has had a housewifely education, and will make, to a good husband, a very good wife. Your sister and I have a great esteem for her; and, if she will be kind enough to accept of our nephew, we think it will be his own fault, if he is not as happy as the married state can make him. The family is a respectable one, but whether there be any fortune I know not; and, as you do not inquire about this particular, I suppose you think with me, that where everything else desirable is to be met with, that is not very material.

What Deborah thought of Miss Betsey may be inferred from a postscript that she hastily annexed to this letter: “If Benny will promise to be one of the tenderest husbands in the world, I give my consent. He knows already what I think of Miss Betsey. I am his loving aunt.” In a subsequent letter, Franklin wrote to Deborah from London that he was glad that “Ben has got that good girl.” Miss Betsey did not prove to be a fortune to her husband, though she did prove to be such a fruitful wife to him that, when the crash of bankruptcy came, there were a number of small children to be included in his schedule of liabilities. Nor is it easy to see how she or any other woman could prove a fortune to any man of whom such a picture could be sketched as that which Thomas, the author of the *History of Printing*, sketches of Benny as he was shortly after his return from Antigua.

Benjamin Mecom [writes Thomas] was in Boston several months before the arrival of his press and types from Antigua, and had much leisure. During this interval he frequently came to the house where I was an apprentice. He was handsomely dressed, wore a powdered bob-wig, ruffles, and gloves: gentleman-like appendages, which the printers of that day did not assume—and thus appareled, he would often assist for an hour at the press.... I viewed him at the press with admiration. He indeed put on a apron to save his clothes from blacking, and guarded his ruffles.... He got the nickname of “Queer Notions” among the printers.

The result of it all was that the patience of the uncle was at last completely worn out. “I can not comprehend,” he wrote to Deborah from London, “how so very sluggish a Creature as Ben. Mecom is grown, can maintain in Philadelphia so large a Family. I hope they do not hang upon you: for really as we grow old and must grow more helpless, we shall find we have nothing to spare.”

In a subsequent letter to Williams he spoke of his sister’s children as if they were all thriftless. If such was the case, it was not because of any lack of interest on his part in them. In a letter, recommending his son William to Jane’s motherly care and advice, he says, “My compliments to my new niece, Miss Abiah, and pray her to accept the enclosed piece of gold,

to cut her teeth; it may afterwards buy nuts for them to crack.” In another letter to his sister, he expresses pleasure at hearing that her son Peter is at a place where he has full employ. If Peter should get a habit of industry at his new place, the exchange, he said pointedly, would be a happy one. In a later letter to Jane, he declares that he is glad that Peter is acquainted with the crown-soap business and that he hopes that he will always take care to make the soap faithfully and never slight the manufacture, or attempt to deceive by appearances. Then he may boldly put his name and mark, and, in a little time, it will acquire as good a character as that made by his uncle (John) or any other person whatever. He also tells Jane that if Peter will send to Deborah a box of his soap (but not unless it be right good) she would immediately return the ready money to him for it. Many years later his letters to his sister show that he was then aiding her in different ways, and among others by buying soap of her manufacture from her, and that some cakes of this soap were sent by him as gifts to friends of his in France. Indeed, he told Jane that she would do well to instruct her grandson in the art of making that soap. In the same letter that he wrote to her about Peter and the crown-soap he sent his love to her son Neddy, and Neddy’s wife, and the rest of Jane’s children. Neddy, born like Benny under an unlucky star, had at the time not only a wife but a disorder which his uncle hoped that he would wear out gradually, as he was yet a young man. If Eben, another of Jane’s sons, would be industrious and frugal, it was ten to one, his uncle said, that he would get rich; for he seemed to have spirit and activity. As to Johnny, still another of Jane’s sons, if he ever set up as a goldsmith, he should remember that there was one accomplishment, without which he could not possibly thrive in that trade; that was perfect honesty. In the latter part of his life, after he had been badly hurt by Benny, and had seen so much of his sound counsel come to nothing, he was slower to give advice to the Mecoms.

Your Grandson [he wrote to Jane, referring to one of her grandsons, who was for a time in his employment at Philadelphia] behaves very well, and is constantly employ’d in writing for me, and will be so some time longer. As to my Reproving and Advising him, which you desire, he has not hitherto appeared to need it, which is lucky, as I am not fond of giving Advice, having seldom seen it taken. An Italian Poet in his Account of a Voyage to the Moon, tells us that

All things lost on Earth are treasur’d there.

on which somebody observ’d, There must then be in the Moon a great deal of *Good Advice*.

Among the letters from Franklin to Jonathan Williams, the elder, is one asking him to lay out for his account the sum of fifty pounds in the purchase of a marriage present for one of Jane’s daughters, who thanks him for it in terms that fall little short of ecstasy.

But attached as Franklin was to his sister he did not hesitate to reprove her when reproof was in his judgment necessary. There is such a thing as not caring enough for a person to reprove him. “It was not kind in you,” he wrote to her on one occasion, “when your sister commended good works, to suppose she intended it a reproach to you. It was very far from her thoughts.” His language was still more outspoken on another occasion when Jane wished him to oust a member of the Franklin connection, with whom she was at odds, from the Post Office to make a place for Benny.

And now [he said] as to what you propose for Benny, I believe he may be, as you say, well enough qualified for it; and, when he appears to be settled, if a vacancy should happen, it is very probable he may be thought of to supply it; but it is a rule with me not to remove any officer, that behaves well, keeps regular accounts, and pays duly; and I think the rule is founded on reason and justice. I have not shown any

backwardness to assist Benny, where it could be done without injuring another. But if my friends require of me to gratify not only their inclinations, but their resentments, they expect too much of me. Above all things I dislike family quarrels, and, when they happen among my relations, nothing gives me more pain. If I were to set myself up as a judge of those subsisting between you and brother's widow and children, how unqualified must I be, at this distance, to determine rightly, especially having heard but one side. They always treated me with friendly and affectionate regard; you have done the same. What can I say between you, but that I wish you were reconciled, and that I will love that side best, that is most ready to forgive and oblige the other? You will be angry with me here, for putting you and them too much upon a footing; but I shall nevertheless be, dear sister, your truly affectionate brother.

Nor did he attempt to disguise his real feelings in a letter which he wrote to Jane near the end of his life in which he told her that her son-in-law, Collas, who kept a store in Carolina, had wished to buy some goods on credit at Philadelphia, but could not do it without his recommendation, which he could not give without making himself pecuniarily liable; and *that* he was not inclined to do, having no opinion either of the honesty and punctuality of the people, with whom Collas proposed to traffic, or of his skill and acuteness in merchandizing. This he wrote, he declared, merely to apologize for any seeming unkindness. The unkindness was but seeming indeed; for the letter also contained these solicitous words:

You always tell me that you live comfortably; but I sometimes suspect that you may be too unwilling to acquaint me with any of your Difficulties from an Apprehension of giving me Pain. I wish you would let me know precisely your Situation, that I may better proportion my Assistance to your Wants. Have you any Money at Interest, and what does it produce? Or do you do some kind of Business for a Living?

Jane seems to have maintained her good humor in the face of every timely reproof of her brother, and other than timely reproofs, we may be sure, there were none. Indeed, she worshipped him so devoutly—devotedly is too feeble an adverb—that there was no need for her at any time in her relations with him to fall back upon her good nature. A few extracts from her letters to Franklin will show how deeply the love and gratitude excited by her brother's ceaseless beneficence sank into her heart.

I am amazed beyond measure [she wrote to Deborah, when she heard of the threatened attack on Franklin's house] that your house was threatened in the tumult. I thought there had been none among you would proceed to such a length to persecute a man merely for being the best of characters, and really deserving good from the hand and tongue of all his fellow creatures.... What a wretched world would this be if the vile of mankind had no laws to restrain them.

Additional edge to the indignation, expressed in this letter, was doubtless given by the fact that the writer had just received from her brother, who was then in London, a box containing, among other things, "a printed cotton gown, a quilted coat, a bonnet, a cap, and some ribbons" for herself and each of her daughters.

It is made manifest by other letters than this that her brother's benevolence towards her and her family were quite as active when he was abroad as when he was at home. In 1779, she tells him that, in a letter from him to her, he, like himself, does all for her that the most affectionate brother can be desired or expected to do.

And though [she further said] I feel myself full of gratitude for your generosity, the conclusion of your letter affects me more, where you say you wish we may spend our last days together. O my dear brother, if this could be accomplished, it would give me

more joy than anything on this side Heaven could possibly do. I feel the want of a suitable conversation—I have but little here. I think I could assume more freedom with you now, and convince you of my affection for you. I have had time to reflect and see my error in that respect. I suffered my diffidence and the awe of your superiority to prevent the familiarity I might have taken with you, and ought, and (which) your kindness to me might have convinced me would be acceptable.

A little later she wrote:

Your very affectionate and tender care of me all along in life excites my warmest gratitude, which I cannot even think on without tears. What manifold blessings I enjoy beyond many of my worthy acquaintance, who have been driven from their home, lost their interest, and some have the addition of lost health, and one the grievous torment of a cancer, and no kind brother to support her, while I am kindly treated by all about me, and ample provision made for me when I have occasion.

As heartfelt was another letter written by her while he was still in France:

Believe me, my dear brother, your writing to me gives me so much pleasure that the great, the very great presents you have sent me are but a secondary joy. I have been very sick this winter at my daughter's; kept my chamber six weeks, but had a sufficiency for my supply of everything that could be a comfort to me of my own, before I received any intimation of the great bounty from your hand, which your letter has conveyed to me, for I have not been lavish of what I before possessed, knowing sickness and misfortunes might happen, and certainly old age; but I shall now be so rich that I may indulge in a small degree a propensity to help some poor creatures who have not the blessing I enjoy. My good fortune came to me altogether to comfort me in my weak state; for as I had been so unlucky as not to receive the letter you sent me through your son Bache's hands, though he informs me he forwarded it immediately. His letter with a draft for twenty five guineas came to my hand just before yours, which I have received, and cannot find expression suitable to acknowledge my gratitude how I am by my dear brother enabled to live at ease in my old age (after a life of care, labor, and anxiety) without which I must have been miserable.

Most touching of all are the words which she addressed to her brother shortly before his death, "Who that know and love you can bear the thought of surviving you in this gloomy world?" Even after his death, his goodness continued to shield her from want, for by his will he devised to her absolutely the house in Unity Street, Boston, in which she lived, and bequeathed to her an annuity of sixty pounds. By his will, he also bequeathed to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, living at the time of his decease, in equal shares, fifty pounds sterling; the same amount that he bequeathed to the descendants living at that time of his brother Samuel, his sister Anne Harris, his brother James, his sister Sarah and his sister Lydia, respectively.

As we have seen, Franklin's feelings about Deborah's relatives were hardly less cordial than his feelings about his own. In addition to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Read, and Brother John Read and Sister Read, and Cousin Debbey, and young cousin Johnny Read, two other kinsmen of Deborah, Joseph Read and James Read are mentioned in his letters. Indeed, at one time he even contrived to ward off the Franklins, Mecoms and Davenports from the Post Office long enough to appoint Joseph to the Postmastership at Philadelphia; but James was so unfortunate as to rub against one of the most highly sensitive surfaces of his disposition. In a letter to him, Franklin says, "Your visits never had but one thing disagreeable in them, that is, they were always too short"; but, in a later letter, he assails Read fiercely for surreptitiously

obtaining a judgment against Robert Grace, one of the original members of the Junto, and produces a power of attorney to himself from William Strahan, authorizing him to recover a large sum of money that Read owed Strahan. "Fortune's wheel is often turning," he grimly reminds Read. The whole letter is written with a degree of asperity that Franklin rarely exhibited except when his sense of injustice was highly inflamed, and the circumstances, under which Read secured the judgment, the "little charges," that he had cunningly accumulated on it, and the cordial affection of Franklin for Grace would appear to have fully justified Franklin's stern rebuke and exultant production of Strahan's power of attorney. But everything, it must be confessed, becomes just a little clearer when we learn from a subsequent letter of Franklin to Strahan that, before he received Strahan's power of attorney and account, there had been a misunderstanding between Read and himself,

occasion'd by his endeavouring to get a small Office from me (Clerk to the Assembly) which I took the more amiss, as we had always been good Friends, and the Office could not have been of much Service to him, the Salary being small; but valuable to me, as a means of securing the Public Business to our Printing House.

The reader will remember that Franklin reserved the right to make full reprisals when anyone undertook to dislodge him from a public office.

Nor, as has been apparent enough, was the interest of Franklin limited to contemporary Franklins. If he had been a descendant of one of the high-bred Washingtons of Northamptonshire—the shire to which the lineage of George Washington, as well as his own, ran back—he could not have been more curious about his descent than he was. "I have ever had pleasure," the opening sentence of the *Autobiography* declares, "in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors." From notes, placed in his hands by his uncle Benjamin, he learned some interesting particulars about his English forbears. They had resided in the village of Ecton, in Northamptonshire, on the great northern turnpike, sixty-six miles from London, for certainly three hundred years, on a freehold of about thirty acres, and the eldest son of the family had always been bred to the trade of a blacksmith.²⁸ Perhaps as Parton conjectures, some swart Franklin at the ancestral forge on the little freehold may have tightened a rivet in the armor, or replaced a shoe upon the horse, of a Washington, or doffed his cap to a Washington riding past. From the registers, examined by Franklin, when he visited Ecton, which ended with the year 1755, he discovered that he was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations back.

One of his letters to Deborah contained much agreeable information about his and her English relations, which he collected at this time. After leaving Cambridge, where his vanity, he said, had been not a little gratified by the particular regard shown him by the chancellor and the vice-chancellor of the university and the heads of colleges, he found on inquiry at Wellingborough that Mary Fisher, the daughter and only child of Thomas Franklin, his father's eldest brother, was still living. He knew that she had lived at Wellingborough, and had been married there about fifty years before to one Richard Fisher, a grazier and tanner, but, supposing that she and her husband were both dead, he had inquired for their posterity.

²⁸ In sending a MS. to Edward Everett, which he placed in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Thomas Carlyle said: "The poor manuscript is an old Tithes-Book of the parish of Ecton, in Northamptonshire, from about 1640 to 1700, and contains, I perceive, various scattered faint indications of the civil war time, which are not without interest; but the thing which should raise it above all tithe-books yet heard of is, that it contains actual notices, in that fashion, of the ancestors of Benjamin Franklin—blacksmiths in that parish! Here they are—their forge-hammers yet going—renting so many 'yard lands' of Northamptonshire Church-soil—keeping so many sheep, etc., etc.,—little conscious that one of the demi-gods was about to proceed out of them."

I was directed [he says] to their house, and we found them both alive, but weak with age, very glad however to see us. She seems to have been a very smart, sensible woman. They are wealthy, have left off business, and live comfortably. They have had only one child, a daughter, who died, when about thirty years of age, unmarried. She gave me several of my uncle Benjamin's letters to her, and acquainted me where the other remains of the family lived, of which I have, since my return to London, found out a daughter of my father's only sister, very old, and never married. She is a good, clever woman, but poor, though vastly contented with her situation, and very cheerful. The others are in different parts of the country. I intend to visit them, but they were too much out of our tour in that journey.

This was in 1758. Mary Fisher had good reason to be weak with age; for this letter states that she was five years older than Franklin's sister Dowse, and remembered her going away with Franklin's father and his first wife and two other children to New England about the year 1685, or some seventy-three years before Franklin's visit to Wellingborough.

"Where are the old men?

I who have seen much,

Such have I never seen."

Only the truly gray earth, humming, as it revolves on its axis, the derisive song, heard by the fine ear of Emerson, could ask this question, unrebuked by such a stretch of human memory as that. The letter then goes on to say that from Wellingborough the writer passed to Ecton, about three or four miles away, where Franklin's father was born, and where his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had lived, and how many of the family before them they knew not.

We went first [Franklin tells us] to see the old house and grounds; they came to Mr. Fisher with his wife, and, after letting them for some years, finding his rent something ill paid, he sold them. The land is now added to another farm, and a school kept in the house. It is a decayed old stone building, but still known by the name of the Franklin House. Thence we went to visit the rector of the parish, who lives close by the church, a very ancient building. He entertained us very kindly, and showed us the old church register, in which were the births, marriages, and burials of our ancestors for two hundred years, as early as his book began. His wife, a good-natured, chatty old lady (granddaughter of the famous Archdeacon Palmer, who formerly had that parish, and lived there) remembered a great deal about the family; carried us out into the churchyard, and showed us several of their gravestones, which were so covered with moss, that we could not read the letters, till she ordered a hard brush and basin of water, with which Peter (Franklin's negro servant) scoured them clean, and then Billy (William Franklin) copied them. She entertained and diverted us highly with stories of Thomas Franklin, Mrs. Fisher's father, who was a conveyancer, something of a lawyer, clerk of the county courts and clerk to the Archdeacon in his visitations; a very leading man in all county affairs, and much employed in public business. He set on foot a subscription for erecting chimes in their steeple, and completed it, and we heard them play. He found out an easy method of saving their village meadows from being drowned, as they used to be sometimes by the river, which method is still in being; but, when first proposed, nobody could conceive how it could be; "but however," they said, "if Franklin says he knows how to do it, it will be done." His advice and opinion were sought for on all occasions, by all sorts of people, and he was

looked upon, she said, by some, as something of a conjuror. He died just four years before I was born, on the same day of the same month.

The likeness between Thomas and his nephew may have been insufficient under any circumstances to justly suggest the thought of a metempsychosis to William Franklin, but Thomas does seem to have been a kind of tentative effort upon the part of Nature to create a Benjamin Franklin.

The letter then states that, after leaving Ecton, the party finally arrived at Birmingham where they were soon successful in looking up Deborah's and cousin Wilkinson's and cousin Cash's relations. First, they found one of the Cashes, and he went with them to Rebecca Flint's where they saw her and her husband. She was a turner, and he a button-maker; they were childless and glad to see any person that knew their sister Wilkinson. They told their visitors what letters they had received from America, and even assured them—such are the short and simple annals of the poor—that they had out of respect preserved a keg in which a gift of sturgeon from America had reached them. Then follow certain details about other members of this family connection, commonplace enough, however, to reconcile us to the fact that they have been cut short by the mordant tooth of time which has not spared the remainder of the letter.

On his second mission to England, Franklin paid another visit to these Birmingham relations of his wife, and was in that city for several days. The severest test of a good husband is to ask whether he loves his wife's relations as much as his own. To even this test Franklin appears to have been equal.

Sally Franklin, the daughter of Thomas Franklin, of Lutterworth, a second cousin of Franklin, also flits through the correspondence between Deborah and her husband. When she was about thirteen years of age, her father brought her to London to see Franklin, and Mrs. Stevenson persuaded him to leave the child under her care for a little schooling and improvement, while Franklin was off on one of his periodical tours.

When I return'd [the latter wrote to Deborah] I found her indeed much improv'd, and grown a fine Girl. She is sensible, and of a sweet, obliging Temper, but is now ill of a violent Fever, and I doubt we shall lose her, which particularly afflicts Mrs. Stevenson, not only as she has contracted a great Affection for the Child, but as it was she that persuaded her Father to leave her there.

Sally, however, settled all doubts by getting well and furnishing future material for Franklin's letters to Deborah. One letter tells Deborah that Sally's father was very desirous that Franklin should take her to America with him; another pays the compliment to Sally, who was at the time in the country with her father, of saying that she is a very good girl; another thanks Deborah for her kind attitude toward her husband's partially-formed resolution of bringing Sally over to America with him; another announces that Sally is again with Mrs. Stevenson; and still another doubtless relieved Deborah of no little uncertainty of mind by informing her that Sally was about to be married to a farmer's son. "I shall miss her," comments Franklin, "as she is nimble-footed and willing to run of Errands and wait upon me, and has been very serviceable to me for some Years, so that I have not kept a Man."

Among Franklin's papers, too, was found at his death a letter from his father to him, beginning "Loving Son," which also makes some valuable contributions to our knowledge of Franklin's forefathers.

As to the original of our name, there is various opinions [says Josiah]; some say that it came from a sort of title, of which a book that you bought when here gives a lively account, some think we are of a French extract, which was formerly called Franks;

some of a free line, a line free from that vassalage which was common to subjects in days of old; some from a bird of long red legs. Your uncle Benjamin made inquiry of one skilled in heraldry, who told him there is two coats of armor, one belonging to the Franklins of the North, and one to the Franklins of the west. However, our circumstances have been such as that it hath hardly been worth while to concern ourselves much about these things any farther than to tickle the fancy a little.

Josiah then has a word to say about his great-grandfather, the Franklin who kept his Bible under a joint stool during the reign of Bloody Mary, and his grandfather. The former, he says, in his travels

went upon liking to a taylor; but he kept such a stingy house, that he left him and travelled farther, and came to a smith's house, and coming on a fasting day, being in popish times, he did not like there the first day; the next morning the servant was called up at five in the morning, but after a little time came a good toast and good beer, and he found good housekeeping there; he served and learned the trade of a smith.

Josiah's grandfather, the letter tells us, was a smith also, and settled in Ecton, and "was imprisoned a year and a day on suspicion of his being the author of some poetry that touched the character of some great man." An ancestry that could boast one sturdy Tubal Cain, ready, though the fires of Smithfield were brightly burning, to hazard his life for his religious convictions, and another, with letters and courage enough to lampoon a great man in England in the sixteenth or the seventeenth century, is an ancestry that was quite worthy of investigation. It at least tickles the fancy a little, to use Josiah's phrase, to imagine that the flame of the Ecton forge lit up, generation after generation, the face of some brawny, honest toiler, not unlike the village blacksmith, whose rugged figure and manly, simple-hearted, God-fearing nature are portrayed with so much dignity and beauty in the well-known verses of Longfellow. Be this as it may, the humble lot of neither ancestral nor contemporary Franklins was a source of mortification to Poor Richard even after the popularity of his *Almanac* had brought in a pair of shoes, two new shifts, and a new warm petticoat to his wife, and to him a second-hand coat, so good that he was no longer ashamed to go to town or be seen there.

"He that has neither fools nor beggars among his kindred, is the son of a thunder gust," said Poor Richard.

V. Franklin's American Friends

The friends mentioned in the correspondence between Franklin and Deborah were only some of the many friends with whom Franklin was blessed during the course of his life. He had the same faculty for inspiring friendship that a fine woman has for inspiring love. In reading his general correspondence, few things arrest our attention more sharply than the number of affectionate and admiring intimates, whose lives were in one way or another interwoven with his own, and, over and over again, in reading this correspondence, our attention is unexpectedly drawn for a moment to some cherished friend of his, of whom there is scarcely a hint elsewhere in his writings.

It was from real considerations of practical convenience that he sometimes avoided the serious task of enumerating all the friends, to whom he wished to be remembered, by sending his love to "all Philadelphia" or "all Pennsylvania."

A dozen of his friends, as we have stated, accompanied him as far as Trenton, when he was on his way to New York to embark upon his first mission abroad in 1757. A cavalcade of three hundred of them accompanied him for sixteen miles to his ship, when he was on his way down the Delaware on his second mission abroad in 1764.

Remember me affectionately to all our good Friends who contributed by their Kindness to make my Voyage comfortable [he wrote to Deborah a little later from London]. To M^r. Roberts, M^{rs}. Thompson, M^{rs}. Smith, M^{rs}. Potts, M^{rs}. Shewell; Mess^{rs}. Whartons, Capt. Falkner, Brothers & Sisters Reads & Franklins, Cousin Davenport, and everybody.

When he returned from England in 1762, he was able to write to Strahan with a flush of pardonable exultation that he had had the happiness to find that Dr. Smith's reports of the diminutions of his friends were all false. "My house," he said, "has been full of a succession of them from morning to night, ever since my arrival, congratulating me on my return with the utmost cordiality and affection." And, several years later, when the news reached Philadelphia that he was again safely in England, the bells rang until near midnight, and libations were poured out for his health, success and every other happiness. "Even your old friend Hugh Roberts," said Cadwallader Evans, who gave this information to Franklin, "stayed with us till eleven o'clock, which you know was a little out of his common road, and gave us many curious anecdotes within the compass of your forty years acquaintance." This rejoicing, of course, was, to a considerable degree, the result of political fermentation, and, if we say nothing of other demonstrations, like the flourish of naked swords, which angered the Proprietary so deeply, and made Franklin himself feel just a little foolish, it is only because it is impossible to declare how far these demonstrations were the tributes of personal friendship rather than of public gratitude. In a letter to Doctor Samuel Johnson, of Connecticut, Franklin tells him that he will shortly print proposals for publishing the Doctor's pieces by subscription, and disperse them among his friends "along the continent." This meant much to an author, coming as it did from a man, of whom it might perhaps be said that he could have travelled all the way from Boston to Virginia without ever being at a loss for the hospitable roof of a friend to shelter him at night.

Nowhere outside of Pennsylvania did Franklin have warmer friends than in New England, the land of his birth. He fled from Boston in 1723, and returned to it on a brief visit in 1724. Aside from other occasional returns, he afterwards revisited it at regular intervals of ten years in 1733, 1743, 1753 and 1763. Many pleasant hours were spent by him among his wayside

friends in New England on those postal and other journeys which took him within her borders.

I left New England slowly, and with great reluctance [he wrote to his friend Catherine Ray, afterwards Greene, at Block Island in 1755]. Short day's journeys, and loitering visits on the road, for three or four weeks, manifested my unwillingness to quit a country, in which I drew my first breath, spent my earliest and most pleasant days, and had now received so many fresh marks of the people's goodness and benevolence, in the kind and affectionate treatment I had everywhere met with. I almost forgot I had a *home*, till I was more than half way towards it, till I had, one by one, parted with all my New England friends, and was got into the western borders of Connecticut, among mere strangers. Then, like an old man, who, having buried all he loved in this world, begins to think of heaven, I began to think of and wish for home.

The only drawback to the pleasure of his New England journeys was the vile roads of the time. In a letter to John Foxcroft, in the year 1773, in which he refers to a fall which Foxcroft had experienced, he says, "I have had three of those Squelchers in different Journeys, and never desire a fourth." Two of these squelchers, we know, befell him on the rough roads of New England, in the year 1763; for, in a letter from Boston to his friend Mrs. Catherine Greene (formerly Ray), of that year, he writes to her that he is almost ashamed to say that he has had another fall, and put his shoulder out. "Do you think, after this," he added, "that even your kindest invitations and Mr. Greene's can prevail with me to venture myself again on such roads?" In August of the same year, Franklin informed Strahan that he had already travelled eleven hundred and forty miles on the American Continent since April, and that he would make six hundred and forty more before he saw home. To this and other postal tours of inspection he owed in part those friends "along the continent," to whom he proposed to appeal in Dr. Johnson's behalf, as well as that unrivalled familiarity with American colonial conditions, which stands out in such clear relief in his works. On one occasion, the accidents by flood and field, to which he was exposed on his American journeys, during the colonial era, resulted in a tie, which, while not the tie of friendship, proved to his cost to be even more lasting than that tie sometimes is. When he was about forty-three years of age, a canoe, in which he was a passenger, was upset near Staten Island, while he was endeavoring to board a stage-boat bound for New York. He was in no danger, as he said to a friend forty years afterwards when recalling the incident, for, besides being near the shore, he could swim like a duck or a Bermudian. But, unfortunately for him, there was a Jew on the stage-boat who chose to believe that he had saved Franklin's life by inducing the stage-boat to stop, and take Franklin in. As far as the latter could learn, he was not more indebted to the Jew than to the Jew's fellow-passengers for being plucked from an element which he never wearied of asserting is not responsible even for bad colds, and, in return for the consideration, that he had received from the stage-boat, he dined all its passengers to their general satisfaction, when he reached New York, at "The Tavern"; but the Jew had no mind to allow the benefaction to sink out of sight for the number of the benefactors.

This Hayes [Franklin wrote to the friend, who had forwarded to him a letter from Hayes' widow] never saw me afterwards, at New York, or Brunswick, or Phila^{da} that he did not dun me for Money on the Pretence of his being poor, and having been so happy as to be Instrumental in saving my Life, which was really in no Danger. In this way he got of me some times a double Joannes, sometimes a Spanish Doubloon, and never less; how much in the whole I do not know, having kept no Account of it; but it must have been a very considerable Sum; and he never incurr'd any Risque, nor was at any Trouble in my Behalf, I have long since thought him well paid for any little

expeñce of Humanity he might have felt on the Occasion. He seems, however, to have left me to his Widow as part of her Dowry.

This was about as far as the kindly nature of Franklin ever went in dealing with a beggar or a bore.

In New York or New Jersey, he was little less at home than in Pennsylvania or New England. In a letter to Deborah in 1763, after telling her that he had been to Elizabeth Town, where he had found their children returned from the Falls and very well, he says, "The Corporation were to have a Dinner that day at the Point for their Entertainment, and prevail'd on us to stay. There was all the principal People & a great many Ladies."

As we shall see, the foundations of his New Jersey friendships were laid very early. In following him on his journeys through Maryland, we find him entertained at the country seats of some of the most prominent gentlemen of the Colony, as for instance at Colonel Tasker's and at Mr. Milligan's. He was several times in Virginia in the course of his life, and it is an agreeable thing to a Virginian, who recollects that a Virginian, Arthur Lee, is to be reckoned among the contentious "bird and beast" people, for whom Franklin had such a dislike, to recollect also that not only are Washington and Jefferson to be reckoned among Franklin's loyal and admiring friends, but that, after Franklin had been a few days in Virginia at Mr. Hunter's, he expressed his opinion of both the country and its people in these handsome terms: "Virginia is a pleasant Country, now in full Spring; the People extreamly obliging and polite." There can be no better corrective of the petty sectional spirit, which has been such a blemish on our national history, and has excited so much wholly unfounded and senseless local prejudice, than to note the appreciation which that open, clear-sighted eye had for all that was best in every part of the American Colonies. "There are brave Spirits among that People," he said, when he heard that the Virginia House of Burgesses had appointed its famous Committee of Correspondence for the purpose of bringing the Colonies together for their common defense. He was never in the Carolinas or Georgia, we believe, though he was for a time the Agent in England of Georgia as well as other Colonies. But he had enough friends in Charleston, at any rate, when he was on his first mission abroad, to write to his Charleston correspondent, Dr. Alexander Garden, the eminent botanist from whom Linnæus borrowed a name for the gardenia, that he purposed, God willing, to return by way of Carolina, when he promised himself the pleasure of seeing and conversing with his friends in Charleston. And to another resident of Charleston, Dr. John Lining, several highly interesting letters of his on scientific subjects were written. For Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, his fellow-commissioner for the purpose of negotiating the treaty of peace with Great Britain, he entertained a warm feeling of esteem and good will which was fully reciprocated by Laurens. It was a just remark of Laurens that Franklin knew very well how to manage a cunning man, but that, when he conversed or treated with a man of candor, there was no man more candid than himself. For Colonel John Laurens, of South Carolina, the son of Henry Laurens, the aide to Washington, and the intrepid young soldier, who perished in one of the last conflicts of the Revolutionary War, Franklin formed a strong sentiment of affection, when Laurens came to France, at the instance of Washington, for the purpose of obtaining some additional aids from the King for the prosecution of the war. In a letter to him, signed "most affectionately yours," when Laurens was about to return to America, Franklin inclosed him an order for another hundred louis with an old man's blessing. "Take my Blessing with it," he said, "and my Prayers that God may send you safe & well home with your Cargoes. I would

not attempt persuading you to quit the military Line, because I think you have the Qualities of Mind and Body that promise your doing great service & acquiring Honour in that Line.”²⁹

How profound was the mutual respect and affection that Washington and Franklin entertained for each other, we have seen. It is an inspiring thing to note how the words of the latter swell, as with the strains of some heroic measure, when his admiration for the great contemporary, whose services to “the glorious cause” alone exceeded his, lifts him up from the lower to the higher levels of our emotional and intellectual nature.

Should peace arrive after another Campaign or two, and afford us a little Leisure [he wrote to Washington from Passy, on March 5, 1780], I should be happy to see your Excellency in Europe, and to accompany you, if my Age and Strength would permit, in visiting some of its ancient and most famous Kingdoms. You would, on this side of the Sea, enjoy the great Reputation you have acquir’d, pure and free from those little Shades that the Jealousy and Envy of a Man’s Countrymen and Cotemporaries are ever endeavouring to cast over living Merit. Here you would know, and enjoy, what Posterity will say of Washington. For 1000 Leagues have nearly the same Effect with 1000 Years. The feeble Voice of those grovelling Passions cannot extend so far either in Time or Distance. At present I enjoy that Pleasure for you, as I frequently hear the old Generals of this martial Country (who study the Maps of America, and mark upon them all your Operations) speak with sincere Approbation and great Applause of your conduct; and join in giving you the Character of one of the greatest Captains of the Age.

The caprice of future events might well have deprived these words of some of their rich cadence, but it did not, and, even the voice of cis-Atlantic jealousy and envy seems to be as impotent in the very presence of Washington, as at the distance of a thousand leagues away, when we place beside this letter the words written by Franklin to him a few years later after the surrender of Cornwallis:

All the world agree, that no expedition was ever better planned or better executed; it has made a great addition to the military reputation you had already acquired, and brightens the glory that surrounds your name, and that must accompany it to our latest posterity. No news could possibly make me more happy. The infant Hercules has now strangled the two serpents (the several armies of Burgoyne and Cornwallis) that attacked him in his cradle, and I trust his future history will be answerable.³⁰

Cordial relations of friendship also existed between Franklin and Jefferson. In their versatility, their love of science, their speculative freedom and their faith in the popular

²⁹ The death of John Laurens in an obscure skirmish, almost at the very end of the Revolutionary War, after a brief career, distinguished by rare intellectual promise and daring valor is one of the most painful tragedies of that war. “He had not a fault that I could discover,” Washington said of him, “unless it were intrepidity bordering on rashness.”

³⁰ It may be said of the fame of Washington in his own land, with something like approximate accuracy, that a file of wild geese winging its flight along the Atlantic Seaboard from Maine to the alluvial meadows of the Roanoke in Southern Virginia, is, for but brief periods only out of sight of some statue or monument erected in his honor by his grateful countrymen. The fame of Franklin in America is but little less strikingly attested. As long ago as 1864, Parton could say this of it: “As there are few counties in the Union which have not a town named Franklin, so there are few towns of any magnitude, which do not possess a Franklin Street, or a Franklin Square, a Franklin hotel, a Franklin bank, a Franklin fire-engine, a Franklin Lyceum, a Franklin lodge, or a Franklin charitable association. His bust and his portrait are only less universal than those of Washington, and most large cities contain something of the nature of a monument to Franklin.” How little this fame has died down since these words were written was seen in the pomp and splendor with which the second centenary of the birth of Franklin was celebrated in the United States and France in 1906.

intelligence and conscience the two men had much in common. As members of the committee, that drafted the Declaration of Independence, as well as in other relations, they were brought into familiar contact with each other; and to Jefferson we owe valuable testimony touching matters with respect to which the reputation of Franklin has been assailed, and also a sheaf of capital stories, that helps us to a still clearer insight into the personal and social phases of Franklin's life and character. One of these stories is the famous story of Abbé Raynal and the Speech of Polly Baker, when she was prosecuted the fifth time for having a bastard child.

The Doctor and Silas Deane [Jefferson tells us] were in conversation one day at Passy on the numerous errors in the Abbé's "*Histoire des deux Indes*" when he happened to step in. After the usual salutations, Silas Deane said to him, "The Doctor and myself, Abbé, were just speaking of the errors of fact into which you have been led in your history." "Oh no, Sir," said the Abbé, "that is impossible. I took the greatest care not to insert a single fact, for which I had not the most unquestionable authority." "Why," says Deane, "there is the story of Polly Baker, and the eloquent apology you have put into her mouth, when brought before a court of Massachusetts to suffer punishment under a law which you cite, for having had a bastard. I know there never was such a law in Massachusetts." "Be assured," said the Abbé, "you are mistaken, and that that is a true story. I do not immediately recollect indeed the particular information on which I quote it; but I am certain that I had for it unquestionable authority." Doctor Franklin, who had been for some time shaking with unrestrained laughter at the Abbé's confidence in his authority for that tale, said, "I will tell you, Abbé, the origin of that story. When I was a printer and editor of a newspaper, we were sometimes slack of news, and to amuse our customers I used to fill up our vacant columns with anecdotes and fables, and fancies of my own, and this of Polly Baker is a story of my making, on one of those occasions." The Abbé without the least disconcert, exclaimed with a laugh, "Oh, very well, Doctor, I had rather relate your stories than other men's truths."

Another of Jefferson's stories, is the equally famous one of John Thompson, hatter.

When the Declaration of Independence [he says] was under the consideration of Congress, there were two or three unlucky expressions in it which gave offence to some members. The words "Scotch and other foreign auxiliaries" excited the ire of a gentleman or two of that country. Severe strictures on the conduct of the British King, in negating our repeated repeals of the law which permitted the importation of slaves, were disapproved by some Southern gentlemen, whose reflections were not yet matured to the full abhorrence of that traffic. Although the offensive expressions were immediately yielded, these gentlemen continued their depredations on other parts of the instrument. I was sitting by Doctor Franklin, who perceived that I was not insensible to these mutilations. "I have made it a rule," said he, "whenever in my power, to avoid becoming the draughtsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body. I took my lesson from an incident which I will relate to you. When I was a journeyman printer, one of my companions, an apprentice hatter, having served out his time, was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome signboard, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words, 'John Thompson, *Hatter*, makes and sells hats for ready money,' with a figure of a hat subjoined; but he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to thought the word '*Hatter*' tautologous, because followed by the words 'makes hats' which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word '*makes*' might as well be omitted, because his customers

would not care who made the hats. If good and to their mind, they would buy, by whomsoever made. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words '*for ready money*' were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit; everyone who purchased expected to pay. They were parted with, and the inscription now stood, 'John Thompson sells hats.' '*Sells hats!*' says his next friend. 'Why nobody will expect you to give them away; what then is the use of that word?' It was stricken out, and '*hats*' followed it, the rather as there was one painted on the board. So the inscription was reduced ultimately to 'John Thompson,' with the figure of a hat subjoined."

The next story has the same background, the Continental Congress.

I was sitting by Doctor Franklin [says Jefferson], and observed to him that I thought we should except books (from the obligations of the non-importation association formed in America to bring England to terms); that we ought not to exclude science, even coming from an enemy. He thought so too, and I proposed the exception, which was agreed to. Soon after it occurred that medicine should be excepted, and I suggested that also to the Doctor. "As to that," said he, "I will tell you a story. When I was in London, in such a year, there was a weekly club of physicians, of which Sir John Pringle was President, and I was invited by my friend Doctor Fothergill to attend when convenient. Their rule was to propose a thesis one week and discuss it the next. I happened there when the question to be considered was whether physicians had, on the whole, done most good or harm? The young members, particularly, having discussed it very learnedly and eloquently till the subject was exhausted, one of them observed to Sir John Pringle, that although it was not usual for the President to take part in a debate, yet they were desirous to know his opinion on the question. He said they must first tell him whether, under the appellation of physicians, they meant to include *old women*, if they did he thought they had done more good than harm, otherwise more harm than good."

This incident brings back to us, as it doubtless did to Franklin, the augurs jesting among themselves over religion.³¹

It is to be regretted that many other easy pens besides that of Jefferson have not preserved for us some of those humorous stories and parables of which Franklin's memory was such a rich storehouse. Doctor Benjamin Rush, one of his intimate friends, is said to have entertained the purpose of publishing his recollections of Franklin's table-talk. The purpose was never fulfilled, but the scraps of this talk which we find in Dr. Rush's diary are sufficient to show that, even in regard to medicine, Franklin had a stock of information and conclusions which were well worth the hearing.

As a member of the Continental Congress, Franklin was brought into close working intercourse with Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and formed a sincere sentiment of friendship for him, which was strengthened by the expedition that they made together to Canada, as two of the three commissioners appointed by Congress to win the Canadians over to the American cause. Samuel Chase, another Marylander, was the third commissioner, and the three were accompanied by John Carroll, the brother of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, whose character as a Catholic priest, it was hoped, would promote the success of the mission. On his way back to Philadelphia, in advance of his fellow-commissioners, Franklin acknowledged in grateful

³¹ Another story of Franklin's told by Jefferson is good enough at any rate for a footnote. At parties at the French Court he sometimes had a game of chess with the old Duchess of Bourbon. Happening once to put her king into prize, he took it. "Ah," said she, "we do not take kings so." "We do in America," said he.

terms the help that he had received on his return journey from the friendly assistance and tender care of this good man, who became his firm friend, and was subsequently made the first Catholic Bishop of America upon his recommendation. William Carmichael, another Marylander, who was for a time the secretary of Silas Deane at Paris, was also one of Franklin's friends. There is a tinge of true affection about his letters to Carmichael, and the latter, in a letter written in the year 1777, while stating that Franklin's age in some measure hindered him from taking so active a part in the drudgery of business as his great zeal and abilities warranted, remarks, "He is the Master to whom we children in politics all look up for counsel, and whose name is everywhere a passport to be well received." When Carmichael was the American Secretary of Legation at Madrid, Franklin still remembered enough of his Spanish to request the former to send him the *Gazette* of Madrid and any new pamphlets that were curious. "I remember the Maxim you mention of Charles V, *Yo y el Tiempo*," he wrote to Carmichael on one occasion, "and have somewhere met with an Answer to it in this distich,

'I and time 'gainst any two,
Chance and I 'gainst Time and you.'

"And I think the Gentlemen you have at present to deal with, would do wisely to guard a little more against certain Chances." In another letter, Franklin, referring to his "Essay on Perfumes," dedicated to the Academy of Brussels, writes to Carmichael, "You do my little Scribblings too much honour in proposing to print them; but they are at your Disposition, except the Letter to the Academy which having several English Puns in it, can not be translated, and besides has too much *grossièreté* to be borne by the polite Readers of these Nations."

It was in Pennsylvania and New England, however, so far as America was concerned, that Franklin formed the intimate friendships which led him so often to say towards the close of his life, as one old friend after another dropped through the bridge of Mirzah, that the loss of friends is the tax imposed upon us by nature for living too long.

The closest friend of his early youth was his Boston friend, John Collins. The reader has already learnt how soon religious skepticism, drinking and gambling ate out the core of this friend's character.

With his intensely social nature, Franklin had hardly found employment in Philadelphia before in his own language he began to have some acquaintance among the young people of the town, that were lovers of reading, with whom he spent his evenings very agreeably. His first group of friends in Philadelphia was formed before he left Pennsylvania for London in 1724. In his pictorial way—for the *Autobiography* is engraved with a burin rather than written with a pen—Franklin brings the figures of this group before us with admirable distinctness. They were three in number, and all were lovers of reading. Two of them, Charles Osborne and Joseph Watson, were clerks to an eminent conveyancer in Philadelphia, Charles Brogden. The third, James Ralph, who has already been mentioned by us, was clerk to a merchant. Watson was a pious, sensible young man, of great integrity; the others were rather more lax in their principles of religion, particularly Ralph, who, as well as Collins, to quote the precise words of Franklin's confession, had been unsettled by him, "for which," he adds, "they both made me suffer."

Osborne [Franklin continues] was sensible, candid, frank; sincere and affectionate to his friends; but, in literary matters, too fond of criticising. Ralph was ingenious, genteel in his manners, and extremely eloquent; I think I never knew a prettier talker. Both of them great admirers of poetry, and began to try their hands in little pieces.

Many pleasant walks we four had together on Sundays into the woods, near Schuylkill, where we read to one another, and conferr'd on what we read.

Ralph had the most fatal of all gifts for a clever man—the gift of writing poetry tolerably well. Osborne tried to convince him that he had no genius for it, and advised him to stick to mercantile pursuits. Franklin conservatively approved the amusing one's self with poetry now and then so far as to improve one's language, but no farther.

Thus things stood when the friends proposed that each should produce at their next meeting a poetical version of the 18th Psalm. Ralph composed his version, showed it to Franklin, who admired it, and, being satisfied that Osborne's criticisms of his muse were the suggestions of mere envy, asked Franklin to produce it at the next symposium of the friends as his own. Franklin, who had a relish for practical jokes throughout his life, fell in readily with Ralph's stratagem. But we shall let a writer, whose diction is as incompressible as water, narrate what followed in his own lively way:

We met; Watson's performance was read; there were some beauties in it, but many defects. Osborne's was read; it was much better; Ralph did it justice; remarked some faults, but applauded the beauties. He himself had nothing to produce. I was backward; seemed desirous of being excused; had not had sufficient time to correct, etc.; but no excuse could be admitted; produce I must. It was read and repeated; Watson and Osborne gave up the contest, and join'd in applauding it. Ralph only made some criticisms, and propos'd some amendments; but I defended my text. Osborne was against Ralph, and told him he was no better a critic than poet, so he dropt the argument. As they two went home together, Osborne expressed himself still more strongly in favour of what he thought my production; having restrain'd himself before, as he said, lest I should think it flattery. "But who would have imagin'd," said he, "that Franklin had been capable of such a performance, such painting, such force, such fire! He has even improv'd the original. In his common conversation he seems to have no choice of words; he hesitates and blunders; and yet, good God! how he writes!" When we next met, Ralph discovered the trick we had plaid him, and Osborne was a little laught at.

This transaction fixed Ralph in his resolution of becoming a poet. I did all I could to dissuade him from it, but he continued scribbling verses till *Pope* cured him.³²

³² It may be said of Ralph that few names are surer of immortality than his, though not for the reasons upon which he founded his deceitful hopes. Between the *Autobiography* and the *Dunciad* he is, not unlike a mummy, preserved long beyond the date at which, in the ordinary course of things, he would have been overtaken by oblivion. This is one of the couplets that Pope bestowed upon him in the *Dunciad*:

"Silence, ye Wolves! While Ralph to Cynthia howls,
And makes night hideous—answer him, ye owls."

The couplet was accompanied by a still more venomous sting in prose: "James Ralph, a name inserted after the first editions, not known till he writ a swearing-piece called *Sawney*, very abusive of Dr. Swift, Mr. Gay, and myself. These lines allude to a thing of his entitled *Night*, a poem. This low writer attended his own works with panegyrics in the Journals, and once in particular praised himself highly above Mr. Addison, in wretched remarks upon that author's account of English poets, printed in a London Journal, September, 1728. He was wholly illiterate and knew no language, not even French. Being advised to read the rules of dramatic poetry before he began a play, he smiled and replied 'Shakspeare writ without rules.' He ended at last in the common sink of all such writers, a political newspaper, to which he was recommended by his friend Arnal, and received a small pittance for pay; and being detected in writing on both sides on one and the same day, he publicly justified the morality of his conduct." Another couplet of the *Dunciad* is this:

"And see! the very Gazetteers give o'er,
Ev'n Ralph repents, and Henley writes no more."

Watson, we are told by Franklin, died in his arms a few years after this incident, much lamented, being the best of their set. Osborne went to the West Indies, where he became an eminent lawyer, and made money, but died young. "He and I," observes Franklin, "had made a serious agreement, that the one who happen'd first to die should, if possible, make a friendly visit to the other, and acquaint him how he found things in that separate state. But he never fulfill'd his promise."

This group of friends was succeeded on Franklin's return from London by the persons who constituted with him the original members of the Junto: Joseph Breintnal, "a copyer of deeds for the scriveners," Thos. Godfrey, the mathematical precisian, for whom Franklin had so little partiality, Nicholas Scull, "a surveyor, afterwards Surveyor-general, who lov'd books, and sometimes made a few verses," William Parsons, "bred a shoemaker, but, loving reading, had acquir'd a considerable share of mathematics, which he first studied with a view to astrology, that he afterwards laugh'd at," William Maugridge, "a joiner, a most exquisite mechanic, and a solid, sensible man," Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, and George Webb, journeymen printers, Robert Grace, "a young gentleman of some fortune, generous, lively, and witty; a lover of punning and of his friends," and William Coleman, then a merchant's clerk about Franklin's age, who had the coolest, clearest head, the best heart, and the exactest morals, Franklin declares, of almost any man he ever met with. Coleman subsequently became a merchant of great note, and a provincial judge; and the friendship between Franklin and himself continued without interruption until Coleman's death, a period of more than forty years. Like Scull, Parsons also became Surveyor-General. The reader will remember how, partly inspired by his affection for Robert Grace, and partly by resentment over a small office, Franklin applied the sharp edge of the *lex talionis* to Jemmy Read. How both Coleman and Grace came to the aid of Franklin in an hour of dire distress, we shall see hereafter.

Such letters from Franklin to Parsons, as have survived, bear the marks of intimate friendship. In one to him, when he was in command of a company at Easton, dated December 15, 1755, in which reference is made to arms and supplies, that had been forwarded for the defence of that town against the Indians, Franklin says, "Be of good Courage, and God guide you. Your Friends will never desert you." Four of the original members of the Junto were among the first members of the Philosophical Society, established by Franklin, Parsons, as Geographer, Thomas Godfrey, as Mathematician, Coleman as Treasurer, and Franklin himself as Secretary. Parsons died during the first mission of Franklin to England, and, in a letter to Deborah the latter comments on the event in these words: "I regret the Loss of my Friend Parsons. Death begins to make Breaches in the little Junto of old Friends, that he had long forborne, and it must be expected he will now soon pick us all off one after another." In another letter, written some months later to Hugh Roberts, a member of the Junto, but not one of the original members, he institutes a kind of Plutarchian contrast between Parsons and Stephen Potts, who is described in the *Autobiography* as a young countryman of full age, bred to country work, of uncommon natural parts, and great wit and humor, but a little idle.

Two of the former members of the Junto you tell me [he said] are departed this life, Potts and Parsons. Odd characters both of them. Parsons a wise man, that often acted foolishly; Potts a wit, that seldom acted wisely. If *enough* were the means to make a man happy, one had always the *means* of happiness, without ever enjoying the *thing*; the other had always the *thing*, without ever possessing the *means*. Parsons, even in his prosperity, always fretting; Potts, in the midst of his poverty, ever laughing. It seems, then, that happiness in this life rather depends on internals than externals; and that, besides the natural effects of wisdom and virtue, vice and folly, there is such a thing as a happy or an unhappy constitution. They were both our friends, and loved us. So, peace to their shades. They had their virtues as well as their foibles; they were

both honest men, and that alone, as the world goes, is one of the greatest of characters. They were old acquaintances, in whose company I formerly enjoyed a great deal of pleasure, and I cannot think of losing them, without concern and regret.

The Hugh Roberts to whom this letter was written was the Hugh Roberts, who found such pleasure in the glad peal of bells, that announced the safe arrival of Franklin in England, and in his reminiscences of his friend of forty years' standing, that he quite forgot that it was his rule to be in bed by eleven o'clock. He was, if Franklin may be believed, an eminent farmer, which may account for the early hours he kept; and how near he was to Franklin the affectionate tone of this very letter abundantly testifies. After expressing his grief because of their friend Syng's loss of his son, and the hope that Roberts' own son might be in every respect as good and useful as his father (than which he need not wish him more, he said) Franklin takes Roberts gently to task for not attending the meetings of the Junto more regularly.

I do not quite like your absenting yourself from that Good old club, the Junto. Your more frequent presence might be a means of keeping them from being all engaged in measures not the best for public welfare. I exhort you, therefore, to return to your duty; and, as the Indians say, to confirm my words, I send you a Birmingham tile. I thought the neatness of the figures would please you.

Even the Birmingham tile, however, did not have the effect of correcting Roberts' remissness, for in two subsequent letters Franklin returns to the same subject. In the first, he tells Roberts that he had received his letter by the hands of Roberts' son in London, and had had the pleasure withal of seeing this son grow up a solid, sensible young man. He then reverts to the Junto. "You tell me you sometimes visit the ancient Junto. I wish you would do it oftener. I know they all love and respect you, and regret your absenting yourself so much. People are apt to grow strange, and not understand one another so well, when they meet but seldom." Then follow these words which help us to see how he came to declare so confidently on another occasion that, compared with the entire happiness of existence, its occasional unhappiness is but as the pricking of a pin.

Since we have held that Club, till we are grown grey together, let us hold it out to the End. For my own Part, I find I love Company, Chat, a Laugh, a Glass, and even a Song, as well as ever; and at the same Time relish better than I used to do the grave Observations and wise Sentences of old Men's Conversation; so that I am sure the Junto will be still as agreeable to me as it ever has been. I therefore hope it will not be discontinu'd, as long as we are able to crawl together.

The second of the two letters makes still another appeal of the same nature.

I wish [Franklin said] you would continue to meet the Junto, notwithstanding that some Effects of our publick political Misunderstandings may sometimes appear there. 'Tis now perhaps one of the *oldest* Clubs, as I think it was formerly one of the *best*, in the King's Dominions. It wants but about two years of Forty since it was establish'd. We loved and still love one another; we are grown Grey together, and yet it is too early to Part. Let us sit till the Evening of Life is spent. The Last Hours are always the most joyous. When we can stay no longer, 'tis time enough then to bid each other good Night, separate, and go quietly to bed.

When even the bed of death could be made to wear this smooth and peaceful aspect by such a genial conception of existence, it is not surprising that Catherine Shipley, a friend of later date, should have asked Franklin to instruct her in the art of procuring pleasant dreams. It was in this letter, too, that he told Roberts that he was pleased with his punning, not merely

because he liked punning in general, but because he learned from the use of it by Roberts that he was in good health and spirits. Of Hugh Roberts it needs to be only further said that he was one of Franklin's many friends who did what they could by courteous offices, when Franklin was abroad, to testify that they loved him too much to be unmindful that he had left a family behind him entitled to their protection and social attentions. For his visits to his family Franklin sometimes thanks him.

The Philip Syng mentioned in one of the letters to Hugh Roberts was another Philadelphia crony of Franklin's. He was enough of an electrician to be several times given due credit by the unhesitating candor of Franklin for ideas which the public would otherwise, perhaps, have fathered upon Franklin himself, who was entirely too careless about his own fine feathers to have any desire for borrowed plumage.

Samuel Rhoads, also, was one of the intimate Philadelphia friends to whom Franklin was in the habit of sending his love. He, too, was an original member of the Philosophical Society established by Franklin and was set down as "Mechanician" on its roll of membership. At any rate, even if "Mechanician" was a rather pompous term for him, as "Geographer" was for William Parsons, the surveyor, he was enough of a builder to warrant Franklin in imparting to him many valuable points about the construction of houses, which were brought to the former's attention when he was abroad. A striking proof, perhaps, of the strength of the attachment between the two is found in the fact that Rhoads built the new residence, previously mentioned by us, for Franklin without a rupture in their friendship; although there appears to have been enough of the usual provoking delays to cause Franklin no little dissatisfaction.

Rhoads was a man of considerable public importance in his time. He enjoyed the distinction of being one of the founders of the Pennsylvania Hospital, a conspicuous member of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, and a Mayor of Philadelphia.

He was one, too, of the Committee of the Assembly which audited Franklin's accounts as the Agent of the Colony upon the latter's return from England in 1762, and he was likewise a member of the Committee which had previously reported that the estates of the Proprietaries in Pennsylvania were not being unfairly taxed. In one of Franklin's letters to him, there is a humorous reference to Rhoads' political career. "I congratulate you," he said, "on Your Retirement, and you being able to divert yourself with farming; 'tis an inexhaustible source of perpetual Amusement. Your Country *Seat* is of a more secure kind than *that* in the Assembly: and I hope not so much in the Power of the Mob to jostle you out of."

A golden sentence in this letter is one of the best that Franklin ever penned. "As long as I have known the World I have observ'd that Wrong is always growing more Wrong till there is no bearing it, and that right however oppos'd, comes right at last."

Rhoads, Syng and Roberts were all three included with Luke Morris, another old friend and an *et cetera*, intended to embrace other friends besides, in a letter which Franklin wrote from Passy to Dr. Thomas Bond.

I thank you [he said] for the pleasing account you give me of the health and welfare of my old friends, Hugh Roberts, Luke Morris, Philip Syng, Samuel Rhoads, &c., with the same of yourself and family. Shake the old ones by the hand for me, and give the young ones my blessing. For my own part, I do not find that I grow any older. Being arrived at seventy, and considering that by travelling further in the same road I should probably be led to the grave, I stopped short, turned about, and walked back again; which having done these four years, you may now call me sixty-six.

Dr. Thomas Bond, the Physician of the Philosophical Society established by Franklin, to whom this letter was written, was also one of Franklin's lifelong friends. He was the Doctor Bond, who found that he could make no headway with his hospital project until it was encouraged by a *ça ira* from Franklin, something like that which he is said to have uttered many years afterwards in France when the issue of the American Revolution was uncertain. For the society of physicians and liberal-minded clergymen Franklin had a peculiar partiality. To the one class he was attracted by both the scientific and humanitarian nature of their profession, to say nothing of the incessant intercourse with their fellow creatures, which makes all physicians more or less men of the world; and to the questioning spirit of the eighteenth century he was too true not to have a natural affinity for clergymen of the latitudinarian type. The ties between Dr. Thomas Bond, Dr. John Bard and Dr. Benjamin Rush and himself were very close. He had such a high opinion of Dr. Bond's pills that on one occasion he even writes to his wife from Virginia to send him some by post. On another occasion, when he was in England, he tells Deborah to thank Dr. Bond for the care that he takes of her. In a letter to the Doctor himself, he remarks that he did not know why their school of physic in Philadelphia should not soon be equal to that in Edinburgh, an observation which seemed natural enough to later Philadelphians when it was not only considered throughout the United States a high compliment to say of a man that he was as clever as a Philadelphia lawyer, but a medical education was in a large part of the United States deemed incomplete unless it had received the finishing touch from the clinics of that city.

When Dr. John Bard removed to New York, where he became the first President of the New York Medical Society, Franklin stated in a letter to Cadwallader Colden that he esteemed Dr. Bard an ingenious physician and surgeon, and a discreet, worthy and honest man. In a letter to Dr. Bard and his wife in 1785, he used these tender words: "You are right in supposing, that I interest myself in everything that affects you and yours, sympathizing in your afflictions, and rejoicing in your felicities; for our friendship is ancient, and was never obscured by the least cloud."

Dr. Rush was such a fervid friend and admirer of Franklin that the latter found it necessary to request him, if he published his discourse on the Moral Sense, to omit totally and suppress that most extravagant encomium on his friend Franklin, which hurt him exceedingly in the unexpected hearing, and would mortify him beyond conception if it should appear from the press. The doctor replied by saying that he had suppressed the encomium, but had taken the liberty of inscribing the discourse to Franklin by a simple dedication, and earnestly insisted upon the permission of his friend to send his last as he did his first publication into the world under the patronage of his name. In the "simple" dedication, the panegyric, which had made Franklin so uncomfortable, was moderated to such an extent that no character was ascribed to him more transcendent than that of the friend and benefactor of mankind.

To Dr. Rush we are under obligations for several stories about Franklin. He tells us that, when chosen by Congress to be one of our Commissioners to France, Franklin turned to him, and remarked: "I am old and good for nothing; but, as the storekeepers say of their remnants of cloth, 'I am but a fag end, and you may have me for what you please.'" No one doubts now that for the purpose of the French mission he was by far the best piece of goods in the shop. Another story, which came to Dr. Rush at second hand, sounds apocryphal. "Why do you wear that old coat today?" asked Silas Deane of Franklin, when they were on their way to sign the Treaty of Alliance with France. Deane referred to the coat, in which Franklin was clad, when Wedderburn made the rabid attack on him before the Privy Council, to which we shall refer later. "To give it its revenge," was the reply. Franklin may have said that, but it was not like him to say anything of the sort.

But we get back to the domain of unquestionable authenticity when we turn to Dr. Rush's account of Franklin's death-bed:

The evening of his life was marked by the same activity of his moral and intellectual powers which distinguished its meridian. His conversation with his family upon the subject of his dissolution was free and cheerful. A few days before he died, he rose from his bed and begged that it might be made up for him so *that he might die in a decent manner*. His daughter told him that she hoped he would recover and live many years longer. He calmly replied, "*I hope not.*" Upon being advised to change his position in bed, that he might breathe easy, he said, "*A dying man can do nothing easy.*" All orders and bodies of people have vied with each other in paying tributes of respect to his memory.

A Philadelphia friend, for whom Franklin entertained a peculiar affection, was John Bartram, the botanist. "Our celebrated Botanist of Pennsylvania," Franklin deservedly terms him in a letter to Jan Ingenhousz. In one letter Franklin addresses him as "My ever dear friend," in another as "My good and dear old friend" and in another as "My dear good old friend." In 1751, Bartram published his *Observations on the Inhabitants, Climate, Soil, Rivers, Productions, Animals, and other Matters worthy of Notice. Made by Mr. John Bartram in his Travels from Pensylvania to Onondaga, Oswego, and the Lake Ontario, in Canada*, and, in a letter to Jared Eliot, Franklin, after mentioning the fact that Bartram corresponded with several of the great naturalists in Europe, and would be proud of an acquaintance with him, said: "I make no Apologies for introducing him to you; for, tho' a plain illiterate Man, you will find he has Merit." "He is a Man of no Letters, but a curious Observer of Nature," was his statement in a subsequent letter to the same correspondent. Through the mediation of Franklin, Bartram was made the American botanist to the King, and given a pension for the fearless and tireless search for botanical specimens, which he had prosecuted, when American forest, savannah and everglade were as full of death as the berry of the nightshade. It was the thought of what he had hazarded that led Franklin to write to him in 1769: "I wish you would now decline your long and dangerous peregrinations in search of new plants, and remain safe and quiet at home, employing your leisure hours in a work that is much wanted, and which no one besides is so capable of performing; I mean the writing a Natural History of our country." The pension meant so much to Bartram that he found difficulty in assuring himself that it would last. In one letter, Franklin tells him that he imagines that there is no doubt but the King's bounty to him would be continued, but he must continue on his part to send over now and then a few such curious seeds as he could procure to keep up his claim. In another letter, he tells him that there is no instance in the then King's reign of a pension once granted ever being taken away, unless for some great offence. Franklin himself was first of all a sower of seed, of that seed which produces the wholesome plants of benevolence and utility; so it seems quite in keeping to find him, when he was absent from America, maintaining a constant interchange of different sorts of seed with Bartram. If Bartram chooses to try the seed of naked oats and Swiss barley, six rows to one ear, he can get some, Franklin writes, by calling on Mrs. Franklin. In another letter, he acknowledges the receipt of seeds from Bartram, and, in return for it, sends him some of the true rhubarb seed which he desires; also some green dry peas, highly esteemed in England as the best for making pea soup; and also some caravances or beans, of which a cheese was made in China. Strangely enough, he could learn nothing about the seed of the lucerne or alfalfa plant, one of the oldest of forage plants, for which Bartram wrote. Later, he sends Bartram a small box of upland rice, brought from Cochin China, and also a few seeds of the Chinese tallow tree.

Another particular friend of Franklin was John Hughes of Philadelphia. This is the Hughes, out of whose debt as a correspondent Franklin, when in England, found it impossible to keep.

He was a man of considerable political importance, for he served on the Committee of the Assembly, which was charged with the expenditure of the £60,000 appropriated by the Assembly, after Braddock's defeat, mainly for the defence of the Province, and on the Committee of the Assembly, which audited Franklin's accounts after his return from England in 1762; and was also one of the delegates appointed by the Assembly to confer with Teedyuscung, the King of the Delawares, at Easton in 1756. Even when Franklin, his party associate, was defeated as a candidate for re-election to the Assembly in 1764, Hughes contrived to clamber back into his own seat. The departure for England of Franklin, shortly after this election, was the signal for the most venomous of all the attacks made upon him by the class of writers which he happily termed "bug-writers"; that is, writers, to use his words, who resemble "those little dirty stinking insects, that attack us only in the dark, disturb our Repose, molesting and wounding us, while our Sweat and Blood are contributing to their Subsistence." But the friendship of Hughes was equal to the emergency. Incensed at the outrageous nature of the attack, he published a card over his signature, in which he promised that, if Chief Justice Allen, or any gentleman of character, would undertake to justify the charges against Franklin, he would pay £10 to the Hospital for every one of these charges that was established; provided that the person, who made them, would pay £5 for every false accusation against Franklin that he disproved. The assailants endeavored to turn Hughes' challenge into ridicule by an anonymous reply, but Hughes rejoined with a counter-reply above his own signature, in which, according to William Franklin, he lashed them very severely for their baseness. This brought on a newspaper controversy, which did not end, until Chief Justice Allen, who was drawn into its vortex, was enraged to find that it had cost him £25. Later, the recommendation of Hughes by Franklin, as the Stamp Distributor for Pennsylvania and the Counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex, gave the worst shock to the popularity of the latter that it ever received. The fierce heat that colonial resentment kindled under the hateful office proved too much for even such a resolute incumbent as Hughes, but he was not long in finding a compensation in the somewhat lower temperature of the office of Collector of Customs for the Colonies, which he held until his death.

Thomas Hopkinson, of Philadelphia, too, was one of Franklin's particular friends. He shared his enthusiasm for electrical experiments, and was the first President of the Philosophical Society established by him. With his usual generosity, Franklin took pains in a note to one of his scientific papers to publish the fact that the power of points to *throw off* the electrical fire was first communicated to him by this friend, then deceased. Nor did he stop there, but referred to him at the same time as a man "whose virtue and integrity, in every station of life, public and private, will ever make his Memory dear to those who knew him, and knew how to value him." There is an amusing reference to Hopkinson in the *Autobiography* in connection with the occasion on which Franklin himself was so transported by Whitefield's eloquence as to empty his pockets, gold and all, into the collector's dish. Disapproving of Whitefield's desire to establish an orphan asylum in Georgia, and suspecting that subscriptions would be solicited by him for that object, and yet distrusting his own capacity to resist a preacher, by whom, in the language of Isaiah, the hearts of the people were stirred, as the trees of the wood are stirred with the wind, he took the precaution of emptying his pockets before he left home. But Whitefield's pathos was too much for him also. Towards the conclusion of the discourse, he felt a strong desire to give, and applied to a Quaker neighbor, who stood near him, to borrow some money for the purpose. The application was unfortunately made, the *Autobiography* says, to perhaps the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, "*At any other time, Friend Hopkinson, I would lend to thee freely; but not now, for thee seems to be out of thy right senses.*"

Anyone who enjoyed Franklin's friendship experienced very little difficulty in passing it on to his son at his death. Francis Hopkinson, the son of Thomas Hopkinson, and the author of *Hail Columbia*, is one example of this. Franklin's letters to him are marked by every indication of affection, and he bequeathed to him all his philosophical instruments in Philadelphia, and made him one of the executors of his will with Henry Hill, John Jay and Mr. Edward Duffield, of Benfield, in Philadelphia County. In doing so, with his happy faculty for such things he managed to pay a twofold compliment to both father and son in one breath. After expressing in a letter to Francis Hopkinson his pleasure that Hopkinson had been appointed to the honorable office of Treasurer of Loans, he added: "I think the Congress judg'd rightly in their Choice, and Exactness in accounts and scrupulous fidelity in matters of Trust are Qualities for which your father was eminent, and which I was persuaded was inherited by his Son when I took the liberty of naming him one of the Executors of my Will." Franklin even had a mild word of commendation for Hopkinson's political squibs, some of which, when on their way across the ocean to him, fell into the hands of the British along with Henry Laurens. The captors, it is safe to say, attached very different degrees of importance to the two prizes, and Hopkinson himself accepted the situation with the cheerful observation, "They are heartily welcome to any performance of mine in that way. I wish the dose was stronger and better for their sake." Several of the letters from Franklin to Francis Hopkinson bring out two of the most winning traits of the writer, his ability to find a sweet kernel under every rind however bitter, and his aversion to defamation, which led him to say truthfully on one occasion that between abusing and being abused he would rather be abused.

As to the Friends and Enemies you just mention [he declared in one of them], I have hitherto, Thanks to God, had Plenty of the former kind; they have been my Treasure; and it has perhaps been of no Disadvantage to me, that I have had a few of the latter. They serve to put us upon correcting the Faults we have, and avoiding those we are in danger of having. They counteract the Mischief Flattery might do us, and their Malicious Attacks make our Friends more zealous in serving us, and promoting our Interest. At present, I do not know of more than two such Enemies that I enjoy, viz. Lee and Izard. I deserved the Enmity of the latter, because I might have avoided it by paying him a Compliment, which I neglected. That of the former I owe to the People of France, who happen'd to respect me too much and him too little; which I could bear, and he could not. They are unhappy, that they cannot make everybody hate me as much as they do; and I should be so, if my Friends did not love me much more than those Gentlemen can possibly love one another.

Every ugly witch is but a transfigured princess. This idea is one that was readily adopted by Franklin's amiable philosophy of life. The thought that enemies are but wholesome mortifications for the pride of human flesh is a thought that he often throws out in his letters to other persons besides Hopkinson. In one to the gallant Col. Henry Bouquet, who was also, it may be said in passing, a warm friend of Franklin, the pen of the latter halts for a moment to parenthesize the fact that God had blessed him with two or three enemies to keep him in order.

But there were few facts in which Franklin found more satisfaction than the fact that all his enemies were mere political enemies, that is to say, enemies like Dr. William Smith, who shot poisoned arrows at him, when he was living, and fired minute guns over his grave, when he was dead.

You know [he wrote to his daughter Sally from Reedy Island, when he was leaving America on his second mission to England], I have many enemies, all indeed on the public account (for I cannot recollect that I have in a private capacity given just cause

of offence to any one whatever), yet they are enemies, and very bitter ones; and you must expect their enmity will extend in some degree to you, so that your slightest indiscretions will be magnified into crimes, in order the more sensibly to wound and afflict me.

The same distinction between personal and political hostility is drawn by him in a letter to John Jay of a much later date in which he uses the only terms of self-approval, so far as we can recollect, that a biographer might prefer him never to have employed.

I have [he said], as you observe, some enemies in England, but they are my enemies as an *American*; I have also two or three in America; who are my enemies as a *Minister*; but I thank God there are not in the whole world any who are my Enemies as a *Man*; for by his grace, thro' a long life, I have been enabled so to conduct myself, that there does not exist a human Being who can justly say, "Ben. Franklin has wrong'd me." This, my friend, is in old age a comfortable Reflection.

In one of the letters to Hopkinson, mentioned by us, he tells Hopkinson that he does well to refrain from newspaper abuse. He was afraid, he declared, to lend any American newspapers in France until he had examined and laid aside such as would disgrace his countrymen, and subject them among strangers to a reflection like that used by a gentleman in a coffee-house to two quarrelers, who, after a mutually free use of the words, *rogue*, *villain*, *rascal*, *scoundrel*, etc., seemed as if they would refer their dispute to him. "I know nothing of you, or your Affair," said he; "I only perceive *that you know one another*."

The conductor of a newspaper, he thought, should consider himself as in some degree the guardian of his country's reputation, and refuse to insert such writings as might hurt it. If people will print their abuses of one another, let them do it in little pamphlets, and distribute them where they think proper, instead of troubling all the world with them, he suggested. In expressing these sentiments, Franklin was but preaching what he had actually practised in the management of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. This fact imparts additional authority to the pungent observations on the liberty of the press contained in one of the last papers that he ever wrote, namely, his *Account of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Pennsylvania, viz.: the Court of the Press*. In this paper, he arraigns the license of the press in his half-serious, half-jocular fashion with undiminished vigor, and ends with the recommendation to the Legislature that, if the right of retaliation by the citizen was not to be left unregulated, it should take up the consideration of both liberties, that of the press and that of the cudgel, and by an explicit law mark their extent and limits.

Doctor Cadwallader Evans of Philadelphia was also on a sufficiently affectionate footing with Franklin for the latter to speak of him as his "good old friend." When news of his death reached Franklin in London in 1773, the event awakened a train of reflection in his mind which led him to write to his son that, if he found himself on his return to America, as he feared he would do, a stranger among strangers, he would have to go back to his friends in England.

Dr. Evans' idea of establishing a medical library at the Hospital was so grateful to Franklin's untiring public spirit that, as soon as he heard of it from Dr. Evans, he sent him at once the only medical book that he had, and took steps to solicit other donations of such books for the purpose in England. There are some instructive observations on political and medical subjects in his earlier letters to Dr. Evans, but his later ones are mainly given over to the movement for the production of silk in Pennsylvania in which Dr. Evans was deeply interested. The

industry, intelligence and enthusiasm with which Franklin seconded his efforts to make the exotic nursling a success is one of the many laudable things in his career.

Another close friend of Franklin was Abel James, a Quaker, and an active member of the society in Pennsylvania for the manufacture of silk, or the Filature, as it was called. When he returned to England in 1764, Abel James, Thomas Wharton and Joseph Galloway were the friends who were so loath to part with him that they even boarded his ship at Chester, and accompanied him as far as New Castle. The enduring claim of James upon the attention of posterity consists in the fact that he was so lucky, when the books and papers, entrusted by Franklin to the care of Joseph Galloway were raided, as to recover the manuscript of the first twenty-three pages of the *Autobiography*, which brought the life of Franklin down to the year 1730. Subsequently he sent a copy to "his dear and honored friend," with a letter urging him to complete the work. "What will the world say," he asked, "if kind, humane and benevolent Ben. Franklin should leave his friends and the world deprived of so pleasing and profitable a work; a work which would be useful and entertaining not only to a few, but to millions?"

The names of Thomas Wharton and Samuel Wharton, two Philadelphia friends of Franklin, are more than once coupled together in Franklin's letters. Thomas Wharton was a partner of Galloway and Goddard in the establishment of the *Philadelphia Chronicle*. It was his woollen gown that Franklin found such a comfortable companion on his winter voyage. He would seem to have been the same kind of robust invalid as the neurasthenic who insisted that he was dying of consumption until he grew so stout that he had to refer his imaginary ill-health to dropsy.

Our friend W—— [Franklin wrote to Dr. Evans], who is always complaining of a constant fever, looks nevertheless fresh and jolly, and does not fall away in the least. He was saying the other day at Richmond, (where we were together dining with Governor Pownall) that he had been pestered with a fever almost continually for these three years past, and that it gave way to no medicines, all he had taken, advised by different physicians, having never any effect towards removing it. On which I asked him, if it was not now time to inquire, whether he had really any fever at all. He is indeed the only instance I ever knew, of a man's growing fat upon a fever.

It was with the assistance of Thomas Wharton that Thomas Livezy, a Pennsylvania Quaker, sent Franklin a dozen bottles of wine, made of the "small wild grape" of America, accompanied by a letter, which Franklin with his *penchant* for good stories, must have enjoyed even more than the wine. Referring to the plan of converting the government of Pennsylvania from a Proprietary into a Royal one, Livezy wrote that, if it was true that there would be no change until the death of Thomas Penn, he did not know but that some people in the Province would be in the same condition as a German's wife in his neighborhood lately was "who said nobody could say she wished her husband dead, but said, she wished she could see how he would look when he was dead." "I honestly confess," Livezy went on to say, "I do not wish him (Penn) to die against his will, but, if he could be prevailed on to die for the good of the people, it might perhaps make his name as immortal as Samson's death did his, and gain him more applause here than all the acts which he has ever done in his life."

The humor of Franklin's reply, if humor it can be termed, was more sardonic.

The Partizans of the present [he said] may as you say flatter themselves that such Change will not take place, till the Proprietor's death, but I imagine he hardly thinks so himself. Anxiety and uneasiness are painted on his brow and the woman who would like to see how he would look when dead, need only look at him while living.

With Samuel Wharton, Franklin was intimate enough to soothe his gout-ridden feet with a pair of "Gouty Shoes" given or lent to him by Wharton. This Wharton was with him one of the chief promoters of the Ohio settlement, of which the reader will learn more later, and the project was brought near enough to success by Franklin for his over-zealous friends to sow the seeds of what might have been a misunderstanding between him and Wharton, if Franklin had not been so healthy-minded, by claiming that the credit for the prospective success of the project would belong to Wharton rather than to Franklin. But, as Franklin said, many things happen between the cup and the lip, and enough happened in this case to make the issue a wholly vain one. Subsequently we know that Franklin in one letter asked John Paul Jones to remember him affectionately to Wharton and in another referred to Wharton as a "particular friend of his." His feelings, it is needless to say, underwent a decided change when later the fact was brought to his attention that Wharton had converted to his own use a sum of money placed in his hands by Jan Ingenhousz, one of the most highly-prized of all Franklin's friends.

There is a thrust at Parliament in a letter from Franklin to Samuel Wharton, written at Passy, which is too keen not to be recalled. He is describing the Lord George Gordon riots, during which Lord Mansfield's house was destroyed.

If they had done no other Mischief [said Franklin], I would have more easily excused them, as he has been an eminent Promoter of the American War, and it is not amiss that those who have approved the Burning our poor People's Houses and Towns should taste a little of the Effects of Fire themselves. But they turn'd all the Thieves and Robbers out of Newgate to the Number of three hundred, and instead of replacing them with an equal Number of other Plunderers of the Publick, which they might easily have found among the Members of Parliament, they burnt the Building.

The relations between Franklin and Ebenezer Kinnersley, who shared his enthusiasm for electrical experiments, John Foxcroft, who became his colleague, as Deputy Postmaster-General for America after the death of Colonel Hunter, and the Rev. Thomas Coombe, the assistant minister of Christ Church and St. Peter's in Philadelphia, were of an affectionate nature, but there is little of salient interest to be said about these relations. Malice has asserted that Franklin did not give Kinnersley due credit for ideas that he borrowed from him in his electrical experiments. If so, Kinnersley must have had a relish for harsh treatment, for in a letter to Franklin, when speaking of the lightning rod, he exclaimed, "May it extend to the latest posterity of mankind, and make the name of franklin like that of newton *immortal*!"

James Wright, and his sister, Susannah Wright, who resided at Hempfield, near Wright's Ferry, Pennsylvania, were likewise good friends of Franklin. Part at any rate of the flour, on which Braddock's army subsisted, was supplied by a mill erected by James Wright near the mouth of the Shawanese Run. Susannah Wright was a woman of parts, interested in silk culture, and fond of reading. On one occasion, Franklin sends her from Philadelphia a couple of pamphlets refuting the charges of plagiarism preferred by William Lauder against the memory of Milton and a book or tract entitled *Christianity not Founded on Argument*. On another occasion, in a letter from London to Deborah, he mentions, as part of the contents of a box that he was transmitting to America, some pamphlets for the Speaker and "Susy" Wright. Another gift to her was a specimen of a new kind of candles, "very convenient to read by." She would find, he said, that they afforded a clear white light, might be held in the hand even in hot weather without softening, did not make grease spots with their drops like those made by common candles, and lasted much longer, and needed little or no snuffing.

A sentiment of cordial friendship also existed between Franklin and Anthony Benezet, a Philadelphia Quaker, born in France, who labored throughout his life with untiring zeal for

the abolition of the Slave Trade. This trade, in the opinion of Franklin, not only disgraced the Colonies, but, without producing any equivalent benefit, was dangerous to their very existence. When actually engaged in business, as a printer, no less than two books, aimed at the abolition of Slavery, one by Ralph Sandysford, and the other by Benjamin Lay, both Quakers, were published by him. The fact that Sandysford's book was published before 1730 and Lay's as early as 1736, led Franklin to say in a letter to a friend in 1789, when the feeling against Slavery was much more widespread, that the headway, which it had obtained, was some confirmation of Lord Bacon's observation that a good motion never dies—the same reflection, by the way, with which he consoled himself when his abridgment of the Book of Common Prayer fell still-born.

When Franklin took a friend to his bosom, it was usually, as he took Deborah, for life. But Joseph Galloway, one of his Philadelphia friends, was an exception to this rule. When Galloway decided to cast his lot with the Loyalists, after Franklin, in a feeling letter to him, had painted their "rising country" in auroral colors, Franklin simply let him lapse into the general mass of detested Tories. Previously, his letters to Galloway, while attended with but few personal details, had been of a character to indicate that he not only entertained a very high estimate of Galloway's abilities but cherished for him the warmest feeling of affection. Indeed, in assuring Galloway of this affection, he sometimes used a term as strong as "unalterable." When Galloway at the age of forty thought of retiring from public life, Franklin told him that it would be in his opinion something criminal to bury in private retirement so early all the usefulness of so much experience and such great abilities. Several years before he had written to Cadwallader Evans that he did not see that Galloway could be spared from the Assembly without great detriment to their affairs and to the general welfare of America. Among the most valuable of his letters, are his letters to Galloway on political conditions in England when the latter was the Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly. In one he expresses the hope that a few months would bring them together, and hazards the belief that, in the calm retirement of Trevoise, Galloway's country place, they might perhaps spend some hours usefully in conversation over the proper constitution for the American Colonies. When Franklin learned from his son that hints had reached the latter that Galloway's friendship for Franklin had been chilled by the fear that he and Franklin would be rivals for the same office, Franklin replied by stating that, if this office would be agreeable to Galloway, he heartily wished it for him.

No insinuations of the kind you mention [he said], concerning Mr. G.,—have reached me, and, if they had, it would have been without the least effect; as I have always had the strongest reliance on the steadiness of his friendship, and on the best grounds, the knowledge I have of his integrity, and the often repeated disinterested services he has rendered me.

In another letter to his son, he said, "I cast my eye over Goddard's Piece against our friend Mr. Galloway, and then lit my Fire with it."

The shadow of the approaching cloud is first noticed in a letter to Galloway in 1775, in which Franklin asks him for permission to hint to him that it was whispered in London by ministerial people that he and Mr. Jay of New York were friends to their measures, and gave them private intelligence of the views of the Popular Party. While at Passy, Franklin informed the Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs that General and Lord Howe, Generals Cornwallis and Grey and other British officers had formally given it as their opinion in Parliament that the conquest of America was impracticable, and that Galloway and other American Loyalists were to be examined that week to prove the contrary. "One would think the first Set were likely to be the best Judges," he adds with acidulous brevity. Later on, he

did not dispose of Galloway so concisely. In a letter to Richard Bache, after suggesting that some of his missing letter books might be recovered by inquiry in the vicinity of Galloway's country seat, he says, smarting partly under the loss of his letter books, and partly under the deception that Galloway had practised upon him:

I should not have left them in his Hands, if he had not deceiv'd me, by saying, that, though he was before otherwise inclin'd, yet that, since the King had declar'd us out of his Protection, and the Parliament by an Act had made our Properties Plunder, he would go as far in the Defence of his Country as any man; and accordingly he had lately with Pleasure given Colours to a Regiment of Militia, and an Entertainment to 400 of them before his House. I thought he was become a stanch Friend to the glorious Cause. I was mistaken. As he was a Friend of my Son's, to whom in my Will I had Left all my Books and Papers, I made him one of my Executors, and put the Trunk of Papers into his Hands, imagining them safer in his House (which was out of the way of any probable March of the enemies' Troops) than in my own.

The correspondence between Franklin and Galloway is enlivened by only a single gleam of Franklin's humor. This was kindled by the protracted uncertainty which attended the application of his associates and himself to the British Crown for the Ohio grant.

The Affair of the Grant [Franklin wrote to Galloway] goes on but slowly. I do not yet clearly see Land. I begin to be a little of the Sailor's Mind when they were handing a Cable out of a Store into a Ship, and one of 'em said: "Tis a long, heavy Cable. I wish we could see the End of it." "D—n me," says another, "if I believe it has any End; somebody has cut it off."³³

James Logan, the accomplished Quaker scholar, David Hall, Franklin's business partner, and Charles Thomson, the Secretary of Congress, were other residents of Pennsylvania, with whom Franklin was connected by ties of friendship, and we shall have occasion to speak of them again when we come to his business and political career. "You will give an old man leave to say, My Love to Mrs. Thompson," was a closing sentence in one of his letters to Charles Thomson.

David Rittenhouse, of Philadelphia, the celebrated astronomer was also a dear friend of his.

Of his New York friends, John Jay was the one, of whom he was fondest, and this friendship included the whole of Jay's family. In a letter from Passy to Jay, shortly after Jay arrived at Madrid, as our minister plenipotentiary to Spain, he tells him that he sends for Mrs. Jay at her request a print of himself.

The Verses at the bottom [he wrote] are truly extravagant. But you must know, that the Desire of pleasing, by a perpetual rise of Compliments in this polite Nation, has so us'd up all the common Expressions of Approbation, that they are become flat and insipid, and to use them almost implies Censure. Hence Musick, that formerly might be sufficiently prais'd when it was called *bonne*, to go a little farther they call'd it *excellente*, then *superbe*, *magnifique*, *exquise*, *céleste*, all which being in their turns worn out, there only remains *divine*; and, when that is grown as insignificant as its Predecessors, I think they must return to common Speech and common Sense; as from vying with one another in fine and costly Paintings on their Coaches, since I first knew the Country, not being able to go farther in that Way, they have returned lately to plain Carriages, painted without Arms or Figures, in one uniform Colour.

³³ "The ship Ohio still aground," is the manner in which Franklin communicated on one occasion to Galloway the slow progress that the application for the Ohio grant was making.

In a subsequent letter, Franklin informs Jay that, through the assistance of the French Court, he is in a position to honor the drafts of Jay to the extent of \$25,000. "If you find any Inclination to hug me for the good News of this Letter," he concluded, "I constitute and appoint Mrs. Jay my Attorney, to receive in my Behalf your embraces."

Afterwards Jay was appointed one of our Commissioners to negotiate the treaty of peace with Great Britain, and he and his family settled down under the same roof with Franklin at Passy. The result was a mutual feeling of attachment, so strong that when Jay returned to America Franklin could write to him of a kind letter that he had received from him: "It gave me Pleasure on two Accounts; as it inform'd me of the public Welfare, and that of your, I may almost say *our* dear little Family; for, since I had the Pleasure of their being with me in the same House, I have ever felt a tender Affection for them, equal I believe to that of most Fathers." In other letters to Jay, there are repeated references by Franklin to the child of Jay mentioned above whose singular attachment to him, he said, he would always remember. "Embrace my little Friend for me," he wrote to Jay and his wife, when he was wishing them a prosperous return voyage to America, and, in a later letter, after his own return to America, to the same pair, he said he was so well as to think it possible that he might once more have the pleasure of seeing them both at New York, with his dear young friend, who, he hoped, might not have quite forgotten him.

Beyond the Harlem River, his friends were only less numerous than they were in Pennsylvania. Among the most conspicuous were Josiah Quincy, John Winthrop, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Harvard College, and Dr. Samuel Cooper, the celebrated clergyman and patriot. We mention these three Boston friends of his first because they were feelingly grouped in a letter that he wrote to James Bowdoin, another valued Boston friend of his, towards the close of his life. In this letter, he tells Bowdoin that it had given him great pleasure to receive his kind letter, as it proved that all his friends in Boston were not estranged from him by the malevolent misrepresentations of his conduct that had been circulated there, but that one of the most esteemed still retained a regard for him. "Indeed," Franklin said, "you are now almost the only one left me by nature; Death having, since we were last together, depriv'd me of my dear Cooper, Winthrop, and Quincy." Winthrop, he had said, in an earlier letter to Dr. Cooper, was one of the old friends for the sake of whose society he wished to return from France and spend the small remnant of his days in New England. The friendship between Quincy and Franklin began when Franklin was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and had its origin in the sum of ten thousand pounds, which Quincy, as the agent of the Colony of Massachusetts, obtained through the assistance of Franklin from the Colony of Pennsylvania for the military needs of the former colony. Quincy, Franklin said in the *Autobiography*, returned thanks to the Assembly in a handsome memorial, went home highly pleased with the success of his embassy, and ever after bore for him the most cordial and affectionate friendship.

For Quincy's highly promising son, Josiah, who died at sea at the early age of thirty-five, Franklin formed a warm regard when Josiah came over to London during the second mission of Franklin to England. To the father he wrote of the son in terms that were doubtless deeply gratifying to him, and, in a letter to James Bowdoin, he said: "I am much pleased with Mr. Quincy. It is a thousand pities his strength of body is not equal to his strength of mind. His zeal for the public, like that of David for God's house, will, I fear, eat him up." Later, when the younger Quincy's zeal had actually consumed him, Franklin wrote to the elder Quincy:

The epitaph on my dear and much esteemed young Friend, is too well written to be capable of Improvement by any Corrections of mine. Your Moderation appears in it,

since the natural affection of a Parent has not induced you to exaggerate his Virtues. I shall always mourn his Loss with you; a Loss not easily made up to his Country.

And then, referring to some of the falsehoods in circulation about his own conduct as Commissioner, he exclaimed: "How differently constituted was his noble and generous Mind from that of the miserable Calumniators you mention! Having Plenty of Merit in himself, he was not jealous of the Appearance of Merit in others, but did Justice to their Characters with as much Pleasure as these People do Injury."

When he sat down at Saratoga to write to a few friends by way of farewell, fearing that the mission to Canada at his time of life would prove too much for him, Quincy was the first of his New England friends to whom he sent an adieu.

To Dr. Samuel Cooper, Franklin wrote some of the most valuable of all his political letters, but the correspondence between them is marked by few details of a personal or social nature. It was upon the recommendation of Franklin that the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon Cooper by the University of Edinburgh. "The Part I took in the Application for your Degree," he wrote to Dr. Cooper, "was merely doing justice to Merit, which is the Duty of an honest Man whenever he has the Opportunity." That Dr. Cooper was duly grateful, we may infer, among other things, from a letter in which Franklin tells his sister Jane that he is obliged to good Dr. Cooper for his prayers. That he was able to hold his own even with such a skilful dispenser of compliments as Franklin himself we may readily believe after reading the letter to Franklin in which he used these words: "You once told me in a letter, as you were going to France, the public had had the eating your flesh and seemed resolved to pick your bones—we all agree the nearer the bone the sweeter the meat." It was to Dr. Cooper that Franklin expressed the hope that America would never deserve the reproof administered to an enthusiastical knave in Pennsylvania, who, when asked by his creditor to give him a bond and pay him interest, replied:

No, I cannot do that; I cannot in conscience either receive or pay Interest, it is against my Principle. You have then the Conscience of a Rogue, says the Creditor: You tell me it is against your Principle to pay Interest; and it being against your Interest to pay the Principal, I perceive you do not intend to pay me either one or t'other.

The letters of Franklin to James Bowdoin are full of interest, but the interest is scientific.

Another Boston friend of Franklin was Mather Byles. In a letter to him, Franklin expresses his pleasure at learning that the lives of Byles and his daughters had been protected by his "points," and his regret that electricity had not really proved what it was at first supposed to be—a cure for the palsy.

It is however happy for you [Franklin said], that, when Old Age and that Malady have concurr'd to infeeble you, and to disable you for Writing, you have a Daughter at hand to nurse you with filial Attention, and to be your Secretary, of which I see she is very capable, by the Elegance and Correctness of her Writing in the Letter I am now answering.

Other letters from Franklin to Byles have unhappily perished. This fact is brought to our knowledge by a letter from him to Elizabeth Partridge, which shows that even the famous letter to her, in which he spoke of the end of his brother as if he had gone off quietly from a party of pleasure in a sedan chair, led for a time a precarious existence. If this was the letter, he said, of which she desired a copy, he fancied that she might possibly find it in Boston, as Dr. Byles once wrote to him that many copies had been taken of it. Then follows this playful and characteristic touch. "I too, should have been glad to have seen that again, among others I had written to him and you. But you inform me they were eaten by the Mice. Poor little

innocent Creatures, I am sorry they had no better Food. But since they like my Letters, here is another Treat for them.”

Another Massachusetts friend of Franklin was Samuel Danforth, the President of its Colonial Council. “It gave me great pleasure,” Franklin wrote to this friend on one occasion, “to receive so chearful an Epistle from a Friend of half a Century’s Standing, and to see him commencing Life anew in so valuable a Son.” When this letter was written, Franklin was in his sixty-eighth year, but how far he was from being sated with the joy of living other passages in it clearly manifest.

I hope [he said] for the great Pleasure of once more seeing and conversing with you: And tho’ living-on in one’s Children, as we both may do, is a good thing, I cannot but fancy it might be better to continue living ourselves at the same time. I rejoice, therefore, in your kind Intentions of including me in the Benefits of that inestimable Stone, which, curing all Diseases (even old Age itself) will enable us to see the future glorious state of our America, enjoying in full security her own Liberties, and offering in her Bosom a Participation of them to all the oppress’d of other Nations. I anticipate the jolly Conversation we and twenty more of our Friends may have 100 Years hence on this subject, over that well replenish’d Bowl at Cambridge Commencement.

In Connecticut, too, Franklin had some highly prized friends. Among them were Jared Eliot, the grandson of Apostle Eliot, and the author of an essay upon *Field Husbandry in New England*, Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College, Dr. Samuel Johnson and Jared Ingersoll. The letters from Franklin to Eliot are a charming *mélange* of what is now known as Popular Science and Agriculture. To Franklin there was philosophy even in the roasting of an egg, and for agriculture he had the partiality which no one, so close to all the pulsations of nature as he was, can fail to entertain. When he heard from his friend Mrs. Catherine Greene that her son Ray was “smart in the farming way,” he wrote to her, “I think agriculture the most honourable of all employments, being the most independent. The farmer has no need of popular favour, nor the favour of the great; the success of his crops depending only on the blessing of God upon his honest industry.” Franklin, of course, was writing before the day of the trust, the high protective tariff, the San José scale and the boll weevil.

In one letter to Eliot he gossips delightfully upon such diverse topics as the price of linseed oil, the kind of land on which Pennsylvania hemp was raised, the recent weather, northeast storms, the origin of springs, sea-shell strata and import duties. Something is also said in the letter about grass seed, and it is curious to note that apparently Franklin was not aware that in parts of New England timothy has always been known as herd’s-grass. And this reminds us that he repeatedly in his later life protested against the use in New England of the word “improve” in the sense of “employ” as a barbarous innovation, when in point of fact the word had been used in that sense in a lampoon in the *Courant*, when that lively sheet was being published under his youthful management. In another letter, written probably in the year 1749, Franklin tells Eliot that he had purchased some eighteen months before about three hundred acres of land near Burlington, and was resolved to improve it in the best and speediest manner. “My fortune, (thank God),” he said, “is such that I can enjoy all the necessaries and many of the Indulgences of Life; but I think that in Duty to my children I ought so to manage, that the profits of my Farm may Balance the loss my Income will Suffer by my retreat to it.” He then proceeds to narrate to Eliot what he had done to secure this result; how he had scoured up the ditches and drains in one meadow, reduced it to an arable condition, and reaped a good crop of oat fodder from it, and how he had then immediately ploughed the meadow again and harrowed it, and sowed it with different kinds of grass seed. “Take the whole together,” he said with decided satisfaction, “it is well-matted, and looks

like a green corn-field." He next tells how he drained a round pond of twelve acres, and seeded the soil previously covered by it, too. Even in such modest operations as these the quick observation and precise standards of a man, who was perhaps first of all a man of science, are apparent. He noted that the red clover came up in four days and the herd's-grass in six days, that the herd's-grass was less sensitive to frost than the red clover, and that the thicker grass seed is sown the less injured by the frost the young grass is apt to be. By actual experiment, he found that a bushel of clean chaff of timothy or salem grass seed would yield five quarts of seed. In another letter to Eliot he has a word to say about the Schuyler copper mine in New Jersey (the only valuable copper mine in America that he knew of) which yielded good copper and turned out vast wealth to its owners. And then there is a ray from the splendor in which the lordly Schuylers lived in this bit of descriptive detail:

Col. John Schuyler, one of the owners, has a deer park five miles round, fenced with cedar logs, five logs high, with blocks of wood between. It contains a variety of land, high and low, woodland and clear. There are a great many deer in it; and he expects in a few years to be able to kill two hundred head a year, which will be a very profitable thing. He has likewise six hundred acres of meadow, all within bank.

The fact that Col. John Schuyler had six hundred acres of meadow land within bank was not lost on Eliot; for later Franklin writes to him again promising to obtain from Colonel Schuyler a particular account of the method pursued by him in improving this land. "In return," said Franklin, "(for you know there is no Trade without Returns) I request you to procure for me a particular Acct of the manner of making a new kind of Fence we saw at Southhold, on Long Island, which consists of a Bank and Hedge." With the exactitude of an experimental philosopher, he then details the precise particulars that he desired, disclosing in doing so the fact that Pennsylvania was beginning in many places to be at a loss for wood to fence with. This statement need not surprise the reader, for in his *Account of the New-Invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces*, published some six years before, Franklin informs us that wood, at that time the common fuel, which could be formerly obtained at every man's door, had then to be fetched near one hundred miles to some towns, and made a very considerable article in the expense of families. From this same essay, we learn that it was deemed uncertain by Franklin whether "Pit-Coal" would ever be discovered in Pennsylvania! In another letter from Franklin to Eliot, along with some items about Peter Collinson, "a most benevolent, worthy man, very curious in botany and other branches of natural history, and fond of improvements in agriculture, &c.," Hugh Roberts' high opinion of Eliot's "Pieces," ditching, the Academy, barometers, thermometers and hygrometers, Franklin has some sprightly observations to make upon the love of praise. Rarely, we venture to say, have more winning arguments ever been urged for the reversal of the world's judgment upon any point.

What you mention concerning the love of praise is indeed very true; it reigns more or less in every heart; though we are generally hypocrites, in that respect, and pretend to disregard praise, and our nice, modest ears are offended, forsooth, with what one of the ancients calls *the sweetest kind of music*. This hypocrisy is only a sacrifice to the pride of others, or to their envy; both which, I think, ought rather to be mortified. The same sacrifice we make, when we forbear to *praise ourselves*, which naturally we are all inclined to; and I suppose it was formerly the fashion, or Virgil, that courtly writer, would not have put a speech into the mouth of his hero, which now-a-days we should esteem so great an indecency;

"Sum pius Æneas ...

... famâ super æther a notus."

One of the Romans, I forget who, justified speaking in his own praise by saying, *Every freeman had a right to speak what he thought of himself as well as of others*. That this is a natural inclination appears in that all children show it, and say freely, *I am a good boy; Am I not a good girl?* and the like, till they have been frequently chid, and told their trumpeter is dead; and that it is unbecoming to sound their own praise, &c. But *naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret*. Being forbid to praise themselves, they learn instead of it to censure others; which is only a roundabout way of praising themselves; for condemning the conduct of another, in any particular, amounts to as much as saying, *I am so honest, or wise, or good, or prudent, that I could not do or approve of such an action*. This fondness for ourselves, rather than malevolence to others, I take to be the general source of censure and back biting; and I wish men had not been taught to dam up natural currents, to the overflowing and damage of their neighbour's grounds.

Another advantage, methinks, would arise from freely speaking our good thoughts of ourselves, viz. if we were wrong in them, somebody or other would readily set us right; but now, while we conceal so carefully our vain, erroneous self-opinions, we may carry them to our grave, for who would offer physic to a man that seems to be in health? And the privilege of recounting freely our own good actions might be an inducement to the doing of them, that we might be enabled to speak of them without being subject to be justly contradicted or charged with falsehood; whereas now, as we are not allowed to mention them, and it is an uncertainty whether others will take due notice of them or not, we are perhaps the more indifferent about them; so that, upon the whole, I wish the out-of-fashion practice of praising ourselves would, like other old fashions, come round into fashion again. But this I fear will not be in our time, so we must even be contented with what little praise we can get from one another. And I will endeavour to make you some amends for the trouble of reading this long scrawl, by telling you, that I have the sincerest esteem for you, as an ingenious man and a good one, which together make the valuable member of society.

It is letters like this that cause us to feel that, if it were known that the lost letters of Franklin were somewhere still in existence, the world might well organize another company of Argonauts to find them.

In a subsequent letter to Eliot, Franklin thanks him for his gift of Merino wool, and tells him that it was one Mr. Masters who made dung of leaves, and not Mr. Roberts. In the same letter, he takes occasion to let Eliot know that Peter Collinson has written to him that the worthy, learned and ingenious Mr. Jackson, who had been prevailed on to give some dissertations on the husbandry of Norfolk for the benefit of the Colonies, admired Eliot's agricultural tracts. In still another letter to Eliot, Franklin, true to the brief that he held for love of praise, writes to him in these terms of unreserved gratification:

The *Tatler* tells us of a Girl, who was observed to grow suddenly proud, and none cou'd guess the Reason, till it came to be known that she had got on a new Pair of Garters. Lest you should be puzzled to guess the Cause, when you observe any Thing of the kind in me, I think I will not hide my new Garters under my Petticoats, but take the Freedom to show them to you, in a paragraph of our friend Collinson's Letter, viz.—But I ought to mortify, and not indulge, this Vanity; I will not transcribe the Paragraph, yet I cannot forbear.

He then transcribes the paragraph in which Collinson had informed him that the Grand Monarch of France had commanded the Abbé Mazeas to write a letter in the politest terms to the Royal Society, to return the King's thanks and compliments in an express manner to Mr. Franklin of Pennsylvania for his useful discoveries in electricity, and the application of pointed rods to prevent the terrible effect of thunderstorms. "I think, now I have stuck a Feather in thy Cap," ended Collinson, "I may be allowed to conclude in wishing thee long to wear it."

On reconsidering this Paragraph [continued Franklin], I fear I have not so much Reason to be proud as the Girl had; for a Feather in the Cap is not so useful a Thing, or so serviceable to the Wearer, as a Pair of good silk Garters. The Pride of Man is very differently gratify'd; and, had his Majesty sent me a marshal's staff, I think I should scarce have been so proud of it, as I am of your Esteem.

There were many principles of congeniality at work to cause Franklin to open his heart so familiarly to Eliot, but one of the most active doubtless was their common love of good stories. "I remember with Pleasure the cheerful Hours I enjoy'd last Winter in your Company," he wrote to Eliot, after his visit to New England in 1754, "and would with all my heart give any ten of the thick old Folios that stand on the Shelves before me, for a *little book* of the Stories you then told with so much Propriety and Humor."

We have already referred to the famous letter, in which, Franklin, a few weeks before his death, stated his religious creed with such unfaltering clearness and directness to Dr. Ezra Stiles, who had written to him, saying that he wished to know the opinion of his venerable friend concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and expressing the hope that he would not impute this to impertinence or improper curiosity in one, who, for so many years, had continued to love, estimate and reverence his abilities and literary character with an ardor and affection bordering on adoration. In his reply, Franklin declared that he had never before been questioned upon religion, and he asked Dr. Stiles not to publish what he had written.

I have ever [he said] let others enjoy their religious Sentiments, without reflecting on them for those that appeared to me unsupportable and even absurd. All Sects here, and we have a great Variety, have experienced my good will in assisting them with Subscriptions for building their new Places of Worship; and, as I have never opposed any of their Doctrines, I hope to go out of the World in Peace with them all.

This letter is so full of interest for the reader that it is to be regretted that Dr. Stiles did not oftener indulge the national weakness for asking questions before his aged correspondent went out of the world in peace with the sects, which most assuredly would have followed him with a shower of stones as thick as that which overwhelmed St. Stephen, if they had known that the discreet old philosopher, who contrived to keep on such comfortable working terms with every one of them, doubted all the while the divinity of our Lord. This letter also has a readable word to say in response to the honor that Dr. Stiles proposed to do Franklin by placing his portrait in the same room at Yale with that of Governor Yale, whom Franklin pronounced "a great and good man." Yale College, Franklin gratefully recalled, was the first learned society that took notice of him, and adorned him with its honors, though it was from the University of St. Andrews that he received the title which made him known to the world as "Dr. Franklin."

Dr. Samuel Johnson has been termed "the venerable father of the Episcopal Church of Connecticut and the apostle of sound learning and elegant literature in New England," and it is not surprising that Franklin should have strained his dialectical skill almost to the point of casuistry in an effort to meet the various reasons which the Doctor gave him for his hesitation

about accepting the headship of the Academy, such as his years, his fear of the small-pox, the politeness of Philadelphia and his imagined rusticity, his diffidence of his powers and his reluctance about drawing off parishioners from Dr. Jenney, the rector of Christ Church and St. Peters. As we have seen, even the multiplying effect of setting up more than one pigeon box against a house was ineffective to lure the apprehensive churchman to Philadelphia. In one of his letters to Dr. Johnson, the enthusiasm of Franklin over the Academy project endows his words with real nobility of utterance.

I think with you [he said], that nothing is of more importance for the public weal, than to form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue. Wise and good men are, in my opinion, the *strength* of a state far more so than riches or arms, which, under the management of Ignorance and Wickedness, often draw on destruction, instead of providing for the safety of a people. And though the culture bestowed on *many* should be successful only with a *few*, yet the influence of those few and the service in their power may be very great. Even a single woman, that was wise, by her wisdom saved a city.

I think also, that general virtue is more probably to be expected and obtained from the *education* of youth, than from the *exhortation* of adult persons; bad habits and vices of the mind being, like diseases of the body, more easily prevented than cured. I think, moreover, that talents for the education of youth are the gift of God; and that he on whom they are bestowed, whenever a way is opened for the use of them, is as strongly *called* as if he heard a voice from heaven.

Remarkable words these to fall from a man who, some two months later, in another letter to Dr. Johnson, modestly declared himself to be unfit to sketch out the idea of the English School for the Academy, having neither been educated himself (except as a tradesman) nor ever been concerned in educating others, he said.

Nobody would imagine [said Dr. Johnson, after reading the sketch,] that the draught you have made for an English education was done by a Tradesman. But so it sometimes is, a true genius will not content itself without entering more or less into almost everything, and of mastering many things more in spite of fate itself.

The friendship between Franklin and Jared Ingersoli is preserved in a single letter only, the one from which we have already quoted in which Franklin had his good-natured jest at the expense of the doleful New England Sunday.

All of these friends were men, but in Catherine Ray, afterwards the wife of Governor William Greene of Rhode Island, and the mother of Ray Greene, one of the early United States Senators from that State, Franklin had a friend whose sex gave a different turn of sentiment and expression to his pen. His first letter to this young woman ("Dear Katy" is the way he addresses her) was written after his return to Philadelphia from a journey to New England in 1754. She then lived on Block Island, and, when he last saw her, she was fading out of sight on the ocean on her way to that island from the mainland.

I thought too much was hazarded [he wrote], when I saw you put off to sea in that very little skiff, tossed by every wave. But the call was strong and just, a sick parent. I stood on the shore, and looked after you, till I could no longer distinguish you, even with my glass; then returned to your sister's, praying for your safe passage.

These words are followed by the paragraph already quoted, in which Franklin acknowledged the affectionate hospitality of New England and the paragraph, already quoted, too, in which he spoke of his being restored to the arms of his good old wife and children.

Persons subject to the *hyp* [he continued] complain of the northeast wind, as increasing their malady. But since you promised to send me kisses in that wind, and I find you as good as your word, it is to me the gayest wind that blows, and gives me the best spirits. I write this during a northeast storm of snow, the greatest we have had this winter. Your favours come mixed with the snowy fleeces, which are as pure as your virgin innocence, white as your lovely bosom, and—as cold. But let it warm towards some worthy young man, and may Heaven bless you both with every kind of happiness.

The letter concludes with these words:

I desired Miss Anna Ward to send you over a little book I left with her, for your amusement in that lonely island. My respects to your good father, and mother, and sister. Let me often hear of your welfare, since it is not likely I shall ever again have the pleasure of seeing you. Accept mine, and my wife's sincere thanks for the many civilities I receiv'd from you and your relations; and do me the justice to believe me, dear girl, your affectionate, faithful, friend, and humble servant.

This letter was dated March 4, 1755, and was in reply to one from Miss Ray which, though dated as far back as January of the same year, had just reached him.

His next letter was dated September 11, 1755, not long after he rendered his unavailing services to Braddock, and was a reply to three other letters of hers of March 3, March 30 and May 1 of that year. It begins: "Begone, business, for an hour, at least, and let me chat a little with my Katy," and apologizes for his belated reply.

Equal returns [he declares], I can never make, tho' I should write to you by every post; for the pleasure I receive from one of yours is more than you can have from two of mine. The small news, the domestic occurrences among our friends, the natural pictures you draw of persons, the sensible observations and reflections you make, and the easy, chatty manner in which you express everything, all contribute to heighten the pleasure; and the more as they remind me of those hours and miles, that we talked away so agreeably, even in a winter journey, a wrong road, and a soaking shower.

In answer to Miss Ray's inquiry about his health, he tells her that he still relishes all the pleasures of life that a temperate man can in reason desire, and, through favor, has them all in his power. In answer to her question as to whether everybody loved him yet, and why he made them do so, he replied:

I must confess (but don't you be jealous), that many more people love me now, than ever did before; for since I saw you I have been enabled to do some general services to the country, and to the army, for which both have thanked and praised me, and say they love me. They say so, as you used to do; and if I were to ask any favours of them, they would, perhaps, as readily refuse me; so that I find little real advantage in being beloved, but it pleases my humor.... I long to hear, [he says in another part of the same letter] whether you have continued ever since in that monastery (Block Island); or have broke into the world again, doing pretty mischief; how the lady Wards do, and how many of them are married, or about it; what is become of Mr. B— and Mr. L—, and what the state of your heart is at this instant? But that, perhaps, I ought not to know; and, therefore, I will not conjure, as you sometimes say I do. If I could conjure, it should be to know what was that *oddest question about me that ever was thought of*, which you tell me a lady had just sent to ask you.

I commend your prudent resolutions, in the article of granting favours to lovers. But, if I were courting you, I could not hardly approve such conduct. I should even be

malicious enough to say you were too *knowing*, and tell you the old story of the Girl and the Miller. I enclose you the songs you write for, and with them your Spanish letter with a translation. I honour that honest Spaniard for loving you. It showed the goodness of his taste and judgment. But you must forget him, and bless some worthy young Englishman.

Then comes the reference to his Joan (Deborah) which we have quoted in another place. She sends her respectful compliments to Miss Ray, he states; and lastly in a postscript he gives Miss Ray this caution: "As to your spelling, don't let those laughing girls put you out of conceit with it. It is the best in the world, for every letter of it stands for something."

The sincerity of this conviction he proved at least once on another occasion by himself spelling his Katy's first name with a C instead of a K.

It is to be feared that Miss Ray was a lively flirt, and it is hard to read Franklin's frequent allusions to Deborah in his letters to her without suspecting that he found it necessary at times to use his wife just a little as a shield.

The next letter from Franklin to Miss Ray is marked by the understrain of coarse license, which ran through his character, and was partly the note of his age, and partly the note of overflowing vital force.

I hear you are now in Boston [he said], gay and lovely as usual. Let me give you some fatherly Advice. Kill no more Pigeons than you can eat—Be a good Girl and don't forget your Catechism.—Go constantly to Meeting—or church—till you get a good Husband,—then stay at home, & nurse the Children, and live like a Christian—Spend your spare Hours, in sober Whisk, Prayers, or learning to cypher—You must practise *addition* to your Husband's Estate, by Industry & Frugality; *subtraction* of all unnecessary Expenses; *Multiplication* (I would gladly have taught you that myself, but you thought it was time enough, & wou'dn't learn) he will soon make you a Mistress of it. As to *Division*, I say with Brother Paul, *Let there be no Division among ye*. But as your good Sister Hubbard (my love to her) is well acquainted with *The Rule of Two*, I hope you will become an expert in the *Rule of Three*; that when I have again the pleasure of seeing you, I may find you like my Grape Vine, surrounded with Clusters, plump, juicy, blushing, pretty little rogues, like their Mama. Adieu. The Bell rings, and I must go among the Grave ones, and talk Politics.

Passages like these are among the things which really tarnish the reputation of Franklin, and make us feel at times that, essentially admirable as he was, in some respects he was compounded of pipe, and not of porcelain, clay. The postscript to this letter, too, is flavored with the rude gallantry of the husking-bee. "The Plums," it said, "came safe, and were so sweet from the Cause you mentioned, that I could scarce taste the Sugar." But when Deputy-Postmaster Franklin next writes to Miss Ray it is with the light, playful grace of his best hours.

Your Apology [he said] for being in Boston, "*that you must visit that Sister once a year*" makes me suspect you are here for some other Reason; for why should you think your being there would need an Excuse to me when you knew that I knew how dearly you lov'd that Sister? Don't offer to hide your Heart from me. You know I can conjure.—Give my best respects, to y^r Sister, & tell her and all your other Sisters and Brothers, that they must behave very kindly to you, & love you dearly; or else I'll send a young Gentleman to steal & run away with you, who shall bring you to a Country from whence they shall never hear a word of you, without paying Postage.

Mrs. Franklin joins in Love to you & sincere wishes for your welfare, with dear good Girl, your affectionate Friend.

Some six months later, when Franklin is on the eve of leaving America on his first mission to England, he writes briefly to Miss Ray again, and tells her he cannot go without taking leave of his dear friend, and is ashamed of having allowed her last letter to remain unanswered so long.

Present my best compliments [he adds] to your good mamma, brother and sister Ward, and all your other sisters, the agreeable Misses Ward, Dr. Babcock and family, the charitable Misses Stanton, and, in short, to all that love me. I should have said all that love you, but that would be giving you too much trouble. Adieu, dear good girl, and believe me ever your affectionate friend.

On the return of Franklin from England, he resumed his correspondence with Miss Ray; but Miss Ray she was no longer, for the divination of the conjurer had not failed him, and she was then married to William Greene. In a letter to Mrs. Greene, dated January 23, 1763, this fact leads to another smutty joke on Franklin's part over the arithmetic of matrimony, the worse for being jestingly ascribed to Mrs. Franklin, who, he said, accepted Mrs. Greene's apology for dropping the correspondence with her, but hoped that it would be renewed when Mrs. Greene had more leisure. That the joke should be debited to the manners of the day fully as much as to Franklin himself, is made clear enough by the fact that it is immediately followed by the assurance that he would not fail to pay his respects to Mr., as well as Mrs., Greene when he came their way. "Please to make my Compliments acceptable to him," he added. The conclusion of this letter is in the former affectionate vein. "I think I am not much alter'd; at least my Esteem & Regard for my Katy (if I may still be permitted to call her so) is the same, and I believe will be unalterable whilst I am B. Franklin."

That they did prove unalterable it is hardly necessary to say. Some twenty-six years after the date of this letter, Franklin writes to Mrs. Greene: "Among the felicities of my life I reckon your friendship, which I shall remember with pleasure as long as that life lasts." And, in the meantime, he had given Mrs. Greene the proof of affectionate interest which, of all others, perhaps, is most endearing in a friend; that is he had taken her children as well as herself to his heart. After a brief visit with Sally to the Greens in 1763, he wrote to Mrs. Greene, "My Compliments too to Mr. Merchant and Miss Ward if they are still with you; and kiss the Babies for me. Sally says, & *for me too*." This letter ends, "With perfect Esteem & Regard, I am, Dear Katy (I can't yet alter my Stile to Madam) your affectionate friend." In another letter to Mrs. Greene, about a month later, he says, "My best respects to good Mr. Greene, Mrs. Ray, and love to your little ones. I am glad to hear they are well, and that your Celia goes alone." The last two letters mentioned by us were written from Boston. Franklin's next letter to Mrs. Greene was written from Philadelphia, condoles with her on the death of her mother, tells her that his dame sends her love to her with her thanks for the care that she had taken of her old man, and conveys his love to "the little dear creatures." "We are all glad to hear of Ray, for we all love him," he wrote to Mrs. Greene from Paris.

In the same letter, he said, "I live here in great Respect, and dine every day with great folks; but I still long for home & for Repose; and should be happy to eat Indian Pudding in your Company & under your hospitable Roof."

Hardly had he arrived in America on his return from France before he sent this affectionate message to Mrs. Greene and her husband: "I seize this first Opportunity of acquainting my dear Friends, that I have once more the great Happiness of being at home in my own Country, and with my Family, because I know it will give you Pleasure." As for Mrs. Greene, Jane

Mecom informed him that, when she heard of his arrival, she was so overjoyed that her children thought she was afflicted with hysteria.

The friendship which existed between Franklin and the Greenes also existed between them and his sister Jane, who was a welcome guest under their roof. "I pity my poor old Sister, to be so harassed & driven about by the enemy," he wrote to Mrs. Greene from Paris in 1778, "For I feel a little myself the Inconvenience of being driven about by my friends."

VI. Franklin's British Friends

In Great Britain, Franklin had almost as many friends as in America. During his missions to England, he resided at No. 7 Craven Street, London, the home of Mrs. Margaret Stevenson, a widow, and the mother of "Polly," whose filial relations to him constituted an idyll in his life. Into all the interests and feelings of this home, he entered almost as fully and sympathetically as he did into those of his own home in Philadelphia; as is charmingly attested by his *Craven Street Gazette*. Mrs. Stevenson looked after his clothing, attended to him when he was sick, and made the purchases from time to time that the commissions of Deborah and Jane Mecom called for. In one of his letters to Temple, written after his return from his second mission to England, Franklin mentions a long letter that he had received from her in the form of "a kind of Journal for a Month after our Departure, written on different Days, & of different Dates, acquainting me who has call'd, and what is done, with all the small News. In four or five Places, she sends her Love to her dear Boy, hopes he was not very sick at Sea, &c., &c." This journal doubtless set forth in a matter-of-fact way the daily life of the Craven Street household, which Franklin idealized with such captivating vivacity in the humorous pages of the *Craven Street Gazette*. At the Craven Street house, he and his son lived in great comfort, occupying four rooms, and waited upon by his man-servant, and Billy's negro attendant; and, when he moved about the streets of London, it was in a modest chariot of his own. Franklin's letters to Deborah frequently conveyed affectionate messages from Mrs. Stevenson and Polly to Deborah and her daughter Sally. Occasionally, too, presents of one kind or another from Mrs. Stevenson found their way across the Atlantic to Deborah and Sally. Altogether, the Craven Street house, if not a true home to Franklin in every sense of the word, was a cheerful semblance of one. A letter from Dr. Priestley to him, which he received shortly after his return from Canada, during the American Revolution, bears witness to the impression left by his amiable traits upon the memory of the good woman with whom he had resided so long. After telling Franklin that Franklin's old servant Fevre often mentioned him with affection and respect, Dr. Priestley added, "Mrs. Stevenson is much as usual. She can talk about nothing but you." The feeling was fully returned.

It is always with great Pleasure [he wrote to her from Passy], when I think of our long continu'd Friendship, which had not the least Interruption in the Course of Twenty Years (some of the happiest of my Life), that I spent under your Roof and in your Company. If I do not write to you as often as I us'd to do, when I happen'd to be absent from you, it is owing partly to the present Difficulty of sure Communication, and partly to an Apprehension of some possible Inconvenience, that my Correspondence might occasion you. Be assured, my dear Friend, that my Regard, Esteem, and Affection for you, are not in the least impair'd or diminish'd; and that, if Circumstances would permit, nothing would afford me so much Satisfaction, as to be with you in the same House, and to experience again your faithful, tender Care, and Attention to my Interests, Health, and Comfortable Living, which so long and steadily attach'd me to you, and which I shall ever remember with Gratitude.

And, when the news of Mrs. Stevenson's death was communicated to Franklin by her daughter, the retrospect of the last twenty-five years that it opened up to him framed itself into these tender words in his reply.

During the greatest Part of the Time, I lived in the same House with my dear deceased Friend, your Mother; of course you and I saw and convers'd with each other much and often. It is to all our Honours, that in all that time we never had among us the

smallest Misunderstanding. Our Friendship has been all clear Sunshine, without the least Cloud in its Hemisphere. Let me conclude by saying to you, what I have had too frequent Occasions to say to my other remaining old Friends, "The fewer we become, the more let us love one another."

On the back of the last letter, dated July 24, 1782, that he received from Mrs. Stevenson, he indorsed this memorandum: "This good woman, my dear Friend, died the first of January following. She was about my Age."

But the closest friendship that Franklin formed in England was with Mary, or Polly, Stevenson. To her, perhaps, the most delightful of all his familiar letters were written—letters so full of love and watchful interest as to suggest a father rather than a friend. It is not too much to say that they are distinguished by a purity and tenderness of feeling almost perfect, and by a combination of delicate humor and instructive wisdom to which it would be hard to find a parallel. The first of them bears date May 4, 1759, and the last bears date May 30, 1786. That the letters, some forty-six in number, are not more numerous even than they are is due to the fact that, during the period of their intercourse, the two friends were often under the same roof, or, when they were not, saw each other frequently.

In his first letter, addressed to "My Dear Child," Franklin tells Polly, who was then about twenty years of age, that he had hoped for the pleasure of seeing her the day before at the Oratorio in the Foundling Hospital, but that, though he looked with all the eyes he had, not excepting even those he carried in his pocket, he could not find her. He had, however, he said, fixed that day se'nnight for a little journey into Essex, and would take Mrs. Stevenson with him as far as the home of Mrs. Tickell, Polly's aunt, at Wanstead, where Polly then was, and would call for Mrs. Stevenson there on his return. "Will," he says in a postscript, "did not see you in the Park." Will, of course, was his son. In the succeeding year, he writes to Polly that he embraces most gladly his dear friend's proposal of a subject for their future correspondence, though he fears that his necessary business and journeys, with the natural indolence of an old man, will make him too unpunctual a correspondent.

But why will you [he asks], by the Cultivation of your Mind, make yourself still more amiable, and a more desirable Companion for a Man of Understanding, when you are determin'd, as I hear, to live single? If we enter, as you propose, into *moral* as well as natural Philosophy, I fancy, when I have fully establish'd my Authority as a Tutor, I shall take upon me to lecture you a little on that Chapter of Duty.

He then maps out a course of reading for her, to be conducted in such a manner as to furnish them with material for their letters. "Believe me ever, my dear good Girl," he concludes, "your affectionate Friend and Servant."

With his next letter, he sends her a gift of books, and begs her to accept it, as a small mark of his esteem and friendship, and the gift is accompanied with more specific advice as to the manner in which she was to prosecute her studies, and obtain the benefit of his knowledge and counsel. When he writes again, his letter discloses the fact that a brisk interchange of ideas had been actually established between them. "'Tis a very sensible Question you ask," he says, "how the Air can affect the Barometer, when its Opening appears covered with Wood?" And her observation on what she had lately read concerning insects is very just and solid too, he remarks. The question he has no difficulty in answering, and the observation on insects leads to some agreeable statements about the silk-worm, the bee, the cochineal and the Spanish fly, and finally to an interesting account of the way in which the great Swedish naturalist, Linnæus had been successfully called in by his King to suggest some means of

checking the ravages of the worm that was doing such injury to the Swedish ships. Nor was all this mellifluous information imparted without a timely caution.

There is, however [he concluded], a prudent Moderation to be used in Studies of this kind. The Knowledge of Nature may be ornamental, and it may be useful; but if, to attain an Eminence in that, we neglect the Knowledge and Practice of essential Duties, we deserve Reprehension. For there is no Rank in Natural Knowledge of equal Dignity and Importance with that of being a good Parent, a good Child, a good Husband or Wife, a good Neighbour or Friend, a good Subject or Citizen, that is, in short, a good Christian. Nicholas Gimcrack, therefore, who neglected the Care of his Family, to Pursue Butterflies, was a just Object of Ridicule, and we must give him up as fair Game to the satyrist.

A later letter is an amusing illustration of the manner in which he occasionally reminded his pupil that she must not take herself and Philosophy too seriously. Polly was at the time at the famous Wells of Bristol about which so much of the social pageantry of the eighteenth century centred.

Your first Question, *What is the Reason the Water at this place, tho' cold at the Spring, becomes warm by Pumping?* it will be most prudent in me to forbear attempting to answer [he said], till, by a more circumstantial account, you assure me of the Fact. I own I should expect that Operation to warm, not so much the Water pump'd, as the Person pumping. The Rubbing of dry Solids together has been long observ'd to produce Heat; but the like Effect has never yet, that I have heard, been produc'd by the mere Agitation of Fluids, or Friction of Fluids with Solids.

He might have let the matter rest there but he did not. The occasion was too opportune a one to impress upon Polly the importance of not jumping at conclusions too quickly for him to refrain from borrowing an apt story from Selden about a young woman who, finding herself in the presence of some gentlemen, when they were examining what they called a Chinese shoe, and carrying on a dispute about it, put in her word, and said modestly, "Gentlemen, are you sure it is a Shoe? Should not that be settled first?"

Then he passes to a highly edifying explanation of tidal movements in rivers, so simple that even a child, to say nothing of a bright-witted girl, could experience no difficulty in understanding it, and ends with the question:

After writing 6 Folio Pages of Philosophy to a young Girl, is it necessary to finish such a Letter with a Compliment? Is not such a Letter of itself a Compliment? Does it not say, she has a Mind thirsty after Knowledge, and capable of receiving it; and that the most agreeable Things one can write to her are those that tend to the Improvement of her Understanding?

With his next letter, he enclosed a paper containing his views on several points relating to the air and the evaporation of water, and informed Polly that he would shortly accompany her good mother again to Wanstead, when they could take a walk to some of Lord Tilney's ponds, and make a few experiments there that would explain the nature of tides more fully.

"Adieu, my dear little Philosopher," he exclaims in another letter, after suggesting that thirsty unfortunates at sea might be greatly relieved by sitting in sea water, and declaring that wet clothes do not create colds, whatever damp may do. No one catches cold by bathing, he said, and no clothes can be wetter than water itself.

In another letter, he makes some most readable observations upon the evaporation of rivers and the relations of colors to heat. The ignorant, he declared, suppose in some cases that a

river loses itself by running underground, whereas in truth it has run up into the air. And, with reference to the interdependence of heat and color, he pursued this fresh train of ideas:

What signifies Philosophy that does not apply to some Use? May we not learn from hence, that black Clothes are not so fit to wear in a hot Sunny Climate or Season, as white ones; because in such Cloaths the Body is more heated by the Sun when we walk abroad, and are at the same time heated by the Exercise, which double Heat is apt to bring on putrid dangerous Fevers? That Soldiers and Seamen, who must march and labour in the Sun, should, in the East or West Indies have an Uniform of white? That Summer Hats, for Men or Women, should be white, as repelling that Heat which gives Headaches to many, and to some the fatal Stroke that the French call the *Coup de Soleil*? That the Ladies' Summer Hats, however, should be lined with Black, as not reverberating on their Faces those Rays which are reflected upwards from the Earth or Water? That the putting a white Cap of Paper or Linnen *within* the Crown of a black Hat, as some do, will not keep out the Heat, tho' it would if placed *without*? That Fruit-Walls being black'd may receive so much Heat from the Sun in the Daytime, as to continue warm in some degree thro' the Night, and thereby preserve the Fruit from Frosts, or forward its Growth?—with sundry other particulars of less or greater Importance, that will occur from time to time to attentive Minds?

Sometimes he exchanges language like this for such bantering questions as these: "Have you finish'd your Course of Philosophy? No more Doubts to be resolv'd? No more Questions to ask? If so, you may now be at full Leisure to improve yourself in Cards."

Another letter, dated June 7, 1762, was written in contemplation of the fact that he was about to leave the Old World for the New.

I fancy I feel a little like dying Saints [he said], who, in parting with those they love in this World, are only comforted with the Hope of more perfect Happiness in the next. I have, in America, Connections of the most engaging kind; and, happy as I have been in the Friendships here contracted, *those* promise me greater and more lasting Felicity. But God only knows whether these Promises shall be fulfilled.

Then came the letter written to her from a "wretched inn" at Portsmouth when he was on the point of embarking for America. It is none the less noteworthy because it reveals the fact that the thought of a marriage between Polly and his son had been a familiar one to him and her.

It (the paper on which he wrote) [he said] will tell my Polly how much her Friend is afflicted, that he must, perhaps, never again, see one for whom he has so sincere an Affection, join'd to so perfect an Esteem; who he once flatter'd himself might become his own, in the tender Relation of a Child, but can now entertain such pleasing Hopes no more. Will it tell *how much* he is afflicted? No, it can not.

Adieu, my dearest Child. I will call you so. Why should I not call you so, since I love you with all the Tenderness, All the Fondness of a Father? Adieu. May the God of all Goodness shower down his choicest Blessings upon you, and make you infinitely Happier, than that Event could have made you.

No wonder that the fatherless girl should have felt from the day that she received this letter until the day that she helped to assuage the pain of Franklin's last hours by her loving ministrations that the heart in which she was so deeply cherished was one of these blessings. A few months later, Franklin writes to her from America a long, communicative letter, valuable among other reasons for the evidence that it affords of the ready sympathy with which he had entered into her circle of youthful friendships. He tells her that he shares her grief over her separation from her old friend Miss Pitt; "Pitty," he calls her in another place in

this letter when he sends his love to her. He congratulates her upon the recovery of her “dear Dolly’s” health. This was Dorothea Blount to whom he repeatedly refers in his letters to her. “I love that dear good Girl myself, and I love her other Friends,” he said. Polly’s statement in the letter, to which his letter was a reply, that she had lately had the pleasure of spending three days with Doctor and Mrs. Hawkesworth at the house of John Stanley, all warm friends of his, elicits from him the exclamation, “It was a sweet Society!”

These are but a few of the many details that make up this letter. Polly was one of the stimulating correspondents who brought out all that was best in Franklin’s own intellectual resources, and the next time that he wrote to her from America he used this appreciative and grateful language. “The Ease, the Smoothness, the Purity of Diction, and Delicacy of Sentiment, that always appear in your Letters, never fail to delight me; but the tender filial Regard you constantly express for your old Friend is particularly engaging.”

In later letters to Polly, written after his return to England in 1764, there are other lively passages like those that animated his letters to her before his return to America. On one occasion he answers a letter from her in verse.

A Muse, you must know, visited me this Morning! I see you are surpriz’d, as I was. I never saw one before. And shall never see another. So I took the Opportunity of her Help to put the Answer into Verse, because I was some Verse in your Debt ever since you sent me the last Pair of Garters.

This letter is succeeded by a highly vivacious one from Paris where he enjoyed the honor of conversing with the King and Queen while they sat at meat. The latter letter is so full of sparkling fun that we cannot but regret that Franklin did not leave behind him equally detailed narratives of his travels in Germany and Holland, and over the face of Great Britain. All the way to Dover, he said, he was engaged in perpetual disputes with innkeepers, hostlers and postilions because he was prevented from seeing the country by the forward tilt of the hoods of the post-chaises in which he was driven; “they insisting that the Chaise leaning forward was an Ease to the Horses, and that the contrary would kill them.” “I suppose the chaise leaning forward,” he surmised, “looks to them like a Willingness to go forward, and that its hanging back shows a Reluctance.” He concludes a humorous description of the seasickness of a number of green passengers between Dover and Calais, who made a hearty breakfast in the morning, before embarking, for fear that, if the wind should fail, they might not get over till supper time, with the remark, “So it seems there are Uncertainties, even beyond those between the Cup and the Lip.” Impositions suffered by Franklin on the journey, the smooth highways of France, the contrast between the natural brunettes of Calais and Boulogne and the natural blondes of Abbéville, the Parisian complexions to which nature in every form was a total stranger, the *Grand Couvert* where the Royal Family supped in public, the magnificence of Versailles and Paris, to which nothing was wanting but cleanliness and tidiness, the pure water and fine streets of Paris, French politeness, the paintings, the plays and operas of the gayest capital in the world all furnished topics for this delightful letter, composed in the high spirits born of rapid movement from one novel experience to another, and doubtless endued, when read, with the never failing charm that belongs to foreign scenes, scanned by the eyes of those we love. Franklin did not know which were the most rapacious, the English or the French boatmen or porters, but the latter had with their knavery, he thought, the most politeness. The only drawback about the roads in France, paved with smooth stone-like streets for many miles together, and flanked on each side with trees, was the labor which the peasants complained that they had to expend upon them for full two months in the year without pay. Whether this was truth, or whether, like Englishmen, they grumbled, cause or no cause, Franklin had not yet been able to fully inform himself.

Passing over his speculations as to the origin of the fair complexions of the women of Abbéville, where wheels and looms were going in every house, we stop for a moment to reproduce this unsparing description of the manner in which the women of Paris exercised the art which has never been known to excite any form of approval except feminine self-approval.

As to Rouge, they don't pretend to imitate Nature in laying it on. There is no gradual Diminution of the Colour, from the full Bloom in the Middle of the Cheek to the faint Tint near the Sides, nor does it show itself differently in different Faces. I have not had the Honour of being at any Lady's Toyllette to see how it is laid on, but I fancy I can tell you how it is or may be done. Cut a hole of 3 Inches Diameter in a Piece of Paper; place it on the Side of your Face in such a Manner as that the Top of the Hole may be just under your Eye; then with a Brush dipt in the Colour, paint Face and Paper together; so when the Paper is taken off there will remain a round Patch of Red exactly the Form of the Hole. This is the Mode, from the Actresses on the Stage upwards thro' all Ranks of Ladies to the Princesses of the Blood, but it stops there, the Queen not using it, having in the Serenity, Complacence, and Benignity that shine so eminently in, or rather through her Countenance, sufficient Beauty, tho' now an old Woman, to do extreamly well without it.

In picturing the royal supper, with its gold service and its *À boire pour le Roy* and its *À boire pour la Reine*, Franklin even draws a sketch of the table so that Polly can see just where the King and Queen and Mesdames Adelaide, Victoria, Louise and Sophie sat, and just where Sir John Pringle and himself stood, when they were brought by an officer of the court to be talked to by the royal personages. This letter also contains what is perhaps the handsomest compliment ever paid to French politeness: "It seems to be a Point settled here universally, that Strangers are to be treated with Respect; and one has just the same Deference shewn one here by being a Stranger, as in England by being a Lady."

The grave statement in this letter that travelling is one way of lengthening life, at least in appearance, is made the starting-point for the laughing statement that the writer himself had perhaps suffered a greater change in his own person than he could have done in six years at home.

I had not been here Six Days [he declared] before my Taylor and Perruquier had transform'd me into a Frenchman. Only think what a Figure I make in a little Bag-Wig and naked Ears! They told me I was become 20 Years younger, and look'd very *galante*; So being in Paris where the Mode is to be sacredly follow'd I was once very near making Love to my Friend's Wife.

The next words in the letter are also full of effervescing gaiety: "This Letter shall cost you a Shilling, and you may consider it cheap, when you reflect, that it has cost me at least 50 Guineas to get into the Situation, that enables me to write it. Besides, I might, if I had staid at home, have won perhaps two Shillings of you at Cribbage."

Among the best of his subsequent letters is the one—instinct with his usual wisdom and good feeling—in which he advises Polly to return to her aunt, Mrs. Tickell, as soon as a temporary separation was at an end, and continue by every means in her power, no matter how sorely tried by her aunt's infirmities, to make the remainder of the latter's days as comfortable as possible. Polly adopted the advice of this letter, and reaped her reward not only in the gratified sense of duty, upon which the letter laid such emphasis, but also in the fortune which she received upon the death of Mrs. Tickell.

In 1770, she was married to Dr. William Hewson, a brilliant physician, who was prematurely cut off by surgical infection, leaving her the mother of three young children. It was probably of him that she wrote to Franklin from Margate in the year preceding her marriage with him that she had met with a very sensible physician the day before and would not have Franklin or her mother surprised if she should run off with this young man. To be sure, this would be an imprudent step at the discreet age of thirty; but there was no saying what one should do, if solicited by a man of an insinuating address and good person, though he might be too young for one, and not yet established in his profession. The letter began with a welcome to Franklin, who had just returned from the Continent, and he was quick to respond with a pleasantry to her communication about the young physician.

There are certain circumstances in Life, sometimes [he said], wherein 'tis perhaps best not to hearken to Reason. For instance; possibly, if the Truth were known, I have Reason to be jealous of this same insinuating, handsome young Physician; but as it flatters more my Vanity, and therefore gives me more Pleasure, to suppose you were in Spirits on acc^t of my safe Return, I shall turn a deaf Ear to Reason in this Case, as I have done with Success in twenty others.

In a subsequent letter, Franklin tells Polly that her mother has been complaining of her head more than ever before.

If she stoops, or looks, or bends her Neck downwards, on any occasion, it is with great Pain and Difficulty, that she gets her Head up again. She has, therefore, borrowed a Breast and Neck Collar of Mrs. Wilkes, such as Misses wear, and now uses it to keep her Head up. Mr. Strahan has invited us all to dine there to-morrow, but she has excused herself. Will you come, and go with me? If you cannot well do that, you will at least be with us on Friday to go to Lady Strachans.

His own head, he says, is better, owing, he is fully persuaded, to his extreme abstemiousness for some days past at home, but he is not without apprehensions that, being to dine abroad that day, the next day, and the day after, he may inadvertently bring it on again, if he does not think of his little monitor and guardian angel, and make use of the proper and very pertinent clause she proposes in his grace. This clause was doubtless suggested by his previous letter about the insinuating, handsome physician in which he had written to his little monitor that he had just come home from a venison feast, where he had drunk more than a philosopher ought. His next letter warily refrains from giving his flat approval to Dr. Hewson's proposal. His attitude towards Mrs. Greene's marriage had been equally cautious. He was probably of the opinion that, along with the other good advice, that finds its way to the moon, is not a little relating to nuptial engagements. The whole letter is stamped with the good sense and wholesome feeling which such situations never failed to evoke from him.

I assure you [he said] that no Objection has occur'd to me. His Person you see; his Temper and his Understanding you can judge of; his Character, for anything I have ever heard, is unblemished; his Profession, with the Skill in it he is suppos'd to have, will be sufficient to support a Family, and, therefore, considering the Fortune you have in your Hands (tho' any future Expectation from your Aunt should be disappointed) I do not see but that the Agreement may be a rational one on both sides.

I see your Delicacy, and your Humility too; for you fancy that if you do not prove a great Fortune, you will not be lov'd; but I am sure that were I in his situation in every respect, knowing you so well as I do, and esteeming you so highly, I should think you a Fortune sufficient for me without a Shilling.

Having thus expressed his concern, equal to any father's, he said, for her happiness, and dispelled the idea on her part that he did not favor the proposal, because he did not immediately advise its acceptance, he left, he concluded, the rest to her sound judgment, of which no one had a greater share, and would not be too inquisitive as to her particular reasons, doubts and fears.

They were married only to share the bright vision of unclouded married happiness for some four years, and then to be separated by that tragic agency which few but Franklin have ever been able to invest with the peaceful radiance of declining day. A letter from Franklin to Mrs. Hewson, written shortly after the marriage, laughs as it were through its tears over the mournful plight in which Dolly and he have been left by her desertion, but it shows that he is beginning to get into touch with all the changes brought about by the new connection. We have already seen how fully his heart went out to his godson who sprang from the union. He has a word to say about him in another letter to Mrs. Hewson after a jest at the expense of Mrs. Stevenson's Jacobite prejudices.

I thank you [he said] for your intelligence about my Godson. I believe you are sincere, when you say you think him as fine a Child as you wish to see. He had cut two Teeth, and three, in another Letter, make five; for I know you never write Tautologies. If I have over-reckoned, the Number will be right by this Time. His being like me in so many Particulars pleases me prodigiously; and I am persuaded there is another, which you have omitted, tho' it must have occur'd to you while you were putting them down. Pray let him have everything he likes; I think it of great Consequence while the Features of the Countenance are forming; it gives them a pleasant Air, and, that being once become natural and fix'd by Habit, the Face is ever after the handsomer for it, and on that much of a Person's good Fortune and Success in Life may depend. Had I been cross'd as much in my Infant Likings and Inclinations as you know I have been of late Years, I should have been, I was going to say, not near so handsome; but as the Vanity of that Expression would offend other Folk's Vanity, I change it out of regard to them, and say, a great deal more homely.

His next letter is written to Mrs. Hewson, then a widow, from Philadelphia, after his return from his second mission to England, and tells her that the times are not propitious for the emigration to America, which she was contemplating, but expresses the hope that they might all be happy together in Philadelphia a little later on.

When he next writes, it is from Paris on January 12, 1777. "My Dear, Dear Polly," he begins, "Figure to yourself an old Man, with grey Hair Appearing under a Martin Fur Cap, among the Powder'd Heads of Paris. It is this odd Figure that salutes you, with handfuls of Blessings on you and your dear little ones." He had failed to bring about a union between Polly and his son, but, inveterate matchmaker that he was, this letter shows that he still had, as a grandfather, the designs on Eliza, Polly's daughter, that he had disclosed in his previous letter to Polly, when he expressed the hope that he might be alive to dance with Mrs. Stevenson at the wedding of Ben and this child. "I give him (Ben)," it said, with a French grimace between its lines, "a little French Language and Address, and then send him over to pay his Respects to Miss Hewson." In another letter, he tells Polly that, if she would take Ben under her care, as she had offered to do, he would set no bad example to her *other* children. Two or three years later, he wrote to her from Philadelphia that Ben was finishing his studies at college, and would, he thought, make her a good son. Indeed a few days later he referred to Ben in another letter as "your son Ben."

"Does my Godson," he asked in a letter from France to Mrs. Hewson, along with many affectionate inquiries about his "dear old Friend," Mrs. Stevenson, and other English friends

of theirs, “remember anything of his Doctor Papa? I suppose not. Kiss the dear little Fellow for me; not forgetting the others. I long to see them and you.” Then in a postscript he tells Mrs. Hewson that, at the ball in Nantes, Temple took notice that there were no heads less than five, and that there were a few seven lengths of the face above the forehead. “You know,” he observes with the old sportive humor, “that those who have practis’d Drawing, as he has, attend more to Proportions, than People in common do.” In another letter from Passy, he asks Mrs. Hewson whether Jacob Viny, who was in the wheel business, could not make up a coach with the latest useful improvements and bring them all over in it. In the same letter, he inserts a word to relieve Mrs. Stevenson of her anxiety about her swelled ankles which she attributed to the dropsy; and the paragraph ends with the words, “My tender Love to her.”

As Polly’s children grew older, the references to them in Franklin’s letters to the mother became more and more frequent and affectionate.

You cannot be more pleas’d [he wrote to her from Passy], in talking about your Children, your Methods of Instructing them, and the Progress they make, than I am in hearing it, and in finding, that, instead of following the idle Amusements, which both your Fortune and the Custom of the Age might have led you into, your Delight and your Duty go together, by employing your Time in the Education of your Offspring. This is following Nature and Reason, instead of Fashion; than which nothing is more becoming the Character of a Woman of Sense and Virtue.

Repeatedly Franklin sends little books to Mrs. Hewson’s children, and on one occasion he sends two different French grammars, one of which, after the French master of her children had taken his choice, was to be given to his godson, as his New Year’s gift, together with the two volumes of *Synonymes Françaises*. At one time before he left France, he thought of visiting Mrs. Hewson in England and asked her advice about doing so in the existing state of the British temper. When she counselled him against the journey, he wrote to her, “Come, my dear Friend, live with me while I stay here, and go with me, if I do go, to America.” As the result of this invitation, Mrs. Hewson and her children spent the winter of 1784-85 with him at Passy, and his first letter to her, after she returned to England, bears indications in every line of the regret inspired by his loss of her society, after, to use his own words, he had passed a long winter in a manner that made it appear the shortest of any he ever spent. One of his peculiarities was to make a point of telling a friend anything of a pleasant nature that he had heard about him. Since her departure, M. LeVeillard in particular, he said, had told him at different times what indeed he knew long since, “*C’est une bien digne Femme, cette Madame Hewson, une très amable Femme.*” The letter then terminates with the request that, when she prayed at church for all that travelled by land or sea, she would think of her ever affectionate friend, but starts up again in a postscript, in which he sends his love to William, Thomas and Eliza, Mrs. Hewson’s children, and asks their mother to tell them that he missed their cheerful prattle. Temple being sick, and Benjamin at Paris, he had found it very *triste* breakfasting alone, and sitting alone, and without any tea in the evening. “My love to every one of the Children,” is his postscript to his next letter, in which, when he was on the eve of leaving France, he told Mrs. Hewson that he said nothing to persuade her to go with him or to follow him, because he knew that she did not usually act from persuasion, but judgment. In nothing was he wiser than in his reserve about giving advice when the persons to be advised were themselves in possession of all the facts of the case essential to a proper decision. When he touched at Southampton, Mrs. Hewson was not yet resolved to sever the ties that connected her with England, but subsequently she did come over with her children to Philadelphia, and made it her home for the rest of her life. The last letter but one that Franklin wrote to her before she sailed is among the most readable letters in the correspondence.

Referring to three letters of hers, that had not reached him until nearly ten years after they were written, he said:

This packet had been received by Mr. Bache, after my departure for France, lay dormant among his papers during all my absence, and has just now broke out upon me, *like words*, that had been, as somebody says, *congealed in northern air*. Therein I find all the pleasing little family history of your children; how William had begun to spell, overcoming, by strength of memory, all the difficulty occasioned by the common wretched alphabet, while you were convinced of the utility of our new one; how Tom, genius-like, struck out new paths, and, relinquishing the old names of the letters, called U *bell* and P *bottle*; how Eliza began to grow jolly, that is, fat and handsome, resembling Aunt Rooke, whom I used to call *my lovely*. Together with all the *then* news of Lady Blount's having produced at length a boy; of Dolly's being well, and of poor good Catherine's decease; of your affairs with Muir and Atkinson, and of their contract for feeding the fish in the channel; of the Vyns and their jaunt to Cambridge in the long carriage; of Dolly's journey to Wales with Mrs. Scott; of the Wilkeses, the Pearces, Elphinstones, &c.;—concluding with a kind of promise, that, as soon as the ministry and Congress agreed to make peace, I should have you with me in America. That peace has been some time made; but, alas! the promise is not yet fulfilled.

Rarely, indeed, we imagine has one person, even though a father, or a husband, ever enveloped the life of another with such an atmosphere of pure, caressing, intimate sympathy and affection as surrounds these letters. Perhaps, our review of them would be incomplete, if we did not also recall the comments made by Franklin to Polly upon the death of her mother, and Polly's own comments upon the close of his life.

The Departure of my dearest Friend [he wrote to Polly from Passy], which I learn from your last Letter, greatly affects me. To meet with her once more in this Life was one of the principal Motives of my proposing to visit England again, before my Return to America. The last Year carried off my Friends Dr. Pringle, and Dr. Fothergill, Lord Kaims, and Lord le Despencer. This has begun to take away the rest, and strikes the hardest. Thus the Ties I had to that Country, and indeed to the World in general, are loosened one by one, and I shall soon have no Attachment left to make me unwilling to follow.

This is the description given by Mrs. Hewson of his last years after stating that during the two years that preceded his death he did not experience so much as two months of exemption from pain, yet never uttered one repining or peevish word.

When the pain was not too violent to be amused, he employed himself with his books, his pen, or in conversation with his friends; and upon every occasion displayed the clearness of his intellect, and the cheerfulness of his temper. Even when the intervals from pain were so short, that his words were frequently interrupted, I have known him to hold a discourse in a sublime strain of piety. I never shall forget one day that I passed with our friend last summer (1789). I found him in bed in great agony; but, when that agony abated a little, I asked him if I should read to him. He said, "Yes," and the first book I met with was "Johnson's Lives of the Poets." I read the "Life of Watts," who was a favorite author with Dr. Franklin; and instead of lulling him to sleep, it roused him to a display of the powers of his memory and his reason. He repeated several of Watts's "Lyric Poems," and descanted upon their sublimity in a strain worthy of them and of their pious author.

Sublime or not, it cannot be denied that the poems of Dr. Watts have been a staff of comfort and support to many a pilgrim on his way to the “fields of endless light where the saints and angels walk.”

Another very dear English friend of Franklin was William Strahan, King’s Printer, the partner at one time of Thomas Cadell the Elder, and the publisher of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The frequent references in Franklin’s letters to him to Madeira wine would seem to indicate that, if it had been possible for such a temperate man as Franklin to have what is known as a boon companion, Strahan would have been he. On one occasion, Franklin writes to him that he has a great opinion of his wisdom (Madeira apart), on another, after twitting him good-humoredly with the restless condition of England, he observes: “You will say my *Advice* ‘smells of *Madeira*.’ You are right. This foolish Letter is mere chitchat *between ourselves* over the *second bottle*.”

The friendship between the two began before they had even seen each other. From writing to each other from time to time, in the course of business, about books and stationery, they finally came to feel as if they really knew each other, and to exchange familiar messages on that footing. In his earliest letter to Strahan, Franklin signs himself, “Your humble servant unknown,” but, before he has even carried into execution the floating intention of going over to England, which, again and again, manifests itself in his letters to Strahan, his spouse is corresponding with Mrs. Strahan, and he has arranged a match between Sally and Master Billy, one of Strahan’s sons. “My compliments to Mrs. Strahan, and to your promising son, perhaps one day mine,” he wrote to Strahan several years before his first mission to England, “God send our children good and suitable matches, for I begin to feel a parents’ cares in that respect, and fondly wish to see them well settled before I leave them.” A little later, he has arranged the match so entirely to his satisfaction, and, as the event proved, to that of Strahan too, that he writes glibly to Strahan of William Strahan as “our son Billy” and of Sally as “our daughter Sally.” The same letter foreshadows the mission to England that brought the two friends for the first time face to face. “Our Assembly,” it said, “talk of sending me to England speedily. Then look out sharp, and if a fat old fellow should come to your printing-house and request a little smouting, depend upon it ‘tis your affectionate friend and humble servant.”

The earlier cis-Atlantic letters of Franklin to Strahan are mainly letters of business over which we need not linger here; but they contain some paragraphs of general interest besides those relating to Sally and Master Billy. In one place, Franklin declares that he is glad that the Polybius, which he had ordered from Strahan, did not come; it was intended for his son, who was, when the order was given, in the army, and apparently bent on a military life, but that, as peace had cut off the prospect of advancement in that way, his son would apply himself to other business. In any event, Polybius would appear to have been a rather pedantic authority for the military operations of the American backwoods. The other business to which William Franklin had decided to apply himself was that of the profession, which, in the opinion of the general public, approximates most nearly to a state of warfare—the law, and, in the letters from Franklin to Strahan, William’s altered plans are brought home to us in the form of orders for law books and the request that Strahan would have William entered as a student at the Inns of Court.

These earlier letters also contain some piquant comments on colonial conditions. Such are the remarks prompted by Pope’s sneer in the *Dunciad* at the supposed popularity of the poetaster, Ward, in “ape-and-monkey climes.”

That Poet has many Admirers here, and the Reflection he somewhere casts on the Plantations as if they had a Relish for such Writers as Ward only, is injurious. Your

Authors know but little of the Fame they have on this side of the Ocean. We are a kind of Posterity in respect to them. We read their Works with perfect impartiality, being at too great distance to be byassed by the Factions, Parties and Prejudices that prevail among you. We know nothing of their Personal Failings; the Blemishes in their Character never reaches (sic) us, and therefore the bright and amiable part strikes us with its full Force. They have never offended us or any of our Friends, and we have no competitions with them, therefore we praise and admire them without Restraint. Whatever Thomson writes send me a dozen copies of. I had read no poetry for several years, and almost lost the Relish of it, till I met with his Seasons. That charming Poet has brought more Tears of Pleasure into my Eyes than all I ever read before. I wish it were in my Power to return him any Part of the Joy he has given me.

Many years later, some appreciative observations of the same critic on the poetry of Cowper were to make even that unhappy poet little less proud than the girl in the Tatler with the new pair of garters.

The friendship, initiated by the early letters of Franklin to Strahan, ripened fast into the fullest and freest intimacy when Franklin went over to England in 1757. They were both printers, to begin with, and were both very social in their tastes. Strahan was besides no mean political *quid nunc*, and Franklin was all his life an active politician. So interesting were the reports that he made to Franklin at the latter's request on political conditions in England, after Franklin returned to America from his first mission to that country, that Franklin acknowledged his debt in these flattering terms:

Your accounts are so clear, circumstantial, and complete, that tho' there is nothing too much, nothing is wanting to give us, as I imagine, a more perfect knowledge of your publick affairs than most people have that live among you. The characters of your speakers and actors are so admirably sketch'd, and their views so plainly opened, that we see and know everybody; they all become of our acquaintance. So excellent a manner of writing seems to me a superfluous gift to a mere printer. If you do not commence author for the benefit of mankind, you will certainly be found guilty hereafter of burying your talent. It is true that it will puzzle the Devil himself to find anything else to accuse you of, but remember he may make a great deal of that. If I were king (which may God in mercy to us all prevent) I should certainly make you the historiographer of my reign. There could be but one objection—I suspect you might be a little partial in my favor.

“Straney” was the affectionate nickname by which Franklin addressed Strahan after he came into personal contact with him, and, as usual, the friendship that he formed for the head of the family drew all the other members of the family within its folds. His friendship was rarely, we believe, confined to one member of a family. That was the reason why, in one of his last letters to Mrs. Hewson, he could picture his condition in Philadelphia in these terms: “The companions of my youth are indeed almost all departed, but I find an agreeable society among their children and grandchildren.” And so, in Franklin's relations with the Strahans, we find his affection taking in all the members of the household. “My dear Love to Mrs. Strahan,” he says in a letter to Strahan from Philadelphia in 1762, “and bid her be well for all our sakes. Remember me affectionately to Rachey and my little Wife and to your promising Sons my young Friends Billy, George and Andrew.” A similar message in another letter to Strahan is followed by the statement, “I hope to live to see George a Bishop,” and, a few days afterwards, Franklin recurs to the subject in these terms: “Tell me whether George is to be a Church or Presbyterian parson. I know you are a Presbyterian yourself; but then I think you

have more sense than to stick him into a priesthood that admits of no promotion. If he was a dull lad it might not be amiss, but George has parts, and ought to aim at a mitre.”

There are other repeated references in Franklin’s letters to Strahan’s daughter whom Franklin called his wife. “I rejoice to hear,” he says in one of them, “that Mrs. Strahan is recovering; that your family in general is well, and that my little woman in particular is so, and has not forgot our tender connection.” In a letter, which we have already quoted, after charging Strahan with not being as good-natured as he ought to be, he says, “I am glad, however that you have this fault; for a man without faults is a hateful creature. He puts all his friends out of countenance; but I love you exceedingly.”

As for Strahan, he loved Franklin so exceedingly that in his effort to bring Deborah over to England he did not stop short, as we have seen, of letting her know that, when she arrived, there would be a ready-made son-in-law to greet her. Indeed the idea of fixing Franklin in England appears to have been the darling project of his heart if we are to judge by the frequency with which Franklin had to oppose Deborah’s fear of the sea to his importunity. More than once it must have appeared to him as if the eloquence on which he prided himself so greatly would bear down all difficulties. After Franklin in 1762 had been for two nights on board of the ship at Portsmouth which was to take him to America, but was kept in port by adverse winds, he wrote to Strahan:

The Attraction of Reason is at present for the other side of the Water, but that of Inclination will be for this side. You know which usually prevails. I shall probably make but this one Vibration, and settle here forever. Nothing will prevent it, if I can, as I hope I can, prevail with Mrs. F. to accompany me.

That, he said in a subsequent letter, would be the great difficulty. The next year, he even wrote to Strahan from America, after his journey of eleven hundred and forty miles on the American continent that year, that no friend could wish him more in England than he did himself, though, before he went, everything, in which he was concerned, must be so settled in America as to make another return to it unnecessary. But, in the course of his life, Franklin, with his sensibility to social attentions and freedom from provincial restrictions, professed his preference for so many parts of the world as a place of residence that statements of this kind should not be accepted too literally.

In one of his letters to Strahan, before his return to England, on his second mission, there is a sly stroke that gives us additional insight into the intimate relations which the two men had contracted with each other.

You tell me [Franklin said] that the value I set on your political letters is a strong proof that my judgment is on the decline. People seldom have friends kind enough to tell them that disagreeable truth, however useful it might be to know it; and indeed I learn more from what you say than you intended I should; for it convinces me that you had observed the decline for some time past in other instances, as ‘tis very unlikely you should see it first in my good opinion of your writings.

With Franklin’s return to England on his second mission, the old friendly intercourse between Strahan and himself was resumed, but it came wholly to an end during the American Revolution; for Strahan was the King’s Printer, an inveterate Tory, and one of the ministerial phalanx, which followed George III. blindly. When the dragon’s teeth sown by the King began to spring up in serried ranks, Franklin wrote, but did not send, to Strahan the letter, which is so well known as to almost make transcription unnecessary.

Mr. Strahan,

You are a Member of Parliament, and one of that Majority which has doomed my Country to Destruction.—You have begun to burn our Towns, and murder our People.—Look upon your Hands! They are stained with the Blood of your Relations!—You and I were long Friends:—You are now my Enemy,—and I am

Yours,
B. Franklin.

In this instance, also, Franklin was but true to his practice of sometimes inserting a quip or a quirk into even the gravest contexts.

Not until December 4, 1781, does the silence between the two friends, produced by the Revolution, appear to have been really broken. On that date, Franklin wrote to Strahan a formal letter, addressing him no longer as “Dear Straney,” but as “Dear Sir,” and concluding with none of the former affectionate terminations, but in the stiffest terms of obsequious eighteenth century courtesy. The ostensible occasion for the letter was a package of letters which he asked Strahan to forward to Mrs. Strange, the wife of Robert Strange, the celebrated engraver, whose address he did not remember. He also asked Strahan for a copy of the *Tully on Old Age*, which Franklin had printed in Philadelphia many years before, and had endeavored to sell in part in London through Strahan. Well maintained as the reserve of this letter is, it is plainly enough that of a man, who is feeling his way a little cautiously, because he does not know just how his approaches will be received. Between the lines, we can see that the real object of the requests about the package of letters and the Latin classic was to find out whether Franklin’s treason had killed all desire on Straney’s part to open a second bottle with him. There is a by-reference to Didot le Jeune, who was bidding fair to carry the art of fine printing to a high pitch of perfection, and an expression of pleasure that Strahan had married his daughter happily, and that his prosperity continued. “I hope,” Franklin said, “it may never meet with any Interruption having still, tho’ at present divided by public Circumstances, a Remembrance of our ancient private Friendship.” Nor did he fail to present his affectionate respects to Mrs. Strahan and his love to Strahan’s children. The olive branch was distinctly held out, but, just about the time that this letter reached Strahan, the ministry, of which he was such an unfaltering adherent, suffered a defeat on the American question, and the Tully was transmitted by Mrs. Strange’s husband with the statement that he really believed that Strahan himself would have written to Franklin but for the smart of the Parliamentary disaster of that morning. Several years later, there came to Franklin an acknowledgment by Strahan of the very friendly and effectual patronage which had been afforded to a distant kinswoman of his at Philadelphia by Franklin’s family. The letter also eagerly urged Franklin to come to England once more, and with Franklin’s reply, signed “yours ever most affectionately,” the old *entente* was fully re-established. In the high animal spirits, aroused by the renewal of the former relationship, he fell back upon the technical terms of the printing house, so familiar to the two friends, for the purpose of illustrating his pet proposition that England would never be at rest until all the enormous salaries, emoluments and patronage of her great offices were abolished, and these offices were made, instead of places of profit, places of expense and burthen.

Ambition and avarice [he said] are each of them strong Passions, and when they are united in the same Persons, and have the same Objects in view for their Gratification, they are too strong for Public Spirit and Love of Country, and are apt to produce the most violent Factions and Contentions. They should therefore be separated, and made to act one against the other. Those Places, to speak in our old stile (Brother Type) may be for the good of the *Chapel*, but they are bad for the Master, as they create constant Quarrels that hinder the Business. For example, here are near two Months that your

Government has been employed *in getting its form to press*; which is not yet fit to *work on*, every Page of it being *squabbled*, and the whole ready to fall into *pye*. The Founts too must be very scanty, or strangely *out of sorts*, since your *Compositors* cannot find either *upper* or *lower case Letters* sufficient to set the word administration, but are forc'd to be continually *turning for them*. However, to return to common (tho' perhaps too saucy) Language, don't despair; you have still one resource left, and that not a bad one, since it may reunite the Empire. We have some Remains of Affection for you, and shall always be ready to receive and take care of you in Case of Distress. So if you have not Sense and Virtue enough to govern yourselves, e'en dissolve your present old crazy Constitution, and *send members to Congress*.

This is the letter that Franklin said was mere chitchat between themselves over the second bottle. Where America was concerned, Strahan was almost credulous enough to have even swallowed the statement in Franklin's humorous letter "To the Editor of a Newspaper," written about the time of the Stamp Act in ridicule of English ignorance respecting America, that the grand leap of the whale in his chase of the cod up the Fall of Niagara was esteemed by all who had seen it as one of the finest spectacles in Nature. In 1783, Captain Nathaniel Falconer, another faithful friend of Franklin, wrote to him with the true disregard of an old sea-dog for spelling and syntax: "I have been over to your old friends Mr. Strawns and find him just the same man, believes every Ly he hears against the United States, the French Army and our Army have been killing each other, and that we shall be glad to come to this country again." In reply, Franklin said: "I have still a regard for M^r. Strahan in remembrance of our ancient Friendship, tho' he has as a Member of Parliament dipt his Hands in our Blood. He was always as credulous as you find him." And, if what Franklin further says in this letter is true, Strahan was not only credulous himself but not above publishing mendacious letters about America as written from New York, which in point of fact were fabricated in London. A little over a year later, when the broken bones of the ancient friendship had reknit, Franklin had his chance to remind Strahan of the extent to which he and those of the same mind with him had been deceived by their gross misconceptions of America. His opportunity came in the form of a reply to a letter from Strahan withholding his assent from the idea of Franklin, so utterly repugnant to the working principles of Strahan's party associates, that public service should be rendered gratuitously. "There are, I make no doubt," said Franklin "many wise and able Men, who would take as much Pleasure in governing for nothing, as they do in playing Chess for nothing. It would be one of the noblest of Amusements." Then, when he has fortified the proposition by some real or fancied illustrations, drawn from French usages, he proceeds to unburden his mind to Strahan with a degree of candor that must have made the latter wince a little at times.

I allow you [he said] all the Force of your Joke upon the Vagrancy of our Congress. They have a right to sit *where* they please, of which perhaps they have made too much Use by shifting too often. But they have two other Rights; those of sitting *when* they please, and as *long* as they please, in which methinks they have the advantage of your Parliament; for they cannot be dissolved by the Breath of a Minister, or sent packing as you were the other day, when it was your earnest desire to have remained longer together.

You "fairly acknowledge, that the late War terminated quite contrary to your Expectation." Your expectation was ill founded; for you would not believe your old Friend, who told you repeatedly, that by those Measures England would lose her Colonies, as Epictetus warned in vain his Master that he would break his Leg. You believ'd rather the Tales you heard of our Poltroonery and Impotence of Body and

Mind. Do you not remember the Story you told me of the Scotch sergeant, who met with a Party of Forty American Soldiers, and, tho' alone, disarm'd them all, and brought them in Prisoners? A Story almost as Improbable as that of the Irishman, who pretended to have alone taken and brought in Five of the Enemy by *surrounding* them. And yet, my Friend, sensible and Judicious as you are, but partaking of the general Infatuation, you seemed to believe it.

The Word *general* puts me in mind of a General, your General Clarke, who had the Folly to say in my hearing at Sir John Pringle's, that, with a Thousand British grenadiers, he would undertake to go from one end of America to the other, and geld all the Males, partly by force and partly by a little Coaxing. It is plain he took us for a species of Animals, very little superior to Brutes. The Parliament too believ'd the stories of another foolish General, I forget his Name, that the Yankeys never *felt bold*. Yankey was understood to be a sort of Yahoo, and the Parliament did not think the Petitions of such Creatures were fit to be received and read in so wise an Assembly. What was the consequence of this monstrous Pride and Insolence? You first sent small Armies to subdue us, believing them more than sufficient, but soon found yourselves obliged to send greater; these, whenever they ventured to penetrate our Country beyond the Protection of their Ships, were either repulsed and obliged to scamper out, or were surrounded, beaten and taken Prisoners. An America Planter, who had never seen Europe, was chosen by us to Command our Troops, and continued during the whole War. This Man sent home to you, one after another, five of your best Generals baffled, their Heads bare of Laurels, disgraced even in the opinion of their Employers.

Your contempt of our Understandings, in Comparison with your own, appeared to be not much better founded than that of our Courage, if we may judge by this Circumstance, that, in whatever Court of Europe a Yankey negotiator appeared, the wise British Minister was routed, put in a passion, pick'd a quarrel with your Friends, and was sent home with a Flea in his Ear.

But after all, my dear Friend, do not imagine that I am vain enough to ascribe our Success to any superiority in any of those Points. I am too well acquainted with all the Springs and Levers of our Machine, not to see, that our human means were unequal to our undertaking, and that, if it had not been for the Justice of our Cause, and the consequent Interposition of Providence, in which we had Faith, we must have been ruined. If I had ever before been an Atheist, I should now have been convinced of the Being and Government of a Deity! It is he who abases the Proud and favours the Humble. May we never forget his Goodness to us, and may our future Conduct manifest our Gratitude.

It was characteristic of Franklin to open his heart to a friend in this candid way even upon sensitive topics, and there can be no better proof of the instinctive confidence of his friends in the essential good feeling that underlay such candor than the fact that they never took offence at utterances of this sort. They knew too well the constancy of affection and placability of temper which caused him to justly say of himself in a letter to Strahan, "I like immortal friendships, but not immortal enmities."

The retrospective letter from which we have just quoted had its genial afterglow as all Franklin's letters had, when he had reason to think that he had written something at which a relative or a friend might take umbrage.

But let us leave these serious Reflections [he went on], and converse with our usual Pleasantry. I remember your observing once to me as we sat together in the House of Commons, that no two Journeymen Printers, within your Knowledge, had met with such Success in the World as ourselves. You were then at the head of your Profession, and soon afterwards became a Member of Parliament. I was an Agent for a few Provinces, and now act for them all. But we have risen by different Modes. I, as a Republican Printer, always liked a Form well *plain'd down*; being averse to those *overbearing* Letters that hold their Heads so *high*, as to hinder their Neighbours from appearing. You, as a Monarchist, chose to work upon *Crown Paper*, and found it profitable; while I work'd upon *pro patria* (often call'd *Fools Cap*) with no less advantage. Both our *Heaps* hold out very well, and we seem likely to make a pretty good day's Work of it. With regard to Public Affairs (to continue in the same stile) it seems to me that the Compositors in your Chapel do not *cast off their Copy* well, nor perfectly understand *Imposing*; their *Forms*, too, are continually pester'd by the *Outs* and *Doubles*, that are not easy to be corrected. And I think they were wrong in laying aside some *Faces*, and particularly certain *Headpieces*, that would have been both useful and ornamental. But, Courage! The Business may still flourish with good Management; and the Master become as rich as any of the Company.

Less than two years after these merry words were penned, Franklin wrote to Andrew Strahan, Strahan's son, saying, "I condole with you most sincerely on the Departure of your good Father and Mother, my old and beloved Friends."

Equally dear to Franklin, though in a different way, was Jonathan Shipley, the Bishop of St. Asaph's, whom he termed in a letter to Georgiana, one of the Bishop's daughters, "that most honoured and ever beloved Friend." In this same letter, Franklin speaks of the Bishop as the "good Bishop," and then, perhaps, not unmindful of the unflinching servility with which the Bench of Bishops had supported the American policy of George III., exclaims, "Strange, that so simple a Character should sufficiently distinguish one of that sacred Body!"

During the dispute with the Colonies, the Bishop was one of the wise Englishmen, who could have settled the questions at issue between England and America, to the ultimate satisfaction of both countries, with little difficulty, if they had been given a *carte blanche* to agree with Franklin on the terms upon which the future dependence of America was to be based. Two productions of his, the "Sermon before the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts" and his "Speech intended to have been spoken on the Bill for Altering the Charters of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay," were among the compositions which really influenced the course of the events that preceded the American Revolution. We know from Franklin's pen that the sermon was for a time "universally approved and applauded," and, in letters to Thomas Cushing, he said that the speech was admired in England as a "Masterpiece of Eloquence and Wisdom," and "had an extraordinary Effect, in changing the Sentiments of Multitudes with regard to America." For both sermon and speech the Bishop was all the more to be honored by Americans, because, as Franklin observed to Galloway of the sermon, the Bishop's censure of the mother country's treatment of the Colonies, however tenderly expressed, could not recommend him at court or conduce in the least to his promotion. On the contrary, it probably cost him the most splendid temporal reward that could be conferred upon a Churchman, the Archbishopric of Canterbury; for, when Charles James Fox was desirous of elevating him to that exalted office, the King defeated his intentions by hastily appointing another person to it.

At Chilbolton, by Twyford, the country seat of the Bishop, some of the most pleasant days that Franklin spent in England were passed. So fond of Franklin were the Bishop and his wife

that the latter carried in her memory even the ages of all Franklin's children and grandchildren. As he was on the point of leaving Twyford, at the end of the three weeks' visit, during which he began the *Autobiography*, she insisted on his remaining that day, so that they might all celebrate the anniversary of Benjamin Bache's birth together. Accordingly, at dinner there was among other things a floating island, such as the hosts always had on the several birthdays of their own six children; all of whom, with one exception, were present as well as a clergyman's widow upwards of one hundred years old. The story is thus told by Franklin to his wife:

The chief Toast of the Day was Master Benjamin Bache, which the venerable old Lady began in a Bumper of Mountain. The Bishop's Lady politely added, *and that he may be as good a Man as his Grandfather*. I said I hop'd he would be *much better*. The Bishop, still more complaisant than his Lady, said, "We will compound the Matter, and be contented, if he should not prove *quite* so good." This Chitchat is to yourself only, in return for some of yours about your Grandson, and must only be read to Sally, and not spoken of to anybody else; for you know how People add and alter Silly stories that they hear, and make them appear ten times more silly.

The room at the Bishop's home, in which the *Autobiography* was begun, was ever subsequently known as Franklin's room. After his return to America from France, Catherine Louisa Shipley, one of the Bishop's daughters, wrote to him, "We never walk in the garden without seeing Dr. Franklin's room and thinking of the work that was begun in it." In a letter to the Bishop in 1771, Franklin says:

I regret my having been oblig'd to leave that most agreeable Retirement which good Mrs. Shipley put me so kindly in possession of. I now breathe with Reluctance the Smoke of London, when I think of the sweet Air of Twyford. And by the Time your Races are over, or about the Middle of next Month (if it should then not be unsuitable to your Engagements or other Purposes) I promise myself the Happiness of spending another Week or two where I so pleasantly spent the last.

Close behind this letter, went also one of his "books," which he hoped that Miss Georgiana, another daughter of the Bishop, would be good enough to accept as a small mark of his "Regard for her philosophic Genius," and a quantity of American dried apples for Mrs. Shipley. A month later, he writes to the Bishop that he had been prevented from coming to Twyford by business, but that he purposed to set out on the succeeding Tuesday for "that sweet Retreat." How truly sweet it was to him a letter that he subsequently wrote to Georgiana from Passy enables us in some measure to realize. Among other things, it contained these winning and affecting words:

Accept my Thanks for your Friendly Verses and good Wishes. How many Talents you possess! Painting, Poetry, Languages, etc., etc. All valuable, but your good Heart is worth the whole.

Your mention of the Summer House brings fresh to my mind all the Pleasures I enjoyed in the sweet Retreat at Twyford: the Hours of agreeable and instructive Conversation with the amiable Family at Table; with its Father alone; the delightful Walks in the Gardens and neighbouring Grounds. Pleasures past and gone forever! Since I have had your Father's Picture I am grown more covetous of the rest; every time I look at your second Drawing I have regretted that you have not given to your Juno the Face of Anna Maria, to Venus that of Emily or Betsey, and to Cupid that of Emily's Child, as it would have cost you but little more Trouble. I must, however, beg that you will make me up a compleat Set of your little Profiles, which are more easily

done. You formerly obliged me with that of the Father, an excellent one. Let me also have that of the good Mother, and of all the Children. It will help me to fancy myself among you, and to enjoy more perfectly in Idea, the Pleasure of your Society. My little Fellow-Traveller, the sprightly Hetty, with whose sensible Prattle I was so much entertained, why does she not write to me? If Paris affords anything that any of you wish to have, mention it. You will oblige me. It affords everything but *Peace*! Ah! When shall we again enjoy that Blessing.

Previously he had written to Thomas Digges that the portrait of the Bishop mentioned by him had not come to hand; nor had he heard anything of it, and that he was anxious to see it, "having no hope of living to see again the much lov'd and respected original." His request for the little profiles of the Shipleys was complied with, we know, because in a letter to the Bishop some two years afterwards he said: "Your Shades are all plac'd in a Row over my Fireplace, so that I not only have you always in my Mind, but constantly before my Eyes." This letter was written in reply to a letter from the Bishop which was the first to break the long silence that the war between Great Britain and America had imposed upon the two friends. "After so long a Silence, and the long Continuance of its unfortunate Causes," Franklin began, "a Line from you was a Prognostic of happier Times approaching, when we may converse and communicate freely, without Danger from the Malevolence of Men enrag'd by the ill success of their distracted Projects."

Among the entries in the desultory Journal that Franklin kept of his return from France to America, are these relating to the visit paid him at Southampton by the Bishop: "Wrote a letter to the Bishop of St. Asaph, acquainting him with my arrival, and he came with his lady and daughter, Miss Kitty, after dinner, to see us; they talk of staying here as long as we do. Our meeting was very affectionate." For two or three days, the reunited friends all lodged at the Star, at Southampton, and took their meals together. The day before his ship sailed, Franklin invited the Bishop and his wife and daughter to accompany him on board, and, when he retired, it was with the expectation that they would spend the night on the ship, but, when he awoke the next morning, he found that they had thoughtfully left the ship, after he retired, to relieve the poignancy of the farewell, and that he was off on his westward course.

In his last letter to the Bishop, Franklin expresses his regret that conversation between them at Southampton had been cut short so frequently by third persons, and thanks him for the pleasure that he derived from the copy of Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, given to him by the Bishop there. Along with the usual contradiction of the English and Loyalist view at this time of our national condition, and the usual picture of himself encircled by his grandchildren, he indulges in these striking reflections about the chequered fate of parental expectations:

He that raises a large Family does, indeed, while he lives to observe them, *stand*, as Watts says, *a broader Mark for Sorrow*; but then he stands a broader Mark for Pleasure too. When we launch our little Fleet of Barques into the Ocean, bound to different Ports, we hope for each a prosperous Voyage; but contrary Winds, hidden Shoals, Storms, and Enemies come in for a Share in the Disposition of Events; and though these occasion a Mixture of Disappointment, yet, considering the Risque where we can make no Insurance, we should think ourselves happy if some return with Success.

Timed as they were, the force of these reflections were not likely to be lost upon the Bishop. Some years before, Georgiana had married with his bitter disapproval Francis Hare-Naylor, the writer of plays and novels, and author of the *History of the Helvetic Republics*, who was so unfortunate as to be arrested for debt during his courtship, while in the episcopal coach of the Bishop with Georgiana and her parents. After the Bishop refused to recognize the

husband, the Duchess of Devonshire settled an annuity of three hundred pounds a year upon the couple, and among the wise, weighty letters of Franklin is one that he wrote from France to Georgiana, after her marriage, in which he replies to her inquiries about the opening that America would afford to a young married couple, and refers to this annuity. The concluding portion of this letter also has its value as another illustration of the calm manner in which Franklin looked forward to his end. He tells Georgiana that, if he should be in America, when they were there, his best counsels and services would not be wanting, and that to see her happily settled and prosperous there would give him infinite pleasure, but that, of course, if he ever arrived there, his stay could be but short.

Franklin survived the Bishop, and his letter to Catherine, in reply to hers, announcing the death of her father, is in his best vein.

That excellent man has then left us! His departure is a loss, not to his family and friends only, but to his nation, and to the world; for he was intent on doing good, had wisdom to devise the means, and talents to promote them. His "Sermon before the Society for Propagating the Gospel," and his "Speech intended to have been spoken," are proofs of his ability as well as his humanity. Had his counsels in those pieces been attended to by the ministers, how much bloodshed might have been prevented, and how much expense and disgrace to the nation avoided!

Your reflections on the constant calmness and composure attending his death are very sensible. Such instances seem to show, that the good sometimes enjoy in dying a foretaste of the happy state they are about to enter.

According to the course of years, I should have quitted this world long before him. I shall however not be long in following. I am now in my eighty-fourth year, and the last year has considerably enfeebled me; so that I hardly expect to remain another. You will then, my dear friend, consider this as probably the last line to be received from me, and as a taking leave. Present my best and most sincere respects to your good mother, and love to the rest of the family, to whom I wish all happiness; and believe me to be, while I *do* live, yours most affectionately.

His friendship in this instance, as usual, embraced the whole family. In a letter in 1783 to Sir William Jones, the accomplished lawyer and Oriental scholar, who married Anna Maria, one of the Bishop's daughters, he said that he flattered himself that he might in the ensuing summer be able to undertake a trip to England for the pleasure of seeing once more his dear friends there, among whom the Bishop and his family stood foremost in his estimation and affection.

To the Bishop himself he wrote from Passy in the letter which mentioned the shades of the Shipleys above his fireplace: "Four daughters! how rich! I have but one, and she, necessarily detain'd from me at 1000 leagues distance. I feel the Want of that tender Care of me, which might be expected from a Daughter, and would give the World for one."

And later in this letter he says with the bountiful affection, which made him little less than a member of the families of some of his friends, "Please to make my best Respects acceptable to Mrs. Shipley, and embrace for me tenderly all our dear Children."

At the request of Catherine, he wrote the *Art of Procuring Pleasant Dreams* in which hygiene and the importance of preserving a good conscience are so gracefully blended, and received from her a reply, in which, after declaring that it flattered her exceedingly that he should employ so much of his precious time in complying with her request, she put to him the question, "But where do you read that Methusaleh slept in the open air? I have searched the Bible in vain to find it."

When Sir William Jones was on the eve of being married to Anna Maria, and of sailing away to India, where he was to win so much distinction, Franklin wrote to him the letter already mentioned, joining his blessing on the union with that of the good Bishop, and expressing the hope that the prospective bridegroom might return from that corrupting country with a great deal of money honestly acquired, and with full as much virtue as he carried out.

The affection that he felt for Catherine and Georgiana, his letters to them, from which we have already quoted, sufficiently reveal. Of the four daughters, Georgiana was, perhaps, his favorite, and she is an example with Mary Stevenson of the subtle magnetism that his intellect and nature had for feminine affinities of mind and temperament. It was to Georgiana, when a child, that he wrote his well-known letter containing an epitaph on her squirrel, which had been dispatched by a dog. The letter and epitaph are good enough specimens of his humor to be quoted in full:

Dear Miss,

I lament with you most sincerely the unfortunate end of poor Mungo. Few squirrels were better accomplished; for he had had a good education, had travelled far, and seen much of the world. As he had the honor of being, for his virtues, your favourite, he should not go, like common skuggs, without an elegy or an epitaph. Let us give him one in the monumental style and measure, which, being neither prose nor verse, is perhaps the properest for grief; since to use common language would look as if we were not affected, and to make rhymes would seem trifling in sorrow.

EPITAPH

Alas! poor Mungo!

Happy wert thou, hadst thou known

Thy own felicity.

Remote from the fierce bald eagle,

Tyrant of thy native woods,

Thou hadst nought to fear from his piercing talons,

Nor from the murdering gun

Of the thoughtless sportsman.

Safe in thy wired castle,

grimalkin never could annoy thee.

Daily wert thou fed with the choicest viands,

By the fair hand of an indulgent mistress;

But, discontented,

Thou wouldst have more freedom.

Too soon, alas! didst thou obtain it;

And wandering,

Thou art fallen by the fangs of wanton, cruel Ranger!

Learn hence,

Ye who blindly seek more liberty,

Whether subjects, sons, squirrels or daughters,
 That apparent restraint may be real protection;
 Yielding peace and plenty
 With security.

You see, my dear Miss, how much more decent and proper this broken style is, than if we were to say, by way of epitaph,

Here skugg
 Lies snug,
 As a bug
 In a rug.

and yet, perhaps, there are people in the world of so little feeling as to think that this would be a good-enough epitaph for poor Mungo.

If you wish it, I shall procure another to succeed him; but perhaps you will now choose some other amusement.

Two of Georgiana's letters to Franklin, after his arrival in France, are very interesting, and one of them especially could not have been written by any but a highly gifted and accomplished woman. In this letter, the first of the two, she begins by expressing her joy at unexpectedly receiving a letter from him.

How good you were [she exclaimed] to send me your direction, but I fear I must not make use of it as often as I could wish, since my father says it will be prudent not to write in the present situation of affairs. I am not of an age to be so very prudent, and the only thought that occurred to me was your suspecting that my silence proceeded from other motives. I could not support the idea of your believing that I love and esteem you less than I did some few years ago. I therefore write this once without my father's knowledge. You are the first man that ever received a private letter from me, and in this instance I feel that my intentions justify my conduct; but I must entreat that you will take no notice of my writing, when next I have the happiness of hearing from you.

She then proceeds to tell Franklin all about her father, her mother, her sister Emily and Emily's daughter, "a charming little girl, near fifteen months old, whom her aunts reckon a prodigy of sense and beauty." The rest of her sisters, she said, continued in *statu quo*. Whether that proceeded from the men being difficult or from *their* being difficult, she left him to determine.

His friends all loved him almost as much as she did; as much she would not admit to be possible. Dr. Pringle had made her extremely happy the preceding winter by giving her a print of her excellent friend, which, was certainly very like him, although it wanted the addition of his own hair to make it complete; but, as it was, she prized it infinitely, now that the dear original was absent. She then has a word to say about Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and the *Economics*, which she had read with great attention, as indeed everything else she could meet with relative to Socrates; for she fancied she could discover in each trait of that admirable man's character a strong resemblance between him and her much-loved friend—the same clearness of judgment, the same uprightness of intention and the same superior understanding. Other words are bestowed on the account which Sir William Hamilton had lately given her of a new

electrical machine invented in Italy, the happiness that she would enjoy, if Franklin were in England to explain it to her, and the envy excited in her by the opportunities that his grandson had for showing him kindness and attention. “Did my family,” she further declares, “know of my writing, my letter would scarce contain the very many things they would desire me to say for them. They continue to admire and love you as much as they did formerly, nor can any time or event in the least change their sentiments.”

She then concludes partly in French and partly in English in these words:

Adieu, mon cher Socrate; conservez-vous pour l’amour de moi, et pour mille autres raisons plus importants. Je ne vous en dirai pas d’avantage pour aujourd’hui, mais je veux esperer de vous entretenir plus á mon aise, avant que soit longue. Pray write whenever a safe conveyance opens, since the receiving letters is reckoned very different from answering them. I must once more repeat nobody knows of this scroll; “a word to the wise,”—as Poor Richard says.

In her second letter, Georgiana speaks of the difficulty she experienced in having her letters conveyed safely to Passy. “Strange,” she declared, “that I should be under the necessity of concealing from the world a correspondence which it is the pride and glory of my heart to maintain.” His *Dialogue with the Gout*, she said, was written with his own cheerful pleasantry, and *La belle et la mauvaise Jambe* recalled to her mind those happy hours they once passed in his society, where they were never amused without learning some useful truth, and where she first acquired a taste *pour la conversation badinante and réfléchie*. Her father grew every year fonder of the peace of Twyford; having found his endeavors to serve his country ineffectual, he had yielded to a torrent which it was no longer in his power to control. Sir John Pringle (Franklin’s friend) had left London and gone to reside in Scotland; she feared that he was much straitened in his circumstances; he looked ill and was vastly changed from what he remembered him; Dr. Priestley (another friend of Franklin) was then on a short visit to his friends in town; good Dr. Price (another friend of Franklin) called on them often, and gave them hopes of a visit to Twyford.

The letter also informed Franklin that the first opportunity that they had of sending a parcel to Paris he might expect *all* their shades; and expressed her gratitude to Mr. Jones for undertaking the care of her letter, and giving her an opportunity of assuring Franklin how much she did and ever should continue to love him.

Catherine Ray was not far wrong when she spoke of Franklin as a conjurer. Catherine Shipley’s letter to him, after she had parted with him at Southampton, though without the romantic flush of these two letters, spoke the same general language of deep-seated affection. She was quite provoked with herself, she said, when she got to Southampton that she had not thought of something, such as a pincushion, to leave with him, that might have been useful to him during the voyage to remind him of her. “Did you ever taste the ginger cake,” she asked, “and think it had belonged to your fellow-traveller? In short, I want some excuse for asking whether you ever think about me.” And from this letter it appears that he had a place in the hearts of Emily and Betsey too. She had had a letter from Emily, Catherine further said, the night after she got home, to inquire whether his stay at Southampton would allow time for her coming to see him. Betsey regretted much that she had lost that happiness, and the writer had written to dear Georgiana a long account of him, for she knew every circumstance would be interesting to her. “Indeed, my dear sir,” the letter ended, “from my father and mother down to their *youngest child*, we all respect and love you.”³⁴

³⁴ “Mrs. Shipley and her daughter Kitty, in their passion for you rival Georgiana.” Letter from Jonathan Shipley to Franklin, Nov. 27, 1785.

When Franklin was told by Georgiana that Sir John Pringle was pinched by poverty, and looked ill, he must have been sorely distressed; for Sir John he once described as his “steady, good friend.” A pupil of Boerhaave, a high authority upon the application of sanitary science to the prevention of dysentery and hospital fevers, physician to the Queen, and President of the Royal Society, Dr. Pringle was one of the distinguished men of his time. What churchmen were to the preservation of classical learning, before teaching became a special calling, physicians were to general scientific knowledge before science became such; and, among these physicians, he occupied an honorable position.³⁵ “His speech in giving the last medal, (of the Royal Society) on the subject of the discoveries relating to the air,” Franklin wrote to Jan Ingenhousz, “did him great honour.” He was quite unlike the courtiers who sought to convince King Canute that he could stay the incoming tide by his command, as George III. found out when he asked him, after the outbreak of the American Revolution, to pronounce an opinion in favor of the substitution of blunt for pointed lightning rods on Kew Palace. The laws of nature, Sir John hinted, were not changeable at royal pleasure, but positions of honor and profit he soon learnt, if he did not know it before, were; for he fell into such disfavor with the King that he had to resign as President of the Royal Society, and was deprived of his post as physician to the Queen. The circumstances in which his disgrace originated leave us at but little loss to understand why the King should have become such a dogged partisan of blunt conductors. Prior to the Revolution, Franklin had been consulted by the British Board of Ordnance as to the best means of protecting the arsenals at Purfleet from lightning, and, after he had visited the powder magazine there, the Royal Society, too, was asked by the Board for its opinion. The Society accordingly appointed a committee of learned men, including Cavendish and Franklin, to make a report on the subject. All of the committee except Benjamin Wilson, who dissented, reported in favor of pointed conductors as against blunt ones, and Franklin, the inventor of pointed lightning rods, drew up the report. The scientific controversy that followed soon assumed a political character, when Franklin dropped the philosophical task of snatching the lightning from the skies for the rebellious task of snatching the sceptre from a tyrant. When he heard that George III. was, like Ajax, obstinate enough to defy even the lightning, he wrote to an unknown correspondent:

The King’s changing his *pointed* conductors for *blunt* ones is, therefore, a matter of small importance to me. If I had a wish about it, it would be that he had rejected them altogether as ineffectual. For it is only since he thought himself and family safe from the thunder of Heaven, that he dared to use his own thunder in destroying his innocent subjects.

Dr. Ingenhousz, however, was not so self-contained, and made such an angry attack on Wilson that Franklin, who invariably relied in such cases upon silence and the principle that Truth is a cat with nine lives to defend him, laughingly remarked, “He seems as much heated about this *one point*, as the Jansenists and Molinists were about the *five*.” As for King George, he had at least the satisfaction of realizing that his people still had a ready fund of wit for timely use. One homely couplet of the period, referring to Franklin’s famous kite, ran in this way:

“He with a kite drew lightning from the sky,
And like a kite he pecked King George’s eye.”

Another more polished poet penned these neat lines:

³⁵ To a series of experiments, conducted by Sir John Pringle, we owe our knowledge of the fact that mosquito hawks are so whimsically constituted that they live longer with their heads off than on. One of these decapitated moths was so tenacious of his existence as to survive for 174 days.

“While you, great George, for knowledge hunt,
 And sharp conductors change for blunt,
 The Empire’s out of joint.
 Franklin another course pursues
 And all your thunder heedless views
 By keeping to the point.”

If we may believe Franklin, Sir John held the efficacy of the healing art in very moderate esteem. The reader has already been told of the humorous manner in which he let it be known that, in his opinion, of the two classes of practitioners, old women and regular physicians, the former had done the most to save the honor of the profession. Franklin also informed Dr. Rush that Sir John “once told him 92 fevers out of 100 cured themselves, 4 were cured by Art, and 4 proved fatal.” But many people must have had a more favorable opinion of the professional value of Sir John than Sir John himself had, for his “Conversations” were in high repute. On this point, there is some evidence in a letter from Franklin to Dr. Thomas Bond, who was desirous of giving his son Richard the benefit of a foreign medical education. Referring to Sir John, Franklin wrote:

Every Wednesday Evening he admits young Physicians and Surgeons to a Conversation at his House, which is thought very improving to them. I will endeavour to introduce your Son there when he comes to London. And to tell you frankly my Opinion, I suspect there is more valuable knowledge in Physic to be learnt from the honest candid Observations of an old Practitioner, who is past all desire of more Business, having made his Fortune, who has none of the Professional Interest in keeping up a Parade of Science to draw Pupils, and who by Experience has discovered the Inefficacy of most Remedies and Modes of Practice, than from all the formal Lectures of all the Universities upon Earth.

That Dr. John cured at least one patient, we are told by Dr. Rush on the authority of Franklin, but it was Only himself of a tremor, and that by simply ceasing to take snuff. Dr. Pringle and himself, Franklin told Dr. Rush, observed that tremors of the hands were more frequent in France than elsewhere, and probably from the excessive use of snuff. “He concluded,” says Dr. Rush, “that there was no great advantage in using tobacco in any way, for that he had kept company with persons who used it all his life, and no one had ever advised him to use it. The Doctor in the 81st year of his age declared he had never snuffed, chewed, or smoked.”

Among the persons who sought Sir John’s professional advice was Franklin himself. It was in relation to a cutaneous trouble which vexed him for some fourteen years, and broke out afresh when he was in his eighty-third year. But the best medicine that Franklin ever obtained from Sir John was his companionship upon two continental tours, one of which was inspired by the latter’s desire to drink the waters at Pyrmont, and the other by the attractions of the French capital. When the news of Sir John’s death reached Franklin at Passy he paid the usual heartfelt tribute. “We have lost our common Friend,” he wrote to Jan Ingenhousz, “the excellent Pringle. How many pleasing hours you and I have pass’d together in his Company!”

Another English physician, for whom Franklin entertained a feeling of deep affection, was the Quaker Dr. John Fothergill. After the death of this friend, in a letter to Dr. John Coakley Lettsom, still another friend of his, and one of the famous English physicians of the eighteenth century, he expressed this extraordinary opinion of Dr. Fothergill’s worth: “If we may estimate the goodness of a man by his disposition to do good, and his constant endeavours and success in doing it, I can hardly conceive that a better man has ever existed.”

No faint praise to be uttered by the founder of the Junto and one who valued above all things the character of a doer of good! Like Sir John Pringle, Dr. Fothergill belonged to the class of physicians who pursued medicine, as if it were a mistress not to be wooed except with the favor of the other members of the scientific sisterhood. He was an ardent botanist, and his collection of botanical specimens and paintings on vellum of rare plants was among the remarkable collections of his age. Two of his correspondents were the Pennsylvania botanists, John Bartram and Humphrey Marshall, who brought to his knowledge a flora in many shining instances unknown to the woods and fields of the Old World. His medical writings were held in high esteem, and were published after his death under the editorial supervision of Dr. Lettsom.

As a practitioner, he was eminently successful, and numbered among his patients many representatives of the most powerful and exclusive circles in London. What the extent of his practice was we can infer from a question put to him by Franklin in 1764.

By the way [he asked], when do you intend to live?—*i. e.*, to enjoy life. When will you retire to your villa, give yourself repose, delight in viewing the operations of nature in the vegetable creation, assist her in her works, get your ingenious friends at times about you, make them happy with your conversation, and enjoy theirs: or, if alone, amuse yourself with your books and elegant collections?

To be hurried about perpetually from one sick chamber to another is not living. Do you please yourself with the fancy that you are doing good? You are mistaken. Half the lives you save are not worth saving, as being useless, and almost all the other half ought not to be saved, as being mischievous. Does your conscience never hint to you the impiety of being in constant warfare against the plans of Providence? Disease was intended as the punishment of intemperance, sloth, and other vices, and the example of that punishment was intended to promote and strengthen the opposite virtues.

All of which, of course, except the suggestion about retirement, which was quite in keeping with Franklin's conception of a rational life, was nothing more than humorous paradox on the part of a man who loved all his fellow-creatures too much to despair of any of them.

When Franklin himself was seized with a grave attack of illness shortly after his arrival in England on his first mission, Doctor Fothergill was his physician, and seems to have cupped and physicked him with drastic assiduity. The patient was not a very docile one, for he wrote to Deborah that, too soon thinking himself well, he ventured out twice, and both times got fresh cold, and fell down again; and that his "good doctor" grew very angry with him for acting contrary to his cautions and directions, and obliged him to promise more observance for the future. Always to Franklin the Doctor remained the "good Doctor Fothergill." Even in a codicil to his will, in bequeathing to one of his friends the silver cream pot given to him by the doctor, with the motto "Keep bright the chain," he refers to him by that designation.

Nor were his obligations as a patient the only obligations that Franklin owed to this friend. When his early letters on electricity were sent over to England, only to be laughed at in the first instance, they happened to pass under the eye of the Doctor. He saw their merit, advised their publication, and wrote the preface to the pamphlet in which they were published by Cave. But the things for which Franklin valued the Doctor most were his public spirit and philanthropy. He was well known in Philadelphia, and, when Franklin arrived in London in 1757, he was actively assisted by the Doctor in his effort to secure a settlement of the dispute over taxation between the Pennsylvania Assembly and the Proprietaries. Afterwards, when Franklin's second mission to England was coming to an end, the Doctor was drawn deeply into a vain attempt made by Lord Howe and his sister and David Barclay, another Quaker

friend of Franklin, to compose the American controversy by an agreement with Franklin. For this business, among other reasons, because of “his daily Visits among the Great, in the Practice of his Profession,” of which Franklin speaks in his history of these negotiations, he would have been a most helpful ally; if the quarrel had not become so embittered. But, as it was, the knot, which the negotiators were striving to disentangle, was too intricate for anything but the edge of the sword. When the negotiations came to nothing, the good Doctor, who knew the sentiments of “the Great” in London at that time, if any private person did, had no advice to give to Franklin except, when he returned to America, to get certain of the Doctor’s friends in Philadelphia, and two or three other persons together, and to inform them that, whatever specious pretences were offered by the English ministry, they were all hollow, and that to obtain a larger field, on which to fatten a herd of worthless parasites, was all that was regarded. It was a bad day, indeed, for England when one of the best men in the land could hold such language.

The silk experiment in Pennsylvania furnished still another congenial field for the co-operation of Franklin and Doctor Fothergill; and, in a letter to Franklin, the latter also declared in startlingly modern terms that, in the warmth of his affection for mankind, he could wish to see “the institution of a College of Justice, where the claims of sovereigns should be weighed, an award given, and war only made on him who refused submission.”

“Dr. Fothergill, who was among the best men I have known, and a great promoter of useful projects,” is the way in which Franklin alludes to the Doctor in the *Autobiography*. He then states in the same connection the plan that he submitted to the Doctor for “the more effectual cleaning and keeping clean the streets of London and Westminster”; but this plan, though not unworthy of the public zeal and ingenuity of its author, is too embryonic, when contrasted with modern municipal methods, and too tamely suggestive of the broom and dust-pan of ordinary domestic housekeeping, to deserve detailed attention.

Franklin was eminently what Dr. Johnson called a “clubable” man. When in England, he often dined at the London Coffee House in Ludgate Hill with the group of scientific men and liberal clergymen, who frequented the place, and of whom he spoke on one occasion as “that excellent Collection of good Men, the Club at the *London*.” He also sometimes dined at St. Paul’s Coffee House and the Dog Tavern on Garlick Hill, and with the Society of Friends to the Cause of Liberty at Paul’s Head Tavern, Cateaton Street, where, upon every 4th day of November, the landing of King William and the Glorious Revolution were enthusiastically toasted. When he ate or drank at a club, he liked to do so in an atmosphere of free thought and free speech. Religion, spiced with heresy, and Politics flavored with liberalism, were the kinds of religion and politics that best suited his predilections. It was at St. Paul’s Coffee House that he became acquainted with Dr. Richard Price, the celebrated clergyman and economist, who was then preaching every Sunday afternoon at Newington Green, where Franklin advised Sir John Pringle to go to hear in the Doctor a preacher of *rational* Christianity. It is probable that Sir John, in inquiring of Franklin where he could go to hear such a preacher, was moved rather by curiosity than piety; for Franklin wrote to Dr. Price: “At present I believe he has no view of attending constantly anywhere, but now and then only as it may suit his convenience.”

The acquaintance between Franklin and Doctor Price, once formed, became a deeply-rooted friendship, and on Franklin’s part it was accompanied by a degree of admiration for the Doctor’s abilities which hurried him on one occasion into language that had little in common with the sober language in which his judgments were usually pronounced. Of Doctor Price’s *Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the National Debt*, he wrote to the author in the most enthusiastic terms, “it being in my Opinion,” he said, “consider^g the profound Study, &

steady Application of Mind that the Work required, & the sound Judgment with which it is executed, and its great and important Utility to the Nation, the foremost Production of human Understanding, that this Century has afforded us.” And to Franklin on one occasion this friend wrote that he considered his friendship one of the honors and blessings of his life.

When the American controversy arose, Dr. Price zealously espoused the cause of the Colonies, and this still further strengthened the friendship between the two. For his *Observations on Civil Liberty and the Justice and Policy of the War with America*, the City of London presented him with the freedom of the city in a gold box of fifty pounds value; and so outspoken was he in the expression of his political convictions that Franklin wrote to John Winthrop in 1777 that “his Friends, on his Acc^t, were under some Apprehensions from the Violence of Government, in consequence of his late excellent Publications in favour of Liberty.” Indeed, so near was he to making the American cause absolutely his own that Congress, while the American War was still raging, even invited him to become an American citizen and to assist in regulating the American finances, but that was one step further than he was willing to go. In a letter to Joseph Priestley, shortly after the Battle of Bunker’s Hill, Franklin makes an amusing allusion to the mathematical genius of Dr. Price which was equal to the abstrusest problems involved in the calculation of annuities.

Britain [he said], at the expense of three millions, has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees this campaign, which is twenty thousand pounds a head; and at Bunker’s Hill she gained a mile of ground, half of which she lost again by our taking post on Ploughed Hill. During the same time sixty thousand children have been born in America. From these *data* his (Dr. Price’s) mathematical head will easily calculate the time and expense necessary to kill us all, and conquer our whole territory.

Always in the American controversy, Franklin relied upon the loins as well as the hands of the Colonists for the final victory.

While mentioning Priestley, we might recall the compliment in a letter from Franklin to Dr. Price, in which the former brought the names of Priestley and Price into a highly honorable conjunction. Speaking of dissensions in the Royal Society, he said, “Disputes even on small Matters often produce Quarrels for want of knowing how to differ decently; an Art which it is said scarce anybody possesses but yourself and Dr. Priestley.” Dr. Price was one of the habitués of the London Coffee House, and, in Franklin’s letters to him from Passy, there are repeated references to the happy hours that the writer had spent there. “I never think of the Hours I so happily spent in that Company,” he said in one letter, “without regretting that they are never to be repeated: For I see no Prospect of an End to the unhappy War in my Time.” In another letter, he concluded with a heartfelt wish that he might embrace Dr. Price once more, and enjoy his sweet society in peace among his honest, worthy, ingenious friends at the *London*. In another letter, after peace was assured, he said that he longed to see and be merry with the Club, and, in a still later letter, he told Dr. Price that he might “pop” in some Thursday evening when they least expected him. In enclosing, on one occasion, to Dr. Price a copy of his Rabelaisian *jeu d’esprit* on “Perfumes,” which was intended also for the eye of Priestley, Franklin cracks an obscene joke at the expense of Priestley’s famous researches with regard to gases, but, when Dr. Price states in his reply, “We have been entertained with the pleasantry of it, and the ridicule it contains,” we are again reminded that the eighteenth century was not the twentieth.

Dr. Price was one of the correspondents to whom Franklin expounded his theory that England’s only chance for self-reformation was to render all places unprofitable and the King too poor to give bribes and pensions.

Till this is done [he said], which can only be by a Revolution (and I think you have not Virtue enough left to procure one), your Nation will always be plundered, and obliged to pay by Taxes the Plunderers for Plundering and Ruining. Liberty and Virtue therefore join in the call, *COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE!*

In a later letter, he returns to the same subject in these words so pregnant with meaning for a student of the political conditions which palsied the influence of Chatham and Burke in their effort to avert the American War:

As it seems to be a settled Point at present, that the Minister must govern the Parliament, who are to do everything he would have done; and he is to bribe them to do this, and the People are to furnish the Money to pay these Bribes; the Parliament appears to me a very expensive Machine for Government, and I apprehend the People will find out in time, that they may as well be governed, and that it will be much cheaper to be governed, by the Minister alone; no Parliament being preferable to the present.

There are also some thoughtful observations in one of Franklin's letters to Dr. Price on the limited influence of Roman and Grecian oratory, as compared with the influence of the modern newspaper. "We now find," he observed, "that it is not only right to strike while the iron is hot, but that it may be very practicable to heat it by continually striking."

His last letter to Dr. Price was written less than a year before his own death. It refers to the death of the Bishop of St. Asaph's, and once more there is a mournful sigh from the Tree of Existence.

My Friends drop off one after another, when my Age and Infirmities prevent my making new Ones [he groaned], & if I still retained the necessary Activity and Ability, I hardly see among the existing Generation where I could make them of equal Goodness: So that the longer I live I must expect to be very wretched. As we draw nearer the Conclusion of Life, Nature furnishes with more Helps to wean us from it, among which one of the most powerful is the Loss of such dear Friends.

With Dr. Joseph Priestley, the famous clergyman and natural philosopher, Franklin was very intimate. The discoveries of Priestley, especially his discovery that carbonic acid gas is imbibed by vegetation, awakened Franklin's keenest interest, and, some years before Priestley actually received a medal from the Royal Society for his scientific achievements, Franklin earnestly, though vainly, endeavored to obtain one for him. "I find that you have set all the Philosophers of Europe at Work upon Fix'd Air," he said in one of his letters to Priestley, "and it is with great Pleasure I observe how high you stand in their Opinion; for I enjoy my Friend's fame as my own." And no one who knows his freedom from all petty, carking feelings of every sort, such as envy and jealousy, can doubt for a moment that he did. For a time, fixed air aroused so much speculation that it was thought that it might even be a remedy for putrid fevers and cancers. The absorption of carbonic acid gas by vegetation is all simple enough now, but it was not so simple when Priestley wrote to Franklin that he had discovered that even aquatic plants imbibe pure air, and emit it as excrementitious to them, in a dephlogisticated state. On one occasion, Franklin paid his fellow-philosopher the compliment of saying that he knew of no philosopher who started so much good game for the hunters after knowledge as he did.

For a time Priestley enjoyed the patronage of Lord Shelburne, who, desirous of having the company of a man of general learning to read with him, and superintend the education of his children, took Priestley from his congregation at Leeds, settled three hundred pounds a year upon him for ten years, and two hundred pounds for life, with a house to live in near his

country seat. So Franklin stated in a letter to John Winthrop, when Priestley was engaged in the task of putting Lord Shelburne's great library into order. Subsequently patron and client separated amicably, but, before they did, Priestley consulted Franklin as to whether he should go on with the arrangement. The latter in a few judicious sentences counselled him to do so until the end of the term of ten years, and, by way of illustrating the frequent and troublesome changes, that human beings make without amendment, and often for the worse, told this story of his youth:

In my Youth, I was a Passenger in a little Sloop, descending the River Delaware. There being no Wind, we were obliged, when the Ebb was spent, to cast anchor, and wait for the next. The Heat of the Sun on the Vessel was excessive, the Company Strangers to me, and not very agreeable. Near the river Side I saw what I took to be a pleasant green Meadow, in the middle of which was a large shady Tree, where it struck my Fancy I could sit and read, (having a Book in my Pocket,) and pass the time agreeably till the tide turned. I therefore prevail'd with the Captain to put me ashore. Being landed, I found the greatest part of my Meadow was really a Marsh, in crossing which, to come at my Tree, I was up to my knees in Mire; and I had not placed myself under its Shade five Minutes, before the Muskitoes in Swarms found me out, attack'd my Legs, Hands, and Face, and made my Reading and my Rest impossible; so that I return'd to the Beach, and call'd for the Boat to come and take me aboard again, where I was oblig'd to bear the Heat I had strove to quit, and also the Laugh of the Company. Similar Cases in the Affairs of Life have since frequently fallen under my Observation.

Deterrent as was the advice, pointed by such a graphic story, Priestley did not take it, and, fortunately for him, the pleasant green meadow and large shady tree to which he retired did not prove such a deceptive mirage. After the separation, Lord Shelburne endeavored to induce him to renew their former relation, but he declined.

Priestley was one of the witnesses of the baiting, to which Franklin was subjected at the Cockpit, on account of the Hutchinson letters, on the famous occasion, of which it could be well said by every thoughtful Englishman a little later in the words of the ballad of Chevy-Chase,

“The child may rue that is unborne
The hunting of that day.”

Or “the speaking” of that day, as Lord Campbell has parodied the lines.

Priestley was also among those eye-witnesses of the scene, who testified to the absolutely impassive countenance with which Franklin bore the ordeal. As he left the room, however, he pressed Priestley's hand in a way that indicated much feeling. The next day, they breakfasted together, and Franklin told Priestley “that, if he had not considered the thing for which he had been so much insulted, as one of the best actions of his life, and what he should certainly do again in the same circumstances, he could not have supported it.”

To Priestley also the world was first indebted for knowledge of the fact that, when Franklin afterwards came to sign in France the Treaty of Alliance between that country and the United States, he took pains to wear the same suit of spotted Manchester velvet that he wore when he was treated with such indecency at the Cockpit.

From France Franklin wrote to Priestley a letter expressing the horror—for no other term is strong enough to describe the sentiment—in which he held the unnatural war between Great Britain and her revolted Colonies.

The Hint you gave me jocularly [he said], that you did not quite despair of the Philosopher's Stone, draws from me a Request, that, when you have found it, you will take care to lose it again; for I believe in my conscience, that Mankind are wicked enough to continue slaughtering one another as long as they can find Money to pay the Butchers. But, of all the Wars in my time, this on the part of England appears to me the wickedest; having no Cause but Malice against Liberty, and the Jealousy of Commerce. And I think the Crime seems likely to meet with its proper Punishment; a total loss of her own Liberty, and the Destruction of her own Commerce.

But Franklin was not too incensed to have his joke in this same letter over even such a grim subject for merriment as powder. "When I was at the camp before Boston," he declared, "the Army had not 5 Rounds of Powder a Man. This was kept a Secret even from our People. The World wonder'd that we so seldom fir'd a Cannon; we could not afford it."

Another English friend of Franklin was Benjamin Vaughan, the son of a West Indian planter, and at one time the private secretary of Lord Shelburne. His family was connected with the House of Bedford, and his wife, Sarah Manning, was an aunt of the late Cardinal Manning. To Vaughan the reputation of Franklin is doubly indebted. In 1779, he brought out a new edition of Franklin's writings, and it was partly the entreaties of Abel James and himself which induced Franklin to continue the *Autobiography*, after work on it had been long suspended by its author because of the demands of the Revolution on his time. The spirit, in which the edition of Franklin's writings was prepared, found expression in the preface. "Can *Englishmen*," Vaughan asked, "read these things and not sigh at reflecting that the *country* which could produce their author, was once without controversy *their own*!"

Before Franklin left France he longed to pay another visit to England, and this matter is touched upon in a letter to Vaughan which sheds a sidelight upon the intimacy which existed between the two men.

By my doubts of the propriety of my going soon to London, [he said], I meant no reflection on my friends or yours. If I had any call there besides the pleasure of seeing those whom I love, I should have no doubts. If I live to arrive there, I shall certainly embrace your kind invitation, and take up my abode with you.

Some of the sagest observations ever made by Franklin are found in his letters to Vaughan, and several of his happy stories. The following reflections, prompted by English restraints upon commerce, were not intended to be taken literally, but they contain profound insight enough to merit transcription.

It is wonderful how preposterously the affairs of this world are managed. Naturally one would imagine, that the interest of a few individuals should give way to general interest; but individuals manage their affairs with so much more application, industry, and address, than the public do theirs, that general interest most commonly gives way to particular. We assemble parliaments and councils, to have the benefit of their collected wisdom, but we necessarily have, at the same time, the inconvenience of their collected passions, prejudices, and private interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower their wisdom, and dupe its possessors; and if we may judge by the acts, *arrêts*, and edicts, all the world over, for regulating commerce, an assembly of great men is the greatest fool upon earth.

When Franklin sat down to write this letter, Vaughan had asked him what remedy he had for the growing luxury of his country which gave so much offence to all English travellers without exception. In replying to this rather tactless question, Franklin's pen ran on until he had completed not so much a letter as an economic essay.

Our People [he begins] are hospitable, and have indeed too much Pride in displaying upon their Tables before Strangers the Plenty and Variety that our Country affords. They have the Vanity, too, of sometimes borrowing one another's Plate to entertain more splendidly. Strangers being invited from House to House, and meeting every Day with a Feast, imagine what they see is the ordinary Way of living of all the Families where they dine; when perhaps each Family lives a Week after upon the Remains of the Dinner given. It is, I own, a Folly in our People to give *such Offence to English Travellers*. The first part of the Proverb is thereby verified, that *Fools make Feasts*. I wish in this Case the other were as true, and *Wise Men eat them*. These Travellers might, one would think, find some Fault they could more decently reproach us with, than that of our excessive Civility to them as Strangers.

With this introduction, he proceeds to say a good word for luxury. "Is not the Hope of one day being able to purchase and enjoy Luxuries a great Spur to Labour and Industry?" he asked. And this question brought up one of the inevitable stories.

The Skipper of a Shallop, employed between Cape May and Philadelphia, had done us some small Service, for which he refused Pay. My Wife, understanding that he had a Daughter sent her as a Present a new-fashioned Cap. Three Years After, this Skipper being at my House with an old Farmer of Cape May, his Passenger, he mentioned the Cap, and how much his Daughter had been pleased with it. "But," says he, "it proved a dear Cap to our Congregation." "How so?" "When my Daughter appeared in it at Meeting, it was so much admired, that all the Girls resolved to get such Caps from Philadelphia, and my Wife and I computed, that the whole could not have cost less than a hundred Pound." "True," says the Farmer, "but you do not tell all the Story. I think the Cap was nevertheless an Advantage to us, for it was the first thing that put our Girls upon Knitting worsted Mittens for Sale at Philadelphia, that they might have wherewithal to buy Caps and Ribbands there, and you know that that Industry has continued, and is likely to continue and increase to a much greater Value, and answer better Purposes." Upon the whole, I was more reconciled to this little Piece of Luxury, since not only the Girls were made happier by having fine Caps, but the Philadelphians by the Supply of warm Mittens.

Then he argues still further as follows that luxury may not always be such an evil as it seems:

A Shilling spent idly by a Fool, may be picked up by a Wiser Person, who knows better what to do with it. It is therefore not lost. A vain, silly Fellow builds a fine House, furnishes it richly, lives in it expensively, and in few years ruins himself; but the Masons, Carpenters, Smiths, and other honest Tradesmen have been by his Employ assisted in maintaining and raising their Families; the Farmer has been paid for his labour, and encouraged, and the Estate is now in better Hands.

There were exceptional cases, of course. "If there be a Nation, for Instance, that exports its Beef and Linnen, to pay for its Importation of Claret and Porter, while a great Part of its People live upon Potatoes, and wear no Shirts, wherein does it differ from the Sot, who lets his Family starve, and sells his Clothes to buy Drink." He meant Ireland, it is needless to add. A little in this way, he confessed, was the exchange of American victuals for West Indian rum and sugar.

The existence of so much want and misery in the world, he thought, was due to the employment of men and women in works that produce neither the necessaries nor the conveniences of life. Such people, aided by those who do nothing, consume the necessaries raised by the laborious. This idea, he developed with his inborn lucidity, ending, however, of

course, with the reflection that we should naturally expect from a man, who was so thoroughly in touch with his kind, that, upon the whole, the quantity of industry and prudence among mankind exceeded the quantity of idleness and folly.

This “long, rambling Letter” he called it—this “brief, pointed and masterly letter,” we term it—concludes quite in the style of one of Poor Richard’s dissertations:

Almost all the Parts of our Bodies require some Expence. The Feet demand Shoes; the Legs, Stockings; the rest of the Body, Clothing; and the Belly, a good deal of Victuals. *Our* Eyes, tho’ exceedingly useful, ask, when reasonable, only the cheap Assistance of Spectacles, which could not much impair our Finances. But *the Eyes of other People* are the Eyes that ruin us. If all but myself were blind, I should want neither fine Clothes, fine Houses, nor fine Furniture.

Another letter to Vaughan is really an essay on the Criminal Laws and the practice of privateering. And a wise, humane and sprightly essay it is, fully worthy of a man, who was entirely too far in advance of his age to approve the savage English laws, which hanged a thief for stealing a horse, and had no better answer to make to the culprit, when he pleaded that it was hard to hang a man for *only* stealing a horse, than the reply of Judge Burnet: “Man, thou art not to be hanged *only* for stealing, but that horses may not be stolen.” Not unworthy either was this essay of a man whose benevolence was too clear-sighted and generous to be cheated by the pretence that the practice of privateering has its root in anything better than the rapacity of the highwayman. A highwayman, he said, was as much a robber, when he plundered in a gang, as when single; and a nation, that made an unjust war, was only a great gang. How could England, which had commissioned no less than seven hundred gangs of privateering robbers, he asked, have the face to condemn the crime of robbery in individuals, and hang up twenty criminals in a morning. It naturally put one in mind of a Newgate anecdote. “One of the Prisoners complain’d, that in the Night somebody had taken his Buckles out of his Shoes; ‘What, the Devil!’ says another, ‘have we then *Thieves* among us? It must not be suffered, let us search out the Rogue, and pump him to death.”

Vaughan was a prolix correspondent, and in reading his letters we cannot but be reminded at times of the question put to him by Franklin, when inveighing against the artifices adopted by booksellers for the purpose of padding books. After remarking that they were puffed up to such an extent that the selling of paper seemed the object, and printing on it, only the pretence, he said, “You have a law, I think, against butchers blowing of veal to make it look fatter; why not one against booksellers’ blowing of books to make them look bigger.”

Vaughan was among the friends who did not fail to hasten to Southampton when Franklin touched there on his return from France to America.

In what affectionate esteem Franklin held his two English friends, Dr. John Hawkesworth, the author and writer of oratorios, and John Stanley, the blind musician and organist of the Society of the Inner Temple, we have already seen. Stanley composed the music for Dr. Hawkesworth’s oratorios *Zimri* and *The Fall of Egypt*, and like music and words the two friends themselves were blended in the mind of Franklin. Writing in the latter years of his life to another English friend of his, Thomas Jordan, the brewer, who had recently sent him a cask of porter, he had this to say about them, in connection with the two satellites of Georgium Sidus, which Herschel had just discovered.

Let us hope, my friend, that, when free from these bodily embarrassments, we may roam together through some of the systems he has explored, conducted by some of our old companions already acquainted with them. Hawkesworth will enliven our

progress with his cheerful, sensible converse, and Stanley accompany the music of the spheres.

Several times, in his letter, Franklin refers to Hawkesworth as the “good Doctor Hawkesworth,” and it was from him that he learned to call Strahan “Straney.”

Another English friend of Franklin was John Sargent, a London merchant, a director of the Bank of England, and a member of Parliament. The friendship was shared by Mrs. Sargent, “whom I love very much,” Franklin said in one of his letters to her husband. After his return from his second mission to England, he wrote to Sargent, asking him to receive the balance due him by Messrs. Browns and Collinson, and keep it for him or his children. “It may possibly,” he declared, “soon be all I shall have left: as my American Property consists chiefly of Houses in our Seaport Towns, which your Ministry have begun to burn, and I suppose are wicked enough to burn them all.” In connection with Sargent, it may also be mentioned that he was one of the applicants with Franklin for the Ohio grant, and that it was at his country seat at Halstead, in Kent, that Lord Stanhope called for the purpose of taking Franklin to Hayes, the country seat of Chatham, where Chatham and Franklin met for the first time.

Another English friend of Franklin was John Canton, who was, however, rather a scientific than a social comrade, though a fellow-tourist of his on one of his summer excursions; and still another was Dr. Alexander Small, for whom he cherished a feeling of real personal affection. In one letter to Small, he tells him that he had found relief from the gout by exposing his naked foot, when he was in bed, and thereby promoting the process of transpiration. He gave the fact, he said, to Small, in exchange for his receipt for tartar emetic, because the commerce of philosophy as well as other commerce was best promoted by taking care to make returns. In another letter to Small, there is a growl for the American Loyalists.

As to the Refugees [he observed], whom you think we were so impolitic in rejecting, I do not find that they are miss’d here, or that anybody regrets their Absence. And certainly they must be happier where they are, under the Government they admire; and be better receiv’d among a People, whose Cause they espous’d and fought for, than among those who cannot so soon have forgotten the Destruction of their Habitations, and the spilt Blood of their dearest Friends and near Relations.

Then there is a reference in this letter to the learned and ingenious friends, who had left Dr. Small and himself to join the majority in the world of spirits.

Every one of them [he said] now knows more than all of us they have left behind. It is to me a comfortable Reflection, that, since we must live forever in a future State, there is a sufficient Stock of Amusement in reserve for us, to be found in constantly learning something new to Eternity, the present Quantity of human Ignorance infinitely exceeding that of human Knowledge. Adieu, my dear Friend, and believe me, in whatever World, yours most affectionately.

In a subsequent letter, there is a softer word for the Loyalists. He believed, he said, that fear and error rather than malice occasioned their desertion of their country’s cause and the adoption of the King’s. The public resentment against them was then so far abated that none, who asked leave to return, were refused, and many of them then lived in America much at their ease. But he thought that the politicians, who were a sort of people that loved to fortify themselves in their projects by precedent, were perhaps waiting, before they ventured to propose the restoration of the confiscated estates of the Loyalists, to see whether the English Government would restore the forfeited estates in Scotland to the Scotch, those in Ireland to the Irish and those in England to the Welsh! He was glad that the Loyalists, who had not

returned to America, had received, or were likely to receive, some compensation for their losses from England, but it did not seem so clearly consistent with the wisdom of Parliament for it to provide such compensation on behalf of the King, who had seduced these Loyalists by his proclamations. Some mad King, in the future, might set up such action on the part of Parliament as a precedent, as was realized by the Council of Brutes in the old fable, a copy of which he enclosed. The fable, of course, was not an old fable at all, but one of his own productions, in which the horse with the “boldness and freedom that became the nobleness of his nature,” succeeded in convincing the council of the beasts, against the views of the wolves and foxes, that the lion should bestow no reward upon the mongrels, who, sprung in part from wolves and foxes, and corrupted by royal promises of great rewards, had deserted the honest dogs, when the lion, notwithstanding the attachment of these dogs to him, had, under the influence of evil counsellors, contracted an aversion to them, condemned them unheard and ordered his tigers, leopards and panthers to attack and destroy them. In this letter, there is another reference to the reformed prayer-book which Dr. Small and good Mrs. Baldwin had done him the honor, as we have seen, to approve. The things of this world, he said, took up too much of the little time left to him for him to undertake anything like a reformation in matters of religion. When we can sow good seed, we should, however, do it, and await with patience, when we can do no better, Nature’s time for their sprouting.

A later letter assured Dr. Small that Franklin still loved England, and wished it prosperity, but it had only another growl for the Loyalists. Someone had said, he declared, that we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but that we are nowhere commanded to forgive our friends. The Loyalists, after uniting with the savages for the purpose of burning the houses of the American Whigs, and murdering and scalping their wives and children, had left them for the Government of their King in England and Nova Scotia. “We do not miss them,” he said, “nor wish their return; nor do we envy them their present happiness.”³⁶

This letter also mildly deprecates the honor that Small did him in naming him with Timoleon. “I am like him only in retiring from my public labours,” he declared, “which indeed my stone, and other infirmities of age, have made indispensably necessary.”

The enthusiasm of the French people had drawn so freely upon the heroes of antiquity for a parallel to him that Dr. Small, perhaps, had to put up with Timoleon in default of a better classical congener.

Other English friends of Franklin were John Alleyne, Edward Bridgen, Edmund Burke, Mrs. Thompson, John Whitehurst, Anthony Tissington, Thomas Viny and Caleb Whitefoord. Our attention has already been called to his pithy reflections on early marriages in one of his letters to John Alleyne.

Treat your Wife [he said, in the concluding sentences of this admirable letter] always with Respect; it will procure Respect to you, not from her only but from all that observe it. Never use a slighting Expression to her, even in jest, for Slights in Jest, after frequent bandyings, are apt to end in angry earnest. Be studious in your Profession, and you will be learned. Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich.

³⁶ A letter from Franklin to Francis Maseres, dated Passy, June 26, 1785, suggests an additional reason why the antipathy of the American Whigs to the American loyalists was so unrelenting. “The war against us was begun by a general act of Parliament, declaring all our estates confiscated; and probably one great motive to the loyalty of the royalists was the hope of sharing in these confiscations. They have played a deep game, staking their estates against ours; and they have been unsuccessful. But it is a surer game, since they had promises to rely on from your government, of indemnification in case of loss; and I see your Parliament is about to fulfil those Promises. To this I have no objection, because, though still our enemies, they are men; they are in necessity; and I think even a hired assassin has a right to his pay from his employer.”

Be sober and temperate, and you will be healthy. Be in general virtuous, and you will be happy. At least, you will, by such Conduct, stand the best Chance for such Consequences.

In another letter to Alleyne, with his unerring good sense, he makes short work of the perverse prejudice against intermarriage with a deceased wife's sister which was destined to die so hard in the English mind.

To Edward Bridgen, a merchant of London, Franklin referred in a letter to Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina as "a particular Friend of mine and a zealous one of the American Cause." The object of the letter was to reclaim from confiscation property in that state belonging to Bridgen. And it was to Bridgen that Franklin made the suggestion that, instead of repeating continually upon every half penny the dull story that everybody knew (and that it would have been no loss to mankind if nobody had ever known) that George III. was King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, etc., etc., there should be inscribed on the coin some important proverb of Solomon, some pious moral, prudential or economical precept, calculated to leave an impression upon the mind, especially of young persons, such as on some, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom"; on others, "Honesty is the best Policy"; on others, "He that by the plow would thrive, himself must either hold or drive"; on others, "Keep thy Shop, and thy Shop will keep thee"; on others, "A penny saved is a penny got"; on others, "He that buys what he has no need of, will soon be forced to sell his necessities"; and on others, "Early to bed and early to rise, will make a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

With Edmund Burke Franklin does not appear to have been intimate, but they knew each other well enough for the former in a letter to the latter to term the friendship between them an "old friendship." It was Burke who remarked, when Franklin was examined before the House of Commons on American affairs, that it was as if a school-master was being catechized by his pupils. For every reason, the judgment of so great a man about such an incident has its value, but among other reasons because Burke was accounted one of the best-informed men in England in relation to American affairs.

The only glimpse we obtain of Mrs. Thompson is in a letter written to her by Franklin from Paris, shortly after his arrival in France in 1776, but the raillery of this letter is too familiar in tone to have marked the course of anything but real intimacy.

You are too early, *Hussy* [he wrote], (as well as too saucy,) in calling me *Rebel*; you should wait for the Event, which will determine whether it is a *Rebellion* or only a *Revolution*. Here the Ladies are more civil; they call us *les Insurgens*, a Character that usually pleases them: And methinks all other Women who smart, or have smarted, under the Tyranny of a bad Husband, ought to be fixed in Revolution Principles, and act accordingly.

Then Mrs. Thompson is told some gossip details about a common friend whom Franklin had seen during the preceding spring at New York, and these are succeeded by some gay sallies with regard to Mrs. Thompson's restlessness.

Pray learn [he said], if you have not already learnt, like me, to be pleased with other People's Pleasures, and happy with their Happiness, when none occur of your own; and then perhaps you will not so soon be weary of the Place you chance to be in, and so fond of Rambling to get rid of your *Ennui*. I fancy you have hit upon the right Reason of your being Weary of St. Omer's, viz. that you are out of Temper, which is the effect of full Living and Idleness. A Month in Bridewell, beating Hemp, upon Bread and Water, would give you Health and Spirits, and subsequent Cheerfulness

and Contentment with every other Situation. I prescribe that Regimen for you, my dear, in pure good will, without a Fee. And let me tell you, if you do not get into Temper, neither Brussels nor Lisle will suit you. I know nothing of the Price of Living in either of those Places; but I am sure a single Woman, as you are, might with Economy upon two hundred Pounds a year maintain herself comfortably anywhere, and me into the Bargain. Do not invite me in earnest, however, to come and live with you; for, being posted here, I ought not to comply, and I am not sure I should be able to refuse.

This letter was written shortly after Franklin's arrival in France, but he had already caught the infection of French gallantry. It closes with a lifelike portrait of himself.

I know you wish you could see me [he said], but, as you can't, I will describe myself to you. Figure me in your mind as jolly as formerly, and as strong and hearty, only a few years older; very plainly dress'd, wearing my thin gray strait hair, that peeps out under my only Coiffure, a fine Fur Cap, which comes down my Forehead almost to my Spectacles. Think how this must appear among the Powder'd Heads of Paris! I wish every gentleman and Lady in France would only be so obliging as to follow my Fashion, comb their own Heads as I do mine, dismiss their *Friseurs*, and pay me half the Money they paid to them. You see, the gentry might well afford this, and I could then enlist those *Friseurs*, who are at least 100,000, and with the Money I would maintain them, make a Visit with them to England, and dress the Heads of your Ministers and Privy Counsellors; which I conceive to be at present *un peu dérangées*. Adieu, Madcap; and believe me ever, your affectionate Friend and humble Servant.

John Whitehurst, who was a maker of watches and philosophical instruments, and the author of an *Inquiry into the Original State and Formation of the Earth*, and his friend, Anthony Tissington, were residents of Derbyshire. Some of Whitehurst's letters to Franklin are still in existence, but none from Franklin to Whitehurst are. A letter from Franklin to Tissington has preserved one of the writer's characteristic stories. After speaking of the rheumatic pains, to which Mrs. Tissington was subject, he said:

'Tis a most wicked Distemper, & often puts me in mind of the Saying of a Scotch Divine to some of his Brethren who were complaining that their Flocks had of late been infected with *Arianism* and *Socinianism*. Mine, says he, is infected with a worse ism than either of those.—Pray, Brother, what can that be?—It is, the *Rheumatism*.

Thomas Viny was a wheel manufacturer of Tenterden, Kent. In a letter to him, Franklin tells him that he cannot without extreme reluctance think of using any arguments to persuade him to remove to America, because of the pain that the removal would occasion to Viny's brother. Possibly, however, he added, Viny might afterwards judge it not amiss, when the many children that he was likely to have, were grown up, to plant one of them in America, where he might prepare an asylum for the rest should any great calamity, which might God avert, befall England. A man he knew, who had a number of sons, used to say that he chose to settle them at some distance from each other, for he thought they throve better, as he remarked that cabbages, growing too near together, were not so likely to come to a head.

I shall be asleep before that time [Franklin continued], otherwise he might expect and command my best Advice and Assistance. But as the Ancients who knew not how to write had a Method of transmitting Friendships to Posterity; the Guest who had been hospitably entertain'd in a strange Country breaking a Stick with every one who did him a kindness; and the Producing such a Tally at any Time afterwards, by a Descendant of the Host, to a Son or Grandson of the Guest, was understood as a good

Claim to special Regard besides the Common Rights of Hospitality: So if this Letter should happen to be preserv'd, your Son may produce it to mine as an Evidence of the Good will that once subsisted between their Fathers, as an Acknowledgment of the Obligations you laid me under by your many Civilities when I was in your Country and a Claim to all the Returns due from me if I had been living.

Another letter from Franklin to Viny was written at Passy. He joined most heartily he said with Viny in his prayers that the Almighty, who had favored the just cause, would perfect his work, and establish freedom in the New World as an asylum for those of the Old who deserved it. He thought the war a detestable one, and grieved much at the mischief and misery it was occasioning to many; his only consolation being that he did all in his power to prevent it. What a pleasure it would be to him on his return to America to see his old friend and his children settled there! "I hope," Franklin concluded, "he will find Vines and Fig-trees there for all of them, under which we may sit and converse, enjoying Peace and Plenty, a good Government, good Laws, and Liberty, without which Men lose half their Value."

Caleb Whitefoord resided at No. 8 Craven Street, London, or next door to Mrs. Stevenson's, where Franklin resided during his two missions to England, and the friendship between Franklin and himself, though very cordial on Whitefoord's part, would seem to have been on Franklin's part, though cordial, the friendship mainly of mere propinquity.³⁷

Far more significant were the ties which bound Franklin to such English friends as Peter Collinson, the Rev. George Whitefield, Lord Le Despencer, James Hutton, David Hartley and George Whatley.

Peter Collinson was a London mercer who had a considerable correspondence with America. He not only enjoyed an acquaintance with men of prominence and influence in the Colonies, but he earnestly interested himself in promoting the production of American flax, hemp, silk and wine. He was a fellow of the Royal Society, besides being one of the founders of the Society of Antiquaries, and it was directly due to the electric tube sent over by him to the Library Company of Philadelphia that Franklin entered upon those experiments in electricity which he communicated to Collinson in a series of memorable letters, that brought lasting renown to their author when given to the world by Collinson. In a letter to Michael Collinson, Franklin speaks of Peter Collinson as our "dear departed Friend," and pays a feeling tribute to his unselfish patronage of the Library at Philadelphia. He alludes to the valuable presents made to the Library by Collinson and others, whose generosity had been kindled by Collinson's zeal, and he states the remarkable fact that for more than thirty years successively Collinson had participated in the annual selection of books for the Library, and had shouldered the whole burden of buying them in London, and shipping them to Philadelphia without ever charging or even accepting any consideration for his trouble. Nay more, during

³⁷ The business of Whitefoord as a wine-merchant was carried on at No. 8 Craven Street, and he enjoyed a considerable reputation for wit in his time. He served as Secretary to the Commission that settled the terms of peace with the United States. He was, Burke thought, a mere *diseur de bons mots*. Goldsmith deemed him of sufficient importance to make him the subject of an epitaph intended to be worked into the Retaliation, and reading as follows:

"Here Whitefoord reclines, deny it who can;
Tho' he merrily lived, he is now a grave man.
What pity, alas! that so lib'ral a mind
Should so long be to Newspaper Essays confined!
Who perhaps to the summit of science might soar,
Yet content if the table he set in a roar;
Whose talents to fit any station were fit,
Yet happy if Woodfall confessed him a wit."
His intimacy with Franklin, Whitefoord said on one occasion, had been the "pride and happiness" of his life.

the same time, he had transmitted to the directors of the Library Company the earliest account of every new European improvement in Agriculture and the Arts, or discovery in Philosophy. Curious in botany as Collinson may have been, it is not hazardous to say that he never gathered or sowed any seed more fruitful than these benefactions, and we can readily understand how deeply his friendship must have been cherished by a spirit so congenial with his as that of Franklin. They were friends before they ever met, but it was not until Franklin arrived in London on his first mission to England that they greeted each other face to face. Franklin's first letter to America, written the day after he reached London, was hastily penned at Collinson's house, and, the next day, John Hanbury, the great Virginia merchant, by an arrangement with Collinson, called for Franklin in his carriage, and conveyed him to the house of Lord Granville for an interview with that nobleman. The letters from Franklin to Collinson on the subject of electricity are, we hardly need say, the most important of the former's letters to him, but very valuable, too, are some of his observations in other letters to his correspondent on political conditions in Pennsylvania and the relations between the Colonies and the mother country. To the scientific letters and to these observations we shall have occasion to revert further on. Beyond a reference to some black silk, sent by Collinson to Deborah, with a generous disregard of the fact that the fowl meadow grass seed that Franklin had sent to him from America never came up, the correspondence between Collinson and Franklin is marked by few intimate features. It was, however, on the back of a letter from Franklin to Collinson, in which the former condoled with the latter on the loss of his wife, that this good man, for such we must believe Collinson to have been, indorsed these singular comments, the offspring probably of purely morbid self-reproach:

There was no occasion of any Phylosophy on this ever to be lamented occasion. Peter Collinson had few feelings but for Himself. The same Principle that led him to deprive his son of his Birthright when that son lay in the Agonies of Death and knew not what he put his hand to, supported Peter Collinson in the loss of the best of Women in a manner that did no Honour to his Feelings, his Gratitude or his Humanity.

The eye of the reader has already been drawn to the Rev. George Whitefield, whose eloquence, we are told by Franklin in the *Autobiography*, "had a wonderful power over the hearts and purses of his hearers." After the death of Whitefield, Franklin paid this handsome tribute to him in a letter to Robert Morris and Thomas Leach. "I knew him intimately upwards of thirty years. His Integrity, Disinterestedness, and indefatigable Zeal in prosecuting every good Work, I have never seen equalled, I shall never see exceeded." To Franklin, too, we are indebted for a striking description of his characteristics as an orator, when he came over to Philadelphia from Ireland, and, after being at first permitted to preach in some churches, was later compelled to preach in the fields, because the clergy took a dislike to him, and refused him their pulpits.

He had a loud and clear voice, and articulated his words and sentences so perfectly, that he might be heard and understood at a great distance, especially as his auditories, however numerous, observ'd the most exact silence. He preach'd one evening from the top of the Court-house steps, which are in the middle of Market-Street, and on the west side of Second-Street, which crosses it at right angles. Both streets were fill'd with his hearers to a considerable distance. Being among the hindmost in Market-Street, I had the curiosity to learn how far he could be heard, by retiring backwards down the street towards the river; and I found his voice distinct till I came near Front-Street, when some noise in the street obscur'd it. Imagining then a semi-circle, of which my distance should be the radius, and that it were fill'd with auditors, to each of whom I allow'd two square feet, I computed that he might well be heard by more

than thirty thousand. This reconcil'd me to the newspaper accounts of his having preach'd to twenty-five thousand people in the fields, and to the antient histories of generals haranguing whole armies, of which I had sometimes doubted.

By experience, Franklin came to distinguish easily between Whitefield's newly composed sermons and those which he had often preached in the course of his travels.

His delivery of the latter was so improv'd by frequent repetitions that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well turn'd and well plac'd, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleas'd with the discourse; a pleasure of much the same kind with that receiv'd from an excellent piece of musick.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary influence of Whitefield's oratory over his auditors, to which Franklin testifies so unqualifiedly, it is obvious enough, as we have seen, that a nature so little given to extreme forms of enthusiasm as that of Franklin could not but regard the hysteria produced by it with some degree of contemptuous amusement.

Who [he asked in his Essay on "Shavers and Trimmers," in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*], has been more notorious for shaving and fleecing, than that Apostle of Apostles, that Preacher of Preachers, the Rev. Mr. G. W.? But I forbear making farther mention of this spiritual Shaver and Trimmer, lest I should affect the Minds of my Readers as deeply as his Preaching has affected their Pockets.

This was mere jesting on the part of a man to whom everything had its humorous as well as its serious side. Very different in spirit are some of the passages in Franklin's letters to Whitefield.

I am glad to hear [he wrote on one occasion] that you have frequent opportunities of preaching among the great. If you can gain them to a good and exemplary life, wonderful changes will follow in the manners of the lower ranks; for *ad exemplum regis*, etc. On this principle, Confucius, the famous Eastern reformer, proceeded. When he saw his country sunk in vice, and wickedness of all kinds triumphant, he applied himself first to the grandees; and having, by his doctrine, won *them* to the cause of virtue, the commons followed in multitudes. The mode has a wonderful influence on mankind; and there are numbers who, perhaps, fear less the being in hell, than out of the fashion. Our most western reformations began with the ignorant mob; and when numbers of them were gained, interest and party views drew in the wise and great. Where both methods can be used, reformations are likely to be more speedy. O that some method could be found to make them lasting! He who discovers that will, in my opinion, deserve more, ten thousand times, than the inventor of the longitude.

Another letter from Franklin to Whitefield is not only distinguished by the same missionary accent but also by the deep-seated loyalty to the English Crown which was so slow in yielding first to disillusionment and then to detestation. Alluding to Whitefield's desire to be the chaplain of an American army, he said that he wished that they could be jointly employed by the Crown to settle a colony on the Ohio.

What a glorious Thing [he exclaimed] it would be, to settle in that fine Country a large strong Body of Religious and Industrious People! What a Security to the other Colonies; and Advantage to Britain, by Increasing her People, Territory, Strength and Commerce! Might it not greatly facilitate the Introduction of pure Religion among the Heathen, if we could, by such a Colony, show them a better Sample of Christians than they commonly see in our Indian Traders, the most vicious and abandoned Wretches of our Nation?... Life, like a dramatic Piece, should not only be conducted with

Regularity, but methinks it should finish handsomely. Being now in the last Act, I begin to cast about for something fit to end with. Or if mine be more properly compar'd to an Epigram, as some of its few Lines are but barely tolerable, I am very desirous of concluding with a bright Point. In such an Enterprise I could spend the Remainder of Life with Pleasure; and I firmly believe God would bless us with Success, if we undertook it with a sincere Regard to his Honour, the Service of our gracious King, and (which is the same thing) the Publick Good.

From the joint enterprise of settling a colony on the Ohio with Whitefield to the joint enterprise of abridging the Book of English Prayer with Lord Le Despencer was a far cry, but not too far for Franklin, as we have seen.

Lord Le Despencer, or Sir Francis Dashwood, as he was known, when he was one of the jolly monks of Medmenham Abbey, was numbered by Franklin among his best friends, and at West Wycombe, the country seat of this nobleman, Franklin spent many happy hours. On one occasion, he writes to his son that he has passed sixteen days there most agreeably. On another occasion, he tells him that he has just come to West Wycombe to spend a few days and breathe a little fresh air. "I am in this House," he said, "as much at my Ease as if it was my own; and the Gardens are a Paradise." After a journey to Oxford, with Lord Le Despencer, he informed the same correspondent that the former was very good to him on all occasions and seemed of late very desirous of his company. Whatever else the owner of West Wycombe may have been, Franklin's letters leave us no room to doubt that he was a capital host.

To a very different type of character in every respect belonged James Hutton, another dear friend of Franklin. He was a bookseller at the sign of the Bible and Sun, west of Temple Bar, and for fifty-five years a zealous member of the Moravian Church. His interest in the missionary labors of that Church, his benevolence, which knew no sectarian limitations, his sense and simplicity of manners won for him an honorable standing even in Court Circles. We are told by William Temple Franklin that he was highly esteemed by George III. and his consort, and was well known to many of the English nobility and men of letters; not being refused admittance to the highest ranks even at Buckingham House, though his ardent benevolence inclined him greatly to neglect his own dress that he might better feed the hungry and cover the naked. A man of that kind always had easy access to the heart of Franklin, open though its hospitable portals were to other friends of a very different description. In a letter to David Hartley from Passy, Franklin speaks of Hutton in these terms: "An old Friend of mine, Mr. Hutton, a Chief of the Moravians, who is often at the Queen's Palace, and is sometimes spoken to by the King, was over here lately." In a letter to Hutton himself from Passy, Franklin applies to him the term, "My dear old friend," which with its different variations meant with him the high-water mark of intimacy. Hutton is also brought to our sight, though in a droll way, in the Craven Street *Gazette*, the mock Chronicle, in which Franklin, with a delicacy and richness of humor all his own, pictures No. 7 Craven Street as a Court, Mrs. Stevenson as a Queen, with lords and ladies in her train, and Hutton and himself as rivals for the good graces of Dolly Blount, Polly's friend.

This Morning [the *Gazette* notes, under date of Tuesday, Sept. 25], my good Lord Hutton call'd at Craven-Street House and enquir'd very respectfully & affectionately concerning the Welfare of the Queen. He then imparted to the big Man (Franklin himself) a Piece of Intelligence important to them both, and but just communicated by Lady Hawkesworth, viz. that the amiable and delectable Companion, Miss D (orothea) B (lount), had made a Vow to marry absolutely him of the two whose Wife should first depart this Life. It is impossible to express the various Agitations of Mind

appearing in both their Faces on this Occasion. *Vanity* at the Preference given them over the rest of Mankind; *Affection* to their present Wives, *Fear* of losing them, *Hope*, if they must lose them, to obtain the proposed Comfort; *Jealousy* of each other in case both Wives should die together, &c. &c. &c.,—all working at the same time jumbled their Features into inexplicable Confusion. They parted at length with Professions & outward Appearances indeed of ever-enduring Friendship, but it was shrewdly suspected that each of them sincerely wished Health & long Life to the other's Wife; & that however long either of these Friends might like to live himself, the other would be very well pleas'd to survive him.

Hutton was one of the simple and warm-hearted friends of Franklin who endeavored by their individual exertions to accelerate the restoration of peace between Great Britain and America, and, like all of Franklin's English friends, who kept up a correspondence with him, while the war was going on, he had to read some scathing fulminations against England.

You have lost by this mad War [Franklin said in one letter to Hutton], and the Barbarity with which it has been carried on, not only the Government and Commerce of America, and the public Revenues and private Wealth arising from that Commerce, but what is more, you have lost the Esteem, Respect, Friendship, and Affection of all that great and growing People, who consider you at present, and whose Posterity will consider you, as the worst and wickedest Nation upon Earth.

Twelve days later, Franklin annexed a postscript to this letter which must have been an even severer trial to Hutton's equanimity than the letter itself.

I abominate with you [he said], all Murder, and I may add, that the Slaughter of Men in an unjust Cause is nothing less than Murder; I therefore never think of your present Ministers and their Abettors, but with the Image strongly painted in my View, of their Hands, red, wet, and dropping with the Blood of my Countrymen, Friends, and Relations.

Franklin's opinion of the King was imparted to Hutton in terms fully as indignant. The letter, in which this was done, was prompted by a letter from Hutton to a third person giving an account of some abominable murders inflicted by American frontiersmen upon the poor Moravian Indians. This time it was not English, but American hands that were red with blood, but Franklin was resourceful enough all the same to fix the responsibility for the murders by a train of indirect reasoning on the King. Why, he asked, had a single man in England, who happened to love blood and to hate Americans, been permitted to gratify that bad temper by hiring German murderers, and joining them with his own to destroy, in a continued course of bloody years, near 100,000 human creatures, many of them possessed of useful talents, virtues and abilities to which he had no pretension! It was he who had furnished the savages with hatchets and scalping knives, and engaged them to fall upon defenceless American farmers, and murder them with their wives and children, paying for their scalps, of which the account kept in America already amounted, he had heard, to near two thousand. Perhaps, the people of the frontiers, he declared, exasperated by the cruelties of the Indians, had been induced to kill all Indians that fell into their hands without distinction; so that even these horrid murders of the poor Moravians might be laid to the King's charge.

And yet [said Franklin] this Man lives, enjoys all the good Things this World can afford, and is surrounded by Flatterers, who keep even his Conscience quiet by telling him he is the best of Princes! I wonder at this, but I can not therefore part with the comfortable Belief of a Divine Providence; and the more I see the Impossibility, from the number & extent of his Crimes, of giving equivalent Punishment to a wicked Man

in this Life, the more I am convinc'd of a future State, in which all that here appears to be wrong shall be set right, all that is crooked made straight. In this Faith let you & I, my dear Friend, comfort ourselves; it is the only Comfort, in the present dark Scene of Things, that is allowed us.

The friendship between Franklin and David Hartley had to endure the concussion of some knocks even harder than these. Hartley was the son of David Hartley, the philosopher, from whom Hartley Coleridge, the poet, derived his name. He was a B. A. of Corpus Christi, Oxford, and a fellow of Merton College, and represented Hull in Parliament from 1774 to 1780 and from 1782 to 1784. An adherent of Lord Rockingham, and a warm friend of Franklin, he was naturally enough selected as the British plenipotentiary to assist in drawing up the treaty of peace between Great Britain and America. Before this time, however, he had been engaged in a protracted correspondence with Franklin, marked by a degree of liberality and humane feeling on his part which did him great honor. To alleviate the condition of American prisoners in England, to promote the exchange of these prisoners and British prisoners in America, to bring about a reunion between Great Britain and her colonies, and, that failing, a separation attended by as little mutual animosity as possible, were the generous objects to which his efforts were addressed. In pursuing these objects, he must have found it difficult at times to submit meekly to some of the ireful invective against his King, Parliament and People, which punctuates Franklin's solicitation of his mediatory offices, in behalf of American prisoners, and pleas for a peace between Great Britain and America, attended by really generous concessions upon the part of Great Britain. The year after his arrival in France as our minister, Franklin wrote to Hartley:

As to our submitting to the government of Great Britain, it is vain to think of it. She has given us, by her numberless barbarities in the prosecution of the war, and in the treatment of prisoners, by her malice in bribing slaves to murder their masters, and savages to massacre the families of farmers, with her baseness in rewarding the unfaithfulness of servants, and debauching the virtue of honest seamen, intrusted with our property, so deep an impression of her depravity, that we never again can trust her in the management of our affairs and interests.

As the war went on, leaving its trail of blood and increasing hatred behind it, his language at times becomes even more intense. About a year and a half later, he wrote to Hartley, "We know that your King hates Whigs and Presbyterians; that he thirsts for our Blood, of which he has already drunk large Draughts; that his servile unprincipled Ministers are ready to execute the Wickedest of his Orders, and his venal Parliament equally ready to vote them just." This outburst was evoked by what he conceived to be a cunning effort of the English Ministry to divide America and her French ally. The next outburst was provoked by the same cause. "The Truth is," he said, "we have no kind of Faith in your Government, which appears to us as insidious and deceitful as it is unjust and cruel; its Character is that of the Spider in Thomson,

"Cunning and fierce,

Mixture abhorr'd!!"

Finally, all the hurrying feelings aroused in him at times by what he called "bloody and insatiable Malice and Wickedness" became condensed in an abstract term so full of passion as "devilism." Franklin was not the man to take hold of the handles of a plough and then turn back. In his correspondence with Hartley, as with his other English friends, after he entered upon his mission to France, is the clearest recognition of the fact, to use his own robust figure of speech, that England had lost limbs which would never grow again, and his unwavering

resolution to give his assent to nothing less than the complete independence of the Colonies. For him, for his country, there were never more to be any connecting links between Great Britain and America except those of mere international good will and commercial comity. Upon propositions of every sort, looking to a reconciliation between the two lands, he lingered solely for the purpose of obtaining for America, when peace finally came, as large a measure of territorial aggrandizement as he could possibly secure. Of a conciliatory bill, of which Hartley sent him a copy, he said, "It might have erected a Wall of Brass round England, if such a Measure had been adopted, when Fryar Bacon's brazen Head cried out, TIME IS! But the wisdom of it was not seen, till after the fatal Cry of time's past!"

It was the almost pathetic desire of such correspondents of Franklin as Hartley to save some sort of organic tie between the two countries from the wreckage wrought by the fatal policy of the British Ministry, which makes it difficult for us to read Franklin's French letters to men like Hutton and Hartley without feeling that the harsh terms, which he often employed in these letters about the English King, Parliament and People, were hardly fair to that courageous and high-minded band of English patriots, who made the American cause almost as much theirs as his own, and stopped only short of treason in the assertion of their belief that the immemorial liberties of England as well as the liberties of America were staked upon the issue of the American contest. It was the extreme outspoken dissatisfaction, with which English Whigs regarded the effort of the British Ministry to force its own violent and technical views of colonial policy upon America, that made it possible for Franklin to write to Englishmen as he did about their government without exciting either frank or sullen resentment. But there was undoubtedly still another reason with which politics had nothing to do. These Whigs not only respected the manly candor, with which Franklin expressed convictions that they knew had been formed by a singularly enlightened, generous and sober mind, once devotedly attached by the strongest ties of tradition and affection to the colonial connection between Great Britain and America, but they had been too intimate with him personally not to be aware that it was not in his nature to harbor any real or lasting malignity of feeling towards anyone. And that this view of his character was correct is shown by more than one feature of his correspondence with Hartley. In a letter to Hartley, he said that, when Hartley's nation was hiring all the cutthroats it could collect of all countries and colors to destroy the Americans, it was hard to persuade the Americans not to ask, or accept of, aid from any country that might be prevailed with to grant it, and this from the hope that, though the British then thirsted for their blood, and pursued them with fire and sword, they might in some future time treat them kindly. But the outbreak does not seem so fierce when he goes on to say, "America has been *forc'd* and *driven* into the Arms of France. She was a dutiful and virtuous Daughter. A cruel Mother-in-law turn'd her out of Doors, defam'd her, and sought her Life. All the World knows her Innocence, and takes her part; and her Friends hope soon to see her honorably married." One of the peculiarities of that kindly and facetious nature was that its sense of humor would at times work its way even between the lines of formal state papers; to say nothing of letters to a familiar friend on the conduct of an enemy. Nor could Hartley doubt that the old well-springs of mirth and loving kindness were as full as ever to overflowing, when, in response to a letter from him to Franklin, containing the Scotch ballad, *Auld Robin Gray*, he received this lively application of the ballad to existing conditions:

I cannot make an entire application of it to present Circumstances; but, taking it in Parts, and changing Persons, some of it is extremely *apropos*. First Jenie may be supposed Old England, and Jamie, America. Jenie laments the loss of Jamie, and recollects with Pain his Love for her, his Industry in Business to promote her Wealth and Welfare, and her own Ingratitude.

“Young Jamie loved me weel,
 And sought me for his Bride,
 But saving ane Crown,
 He had naithing beside,
 To make that Crown a Pound, my Jamie gang’d to Sea,
 And the Crown and the Pound were all for me.”
 Her grief for this Separation is expressed very pathetically.

“The ship was a Wrack,
 Why did na Jennie die;
 O why was I spared
 To cry, Wae is me!”

There is no Doubt but that honest Jamie had still so much Love for her as to Pity her in his Heart, tho’ he might, at the same time, be not a little angry with her.

Towards the Conclusion, we must change the Persons, and let Jamie be old England, Jennie, America, and old Robin Gray, the Kingdom of France. Then honest Jenie, having made a Treaty of Marriage with Gray, expresses her firm Resolution of Fidelity, in a manner that does Honour to her good Sense, and her Virtue.

“I may not think of Jamie,
 For that would be a Sin,
 But I maun do my best,
 A gude wife to be;
 For auld Robin Gray
 Is very kind to me.”

How was it possible for Hartley to remain angry with a man like this, even if he was told by him in another letter that, though there could be but few things, in which he would venture to disobey the orders of Congress, he would, nevertheless, instantly renounce the commission that he held from it, and banish himself forever from so infamous a country as America, if Congress were to instruct him to seek a truce of ten years with Great Britain, with the stipulation that America was not to assist France during that time, if the war between Great Britain and France continued? This was trying, though not so trying perhaps as his statement in still another letter to Hartley that he thought of his reasonings to show that, if France should require of America something unreasonable, America would not be obliged by the treaty between them to continue the war as her ally, what he supposed an honest woman would think, if a gallant should entertain her with suppositions of cases in which infidelity to her husband would be justifiable. Nor was the merry adaptation of the ballad of *Auld Robin Gray* the only thing of the kind that tended to relieve the tension of the reproaches heaped by Franklin upon Great Britain in his letters to Hartley. In the same letter, in which he depicts the King as thirsty for still further draughts of American blood, and repels with apparently hot wrath the suggestion of Hartley that the alliance between France and America was the greatest stumbling-block in the way of peace between Great Britain and France, he tells Hartley that the proposition to separate France and America puts him in mind of the comic farce entitled *God-send, or The Wreckers*. It was not hard, of course, for him to be put in

mind of something conceived by his own mind. The farce opens with this stage introduction: (A Ship riding at anchor in a great Storm. A Lee Shore full of Rocks, and lin'd with people, furnish'd with Axes & Carriages to cut up Wrecks, knock the Sailors on the Head, and carry off the Plunder; according to Custom.) Then, after a lively dialogue between the wreckers, who have grown impatient with the staunch way in which the ship is riding out the storm, they put off in a boat in the hope of luring her to the shore, and come under her stern, and try to persuade her captain, in the course of another lively dialogue, that his cable is a damned rotten French cable, and will part of itself in half an hour; only to be told by the captain that they are rogues, and offer nothing but treachery and mischief, and that his cable is good and strong, and would hold long enough to balk their projects. The dialogue ends with the exclamation by the spokesman of the wreckers, "Come, my Lads, let's be gone. This Fellow is not so great a Fool as we took him to be."

Familiar affection glistens in every line of the letters from Franklin to George Whatley, and one of them is suffused with the genial warmth of his best social hours. After some strictures on an epitaph by Pope, he said in this letter:

I like better the concluding Sentiment in the old Song, call'd *The Old Man's Wish*, wherein, after wishing for a warm house in a country Town, an easy Horse, some good old authors, ingenious and cheerful Companions, a Pudding on Sundays, with stout Ale, and a bottle of Burgundy, &c., &c., in separate Stanzas, each ending with this burthen,

"May I govern my Passions with an absolute sway,

Grow wiser and better as my Strength wears away,

Without Gout or Stone, by a gentle Decay";

he adds,

"With a courage undaunted may I face my last day,

And, when I am gone, may the better Sort say,

'In the Morning when Sober, in the Evening when mellow,

He's gone, and has not left behind him his Fellow;

For he governed his Passions, &c.'"

But what signifies our Wishing? Things happen, after all, as they will happen. I have sung that *wishing Song* a thousand times, when I was young, and now find, at Four-score, that the three Contraries have befallen me, being subject to the Gout and the Stone, and not being yet Master of all my Passions. Like the proud Girl in my Country, who wished and resolv'd not to marry a Parson, nor a Presbyterian, nor an Irishman; and at length found herself married to an Irish Presbyterian Parson.

In the course of one of the summer rambles, which he took every year for twenty years, for health and recreation, Franklin twice visited Scotland, once in 1759, and once in 1771. As the result of civilities received by him in that country at the hands of Sir Alexander Dick, the President of the College of Physicians at Edinburgh, and Henry Home, Lord Kames, a Judge of the Court of Session, and author of *The Elements of Criticism* and *The Sketches of the History of Man*, he became a fast friend of these two eminent men. After completing with his son a tour of nearly 1500 miles in 1759, he wrote to Sir Alexander Dick, whose guests they had been for a time, that the many civilities, favors and kindnesses heaped upon them, while they were in Scotland, had made the most lasting impression upon their minds, and endeared

that country to them beyond expression. In the same letter, he asked Sir Alexander to assure Lady Dick that he had great faith in her parting prayers that the purse she honored him with would never be quite empty. His letters to Lord Kames testified in even stronger terms to the happy hours that he had spent in Scotland on this visit.

How unfortunate I was [he wrote to him] that I did not press you and Lady Kames more strongly to favor us with your company farther. How much more agreeable would our journey have been, if we could have enjoyed you as far as York. We could have beguiled the way, by discoursing of a thousand things, that now we may never have an opportunity of considering together; for conversation warms the mind, enlivens the imagination, and is continually starting fresh game, that is immediately pursued and taken, and which would never have occurred in the duller intercourse of epistolary correspondence. So that whenever I reflect on the great pleasure and advantage I received from the free communication of sentiment, in the conversations we had at Kames, and in the agreeable little rides to the Tweed side, I shall forever regret our premature parting.

Even more fervid was the conclusion of this letter:

Our conversation till we came to York, was chiefly a recollection of what we had seen and heard, the pleasure we had enjoyed, and the kindness we had received in Scotland, and how far that country had exceeded our expectations. On the whole, I must say, I think the time we spent there, was six weeks of the *densest* happiness I have met with in any part of my life: and the agreeable and instructive society we found there in such plenty, has left so pleasing an impression on my memory, that did not strong connexions draw me elsewhere, I believe Scotland would be the country I should choose to spend the remainder of my days in.

In a later letter to Lord Kames, he returns to the same pleasing field of association.

Your invitation to make another jaunt to Scotland, and offer to meet us half way *en famille*, was extremely obliging. Certainly I never spent my time anywhere more agreeably, nor have I been in any place, where the inhabitants and their conversation left such lastingly pleasing impressions on my mind, accompanied with the strongest inclination once more to visit that hospitable, friendly, and sensible people.

When we recall Franklin's distaste for theology and metaphysics, the humor that ever lurked about his lips, and Sydney Smith's famous observation that it requires a surgical operation to get a joke into a Scotchman's head, we may well experience a sensation of momentary surprise when we read these earnest tributes to the charm of Scotch social conditions in 1759—a sense of surprise increased by the fact that, in the *Autobiography*, Franklin ends a little dissertation on the odious nature of disputation with these words: "Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh." But all such sensations of surprise pass away when we remember that manly simplicity, practical sagacity, a spirit of enterprise and a love of learning, which no discouragements can chill, were also Scotch characteristics that Franklin shared with Scotchmen.

When Franklin returned in 1771 to the "odious-smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts and most enlightened understandings," amid which Sydney Smith, with his exaggerated humor, afterwards pictured himself as dwelling when he was a resident of Edinburgh, William Franklin did not accompany him.

In Scotland [Franklin wrote to his son after this second visit] I spent 5 Days with Lord Kaims at his Seat, Blair Drummond near Stirling, two or three Days at Glasgow, two

Days at Carron Iron Works, and the rest of the Month in and about Edinburgh, lodging at David Hume's, who entertain'd me with the greatest Kindness and Hospitality, as did Lord Kaims & his Lady. All our old Acquaintance there, Sir Alex^r Dick and Lady, Mr. M^cGowan, Drs. Robertson, Cullen, Black, Ferguson, Russel, and others, enquired affectionately of your Welfare. I was out three Months, and the Journey was evidently of great service to my Health.

The letters from Franklin to Lord Kames cover a great variety of topics; and to his observations on some of these topics, which were of a political or scientific nature, we shall return in other connections. One letter was written, when Franklin was on the eve of sailing from Portsmouth to America in 1762, and that the moment of embarkation upon the perilous seas of that time was a solemn one is manifest enough in its opening statements:

My dear Lord,

I am now waiting here only for a wind to waft me to America, but cannot leave this happy island and my friends in it, without extreme regret, though I am going to a country and a people that I love. I am going from the old world to the new; and I fancy I feel like those, who are leaving this world for the next: grief at the parting; fear of the passage; hope of the future.

But never were votive chaplets woven and gratefully suspended by a voyager after a more prosperous passage than this. Franklin left England in company with ten sail of merchant ships, under the convoy of a man-of-war, touched at the heavenly Madeira Islands, and was then caught up in the benign trade winds, and borne safely to the American coast.

The weather was so favourable [he stated in another letter to Lord Kames] that there were few days in which we could not visit from ship to ship, dining with each other, and on board of the man-of-war; which made the time pass agreeably, much more so than when one goes in a single ship; for this was like travelling in a moving village, with all one's neighbours about one.

Among the things upon which Franklin prided himself was the fact that he shaved himself, and in one of his letters to Lord Kames this trivial circumstance is brought to our notice in these wise words:

I have long been of an opinion similar to that you express, and think happiness consists more in small conveniences or pleasures that occur every day, than in great pieces of good fortune that happen but seldom to a man in the course of his life. Thus I reckon it among my felicities, that I can set my own razor, and shave myself perfectly well; in which I have a daily pleasure, and avoid the uneasiness one is sometimes obliged to suffer from the dirty fingers or bad breath of a slovenly barber.

There was also a link of friendship between Franklin and David Hume. In a letter to Strahan, Franklin, when on his visit to Scotland in 1771, writes to him that Hume, agreeably to the precepts of the Gospel, had received the stranger, and that he was then living with him at his house in the New Town at Edinburgh most happily. In another letter, a week or so later, he informed Strahan, after a short excursion from Edinburgh, that he was well and again under the hospitable roof of the good Samaritan. Hume was too much of a bigoted Tory not to snarl a little at Franklin's "factious" spirit, when the Revolution was coming on, but, when Franklin was leaving England in 1762, he paid him this handsome compliment:

I am very sorry, that you intend soon to leave our hemisphere. America has sent us many good things, gold, silver, sugar, indigo, &c; but you are the first philosopher, and indeed the first great man of letters for whom we are beholden to her. It is our

own fault, that we have not kept him; whence it appears, that we do not agree with Solomon, that wisdom is above gold; for we take care never to send back an ounce of the latter, which we once lay our fingers upon.

It was a dangerous thing to enter into a competition of compliments with Franklin, as his reply to this letter showed.

Your compliment of *gold* and *wisdom* [he said] is very obliging to me, but a little injurious to your country. The various value of everything in every part of this world arises, you know, from the various proportions of the quantity to the demand. We are told, that gold and silver in Solomon's time were so plenty, as to be of no more value in his country than the stones in the street. You have here at present just such a plenty of wisdom. Your people are, therefore, not to be censured for desiring no more among them than they have; and if I have *any*, I should certainly carry it where, from its scarcity, it may probably come to a better market.

This was certainly a ponderous compliment, but it does not seem quite so much so, when read after the alleviating story which immediately preceded it. Referring to a ridiculous dispute, mentioned by his correspondent, he said:

Judges in their decisions often use precedents. I have somewhere met with one, that is what the lawyers call a *case in point*. The Church people and the Puritans in a country town had once a bitter contention concerning the erecting of a Maypole, which the former desired and the latter opposed. Each party endeavoured to strengthen itself by obtaining the authority of the mayor, directing or forbidding a Maypole. He heard their altercation with great patience, and then gravely determined thus; "You, that are for having no Maypole, shall have no Maypole; and you, that are for having a Maypole, shall have a Maypole. Get about your business, and let me hear no more of this quarrel."

Other Scotch friends of Franklin were William Alexander, a connection of Lord Stirling, and his two daughters, one of whom, Mariamne, became the wife of Franklin's nephew, Jonathan Williams. A letter from Alexander to Franklin has its value because of the knowledge that it affords to us of the personal bearing of Arthur Lee who was, we shall see, jealous, haughty and sensitive enough to curdle even the sweet milk of Franklin's amiable nature. "I see," wrote Alexander, "you have made my old friend Lee a minister at Madrid, I think he has very much the manners of a Spaniard when he is not angry." It was Alexander also whose careful mercantile habits impelled him to write to Franklin, when he observed the disorder in which the latter kept his papers at Passy, this word of caution:

Will you forgive me my Dear Sir for noticing, that your Papers seem to me to lye a little loosely about your hands—you are to consider yourself as surrounded by spies and amongst people who can make a cable from a thread; would not a spare half hour per day enable your son to arrange all your papers, useless or not, so that you could come at them sooner, and not one be visible to a prying eye.

The only intimate friend, we believe, that Franklin had in Ireland was Sir Edward Newenham, a member of the Irish Parliament, whose sympathy with the American cause was so extreme that he appeared in his seat in deep mourning when the news of General Montgomery's death reached Ireland. Unfortunately, of the many letters, that Franklin wrote to him, only two or three, of comparatively meagre interest, survive. But of Ireland itself we have some graphic details in his letters to other persons. In one to Thomas Cushing, he says of the Irish, after a tour of the island with his friend, Richard Jackson, "There are many brave Spirits among them. The Gentry are a very sensible, polite, friendly and handsome People.

Their Parliament makes a most respectable Figure, with a number of very good Speakers in both Parties, and able Men of Business.” He then tells Cushing in modest terms how, when he was on his way to the gallery in the Parliament House at Dublin, the whole assembly, upon being informed by the Speaker that there was in town an American gentleman of distinguished character and merit, who was a member or delegate of some of the Parliaments in America, by a loud, unanimous expression of its will voted to admit him to the privileges of the floor; whereupon two members came to him without the bar, where he was standing, led him in and placed him very honorably.

Other friends of Franklin there were whom it is difficult to classify either as Englishmen or Americans, such as General Horatio Gates and General Charles Lee, who were born in England but became celebrated in America, and Benjamin West, the painter, who was born in America, but passed his mature life in England. That Franklin was on very friendly relations with Gates there can be no doubt, for in one of his letters to him he calls him his “Dear old friend,” and that was a term never applied by him to any but his intimates. Nor can there be much doubt as to what it was that brought and kept Franklin and Gates together as friends. It was the game to which Franklin was so much addicted that he even expounded its morals in an essay—chess. “When,” he wrote to Gates from Passy, “shall we meet again in cheerful converse, talk over our adventures, and finish with a quiet game of chess?” And on the same day that he addressed to Washington the noble letter, declaring that, if the latter were to come to Europe, he would know and enjoy what posterity would say of Washington, he wrote to Gates, “May God give us soon a good Peace, and bring you and I (*sic*) together again over a Chess board, where we may have Battles without Bloodshed.”

How an eccentric and perfidious man like General Charles Lee, whose temper alone was so repugnant to Franklin’s dislike of disputation as to win for him the nickname of “Boiling Water” from the Indians, could ever have passed himself off with Franklin as genuine coin is hard to understand, but he appears to have done so. “Yours most affectionately,” is the manner in which one of Franklin’s letters to him ends. In another letter to Lee, Franklin gravely sums up in formal numerical sequence his reasons for thinking that bows and arrows were good weapons not wisely laid aside. The idea is one so little in harmony with his practical turn of mind, and is reasoned out so elaborately, that we form a shrewd suspicion as we read that this was after all but his humorous way of replying to his erratic friend’s suggestion that the use of pikes by the American Army might not be a bad thing.

A very different kind of friend was Benjamin West. It was he that Franklin had in mind when he wrote to Polly Stevenson in 1763, “After the first Cares for the Necessaries of Life are over, we shall come to think of the Embellishments. Already some of our young Geniuses begin to lisp Attempts at Painting, Poetry, and Musick. We have a young Painter now studying at Rome.” Twenty years later, the lisping attempts of America at painting had become so distinctly articulate, and the young painter, who was studying at Rome, had become so famous, that Franklin could write to Jan Ingenhousz, “In England at present, the best History Painter, West; the best Portrait Painter, Copley, and the best Landscape Painter, Taylor, at Bath, are all Americans.” Benjamin West, and his wife, as Elizabeth Shewell, were friends of Franklin and Deborah before West left his native Pennsylvania for Europe; and the friendship between the artist and his wife and Franklin was kept alive by affectionate intercourse in England. For one of West’s sons Franklin became godfather. “It gave me great Pleasure,” he said in a letter to West, referring to a letter from West to him, “as it informed me of the Welfare of a Family I so much esteem and love, and that my Godson is a promising Boy.” The letter concludes with loving words for the godson and Raphael, West’s oldest son, and “Betsey,” West’s wife.

We have by no means taken a complete census of Franklin's American and British friends. For instance, in a letter to Doctor Cooper from London, he refers to a Mr. Mead, first Commissioner of the Customs in England, whom we have not mentioned, as a particular and intimate friend of his; to say nothing of other persons with whom his intercourse was very friendly but either too colorless to arrest our attention in reading his correspondence, or to even bring them up in his correspondence at all. But we have marshalled quite enough of these friends before the eye of the reader, we are sure, to satisfy him that few human beings ever had such a wealth of affection heaped on them as Franklin.

VII. Franklin's French Friends

To the host of friends mentioned above, numerous as it was, another great addition was to be made when Franklin became one of our envoys to France. In the various Colonies of America, so unlike each other in many respects, in England, in Scotland, his liberal instincts and quick sympathies ran out into new social forms almost with the fluid ease of the melted tallow which he had poured, in his boyhood, into his father's candle moulds; but of all the impressions that he ever derived from any society, that which was made upon him by French society certifies most strikingly to the wonderful plasticity of his nature, under the pressure of new conditions. So permeated did he—one of the truest progenitors of distinctively American ideas and attributes, and one of the truest exponents of the robust Anglo-Saxon character—become with the genius of the French People that a Frenchman, Henri Martin, the historian, has declared that he was “of a mind altogether French in its grace and elasticity.”

There was a time, of course, when Franklin, apart from the inveteracy of the old English prejudice, which believed that upon every pair of English legs marched three Frenchmen, had no good blood for the French because of the agony in which they had for so many years, with the aid of their savage friends, kept the colonial frontier. ”I fancy that intriguing nation would like very well to meddle on occasion, and blow up the coals between Britain and her colonies; but I hope we shall give them no opportunity.” This was his quiet comment even as late as 1767 in a letter to William Franklin upon the sedulous attentions recently paid to him by Monsieur Durand, the French plenipotentiary in London, whose masters were fully awake to the fact that the quarrel between Great Britain and her Colonies might be a pretty one from the point of view of French interests, and that in duels it is not the pistols but the seconds that kill. But this was politics. Long before Franklin crossed the Atlantic on his French mission, he had felt, during his visits to France in 1767 and 1769, the bewitching influence of social conditions perpetually enlivened and refreshed by the vivacity and inventive resource which were such conspicuous features of his own character. After his return from France in 1767, he wrote to D'Alibard: “The Time I spent in Paris, and in the improving Conversation and agreeable Society of so many learned and ingenious Men, seems now to me like a pleasing Dream, from which I was sorry to be awaked by finding myself again at London.” These agreeable impressions were confirmed by his return to France in 1769. After stating in a letter to Dupont de Nemours in the succeeding year that he expected to return to America in the ensuing summer, he exclaimed, “Would to God I could take with me Messrs. Dupont, du Bourg, and some other French Friends with their good Ladies! I might then, by mixing them with my Friends in Philadelphia, form a little happy Society that would prevent my ever wishing again to visit Europe.”

It was, therefore, to no entirely novel social conditions that Franklin was introduced when he found himself again in France in 1776. At any rate, no chameleon was ever quicker to absorb the color of his latest background. As time elapsed, nothing but his inability to write and speak French with the facility of a native-born Frenchman separated him in a social sense from the mass of French men and women, by whom he was admired, courted and flattered almost from the day that he set foot in France until the day that he was conveyed in one of the Queen's litters to the coast on his return to America. How far this assimilation was the deliberate achievement of a wise man, who never failed to act upon the principle that the best way of managing men is to secure their good will first, how far but the unconscious self-adjustment of a pliable disposition it is impossible to say. But there can be no doubt about the amazing sympathy with which Franklin entered into the social life of the French people.

Beneath the gay, pleasure-loving exterior that he presented to French society, there was always the thought of that land over-sea, so singularly blessed by Providence with material comfort and equality of fortune, with the general diffusion of education and enlightenment, and with political institutions bound to the past only by the wisdom of experience. Always beneath that exterior, too, was a glowing resentment of the wrongs that England had inflicted upon America, an enthusiastic sense of the “glorious cause” in which America was engaged, and a resolution as fixed as the eye of Nemesis that no hand but the hand of America itself should fill out the outlines of the imperial destiny, in which he had once been so eagerly, even pathetically, desirous that England should share. But these were thoughts and purposes reserved for the hours of business, or of confidential intercourse with his American compatriots, or for such moments as the one when he heard of the fall of Philadelphia and the surrender of Burgoyne. In his purely social relations with the French People, he preserved only enough of his republican ideas, dress and manners to give a certain degree of piquancy to his *ensemble*.

He adopted French usages and customs; he composed exquisite little stories and dialogues in the French manner, and, old as he was, he made love like a French *galant*. “As it is always fair Weather in our Parlours, it is at Paris always Peace,” he wrote to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and this remark comes home to us with full force when we remember with what unrestrained gaiety of heart, notwithstanding the shudder sent through him at times by the American War, he enjoyed the social life of Paris. Long before he left France, he had learnt to love the country and its people with a sincere, fervent attachment. After saying in a letter to Josiah Quincy, that the French had certainly advanced in politeness and civility many degrees beyond the English, he paid them this compliment:

I find them here a most amiable Nation to live with. The Spaniards are by common Opinion suppos’d to be cruel, the English proud, the Scotch insolent, the Dutch Avaricious, &c., but I think the French have no national Vice ascrib’d to them. They have some Frivolities, but they are harmless. To dress their Heads so that a Hat cannot be put on them, and then wear their Hats under their Arms, and to fill their Noses with Tobacco, may be called Follies, perhaps, but they are not Vices. They are only the effects of the tyranny of Custom. In short, there is nothing wanting in the Character of a Frenchman, that belongs to that of an agreeable and worthy Man. There are only some Trifles surplus, or which might be spared.

These, however, were but frigid words in comparison with those subsequently employed by him in relation to a country, where, to use his own language, everybody strove to make him happy. “The French are an amiable People to live with,” he told his old friend, Captain Nathaniel Falconer, “They love me, & I love them.” In a later letter to William Franklin, he said, “I am here among a People that love and respect me, a most amiable Nation to live with; and perhaps I may conclude to die among them; for my Friends in America are dying off, one after another, and I have been so long abroad, that I should now be almost a Stranger in my own Country.”

Nor did the love for France that he took back with him to the United States grow at all fainter with absence and the flow of time. To the Duc de la Rochefoucauld he wrote from Philadelphia, “I love France, I have 1000 Reasons for doing so: And whatever promotes or impedes her Happiness affects me as if she were my Mother.” To Madame Lavoisier he used terms that communicate to us an even more vivid conception of the ambrosial years that he had passed in France.

These [he said, referring to his good fortune in his old age in its different aspects] are the blessings of God, and depend on his continued goodness; yet all do not make me

forget Paris, and the nine years' happiness I enjoyed there, in the sweet society of a people whose conversation is instructive, whose manners are highly pleasing, and who, above all the nations of the world, have, in the greatest perfection, the art of making themselves beloved by strangers. And now, even in my sleep, I find, that the scenes of all my pleasant dreams are laid in that city, or in its neighbourhood.³⁸

Mingled with these pleasant dreams, it is safe to say were some of the lively and charming women to whose embraces he submitted, if his sister Jane was not misinformed, in a spirit quite remote from that of the rigors of penance.

You mention the Kindness of the French Ladies to me [he wrote to Elizabeth Partridge, whose husband was the superintendent of the almshouse in Boston], I must explain that matter. This is the civilest nation upon Earth. Your first Acquaintances endeavour to find out what you like, and they tell others. If 'tis understood that you like Mutton, dine where you will you find Mutton. Somebody, it seems, gave it out that I lov'd Ladies; and then everybody presented me their Ladies (or the Ladies presented themselves) to be *embrac'd*, that is to have their Necks kiss'd. For as to kissing of Lips or Cheeks it is not the Mode here, the first, is reckon'd rude, & the other may rub off the Paint. The French Ladies have however 1000 other ways of rendering themselves agreeable; by their various Attentions and Civilities, & their sensible Conversation. 'Tis a delightful People to live with.

I hope, however [he wrote to another correspondent after denying a story about himself], to preserve, while I stay, the regard you mention of the French ladies; for their society and conversation, when I have time to enjoy them, are extremely agreeable.

And that the French ladies found his society and conversation extremely agreeable no one can well doubt who has had occasion to become familiar with the scented missives, full of artful coquetry, that were addressed by many fair hands to "très cher papa," or "Dear American papa" or "amiable papa," when he was in the land where somebody had been so considerate as to give it out that he liked ladies. At times, these notes run along in mingled French and English as if the writers were determined to bring to bear upon him the blandishments not only of the former language but of his own familiar tongue besides. "Je vous envoye a sweet kiss, dear Papa, envoyez moi en revanche, un Mot de Réponse," was one languishing request. Even Franklin's bad French mattered but little when a woman, Madame Brillon, whom the daughter of Abigail Adams pronounced "one of the handsomest women in France," could write to him, "It is always very good French to say, 'Je vous aime.' My heart always goes out to meet this word when you say it to me." From such words as these to his saying that the best master of languages is a mistress the transition was not very difficult.³⁹

It was at Passy, then a suburb of Paris, that Franklin resided during the eight and a half years that he was one of our representatives in France. His surroundings were thus described by him in reply to a question from Mrs. Stevenson:

You wish to know how I live. It is in a fine House, situated in a neat Village, on high Ground, half a Mile from Paris, with a large Garden to walk in. I have abundance of Acquaintance, dine abroad Six days in seven. Sundays I reserve to dine at home, with

³⁸ In a letter to Count de Moustiers, dated Philadelphia, Feb. 10, 1788, Franklin termed Louis XVI. and France "the best of Kings & the most beloved of Nations."

³⁹ Franklin was too old when he entered upon the French mission to acquire a real mastery of the French language. On one occasion, when at the theatre with Madame de Boufflers, from whom he took his cue in helping to swell the plaudits of the evening, he was chagrined to find that his most vigorous applause had been bestowed on flattering allusions to himself.

such Americans as pass this Way; and I then have my grandson Ben, with some other American Children from his school.

The house mentioned by Franklin was known as the Basse Cour de Monsieur Le Ray de Chaumont, and had originally, with the inscription over its door, “Se sta bene, non si muove” not been unknown to fame as the Hôtel de Valentinois. Indeed, John Locke, who visited Paris in 1679, declared that it was among the twenty-four *belles maisons* in Paris that best rewarded the curiosity of the stranger at that time. The circumstances, under which it passed into the possession of Franklin, were another proof of the flaming zeal with which many of the foremost inhabitants of France espoused the cause of the Colonies. Chaumont was Grand Maître des Eaux et Forêts de France and Intendant Honoraire des Invalides, a friend of the Duc de Choiseul, and a man of large wealth, with a château on the Loire as well as the mansion at Passy, of which the building occupied by Franklin was a part. In his generous enthusiasm for American liberty, he declined a post in the French Ministry, offered to him by Choiseul, because he thought that by declining it he might be a more useful intermediary between America and the French Government. When John Adams came to Passy, and found a home under the same roof with Franklin, he felt obliged to write to Chaumont asking him to consider what rent they should pay to him for the use of his house and furniture. Every part of Chaumont’s conduct towards him and Americans in general, and in all their affairs, he said, had been polite and obliging, as far as he had an opportunity of observing, and he had no doubt it would continue, but it was not reasonable that they should occupy such an elegant mansion without any compensation to the owner, and it was not right that they should live at too great or at too uncertain an expense to their constituents. The reply of Chaumont was worthy of a paladin of Ancient France. “When I consecrated my home to Dr. Franklin and his associates who might live with him,” he said, “I made it fully understood that I should expect no compensation, because I perceived that you had need of all your means to send to the succor of your country, or to relieve the distresses of your countrymen escaping from the chains of their enemies.” This is a world, however, in which it is too much to expect an absolutely free gift of house rent, and the answer of Chaumont to John Adams does not altogether agree with the version of the matter given by Franklin in a letter to Robert R. Livingston, in which he said that Chaumont had originally proposed to leave the article of rent unsettled until the end of the war, and then to accept for it a piece of American land from the Congress such as they might judge equivalent. Considering the serious uncertainty as to whether there would then be any Congress, this was quite generous enough. It is painful to relate, however, that Chaumont engaged so recklessly in the hazardous business of shipping supplies to America for the patriot army as to become involved in pecuniary embarrassments, which produced some degree of temporary constraint in his intercourse with Franklin. “I find that in these Affairs with him, a Bargain tho’ ever so clearly express’d signifies nothing,” wrote Franklin in a moment of disgust with his volatility to Jonathan Williams. A few months before, Franklin had made this entry in a journal kept by him during a brief portion of his residence at Passy. “Visit at M. de Chaumont’s in the evening; found him cold and dry.” But before Franklin left France, the old cordiality of intercourse appears to have been fully re-established, for we find the two dining with each other again, and besides, when Franklin was on his way to the seacoast, on his return to America, Chaumont and his daughter accompanied him part of the way. The entire restoration of good feeling between the two men is also shown in the letters and conduct of Franklin after his return to America. Chaumont was one of the group of French friends favored by him with gifts of the Franklin Myrtle Wax Soap, “thought,” he said, “to be the best in the World, for Shaving & for washing Chinces, and other things of delicate Colours.” In one of his letters from Philadelphia, Franklin tells Chaumont that Donatien Le Ray Chaumont, the Younger, who had come over to America to press certain claims of the elder Chaumont against the United States, was out at that time

with his “son Bache” and some others on a hunt. It is in this letter, by the way, that he said of Finck, his *maître d’hôtel* at Passy, who was pretending that he was not wholly paid, “He was continually saying of himself, Je suis honnête homme, Je suis honnête homme. But I always suspected he was mistaken; and so it proves.” In another letter, he wrote to Chaumont, “I have frequently the Pleasure of seeing your valuable Son, whom I love as my own,” and in this letter he sent his love to all Chaumont’s children in France, one of whom he was in the habit of addressing as “ma femme,” another as “ma chere amie,” and still another as “mon enfant.” “Present my affectionate Respects to Madame de Chaumont, and Love to Mad^e Foucault, to ma Femme, m^a chere Amie, et mon Enfant,” was one of his messages to Chaumont. This Madame Foucault was the favorite mentioned by William Temple Franklin, when he wrote to his grandfather some nine months after the latter found the manner of Chaumont “cold and dry,” “All the family (the Chaumonts) send their love to you, and the beautiful M^e Foucault accompanys hers with an English kiss.” A challenge of that kind was always promptly caught up by Franklin. “Thanks to Mad^e Foucault,” he replied, “for her kindness in sending me the Kiss. It was grown cold by the way. I hope for a warm one when we meet.”

An amusing observation of Madame Chaumont, which has its value, as an illustration of eighteenth-century manners in France, is quoted in a letter from Franklin to John Paul Jones:

L’Abbé Rochon had just been telling me & Madame Chaumont [wrote Franklin] that the old Gardiner & his Wife had complained to the Curate, of your having attack’d her in the Garden about 7 o’clock the evening before your Departure, and attempted to ravish her relating all the Circumstances, some of which are not fit for me to write. The serious Part of it was y^t three of her Sons were determin’d to kill you, if you had not gone off; the Rest occasioned some Laughing; for the old Woman being one of the grossest, coarsest, dirtiest & ugliest that we may find in a thousand, Madame Chaumont said it gave a high Idea of the Strength of Appetite & Courage of the Americans. A Day or two after, I learnt y^t it was the femme de Chambre of Mademoiselle Chaumont who had disguis’d herself in a Suit, I think, of your Cloaths, to divert herself under that Masquerade, as is customary the last evening of Carnival: and that meeting the old Woman in the Garden, she took it into her Head to try her Chastity, which it seems was found Proof.

The wit of Madame de Chaumont, however, shows to better advantage in connection with another incident. One of Franklin’s friends was Mademoiselle Passy, a beautiful girl, whom he was in the habit of calling, so John Adams tells us, “his favorite, and his flame, and his love,” which flattered the family, and did not displease the young lady. When her engagement to the Marquis de Tonnerre was announced, Madame de Chaumont exclaimed to Franklin, “Hélas! tous les conducteurs de Monsieur Franklin n’ont pas empêché le tonnerre de tomber sur Mademoiselle de Passy.” Franklin himself was entirely too good a conductor of wit not to pass a thing like this on.

It gives me great Pleasure Madam my respected Neighbour, [he said in a letter to Madame de Boulainvilliers, the mother of the Semele upon whom the Marquis was about to descend] to learn that our lovely Child is soon to be married with your Approbation & that we are not however to be immediately depriv’d of her Company. I assure you I shall make no Use of my Paratonnerre [lightning-rod] to prevent this Match.

Franklin’s republican simplicity began and ended with his unpowdered hair, worn straight, and covered with a cap of marten fur, and his russet dress. At Passy, he lived in a manner that Vergennes, accustomed to the splendor and profusion of European Courts, might well call

modest, but which was quite as lavish as was consistent with the reputation of a plain democrat or of a veritable philosopher. Under the terms of his contract with his *maître d'hôtel*, the latter was to provide *déjeuner* and dinner daily for five persons.

The *déjeuner* was to consist of bread and butter, honey, and coffee or chocolate with sugar, and the dinner of a joint of beef, or veal or mutton, followed by fowl or game with “deux plats d'entremets, deux plats de legumes, et un plat de Pâtisserie, avec hors d'œuvre, de Beurres, cornichons, radis, et^c.” For dessert, there were to be “deux de Fruit en hiver et 4 en Été.” There were also to be at dinner: “Deux compottes, un assiette de fromage, un de Biscuits, et un de bonbons,” and “Des Glaces, 2 fois par Semaine en Été et un fois en Hyver.” The cost of this service per month was 720 livres. There was also an allowance of 240 livres per month for nine domestic servants, and of 400 livres per month for extra dinners for guests; making the total monthly cost of Franklin's table 1360 livres. And there was no lack of good wine, red or white, *ordinaire* or *extraordinaire*. In 1778, there were 1180 bottles of wine and rum in the cellar at Passy, and, some four and one half years later, there were 1203. Franklin also maintained a carriage and coachman at a cost of 5018 livres per year. By a resolution of Congress, the salaries of the different Commissioners of the United States in Europe were fixed at 11,428 livres tournois per annum, in addition to their reasonable expenses, and the total expenses of Franklin in France are computed by Smyth to have been about \$15,000 per annum, a moderate sum, indeed, in comparison with the amount necessary to sustain the dignity of our Minister to France at the present time. Nevertheless, the *ménage* at Passy was luxurious enough for him to be warned that it had been described at home by some of his guests in such terms as to provoke popular censure on the part of his countrymen.

They must be contented for the future [Franklin said in a letter to John Adams] as I am, with plain beef and pudding. The readers of Connecticut newspapers ought not to be troubled for any more accounts of our extravagance. For my own part, if I could sit down to dinner on a piece of excellent salt pork and pumpkin, I would not give a farthing for all the luxuries of Paris.

After this time, Franklin did not keep such an open house as before, considerably to the relief of his gout. Previously, if we may believe John Adams, he had made a practice of inviting everybody to dine with him on Sunday at Passy. Sometimes, his company was made up exclusively, or all but exclusively, of Americans, and sometimes partly of Americans, and partly of French, and, now and then, there was an Englishman or so. Miss Adams mentions a “sumptuous dinner,” at which the members of the Adams family, the Marquis de la Fayette and his wife, Lord Mount Morris, an Irish Volunteer, Dr. Jeffries, and Paul Jones were guests. Another dinner is mentioned by her at which all the guests were Americans, except M. Brillon, who had dropped in, he said, “à demander un diné à Père Franklin.” A whimsical story is told by Jefferson of still another dinner at which one half of the guests were Americans and one half French.

Among the last [he says] was the Abbé (Raynal). During the dinner he got on his favorite theory of the degeneracy of animals, and even of men, in America, and urged it with his usual eloquence. The Doctor at length noticing the accidental stature and position of his guests, at table, “Come,” says he, “M. L'Abbé, let us try this question by the fact before us. We are here one half Americans, and one half French, and it happens that the Americans have placed themselves on one side of the table, and our French friends are on the other. Let both parties rise, and we will see on which side nature has degenerated.” It happened that his American guests were Carmichael, Harmer, Humphreys, and others of the finest stature and form; while those of the other side were remarkably diminutive, and the Abbé himself, particularly, was

a mere shrimp. He parried the appeal, however, by a complimentary admission of exceptions, among which the Doctor himself was a conspicuous one.

Not the least interesting of the guests that Franklin drew around his table at Passy were lads, who had a claim upon his notice, either because they were the sons, or grandsons, of friends of his, or because they were friends of his grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache. In a letter to Doctor Cooper, Franklin tells him that his grandson, Samuel Cooper Johonnot appeared a very promising lad, in whom he thought that the doctor would have much satisfaction, and was well on the preceding Sunday, when he had had the pleasure of his company to dinner with Mr. Adams' sons, and some other young Americans. There is still in existence a letter from John Quincy Adams, then a boy of eleven, to Franklin, which indicates that the latter had quite won his heart, though, do what he might, he could never win the heart of the elder Adams.

It was a brilliant society, to which Franklin was introduced, after the first reserve of the French Court, before its recognition of American independence, was laid aside. He had the magpie habit of hoarding every scrap of paper or cardboard, that bore the imprint of his existence, and Smyth, the latest editor of Franklin's works, has, with his usual diligence, compiled the names that appear most frequently on the visiting cards, found among Franklin's papers. They are such significant names as those of La Duchesse d'Enville, her son Le Duc de la Rochefoucauld, M. Turgot, Duc de Chaulnes, Comte de Crillon, Vicomte de Sarsfield, M. Brisson, of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Comte de Milly, Prince des Deuxponts, Comte d'Estaing, Marquis de Mirabeau and M. Beugeard, Treasurer of the State of Brittany.

The Diary of John Adams reveals Franklin and himself dining on one occasion with La Duchesse d'Enville, and "twenty of the great people of France," on another with M. Chalut, one of the farmers-general, and the old Marshal Richelieu, and "a vast number of other great company," on another with the Prince de Tingry, Duc de Beaumont, of the illustrious House of Montmorency, and on another with La Duchesse d'Enville, along with her daughter and granddaughter, and dukes, abbots and the like so numerous that the list ends with a splutter of *et ceteras*. "Dukes, and bishops and counts, etc." are the overburdened words with which Adams closes his list of the guests at a dinner given by Vergennes, the minister of Louis XVI.

But, after all, it was the circle of intimate friends, to which Franklin promised to introduce John Jay on the arrival of Jay in France, that constitutes the chief interest of the former's social life in France. Three of these friends were Madame Helvétius, Madame Brillon and the Comtesse d'Houdetot. With Madame Helvétius, he dined every Saturday at Auteuil, with Madame Brillon twice a week at the home of her husband, not far from his, and with the Comtesse d'Houdetot frequently at Sanois, in the Valley of Montmorency. Madame Helvétius was known to her friends as "Our Lady of Auteuil." She was the widow of Helvétius, the philosopher, who had left her a handsome fortune, amassed by him when one of the farmers-general. In testimony of her affection for him, she kept under glass, on a table in her bedroom, a monument erected to his memory, with his picture hung above it.

Her *salon* was one of the best-known in France, and it was maintained on such a sumptuous scale that, in one of his letters, after his return to America, Franklin told her that often in his dreams he placed himself by her side on one of her thousand sofas. It was at Auteuil that he passed some of his happiest hours in France, plying its mistress with flattery and badinage, and enjoying the music of her two daughters, known to the household as "the Stars," and the conversation of her friends, the younger Cabanis, and the Abbés Morellet and de la Roche. One of the amusements of the inner circle at Auteuil was to read aloud to each other little trifles, full of point and grace which they had composed. Thus, though after Franklin had

returned to America, was ushered into the world the Abbé Morellet's *Very Humble Petition to Madame Helvétius from her Cats*—animals which appear to have had a position in her home as assured as that of “the Stars” or the Abbés themselves; and several of the wittiest of the productions, which Franklin called his Bagatelles, originated in the same way. If homage, seasoned with delightful humor and wit, could have kept the mistress of Auteuil, at the age of sixty, from incurring the malice of the female contemporary, who, we are told by Miss Adams, compared her with the ruins of Palmyra, that of Franklin would assuredly have done it. When she complained that he had not been to see her for a long time, he evaded the reproach of absence by replying, “I am waiting, Madame, until the nights are longer.” Whatever others might think, she was to him, “his fair friend at Auteuil,” who still possessed “health and personal charms.” What cleverer application could there be than this of the maxim of Hesiod that the half is sometimes more than the whole:

Very dear Friend, we shall have some good music to-morrow morning at breakfast. Can you give me the pleasure of sharing in it. The time will be half past ten. This is a problem that a mathematician will experience some trouble in explaining; In sharing other things, each of us has only one portion; but in sharing pleasures with you, my portion is doubled. The part is more than the whole.

On another occasion, when Madame Helvétius reminded Franklin that she expected to meet him at Turgot's, he replied, “Mr. Franklin never forgets any party at which Madame Helvétius is expected. He even believes that, if he were engaged to go to Paradise this morning, he would pray for permission to remain on earth until half-past one, to receive the embrace promised him at the Turgots.”

Poor Deborah seems altogether lost, and forgotten when we read these lines that he wrote to the Abbé de la Roche:

I have often remarked, when reading the works of M. Helvétius, that, although we were born and reared in two countries so remote from each other, we have frequently had the same thoughts; and it is a reflection very flattering to me that we have loved the same studies, and, as far as we have both known them, the same friends, and the same woman.

But the image of Deborah was not so completely effaced from Franklin's memory that he could not conjure up her shade for a moment to excite a retaliatory impulse in the breast which he had found insensible to his proposals of marriage, serious, or affected. If Madame Helvétius, who was illiterate like Deborah, did not appreciate the light, ærial humor of the following dream from the pen of the author of *The Art of Procuring Pleasant Dreams*, we may be sure that her witty Abbés did:

Mortified by your cruel resolution, declared by you so positively yesterday evening, to remain single the rest of your life, out of respect for your dear husband, I retired to my home, threw myself upon my bed, and dreamt that I was dead and in the Elysian Fields.

I was asked whether I wished to see any persons in particular. “Conduct me to the philosophers,” I replied. “There are two who live here close by in this garden; they are very good neighbors and very friendly with each other,” I was told. “Who are they?” “Socrates and Helvétius.” “I esteem them both immensely, but let me see Helvétius first, because I understand a little French, but not a word of Greek.” He received me with much courtesy, having known me, he said, by reputation for some time past. He asked me a thousand questions about the war, the present state of religion, of liberty, and politics in France. “You do not ask me then,” I said, “anything about your

dear *amie*, Madame Helvétius; yet she loves you still exceedingly, and I was at her home only an hour ago.” “Ah,” said he, “you bring back to me my past happiness, but it must be forgotten to be happy here. During several of my first years here, I thought only of her, but at length I am consoled. I have taken another wife, one as much like her as I could find. She is not, it is true, quite so handsome, but she has as much good sense, and much *esprit*, and she loves me infinitely. Her continuous aim is to please me, and she is at this moment gone to look up the best nectar and ambrosia to regale me with this evening; stay here awhile, and you will see her.” “I perceive,” said I, “that your former *amie* is more faithful than you are; for she has had several good offers, but has refused them all. I confess that I myself have loved her to distraction, but she was obdurate, and has rejected me peremptorily for love of you.” “I pity your misfortune,” said he, “for in truth she is a good and handsome woman, and very lovable.” “But are not the Abbé de la R—— and the Abbé M—— still some times at her house?” “Yes, to be sure, for she has not lost a single one of your friends.” “If you had induced the Abbé M—— (with some good coffee and cream) to say a word for you, you would, perhaps, have succeeded; for he is as subtle a reasoner as Duns Scotus or St. Thomas; he marshals his arguments in such good order that they become almost irresistible. And if the Abbé de la R—— had been induced (by some fine edition of an old classic) to say a word against you, that would have been better; for I have always observed that when he advised her to do anything she had a very strong inclination to do the reverse.” As he was saying this, the new Madame Helvétius entered with the nectar, and I recognized her instantly as my former American *amie*, Mrs. Franklin. I laid claim to her but she said to me coldly: “I was a good wife to you for forty-nine years and four months, almost a half century; be content with that. I have formed a new connection here which will last to eternity.” Indignant at this refusal of my Eurydice, I at once resolved to quit those ungrateful shades, and to return to this good world, and to gaze again upon the sun and you. Here I am; let us avenge ourselves.

It is an animated picture, too, that Franklin strikes off of Our Lady of Auteuil in a letter to Cabanis, when the latter had been absent for a time from Auteuil:

We often talk of you at Auteuil, where everybody loves you. I now and then offend our good lady who can not long retain her displeasure, but, sitting in state on her sofa, extends graciously her long, handsome arm, and says “*la; baisez ma main: Je vous pardonne,*” with all the dignity of a sultanness. She is as busy as ever, endeavoring to make every creature about her happy, from the Abbés down thro’ all ranks of the family to the birds and Poupon.

Poupon was one of the fair lady’s eighteen cats. This letter ends with the request that Cabanis present to his father the writer’s thanks to him for having gotten so valuable a son.

A lively note to Cabanis is in the same vein:

M. Franklin risen, washed, shaved, combed, beautified to the highest degree, of which he is capable, entirely dressed, and on the point of going out, with his head full of the four Mesdames Helvétius, and of the sweet kisses that he proposes to snatch from them, is much mortified to find the possibility of this happiness being put off until next Sunday. He will exercise as much patience as he can, hoping to see one of these ladies at the home of M. de Chaumont Wednesday. He will be there in good time to see her enter with that grace and dignity which charmed him so much seven weeks ago in the same place. He even plans to seize her there, and to keep her at his home

for the rest of her life. His remaining three Mesdames Helvétius at Auteuil can suffice for the canaries and the Abbés.

Another note to Cabanis illustrates how readily pleasantry of this kind ran in the eighteenth century into gross license:

M. Franklin is sorry to have caused the least hurt to those beautiful tresses that he always regards with pleasure. If that Lady likes to pass her days with him, he would like as much to pass his nights with her; and since he has already given many of his days to her, although he had such a small remnant of them to give, she would seem ungrateful to have never given him a single one of her nights, which run continually to pure waste, without promoting the good fortune of any one except Poupon.

When the reader is told that this letter ended with the words, “to be shown to our Lady of Auteuil,” his mind is not unprepared for the graphic description by Abigail Adams of a dinner at which Madame Helvétius was the central figure:

She entered the room with a careless, jaunty air; upon seeing ladies who were strangers to her, she bawled out, “Ah, mon Dieu, where is Franklin? Why did you not tell me there were ladies here?” You must suppose her speaking all this in French. “How I look!” said she, taking hold of a chemise made of tiffany, which she had on over a blue lutestring, and which looked as much upon the decay as her beauty, for she was once a handsome woman; her hair was frizzled; over it she had a small straw hat, with a dirty gauze half-handkerchief round it, and a bit of dirtier gauze than ever my maids wore was bowed on behind. She had a black gauze scarf thrown over her shoulders. She ran out of the room; when she returned, the Doctor entered at one door, she at the other; upon which she ran forward to him, caught him by the hand, “Hélas! Franklin;” then gave him a double kiss, one upon each cheek, and another upon his forehead. When we went into the room to dine, she was placed between the Doctor and Mr. Adams. She carried on the chief of the conversation at dinner, frequently locking her hands into the Doctor’s, and sometimes spreading her arms upon the backs of both the gentlemen’s chairs, then throwing her arm carelessly upon the Doctor’s neck.

I should have been greatly astonished at this conduct, if the good Doctor had not told me that in this lady I should see a genuine Frenchwoman, wholly free from affectation or stiffness of behaviour, and one of the best women in the world. For this I must take the Doctor’s word; but I should have set her down for a very bad one, although sixty years of age, and a widow. I own I was highly disgusted, and never wish for an acquaintance with any ladies of this cast. After dinner, she threw herself upon a settee, where she showed more than her feet. She had a little lapdog, who was, next to the Doctor, her favorite. This she kissed, and when he wet the floor she wiped it up with her chemise. This is one of the Doctor’s most intimate friends, with whom he dines once every week, and she with him. She is rich, and is my near neighbour; but I have not yet visited her. Thus you see, my dear, that manners differ exceedingly in different countries. I hope however, to find among the French ladies manners more consistent with my ideas of decency, or I shall be a mere recluse.

This, of course, in part, was but the New England snowdrop expressing its disapproval of the full-blown red rose of France, but it is impossible for all the pigments in the picture, painted by the skilful hand of Abigail Adams, to have been supplied by the moral austerity of Puritanism. Miss Adams, we might add, followed up her mother’s impression with a prim ditto in her journal: “Dined at Mr. Franklin’s by invitation; a number of gentlemen and

Madame Helvétius, a French lady sixty years of age. Odious indeed do our sex appear when divested of those ornaments, with which modesty and delicacy adorn us.” But we suspect that the Doctor was right in saying that Madame Helvétius, free and tawdry as she seemed to Abigail Adams and her daughter, was one of the best women in the world; that is to say her world. We are told that, when she was convalescing from an illness, four hundred persons assembled at Auteuil to express the pleasure they felt at the prospect of her recovery. Beneath the noisy, lax manners, which Mrs. Adams delineates so mercilessly, there must have been another and a very different Madame Helvétius to have won such a tribute as the following from a man who had known what it was to be tenderly beloved by more than one pure, thoroughly refined and accomplished woman:

And now I mention your friends, let me tell you, that I have in my way been trying to form some hypothesis to account for your having so many, and of such various kinds. I see that statesmen, philosophers, historians, poets, and men of learning of all sorts are drawn around you, and seem as willing to attach themselves to you as straws about a fine piece of amber. It is not that you make pretensions to any of their sciences; and if you did, similarity of studies does not always make people love one another. It is not that you take pains to engage them; artless simplicity is a striking part of your character. I would not attempt to explain it by the story of the ancient, who, being asked why philosophers sought the acquaintance of kings, and kings not that of philosophers, replied that philosophers knew what they wanted, which was not always the case with kings. Yet thus far the comparison may go, that we find in your sweet society that charming benevolence, that amiable attention to oblige, that disposition to please and be pleased, which we do not always find in the society of one another. It springs from you; it has its influence on us all, and in your company we are not only pleased with you, but better pleased with one another and ourselves.

There can be no doubt that the friendship between the two was a real, genuine sentiment. When Franklin was doubting whether he was not too old and decrepit to cross the Atlantic, she was one of the three friends who urged him to spend his last days in France, and live with them. It was hardly fair, therefore, when she exclaimed after the departure of Franklin from France, in the presence of Madame Brillon, “Ah, that great man, that dear man, we shall see him no more,” for Madame Brillon to retort, “It is entirely your fault, Madame.”

From Havre he sent back tender farewells to his “très chere amie.” They were awaiting, he said, their baggage and fellow-voyager, Mr. Houdon, the sculptor. “When they come, we shall quit France, the country of the world that I love the best; and I shall leave there my dear Helvetia. She can be happy there. I am not sure of being happy in America; but it is necessary for me to go there. Things seem to me to be badly arranged here below, when I see beings so well constituted to be happy together compelled to separate.” Then after a message of friendship to “the Abbés the good Abbés,” the *vale* dies out in these fond words: “I do not tell you that I love you. I might be told that there was nothing strange or meritorious in that, because the whole world loves you. I only hope that you will always love me a little.”

Nor did the separation worked by the Atlantic produce any change in these feelings. In the letters written by Franklin to Madame Helvétius, and the members of her circle, after his return to Philadelphia, there is the same spirit of affection for her and for them, as well as a wistful retrospect of his chats with her on her thousand sofas, his walks with her in her garden, and the repasts at her table, always seasoned by sound sense, sprightliness and friendship. One of his commissions seems to have been to obtain a cardinal red bird for the “good dame,” as he calls her in a letter to the Abbé Morellet from Philadelphia. “The good Dame, whom we all love, and whose Memory I shall love and honour as long as I have any

Existence,” were his words. But the commission was difficult of execution. The Virginia cardinal, he wrote to the Abbé, was a tender bird that stood the sea but poorly. Several sent out to France for their dame by Mr. Alexander, in his tobacco ships, had never arrived, he understood, and, “unless a Friend was going in the Ship who would take more than common Care of them,” he supposed, “one might send an hundred without landing one alive.”

They would be very happy, I know [he said], if they were once under her Protection; but they cannot come to her, and she will not come to them. She may remember the Offer I made her of 1,000 Acres of Woodland, out of which she might cut a great Garden and have 1,000 Aviaries if she pleased. I have a large Tract on the Ohio where Cardinals are plenty. If I had been a Cardinal myself perhaps I might have prevail’d with her.

In his efforts to transport the Cardinal, Franklin even enlisted the services of Mr. Paradise, who, if contemporary gossip is reliable, might well have pleaded the preoccupation imposed upon him of protecting himself from the beak of his own termagant wife. Madame Helvétius, however, was not so eager for a cardinal as not to be willing to wait until one could be brought over by a proper escort. “I am in no hurry at all,” she wrote to Franklin; “I will wait; for I am not willing to be the death of these pretty creatures. I will wait.” In this same letter, there is an amusing mixture of tenderness and banter. Declining health and advancing years, she said, would but enable them the sooner to meet again as well as to meet again those whom they had loved, she a husband and he a wife; “but I believe,” she wipes the moisture from her eyes long enough to say, “that you who have been a rogue (*coquin*) will be restored to more than one.”

From what we have said, it is plain enough that the friendship felt by Madame Helvétius for the Abbés Morellet and de la Roche was shared by Franklin. When he touched at Southampton, after leaving Havre, on his return to America, he wafted another fond farewell to Madame Helvétius; “I will always love you,” he said, “think of me sometimes, and write sometimes to your B. F.” This letter, too, contained the usual waggish reference to the Abbés. “Adieu, my very, very, very dear amie. Wish us a good voyage, and tell the good Abbés to pray for us, since that is their profession.” The *Very Humble Petition to Madame Helvétius from her Cats* was long ascribed to Franklin, but it was really written by the Abbé Morellet. After reading it, Franklin wrote to the Abbé that the rapidity, with which the good lady’s eighteen cats were increasing, would, in time, make their cause insupportable, and that their friends should, therefore, advise them to submit voluntarily either to transportation or castration. How deeply the Abbé Morellet was attached to Franklin is feelingly revealed in the letters which he wrote to him after the latter had arrived safely in America; to say nothing of the Abbé’s Memoirs.

May your days [he wrote in one of these letters] be prolonged and be free from pain; may your friends long taste the sweetness and the charm of your society, and may those whom the seas have separated from you be still happy in the thought that the end of your career will be, as our good La Fontaine says, “the evening of a fine day.”

Then, after some political reflections, suggested by the liberal institutions of America, the Abbé indulges in a series of gay comments on the habit that their Lady of Auteuil had, in her excessive love of coffee, of robbing him of his share of the cream, on the vicious bulldog brought over by Temple to France from England and on the host of cats, that had multiplied in the woodhouse and woodyard at Auteuil, under the patronage of their mistress, and did nothing but keep their paws in their furred gowns, and warm themselves in the sun. Friends of liberty, these cats, the Abbé said, were entirely out of place under the governments of

Europe. Nothing could be more suitable than to load a small vessel with them and ship them to America. Another letter from the Abbé concluded with these heartfelt words:

I shall never forget the happiness I have enjoyed in knowing you, and seeing you intimately. I write to you from Auteuil, seated in your arm-chair, on which I have engraved, *Benjamin Franklin hic sedebat*, and having by my side the little bureau, which you bequeathed to me at parting, with a drawer full of nails to gratify the love of nailing and hammering, which I possess in common with you. But believe me, I have no need of all these helps to cherish your endeared *remembrance*, and to love you,

“Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos reget artus.”

During their jolly intercourse in France, the Abbé Morellet and Franklin touched glasses in two highly convivial productions. On one of the anniversaries of the birth of Franklin, or of American liberty, the Abbé could not remember which, the Abbé composed a drinking song in honor of Franklin, and among the letters written by Franklin when he was in France was one to the Abbé in which wine is lauded in terms of humorous exaggeration. One of the verses of the Abbé’s production refers to the American War, and has been translated in these words by Parton:

“Never did mankind engage
In a war with views more sage;
They seek freedom with design,
To drink plenty of French wine;
Such has been
The intent of Benjamin.”

The other verses are no better and no worse, and the whole poem is even more inferior in wit to Franklin’s letter to the Abbé than the *Very Humble Petition to Madame Helvétius from her Cats*, clever though it be, is to Franklin’s *Journey to the Elysian Fields*. If we had nothing but these bibulous productions to judge by, we might infer that love of wine, quite as much as love of Madame Helvétius was the tie of connection between the Abbé Morellet and Franklin. Indeed, in the letter to Franklin with respect to the cats, the Abbé was quite as candid about expressing his partiality for one form of spirits as Franklin was in his unblushing eulogy of wine. He did not know, he said, what duties his cats, in the unsettled condition of the commercial relations between France and the United States, would be made to pay on arriving at Philadelphia; “and then,” he continued, “if my vessel should find nothing to load with among you but grain, it could not touch at our islands to take in sugar, or to bring me back good rum either, which I love much.”

When the Abbé de la Roche made a gift to Franklin of a volume of Helvétius’ poems, Franklin was quick to give him a recompense in the form of a little drinking song which he had composed some forty years before. The plan of this poem is for the chorus, whenever the singer dwells upon any other source of gratification, to insist so vociferously upon friends and a bottle as the highest as to finally, so to speak, drown the singer out.

Thus:

SINGER

“Fair Venus calls; her voice obey,
In beauty’s arms spend night and day.

The joys of love all joys excel,
And loving's certainly doing well.

CHORUS

“Oh! no!

Not so!

For honest souls know,
Friends and a bottle still bear the bell.”

In a letter to William Carmichael, enclosing his brilliant little bagatelle, *The Ephemera*, Franklin described Madame Brillon in these terms:

The person to whom it was addressed is Madame Brillon, a lady of most respectable character and pleasing conversation; mistress of an amiable family in this neighbourhood, with which I spend an evening twice in every week. She has, among other elegant accomplishments, that of an excellent musician; and, with her daughters, who sing prettily, and some friends who play, she kindly entertains me and my grand son with little concerts, a cup of tea, and a game of chess. I call this *my Opera*, for I rarely go to the Opera at Paris.

Madame Brillon was the wife of a public functionary much older than herself, who yet, as her own letters to Franklin divulge, did not feel that strict fidelity to her was necessary to soften the difference in their ages.

My father [she wrote on one occasion to Franklin], marriage in this country is made by weight of gold. On one end of the scale is placed the fortune of a boy, on the other that of a girl; when equality is found the affair is ended to the satisfaction of the relatives. One does not dream of consulting taste, age, congeniality of character; one marries a young girl whose heart is full of youth's fire and its cravings to a man who has used them up; then one exacts that this woman be virtuous—my friend, this story is mine, and of how many others! I shall do my best that it may not be that of my daughters, but alas, shall I be mistress of their fate?

The correspondence between Madame Brillon and Franklin was very voluminous. Among the Franklin papers in the possession of the American Philosophical Society, there are no less than 119 letters from her to him, and in the same collection there are also the rough drafts of some of his letters in French to her. More than one of them are marked with corrections by her hand. Repeated statements of hers show that she took a very indulgent view of his imperfect mastery of the French language. When he sent to the Brillons his French translation of his *Dialogue between the Gout and M. Franklin*, she returned it to him, “corrected and made worse in several particulars by a savant, and devoted to destruction by the critical notes of a woman who is no savant,” and she took occasion at the same time to say:

Your dialogue has greatly amused me, but your corrector of French has spoiled your work. Believe me, leave your productions as they are, use words which mean something, and laugh at the grammarians who enfeeble all your phrases with their purisms. If I had the brains, I should utter a dire diatribe against those who dare to touch you up, even if it were the Abbé de la Roche, or my neighbor Veillard.

And after reading *The Whistle* of Franklin, she wrote to him, “M. Brillon has laughed heartily over the Whistle: we find that what you call your bad French often gives a piquant flavor to your narrative by reason of a certain turn of phraseology and the words you invent.”

It may well be doubted whether there is anything more brilliant in literary history than the letters which make up the correspondence between Madame Brillon and Franklin, and the marvel is that the intellectual quality of his letters should, in every respect, be as distinctly French as that of hers. His easy, fleeting touch, his unflagging vivacity, his wit, his fertility of invention, his amative coloring are all as thoroughly French as bonbons or champagne. The tame domesticity of his forty-nine years of sober American wedlock, the calm, well-regulated flow of his thoughts and habits in conservative England, under the roof of Mrs. Stevenson, and at the country seat of the "Good Bishop," the Philosophy of Poor Richard, the Art of Virtue, are exchanged for a character which, except when a suitable match was to be found for M. Franklinet, as Madame Brillon called William Temple Franklin, apparently took no account of anything but the pursuit of pleasure, as pleasure was pursued by the people, who have, of all others, most nearly succeeded in giving to it the rank of a respectable divinity. In all the letters of Franklin to Madame Brillon, there is not a sentiment with a characteristic American or English inflection in it. How far his approaches to the beautiful and clever wife of M. Brillon were truly erotic, and how far merely the conventional courtship of a gifted but aged man, who had survived everything, that belongs to passion but its language, it is impossible to say. We only know that, if his gallantry was specious merely, he maintained it with a degree of pertinacity, which there is only too much reason to believe might have had a different issue if it had been more youthful and genuine. A handsome, talented Frenchwoman, of the eighteenth century, burdened with a faithless husband, not too old for the importunity of a heart full, to use her own expression, of youth's fire and cravings, and tolerant enough to sit on an admirer's knees, and to write responsive replies to letters from him, accompanied by a perpetual refrain of sexuality, would, to say the least, have been in considerable danger of forgetting her marriage vows if her Colin had been younger. As it was, the tenderness of Madame Brillon for her "cher Papa" appears to have produced no results worse than a series of letters from her pen, as finished as enamel, which show that in every form of defensive warfare, literary or amorous, she was quite a match for the great man, who was disposed to forget how long he had lingered in a world which has nothing but a laugh for the efforts of December to pass itself off as May.

"Do you know, my dear Papa," she wrote to him on one occasion, "that people have criticized my pleasant habit of sitting on your lap, and yours of asking me for what I always refuse?" In this world, she assured him, she would always be a gentle and virtuous woman, and the most that she would promise was to be his wife in Paradise, if he did not ogle the maidens there too much while waiting for her.

When the hardy resolution is once formed of reviewing the correspondence between Franklin and Madame Brillon, the most difficult task is that of compression.

What! [she wrote to "Monsieur Papa" from Nice, after the capitulation of Cornwallis] You capture entire armies in America, you burgoinise Cornwallis, you take cannon, vessels, munitions of war, men, horses, etc., etc. you capture everything and from everybody, and the gazette alone brings it to the knowledge of your friends, who befuddle themselves with drinking to your health, to that of Washington, of Independence, of the King of France, of the Marquis de la Fayette, of the M^{rs}: de Rochambault, Chalelux etc., etc. while you do not exhibit a sign of life to them; yet you should be a bon vivant at this time, although you rarely err in that respect, and you are surely twenty years younger because of this good news, which ought to bring us a lasting peace after a glorious war.

To this letter, Franklin replied on Christmas Day of the year 1781, the birthday of the Dauphin of Heaven, he called it in the letter. He was very sensible, he said, to the greatness of

their victory, but war was full of vicissitudes and uncertainty, and he played its game with the same evenness of temper that she had seen him bring to the good and bad turns of a game of chess. That was why he had said so little of the surrender, and had only remarked that nothing could make him perfectly happy under certain circumstances. The point, of course, was that still another capitulation was essential to his happiness. He then proceeds to tell Madame Brillon that, everywhere from Paris to Versailles, everyone spoke of her with respect, and some with affection and even admiration; which was music to his ears.

I often pass before your house [he adds]. It wears a desolate look to me. Heretofore, I have broken the commandment in coveting it along with my neighbour's wife. Now I do not covet it. Thus I am the less a sinner. But with regard to the wife, I always find these commandments very inconvenient, and I am sorry that we are cautioned to practise them. Should you find yourself in your travels at the home of St. Peter, ask him to recall them, as intended only for the Jews, and as too irksome for good Christians.

These specimens are true to the language of the entire correspondence, but further excerpts from it will not be amiss for the purpose of enabling us to realize how agreeable the flirtation between the two must have been to have produced such a lengthy correspondence despite the fact that Franklin visited Madame Brillon at least every Wednesday and Saturday.

On Nov. 2, 1778, she wrote to Franklin as follows:

The hope that I had of seeing you here, my dear Papa, has kept me from writing to you for Saturday's tea. Hope is the remedy for all our ills. If one suffers, one hopes for the end of the trouble; if one is with friends, one hopes to remain with them always; if one is away from them, one hopes to rejoin them,—and this is the only hope that is left to me. I shall count the days, the hours, the moments; each moment gone brings me nearer to you. We like to grow older when it is the only means of reuniting us to those whom we love. The person, who takes life thus, seeks unceasingly to shorten it; he plans, desires; without the future, it seems to him that he has nothing. When my children are grown up—in ten years—the trees in my garden will shade me. The years slip by, then one regrets them. I might have done such and such a thing, one says then. Had I not been only twenty-five years old, I should not have done the foolish thing of which I now repent. The wise man alone enjoys the present, does not regret the past, and awaits peacefully the future. The wise man, who, like you, my Papa, has passed his youth in acquiring knowledge and enlightening his fellow-men, and his mature years in obtaining liberty for them, brings a complaisant eye to bear on the past, enjoys the present, and awaits the reward of his labors in the future; but how many are wise? I try to become so, and am so in some respects: I take no account of wealth, vanity has little hold upon my heart; I like to do my duty; I freely forgive society its errors and injustices. But I love my friends with an idolatry that often does me much harm: a prodigious imagination, a soul of fire will always get the better of all my plans and thoughts. I see, Papa, that I must never lay claim to any but the one perfection of loving the most that is possible. May this quality make you love your daughter always!... Come, you always know how to combine a great measure of wisdom with a touch of roguishness; you ask Brillon for news of me at the very moment when you are receiving a letter from me; you play the part of the neglected one, just when you are being spoiled, and then you deny it like a madman when the secret is discovered. Oh, I have news of you!

... Mama, my children, and Mlle. Jupin present their respects to you. May I venture to beg you to give my kind regards to Mr. Franklinet?

Another letter in the same vein from Madame Brillon to Franklin bears date May 11, 1779:

You are quite right, my good Papa, we should find true happiness only in peace of mind; it is not in our power to change the nature of those with whom we live, nor to check the course of the contradictions that surround us. It is a wise man who speaks, and who tries to comfort his too sensitive daughter by telling her the truth. Oh, my father, I beseech your friendship, your healthy philosophy; my heart hears you and is submissive to you. Give me strength to take the place of an indifference that your child can never feel. But admit, my friend, that for one who knows how to love, ingratitude is a frightful misfortune; that it is hard for a woman who would give her life without hesitation to insure her husband's happiness to see the results of her exertions and her longings wiped out by intrigue, and falsity. Time will make everything right; my Papa has said so, and I believe it. But my Papa has also said that time is the stuff that life is made of. *My* life, my friend, is made of a fine and thin stuff, that grief rends cruelly; if I had anything to reproach myself with, I should long have ceased to exist. My soul is pure, simple, frank. I dare to tell my Papa so; I dare to tell him that it is worthy of him; I dare still to assure him that my conduct, which he has deemed wise, will not belie itself, that I shall await justice with patience, that I shall follow the advice of my worthy friend with steadiness and confidence.

Adieu, you whom I love so much—my kind Papa. Never call me anything but “my daughter.” Yesterday you called me “Madame,” and my heart shrank, I examined myself, to see whether I had done you any wrong, or if I had some failings that you would not tell me of. Pardon, my friend; I am not visiting you with a reproach, I am accusing myself of a weakness. I was born much too sensitive for my happiness and for that of my friends; cure me, or pity me; if you can, do one or the other.

Tomorrow, Wednesday, you will come to tea, will you not? Believe me, my Papa, that the pleasure I feel in receiving you is shared by my husband, my children, and my friends; I cannot doubt it, and I assure you of it.

Franklin's reply to this letter is for a brief moment that of a real father rather than Monsieur Papa. This reminds us that, in one of her letters to him, she states that in her own father she had lost her first and best friend, and recalled the fact that Franklin had told her of the custom of certain savages, who adopt the prisoners, that they capture in war, and make them take the place of the relations whom they have lost. In answer to her statement that ingratitude is a frightful misfortune, he says: “That is true—to ingrates—but not to their benefactors. You have conferred benefits on those that you have believed worthy of them; you have, therefore, done your duty, as it is a part of our duty to be kindly, and you ought to be satisfied with that and happy in the reflection.” This was followed by the advice to his “very dear and always lovable daughter” to continue to fulfill all her duties as a good mother, a good wife, a good friend, a good neighbor, a good Christian, etc. We shall see a little later on what he deemed a part of the duty of a good charitable Christian to be. The letter terminates with an apology for his bad French. “It may,” he said, “disgust you, you who write that charming language with so much purity and elegance. But, if you can in the end decipher my awkward and improper expressions, you will, at least, perhaps, experience the kind of pleasure that we find in solving enigmas or discovering secrets.”

His letter transmitting his *Dialogue with the Gout* to Madame Brillon was not so decorous. It was in it that he had a word to say about the other kind of Christian conduct that he was in the habit of enjoining upon her. A part of this letter was the following:

One of the characters in your story, namely, the Gout appeared to me to reason well enough, with the exception of his supposition that mistresses have had something to do with producing this painful malady. I myself believe the entire contrary, and this is my method of reasoning. When I was a young man, and enjoyed the favors of the sex more freely than at present, I had no gout. Therefore, if the ladies of Passy had had more of that kind of Christian charity, that I have often recommended to you in vain, I would not have the gout at present. This seems to me to be good logic.

I am much better. I suffer little pain, but I am very feeble. I can, as you see, joke a little, but I cannot be really gay before I hear that your precious health is re-established.

I send you my Dialogue in the hope that it may amuse you at times.

Many thanks for the three last volumes of Montaigne that I return.

The visit of your ever lovable family yesterday evening has done me much good. My God! how I love them all from the Grandmother and the father to the smallest child.

The reply of Madame Brillon was in kindred terms:

Saturday, 18th November, 1780.

There would be many little things indeed to criticise in your logic, which you fortify so well, my dear Papa. "When I was a young man," you say, "and enjoyed the favors of the sex more freely than at present, I had no gout." "Therefore," one might reply to this, "when I threw myself out of the window, I did not break my leg." Therefore, you could have the gout without having deserved it, and you could have well deserved it, as I believe, and not have had it.

If this last argument is not so brilliant as the others, it is clear and sure; what is neither clear nor sure are the arguments of philosophers who insist that everything that happens in the world is necessary to the general movement of the universal machine. I believe that the machine would go neither better nor worse if you did not have the gout, and if I were forever rid of my nervous troubles.

I do not see what help, more or less, these little incidents can give to the wheels that turn this world at random, and I know that my little machine goes very much the worse for them. What I know very well besides, is that pain sometimes becomes mistress of reason, and that patience alone can overcome these two nuisances. I have as much of it as I can, and I advise you, my friend, to have the same amount. When frosts have cast a gloom over the earth, a bright sun makes us forget them. We are in the midst of frosts, and must wait patiently for this bright sun, and, while waiting for it, amuse ourselves in the moments when weakness and pain leave us some rest. *This*, my dear Papa, is *my* logic....

Adieu, my good Papa. My big husband will take my letter to you; he is very happy to be able to go to see you. For me, nothing remains but the faculty of loving my friends. You surely do not doubt that I shall do my best for you, even to Christian charity, that is to say, with the exception of your Christian charity.

She writes a brief letter to Franklin on New Year's Day of 1781:

If I had a good head and good legs—if, in short, I had everything that I lack,—I should have come, like a good daughter, to wish a happy New Year to the best of papas. But I have only a very tender heart to love him well, and a rather bad pen to

scribble him that this year, as well as last year, and all the years of my life, I shall love him, myself alone, as much as all the others that love him, put together.

Brillon and the children present their respects to the kind Papa; and we also send a thousand messages for M. Franklinet.

Some four years later, after Franklin had vainly endeavored to marry Temple Franklin to a daughter of Madame Brillon, we find him writing a letter of congratulation to her upon the happy *accouchement* of her daughter. It elicits a reply in which the cheek of the “beautiful and benignant nature,” of which she speaks, undergoes a considerable amount of artificial coloring.

2nd December, 1784.

Your letter, my kind Papa, has given me keen pleasure; but, if you would give me still more, remain in France until you see my sixth generation. I only ask you for fifteen or sixteen years: my granddaughter will be marriageable early; she is fair and strong. I am tasting a new feeling, my good Papa, to which my heart surrenders itself with pleasure, it is so sweet to love. I have never been able to conceive how beings exist who are such enemies to themselves as to reject friendship. They are ingrates, we say; well we are deceived; that is a little hard sometimes, but we are not always so; and to feel oneself incapable of returning the treachery affords a satisfaction of itself that consoles us for it.

My little nurse is charming and fresh as a morning rose. The first days the child had difficulty,... but patience and the mother’s courage overcame it; all goes well now, and nothing could be more interesting than this picture of a young and pretty person nursing a superb child, the father uninterruptedly occupied with the spectacle, and joining his attentions to those of his wife. My eyes are unceasingly moist, and my heart rejoices, my kind Papa. You realize so well the value of all that belongs to beautiful and benignant nature that I owe you these details. My daughter charges me with her thanks and compliments to you; *ma Cadette* and my men present their regards, and as for me, my friend, I beg you to believe that my friendship and my existence will always be one as respects you.

Once Franklin sought to corner Madame Brillon with a story, which makes us feel for a moment as if the rod of transformation was beginning to work a backward spell, and the Benjamin Franklin of Craven Street and Independence Hall to be released from the spell of the French Circe:

To make you better realize the force of my demonstration that you do not love me, I commence with a little story:

A beggar asked a rich Bishop for a louis by way of alms. You are wild. No one gives a louis to a beggar. An écu then. No. That is too much. A liard then,—or your benediction. My benediction! Yes, I will give it to you. No, I will not accept it. For if it was worth a liard, you would not be willing to give it to me. That was how this Bishop loved his neighbor. That was his charity! And, were I to scrutinize yours, I would not find it much greater. I am incredibly hungry for it and you have given me nothing to eat. I was a stranger, and I was almost as love-sick as Colin when you were singing, and you have neither taken me in, nor cured me, nor eased me.

You who are as rich as an Archbishop in all the Christian and moral virtues, and could sacrifice a small share of some of them without visible loss, you tell me that it is asking too much, and that you are not willing to do it. That is your charity to a poor

wretch, who once enjoyed affluence, and is unfortunately reduced to soliciting alms. Nevertheless, you say you love him. But you would not give him your friendship if it involved the expenditure of the least little morsel, of the value of a liard, of your wisdom.

But see how nimbly the coquette eludes her pursuer:

My dear Papa: Your bishop was a niggard and your beggar a queer enough fellow. You are a logician all the cleverer because you argue in a charming way, and almost awaken an inclination to yield to your unsound arguments founded on a false principle. Is it of Dr. Franklin, the celebrated philosopher, the profound statesman, that a woman speaks with so much irreverence? Yes, this erudite man, this legislator, has his infirmities (it is the weakness, moreover, of great men: he has taken full advantage of it). But let us go into the matter.

To prove that I do not love you, my good Papa, you compare yourself to a beggar who asked alms from a bishop. Now, the rôle of a bishop is not to refuse to give to beggars when they are really in want; he honors himself in doing good. But in truth the kind of charity which you ask of me so amusingly can be found everywhere. You will not grow thin because of my refusals! What would you think of your beggar, if, the bishop having given him the "louis" which he asked, he had grumbled because he did not get two? That, however, is your case, my good friend.

You adopted me as your daughter, I chose you for my father: what do you expect of me? Friendship! Well, I love you as a daughter should love her father. The purest, the most respectful, the tenderest affection for you fills my soul; you asked me for a "louis"; I gave it to you, and yet you murmur at not getting another one, which does not belong to me. It is a treasure which has been entrusted to me, my good Papa; I guard it and will always guard it carefully. Even if you were like "Colin sick," in truth I could not cure you; and nevertheless, whatever you may think or say, no one in this world loves you more than I.

In this letter she puts him off with the teasing assurance of friendship. In another, written from Marseilles, it is with other charming women that she mocks him:

I received on my arrival here, my good Papa, your letter of October 1st. It has given me keen pleasure; I found in it evidences of your friendship and a tinge of that gayety and gallantry which make all women love you, because you love them all. Your proposition to carry me on your wings, if you were the angel Gabriel, made me laugh; but I would not accept it, although I am no longer very young nor a virgin. That angel was a sly fellow and your nature united to his would become too dangerous. I should be afraid of miracles happening, and miracles between women and angels might well not always bring a redeemer....

I have arranged, my good friend, to write alternately to my "great neighbor" and to you; the one to whom I shall not have written will kindly tell the other that I love him with all my heart, and when your turn comes you will add an embrace for the good wife of our neighbor, for her daughter, for little Mother Caillot, for all the gentle and pretty women of my acquaintance whom you may meet. You see that not being able to amuse you, either by my singing or by chess, I seek to procure you other pleasures. If you had been at Avignon with us, it is there you would have wished to embrace people. The women there are charming; I thought of you every time I saw one of them. Adieu, my good Papa; I do not relate to you the details of my journey, as I have

written of them to our neighbor, who will communicate them to you. I limit myself to assuring you of the most constant and the tenderest friendship on my part.

At times the pursuer is too badly afflicted with gout in his legs to maintain the pursuit, and the pursued has to come to his assistance to keep the flirtation going:

How are you, my good Papa? Never has it cost me so much to leave you; every evening it seems to me that you would be very glad to see me, and every evening I think of you. On Monday, the 21st, I shall go to meet you again; I hope that you will then be very firm on your feet, and that the teas of Wednesday and Saturday, and that of Sunday morning, will regain all their brilliance. I will bring you *la bonne évêque*. My fat husband will make you laugh, our children will laugh together, our great neighbor will quiz, the Abbés La Roche and Morellet will eat all the butter, Mme. Grand, her amiable niece, and M. Grand will help the company out, Père Pagin will play *God of Love* on his violin, I the march on the Piano, and you *Petits Oiseaux* on the armonica.

O! my friend, let us see in the future fine and strong legs for you, and think no more of the bad one that has persecuted you so much. After what is bad, one enjoys what is good more; life is sown with both, which she changes unceasingly. What she cannot keep from being equal and uniform is my tenderness for you, that time, place, and events will never alter.

My mother and all my family wish to be remembered to you.

I have had some news of you through our neighbor, but I must absolutely have some from you.

Amusingly enough, M. Brillon contributes his part to the restoration of the gouty legs to something like normal activity.

The visits of your good husband during my sickness [wrote Franklin to Madame Brillon] have been very agreeable to me. His conversation has eased and enlivened me. I regret that, instead of seeking it when I have been at your home, I have lost so much time in playing chess. He has many stories and always applies them well. If he has despoiled you of some, you can repeat them all the same, for they will always please me, coming from your mouth.

There is another letter from Madame Brillon to Franklin which drew a reply from him, in which he ascended into the Christian heaven with almost as much literary facility as marked his entrance into the Pagan Elysium. Her letter was written during an absence from home:

Here I am reduced to writing to you, my good Papa, and to telling you that I love you. It was sweeter no doubt to let you see it in my eyes. How am I going to spend the Wednesdays and Saturdays? No teas, no chess, no music, no hope of seeing or embracing my good papa! It seems to me that the privation which I experience from your absence would suffice to make me change my views, were I inclined to materialism.

Happiness is so uncertain, so full of crosses, that the deep conviction that we shall be happier in another life can alone tide us over the trials of this one. In Paradise we shall be reunited, never to leave each other again! We shall there live on roasted apples only; the music will be made up of Scotch airs; all parties will be given over to chess, so that no one may be disappointed; every one will speak the same language; the English will be neither unjust nor wicked there; the women will not be coquettes, the men will be neither jealous nor too gallant; "King John" will be left to eat his apples

in peace; perhaps he will be decent enough to offer some to his neighbors—who knows? since we shall want for nothing in paradise! We shall never suffer from gout or nervous troubles there. Mr. Mesmer will content himself with playing on the armonica, without wearying us with the electric fluid; ambition, envy, snobbery, jealousy, prejudice, all these will vanish at the sound of the trumpet. A lasting, sweet and peaceful friendship will animate every gathering. Every day we shall love one another, in order that we may love one another still more the day after; in a word, we shall be completely happy. In the meantime, let us get all the good we can out of this poor world of ours. I am far from you, my good Papa; I look forward to the time of our meeting, and I am pleased to think that your regrets and desires equal mine.

My mother and my children send you a thousand tender messages of respect; we should all like to have you here. May I venture to ask you to remember us to your grandson?

And this was the deft reply of Franklin which has come down to us in French corrected by Madame Brillon's hand:

Since you have assured me that we shall meet each other again, and shall recognize each other, in Paradise, I have reflected continually on our arrangements in that country; for I have great confidence in your assurances, and I believe implicitly what you believe.

Probably more than forty years will pass away, after my arrival there, before you will follow me. I fear a little that, in the course of such a long time, you may forget me; that is why I have had thoughts of proposing to you that you give me your word that you will not renew your contract with M. Brillon. I would give you mine at the same time to wait for you, but this monsieur is so good, so generous to us—he loves you—and we him—so well—that I can not think of this proposition without some scruples of conscience—however the idea of an eternity, in which I should not be more favored than to be allowed to kiss your hands, or your cheeks occasionally, and to pass two or three hours in your sweet society at Wednesday and Saturday evening parties, is frightful. In fine, I can not make that proposal, but since, like all who know you, I desire to see you happy in every respect, we may agree to say nothing more about it at this time, and to leave you at liberty to decide, when we are all together again: there to determine the question as you deem best for your happiness and ours; but, determine it as you will, I feel that I shall love you eternally. Should you reject me, perhaps, I shall pay my addresses to Madame D'Hardancourt (the mother of Madame Brillon), who might be glad to keep house for me. In that event I should pass my domestic hours agreeably with her; and I should be better prepared to see you. I should have enough time in those forty years there to practise on the armonica, and, perhaps, I should play well enough to be worthy to accompany your pianoforte. We should have little concerts from time to time, good father Pagin would be of the company, your neighbor and his dear family [M. Jupin], M. de Chaumont, M. B., M. Jourdan, M. Grammont, Madame du Tartre, the little mother, and some other select friends will be our audience, and the dear, good girls, accompanied by some other young angels, whose portraits you have already given me, will sing hallelujahs with us; we shall eat together apples of Paradise, roasted with butter and nutmeg; and we shall pity them who are not dead.

In another letter, he complains that she shuts him out from everything except a few civil and polite kisses such as she might give to some of her small cousins.

All this, however, was but preliminary to the treaty, which the signer of the Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States formally submitted to her in this letter.

Among the articles of this treaty were to be these:

Article 6. And the said Mr. F. on his part stipulates and covenants that he is to call at the home of M'de B. as often as he pleases.

Article 7. That he is to remain there as long as he pleases.

Article 8. And that when he is with her, he is to do what he pleases.

He did not have much hope, he said, of obtaining her consent to the eighth article.

In another letter, the aged lover tells Madame Brillon that she must not accuse others of being responsible for his having left her half an hour sooner than usual. The truth was that he was very much fatigued for special reasons that he mentions, and thought it more decent to leave her than to fall asleep, which he was beginning to do on a bench in her garden after her descent into it. After all a half-hour with an old man, who could not make the best use of it, was a thing of very little importance. Saturday evening, he would remain with her until she wished him to go, and, in spite of her usual polite phrases, he would know the time by her refusal to give him a little kiss.

With another note, he sent to Madame Brillon his Essay on the Morals of Chess. It was only proper that it should be dedicated to her, he said, as its good advice was copied from her generous and magnanimous way of playing the game. In the same letter, he stated that his grandson had inspected the house that she had urged him to apply for, but, true still to his adopted character, he said, "He finds it too magnificent for simple Republicans."

In another letter, he told Madame Brillon that he loved to live, because it seemed to him that there was much more pleasure than pain in existence. We should not blame Providence rashly. She should reflect how many even of our duties it had made pleasures, and that it had been good enough, moreover, to call several pleasures sins to enhance our enjoyment of them.

One more letter from Madame Brillon and we shall let her retire from the chess-board with the credit of having proved herself fully a match for Franklin in the longest and most absorbing game of chess that he played in France:

25th of December at Nice.

The atonement is adequate, my dear Papa. I shall no longer call you *Monseigneur* nor even *Monsieur*. My petition succeeded before reaching you; our tears are dried. You love us, you tell us so; you are in good health, and are as roguish as ever, since you are planning to steal me from Brillon, and to take me on a trip to America without letting anyone know it. Everything is as usual. I recognize your fine mask, and I am wholly satisfied. But, my good Papa, why say that you write French badly,—that your pleasantries in that language are only nonsense? To make an academic discourse, one must be a good grammarian; but to write to our friends all we need is a heart, and you combine with the best heart, my lovable Papa, when you wish, the soundest ethics, a lively imagination, and that roguishness, so pleasant, which shows that the wisest man in the world allows his wisdom to be perpetually broken against the rocks of femininity. Write to me, therefore, write to me often and much, or from spite I shall learn English. I should want to know it quickly, and that would hurt me as I have been forbidden all study, and you would be the cause of my ills, for having refused me a few lines of your bad French, which my family and I—and we are not simpletons—

consider very good; ask my neighbors, M. d'Estaing, Mme. Helvétius and her abbés, if it would be right for you to prejudice the improvement which the sun here has caused in my health, for the sake of a little *amour propre* which is beneath My Lord the Ambassador, Benjamin Franklin.

One more letter from Franklin, and we shall cease to walk upon eggs. The French drapery is gone and nothing is left but Saxon nudity:

I am charm'd with the goodness of my spiritual guide, and resign myself implicitly to her Conduct, as she promises to lead me to heaven in so delicious a Road when I could be content to travel thither even in the roughest of all ways with the pleasure of her company.

How kindly partial to her Penitent in finding him, on examining his conscience, guilty of only one capital sin and to call that by the gentle name of Foible!

I lay fast hold of your promise to absolve me of all Sins past, present, & future, on the easy & pleasing Condition of loving God, America and my guide above all things. I am in rapture when I think of being absolv'd of the future.

People commonly speak of Ten Commandments.—I have been taught that there are twelve. The first was increase & multiply & replenish the earth. The twelfth is, A new Commandment I give unto you, *that you love one another*. It seems to me that they are a little misplaced, And that the last should have been the first. However I never made any difficulty about that, but was always willing to obey them both whenever I had an opportunity. Pray tell me dear Casuist, whether my keeping religiously these two commandments tho' not in the Decalogue, may not be accepted in Compensation for my breaking so often one of the ten, I mean that which forbids coveting my neighbour's wife, and which I confess I break constantly God forgive me, as often as I see or think of my lovely Confessor, and I am afraid I should never be able to repent of the Sin even if I had the full Possession of her.

And now I am Consulting you upon a Case of Conscience I will mention the Opinion of a certain Father of the church which I find myself willing to adopt though I am not sure it is orthodox. It is this, that the most effectual way to get rid of a certain Temptation is, as often as it returns, to comply with and satisfy it.

Pray instruct me how far I may venture to practice upon this Principle?

But why should I be so scrupulous when you have promised to absolve me of the future?

Adieu my charming Conductress and believe me ever with the sincerest Esteem & affection.

Your most obed't hum. Serv.

B F

It would be easy enough to treat this correspondence too seriously. When we recall the social sympathies and diversions which drew the parties to it together, the advanced age of Franklin, the friendly relations sustained by him to all the members of the Brillon household, his attempt to bring about a matrimonial union between Temple Franklin and the daughter of Madame Brillon, the good-humored complaisance of M. Brillon, the usages of Parisian society at that time, the instinctive ease with which Franklin adopted the tone of any land in which he happened to be, and the sportive grace and freedom, brought by his wit and literary dexterity to every situation that invited their exercise, we might well infer that, perhaps, after

all, on his part, as well on that of the clever coquette, whose bodkin was quite as keen as his sword, it was understood that the *liaison* was to be only a paper one—an encounter of wit rather than of love. From first to last, the attitude of Madame Brillon towards Franklin was simply that of a beautiful and brilliant woman, to whom coquetry was an art, and whose intellectual activity had been stimulated, and vanity gratified, by the homage of a brilliant, magnetic and famous man, who possessed to a remarkable degree the faculty of rendering his splendid intellectual powers subservient to purely social uses. It was no slight thing to a woman such as Madame Brillon to be the *Vainqueur du Vainqueur de la Terre*, and little less than this did all France at that time insist that Franklin was. There is nothing in her letters to Franklin to indicate that she ever really had any thought of allowing him any greater degree of intimacy with her than he actually enjoyed. On that point she was apparently as firm as she was in her courteous and kindly but inflexible opposition to a marriage between her daughter and William Temple Franklin.

I despise slanderers [she wrote to Franklin on one occasion], and am at peace with myself, but that is not enough, one must submit to what is called *propriety* (that word varies in each century in each country) to sit less often on your knees. I shall certainly love you none the less, nor will our hearts be more or less pure; but we shall close the mouth of the malicious, and it is no slight thing even for the sage to silence them.

On the other hand there is much to support the idea that the motive at the back of Franklin's letters to Madame Brillon was very much the same as that which inspired the *Journey to the Elysian Fields* and the *Ephemera*. They were to a great extent, at any rate, mere literary bagatelles as those performances were—the offerings of an opulent wit and fancy at the shrine of beauty and fashion, which to be successful in an academic sense had to be informed by the spirit, and attuned to the note, of the time and place. All the same, the letters from Franklin to Madame Brillon are painful reading. Like not a little else in his life, they tend to confirm the impression that upright, courageous, public-spirited, benevolent, loving and faithful in friendship as he was, on the sensual side of his nature he was lamentably callous to the moral laws and conventions and the personal and social refinements which legitimize and dignify the physical intercourse of the sexes. The pinchbeck glitter, the deceitful vacuity of his moral regimen and *Art of Virtue*, assume an additional meaning, when we see him mumbling the cheek of Madame Brillon, and month after month and year after year writing to her in strains of natural or affected concupiscence. It was things of this sort which have assisted in strengthening the feeling, not uncommon, that Franklin's *Art of Virtue* was a purely counterfeit thing, and the moralist himself an untrustworthy guide to righteous conduct.

In a letter to M. de Veillard, Franklin after his return to America from France referred to the Brillon family as "that beloved family." Restored to his home surroundings, he forgot his French lines, and was again as soberly American as ever in thought and speech. Who would recognize the lover of Madame Brillon in this russet picture that he paints of himself in his eighty-third year in a letter to her?

You have given me Pleasure by informing me of the Welfare and present agreeable Circumstances of yourself and Children; and I am persuaded that your Friendship for me will render a similar Account of my Situation pleasing to you. I am in a Country where I have the happiness of being universally respected and beloved, of which three successive annual Elections to the Chief Magistracy, in which Elections the Representatives of the People in Assembly and the Supreme Court join'd and were unanimous, is the strongest Proof; this is a Place of Profit as well as of Honour; and my Friends chearfully assist in making the Business as easy to me as possible.

After a word more with regard to the dwelling and the dutiful family, so often mentioned in his twilight letters, he concludes in this manner:

My Rents and Incomes are amply sufficient for all my present Occasions; and if no unexpected Misfortunes happen during the time I have to live, I shall leave a handsome Estate to be divided among my Relatives. As to my Health, it continues the same, or rather better than when I left Passy; but being now in my 83rd year, I do not expect to continue much longer a Sojourner in this world, and begin to promise myself much Gratification of my Curiosity in soon visiting some other.

In this letter, Franklin was looking forward, we hardly need say, to a very different world from the one where Madame Brillon was to be the second Mrs. Franklin, and they were to eat together apples of Paradise roasted with butter and nutmeg. And it is only just to the memory of Madame Brillon to recall the genuine words, so unlike the tenor of her former letters to Franklin, in which she bade him farewell, when he was leaving the shores of France:

I had so full a heart yesterday in leaving you that I feared for you and myself a grief-stricken moment which could only add to the pain which our separation causes me, without proving to you further the tender and unalterable affection that I have vowed to you for always. Every day of my life I shall recall that a great man, a sage, was willing to be my friend; my wishes will follow him everywhere; my heart will regret him incessantly; incessantly I shall say I passed eight years with Doctor Franklin; they have flown, and I shall see him no more! Nothing in the world could console me for this loss, except the thought of the peace and happiness that you are about to find in the bosom of your family.

It was to the Comtesse d'Houdetot of Rousseau's *Confessions*, however, that Franklin was indebted for his social apotheosis in France. In a letter to her after his return to America, he calls her "ma chere & toujours—amiable Amie," and declares that the memory of her friendship and of the happy hours that he had passed in her sweet society at Sanois, had often caused him to regret the distance which made it impossible for them to ever meet again. In her letters to him, after his return to America, she seeks in such words as "homage," "veneration" and "religious tenderness" to express the feelings with which he had inspired her. In these letters, there are also references to the *fête champêtre* which she gave in his honor at her country seat at Sanois on the 12th day of April, in the year 1781, and which was one of the celebrated events of the time. When it was announced that Franklin's carriage was approaching the château, the Countess and a distinguished retinue of her relations set out on foot to meet him. At a distance of about half a mile from the château, they came upon him, and gathered around the doors of his carriage, and escorted it to the grounds of the château, where the Countess herself assisted Franklin to alight. "The venerable sage," said a contemporary account, "with his gray hairs flowing down upon his shoulders, his staff in his hand, the spectacles of wisdom on his nose, was the perfect picture of true philosophy and virtue." As soon as Franklin had descended from the carriage, the whole company grouped themselves around him, and the Countess declaimed, with proper emphasis we may be sure, these lines:

"Soul of heroes and wise men,
Oh, Liberty! First boon of the Gods!
Alas! It is too remotely that we pay thee our vows;
It is only with sighs that we render homage

To the man who made happy his fellow-citizens.”

All then wended their way through the gardens of the Countess to the château, where they were soon seated at a noble feast. With the first glass of wine, a soft air was played, and the Countess and her relations rose to their feet, and sang in chorus these lines, which they repeated in chorus after every succeeding glass of wine:

“Of Benjamin let us celebrate the renown,
Let us sing the good that he has done to mortals;
In America he will have altars,
And at Sanois we drink to his fame.”

When the time for the second glass of wine came, the Countess sang this quatrain:

“He gives back to human nature its rights,
To free it he would first enlighten it,
And virtue to make itself adored,
Assumed the form of Benjamin.”

And at the third glass, the Vicomte d’Houdetot sang these words:

“William Tell was brave but savage,
More highly our dear Benjamin I prize,
While shaping the destiny of America,
At meat he laughs just as does your true sage.”

And at the fourth glass, the Vicomtesse d’Houdetot sang these words:

“I say, live Philadelphia, too!
Freedom has its allurements for me;
In that country, I would gladly dwell,
Though neither ball nor comedy is there.”

And at the fifth glass, Madame de Pernan sang these words:

“All our children shall learn of their mothers,
To love, to trust, and to bless you;
You teach that which may reunite
All the sons of men in the arms of one father.”

And at the sixth glass, the aged Comte de Tressan sang these words:

“Live Sanois! ‘Tis my Philadelphia.
When I see here its dear law-giver;
I grow young again in the heart of delight,
And I laugh, and I drink and list to Sophie.”

And at the seventh glass, the Comte d’Apché sang these lines, in which some violence was done to the facts of English History, and the French Revolution was foreshadowed:

"To uphold that sacred charter
 Which Edward accorded to the English,
 I feel that there is no French Knight
 Who does not desire to use his sword."

And so quatrain preceded glass and chorus followed quatrain until every member of the eulogistic company had sung his or her song. The banqueters then rose from the table, and the Countess, followed by her relations, conducted Franklin to an arbor in her gardens, where he was presented with a Virginia locust by her gardener, which he was asked to honor the family by planting with his own hands. When he had done so, the Countess declaimed some additional lines, which were afterwards inscribed upon a marble pillar, erected near the tree:

"Sacred tree, lasting monument
 Of the sojourn deigned to be made here by a sage,
 Of these gardens henceforth the pride,
 Receive here the just homage
 Of our vows and of our incense;
 And may you for all the ages,
 Forever respected by time,
 Live as long as his name, his laws and his deeds."

On their way back to the château, the concourse was met by a band which played an accompaniment, while the Countess and her kinsfolk sang this song:

"May this tree, planted by his benevolent hand,
 Lifting up its new-born trunk,
 Above the sterile elm,
 By its odoriferous flower,
 Make fragrant all this happy hamlet.
 The lightning will lack power to strike it,
 And will respect its summit and its branches,
 'Twas Franklin who, by his prosperous labors,
 Taught us to direct or to extinguish that,
 While he was destroying other evils,
 Still more for the earth's sake to be pitied."

This over, all returned to the château where they were engaged for some time in agreeable conversation. In the late afternoon, Franklin was conducted by the Countess and the rest to his carriage, and, when he was seated, they gathered about the open door of the vehicle, and the Countess addressed her departing guest in these words:

"Legislator of one world, and benefactor of two!
 For all time mankind will owe thee its tribute,
 And it is but my part that I here discharge

Of the debt that is thy due from all the ages.”

The door of the carriage was then closed, and Franklin returned to Paris duly deified but as invincibly sensible as ever.

Another French woman with whom Franklin was on terms of familiar affection was the wife of his friend, Jean Baptiste Le Roy. His endearing term for her was *petite femme de poche* (little pocket wife), and, in a letter after his return to Philadelphia, she assured him that, as long as his *petite femme de poche* had the breath of life, she would love him.

On one occasion, when he was in France, she wrote to him, asking him to dine with her on Wednesday, and saying that she would experience great pleasure in seeing and embracing him. Assuredly, he replied, he would not fail her. He found too much pleasure in seeing her, and in hearing her speak, and too much happiness, when he held her in his arms, to forget an invitation so precious.

In another letter to her, after his return to America—the letter which drew forth her declaration that her love for him would last as long as her breath—he told her that she was very courageous to ascend so high in a balloon, and very good, when she was so near heaven, not to think of quitting her friends, and remaining with the angels. Competition might well have shunned an effort to answer such a flourish as that in kind, but a lady, who had been up in a balloon among the angels, was not the person to lack courage for any experiment. She only regretted, she said, that the balloon could not go very far, for, if it had been but able to carry her to him, she *would have been* among the angels, and would have given him proofs of the respect and esteem for him, ineffaceably engraved upon her heart. Sad to relate, in the same letter she tells Franklin that her husband had proved hopelessly recreant to every principle of honor and good feeling. We say, “sad to relate,” not for general reasons only, but because Franklin, when he had heard in 1772 that Le Roy was well and happily married, had felicitated him on the event, and repeated his oft-asserted statement that matrimony is the natural condition of man; though he omitted this time his usual comparison of celibacy with the odd half of a pair of scissors. The estrangement between his little pocket wife and her husband, however, did not affect his feeling of devoted friendship for Jean Baptiste Le Roy. Some two years and five months later, when the wild Walpurgis night of the French Revolution was setting in, he wrote to Le Roy to find out why he had been so long silent. “It is now more than a year,” he said, “since I have heard from my dear friend Le Roy. What can be the reason? Are you still living? Or have the mob of Paris mistaken the head of a monopolizer of knowledge, for a monopolizer of corn, and paraded it about the streets upon a pole?” The fact that Le Roy, who was a physicist of great reputation, was a member of both the American Philosophical Society and the Royal Society, led Franklin in one of his letters to address him as his “Dear double *Confrère*.” Le Roy’s three brothers, Pierre, Charles and David were also friends of Franklin. Indeed, in a letter to Jean Baptiste, Franklin spoke of David, to whom he addressed his valuable paper entitled *Maritime Observations*, as “our common Brother.”

Other friendships formed by Franklin with women in France were those with Madame Lavoisier, Madame de Forbach and Mademoiselle Flainville. Madame Lavoisier was first the wife of the famous chemist of that name, and, after he was guillotined, during the French Revolution, the wife of the equally famous Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford. She painted a portrait of Franklin, and sent it to him at Philadelphia.

It is allowed by those, who have seen it [he wrote to her], to have great merit as a picture in every respect; but what particularly endears it to me is the hand that drew it. Our English enemies, when they were in possession of this city (Philadelphia) and my

house, made a prisoner of my portrait, and carried it off with them, leaving that of its companion, my wife, by itself, a kind of widow. You have replaced the husband, and the lady seems to smile as well pleased.

So his Eurydice, as soon as the enchantments of the French sorceress lost their power, was reunited to him after all.

Among his French friends, Madame de Forbach, the Dowager Duchess of Deux-Ponts, was conspicuous for the number of the presents that she made to him. Among others, was the fine crab-tree walking stick, surmounted with a gold head, wrought in the form of a cap of liberty, which he bequeathed to Washington. Other gifts of hers are alluded to in a letter from Franklin to her, acknowledging the receipt of a pair of scissors.

It is true [he said] that I can now neither walk abroad nor write at home without having something that may remind me of your Goodness towards me; you might have added, that I can neither play at Chess nor drink Tea without the same sensation: but these had slipt your Memory. There are People who forget the Benefits they receive, Mad^e d^e Forbach only those she bestows.

His only letter to Mademoiselle Flainville is addressed to “ma chere enfant,” and is signed “Your loving Papa.” It helps, along with innumerable other kindred scraps of evidence, to prove how infirm is the train of reasoning which seeks to establish a parental tie between Franklin and anyone simply upon the strength of his epistolary assumption of fatherhood. He might as well be charged with polygamy because he addressed so many persons as “my wife” or “ma femme.” This letter also has its interest, as exemplifying the natural manner in which he awaited the sedan chair that was to bear him away from his fleshly tenement. “I have been harassed with Illness this last Summer,” he told her, “am grown old, near 83, and find myself very infirm, so that I expect to be soon call’d for.”

This is far from being a complete list of the French women with whom Franklin was on terms of affectionate intimacy. To go no further, we know that Madame Brillon, in addition to writing to him on one occasion, “Give this evening to my amiable rival, Madame Helvétius, kiss her for yourself and for me,” granted him on another a power of attorney to kiss for her until her return, whenever he saw them, her two neighbors, Le Veillard, and her pretty neighbor, Caillot.

The truth is that Franklin had a host of friends of both sexes in France.

When Thomas Paine visited that country, after the return of Franklin to America, he wrote to the latter that he found his friends in France “very numerous and very affectionate”; and we can readily believe it. Among them were Buffon, Condorcet, Lafayette, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Lavoisier, Chastellux, Grand, Dupont, Dubourg and Le Veillard.

To Buffon, the great naturalist, Franklin was drawn by common scientific sympathies. Like Franklin, he became a sufferer from the stone, and one of the results was a letter in which the former, in reply to an inquiry from him as to how he obtained relief from the malady, stated that his remedy was to take, on going to bed, “the Bigness of a Pigeon’s Egg of Jelly of Blackberries”; which, in the eyes of modern medical science was, as a palliative, hardly more effective than a bread pill.

With Condorcet, the philosopher, Franklin was intimate enough to call him, and to be called by him, “My dear and illustrious Confrère”; and it was he, it is worthy of mention, who happily termed Franklin “the modern Prometheus.”

For Lafayette, that winning figure, forever fixed in the American memory, despite his visit to America in old age, in immortal youth and freshness, like the young lover and the happy

boughts on Keats's Grecian Urn, Franklin had a feeling not unlike that of Washington. In referring to the expedition against England, in which Temple Franklin was to have accompanied Lafayette, Franklin said in a letter to the latter, "I flatter myself, too, that he might possibly catch from you some Tincture of those engaging Manners that make you so much the Delight of all that know you." In another letter, he observed in reply to the statement by Lafayette that the writer had had enemies in America, "You are luckier, for I think you have none here, nor anywhere." When it became his duty to deliver to Lafayette the figured sword presented to the latter by Congress, he performed the office, though ill-health compelled him to delegate the actual delivery of the gift to his grandson, in the apt and pointed language which never failed him upon such occasions. "By the help," he said, "of the exquisite Artists France affords, I find it easy to express everything but the Sense we have of your Worth and our Obligations to you. For this, Figures and even Words are found insufficient." Through all his letters to Lafayette there is a continuous suggestion of cordial attachment to both him and his wife. When Lafayette wrote to him that Madame de Lafayette had just given birth to a daughter, and that he was thinking of naming her Virginia, he replied, "In naming your Children I think you do well to begin with the most antient State. And as we cannot have too many of so good a Race I hope you & M^{me} de la Fayette will go thro the Thirteen." This letter was written at Passy. In a later letter to Lafayette, written at Philadelphia, he concluded by saying, "You will allow an old friend of four-score to say he *loves* your wife, when he adds, and children, and prays God to bless them all."

For the Duc de la Rochefoucauld he entertained the highest respect as well as a cordial feeling of friendship. "The good Duke," he terms him in a letter to Dr. Price. And it was to the judgment of the Duke and M. le Veillard in France, as it was to that of Vaughan and Dr. Price in England, as we shall see, that he left the important question as to whether any of the *Autobiography* should be published, and, if so, how much. Among the many tributes paid to his memory, was a paper on his life and character read by the Duke before the Society of 1789. One of the Duke's services to America was that of translating into French, at the request of Franklin, for European circulation all the constitutions of the American States.

Lavoisier was a member with Franklin of the commission which investigated the therapeutic value of mesmerism, and exposed the imposture of Mesmer. There are no social incidents in the intercourse of the two men, friendly as it was, so far as we know, worthy of mention; but, in a passage in one of Franklin's letters to Jan Ingenhousz, we have a glimpse of the master, of whom, when guillotined, after the brutal declaration of Coffinhal, the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, that the Republic had no need for *savants*, Lagrange remarked, "They needed but a moment to lay that head low, and a hundred years, perhaps, will not be sufficient to reproduce its like." Speaking of an experiment performed by Lavoisier, Franklin wrote to Jan Ingenhousz, "He kindled a hollow Charcoal, and blew into it a Stream of dephlogisticated Air. In this Focus, which is said to be the hottest fire human Art has yet been able to produce, he melted Platina in a few Minutes."

Franklin's friend, the Chevalier (afterwards Marquis) de Chastellux, who served with the Comte de Rochambeau in America, and was the author of the valuable *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 81 and 82*, succeeded in making himself as agreeable to American women as Franklin succeeded in making himself to French women. There is an echo of this popularity in one of Franklin's letters to him. "Dare I confess to you," he said, when he was still at Passy, and the Chevalier was still in America, "that I am your rival with Madame G——? (Franklin's Katy). I need not tell you, that I am not a dangerous one. I perceive that she loves you very much; and so does, dear Sir, yours, &c."

Through the influence of Leray de Chaumont, Ferdinand Grand, who was a Swiss Protestant, became the banker of our representatives in France, and, after Franklin's return to America, he remained entrusted with some of Franklin's private funds upon which the latter was in the habit of drawing from time to time. The correspondence between Franklin and himself is almost wholly lacking in social interest, but it indicates a deep feeling of affection upon Franklin's part.

For Dupont de Nemours, the distinguished economist, and the founder of the family, which has been so conspicuous in the industrial, military and naval history of the United States, Franklin cherished a feeling distinctly friendly. His acquaintance with Dupont as well as with Dubourg, who, like Dupont, was a member of the group of French Economists, known as the Physiocrats, was formed, as we have seen, before his mission to France. The correspondence between Franklin and Dupont, however, like that between Franklin and Grand, has but little significance for the purposes of this chapter.⁴⁰

This, however, is not true of the relations between Dr. Barbeu Dubourg, a medical practitioner of high standing, and Franklin. They not only opened their minds freely to each other upon a considerable variety of topics, but their intercourse was colored by cordial association. Of all the men who came under the spell of Franklin's genius, Dubourg, who was, to use Franklin's own words, "a man of extensive learning," was one of the American philosopher's most enthusiastic pupils. "My dear Master," was the term that he habitually used in speaking of him, and his reverence for the object of his admiration led him to translate into French, with some additions, the edition of Franklin's scientific papers, brought out in London by David Henry in 1769. Nothing that he had ever written, he told his master, had been so well received as the preface to this compilation. "So great," he declared, "is the advantage of soaring in the shadow of Franklin's wings." We pass by the communications from Franklin to Dubourg on purely scientific subjects. One letter from the former to him brings to our knowledge a curious habit into which Franklin was drawn by the uncompromising convictions that he entertained in regard to the origin of bad colds and the virtues of ventilation, of which we shall hereafter speak more particularly.

You know [he said] the cold bath has long been in vogue here as a tonic; but the shock of the cold water has always appeared to me, generally speaking, as too violent, and I have found it much more agreeable to my constitution to bathe in another element, I mean cold air. With this view I rise almost every morning, and sit in my chamber without any clothes whatever, half an hour or an hour, according to the season, either reading or writing. This practice is not in the least painful, but, on the contrary, agreeable; and, if I return to bed afterwards, before I dress myself, as sometimes happens, I make a supplement to my night's rest of one or two hours of the most pleasing sleep that can be imagined. I find no ill consequences whatever resulting from it, and that at least it does not injure my health, if it does not in fact contribute much to its preservation.

Another letter from Franklin to Dubourg is a dissertation on swimming—the only form of outdoor exercise, to which he was addicted—but in which he was, throughout his life, such an adept that he could even make the following entry in his Journal, when he was at Southampton on his return to America from France: "I went at noon to bathe in Martin's salt-

⁴⁰ No humanitarian levels were too high for the aspirations of Franklin, but he always took care, to use one of the sayings that he conceived or borrowed, not to ride before the horse's head. There is just a suspicion of unconscious sarcasm in a letter from him to Dupont in which he expresses the wish that the Physiocratic philosophy may grow and increase till it becomes the governing philosophy of the human species, "as it must be that of superior beings in better worlds."

water hot-bath, and, floating on my back, fell asleep, and slept near an hour by my watch without sinking or turning! a thing I never did before, and should hardly have thought possible. Water is the easiest bed that can be!” In the letter to Dubourg, he recalls the assertion of a M. Robinson that fat persons with small bones float most easily upon the water, makes a passing reference to the diving bell and the swimming waist-coat, now known as the life-preserver, and suggests the comfort of varying the progressive motion of swimming by turning over occasionally upon one’s back, and otherwise. He also states that the best method of allaying cramp is to give a sudden vigorous and violent shock to the affected region; which may be done in the air as the swimmer swims along on his back, and recalls an incident illustrative of the danger of throwing one’s self, when thoroughly heated, into cold spring water.

The exercise of swimming [he declared] is one of the most healthy and agreeable in the world. After having swam for an hour or two in the evening, one sleeps coolly the whole night, even during the most ardent heat of summer. Perhaps, the pores being cleansed, the insensible perspiration increases and occasions this coolness. It is certain that much swimming is the means of stopping a diarrhoea, and even of producing a constipation.

In this letter, too, Franklin tells Dubourg how, when he was a boy, he quickened his progress in swimming by aiding the stroke of his hands with oval palettes, and attempted to do so by attaching a kind of sandals to the soles of his feet; and also how in his boyhood, on one occasion, he lay on his back in a pond and let his kite draw him across it without the least fatigue, and with the greatest pleasure imaginable. He thought it not impossible to cross in this manner from Dover to Calais.

Another letter from Franklin to Dubourg on what he calls the doctrines of life and death is a delightful example of both his insatiable inquisitiveness and the readiness with which he could give a pleasant fillip to any subject however grave. He is speaking of some common flies that had been drowned in Madeira wine, apparently about the time when it was bottled in Virginia to be sent to London, where the writer was:

At the opening of one of the bottles, at the house of a friend where I then was [he said], three drowned flies fell into the first glass that was filled. Having heard it remarked that drowned flies were capable of being revived by the rays of the sun, I proposed making the experiment upon these; they were therefore exposed to the sun upon a sieve, which had been employed to strain them out of the wine. In less than three hours, two of them began by degrees to recover life. They commenced by some convulsive motions of the thighs, and at length they raised themselves upon their legs, wiped their eyes with their fore feet, beat and brushed their wings with their hind feet, and soon after began to fly, finding themselves in Old England, without knowing how they came thither. The third continued lifeless till sunset, when, losing all hopes of him, he was thrown away.

I wish it were possible, from this instance, to invent a method of embalming drowned persons, in such a manner that they may be recalled to life at any period, however distant; for having a very ardent desire to see and observe the state of America a hundred years hence, I should prefer to any ordinary death, the being immersed in a cask of Madeira wine, with a few friends, till that time, to be then recalled to life by the solar warmth of my dear country! But since in all probability we live in an age too early and too near the infancy of science, to hope to see such an art brought in our time to its perfection, I must for the present content myself with the treat, which you are so kind as to promise me, of the resurrection of a fowl or turkey cock.

The friendship of Dubourg for Franklin bore good fruit for America, when the American Revolution came on; for a sanguine letter from him exerted a determining influence in inducing Congress to send Franklin to France.

Le Veillard, who was a neighbor of Franklin at Passy, was one of the friends whom Franklin loved as he loved Hugh Roberts or John Hughes, Strahan or Jan Ingenhousz. And this feeling, as usual, included the members of his friend's family. Public cares, he wrote to Le Veillard, after his return to America, could not make him forget that he and Le Veillard loved one another. In the same letter, he spoke of Madame Le Veillard, as "the best of good women," and of her daughter as the amiable daughter, who, he thought, would tread in her footsteps. In a later letter, he told Le Veillard that he could not give him a better idea of his present happiness in his family than by informing him that his daughter had all the virtues of a certain good lady whom Le Veillard allowed him to love; the same tender affections and intentions, ingenuity, industry, economy, etc. "Embrace that good dame for me warmly, and the amiable daughter," he added. "My best wishes attend the whole family, whom I shall never cease to love while I am B. Franklin." This wealth of affection was richly repaid. The closest relations existed between Franklin and the Le Veillard family, while he was in France, and, when he left that country, Le Veillard was not content to accompany him simply to the seacoast, but was his companion as far as Southampton. To him, Abel James, Benjamin Vaughan and the Shipleys we are beholden for the fact that the *Autobiography* was brought down to the year 1757; there to stop like the unfinished tower which tantalized the world with a haunting sense of its rare worth and incompleteness. Like a faithful, good wife, who avails herself of her intimacy with her husband to bring the continuous pressure of her influence to bear upon him for the purpose of arousing him to a proper sense of his duty, Le Veillard spared neither entreaty nor reproach to secure additions to the precious sibylline leaves of the *Autobiography*. "You blame me for writing three pamphlets and neglecting to write the little history," Franklin complained. "You should consider they were written at sea, out of my own head; the other could not so well be written there for want of the documents that could only be had here." After this bit of self-defense, Franklin goes on to describe his physical condition. He realized that the stone in his bladder had grown heavier, he said, but on the whole it did not give him more pain than when he was at Passy, and, except in standing, walking or making water, he was very little incommoded by it. Sitting or lying in bed, he was generally quite easy, God be thanked, and, as he lived temperately, drank no wine, and used daily the exercise of the dumb-bell, he flattered himself that the stone was kept from augmenting so much as it might otherwise do, and that he might still continue to find it tolerable. "People who live long," the unconquerable devotee of human existence declared, "who will drink of the cup of life to the very bottom, must expect to meet with some of the usual dregs."

The view taken by Franklin in this letter of his physical condition was entirely too cheerful to work any alteration in the resolution of Le Veillard that the *Autobiography* should be completed, if the unremitting appeal of an old friend could prevail. In a subsequent letter, Franklin tells him that in Philadelphia his time was so cut to pieces by friends and strangers that he had sometimes envied the prisoners in the Bastille. His three years of service as President, however, would expire in the succeeding October, and he had formed the idea of retiring then to Temple's farm at Rancocas, where he would be free from the interruption of visits, and could complete the work for Le Veillard's satisfaction. In the meantime, in view of the little remnant of life left to him, the accidents that might happen before October, and Le Veillard's earnest desire, he had resolved to proceed with the *Autobiography* the very next day, and to go on with it daily until finished. This, if his health permitted, might be in the course of the ensuing summer.

In a still later letter, Franklin declared that Le Veillard was a hard taskmaster to his friend. "You insist," he said, "on his writing *his life*, already a long work, and at the same time would have him continually employed in augmenting the subject, while the time shortens in which the work is to be executed." Some months later, he is able to send to Le Veillard the joyful intelligence that he had recently made great progress in the work that his friend so urgently demanded, and that he had come as far as his fiftieth year. Indeed, he even stated that he expected to have the work finished in about two months, if illness, or some unforeseen interruption, did not prevent. This expectation was not realized, and the reason for it is stated in painful terms in a subsequent letter from Franklin to Le Veillard.

I have a long time [he said] been afflicted with almost constant and greivous Pain, to combat which I have been obliged to have recourse to Opium, which indeed has afforded me some Ease from time to time, but then it has taken away my Appetite and so impeded my Digestion that I am become totally emaciated, and little remains of me but a Skeleton covered with a Skin. In this Situation I have not been able to continue my Memoirs, and now I suppose I shall never finish them. Benjamin has made a Copy of what is done, for you, which shall be sent by the first safe Opportunity.

The copy was subsequently sent to Le Veillard, and, after the death of Franklin, was given by him to William Temple Franklin, to whom Franklin bequeathed most of his papers, in exchange for the original manuscript of the *Autobiography*. The motive for the exchange was doubtless the desire of Temple to secure the most legible "copy" that he could find for the printer of his edition of his grandfather's works. The original manuscript finally became the property by purchase of the late John Bigelow. There is reason to believe that, even after the receipt of the copy of the *Autobiography*, Le Veillard still cherished the hope that the work might be brought down to a later date. Writing to Le Veillard only a few days before Franklin's death, Jefferson said:

I wish I could add to your happiness by giving you a favourable account of the good old Doctor. I found him in bed where he remains almost constantly. He had been clear of pain for some days and was chearful and in good spirits. He listened with a glow of interest to the details of your revolution and of his friends which I gave him. He is much emaciated. I pressed him to continue the narration of his life and perhaps he will.

That Le Veillard had a lively mind we may well infer from an amusing paragraph in one of his letters to Franklin in which he pictures the jealousy with which Madame Helvétius and Madame Brillon regarded each other after the departure of Franklin from France.

You had two good friends here [he said] who might have lived harmoniously enough with each other, because they almost never saw each other, and you assured each of them privately that it was she that you loved the best; but do you venture to write to one and keep silent to the other? The first does not fail to brag and show her letter everywhere; what do you wish to become of the other? Two women draw their knives, their friends take sides, the war becomes general, now see what you have done. You set fire with a bit of paper to one half of the world, you who have so effectively aided in pacifying the other half!

It was a singularly unhappy prophecy that Franklin, after his return to Philadelphia, made to this friend whose lips were so soon to be dyed with the red wine of the guillotine. "When this fermentation is over," he wrote to him with regard to the popular tumults in which France was then involved, "and the troubling parts subsided, the wine will be fine and good, and cheer the hearts of those who drink it."

A bright letter from the daughter of Le Veillard merits a passing word. In reply to the statement of Franklin that she did not embrace him with a good grace, she says:

You know doubtless a great number of things; you have travelled much; you know men, but you have never penetrated the head of a French girl. Well! I will tell you their secret: When you wish to embrace one and she says that it does not pain her, that means that it gives her pleasure.

Very dear, too, to Franklin, was Dr. Jan Ingenhousz, the eminent scientist and physician to Maria Theresa. Many years after Franklin made his acquaintance, he received from Franklin the assurance that he had always loved him ever since he knew him, with uninterrupted affection, and he himself in a previous letter to Franklin styled him in his imperfect English “the most respectful” of all his friends. Only a few of the numerous letters that Franklin must have written to this friend are known to be in existence, and these are not particularly interesting from a social point of view. In one respect, however, they strikingly evince the kindness of heart which made Franklin so lovable. As was true of many other Europeans of his time, Ingenhousz incurred considerable pecuniary loss in American business ventures, and, like King David, who in his haste called all men liars, he was disposed at one time to call all Americans knaves. One of his American debtors, as we have already stated, was Samuel Wharton, of Philadelphia.

I know we should be happy together [wrote Franklin to Ingenhousz when the writer was about to return to America], and therefore repeat my Proposition that you should ask Leave of the Emperor to let you come and live with me during the little Remainder of Life that is left me. I am confident his Goodness would grant your Request. You will be at no expence while with me in America; you will recover your Debt from Wharton, and you will make me happy.

And the letter concludes with the request that Ingenhousz, who shared his enthusiasm for electrical experiments, would let him know soon whether he would make him happy by accepting his invitation. “I have Instruments,” he declared, in terms that remind us of Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim, when they were planning their future military diversions together, “if the Enemy did not destroy them all, and we will make Plenty of Experiments together.”

Such were the more conspicuous of the friendships which clustered so thickly about the life of Franklin.⁴¹ When we remember that all these men and women have with him said “good-night” to his Landlord of Life and Time, and gone off to their still chambers, we experience a

⁴¹ Franklin had many intimate friends besides those mentioned in our text. In two letters to Samuel Rhoads he refers to his “dear old Friend Mrs. Paschal.” In a letter to Thomas Mifflin, congratulating him upon his election as President of Congress, he speaks of their “ancient friendship.” William Hunter he addresses in 1786 as “my dear old friend.” In a letter to him in 1782, Thomas Pownall, the former Colonial Governor, says: “Permett me to say how much I have been your old invariable friend of four or five and twenty years standing.” Jean Holker and his wife, of Rouen, were “dear friends” of his, and he was on terms of intimacy with John Joseph Monthieu, a Paris merchant, and Turgot, the French statesman. He writes to Miss Alexander from Passy that he has been to pay his respects to Madame La Marck, “not merely,” he says, “because it was a Compliment due to her, but because I love her; which induces me to excuse her not letting me in.” One of Franklin’s friends, Dr. Edward Bancroft, a native of Massachusetts, who kept one foot in London and one foot in Paris during the Revolution, for the purpose, as was supposed by those of our envoys who were on good terms with him, of collecting, and imparting to our mission, information about the plans of the British Ministry, has come to occupy an equivocal position in the judgment of history. George Bancroft, the American historian, has set him down as “a double spy,” and the view of Bancroft has been followed by others, including Henri Doniol, in his work on the participation of France in the establishment of the United States. But it would seem difficult for anyone to take this view after reading the acute and vigorous discussion of the subject by Dr. Francis Wharton in the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*. In a letter to David Hartley of Feb. 22, 1779, Franklin pronounced Bancroft a “Gentleman of Character and Honour.”

feeling something like that of Xerxes when he gazed upon his vast army and reflected that not a man in it might return from Greece. The thought that there might never again be any movement in those cheerless rooms, nor any glimmer of recurring day was well calculated to make one, who loved his friends as Franklin did, exclaim, "I too with your Poet trust in God." The wide sweep of his sympathies and charities, the open prospect ever maintained by his mind, are in nothing made clearer to us than in the extent and variety of his friendships. They were sufficiently elastic, as we have seen, to include many diverse communities, and such extremes as Joseph Watson and James Ralph, George Whitefield and Lord le Despencer, John Jay and General Charles Lee, Polly and Madame Brillon. The natural, instinctive side of his character is brought to our attention very plainly in a letter from him to David Hartley, which reveals in an engaging manner the profound effect worked upon his imagination by a poor peasant, but *véritable philosophe*, who had walked all the way to Paris from one of the French provinces for the purpose of communicating a purely benevolent project to the world. But, at the same time, he never found any difficulty in accommodating himself to aberrant or artificial types of character, or to alien usages, customs and modes of thought. He belonged to the *genus homo* not to the species *homo Americanus* or *Britannicus*. Like the politic and much-experienced Ulysses of Tennyson, familiar with

"Cities of men

And manners, climates, councils, governments,"

he could say,

"I am a part of all that I have met."

Wherever he went into the world, he realized his own aspiration that the time might come when a philosopher could set his foot on any part of the earth, and say, "This is my Country." Wherever he happened to be, he was too exempt from local bias, thought thoughts, cherished feelings, and spoke a language too universal not to make a strong appeal to good will and friendship.

Volume II

I. Franklin's Personal Characteristics

The precise explanation of the great concourse of friends that Franklin drew about him, at the different stages of his long journey through the world, is to be found partly in his robust, honorable character and mental gifts. The sterner virtues, which are necessarily the foundations of such esteem as he enjoyed, he possessed in an eminent degree. An uncommonly virile and resolute spirit animated the body, which was equal in youth to the task of swimming partly on and partly under water from near Chelsea to Blackfriars, and of exhibiting on the way all of Thevenot's motions and positions as well as some of its own, and which shortly afterwards even sported about the becalmed Berkshire in the Atlantic almost with the strength and ease of one of the numerous dolphins mentioned by Franklin in his Journal of his voyage on that ship from England to America. He hated cruelty, injustice, rapacity and arbitrary conduct. It was no idle or insincere compliment that Burke paid him when he spoke of his "liberal" and manly way of thinking." How stoutly his spirit met its responsibilities in Pennsylvania, prior to the Declaration of Independence, we have seen. The risks incident to the adoption of that declaration it incurred with the same fearless courage. Of all the men who united in its adoption, he, perhaps, was in the best position to know, because of his long residence in England, and familiarity with the temper of the English monarch and his ministry, what the personal consequences to the signers were likely to be, if the American cause should prove unsuccessful. He had a head to lose even harder to replace than that of his friend Lavoisier, he had a fortune to be involved in flame or confiscation, the joy of living meant to him what it has meant to few men, and more than one statement in his writings affords us convincing proof that, quite apart from the collective act of all the signers in pledging their lives, fortunes and sacred honor to the "glorious cause," he did not lose sight of the fact that the Gray Tower still stood upon its ancient hill with its eye upon the Traitor's Gate, and its bosom stored with instruments of savage vengeance. Indeed, it was the thought that his son had been engaged against him in a game, in which not only his fortune but his neck had been at stake, that made it so difficult for him, forgiving as he was, to keep down the bile of violated nature. But, when the time came for affixing his signature to the Declaration, he not only did it with the equanimity of the rest, but, if tradition may be believed, with a light-hearted intrepidity like that of Sir Walter Raleigh jesting on the scaffold with the edge of the axe. "We must all hang together," declared John Hancock, when pleading for unanimity. "Yes," Franklin is said to have replied, "we must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

The inability of old age, partly from sheer loss of animal vigor, and partly from the desire for peace, produced by" the general decline in vividness of everything in a world, that it is about to quit, to assert itself with the force of will and temper, that belongs to us in our prime, is one of the most noticeable phenomena of the later stages of human existence. But John Adams to the contrary, the evidence all tends to show that the resolution of character exhibited by Franklin in the heyday of his physical strength he exhibited to the last. He was always slow to anger. Independent of the remarkable self-control, which enabled him to preserve a countenance, while Wedderburn was traducing him, as fixed as if it had been carved out of wood, his anger was not kindled quickly, among other reasons because he was too wise and just not to know that, if we could lay aside the sensitiveness of exaggerated self-importance, there would be but little real occasion for anger in the ordinary course of human life. But when meanness, injustice or other aggravated forms of human depravity were to be rebuked, the indignation of Franklin remained deliberate, judicious, calculating and crushing to the last. One illustration of this we have already given in his letter to Captain Peter

Landais. Others we shall have brought to our attention in several of his letters to Arthur Lee. Upon these occasions, angry as he was, he was apt to make out his case with very much the same cool completeness as that with which he demonstrated in a letter to the British Post Office that it would be a mistake to shift His Majesty's mails from the Western to the Eastern Post Route in New Jersey. The time never came when he was not fully as militant as the occasion required, though never more so.

And his integrity was as marked as his courage. "Splashes of Dirt thrown upon my Character, I suffered while fresh to remain," he once said. "I did not chuse to spread by endeavouring to remove them, but rely'd on the vulgar Adage *that they would all rub off when they were dry.*" And such was his reputation for uprightness that, as a rule," he could neglect attacks upon his character with impunity. The one vaunt of his life, if such it can be called, was his statement to John Jay that no person could truthfully declare that Benjamin Franklin had wronged him. A statement of that kind, uttered by an even better man than Franklin, might well be answered in the spirit that prompted Henry IV of France, when his attention was called to a memorial inscription, which asserted that its subject never knew fear, to remark, "Then he never snuffed a candle with his fingers." But that Franklin was a man of sterling probity is unquestionable."⁴² "We ought always to do what appears best to be done without much regarding what others may think of it," he wrote to William Carmichael, and, at more than one trying crisis of his career, he rose without difficulty to the requirements of his maxim. Lord North had little love for him, but he is credited with the remarkable statement, during the American War, that, in his belief, Franklin was the only man in France whose hands were not stained with stock jobbery. When the false charge was made that Franklin had never accounted for one of the many millions of livres entrusted to him by our French ally, no pride could suffer more acutely than did his from its inability to disprove the charge immediately.

⁴² In his *True Benjamin Franklin*, p. 163, Sydney George Fisher makes these statements: "In a letter written to Mrs. Stevenson in London, while he (Franklin) was envoy to France, he expresses surprise that some of the London tradespeople still considered him their debtor for things obtained from them during his residence there some years before, and he asks Mrs. Stevenson, with whom he had lodged, how his account stands with her.... He appears to have overdrawn his account with Hall, for there is a manuscript letter in the possession of Mr. Howard Edwards, of Philadelphia, written by Hall, March 1, 1770, urging Franklin to pay nine hundred and ninety-three pounds which had been due for three years." What Franklin's letter to Mrs. Stevenson, which is dated Jan. 25, 1779, states is that he had been told after reaching France that Mr. Henley, the linen-draper, had said that, when the former left England for America, he had gone away in his debt. The letter questions whether Henley ever made such a statement, asks Mrs. Stevenson to let the writer know the meaning of it all, and adds: "I thought he had been fully paid, and still think so, and shall, till I am assur'd of the contrary." The account that the letter asks of Mrs. Stevenson was probably for the shipping charges on the white cloth suit, sword and saddle, which had been forwarded, as the letter shows, to Franklin at Passy by Mrs. Stevenson. Or it may have well been for expense incurred by Mrs. Stevenson in performing some similar office for him. For instance, when he was on the point of leaving England in 1775, he wrote to a friend on the continent that, if he had purchased a certain book for the writer, Mrs. Stevenson, in whose hands he left his little affairs till his return, which he proposed, God willing, in October, would pay the draft for it.

A letter from Franklin to Mrs. Stevenson, dated July 17, 1775, shows that there had been mutual accounts between them during his long and familiar intercourse with her under the Craven Street roof. With this letter, he incloses an order for a sum of money that she had intrusted to him for investment, and also an order for £260 more, "supposing," he says, "by the Sketch Mr. Williams made of our Accts. that I may owe you about that Sum." "When they are finally settled," he further says, "we shall see where the Ballance lies, and easily rectify it." If the account in question had any connection with these accounts the unliquidated nature of the latter, the abruptness with which Franklin was compelled to leave England in 1775, coupled with his expectation of returning, the troubled years which followed and the difficulty of finally settling detailed accounts, when the parties to them are widely separated, furnish a satisfactory explanation of the delay in settlement. If Franklin did not pay a balance claimed from him by Hall on the settlement of their partnership accounts, after the expiration of the partnership in 1766, it was doubtless because of his own copyright counter-claim to which we have already referred in our text.

When enemies, to whom he had never given any just cause of offence whatever, were calumniating him towards the close of his life, his desire to leave the reputation of an honest man behind him became the strongest of his motives. The flattering language of great men, he said in his *Journal of the Negotiation for Peace with Great Britain*, did not mean so much to him when he found himself so near the end of life as to esteem lightly all personal interests and concerns except that of maintaining to the last, and leaving behind him the tolerably good character that he had previously supported. Still later he wrote to Henry Laurens, accepting the offer of that true patriot and gentleman to refute the slanders with regard to his career in France, and saying:

“I apprehend that the violent Antipathy of a certain person to me may have produced some Calumnies, which, what you have seen and heard here may enable you easily to refute. You will thereby exceedingly oblige one, who has lived beyond all other Ambition, than that of dying with the fair Character he has long endeavoured to deserve.”⁴³

When the negotiations for peace between Great Britain and the United States began, Richard Oswald, the envoy of Lord Shelburne, told Franklin that a part of the confidence felt in him by the English Ministry was inspired by his repute for open, honest dealing. This was not a mere diplomatic *douceur*, but a just recognition of his candid, straightforward conduct in his commerce with men. He was very resourceful and dexterous, if need were, and, in his early life, when he was promoting his own, or the public interests, he exhibited at times a finesse that bordered upon craftiness; but, when Wedderburn taxed him with duplicity, he imputed to Franklin's nature a vice incompatible with his frank, courageous disposition. It was his outspoken sincerity of character that enabled him, during the American War, to retain the attachment of his English friends even when he was holding up their land as one too wicked for them to dwell in.

⁴³ In recent years there has been a tendency to disparage the merits of Henry Laurens. The Hales in their *Franklin in France* speak of him "as a very worthy, but apparently very inefficient, member of the Commission." In his admirable prolegomena to the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, which is well calculated to excite the regret that lawyers do not oftener bring the professional habit of weighing evidence to bear upon historical topics, Dr. Francis Wharton says: "The influence he exerted in the formation of the treaty was but slight, and his attitude as to the mode of its negotiation and as to its leading provisions so uncertain as to deprive his course in respect to it of political weight." Dr. Wharton also reaches the conclusion that Henry Laurens was deficient, in critical moments, both in sagacity and resolution. On the other hand Moses Coit Tyler in his *Literary History of the American Revolution* declares that, coming at last upon the arena of national politics, Laurens was soon recognized for what he was, "a trusty, sagacious, lofty, imperturbable character." In another place in the same work, Tyler speaks of the "splendid sincerity, virility, wholesomeness and competence of this man—himself the noblest Roman of them all—the unsurpassed embodiment of the proudest, finest, wittiest, most efficient, and most chivalrous Americanism of his time." And in still another place in the same work the *Narrative of the Capture of Henry Laurens* is described "as a modest and fascinating story of an heroic episode in the history of the Revolution, a fragment of autobiography fit to become a classic in the literature of a people ready to pay homage to whatever is magnanimous, exquisite and indomitable in the manly character." To anyone familiar with the whole conduct of Laurens in the Tower and the other facts upon which Dr. Wharton based his judgment as to his sagacity and firmness at trying conjunctures, these statements of Tyler are to a certain extent mere academic puffery. We see no reason, however, to shade the character that we have ascribed to Laurens in the text. Writing to Franklin about him after his release from the Tower, John Adams said: "I had vast pleasure in his conversation; for I found him possessed of the most exact judgment concerning our enemies, and of the same noble sentiments in all things which I saw in him in Congress." And some eighteen months later Franklin wrote to Laurens himself in terms as strong as that he should ever look on his friendship as an honor to him.

His intellectual traits, too, were of a nature to win social fame. In his graphic description of Franklin in extreme old age, Doctor Manasseh Cutler, of Massachusetts, brings him before us with these telling strokes of his pencil:

I was highly delighted with the extensive knowledge he appeared to have of every subject, the brightness of his memory, and clearness and vivacity of all his mental faculties, notwithstanding his age. His manners are perfectly easy, and everything about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness. He has an incessant vein of humour, accompanied with an uncommon vivacity, which seems as natural and involuntary as his breathing.

In other words, whatever knowledge Franklin had was readily available for social purposes, and suffused with the gaiety and humor which are so ingratiating, when accompanied, as they were in his case, by the desire to please and do good.⁴⁴ "He had wit at will," is the testimony" of an unfriendly but honest witness, John Adams. His humor it would be difficult to over-emphasize. It ranged from punning, trifling, smutty jests and horse laughter to the sly, graceful merriment of Addison and the bitter realism of Swift. It irradiated his conversation, his letters, his writings, his passing memoranda, at times even his scientific essays and political papers. "Iron is always sweet, and every way taken is wholesome and friendly to the human Body," he states in his *Account of the New-Invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces*; but his waggish propensity is too much for him, and he adds, "except in Weapons." Jefferson said that Franklin was not allowed to draft the Declaration of Independence for fear that he would insert a joke in it. So far as his humor assumed literary forms, we shall speak of it in another place. We are concerned with it now only so far as it influenced his conversation. In the *Autobiography* he tells us that his reputation among his fellow-printers at Watts's Printing House in London as "a pretty good *riggite*, that is, a jocular verbal satirist," helped to support his consequence in the society. In the same book, he also tells us that later, wishing to break a habit that he was getting" into of prattling, punning and joking, which made him acceptable to trifling company only, he gave Silence the second place in his little *Book of Virtues*. "What new story have you lately heard agreeable for telling in conversation?" was one of the standing questions, of his conception, which were to be answered by the members of the Junto at each of its meetings. And, even when he was in his eighty-third year, he could say to Elizabeth Partridge that, notwithstanding the gout, the stone and old age, he enjoyed many comfortable intervals, in which he forgot all his ills, and amused himself in reading or writing, or in conversation with friends, joking, laughing and telling merry stories, as when she first knew him a young man about fifty. His puns at times were as flat as puns usually are, and some of his stories could hardly have prospered in the ear that heard them, if they had not been set off by high animal spirits and contagious good humor. But some of those that crept into his letters, whether original or borrowed, are good enough for repetition. He

⁴⁴ The Abbé Morellet in his *Memoirs* gives us very much the same impression of the social characteristics of Franklin that Cutler does. "His conversation was exquisite—a perfect good nature, a simplicity of manners, an uprightness of mind that made itself felt in the smallest things, an extreme gentleness, and, above all, a sweet serenity that easily became gayety." But this was Franklin when he was certain of his company. "He conversed only with individuals," John Adams tells us, "and freely only with confidential friends. In company he was totally silent." If we may judge by the few specimens reserved by the Diary of Arthur Lee, the Diary of John Baynes, an English barrister, and Hector St. John, the author of *Letters from an American Farmer*, the grave talk of Franklin was as good as his conversation in its livelier moods. After a call with Baynes upon Franklin at Passy, Sir Samuel Romilly wrote in his Journal: "Of all the celebrated persons whom in my life I have chanced to see, Dr. Franklin, both from his appearance and his conversation, seemed to me the most remarkable. His venerable patriarchal appearance, the simplicity of his manner and language, and the novelty of his observations, at least the novelty of them at that time to me, impressed me with an opinion of him as one of the most extraordinary men that ever existed."

seems to have had one for every possible combination of circumstances. "The Doctor," Miss Adams observes, "is always silent unless he has some diverting story to tell, of which he has a great collection." The mutinous and quarrelsome temper of his soldiers at Gnadenhutten, when they were idle, put him in mind of the sea-captain, who made it a rule to always keep his men at work, and who exclaimed, upon being told by his mate, that there was nothing more to employ them about, "*Oh, make them scour the anchor.*" His absent-mindedness, when electrocuting a turkey, in setting up an electric circuit through his own body, which cost him the loss of his consciousness, and a numbness in his arms and the back of his neck, which did not wear off until the next morning, put him in mind of the blunderer who, "being about to steal powder, made a hole in the cask with a hot iron." At times, there was a subjective quality" about his stories which lifted them above the level of mere jests. When the suggestion was made that, in view of the favor conferred upon America by the repeal of the Stamp Act by Parliament, America could not, with any face of decency, refuse to defray the expense incurred by Great Britain in stamping so much paper and parchment, Franklin did not lack an apposite story in which a hot iron was again made to figure.

The whole Proceeding [he said] would put one in Mind of the Frenchman that used to accost English and other Strangers on the Pont-Neuf, with many Compliments, and a red hot Iron in his Hand; *Pray Monsieur Anglois*, says he, *Do me the Favour to let me have the Honour of thrusting this hot Iron into your Backside?* Zoons, what does the Fellow mean! Begone with your Iron or I'll break your Head! *Nay Monsieur*, replies he, *if you do not chuse it, I do not insist upon it. But at least, you will in Justice have the Goodness to pay me something for the heating of my Iron.*

This story was too good not to have a sequel.

As you observe [he wrote to his sister Jane] there was no swearing in the story of the poker, when I told it. The late new dresser of it was, probably, the same, or perhaps akin to him, who, in relating a dispute that happened between Queen Anne and the Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning a vacant mitre, which the Queen was for bestowing on a person the Archbishop thought unworthy, made both the Queen and the Archbishop swear three or four thumping oaths in every sentence of the discussion, and the Archbishop at last gained his point. One present at this tale, being surprised, said, "But did the Queen and the Archbishop swear so at one another?" "O no, no," says the relator; "that is only *my way* of telling the story."

Another rather elaborate story was prompted by Franklin's disapproval of the Society of the Cincinnati.

The States [he said in his famous letter to his daughter] should not only restore to them the *Omnia* of their first Motto (*omnia reliquit servare rempublicam*) which many of them have left and lost, but pay them justly, and reward them generously. They should not be suffered to remain, with (all) their new-created Chivalry, *entirely* in the Situation of the Gentleman in the Story, which their *omnia reliquit* reminds me of.... He had built a very fine House, and thereby much impair'd his Fortune. He had a Pride, however, in showing it to his Acquaintance. One of them, after viewing it all, remark'd a Motto over the Door "***[=O]IA VANITAS.*" "What," says he, "is the Meaning of this ***[=O]IA*? It is a word I don't understand." "I will tell you," said the Gentleman; "I had a mind to have the Motto cut on a Piece of smooth Marble, but there was not room for it between the Ornaments, to be put in Characters large enough to be read. I therefore made use of a Contraction antiently very common in Latin Manuscripts, by which the *m*'s and *n*'s in Words are omitted, and the Omissions noted by a little Dash above, which you may see there; so that the Word is *omnia*, OMNIA

VANITAS.” “O,” says his Friend, “I now comprehend the Meaning of your motto, it relates to your Edifice; and signifies, that, if you have abridged your *Omnia*, you have, nevertheless, left your VANITAS legible at full length.”

The determination of the enemies of America after the Revolution to have it that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, America was going from bad to worse, brought out still another story:

They are angry with us and hate us, and speak all manner of evil of us; but we flourish, notwithstanding [he wrote to his grandnephew, Jonathan Williams]. They put me in mind of a violent High Church Factor, resident some time in Boston, when I was a Boy. He had bought upon Speculation a Connecticut Cargo of Onions, which he flatter’d himself he might sell again to great Profit, but the Price fell, and they lay upon hand. He was heartily vex’d with his Bargain, especially when he observ’d they began to *grow* in the Store he had” fill’d with them. He show’d them one Day to a Friend. “Here they are,” says he, “and they are *growing* too! I damn ‘em every day; but I think they are like the Presbyterians; the more I curse ‘em, the more they *grow*.”

It was impossible for such an irrational thing as the duel to escape Franklin’s humorous insight, and a story like the following tended far more effectively to end the superstition upon which it throve than any pains or penalties that law could devise:

A Man [wrote Franklin from Passy to Thomas Percival] says something, which another tells him is a Lie. They fight; but, whichever is killed, the Point in dispute remains unsettled. To this purpose they have a pleasant little Story here. A Gentleman in a Coffee-house desired another to sit farther from him. “Why so?” “Because, Sir, you stink.” “That is an Affront, and you must fight me.” “I will fight you, if you insist upon it; but I do not see how that will mend the Matter. For if you kill me, I shall stink too; and if I kill you, (you) will stink, if possible, worse than you do at present.”

This is one of those stories which make their own application, but the grave reflections, by which it was followed, are well worthy of quotation too.

How can such miserable Sinners as we are [added Franklin] entertain so much Pride, as to conceit that every Offence against our imagined Honour merits *Death*? These petty Princes in their own Opinion would call that Sovereign a Tyrant, who should put one of them to death for a little uncivil Language, tho’ pointed at his sacred Person; yet every one of them makes himself Judge in his own Cause, condemns the offender without a Jury, and undertakes himself to be the Executioner.

Some *bon mots*, too, of Franklin have come down to us with his stories. When a neighbor of his in Philadelphia consulted him as to how he could keep trespassers from coming into his back yard, and stealing small beer from a keg, which he kept there, he replied, “Put a pipe of Madeira” alongside of it.” When Lord Stormont, the British Ambassador to France, hatched the report that a large part of Washington’s army had surrendered, Franklin was asked whether it was true. “No sir,” he said, “it is not a truth, it is only a stormont.” The result was that for some time no lies were told in Paris but only “stormonts.” It was not often that the wit of Franklin was barbed with malice, but there were good reasons why the malice in this instance should never have cost him any regret. When the American Commissioners proposed an exchange of prisoners to Lord Stormont, he did not deign to reply, but when they followed up their proposition with another letter, he returned a communication to them without date or signature in these insolent words: “The King’s Ambassador receives no letters from rebels but when they come to implore his Majesty’s mercy.” The American Commissioners, with Franklin doubtless as their scrivener, were quite equal to the occasion.

"In answer to a letter which concerns some of the most material interests of humanity, and of the two nations, Great Britain and the United States of America, now at war," they retorted, "we received the inclosed *indecent* paper, as coming from your lordship, which we return, for your lordship's more mature consideration." Between Franklin and the vivacity of the Parisians, Lord Stormont found it not a little difficult to maintain his position of frigid and relentless dignity. Commenting in a letter to John Lovell, after Lord Stormont had left France, upon the expense entailed upon the United States by supernumerary commissioners, Franklin takes this parting shot at the Ambassador; we reduce such of his words as were in French to English:

I imagine every one of us spends nearly as much as Lord Stormont did. It is true, he left behind him the character of a niggard; and, when the advertisement appeared for the sale of his household goods, all Paris laughed at an article of it, perhaps very innocently expressed, "a great quantity of table linen, which has never been used." "That is very true," say they, "for he has never given any one anything to eat."⁴⁵

Another *bon mot* of Franklin was his reply when he was told that Howe had taken Philadelphia. "No," he said, "Philadelphia has taken Howe"; and so it proved. Still another owed its origin to the balloon in its infancy. "Of what use is a balloon?" someone asked in Franklin's presence. "Of what use," he answered, "is a new-born baby?"

But to form a correct impression of Franklin's humor we should think of it, to use Dr. Cutler's comparison, as something as natural to him as the rise and fall of his chest in breathing. It played like an iris over the commonest transactions of his life. If it was only a lost prayer book of his wife that he was advertising for in his *Gazette*, he did it in such terms as these:

Taken out of a Pew in the Church some months since, a Common Prayer-Book, bound in Red, gilt, and letter'd D. F. on each corner. The Person who took it is desir'd to open it, and read the Eighth Commandment, and afterwards return it to the same Pew again; upon which no further Notice will be taken.

At times, the humor is mere waggishness. When he was the Colonial Deputy Postmaster-General, he indorsed his letters, "Free, B. Franklin," but, after he became the Postmaster-General of the United States, out of deference for the American struggle for liberty, he changed the indorsement to "B. Free Franklin." Even in his brief memoranda on the backs of letters, there are gleams of the same overflowing vivacity. Upon the manuscript of a long poem, received by him, when in France, he jotted down the words: "From M. de Raudiere, a poor Poet, who craves assistance to enable him to finish an epic poem which he is writing against the English. He thinks General Howe will be off as soon as the poem appears." When a Benedictine monk, the prior for a time of the Abbey of St. Pierre de Chalon, lost money at

⁴⁵ The lack of generous fare imputed by the Parisians to the table of Lord Stormont was in keeping with the hopelessly rigid and bigoted nature revealed by his dispatches when in France. Writing from Paris on Dec. 11, 1776, to Lord Weymouth, he says of Franklin: "Some people think that either some private dissatisfaction or despair of success have brought him into this country. I can not but suspect that he comes charged with a secret commission from the Congress, and as he is a subtle, artful man, and void of all truth, he will in that case use every means to deceive, will avail himself of the general ignorance of the French, to paint the situation of the rebels in the falsest colours, and hold out every lure to the ministers, to draw them into an open support of that cause. He has the advantage of several intimate connexions here, and stands high in the general opinion. In a word, my Lord, I look upon him as a dangerous engine, and am very sorry that some English frigate did not meet with him by the way." In another letter to Lord Weymouth, dated Apr. 16, 1777, Lord Stormont declared that he was thoroughly convinced that few men had done more than Franklin to poison the minds of the Americans, or were more totally unworthy of his Majesty's mercy.

cards, and wrote to him for his aid, he made this endorsement upon the letter: “Dom Bernard, Benedictine, wants me to pay his Gaming Debts—and he will pray for success to our Cause!”

The humor of Franklin was too broad at times not to find expression occasionally in practical jokes. When in England, during his maturer years, he was in the habit of pretending to read his Parable against Persecution, which he had learnt by heart, and in which the manner of the Old Testament is skilfully imitated, out of his Bible, as the fifty-first Chapter of the Book of Genesis. The remarks of the Scripturians on it, he said in a letter written by him a year before his death, were sometimes very diverting. On one occasion, he wrote to the famous English printer, John Baskerville, that, to test the acumen of a connoisseur, who had asserted that Baskerville would blind all the” readers of the nation by the thin and narrow strokes of his letters, he submitted to the inspection of the gentleman, as a specimen of Baskerville’s printing, what was in reality a fragment of a page printed by Caslon. Franklin protested that he could not for his life see in what respects the print merited the gentleman’s criticism. The gentleman saw in it everywhere illustrations of the justice of this criticism and declared that he could not even then read the specimen without pain in his eyes.

I spared him that Time [said Franklin] the Confusion of being told, that these were the Types he had been reading all his life, with so much Ease to his Eyes; the Types his adored Newton is printed with, on which he has pored not a little; nay, the very Types his own Book is printed with, (for he is himself an Author) and yet never discovered this painful Disproportion in them, till he thought they were yours.⁴⁶

Associated with these moral and intellectual traits was a total lack of all anti-social characteristics or habits. When Franklin was in his twenty-first year, he made this sage entry in his Journal of his voyage from London to Philadelphia:

Man is a sociable being, and it is, for aught I know, one of the worst of punishments to be excluded from Society. I have read abundance of fine things on the subject of solitude, and I know ‘tis a common boast in the mouths of those that affect to be thought wise, *that they are never less alone than when alone*. I acknowledge solitude an agreeable refreshment to a busy mind; but were these thinking people obliged to be always alone, I am apt to think they would quickly find their very being insupportable to them.

In his youth he adopted the Socratic method of argument, and grew, he tells us in the *Autobiography*, very” artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither he nor his cause always deserved. But, in a few years, he discovered that these victories were Pyrrhic victories, and he gradually left off this doubtful kind of dialectics, retaining only the habit of expressing himself in terms of modest diffidence, never using when he advanced anything, that might possibly be disputed, the words “certainly,” “undoubtedly” or any others that gave the air of positiveness to an opinion, but rather saying “I conceive” or “apprehend” a thing to be so and so; “it appears to me,” or “I should think it is so or so” for such and such reasons; or “I imagine it to be so,” or “it is so if I am not mistaken.”

As the chief ends of conversation [he declared] are to *inform* or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust,

⁴⁶ It was Balzac who said that the *canard* was a discovery of Franklin—the inventor of the lightning rod, the hoax, and the republic.

tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure.

And that Franklin completely succeeded in rooting out the last vestige of dogmatism in his nature we not only have his testimony but that of Jefferson, who was not even born when he resolved to do it. "It was one of the rules which, above all others, made Dr. Franklin the most amiable of men in society," he said, "never to contradict anybody." Long before this, when Franklin was only in his forty-fifth year, James Logan wrote of him to Peter Collinson in these words: "Our Benjamin Franklin is certainly an extraordinary man, one of a singular good judgment, but of equal modesty."

How noble was his capacity for self-effacement in the investigation of truth we shall see later on. In this place, it is enough to say that even the adulation poured out upon him in France did not in the slightest degree turn his head. He accepted it with the ingenuous pleasure with which he accepted everything that tended to confirm his impression that life was a game fully worth the candle, but, much as he loved France and the French, ready as he was to take a sip of everything that Paris pronounced exquisite, celestial or divine, it is manifest enough that he regarded with no little amusement the effort of French hyperbole to assign to him the rôle of Jupiter Tonans. When Felix Nogaret submitted to him his French version of Turgot's epigram, "Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis," Franklin, after acknowledging the flood of compliments that he could never hope to merit, with which the writer had overwhelmed him in his letter, added, "I will only call your attention to two inaccuracies in the original line. In spite of my electrical experiments, the lightning descends just the same before my very nose and beard, and, as to tyrants, there have been more than a million of us engaged in snatching his sceptre from him." His pen, however, was wasting its breath when it attempted to convince a Frenchman of that day that his countrymen did not owe their liberties solely to him. If the French had not been too generous and well-bred to remind him of the millions of livres obtained by him from the French King for the support of the American cause, he might have found it more difficult to deny that he was the real captor of Cornwallis.

How heartily Franklin hated disputation we have already had some occasion to see. This aversion is repeatedly expressed in the *Autobiography*. Referring to his arguments with Collins, he tells us in one place that the disputatious turn of mind

is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, is productive of disgusts and perhaps enmities where you may have occasion for friendship.

In another place, he has this to say of the contentious Governor Morris, one of the Colonial governors of Pennsylvania:

He had some reason for loving to dispute, being eloquent, an acute sophister, and, therefore, generally successful in argumentative conversation. He had been brought up to it from a boy, his father, as I have heard, accustoming his children to dispute with one another for his diversion, while sitting at table after dinner; but I think the practice was not wise; for, in the course of my observation, these disputing, contradicting, and confuting people are generally unfortunate in their affairs. They get victory sometimes, but they never get good will, which would be of more use to them.

The same thought is stated in a letter from Franklin to Robert Morris in which the former told the latter that he would see, on comparing a letter which Franklin had written, with the

answer, that, if he had replied, which he could easily have done, a dispute might have arisen out of it, in which, if he had got the better, he should perhaps have got nothing else.

Facetious and agreeable as he was, he was likewise free from the unsocial habit of monopolizing conversation:

The great secret of succeeding in conversation, [he declared], is to admire little, to hear much; always to distrust our own reason, and sometimes that of our friends; never to pretend to wit, but to make that of others appear as much as possibly we can; to hearken to what is said, and to answer to the purpose.

Nor, in making or borrowing these just observations, was Franklin like Carlyle who has been wittily said to" have preached the doctrine of silence in thirty volumes. What he preached in these respects, he practised.

He was friendly and agreeable in conversation [Miss Logan tells us], which he suited to his company, appearing to wish to benefit his hearers. I could readily believe that he heard nothing of consequence himself but what he turned to the account he desired, and in his turn profited by the conversation of others.

It is hardly just to Franklin, however, to portray his social character negatively. The truth is, as the extracts from his correspondence have clearly enough shown, he was one of the most companionable and one of the kindest and most sympathetic and affectionate of human beings. He detested wrangling and discord. He had no patience with malice, and refused to allow the *Pennsylvania Gazette* to be made a vehicle for detraction. To tell a chronic grumbler that he was hurt by his "voluminous complaints," or to write to a friend that he would have sent him a longer letter but for the coming in of a *bavard* who had worried him till evening was about as close as he ever got to fretfulness. There is testimony to the effect that he never uttered a hasty or angry word to any member of his household, servant or otherwise. Even where he had strong reasons for resentment, he was remarkably just, generous and forgiving. Speaking in the *Autobiography* of the manner in which he had been deceived by Governor Keith, he had only these mild words of reproof for him:

He wish'd to please everybody; and, having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious, sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good governor for the people, tho' not for his constituents, the proprietaries, whose instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best laws were of his planning and passed during his administration.

When Bradford was Postmaster, he refused to allow his post-riders to carry any newspaper but his own. When the tables were turned, and Franklin was in the position as Postmaster himself to shut out every publication from the mails except his *Gazette*, he declined to retaliate on Bradford's meanness. Drained of money, as he was by Ralph, when they were in London together, he nevertheless summed up the situation in the *Autobiography* with the charitable statement: "I lov'd him, notwithstanding, for he had many amiable qualities." If there was any person for whom Franklin entertained, and had just cause to entertain, a bitter feeling of contempt and dislike, it was Thomas Penn. Yet, when Lady Penn solicited his assistance, for the protection of her interests in Pennsylvania, after the Proprietary Government in that Province had collapsed with the royal authority, he did all that he could properly do to aid her.

He was always ready for a friendly game of cribbage, cards or chess. Though entirely too temperate to indulge any physical appetite to excess, he was not insensible to the pleasures of the table in his later years. Wine, too, he relished sufficiently to thank God for it liturgically in his youth, and to consume a second bottle of it at times in middle age with the aid of his

friend "Straney." When Col. Henry Bouquet was looking forward to a hot summer in Charleston, he wrote to him that he did all that he could for his relief, by recommending him to an ingenious physician of his acquaintance, who knew the rule of making cool, weak, refreshing punch, not inferior to the nectar of the gods. It would not do, of course, to accept too literally the song in which Franklin exalted Bacchus at the expense of Venus, or the Anacreontic letter to the Abbé Morellet, in which wine was extolled as if it were all milk of our Blessed Lady. But these convivial effusions of his pen nevertheless assist us in arriving at a correct interpretation of his character."

He was fond of music also, and was something of a musician himself. He could play on the harp, the guitar and the violin, and he improved the armonica, which acquired some temporary repute. His interest in this musical instrument owed its birth to the melodious sounds which a member of the Royal Society, Mr. Delavel, happened to produce in his presence by rubbing his fingers on the edges of bowls, attuned to the proper notes by the different measures of water that they contained. It was upon the armonica that Franklin played at the social gatherings under M. Brillon's roof which he called his Opera, and to which such lively references are made in the letters that passed between Madame Brillon and himself. The advantages of the instrument, he wrote to Giambatista Beccaria, were that its tones were incomparably sweet beyond those of any other; that they could be swelled and softened at pleasure by stronger or weaker pressures of the fingers, and continued to any length; and that the instrument, being once well tuned, never again required tuning.

Blend with all this the happy disposition, which led Franklin to declare in his eighty-second year that he comforted himself with the reflection that only three incurable diseases, the gout, the stone, and old age, had fallen to his share, and that they had not yet deprived him of his natural cheerfulness, his delight in books, and enjoyment of social conversation, and we can form some adequate idea of what he brought to intercourse with his fellow-creatures. Only about two weeks before his death he wrote to Jane Mecom from his death-bed:

I do not repine at my malady, though a severe one, when I consider how well I am provided with every convenience to palliate it, and to make me comfortable under it; and how many more horrible evils the human body is subject to; and what a long life of health I have been blessed with, free from them all.

In his *Proposals Relating to Education*, he dwelt upon the importance of "that *Benignity of Mind*, which shows itself in *searching for* and *seizing* every Opportunity to *serve* and to *oblige*; and is the Foundation of what is called Good Breeding; highly useful to the Possessor, and most agreeable to all." This benignity of mind belonged to him in an eminent degree. The grape vines that he procured for his friend Quincy at the cost of so much trouble to himself were but one of the ten thousand proofs that he gave his friends of his undiminished affection and unselfish readiness to serve them. Throughout his whole life, he had a way of keeping friendship fresh by some thoughtful gift or act of kindness. Books, pamphlets, writing materials, seeds of many descriptions, candles, hams, American nuts and dried apples, even choice soap, were among the articles with which he reminded his friends that he had not forgotten them.

The Box not being full [he wrote to Collinson], I have put in a few more of our Candles which I recommend for your particular Use when you have Occasion to read or write by Night; they give a whiter Flame than that of any other kind of Candle, and the Light is more like Daylight than any other Light I know; besides they need little or no Snuffing, and grease nothing. There is still a little Vacancy at the End of the Box, so I'll put in a few Cakes of American Soap made of Myrtle Wax, said to be the best Soap in the World for Shaving or Washing fine Linnens etc. Mrs. Franklin requests

your Daughter would be so good as to accept 3 or 4 Cakes of it, to wash your Grandson's finest Things with.

In a letter to Bartram, who had informed him that his eye sight was failing, Franklin surmises that this good and dear old friend did not have spectacles that suited him.

Therefore [he said] I send you a complete set, from number one to thirteen, that you may try them at your ease; and, having pitched on such as suit you best at present, reserve those of" higher numbers for future use, as your eyes grow still older; and with the lower numbers, which are for younger people, you may oblige some other friends. My love to good Mrs. Bartram and your children.

Afterwards, he sends to Bartram several sorts of seed and the English medal which had been awarded to him for his botanical achievements. And with them went also one of the compliments in which his urbanity abounded. Alluding to the medal, he says, "It goes in a Box to my Son Bache, with the Seeds. I wish you Joy of it. Notwithstanding the Failure of your Eyes, you write as distinctly as ever."

"Please to accept a little Present of Books, I send by him, curious for the Beauty of the Impression," he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan, when Temple was on the point of visiting England. One of his last gifts was a collection of books to Abdiel Holmes, the father of Oliver Wendell Holmes. In addition to the gifts that he made to his friends, and the numerous commissions that he executed for them, when he was in London, he was prompt to let them feel that they could always be certain of his sympathy in every respect that affected their prosperity or happiness for good or for evil. In one of his letters, he assures Jared Eliot that, if he should send any of his steel saws to Philadelphia for sale, the writer would not be wanting, where his recommendation might be of service. When at Passy, he wrote to George Whatley for a copy of his "excellent little Work," *The Principles of Trade*. "I would get it translated and printed here," he said. The same generous impulse led him to write to Robert Morris, when Morris was acquiring his reputation as "The Financier," "No one but yourself can enjoy your growing reputation more than I do." Often as he was honored both at home and abroad by institutions of learning, it is safe to say that no honor that he ever received afforded him more pleasure than he experienced when the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred at his instance by the University of Edinburgh upon Dr. Samuel Cooper.

In no respect, however, did Franklin commend himself more signally to the affection of his friends than in the notice that he took of their children. His relations to some of these children were closely akin to those of adoption. To John Hughes, Josiah Quincy, Henry Laurens and de Chaumont, he wrote at one time or another referring to their "valuable" sons, and filling their bosoms with the parental joy that his commendation could not fail to excite.

In these attributes of mind, character and nature can readily be found, we think, the explanation of that capacity for winning and retaining friends which made the life of Franklin as mellow as a ripe peach. The most important of them in a social sense lead us, of course, simply to the statement that he was far more beloved than most men are because he was himself influenced far more than most men are by the spirit of love. His sympathy and affection were given to men in gross, and they were given to men in detail. His heart was capacious enough to take in the largest enterprises of human benevolence, but, unlike the hearts of many philanthropists and reformers, it was not so intensely preoccupied with them as to have no place for

That best portion of a good man's life,—

His little, nameless, unremembered acts

Of Kindness and of Love.

II. Franklin as a Man of Business

When some one said to Erskine that punning was the lowest kind of wit, he replied that the statement was true, because punning was the foundation of all wit.

The business career of Franklin did not move upon such an exalted plane as his scientific or political career, but it was the basis on which the entire superstructure of his renown as a philosopher and a statesman was built up; inasmuch as it was his early release from pecuniary cares which enabled him to apply himself with single-minded devotion to electrical experiments, and to accept at the hands of the people of Pennsylvania the missions to England which opened up the wider horizon of his postmeridian life. Quite apart, however, from the scientific and political reputation, to which his material success smoothed the way, his business career has an intrinsic interest of its own. In itself alone, when the limited opportunities afforded by Colonial conditions for the accumulation of a fortune are considered, it is a remarkable illustration of the extent to which sleepless energy and wise conduct rise superior to the most discouraging circumstances. Comparatively few young men aspire to be philosophers or statesmen, but almost every young man of merit finds himself under the necessity of striving for a pecuniary independence or at any rate for a "pecuniary" livelihood. How this object can be most effectually accomplished, is the problem, above all others in the world, the most importunate; and the effort to solve it from generation to generation is one of the things that invest human existence with perpetual freshness. To a young man, involved in the hopes and anxieties of his first struggles for a foothold in the world, the history of Franklin, as a business man, could not but be full of inspiration, even if it had not flowered into higher forms of achievement, and were not reflected in publications of rare literary value. But, putting altogether out of sight the great fame acquired by Franklin in scientific and political fields, a peculiar vividness is imparted to his business career by other circumstances which should not be overlooked. His main calling was that of a printer, a vocation of unusual importance and influence in a free community. "I, Benjamin Franklin, of Philadelphia, printer, late Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America to the Court of France, now President of the State of Pennsylvania," is the way in which he describes himself in his will executed less than two years before his death. And from that day to this, upon one memorable occasion or another, guilds of printers on both sides of the Atlantic have acclaimed him as little less than the patron saint of their craft.

Two of his commercial enterprises were the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the most readable newspaper of Colonial America, and *Poor Richard's Almanac*, the only almanac that has ever attained the rank of literature. And finally the story of Franklin's business vicissitudes and the fortune, that he ultimately won, has been pictured with incomparable distinctness in the fascinating *Autobiography*. There he has set forth, as no other man with such lowly beginnings has had the genius to set forth, the slow, painful progress of a printer and merchant, under harsh and rigid conditions, from poverty to wealth." That fortune cannot be won under such circumstances except by the exercise of untiring industry, pinching frugality and unceasing vigilance, but that, with good health, good character, unquailing courage and due regard to Father Abraham's harangue, every man can conquer adversity, is the moral which the *Autobiography* has for the youth who has no inheritance but his own hands or brain. It is sad to reflect how much more impressive and stimulating this moral would be, if the *Autobiography* did not also disagreeably remind us that pecuniary ideals subject human character to many peculiar temptations of their own, and that, as the result of the destructive competition, which extends even to the sapling struggling in the thick set copse for its share

of light and air, the success of one man in business is too often founded upon the ruins of that of another.

The business life of Franklin began when he was ten years old. At that age, he was taken from Mr. Brownell's school in Boston, and set to the task at the Blue Ball, his father's shop, of "cutting wick for the candles, filling the dipping mold and the molds for cast candles, attending the shop, going of errands, etc." At this he continued until he was twelve years of age, but his duties were so distasteful to him that his father feared that, unless he could find some more congenial occupation for him, he would run off to sea. To avert this danger, Josiah sometimes took Benjamin about with him, and showed him joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers and other artisans at their several trades in the hope of awakening an inclination in him for one of them. The walks were not unprofitable to the son.

It has ever since [he says in the *Autobiography*] been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools; and it has been useful to me, having learnt so much by it as to be able to do little jobs myself in my house when a workman could not readily be got, and to construct little machines for my" experiments, while the intention of making the experiment was fresh and warm in my mind.

After this circuit of the various handicrafts, Josiah decided to make a cutler of Benjamin, and he placed him on probation with Samuel Franklin, a cutler, and a son of Josiah's brother, Benjamin. But Samuel thought that he should be paid a fee for instructing his cousin, and the suggestion was so displeasing to Josiah that he took the lad back to his own home. He doubtless felt that Samuel might have remembered whose roof it was that had sheltered his father when the latter first came over from England to Boston.

The real inclination, however, that Benjamin discovered at this period of his life was for books. His father observed it, and decided to make a printer of him, and it was when James, an older son of Josiah, returned from England, with a press and letters, to set up as a printer at Boston, that Benjamin was finally persuaded to enter into indentures of apprenticeship with him. He did not yield at once, because, while he preferred the business of a printer to that of a tallow chandler, the salt of the sea was still in his blood. Under the provisions of the indentures, he was to serve as his brother's apprentice, until he was twenty-one years of age, but he was to be allowed the wages of a journeyman during the last year of the apprenticeship. It was a fortunate thing for the apprentice that he should have become bound to a master, who had been trained for his craft in London, and the extraordinary skill which he early acquired as a printer was probably due in part to this circumstance. Among the publications printed by James, while the apprenticeship lasted, were Stoddard's *Treatise on Conversion*, Stone's *Short Catechism* and *A Prefatory Letter about Psalmody*. These publications were all of the kind that Franklin afterwards came to regard as hopelessly dry pemmican. Other publications, printed by" James Franklin, during the same time, were various New England sermons, *The Isle of Man, or Legal Proceedings in Manshire against Sin*, an allegory, *A Letter from One in the Country to his Friend in Boston*, *News from the Moon*, *A Friendly Check from a kind Relation to the Chief Cannoneer* and *A Word of Comfort to a Melancholy Country*—all political pamphlets,—several papers on inoculation, and a production bearing the quaint title *Hooped Petticoats Arraigned by the Light of Nature and the Law of God*. But it was through a publication of a very different nature from these that James Franklin has come to occupy his position of prominence in the life of his apprentice. This publication was the *New England Courant*, already mentioned above. Its first issue appeared at Boston on August 21, 1721, and so bold were its pungent comments upon the clergy and magistrates of the Colony that, within a year, James Franklin was by the Council summoned before it for what it conceived to be highly injurious reflections upon the

civil authorities. The reflections consisted in this: A letter from Newport in the *Courant* for June 11, 1722, stated that a piratical vessel had been seen off Block Island, and that two vessels were being fitted out to pursue her. "We are advised from Boston," was the conclusion of the letter, "that the Government of the Massachusetts are fitting out a ship (The Flying Horse) to go after the pirates, to be commanded by Captain Peter Papillon, and 'tis thought he will sail some time this month, wind and weather permitting." The letter, of course, was fictitious, and but a mild piece of satire in comparison with some of the prior utterances of the *Courant*. But this time the magistracy of the Colony was too much exasperated by the past misdemeanors of the *Courant* to overlook such a gibe at the expense of its activity. When questioned by the Council, James admitted that he was the owner of the paper, but refused to disclose the name of the author of the offensive letter." Benjamin was questioned, too, and united in the refusal. This was excusable in him as it was a point of honor for an apprentice not to betray his master's secrets, but James had no such plea behind which to shelter himself. Indeed, his bearing before the Council appears to have been too haughty to warrant the idea that he was much concerned about bringing forward any sort of defence. The examination resulted in a decision by the Council that the letter was "a high affront to the Government" and an order to the Sheriff to commit James to the Boston Jail.

A week in jail was sufficient to bring James a whining suppliant to the feet of his oppressors. At the end of that time, he addressed an humble petition to the Council, acknowledging his folly in affronting the civil government, and his indecent behavior, when arraigned for it, and praying for forgiveness and less rigorous confinement. The petition was granted, but, when he was released, he had been a whole month in durance. In the meantime, however, Benjamin, who had attracted the attention of his brother and the group of writers, who contributed to the columns of the *Courant*, by a sprightly series of letters signed Silence Dogood, of which we shall say something hereafter, had been conducting the publication, and, with the aid of his literary coadjutors, assailing the proceedings of the Council in prose and verse. These attacks continued for six months after James was released, and were borne by the Council with a supineness which was probably due to the fear of exciting popular sympathy with the *Courant* as a champion of free speech. But in the issue of the *Courant* for January 14, 1723, appeared an article so caustic that the Council could contain itself no longer. It was headed by the well known lines of *Hudibras*, which are significant of the spirit in which the youthful Franklin confronted the whole system of Puritan Asceticism:

In the wicked there's no vice,
Of which the saints have not a spice;"
And yet that thing that's pious in
The one, in t'other is a sin.
Is't not ridiculous and nonsense,
A saint should be a slave to conscience?

The performance has so many earmarks of Franklin's peculiar modes of thought and speech that it is hard not to ascribe its authorship to him without hesitation. Besides thrusts at the Governor and other public functionaries, it lashed the pietists of the place and time with unsparing severity. Many persons, it declared, who seemed to be more than "ordinarily religious," were often found to be the greatest cheats imaginable. They would dissemble and lie, snuffle and whiffle, and, if it were possible, would overreach and defraud all who dealt with them.

For my own part [the writer further declared] when I find a man full of religious cant and pellavar, I presently suspect him to be a knave. Religion is, indeed, the *principal thing*; but too much of it is worse than none at all. The world abounds with knaves and villains; but of all knaves, the *religious knave* is the worst; and villainies acted under the cloak of religion are the most execrable. Moral honesty, though it will not of itself, carry a man to heaven, yet I am sure there is no going thither *without it*. And however such men, of whom I have been speaking, may palliate their wickedness, they will find that *publicans and harlots will enter the kingdom of heaven before themselves*.

The same day, on which this issue of the *Courant* appeared, the Council passed an order, denouncing it in scathing terms, and appointing a committee of three persons to consider and report what was proper for the Court to do with regard to it. It did not take the committee long to report. They condemned the *Courant* in stern language as an offence to church and state, and “for precaution of the like offence for the future,” humbly” proposed that “James Franklin, the printer and publisher thereof, be strictly forbidden by this Court to print or publish the New England *Courant*, or any other pamphlet or paper of the like nature, except it be first supervised by the Secretary of this Province.” The report was approved, and followed by an order, carrying its recommendations into execution. But the proprietor of the *Courant* and his literary retainers were equal to the crisis. They assembled at once, and resolved that the paper should thenceforth be issued in the name of Benjamin, at that time a boy of seventeen. At the same time, to retain his hold on his apprentice until the expiration of his term, James resorted to a knavish expedient.

The contrivance [the *Autobiography* tells us] was that my old indenture should be return'd to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to be shown on occasion, but to secure to him the benefit of my service, I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme it was; however, it was immediately executed.

As the final step in the fraud, the next issue of the *Courant* announced that the late publisher of the paper, finding that so many inconveniences would arise by his taking the manuscripts and public news to be supervised by the Secretary as to render his carrying it on unprofitable, had entirely dropped the undertaking. The *Courant* itself, however, went merrily along in its old evil courses, despite the fact that the same issue, speaking through its new management, as if it were an entire stranger to its guilty past, deprecated newspaper license in the strongest terms, looked forward to a future of genial good-humor only, and even gave expression to such a deceitful sentiment as this: “Pieces of pleasancy and mirth have a secret charm in them to allay the heats and tumors of our spirits, and to make a man forget his restless resentments.” These” debonair pretences were hardly uttered before they were laid aside, and the attacks on the clergy and their sanctimonious adherents renewed with as much wit and vivacity as formerly, if not more; and so eagerly read were the lampoons of the *Courant* by the population of Boston, which, perhaps, after all, stiff-necked as it was, did not differ from most urban populations in containing more sinners than saints, that, under the management of “Old Janus,” the mask behind which young Franklin concealed his features, the *Courant* was in a few months able to raise its price from ten to twelve shillings a year. It was a lawless sheet, but, in its contest against arbitrary power and muffled speech, it was swimming with a current that was to gather up additional elements of irresistible volume and force at every stage of its journey towards the open main of present American political ideas.

In the management of the *Courant*, Franklin had scored his first business success. James might well have made his gifted apprentice his co-partner; but, whether from jealousy, the

sauciness of the apprentice, mere choler, or the domineering temper that we should naturally expect in a man who meekly kissed the hand of tyranny after a single week in jail, he was far from doing anything of the sort. Smarting under the snubs and blows administered to him by a brother, from whose fraternal relationship to him he thought that he was entitled to receive somewhat more than the ordinary indulgence shown an apprentice, Benjamin, to use his own words, took upon him to assert his freedom; presuming that James would not venture to produce the new indentures. When James found that his apprentice was about to leave him, he prevented him from securing employment with any other Boston printer by warning them all against him. The consequence was that the boy, between his reputation as “a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satyr,” the horror with which he was pointed at by good” people as an infidel or atheist, the lowering eye of the Provincial Government, and the rancor with which he was pursued by his brother, found himself under a cloud of opprobrium from which he could not escape except by making his home in another place than Boston. Knowing that his father would detain him, if he learnt that he was about to go elsewhere, he sold enough of his books to obtain a small sum of money for his journey, and contrived, through the management of Collins, to be secretly taken on board of a sloop on the eve of sailing for New York, under the pretence of his being a young acquaintance of Collins, who had got a naughty girl with child. The flight which followed has been narrated and pictured until it is almost as well known as the exodus of the Old Testament. He would be a rash writer, indeed, who imagined that he could tell that story over again in any words except those of Franklin himself without dispelling a charm as subtle as that which forbids a seashell to be removed from the seashore. How, with a fair wind, he found himself, a boy of seventeen, in New York,⁴⁷ without a claim of friendship, acquaintance or recommendation upon a human being in that town; how he fruitlessly applied for employment to the only printer there, William Bradford, and was advised by him to go on to Philadelphia; how, owing to an ugly squall, he was thirty hours on the waters of New York Bay before he could make the Kill, without victuals, or any drink except a bottle of filthy rum, and with no companion except his boatman and a drunken Dutchman; how after breaking up a fever, brought on by this experience, with copious draughts of cold water, he trudged on foot all the way across New Jersey from Amboy to Burlington; stopping the first day for the night at a poor inn, where travel-stained and drenched to the skin by rain, he was in danger of being” taken up as a runaway servant; stopping the second day at an inn within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by a Dr. Brown, an infidel vagabond, with a flavor of letters, and arriving the next morning at Burlington, where a kindly old woman of whom he had bought gingerbread, to eat on his way down the Delaware, gave him a dinner of ox cheek with great good will, and accepted only a pot of ale in return—all these things are told in the *Autobiography* in words as well known to the ordinary American boy as the prominent incidents of his own life. And so also is the descent of the Delaware in the timely boat that hove in sight as Benjamin was walking in the evening by the water-side at Burlington on the day of his arrival there, and took him aboard, putting in about midnight at Cooper’s Creek for fear that it had passed in the darkness the town which has since grown to be a vast city more luminous at night than the heavens above it, and landing at Market Street, Philadelphia, the next day, Sunday, at eight or nine o’clock. Here the dirty, hungry wayfarer found himself in a land marked by many surprising contrasts with the one from which he had fled. There was no biscuit to be had in the town, nor could he even obtain a three-penny loaf at the baker shop on Second Street; but for three pence he purchased to his astonishment three great puffy rolls, so large that, after sating his hunger with one of them, as he walked up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, and then back by other streets for a drink of river-water to the Market Street

⁴⁷ In 1723 the town of New York had a population of seven or eight thousand persons.

Wharf, he still had the other two left to give to a mother and child, who had come down the Delaware with him, and were on their way to a more distant point. But, doubtless, of all the things in that unfamiliar place, the one that seemed to him most unlike his former home was the serene, mild face that religion wore. It must have been like mollifying oil poured into a wound for him to find himself in such an edifice as the Great Quaker meeting house near the” market with a placid, clean-dressed concourse of worshippers, whose brooding silence, so unlike the strident voices of the Saints, with whom he had been warring in Boston, soon lulled him to sleep; a sleep not so deep or so long, however, that the youth, exhausted by the labor of rowing, and the want of rest, could not, when diverted from the sign of the disreputable Three Mariners, and directed to the sign of the more reputable Crooked Billet, in Water Street, by a friendly Quaker guide, consume in profound slumber, with a brief intermission for supper, the entire time between dinner and the next morning. He was too young yet to need to be reminded by any Poor Richard that there is sleeping enough in the grave, and the next morning was to see the beginning of a struggle, first for subsistence, and then for a fortune, hard as a muscle tense with the utmost strain that it can bear.

With the return of day, he made himself as tidy as he could without the aid of his clothes chest, which was coming around by sea, and repaired to the printing shop of Andrew Bradford, to whom he had been referred by William Bradford, the father of Andrew, in New York. When he arrived at the shop, he found the father there. By travelling on horseback, he had reached Philadelphia before Benjamin. By him Benjamin was introduced to Andrew Bradford, who received him civilly, and gave him breakfast but told him that he was not at present in need of a hand, having recently secured one. There was another printer in town, however, he said, lately set up, one Keimer, who perhaps might employ him. If not, Benjamin was welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give him a little work to do now and then until he could find steadier employment for him.

Benjamin then went off to see Keimer; and William Bradford accompanied him; for what purpose soon became apparent enough. “Neighbor,” said Bradford, “I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps” you may want such a one.” Keimer asked Benjamin a few questions, put a composing stick in his hands to test his competency, and declared that he would employ him soon though he had just then nothing for him to do. Then taking old Bradford, whom he had never seen before, and whose relationship to Andrew he never suspected, to be a friendly fellow townsman, he opened up his plans and prospects to his visitors, and announced that he expected to get the greater part of the printing business in Philadelphia into his hands. This announcement prompted William Bradford to draw him on “by artful questions, and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what interest he reli’d on, and in what manner he intended to proceed.” “I,” observes Franklin, “who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old sophister, and the other a mere novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surpris’d when I told him who the old man was.”

There was room enough in Philadelphia for such an expert craftsman as Benjamin. Andrew Bradford had not been bred to the business of printing, and was very illiterate, and Keimer, though something of a scholar, was a mere compositor, and knew nothing of presswork. His printing outfit consisted of an old shattered press, and one small, worn-out font of English letters. When Benjamin called on him, he was composing directly out of his head an elegy on Aquila Rose, a worthy young Philadelphian who had just died:

What mournful accents thus accost mine ear,

What doleful echoes hourly thus appear!

What sighs from melting hearts proclaim aloud
 The solemn mourning of this numerous crowd.
 In sable characters the news is read,
 Our Rose is withered, and our Eagle's fled,
 In that our dear Aquila Rose is dead."

These are a few of the many lines in which Keimer, disdaining ink-bottle and quill, traced with his composing stick alone from birth to death the life of his lost Lycidas. As there was no copy, and but one pair of cases, and the threnody was likely to require all the letters that Keimer had, no helper could be of any assistance to him. So Benjamin put the old press into as good a condition as he could, and, promising Keimer to come back and print off the elegy, as soon as it was transcribed into type from the tablets of his brain, returned to Bradford's printing-house. Here he was given a small task, and was lodged and boarded until Keimer sent for him to strike off his poem. While he had been away, Keimer had procured another pair of cases, and had been employed to reprint a pamphlet; and upon this pamphlet Benjamin was put to work.

During the period of his employment by Keimer, an incident arose which gave a decisive turn to his fortunes for a time. Happening to be at New Castle, his brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, the master of a sloop that plied between Boston and the Delaware River, heard that he was at Philadelphia, and wrote to him, earnestly urging him to return to Boston. To this letter Benjamin replied, thanking Holmes for his advice, but stating his reasons for leaving Boston fully and in such a way as to convince him that the flight from Boston was not so censurable as he supposed. The letter was shown by Holmes to Sir William Keith, who read it, and was surprised when he was told the age of the writer. Benjamin, he said, appeared to be a young man of promising parts, and should, therefore, be encouraged, for the printers at Philadelphia were wretched ones, and he did not doubt that, if Benjamin would set up as a printer there, he would succeed. As to himself, he would procure him the public printing and render him any other service in his power. Before these circumstances were brought to the knowledge of Benjamin, the Governor and Col. French of New Castle proceeded to look him up, and one day, while he and Keimer were working together near the window of the Keimer printing-office, they saw the pair coming across the street in their fine clothes towards its door. As soon as they were heard at the door, Keimer, assuming that they were calling upon him, ran down to greet them, but the Governor inquired for Benjamin, walked upstairs, and, with a condescension and politeness to which the youth was quite unaccustomed, paid him many compliments, expressed a desire to be acquainted with him, blamed him kindly for not making himself known to him, when Benjamin first came to Philadelphia, and invited him to accompany him to the tavern where he was going, he said, with Col. French to taste some excellent Madeira.

"I," says Franklin, "was not a little surprised, and Keimer star'd like a pig poison'd." But the invitation was accepted, and, at a tavern, at the corner of Third Street, and over the Madeira, Keith suggested that the youth should become a printer on his own account, and pointed out to him the likelihood of his success; and both he and Col. French assured him that he would have their interest and influence for the purpose of securing the public printing in Pennsylvania and the three Lower Counties on the Delaware. When Benjamin stated that he doubted whether his father would assist him in the venture, Keith replied that he would give him a letter to Josiah, presenting the advantages of the scheme, and that he did not doubt that it would be effectual. The result of the conversation was a secret understanding that Benjamin should return to Boston in the first available vessel with Keith's letter, and, while he was

awaiting this vessel, Benjamin continued at work with Keimer as usual; Keith sending for him now and then to dine with him, and conversing with him in the most affable, familiar and friendly manner imaginable.”

Later a little vessel came along bound for Boston. With Keith’s letter in his possession, Benjamin took passage in her, and, after a dangerous voyage of two weeks, found himself again in the city from which he had fled seven months before. All the members of his family gave him a hearty welcome except his brother James, but Josiah, after reading the Governor’s letter, and considering its contents for some days, expressed the opinion that he must be a man of small discretion to think of setting up a boy in business who wanted yet three years of being at man’s estate. He flatly refused to give his consent to the project, but wrote a civil letter to the Governor, thanking him for the patronage that he had proffered Benjamin, and stating his belief that his son was too young for such an enterprise. Nevertheless, Josiah was pleased with the evidences of material success and standing that his son had brought back with him from Philadelphia, and, when Benjamin left Boston on his return to Philadelphia, it was with the approbation and blessing of his parents, and some tokens, in the form of little gifts, of their love, and with the promise, moreover, of help from Josiah, in case he should not, by the time he reached the age of twenty-one, save enough money by his industry and frugality to establish himself in business.

When Benjamin arrived at Philadelphia, and communicated Josiah’s decision to Keith, the Governor was not in the least disconcerted. There was a great difference in persons he was so kind as to declare. Discretion did not always accompany years, nor was youth always without it. “And since he will not set you up,” he said to Benjamin, “I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolv’d to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed.” This, the *Autobiography* tells us, was uttered with such apparently heartfelt cordiality that Benjamin did not entertain the slightest doubt of Keith’s sincerity, and, as he had kept, and was still keeping, his plans entirely secret, there was no one more familiar with Keith’s character than himself to warn him that the actual value of Keith’s promises was a very different thing from their face value. Believing the Governor to be one of the best men in the world to have thus unsolicited made such a generous offer to him, Benjamin drew up an inventory calling for a small printing outfit of the value of about one hundred pounds sterling, and handed it to him. It met with his approval, but led him to ask whether it might not be of some advantage for Benjamin to be on the spot in England to choose the type, and to see that everything was good of its kind. Moreover, he suggested that, when Benjamin was there, he might make some useful acquaintance, and establish a profitable correspondence with book-sellers and stationers. To the advantage of all this Benjamin could not but assent. “Then,” said Keith, “get yourself ready to go with Annis”; meaning the master of the *London Hope*, the annual ship, which was the only one at that time plying regularly between London and Philadelphia.

Until Annis sailed, Benjamin continued in the employment of Keimer, whom he still kept entirely in ignorance of his project, and was frequently at the home of Keith. During this time, Keith’s intention of establishing him in business was always mentioned as a fixed thing, and it was understood that he was to take with him letters of recommendation from Keith to a number of the latter’s friends in England besides a letter of credit from Keith to supply him with the necessary money for buying the printing outfit and the necessary printer’s supplies. Before Annis’ ship sailed, Benjamin repeatedly called upon Keith for these letters at different times appointed by him, but on each occasion their delivery was postponed to a subsequent date. Thus things went on until the ship was actually on the point of sailing. Then, when Benjamin called on Keith, to take his leave of him and to receive the letters, the Governor’s

secretary, Dr. Bard, came out from Keith and told him that the Governor was busily engaged in writing, but would be at New Castle before the ship, and that there the letters would be delivered. Upon the arrival of the ship at New Castle, Keith, true to his word, was awaiting it, but, when Benjamin went to Keith's lodgings to get the letters, the Governor's secretary again came out from him with a statement by him that he was then absorbed in business of the utmost importance, but that he would send the letters aboard. The message was couched in highly civil terms, and was accompanied by hearty wishes that Benjamin might have a good voyage, and speedily be back again. "I returned on board," says Franklin in the *Autobiography*, "a little puzzled, but still not doubting." At the very beginning of the voyage, Benjamin and his graceless friend Ralph had an unusual stroke of good luck. Andrew Hamilton, a famous lawyer of Philadelphia, who was accompanied by his son, afterwards one of the Colonial Governors of Pennsylvania, Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant, and Messrs. Onion and Russell, the masters of the Principio Iron Works in Cecil County, Maryland, had engaged the great cabin of the ship; so that it looked as if Benjamin and Ralph, who were unknown to any of the cabin passengers, were doomed to the obscurity and discomfort of the steerage. But, while the ship was at New Castle, the elder Hamilton was recalled to Philadelphia by a great fee in a maritime cause, and, just before she sailed, Col. French came on board, and treated Benjamin with such marked respect that he and Ralph were invited by the remaining cabin passengers to occupy the cabin with them—an invitation which the two gladly accepted. They had good reason to do so. The cabin passengers formed a congenial company, the plenteous supply of provisions laid in by Andrew Hamilton," with the stores to which they were added, enabled them to live uncommonly well, and Mr. Denham contracted a lasting friendship for Benjamin. The latter, however, had not lost sight of the letters from Keith which had been so long on their way to his hands. As soon as he learnt at New Castle that Col. French had brought the Governor's dispatches aboard, he asked the captain for the letters that were to be under his care. The captain said that all were put into the bag together, and that he could not then come at them, but that, before they landed in England, Benjamin should have the opportunity of picking them out. When the Channel was reached, the captain was as good as his word, and Benjamin went through the bag; but no letters did he find that were addressed in his care. He picked out six or seven, however, that he thought from the handwriting might be the promised letters, especially as one was addressed to Basket, the King's printer, and another to some stationer. On the 24th day of December, 1724, the ship reached London. The first person that Benjamin waited upon was the stationer, to whom he delivered the letter addressed to him, with the statement that it came from Governor Keith. "I don't know such a person," the stationer said, but, on opening the letter, he exclaimed, "O! this is from Riddlesden. I have lately found him to be a compleat rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him." With that he gave the letter back to Benjamin and turned on his heel to serve a customer. Then it was that Benjamin, putting two and two together, began to doubt Keith's sincerity, and looked up Mr. Denham, and told him what had happened. There was not the least probability, Mr. Denham declared, that Keith had written any letters for him. No one, he said, who knew the Governor, trusted him in the slightest degree, and, as for his giving a letter of credit to Benjamin, he had no credit to give. One advantage, however, Benjamin reaped from the deception" practised upon him. Both Mr. Denham and himself as well as the stationer knew that Riddlesden was a knave. Not to go further, Deborah's father by becoming surety for him had been half ruined. His letter disclosed the fact that there was a scheme on foot to the prejudice of Andrew Hamilton, and also the fact that Keith was concerned in it with Riddlesden; so, when Hamilton came over to London shortly afterwards, partly from ill will to Keith and Riddlesden, and partly from good will to Hamilton, Benjamin adopted the advice of Mr. Denham and waited on him, and gave him the letter. He thanked Benjamin warmly, and from that time became his friend, to his

very great advantage on many future occasions. "I got his son once £500," notes the grateful Franklin briefly in a foot-note of the *Autobiography*.

By cozenage almost incredible, Benjamin, at the age of eighteen, had been thus lured off to London; the London of Addison, Pope and Sir Isaac Newton. Rather than confess the emptiness of his flattering complaisance Keith preferred to rely upon the chance that, once in London, the youth would be either unable or disinclined to return to his own native land. It would be hard to say what might have become of him if he had not had the skill as a printer which exemplified in a striking way the truth of two of the sayings of Poor Richard, "He that hath a Trade hath an Estate" and "He that hath a Calling, hath an Office of Profit and Honour."

The most serious stumbling block to his advancement in London was the one that he brought over seas with him, namely, Ralph himself, who had deserted his wife and child in Philadelphia, and now let his companion know for the first time that he never meant to return to that city. All the money that Ralph had, when he left home, had been consumed by the expenses of the voyage, but Benjamin was still the possessor of fifteen pistoles when the voyage was over, and from this sum Ralph occasionally borrowed" while he was endeavoring to convert some of his high-flown ambitions into practical realities. First, he applied for employment as an actor, only to be told by Wilkes that he could never succeed on the stage, then he tried to induce Roberts, a publisher in Paternoster Row, to establish a weekly periodical like the *Spectator*, with himself as the Addison, on certain conditions to which Roberts would not give his assent. Finally, he was driven to the stress of seeking employment as a copyist for stationers and lawyers about the Temple, but he could not find an opening for even such ignoble drudgery as this. Soon all of Benjamin's pistoles were gone. But, in the meantime, with his training as a printer, he had secured employment without difficulty at Palmer's, a famous printing-house in Bartholomew Close, where he remained for nearly a year. Here he labored pretty diligently, but with Ralph as well as himself to maintain, and with the constant temptations to expense, afforded by playhouses and other places of amusement, he was unable to hoard enough money to pay his passage back to Philadelphia.

For a time, after Ralph and himself arrived at London, they were inseparable companions, occupying the same lodgings in Little Britain, the home of bookstalls, and sharing the same purse. But when Ralph drifted off into the country, all intercourse between the friends was brought to an end by the overtures that Benjamin made to his mistress in his absence. It was then that Benjamin, relieved of the burden which the pecuniary necessities of Ralph had imposed on him, began to think of laying aside a little money, and left Palmer's to work at Watts' near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a still more important printing-house, where he was employed so long as he remained in London. His reminiscences of this printing-house are among the most interesting in the *Autobiography*. One episode during his connection with it presents him to us with some of the lines of his subsequent maturity" plainly impressed on him. "I drank," he says, "only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great guzzlers of beer." When they observed that his physical strength was superior to theirs, they wondered that the Water-American, as they called him, should be stronger than they who drank strong beer. A boy was incessantly running between an alehouse and the printing-house for the purpose of keeping the latter supplied with drink. Benjamin's pressmate drank every day a pint of beer before breakfast, a pint at breakfast, with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another pint when he had done his day's work. Franklin vainly endeavored to convince him that the physical strength, produced by beer, could only be in proportion to the grain or barley-flour dissolved in water that the beer contained, that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread, and that, therefore, if he would eat that with a pint of water, it would

give him more strength than a quart of beer. As it was, he had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for muddling liquor, and in this way he and his fellow-workmen kept themselves always under.

Benjamin began at Watts' as a pressman, but, after some weeks of service, he was transferred by the master to the composing-room. There a toll of five shillings for drink was demanded of him by the other compositors as the price of his admission to their society. At first he refused to pay it, as he had already paid a similar *bienvvenu* in the press-room, and the master followed his refusal up by positively forbidding him to pay it; but after a few weeks of recusancy he learnt how despotic a thing an inveterate custom is. He was excommunicated for a while by all his fellow-workmen, and could not leave the composing-room for even the briefest time without having his sorts mixed or his pages transposed by the Chapel ghost," who was said to have a deep grudge against all imperfectly initiated compositors. Master or no master, he finally found himself forced to comply with the custom and to pay the exaction, convinced as he became of the folly of being on ill terms with those with whom one is bound to live continually. Erelong his offence was forgotten, and his influence firmly established among his fellow-compositors. It was prevailing enough to enable him to propose some reasonable changes in the Chapel laws, and to carry them through in the face of all opposition. At the same time, the example of temperance, set by him, induced a great part of his companions to give up their breakfast of beer, bread and cheese, and to supply themselves from a neighboring public-house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, seasoned with butter and pepper, and crumbed with bread, for the price of a pint of beer, namely, three half-pence. This made a more comfortable as well as a cheaper breakfast, and one that left their heads clear besides. Those of Benjamin's fellow-workmen whom he could not reclaim fell into the habit of using his credit for the purpose of getting beer when their *light* at the alehouse, to use their own cant expression, was out. To protect himself, he stood by the payable on Saturday night, and collected enough from their wages to cover the sums for which he had made himself responsible, amounting sometimes to as much as thirty shillings a week. The loan of his credit in this way and his humor gave him an assured standing in the composing-room. On the other hand, his steadiness—for he never, he says, made a St. Monday—recommended him to the favor of his master; and his uncommon quickness in composing enabled him to secure the higher compensation which was paid for what would now be termed "rush work." His situation was at this time very agreeable and his mind became intently fixed upon saving as much of his wages as he could."

Finding that his lodgings in Little Britain were rather remote from his work, he obtained others in Duke Street, opposite the Romish Chapel, with a widow, who had been bred a Protestant, but had been converted to Catholicism by her husband, whose memory she deeply revered. It is a pleasing face that looks out at us from the portrait painted of her by Franklin in the *Autobiography*. She

had lived much among people of distinction, and knew a thousand anecdotes of them as far back as the time of Charles the Second. She was lame in her knees with the gout, and, therefore, seldom stirred out of her room, so sometimes wanted company; and hers was so highly amusing to me, that I was sure to spend an evening with her whenever she desired it. Our supper was only half an anchovy each, on a very little strip of bread and butter, and half a pint of ale between us; but the entertainment was in her conversation. My always keeping good hours, and giving little trouble in the family, made her unwilling to part with me; so that, when I talk'd of a lodging I had heard of, nearer my business, for two shillings a week, which, intent as I now was on saving money, made some difference, she bid me not think of it, for she would abate

me two shillings a week for the future, so I remained with her at one shilling and six pence as long as I staid in London.

It was in the garret of this house that the nun mentioned by us in connection with the religious opinions of Franklin passed her secluded life.

It was while he resided here that Wygate, a fellow-printer, made a proposal to him that, if accepted, might have given a different direction to his career. Drawn to Benjamin, who had taught him how to swim, by common intellectual tastes, and by the admiration excited in him by Benjamin's vigor and agility as a swimmer, he suggested to the latter that they should travel all over Europe together, and support themselves as they went by the exercise of their handicraft. Benjamin was disposed to adopt the suggestion, but, when he mentioned it to his friend, Mr. Denham, upon whom he was in the habit of calling, the latter disapproved of it, and advised him to dismiss every thought from his mind except that of returning to Pennsylvania, which he was about to do himself. Nay more, he told Benjamin that he expected to take over a large amount of merchandise with him, and to open a store in Philadelphia; and he offered to employ Benjamin as his clerk to keep his books, when the latter had acquired a sufficient knowledge of bookkeeping under his instruction, copy his letters, and attend to the store. In addition, he promised that, as soon as Benjamin should have the requisite experience, he would promote him by sending him with a cargo of bread-stuffs to the West Indies, and would, moreover, procure profitable commissions for him from others, and, if Benjamin made a success of these opportunities, establish him in life handsomely. The proposal was accepted by Benjamin. He was tired of London, remembered with pleasure the happy months spent by him in Pennsylvania, and was desirous of seeing it again. He agreed, therefore, at once, to become Mr. Denham's clerk at an annual salary of fifty pounds, Pennsylvania money. This was less than he was earning at the time as a compositor, but Mr. Denham's offer held out the prospect of a better future on the whole to him.

After entering into this agreement, Benjamin supposed that he was done with printing forever. During the interval preceding the departure of Mr. Denham and himself for America, he went about with his employer, when he was purchasing goods, saw that the goods were packed properly for shipment, and performed other helpful offices. After the stock of goods had been all safely stored on shipboard, he was, to his surprise, sent for by Sir William Wyndham, who had heard of his swimming exploits, and who offered to pay him generously, if he would teach his two sons, who were about to travel, how to swim; but the two youths had not yet come to town, and Benjamin did not know just when he would sail; so he was compelled to decline the invitation. The offer of Sir William, however, made him feel that he might earn a good deal of money, were he to remain in England and open a swimming school, and the reflection forced itself upon his attention so strongly that he tells us in the *Autobiography* that, if Sir William had approached him earlier, he would probably not have returned to America so soon.

He left Gravesend for Philadelphia on July 23, 1726, after having been in London for about eighteen months. During the greater part of this time, he had worked hard, and spent but little money upon himself except in seeing plays and for books. It was Ralph who had kept him straitened by borrowing sums from him amounting in the whole to about twenty-seven pounds. "I had by no means improv'd my fortune," Franklin tells us in the *Autobiography*,

“but I had picked up some very ingenious acquaintance, whose conversation was of great advantage to me; and I had read considerably.”⁴⁸

After a long voyage, he was again in Philadelphia, and Keith was now a private citizen. When Benjamin met him on the street, he showed a little shame at the sight of his dupe, but he passed on without saying anything. Keimer seemed to have a flourishing business. He had moved into a better house, and had a shop well supplied” with stationery, plenty of type, and a number of hands, though none of them were efficient.

Mr. Denham opened a store in Water Street, and the merchandise brought over with him was placed in it. Benjamin gave his diligent attention to the business, studied accounts, and was in a little while an expert salesman. But then came one of those sudden strokes of misfortune, which remind us on what perfidious foundations all human hopes rest. Beginning with his relations to Mr. Denham, Franklin narrates the circumstances in these words:

We lodg’d and boarded together; he counsell’d me as a father, having a sincere regard for me. I respected and loved him, and we might have gone on together very happy, but, in the beginning of February, 1726/7, when I had just pass’d my twenty-first year, we both were taken ill. My distemper was a pleurisy, which very nearly carried me off. I suffered a good deal, gave up the point in my own mind, and was rather disappointed when I found myself recovering, regretting, in some degree, that I must now, some time or other, have all that disagreeable work to do over again. I forget what his distemper was; it held him a long time, and at length carried him off. He left me a small legacy in a nuncupative will, as a token of his kindness for me, and he left me once more to the wide world; for the store was taken into the care of his executors, and my employment under him ended.

Franklin did have all that disagreeable work to do over again, for it was of a pleuritic abscess that he died in the end. Of Mr. Denham we cannot take our leave without drawing upon the *Autobiography* for an incident which shows that he was one of the many good men whose friendship was given so generously to Franklin. He was at one time a merchant at Bristol, and failed in business. After compounding with his numerous creditors, he migrated to America where he made a fortune” in a few years. While he was in England with Benjamin, he invited his former creditors to an entertainment, and, when they were all seated, thanked them for the easy terms on which they had compromised their claims against him. Duly thanked, they supposed that there was nothing in store for them but the ordinary hospitality of such an occasion, but, when each turned his plate over, he found under it an order upon a banker for the full amount, with interest, of the unpaid balance of the debt that he had released.

At the time of Mr. Denham’s death, Franklin had only recently arrived at the age of twenty-one. Holmes, his brother-in-law, now urged him to return to his trade, and Keimer offered him a liberal yearly wage to take charge of his printing-office, so that he himself might have more time for his stationery business. Franklin had heard a bad character of Keimer in London from Keimer’s wife and her friends, and he was reluctant to have anything more to do with him; so much so that he endeavored to secure employment as a merchant’s clerk, but, being unable to do so, he closed with Keimer.

⁴⁸ In his edition of Franklin's works, vol. x., p. 154, Smyth says of him, when he was in London in his youth, "His nights were spent in cynical criticism of religion or in the company of dissolute women." It is likely enough that the religious skepticism of Franklin at this time found expression in his conversation as well as in his *Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity*, though there is no evidence to justify the extreme statement that his nights were spent in irreligious talk. His days, we do know, were partly spent in listening to London preachers. He may have had good reason, too, to utter a *peccavi* in other sexual relations than those that he so disastrously attempted to sustain to Ralph's mistress; but of this there is no evidence whatever.

I found in his house [says the *Autobiography*] these hands: Hugh Meredith, a Welsh Pennsylvanian, thirty years of age, bred to country work; honest, sensible, had a great deal of solid observation, was something of a reader, but given to drink. Stephen Potts, a young countryman of full age, bred to the same, of uncommon natural parts, and great wit and humour, but a little idle. These he had agreed with at extream low wages per week, to be rais'd a shilling every three months, as they would deserve by improving in their business; and the expectation of these high wages, to come on hereafter, was what he had drawn them in with. Meredith was to work at press, Potts at book-binding, which he, by agreement, was to teach them, though he knew neither one nor t'other. John,—a wild Irishman, brought up to no business, whose service, for four years, Keimer had purchased from the captain of a ship;" he, too, was to be made a pressman. George Webb, an Oxford scholar, whose time for four years he had likewise bought, intending him for a compositor, of whom more presently; and David Harry, a country boy, whom he had taken apprentice.

George Webb is later described by Franklin as being lively, witty, good-natured and a pleasant companion, but idle, thoughtless, and imprudent to the last degree. While a student at Oxford, he had become possessed with the desire to see London and be a player. Yielding to this impulse, he walked outside of Oxford, hid his gown in a furze bush, and strode on to London where he fell into bad company, spent all his money, pawned his clothes and lacked bread; having failed to secure an opening as a player. While in this situation, he was induced by his necessities to bind himself to go over to America as an indentured servant, and this he did without ever writing a line to his friends to let them know what had become of him. John, the Irishman, soon absconded. With the rest of Keimer's awkward squad, Franklin quickly formed very agreeable relations, all the more so because they had found Keimer incapable of teaching them, but now found that Franklin taught them something daily. By Keimer, too, Franklin was for a time treated with great civility and apparent regard. The selfish reasons for such treatment were patent enough.

Our printing-house [declares the *Autobiography*] often wanted sorts, and there was no letter-founder in America; I had seen types cast at James's in London, but without much attention to the manner; however, I now contrived a mould, made use of the letters we had as puncheons, struck the matrices in lead, and thus supply'd in a pretty tolerable way all deficiencies. I also engrav'd several things on occasion; I made the ink; I was warehousman, and everything, and, in short, quite a fac-totum.

Keimer was simply using Franklin to lick his rough cubs into shape. The value of Franklin's services declined every day as his other hands became more efficient, and, when he paid him his wages for the second quarter, he let him know that he thought that he should submit to a reduction. By degrees, he grew less civil, assumed a more imperious air, became fault-finding and captious, and seemed ready for an outbreak. Nevertheless, Franklin preserved his patience, thinking that Keimer's demeanor was partly due to his embarrassed circumstances. But a very small spark was enough to produce an explosion. Startled one day by a loud noise near the court-house, Franklin put his head out of the window of the printing-office to see what was the matter. Just then, Keimer, who was in the street, looked up and saw him, and called out to him in vociferous and angry tones to mind his business, adding some reproachful words that nettled Franklin the more because they were heard by the whole neighborhood. Keimer made things still worse by coming up into the printing-office and continuing his rebuke. High words passed between the two, and Keimer gave Franklin the quarter's notice to quit, to which he was entitled, saying as he did it that he wished he could give him a shorter one. Franklin replied that the wish was unnecessary, and, taking up his hat, walked out of doors, requesting Meredith, as he left, to take care of some of his things that

remained behind him, and to bring them to his lodgings. This Meredith, who had a great regard for Franklin, and regretted very much the thought of being in the printing-office without him, did the evening of the same day, and he availed himself of the opportunity to dissuade Franklin from returning to New England. Keimer, he said, was in debt for all that he possessed, his creditors were beginning to be uneasy, and he managed his shop wretchedly, often selling without profit for ready money, and frequently giving credit without keeping an account. He must, therefore, fail, which would make an opening for Franklin. To this reasoning Franklin objected his want of means. Meredith then informed him that his father had a high opinion of him, and, from some things, that his father had said to him, he was sure that, if Franklin would enter into a partnership with him, the elder Meredith would advance enough money to set them going in business. His time with Keimer, he further said, would be out in the spring. Before then, they might procure their press and type from London. "I am sensible," added Meredith, "I am no workman; if you like it, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish, and we will share the profits equally."

Franklin acceded to the proposal, and Meredith's father ratified it all the more willingly as he saw that Franklin had a great deal of influence with his son, had prevailed on him to abstain from dram-drinking for long periods of time, and might be able to induce him to give up the miserable habit entirely when they came to form the close relations of partners with each other. An inventory of what was needed for the business was accordingly given to the father; an order for it was placed by him in the hands of a merchant; and the things were sent for. Until they arrived, the partnership was to be kept secret, and Franklin was to seek employment from Bradford. Bradford, however, was not in need of a hand, and for some days Franklin was condemned to idleness. But opportunely enough the chance presented itself to Keimer just at this time of being employed to print some paper money for the Province of New Jersey which would require cuts and type that nobody but Franklin was clever enough to execute or make. Fearing that Bradford might employ him, and secure the work, Keimer sent Franklin word that old friends should not be estranged by a few passionate words, and that he hoped Franklin would return to him. Influenced by the desire of Meredith to derive still further benefit from his instruction, Franklin did return to Keimer, and entered upon relations with him that proved more satisfactory than any that he had had with him for some time past. Keimer secured the New Jersey contract.

The New Jersey jobb was obtain'd [the *Autobiography* states], I contriv'd a copperplate press for it, the first that had been seen in the country; I cut several ornaments and checks for the bills. We went together to Burlington, where I executed the whole to satisfaction; and he received so large a sum for the work as to be enabled thereby to keep his head much longer above water.

One of the attractive things about the youth of Franklin is the extent to which his love of reading and intellectual superiority gave him a standing with distinguished or prominent men much older than himself. In the case of Sir William Keith, the standing produced nothing but deception and disappointment, but, in the case of Cotton Mather, it supplied Franklin with one of those moral lessons for which his mind had such an eager appetency.

The last time I saw your father [he wrote late in life to Samuel Mather, the son of Cotton] was in the beginning of 1724, when I visited him after my first trip to Pennsylvania. He received me in his library, and on my taking leave showed me a shorter way out of the house through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam overhead. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly toward him, when he said hastily, *Stoop, stoop!* I did not understand him, till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any

occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me, "*You are young, and have the world before you; STOOP as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.*" This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me; and I often think of it, when I see pride mortified, and misfortune brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high.

Gov. William Burnet, of New York, the son of the famous English Bishop of that name, was another conspicuous personage to whose friendly notice the youth was brought. Shortly after the apt admonition of Cotton Mather, when Franklin was on his return to Philadelphia, the Governor heard from the captain of the vessel, by which Franklin had been conveyed to New York, that a young man, one of his passengers, had a great many books with him, and asked the captain to bring this young man to see him. The Governor loved books and lovers of books.

I waited upon him accordingly [says Franklin] and should have taken Collins with me but that he was not sober. The gov'r. treated me with great civility, show'd me his library, which was a very large one, and we had a good deal of conversation about books and authors. This was the second governor who had done me the honour to take notice of me; which, to a poor boy like me, was very pleasing.

The happy consequences to Ralph and himself of the respect, shown him by Col. French at New Castle, and the lasting sense of gratitude that he soon afterwards excited in Andrew Hamilton have just been mentioned. This capacity for arresting the attention of men of years and influence now made its mark in New Jersey. Some of the principal men of the province were appointed by the Assembly to oversee the working of Keimer's press, and to take care that no more bills were printed than were authorized by law. They discharged this duty by turns, and usually each one, when he came, brought a friend or so with him for company. In this way, Franklin was introduced to a considerable group of persons who invited him to their houses, introduced him to their friends, and showed him much attention. Keimer, on the other hand, perhaps, Franklin surmises, because his mind had not been so much improved by reading as his, was a little neglected, though the master. The explanation given by Franklin for this neglect would seem a rather inadequate one when we recollect that in the same context he sums up the character of Keimer in these trenchant words: "In truth, he was an odd fish; ignorant of common life, fond of rudely opposing receiv'd opinions, slovenly to extream dirtiness, enthusiastic in some points of religion, and a little knavish withal." Like St. Sebastian, poor Keimer will never be drawn without that arrow in his side.

For three months Franklin remained at Burlington, making printer's ink money. At the end of that time, he could reckon among his friends Judge Allen, Samuel Bustill, the Secretary of the Province, Isaac Pearson, Joseph Cooper, and several of the Smiths, members of the Assembly, and Isaac Decow, the surveyor-general.

The latter [he says] was a shrewd, sagacious old man, who told me that he began for himself, when young, by wheeling clay, for the brickmakers, learned to write after he was of age, carri'd the chain for surveyors, who taught him surveying and he had now by his industry, acquir'd a good estate; and says he, "I foresee that you will soon work this man out of his business, and make a fortune in it at Philadelphia." He had not then the least intimation of my intention to set up there or anywhere. These friends were afterwards of great use to me, as I occasionally was to some of them. They all continued their regard for me as long as they lived.

Shortly after the completion of the New Jersey contract, the new type, which had been ordered for Franklin and Meredith from London, arrived at Philadelphia. With Keimer's

consent, the two friends left him before he knew of its arrival. They rented a house near the market, and, to reduce the rent of twenty-four pounds a year, they sublet a part of it to Thomas Godfrey, who was to board them. They had scarcely made ready for business” when George House, an acquaintance of Franklin, brought to them a countryman who had inquired of him on the street where he could find a printer. By this countryman the firm was paid for the work that he gave them the sum of five shillings, and this sum, Franklin declares in the *Autobiography*, being their first fruits, and coming in at a time when they had expended all their available cash in preparing for business, awakened more pleasure in him than any crown that he had ever since earned, and, besides, made him prompter than he, perhaps, would otherwise have been to help beginners. Whether there were any “boomers,” to use the cant term of to-day, in Philadelphia at that time the *Autobiography* does not tell us, but there was, to use another cant term of to-day, at least one “knocker.”

There are croakers in every country [says Franklin in the *Autobiography*] always boding its ruin. Such a one then lived in Philadelphia: a person of note, an elderly man, with a wise look and a very grave manner of speaking; his name was Samuel Mickle. This gentleman, a stranger to me, stopt one day at my door, and asked me if I was the young man who had lately opened a new printing-house. Being answered in the affirmative, he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive undertaking, and the expense would be lost; for Philadelphia was a sinking place, the people already half bankrupts, or near being so; all appearances to the contrary, such as new buildings and the rise of rents, being to his certain knowledge fallacious, for they were, in fact, among the things that would soon ruin us. And he gave me such a detail of misfortunes now existing, or that were soon to exist, that he left me half melancholy. Had I known him before I engaged in this business, probably I never should have done it. This man continued to live in this decaying place, and to declaim in the same strain, refusing for many years to buy a house there, because all was going to destruction; and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have bought it for when he first began his croaking.

The outlook of Franklin was a cheerful, optimistic one, and he had no sympathy with pessimists of any sort. Even his civic interests came back to him in personal profit, since, aside from its public aims, the Junto was a most useful aid to the business of Franklin and Meredith. All its members made a point of soliciting patronage for the new printing firm. Breintnal, for instance, obtained for it the privilege of printing forty sheets of the history which the Quakers published of their sect; the rest having gone to Keimer. The price was low, and the job cost Franklin and Meredith much hard labor. The work, Franklin tells us, with the fond minuteness with which a man is disposed to dwell upon the events of his early life, was a folio, of *pro patria* size, and in pica, with long primer notes. Franklin composed it at the rate of a sheet a day, and Meredith ran off what was composed at the press. It was often eleven at night and later, when Franklin had completed his distribution for the work of the next day, for now and then he was set back by other business calls. So resolved, however, was he never to default on his sheet a day that one night, when one of his forms was accidentally broken up, and two pages of his work reduced to pi, he immediately distributed and composed it over again before he went to bed, though he had supposed, when the accident occurred, that a hard day’s task had ended. This industry brought the firm into favorable notice, and especially was Franklin gratified by what Dr. Baird had to say about it. When the new printing-office was mentioned at the Merchants’ Every Night Club, and the opinion was generally expressed that three printing-offices could not be maintained in Philadelphia, he took issue with this view; “For the industry of that Franklin,” he said, “is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind; I see him still at work when I go home from club,

and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed.” This statement led one of the persons who heard it to offer to furnish” the new firm with stationery; but it was not yet ready to open a stationery shop.

About this time, George Webb, who had bought his time of Keimer, with the aid of one of his female friends, solicited from the firm employment as a journeyman. Its situation was not such as to warrant his employment, but Franklin indiscreetly let him know as a secret that he expected to establish a newspaper soon; when he might have work for him. Bradford’s newspaper, *The American Mercury*, he told Webb, was a paltry thing, stupid and wretchedly managed, and yet was profitable. “Three can keep a Secret if two are dead,” is a saying of Poor Richard. It would have been well if Franklin on this occasion had been mindful of the wisdom in which it was conceived. He requested Webb not to mention what he said; but, as is often true under such circumstances, it would have been more prudent for him to have asked him to mention it. Webb did tell Keimer, and he immediately published the prospectus of a newspaper on which Webb was to be employed. This was resented by Franklin, and, to counteract the scheme, he and his friend Breintnal wrote some clever little essays for Bradford’s newspaper under the title of the “Busy Body.” In that dull sheet, they were, to borrow Shakespeare’s image, like bright metal on sullen ground. Public attention was fixed upon them, and Keimer’s prospectus was overlooked. He founded his newspaper nevertheless, and conducted it for nine months under the prolix name of the *Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences and Pennsylvania Gazette*. It never had, at any time, more than ninety subscribers, and, at the end of the nine months, in 1729, Franklin, who had for some time had his arms extended to catch it when it fell, bought it at a trifling price. Under his ownership, the cumbrous name of the paper was cut down simply to that of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and the absurd plan formed by Keimer of publishing an instalment” of Chambers’ *Universal Dictionary* of all the Arts and Sciences in every issue was abandoned for a strain of original comment and unctuous humor which made the *Gazette* in popularity second only to *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. Under Franklin’s hands, the paper assumed from the beginning a better typographical appearance than any previously known to the Province, and some spirited observations by him on a controversy between Governor Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, which called into play his aversion to political tyranny, aroused so much public attention that all the leading citizens of the Province became subscribers. Many other subscribers followed in their train, and the subscriptions went on continually increasing until in a few years, to quote Franklin’s own words, the *Gazette* proved extremely profitable to him.

This was one of the first good effects of my having learnt a little to scribble [he tells us], another was that the leading men, seeing a newspaper now in the hands of one who could also handle a pen, thought it convenient to oblige and encourage me. Bradford still printed the Votes and laws, and other publick business. He had printed an address of the House to the Governor, in a coarse, blundering manner; we reprinted it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every member. They were sensible of the difference: it strengthened the hands of our friends in the House, and they voted us their printers for the year ensuing.

Among these friends, was the grateful Andrew Hamilton.

The young printer had pushed himself forward successfully enough to make his competition keenly felt by both Keimer and Bradford. But now unexpectedly, when all the omens were so fair, he found himself on the brink of ruin. For some time past, he had faithfully observed his obligations to Meredith, though his friends lamented his connection with him. Meredith was no compositor,” and but a poor pressman, and, if he had been the best compositor or

pressman in the world, he would have been a poor partner, for he was seldom sober. While Franklin was bearing him along on his back as well as he could, Meredith's father found himself unable to advance for the firm the second instalment of one hundred pounds, necessary to complete the payment for its printing outfit. The result was that the merchant, who had sold it to the firm, grew impatient, and sued them all. They gave bail, but realized that, if the money could not be raised in time, judgment and execution would follow, and that the outfit would be sold at half price. Then it was, to recall the simple and affecting words of Franklin himself in the *Autobiography*, that two true friends, William Coleman and Robert Grace, whose kindness he had never forgotten, and never would forget, while he could remember anything, came to him separately, unknown to each other, and, without any application from him, each offered to advance to him all the money that should be necessary to enable him to acquire the whole business of the firm, if that should be practicable.⁴⁹ They did not like the idea of his continuing to be a partner of Meredith, who, they said, was often seen drunk in the streets, and playing at low games in alehouses to the discredit of the firm. Distressing, however, as his situation was, Franklin appears to have acted with a high-minded regard to the proprieties of the occasion. He told Coleman and Grace that, so long as there was any prospect that the Merediths might live up to their agreement, he was under too great obligations to them for what they had done, and would do, if they could, to suggest a dissolution of the partnership, but" that, if they finally defaulted in the performance of their part of the agreement, and the partnership was dissolved, he would feel at liberty to accept the assistance of his friends.

But he was astute as well as conscientious. After the matter had rested in this position for some time, he said to Meredith:

Perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you alone. If that is the case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business.

No, said he, my father has really been disappointed, and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him farther. I see this is a business I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was a folly in me to come to town, and put myself, at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I am inclin'd to go with them, and follow my old employment. You may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you; return to my father the hundred pound he has advanced; pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership, and leave the whole in your hands.

Franklin agreed to this proposal. It was made the basis of a contract which was immediately signed and sealed. Meredith received the thirty pounds and the saddle, and soon afterwards went off to North Carolina, whence he sent to Franklin the next year two long letters containing the best account of the climate, soil, husbandry and other features of that Province that had been given up to that time. "For in those matters," adds Franklin, with his usual generosity, "he was very judicious. I printed them in the papers, and they gave great satisfaction to the publick."

After the departure of Meredith for North Carolina, Franklin turned to the two friends who had proffered their help. He accepted from each of them, because he would not give an

⁴⁹ The ineffaceable impression of gratitude left upon the mind of Franklin by the timely assistance of these two dear friends was again expressed in the Codicil to his Will executed in 1789. In it he speaks of himself as "assisted to set up" his business in Philadelphia by kind loans of money from two friends there, which was the foundation, he said, of his fortune and of all the utility in life that might be ascribed to him.

unkind preference to either, one half of the money he needed, paid off the debts of the partnership, advertised its dissolution and went on with the business in his own name. This was on July 14, 1730.

Seasonably for him, there was a loud cry among the people at this time for a more abundant issue of paper money. The wealthier members of the community were all against the proposition. They feared that an addition to the existing paper circulation would depreciate, as it had done in New York, and that the debts due to them would be discharged by payment in a medium worth less than its nominal value. The question was discussed by the Junto, and Franklin argued in favor of the issue; being persuaded that the prosperity of the Province had been very much promoted by a small previous issue of paper money in 1723. He remembered, he says in the *Autobiography*, that, when he first walked about the streets of Philadelphia, eating his roll, most of the houses on Walnut Street, between Second and Front Streets, and many besides, on Chestnut and other streets, were placarded, "To be let"; which made him feel as if the inhabitants of Philadelphia were deserting the town one after the other; whereas at the time of this discussion all the old houses were occupied, and many new ones were in process of construction. Not content with presenting his views on the subject to the Junto, he wrote an anonymous pamphlet on it entitled *The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*. This pamphlet was well received by the common people, he tells us, but met with the disfavor of the rich, because it swelled the clamor for more money. Their opposition, however, for lack of writers, competent to refute its reasoning, languished, and the issue was authorized by the Assembly. Franklin's friends in the house rewarded him for his part in the controversy over it by employing him to print the money. "A very profitable jobb and a great help to me," remarks Franklin complacently in the *Autobiography*, and he adds, "This was another advantage gain'd by my being able to write."

Through the influence of his friend Hamilton, he likewise secured the contract for printing the paper money, issued by the Three Lower Counties on the Delaware. "Another profitable jobb as I then thought it," he says, "small things appearing great to those in small circumstances." Hamilton also procured for him the privilege of printing the laws and legislative proceedings of the Three Lower Counties, and he retained it as long as he remained in the printing business. Now, for the first time, he felt that his position was assured enough for him to open up a small stationery shop, where he sold blanks of all sorts, paper, parchment, chapmen's books and other such wares. The blanks he believed to be "the correctest that ever appear'd among us, being assisted in that by my friend Breintnal." The demands on his printing-office, too, increased to such a degree that he employed a compositor, one Whitemarsh, an excellent workman, whom he had known in London, and undertook the care of an apprentice, a son of the ever-to-be-lamented Aquila Rose. Soon he was prospering to such an extent that he could begin to pay off the debt that he owed on his printing outfit. These are the words in which he himself described his situation at this time:

In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in *reality* industrious and frugal, but to avoid all appearances to the contrary. I drest plainly; I was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauch'd me from my work, but that was seldom, snug, and gave no scandal; and, to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchas'd at the stores thro' the streets on a wheel-barrow. Thus being esteem'd an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on swimmingly. In the meantime, Keimer's credit and business declining daily, he was at last forc'd to sell

his printing-house to satisfy his creditors. He went to Barbadoes, and there lived some years in very poor circumstances.

For some time before Keimer went off to Barbadoes, he had been in the condition of an unsound tree, which still stands but with a dry rot at its heart momentarily presaging its fall. As far back as Issue No. 27 of *The Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences*, and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, he had found it necessary to explain a week's delay in the publication of that issue by stating to the public that he had been awakened, when fast asleep in bed, about eleven at night, over-tired with the labor of the day, and taken away from his dwelling by a writ and summons; it being basely and confidently given out that he was that very night about to run away, though there was not the least color or ground for such a vile report. He was, he further declared, "the shuttlecock of fortune ... the very but for villany to shoot at, or the continued mark for slander and her imps to spit their venom upon." It was remarkable, he thought, that

a person of strict sincerity, refin'd justice, and universal love to the whole creation, should for a series of near twenty years, be the constant butt of slander, as to be three times ruin'd as a master-printer, to be nine times in prison, one of which was six years together, and often reduc'd to the most wretched circumstances, hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, and persecuted with the most abominable lies the devil himself could invent or malice utter.

It was but the old story of the man, who is dizzy, thinking that the whole world is spinning around."

David Harry, Keimer's former apprentice, had also opened a printing-office in Philadelphia. When his enterprise was in its inception, Franklin regarded his rivalry with much uneasiness on account of his influential connections. He accordingly proposed a partnership to him, a proposal which, fortunately for the former, was disdainfully refused. "He was very proud," says Franklin, "dress'd like a gentleman, liv'd expensively, took much diversion and pleasure abroad, ran in debt, and neglected his business; upon which, all business left him." The result was that Harry had to follow Keimer to Barbadoes, taking his printing outfit with him. Here the former apprentice employed the former master as a journeyman; they frequently quarrelled with each other; Harry steadily fell behind, and was compelled to sell his type, and to return to his country work in Pennsylvania. The purchaser of the outfit employed Keimer to operate it, but, in a few years more, Keimer was transported by death out of the world, which for a considerable part of his life he had seen only through the gratings of a jail.

The departure of Harry left Franklin without any competitor except his old one, Bradford, who was too rich and easy-going to actively push for business. But, in one respect, Bradford was a formidable rival. He was the Postmaster at Philadelphia, and his newspaper flourished at the expense of the *Gazette* upon the public impression that his connection with the Post-office gave him facilities for gathering news and for circulating advertisements that Franklin did not enjoy.

To this period belong Franklin's treaty for a wife with enough means to discharge the balance of one hundred pounds still due on his printing outfit, and his final recoil to Deborah whose industry and frugality were far more than the pecuniary equivalent of one hundred pounds. After his marriage, he was, if anything, even more industrious than before, and this is what he has to" say about his habits and employments during the period that immediately followed that event:

Reading was the only amusement I allow'd myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolicks of any kind; and my industry in my business continu'd as indefatigable as

it was necessary. I was indebted for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated, and I had to contend with for business two printers, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, "Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men," I from thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encourag'd me, tho' I did not think that I should ever literally *stand before* kings, which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before *five*, and even had the honour of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.

Another passage in the *Autobiography* tells us just what degree of frugality Franklin and Deborah practiced at this stage of his business career.

We kept no idle servants [he says], our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress, in spite of principle: being call'd one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserv'd a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house, which afterward," in a course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value.

In 1732 was first published, at fivepence a copy, Franklin's famous almanac known as *Poor Richard's Almanac*, which for twenty-five years warmed the homes of Pennsylvania with the ruddy glow of its wit, humor and wisdom. His endeavor in conducting it he tells us was to make it both entertaining and useful, and he was so successful that he reaped considerable profit from the nearly ten thousand copies of it that he annually sold. Hundreds of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania, who read nothing else, read the *Almanac*. Its infectious humor, its coarse pleasantry, its proverbs and sayings so much wiser than the wisdom, and so much wittier than the wit of any single individual, made the name of Franklin a common household word from one end of Pennsylvania to another, and, when finally strained off into Father Abraham's speech, established his reputation as a kindly humorist and moral teacher throughout the world.

In somewhat the same spirit of instruction as well as entertainment was the *Gazette*, too, conducted.

I considered my newspaper, also [says Franklin], as another means of communicating instruction, and in that view frequently reprinted in it extracts from the *Spectator*, and other moral writers; and sometimes publish'd little pieces of my own, which had been first compos'd for reading in our Junto.

The caution exercised by the *Gazette* in shutting out malice and personal abuse from its columns is the subject of one of the weightiest series of statements in the *Autobiography*.

In the conduct of my newspaper [Franklin declares] I carefully excluded all libelling and personal abuse, which is of late years become so disgraceful to our country. Whenever I was" solicited to insert anything of that kind, and the writers pleaded, as they generally did, the liberty of the press, and that a newspaper was like a stage-coach, in which any one who would pay had a right to a place, my answer was, that I

would print the piece separately if desired, and the author might have as many copies as he pleased to distribute himself, but that I would not take upon me to spread his detraction; and that, having contracted with my subscribers to furnish them with what might be either useful or entertaining, I could not fill their papers with private altercation, in which they had no concern, without doing them manifest injustice. Now, many of our printers make no scruple of gratifying the malice of individuals by false accusations of the fairest characters among ourselves, augmenting animosity even to the producing of duels; and are, moreover, so indiscreet as to print scurrilous reflections on the government of neighboring states, and even on the conduct of our best national allies, which may be attended with the most pernicious consequences. These things I mention as a caution to young printers, and that they may be encouraged not to pollute their presses and disgrace their profession by such infamous practices, but refuse steadily, as they may see by my example that such a course of conduct will not, on the whole, be injurious to their interests.

By 1733 Franklin was sufficiently established in business to branch out still more. That year he sent one of his journeymen, Thomas Whitmarsh, to Charleston, South Carolina, where a printer was needed, under an agreement of partnership which was the prototype of most of the subsequent articles of copartnership formed by him with other printers under similar conditions; that is to say, he furnished the printing outfit, paid one third of the expenses, and received one third of the profits. The history of this partner gave Franklin an opportunity to moralize a little in the *Autobiography* upon the importance of a knowledge of accounts rather than of music or dancing as a part of female education. The Carolina printer was a man” of education and honest, but ignorant of accounts, and, though he made occasional remittances, Franklin could never get any account from him, nor any satisfactory statement of the condition of the partnership business. On his death, however, his widow, who had been born and bred in Holland, not only sent Franklin as clear a statement as was possible of the past transactions of the firm, but subsequently rendered him an exact account every quarter with the utmost punctuality, and, besides, managed the business with such success that she reared a family of children decently, and, upon the expiration of the copartnership, purchased the outfit from Franklin, and turned it over to her son.

The success of the Carolina partnership encouraged Franklin to form partnerships with other journeymen of his, and by 1743 he had opened three printing-offices in three different colonies, and proposed to open a fourth, if he could find a suitable person to take charge of it. Others were opened by him later. Among the persons besides Whitmarsh, established by him at different times as printers, under one arrangement or another with himself, were Peter Timothy in South Carolina, Smith and Benjamin Mecom in Antigua, James Parker in New York, his brother in Rhode Island, Hall and Miller and Samuel Holland at Lancaster, and William Daniell at Kingston, Jamaica. Speaking of his partners in the *Autobiography*, he says of them:

Most of them did well, being enabled at the end of our term, six years, to purchase the types of me and go on working for themselves, by which means several families were raised. Partnerships often finish in quarrels; but I was happy in this, that mine were all carried on and ended amicably, owing, I think, a good deal to the precaution of having very explicitly settled, in our articles, everything to be done by or expected from each partner, so that there was nothing to dispute, which precaution I would therefore recommend to all who enter into” partnerships; for, whatever esteem partners may have for, and confidence in each other at the time of the contract, little jealousies and disgusts may arise, with ideas of inequality in the care and burden of the business,

etc., which are attended often with breach of friendship and of the connection, perhaps with lawsuits and other disagreeable consequences.

Two other business enterprises of Franklin merit notice. He was the founder of the first newspaper in the United States to be published in a foreign tongue, namely, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*, which owed its origin to the large number of Germans who came over to Pennsylvania during the Colonial Period. He was also the founder of a monthly literary magazine which for some reason he does not mention in the *Autobiography* at all. It was the second enterprise of the kind undertaken in America, and was known as *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle for All the British Plantations in America*. To Franklin as a business man might aptly be applied the words of Emerson with respect to Guy:

Stream could not so perversely wind

But corn of Guy's was there to grind.

One exception, however, appears to have been this magazine which lasted but a short time. It was ill-starred from the start. When Franklin was ready to spring it upon the public, he engaged John Webbe as its editor, but Webbe betrayed the project to Bradford, who at once announced that, a little later, a magazine would be offered to the public edited by Webbe, and published by himself. When the first number of Franklin's magazine came out, he stated that its publication was earlier than he had intended because of the faithless conduct of Webbe. This Webbe resented by charging Franklin, who was then Postmaster at Philadelphia, with shutting out Bradford's *Mercury* from the post, but Franklin silenced his fire by stating and proving that he had had no choice in the matter, because he had been commanded by Postmaster-General Spottswood, on account of Bradford's failure as Postmaster at Philadelphia to account with him, to suffer no longer any of his newspapers or letters to be conveyed by post free of charge.

The business of Franklin received another push forward with the political consequence which he acquired through the *Gazette* and the influence of the Junto. In 1736, he was chosen Clerk of the General Assembly, and in the succeeding year he was appointed Postmaster at Philadelphia, in the place of Bradford, by Alexander Spottswood, who had been Governor of Virginia, and was then the Deputy Postmaster-General for America. The salary of the Postmastership was small, but, for the purposes of the *Gazette*, the office gave him the same advantage that Bradford had enjoyed, when he refused to allow that newspaper to be carried by his post-riders. The positions of the two men were now reversed, but Franklin was too magnanimous to remind Bradford, sternly, as he did Jemmy Read, that Fortune's Wheel is ever turning. "My old competitor's newspaper," he says, "declined proportionably, and I was satisfy'd without retaliating his refusal, while postmaster, to permit my papers being carried by the riders." Bradford had suffered, Franklin adds, "for his neglect in due accounting." And this gave him occasion to observe that regularity and clearness in rendering accounts and punctuality in making remittances are "the most powerful of all recommendations to new employments and increase of business."

The office of Clerk of the Assembly also had its business value.

Besides the pay for the immediate service as clerk [Franklin says] the place gave me a better opportunity of keeping up an interest among the members, which secur'd to me the" business of printing the votes, laws, paper money, and other occasional jobbs for the public, that, on the whole, were very profitable.

The first year that he came up for election the vote in his favor was unanimous, but the next year, while he was elected, it was only after a new member had made a long speech against

him in the interest of another candidate. How Franklin conciliated the unfriendliness of this member is fully told in the *Autobiography*;

I therefore did not like the opposition of this new member, who was a gentleman of fortune and education, with talents that were likely to give him, in time, great influence in the House, which, indeed, afterwards happened. I did not, however, aim at gaining his favour by paying any servile respect to him, but, after some time, took this other method. Having heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting he would do me the favour of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately, and I return'd it in about a week with another note, expressing strongly my sense of the favour. When we next met in the House, he spoke to me (which he had never done before), and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends, and our friendship continued to his death. This is another instance of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says, "*He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged.*" And it shows how much more profitable it is prudently to remove, than to resent, return, and continue inimical proceedings.

The artifice practised by Franklin on this occasion has been condemned. What he really did, of course, was to use gratified vanity as a foil to mortified vanity. The possible consequences of the new member's hostility were too serious for him to say as Washington was in the habit of saying when he had a bad cold: "Let it go as it came." He knew that the malice was as shallow as the good will; and the alternatives were resentment, sycophancy, or a little subtlety. Under the circumstances, Franklin would not have been Franklin, if he had not elected subtlety.

Nothing was now wanting to the full development of his business career except the repetition in other communities of the success that had crowned his personal exertions in Pennsylvania. Referring to the state of his business at this time, he says in the *Autobiography*;

My business was now continually augmenting, and my circumstances growing daily easier, my newspaper having become very profitable, as being for a time almost the only one in this and the neighboring provinces. I experienced, too, the truth of the observation, "*that after getting the first hundred pound, it is more easy to get the second,*" money itself being of a prolific nature.

The outcome of it all was that, in the year 1748, at the age of forty-two, he flattered himself, to repeat his own language, that, by the sufficient, though moderate, fortune which he had acquired, he had secured leisure during the rest of his life for philosophical studies and amusements.

The plan that he formed for securing this leisure, which he turned to such fruitful purposes, was marked by his usual good judgment. In 1744, he had taken into his employment David Hall, a Scotch journeyman, and a friend of Strahan. He now admitted Hall to partnership with him. "A very able, industrious, and honest partner, Mr. David Hall, with whose character I was well acquainted, as he had work'd for me for four years," are the terms in which he speaks of Hall in the *Autobiography*. "He took off my hands," he continues, "all care of the printing-office, paying me punctually my share of the profits. The partnership continued eighteen years, successfully for us" both." Under the provisions of the partnership agreement, Hall was to carry on the printing and publishing business of Franklin in his own way, but in the firm name of Franklin and Hall, and Hall was to pay to Franklin a thousand pounds a year

for eighteen years; at the end of which period Hall was to become the sole proprietor of the business.⁵⁰ Exactly what income Franklin was deriving from his printing and publishing business at the time that this agreement was entered into is not known, but reasonable conjecture has placed it at something like two thousand pounds a year. At that time he was also the owner of a considerable amount of property, representing invested returns from his business in the past. The *Gazette* continued to be published until the year 1821. When the term of eighteen years, during which the partnership was to last, expired in 1766, the profits had been over twelve thousand pounds, Pennsylvania currency, from subscriptions, and over four thousand pounds, Pennsylvania currency, from advertisements. Judged by the standards of the time and place, it was an extraordinary degree of success which had enabled Franklin in some twenty years to establish so lucrative a business as that which he handed over to the management of Hall in 1748, and few indeed have been the men in mercantile history, who have been willing, after so long a period of prosperous addiction to gain, to turn away to purely intellectual and unremunerative pursuits from such a prospect of increasing self-enrichment as that renounced by Franklin when he wrote to Cadwallader Colden that he, too, was taking the proper measures for obtaining leisure to enjoy life and his friends more than in the past; having put his printing-house under the care of his partner, David Hall, absolutely left off book-selling, and removed to a more quiet part of the town, where he was settling his old accounts, and hoped soon to be quite master of his own time, and no longer, as the song had it, at everyone's call but his own. Nobody knew better than he that, if, after getting the first hundred pounds, it is easier to get the second, it is still easier, after getting the second hundred pounds, to get the third.

For Hall, Franklin entertained uninterrupted feelings of respect and affection, down to the date of the former's death on December 17, 1772. "My Love to Mr. Hall," is one of his messages to Deborah some seven years after the firm of Franklin and Hall was created. Before that he had written to Strahan, "Our friend, Mr. Hall, is well, and manages perfectly to my satisfaction." Many years after the death of Hall, the account between Franklin and him had not been wholly settled, and a letter from the former to Strahan in the year 1785 tells him that Hall and himself had not been of the same mind as to "the value of a copyright in an established newspaper, of each of which from eight to ten thousand were printed," but "were to be determined" by Strahan's opinion. "My long absence from that country, and immense employment the little time I was there," Franklin wrote, "have" hitherto prevented the settlement of all the accounts that had been between us; though we never differed about them, and never should if that good honest man had continued in being."

Franklin's failure to forecast the stubborn hostility of the Colonies to the Stamp Act not only cost him some personal popularity but it caused his firm some pecuniary loss. Anticipating with his usual shrewdness the passage of that Act, which imposed a tax of a sterling half-

⁵⁰ The interest of Franklin in the Art of Printing did not end with his retirement from his vocation as a printer. When he arrived in England in 1757, he is said to have visited the composing-room at Watts' printing establishment, where he was employed many years before, and to have celebrated the occasion by giving to the composing force there a *bienvenu*, or fee for drink, and proposing as a toast "Success to Printing." The type of Baskerville, the "charming Editions" of Didot *le Jeune*, the even finer *Sallust*, and *Don Quixote* of Madrid, and the method of cementing letters, conceived by John Walter, the founder of the *London Times*, all came in for his appreciative attention. It is said that the process of stereotyping was first communicated to Didot by him. When he visited the establishment of the latter, in 1780, he turned to one of his presses, and printed off several sheets with an ease which excited the astonishment of the printers about him. Until the close of his life he had a keen eye for a truly black ink and superfine printing paper and all the other niceties of his former calling. The only trace of eccentricity in his life is to be found in his methods of punctuation, which are marked by a sad lack of uniformity in the use of commas, semicolons and colons, and by the lavish employment of the devices to denote emphasis which someone has happily termed "typographical yells."

penny on every half-sheet of a newspaper, however small, he sent over to Hall one hundred reams of large half-sheet paper, but permission could not be obtained to have it stamped in America, and it was all reshipped to England at a loss.

As to the Paper sent over [he wrote to Hall] I did it for the best, having at that time Expectations given me that we might have had it stampd there; in which case you would have had great Advantage of the other Printers, since if they were not provided with such Paper, they must have either printed but a half sheet common Demi, or paid for two Stamps on each Sheet. The Plan was afterward alter'd notwithstanding all I could do, it being alledged that Scotland & every Colony would expect the same Indulgence if it was granted to us. The Papers must not be sent back again: But I hope you will excuse what I did in Good will, tho' it happen'd wrong.

After the retirement of Franklin from active business, he still continued to hold his office as Postmaster at Philadelphia, and, while holding it, he was employed by the Deputy Postmaster-General for America as his comptroller to examine and audit the accounts of several of his subordinate officers. Upon the death of the Deputy Postmaster-General, he was appointed his successor, jointly with William Hunter, of Virginia, by the British Postmasters-General. When the pair were appointed, the office had never earned any net revenue for the British" Crown. Under the terms of their appointment, they were to have six hundred pounds a year between them, if they could make that sum out of its profits, and, when they entered upon it, so many improvements had to be effected by them that, in the first four years, it ran into debt to them to the extent of upwards of nine hundred pounds; but, under the skilful management of Franklin, it became remunerative, and, before he was removed by the British Government, after his arraignment before the Privy Council, it had been brought to yield three times as much clear revenue to the Crown as the Irish Post-office. "Since that imprudent transaction," Franklin observes in the *Autobiography*, "they have receiv'd from it—not one farthing!"

On August 10, 1761, eight years after the appointment of Franklin and Hunter, and a few weeks before Foxcroft succeeded Hunter, there was a net balance of four hundred and ninety-four pounds four shillings and eight pence due by the American Post-office to the British Crown; which was duly remitted. "And this," exclaims the astonished official record of the fact in England, "is the first remittance ever made of the kind." Between August 10, 1761, and the beginning of 1764, the net profits of the American Post-office amounted to two thousand and seventy pounds twelve shillings and three and one quarter pence, and drew from the British Postmasters-General the statement, "The Posts in America are under the management of persons of acknowledged ability." With this record of administrative success, it is not surprising that, when Franklin was removed from office, he should have written to Thomas Cushing these bitter words:

I received a written notice from the Secretary of the general post-office, that His Majesty's postmaster-general *found it necessary* to dismiss me from my office of deputy postmaster-general" in North America. The expression was well chosen, for in truth they were *under a necessity* of doing it; it was not their own inclination; they had no fault to find with my conduct in the office; they knew my merit in it, and that, if it was now an office of value, it had become such chiefly through my care and good management; that it was worth nothing, when given to me; it would not then pay the salary allowed me, and, unless it did, I was not to expect it; and that it now produces near three thousand pounds a year clear to the treasury here. They had beside a personal regard for me. But as the postoffices in all the principal towns are growing daily more and more valuable, by the increase of correspondence, the officers being

paid *commissions* instead of *salaries*, the ministers seem to intend, by directing me to be displaced on this occasion, to hold out to them all an example that, if they are not corrupted by their office to promote the measures of administration, though against the interests and rights of the colonies, they must not expect to be continued.

Not only was the American postal service made by Franklin's able management to yield a net revenue to the British Crown, but it was brought up to a much higher level of efficiency. For one thing, the mails between New York and Philadelphia were increased from one a week in summer and two a month in winter to three a week in summer and one a week in winter. In 1764, a Philadelphia merchant could mail a letter to New York and receive a reply the next day. For another thing, post-riders were required to carry all newspapers offered to them for carriage whether the newspapers of postmasters or not. In the discharge of his postal duties, Franklin was compelled to make many long journeys outside of Pennsylvania, and these journeys did much, as we have said, to extend his reputation on the American continent and to confirm his extraordinary familiarity with American conditions. As soon as he was appointed Deputy Postmaster-General for America with Hunter, William Franklin" was appointed Comptroller of the Post-office. The post-office at Philadelphia he first conferred upon William Franklin, then upon Joseph Read, one of Deborah's relatives, and then upon Peter Franklin, Franklin's brother. Indeed, so long as there was a Franklin or a Read willing to enter the public service, Franklin's other fellow-countrymen had very little chance of filling any vacant post in the American Post-office. This was doubtless due not only to his clannishness but also to the fact that, as far as we can now judge, nepotism was a much more venial offence in the eyes of the public during the colonial era than now. Even now it may be doubted whether the disfavor with which it is regarded is prompted so much by its prejudicial tendency from a public point of view as by its tendency, from the point of view of the spoilsman, to interfere with the repeated use of office for partisan purposes.

The income upon which Franklin retired from business was the sum of one thousand pounds a year for eighteen years, which Hall agreed to pay him, the small salary, arising from the office of Postmaster at Philadelphia, and the income, supposed to be about seven hundred pounds a year, produced by his invested savings. When in England, in addition to the one thousand pounds a year, paid to him by Hall, which ended in the year 1766, and the income derived by him from invested savings, he received a salary of three hundred pounds a year from his office as Deputy Postmaster-General for America, until he was removed in 1774, and for briefer periods a salary of five hundred pounds a year from his office as Colonial Agent for Pennsylvania, and salaries of four hundred pounds, two hundred pounds and one hundred pounds as the Colonial Agent of Massachusetts, Georgia and New Jersey, respectively. With his removal from his office of Deputy Postmaster-General, all these agencies and the salaries attached to them came to an end. When the annuity paid to him by Hall ceased, his income was so" seriously curtailed that he was compelled, as we have seen, to remind Deborah of the fact. After his return from England in 1775, he was appointed the Postmaster-General of the United States at a salary of one thousand pounds a year.

For his public services in France, he was allowed at first a salary of five hundred pounds a year and his expenses, and subsequently, when his rank was advanced to that of ambassador, two thousand five hundred pounds a year. When he returned from France to America, he communicated to his old friend, Charles Thomson, the Secretary of Congress, his hope that Congress might be kind enough to recognize the value of his services and sacrifices in the American cause by granting him some small tract of land in the West. He saw, he said, that Congress had made a handsome allowance to Arthur Lee for his services to America in England before his appointment as Commissioner to France, though it had made none to the writer or to Mr. Bollan, who were also parties to these services. Moreover, Lee, on his return

to America, as well as John Jay, had been rewarded by Congress with a good office. The letter, of course, made out an irrefragable case; for, if the United States had given the whole Northwest Territory to Franklin, his heirs and assigns forever, the gift would hardly have exceeded the value of his services. It was written just before the Old Congress gave way to the First Congress under the Federal Constitution, and nothing ever came of it. The conduct of the Old Congress to Franklin in other respects had been so ungenerous that it is hardly likely that it would have made any response to the appeal anyhow unless solicited by a more intriguing spirit than his.

The State of Georgia was more mindful of its obligations to him, and voted him the right to take up three thousand acres of land within its limits.

After his return from France, a great rise took place in the value of real estate in Philadelphia, and his houses and lots reaped its benefits to a conspicuous degree. On Jan. 29, 1786, he wrote to Ferdinand Grand, "My own Estate I find more than tripled in Value since the Revolution"; and similar statements are to be found in other letters of his at this time.

At this period of his life, a considerable amount of his attention was given to the improvement of his property. On Apr. 22, 1787, in a letter to Ferdinand Grand, he said, "The three Houses which I began to build last year, are nearly finished, and I am now about to begin two others. Building is an Old Man's Amusement. The Advantage is for his Posterity."

When Franklin died, his estate consisted of ten houses in Philadelphia, and almost as many vacant lots, a pasture lot near Philadelphia, a farm near Burlington, New Jersey, a house in Boston, the right to the three thousand acres of land in Georgia, a tract of land on the Ohio, a tract of land in Nova Scotia, twelve shares of the capital stock of the Bank of North America and bonds of individuals in excess of eighteen thousand pounds. The value of his entire estate was supposed to be between two hundred and two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Under his management, the *Gazette* was probably the best newspaper produced in Colonial America. In its early history, it appeared first twice a week, and then weekly, and consisted of but a single sheet, which, when folded, was about 12 by 18 inches square. Parton is not accurate, as his own context shows, in stating that Franklin "originated the modern system of business-advertising." Other newspapers of the time, including Bradford's *Mercury*, contained advertisements for the recovery of runaway servants and slaves, and lost or stolen articles, and for the sale of different kinds of merchandise. When Franklin fled from Boston, his brother James advertised for another apprentice in the *Courant*. Nor is Parton accurate, either, in stating that Franklin "invented the plan of distinguishing advertisements by means of little pictures, which he cut with his own hands." There were such cuts in Bradford's *Mercury* even before the *Gazette* was founded. The *Gazette* won a position of its own because its proprietor and editor brought to its issues that knowledge of human life and human nature and that combination of practical sagacity, humor and literary skill which he carried into everything. The latest advices of the day, foreign and domestic, which were tardy enough, extracts from the *Spectator* and other moral writers of the age, verses from contemporary poets, cuttings from the English newspapers, broad, obscene jokes, as unconscious of offence as the self-exposure of a child or an animal, all assembled with the instinctive eye to unity of effect, which is the most consummate achievement of journalistic art, made up the usual contents of the *Gazette*. Now, along with news items of local and outside interest, we have a humorous account of a lottery in England, by which, for the better increase of the King's subjects, all the old maids are to be raffled for; now some truculent flings at the Catholics, the *caput lupinum* of that age; now a hint to a delinquent subscriber that it was considerably in his power to contribute towards the happiness of his most humble obliged servant; now an exasperating intimation that the *Mercury* has been depredating upon

the columns of its rival; now some little essay or dialogue from the pen of Franklin himself, good enough to be classed as literature. The open, kindly, yet shrewd, face, with the crow's-feet, furrowed by the incessant play of humor about the corners of its eyes, looks out at us from every page.

The editor of the *Gazette* sustains to his readers a relation as personal as that sustained by Poor Richard to his. He goes off to New Jersey to print some paper currency for that Colony, and he inserts this paragraph in the *Gazette*: "The Printer hopes the irregular Publication of this Paper will be excused a few times by his Town Readers, on consideration of his being at Burlington with the press, labouring for the publick Good, to make Money more plentiful." The statement that a flash of lightning in Bucks County had melted the pewter buttons off the waistband of a farmer's breeches elicits the observation, "Tis well nothing else thereabouts was made of pewter." When contributions by others failed him, he even wrote letters to himself under feigned names. "Printerum est errare," we are told, and then, under this announcement, Franklin, in another name, addresses the following facetious letter to himself:

Sir, As your last Paper was reading in some Company where I was present, these Words were taken Notice of in the Article concerning Governor Belcher (After which his Excellency, with the Gentlemen trading to New England, died elegantly at Pontack's). The Word died should doubtless have been dined, Pontack's being a noted Tavern and Eating house in London for Gentlemen of Condition; but this Omission of the Letter (n) in that Word, gave us as much Entertainment as any Part of your Paper. One took the Opportunity of telling us, that in a certain Edition of the Bible, the Printer had, where David says I am fearfully and wonderfully made, omitted the Letter (e) in the last Word, so that it was, I am fearfully and wonderfully mad; which occasion'd an ignorant Preacher, who took that Text, to harangue his Audience for half an hour on the Subject of Spiritual Madness. Another related to us, that when the Company of Stationers in England had the Printing of the Bible in their Hands, the Word (not) was left out of the Seventh Commandment, and the whole Edition was printed off with Thou shalt commit Adultery, instead of Thou shalt not, &c. This material Erratum induc'd the Crown to take the Patent from them which is now held by the King's Printer. The Spectator's Remark upon this Story is, that he doubts many of our modern Gentlemen have this faulty edition by 'em, and are not made sensible of the Mistake." A Third Person in the Company acquainted us with an unlucky Fault that went through a whole Impression of Common-Prayer Books; in the Funeral Service, where these Words are, We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, &c., the Printer had omitted the (c) in changed, and it read thus, We shall all be hanged, &c. And lastly, a Mistake of your Brother News-Printer was mentioned, in The Speech of James Prouse written the Night before he was to have been executed, instead of I die a Protestant, he has put it, I died a Protestant. Upon the whole you came off with the more favourable Censure, because your Paper is most commonly very correct, and yet you were never known to triumph upon it, by publicly ridiculing and exposing the continual Blunders of your Contemporary Which Observation was concluded by a good old Gentleman in Company, with this general just Remark, That whoever accustoms himself to pass over in Silence the Faults of his Neighbours, shall meet with much better Quarter from the World when he happens to fall into a Mistake himself; for the Satyrical and Censorious, whose Hand is against every Man, shall upon such Occasions have every Man's Hand against him.

This is an accusation of plagiarism made by Franklin against Bradford:

When Mr. Bradford publishes after us [he declared], and has Occasion to take an Article or two out of the *Gazette*, which he is always welcome to do, he is desired not to date his Paper a Day before ours, (as last Week in the Case of the Letter containing Kelsey's Speech, &c) lest distant Readers should imagine we take from him, which we always carefully avoid.

Bradford hit back as best he could. On one occasion he charged that the contract for printing paper money for the Province of New Jersey had been awarded to Franklin at a higher bid than that of another bidder. "Its no matter," he said, "its the Country's Money, and if the" Publick cannot afford to pay well, who can? Its proper to serve a Friend when there is an opportunity."

One of Franklin's favorite devices for filling up gaps in the *Gazette* was to have himself, in the guise of a correspondent, ask himself questions, and then answer them. "I am about courting a girl I have had but little acquaintance with; how shall I come to a knowledge of her faults, and whether she has the virtues I imagine she has," is one such supposititious question. "Commend her among her female acquaintance," is the ready-made answer. Another imaginary question was of this tenor: "Mr. Franklin: Pray let the prettiest Creature in this Place know (by publishing this), that if it was not for her Affectation she would be absolutely irresistible." Next week a flood of replies gushed out of the editor's pigeon-holes. One ran thus:

"I cannot conceive who your Correspondent means by 'the prettiest creature' in this Place; but I can assure either him or her, that she who is truly so, has no Affectation at all."

And another ran thus:

"Sir, Since your last Week's Paper I have look'd in my Glass a thousand Times, I believe, in one way; and if it was not for the Charge of Affectation I might, without Partiality believe myself the Person meant."

At times we cannot but suspect that Franklin has deliberately created a sensation for the purpose of quickening the sale of the *Gazette*. For instance, a peruke maker in Second Street advertises that he will "leave off the shaving business after the 22nd of August next."

Commenting on this advertisement, Franklin observes that barbers are peculiarly fitted for politics, for they are adept shavers and trimmers; and, when the angry peruke maker calls him to task for his levity, he replies that he cherishes no animosity at all towards him, and can only impute his feelings to a "Want of taste and relish for pieces of that force and" beauty which none but a University bred gentleman can produce."

On another occasion, when advertising the sailing of a ship, he added this N. B. of his own: "No Sea Hens, nor Black Gowns will be admitted on any terms." To such a degree were some of the clergy incensed by it that they withdrew their subscriptions; but it is not unlikely that in a day or so twice their number in scoffers were added to the subscription list of the young printer. At times the fooling is bald buffoonery.

On Thursday last [he informed his readers] a certain P—r ('tis not customary to give names at length on these occasions) walking carefully in clean clothes over some barrels of tar on Carpenter's Wharf, the head of one of them unluckily gave way, and let a leg of him in above the knee. Whether he was upon the Catch at that time, we can not say, but 'tis certain he caught a *Tar-tar*, 'Twas observed he sprang out again right briskly, verifying the common saying, as nimble as a Bee in a Tar barrel. You must know there are several sorts of bees: 'tis true he was no honey bee, nor yet a humble bee: but a *Boo-bee* he may be allowed to be, namely B. F.

Franklin was a publisher of books as well as a newspaper proprietor. Most of the books and pamphlets published by him were of a theological or religious nature, in other words books which, aside from the pecuniary profit of printing them, he was very much disposed to regard as no books at all. Others were of a description to serve the practical wants of a society yet simple in its structure, such as *The Gentlemen's Pocket Farrier* and *Every Man his Own Doctor, or the Poor Planter's Physician*. But some were of real note such as two little volumes of native American poetry, Colden's *Essay on the Iliac Passion*, which is said to have been the first American medical treatise, Cadwallader's *Essay on the West India Dry Gripes*, and James Logan's translation of "Cato's *Moral Distichs*", which Franklin regarded as his *chef d'œuvre*, and which is said to have been the first book in the Latin tongue to have been both translated and printed in America. Worthy of mention also are various publications on the subject of slavery, precursors of the endless succession a little later on of anti-slavery tracts, books and speeches, which anon became a mountain. The mercantile business, of which Franklin's stationery shop was the nucleus, was of a highly miscellaneous character. In addition to books and pamphlets printed by himself, he imported and sold many others including chapmen's books and ballads.

At the time I establish'd myself in Pennsylvania [he tells us in the *Autobiography*], there was not a good bookseller's shop in any of the Colonies to the southward of Boston. In New York and Philad'a the printers were indeed stationers; they sold only paper, etc., almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who lov'd reading were oblig'd to send for their books from England.

The spirit in which he imported the pamphlets sold by him is indicated in one of his letters to Strahan. "Let me have everything, good or bad, that makes a Noise and has a Run," he says. His stock of merchandise included everything usually sold at a stationer's shop such as good writing paper, choice writing parchment, cyphering slates and pencils, Holman's ink powders, ivory pocket books, pounce and pounce boxes, sealing wax, wafers, pencils, fountain pens, choice English quills, brass inkhorns, and sand glasses. There were besides "fine mezzotints, a great variety of maps, cheap pictures engraved on copper plate of all sorts of birds, beasts, fishes, fruits, flowers etc., useful to such as would learn to draw." Along with these things, and choice consignments of the Franklin Crown Soap, were vended" articles almost as varied as the contents of a junkshop, such as the following:

very good sack at 6s per gallon, glaz'd fulling papers and bonnet-papers, very good lamp-black, very good chocolate, linseed oil, very good coffee, compasses and scales, Seneca rattlesnake root, with directions how to use it in the pleurisy &c., dividers and protractors, a very good second hand two-wheel chaise, a very neat, new fashion'd vehicle, or four wheel'd chaise, very convenient to carry weak or other sick persons, old or young, good Rhode Island cheese and codfish, quadrants, forestaffs, nocturnals, mariner's compasses, season'd murchantable boards, coarse and fine edgings, fine broad scarlet cloth, fine broad black cloth, fine white thread hose and English sale duck, very good iron stoves, a large horse fit for a chair or saddle, the true and genuine Godfrey's cordial, choice bohea tea, very good English saffron, New York Lottery tickets, choice makrel, to be sold by the barrel, a large copper still, very good spermacety, fine palm oyl, very good Temple spectacles and a new fishing net.

Another commodity in which Franklin dealt was the unexpired time of indentured or bond servants, who had sold their services for a series of years in return for transportation to America. This traffic is illustrated in such advertisements in the *Gazette* as these: "To be sold. A likely servant woman, having three years and a half to serve. She is a good spinner"; "To be sold. A likely servant lad about 15 years of age, and has 6 years to serve." And alas! the

humanitarian, who strove so earnestly, during the closing years of his life, when he was famous and rich, and the President of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, to bring home the horrors of slavery to the Southern conscience, was himself what involved until the end utter social disrepute in the slaveholding South, that is to say, a negro-trader. "Some of these slaves," Paul Leicester Ford tells us in *The Many Sided Franklin*, "he procured from New England where, as population grew in density, the need for them passed, leading to their sale in the colonies to the southward." The business was certainly a repulsive one, even when conducted by such a lover of the human species as Franklin. How far this is true the reader can judge for himself when he reads the following advertisements, which are but two of the many of the same kind that appeared in the *Gazette*:

To be sold a likely negro woman, with a man-child, fit for town or country business. Enquire of the printer hereof.

To be sold. A prime able young negro man, fit for laborious work, in town or country, that has had the small pox: As also a middle aged negro man, that has likewise had the small pox. Enquire of the printer hereof: Or otherwise they will be expos'd to sale by publick vendue, on Saturday the 11th of April next, at 12 o'clock, at the Indian-king, in Market Street.

While Franklin was printing pamphlets against slavery and selling negroes, and Deborah was stitching pamphlets and vending old rags, Mrs. Read, the mother of Deborah, was engaged in compounding and vending an ointment suited to conditions still graver than those for which the Franklin Crown Soap was intended. We can hardly doubt that this advertisement, which was published in the *Gazette*, was penned by the same hand which wrote the *Ephemeris*:

The Widow Read, removed from the upper End of High Street to the *New Printing Office* near the Market, continues to make and sell her well-known Ointment for the ITCH, with which she has cured abundance of People in and about this City for many Years past. It is always effectual for that purpose, and never fails to perform the Cure speedily. It also kills or drives away all Sorts of Lice in once or twice using." It has no offensive Smell, but rather a pleasant one; and may be used without the least Apprehension of Danger, even to a sucking Infant, being perfectly innocent and safe. Price 2s. a Galley-pot containing an Ounce; which is sufficient to remove the most inveterate Itch, and render the Skin clear and smooth.

The same advertisement informed the public that the Widow Read also continued to make and sell her excellent *Family Salve* or Ointment, for Burns or Scalds, (Price 1s. an Ounce) and several other Sorts of Ointments and Salves as usual.

From this review of the business career of Franklin, it will be seen that the stairway, by which he climbed to pecuniary independence and his wider fame, though not long, was, in its earlier gradations, hewn step by step from the rock. From the printing office of Keimer to Versailles and the *salon* of Madame Helvétius was no primrose path. As long as the human struggle in its thousand forms, for subsistence and preferment, goes on, as long as from year to year youth continues to be rudely pushed over the edge of the nest, with no reliance except its own strength of wing, it is safe to say that the first chapters of the *Autobiography* will remain a powerful incentive to human hope and ambition.

III. Franklin As A Statesman

The career of Franklin as a public official began in 1736, when he was appointed Clerk of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. In this position, he remained until his retirement from business precipitated so many political demands upon him that he had to give it up for still higher responsibilities.

The publick [he says in the *Autobiography*] now considering me as a man of leisure, laid hold of me for their purposes, every part of our civil government, and almost at the same time, imposing some duty upon me. The Governor put me into the commission of the peace; the corporation of the city chose me of the common council, and soon after an alderman; and the citizens at large chose me a burgess to represent them in Assembly.⁵¹

His legislative seat was all the more agreeable to him because he had grown tired as clerk of listening to debates in which he could take no part, and which were frequently so lifeless that for very weariness he had to amuse himself” with drawing magic squares or circles, or what not, as he sat at his desk. The office of justice of the peace he withdrew from by degrees, when he found that, to fill it with credit, more knowledge of the common law was requisite than he possessed, and, in this connection, the belief maybe hazarded that his influence in Congress and the Federal Convention of 1787 would have been still greater, if he had been a better lawyer, and, therefore, more competent to cope in debate with contemporaries fitter than he was to discuss questions which, true to the time-honored Anglo-Saxon traditions, turned largely upon the provisions of charters and statutes. That he was lacking in fluency of speech we have, as we have seen, his own admission—a species of evidence, however, by no means conclusive in the case of a man so little given to self-praise as he was. But there is testimony to convince us that, as a debater, Franklin was, at least, not deficient in the best characteristic of a good debater, that of placing the accent upon the truly vital points of his case.

I served [declares Jefferson] with General Washington in the legislature of Virginia, before the revolution, and, during it, with Dr. Franklin in Congress. I never heard either of them speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point, which was to decide the question. They laid their shoulders to the great points, knowing that the little ones would follow of themselves.

What John Adams has to say about Franklin as a legislator is manifestly the offspring of mere self-love. After taking a view of his own legislative activity through the highly magnifying lens, which he brought to bear upon everything relating to himself, he pictures Franklin in Congress as “from day to day, sitting in silence, a great part of his time fast asleep in his chair.”

But whatever were the demerits of Franklin as a speaker, his influence was very great in every legislative assembly” in which he ever sat. To begin with, he had the kind of eloquence that gives point to his own saying, “Whose life lightens, his words thunder.” Commenting in

⁵¹ There is no evidence that, while he was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Franklin ever had occasion, as every member of an American State legislature is likely to have, to deal with a bill for the extermination of hawks and owls; but a skeleton sketch by his hand of his services as an assemblyman shows that he shared the fate of the ordinary member of an American State legislature in having a bill relating to dogs referred to a Committee of which he was a member.

the latter part of his career to Lord Fitzmaurice upon the stress laid by Demosthenes upon action as the point of first importance in oratory, he said that he

thought another kind of action of more importance to an orator, who would persuade people to follow his advice, viz. such a course of action in the conduct of life, as would impress them with an opinion of his integrity as well as of his understanding; that, this opinion once established, all the difficulties, delays, and oppositions, usually occasioned by doubts and suspicions, were prevented; and such a man, though a very imperfect speaker, would almost always carry his points against the most flourishing orator, who had not the character of sincerity.

In the next place, Franklin's rare knowledge and wisdom made him an invaluable counsellor for any deliberative gathering. He was the protagonist in the Pennsylvania Assembly of the Popular Party, in its contest with the Proprietary Party, and was for a brief time its Speaker. As soon as he returned from Europe, at the beginning of the Revolution, he was thrice honored by being elected to the Continental Congress, the Pennsylvania Assembly, and the Convention to frame a constitution for Pennsylvania. Besides appointing him Postmaster-General, Congress placed him upon many of its most important committees; the Assembly made him Chairman of its Committee of Safety, a post equivalent, for all practical purposes, to the executive headship of the Province; and the Convention made him its President. It is safe to say that, had there not been a Washington, even his extreme old age and physical infirmities would not have kept him from being the presiding officer of the Federal Convention of 1787 and the first President of the United States. The intellect of Franklin was too solid to be easily imposed upon by mere glibness of speech. "Here comes the orator, with his flood of words and his drop of reason," remarks Poor Richard. Equally pointed is that other saying of his, "The worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise." But Franklin was fully alive to the splendid significance of human eloquence, when enlisted in the service of high-minded and far-seeing statesmanship. Speaking in a letter to Lord Stanhope of Lord Chatham's speech in support of his motion for the removal of the King's troops from Boston, he said, "Dr. F. is fill'd with admiration of that truly great Man. He has seen, in the course of Life, sometimes Eloquence without Wisdom, and often Wisdom without Eloquence; in the present Instance he sees both united; and both, as he thinks, in the highest Degree possible."

When Franklin took his seat in the Assembly, William Franklin was elected its clerk in his place; for heredity as well as consanguinity was a feature of the Franklin system of patronage. Once elected to the Assembly, he acquired a degree of popularity and influence that rendered his re-election for many years almost a matter of course. "My election to this trust," he says in the *Autobiography*, "was repeated every year for ten years, without my ever asking any elector for his vote, or signifying, either directly or indirectly, any desire of being chosen." So eager were his constituents to confer the honor upon him that they kept on conferring it upon him year after year, even when he was abroad.⁵² He proved himself eminently worthy of this confidence. By nature and training, he was a true democrat, profoundly conservative at the core," but keenly sensitive to every rational and wholesome appeal to his liberal or generous instincts. He loved law and order, stable institutions, and settled forms and tendencies, rooted in the soil of transmitted wisdom and experience. He was too much of an Englishman to have any sympathy with hasty changes or rash innovations. Much as he loved France he could never have been drawn into such a delirious outburst as the French Revolution. He loved

⁵² Franklin, though in no sense a time server, rarely got out of touch with the majority simply because he always saw things as the best collective intelligence of the community is likely to see them—only a little sooner and more clearly. "Friend Joseph," one Quaker is said to have asked of an acquaintance, "didst thee ever know Dr. Franklin to be in a minority?"

liberty as Hampden loved it, as Chatham loved it, as Gladstone loved it. John Wilkes, though in some respects an ignoble, was in other respects an indubitable champion of English freedom; yet Franklin utterly failed to see in him even a case for the application of his reminder to his daughter that sweet and clear waters come through very dirty earth. His happy nature and his faith in individual thrift sometimes made him slow to believe that masses of men had as much cause for political discontent as they claimed, and for such mob violence, as attended the career of Wilkes, of whom he speaks in one of his letters to his son as “an outlaw and an exile, of bad personal character, not worth a farthing,” it was impossible for his deep-seated respect for law and order to have any toleration; though he did express on one occasion the remarkable conviction that, if George the Third had had a bad private character, and John Wilkes a good one, the latter might have turned the former out of his kingdom.

It is certain, however, that few men have ever detested more strongly than he did the baseness and meanness of arbitrary power. And he had little patience at the same time with conditions of any sort that rested upon mere precedent, or prescription. He welcomed every new triumph of science over inert matter, every fresh victory of truth over superstition, bigotry, or the unseeing eye, every salutary reform that vindicated the fitness of the human race for its destiny of unceasing self-advancement. His underlying instincts were firmly fixed in the ground,” but his sympathies reached out on every side into the free air of expanding human hopes and aspirations. In his faith in the residuary wisdom and virtue of the mass of men, he is more like Jefferson than any of his Revolutionary compeers. “The People seldom continue long in the wrong, when it is nobody’s Interest to mislead them,” he wrote to Abel James. The tribute, it must be confessed, is a rather equivocal one, as it is always somebody’s interest to mislead the People, but the sanguine spirit of the observation pervades all his relations to popular caprice or resentment. Less equivocal was his statement to Galloway: “The People do not indeed always see their Friends in the same favourable Light; they are sometimes mistaken, and sometimes misled; but sooner or later they come right again, and redouble their former Affection.” Few were the public men of his age who looked otherwise than askance at universal suffrage, but he was not one of them.

Liberty, or freedom [he declared in his *Some Good Whig Principles*], consists in having *an actual share* in the appointment of those who frame the laws, and who are to be the guardians of every man’s life, property, and peace; for the *all* of one man is as dear to him as the *all* of another; and the poor man has an *equal* right, but *more* need, to have representatives in the legislature than the rich one.

For similar reasons he was opposed to entails, and favored the application of the just and equal law of gavelkind to the division of intestate estates.

It was impossible for such a man as this not to ally himself with the popular cause, when he became a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly. At that time, the Proprietary Government of Pennsylvania had proved as odious to the people of the Province as the proprietary governments of South Carolina and the Jerseys had proved to the people of those Colonies. Almost from the time of the original” settlement, the relations between the Assembly and the Penns had been attended by mutual bickerings and reproaches. First William Penn had scolded the Assembly in a high key, then his sons; and, in resolution after resolution, the Assembly had, in true British fashion, stubbornly asserted the liberties and privileges of their constituents, and given the Proprietary Government, under thinly veiled forms of parliamentary deference, a Roland for its every Oliver. The truth was that a Proprietary Government, uniting as it did governmental functions, dependent for their successful exercise upon the popular faith in the disinterestedness of those who exercised them, with the selfish concerns of a landlord incessantly at loggerheads with his vendees and tenants over purchase

money and quitrents, was utterly incompatible with the dignity of real political rule,⁵³ and hopelessly repugnant to the free English spirit of the Pennsylvanians. Under such circumstances, there could be no such thing as a true commonwealth; nor anything much better than a feudal fief. Political sovereignty lost its aspect of detachment and legitimate authority in the eyes of the governed, and wore the appearance of a mere organization for the transaction of private business. Almost as a matter of course, the Proprietaries came to think and speak of the Province as if it were as much their personal property as one of their household chattels, refusing, as Franklin said, to give their assent to laws, unless some private advantage was obtained, some profit got or unequal exemption gained for their estate, or some privilege wrested from the people; and almost, as a matter of course, the disaffected people of the Province sullenly resented a situation so galling to their pride and self-respect." Franklin saw all this with his usual clearness. After conceding in his *Cool Thoughts* that it was not unlikely that there were faults on both sides, "every glowing Coal being apt to inflame its Opposite," he expressed the opinion that the cause of the contentions was

radical, interwoven in the Constitution, and so become of the very Nature, of Proprietary Governments. And [he added] as some Physicians say, every Animal Body brings into the World among its original Stamina the Seeds of that Disease that shall finally produce its Dissolution; so the Political Body of a Proprietary Government, contains those convulsive Principles that will at length destroy it.

The Proprietary Government of Pennsylvania was bad enough in principle; it was made still worse by the unjust and greedy manner in which it was administered by Thomas and Richard Penn, who were the Proprietaries, when Franklin became a member of the Assembly. The vast estate of William Penn in Pennsylvania, consisting of some twenty-six million acres of land, held subject to the nominal obligation of the owner to pay to the King one fifth of such gold and silver as the Province might yield, descended upon the death of Penn to his sons John, Thomas and Richard, in the proportion of one half to John, as the eldest son, and in the proportion of one fourth each to Thomas and Richard. John died in 1746, after devising his one half share to Thomas; thus making Thomas the owner of three out of the four shares.⁵⁴ The political powers of the Proprietaries were exercised by a deputy-governor whose position was in the highest degree vexatious and perplexing. He held his office by appointment of the Proprietaries, who resided in England, and the mode in which he was to discharge his duties was prescribed by "rigid "instructions," issued to him by them. His salary, however, was derived from the Assembly, which was rarely at peace with the Proprietary Government. If he obeyed his instructions, he ran the risk of losing his salary; if he disobeyed them, he was certain to lose his place. Incredible as it may now seem, the main duty imposed upon him by his instructions was that of vetoing every tax bill enacted by the Assembly which did not expressly exempt all the located, unimproved and unoccupied lands of the Proprietaries, and all the quitrents, fines and purchase money out at interest, to which they were entitled, that is to say, the greater part of their immense estate. This was the axis about which the bitter controversy between the Popular and Proprietary parties, in which Franklin acquired his political training and reputation, revolved like one of the lurid waterspouts with which a letter that his correspondent John Perkins received from him has been illustrated. The Assembly insisted that they should not be required to vote money for the

⁵³ "I believe it will in time be clearly seen by all thinking People that the Government and Property of a Province should not be in the same family. Tis too much weight in one scale." Letter from Franklin to Israel Pemberton, Mar. 19, 1759.

⁵⁴ In 1768, the revenues of the Proprietaries from their Pennsylvania estates were estimated by Joseph Galloway to be not much short of one hundred thousand pounds.

support of the Proprietary Government, unless the proprietary estate bore its proper share of the common burden. The Governor did not dare to violate his instructions for fear of being removed by his masters, and of being sued besides on the bond by which he had bound himself not to violate them. At times, the feud was so intense and absorbing, that, like a pair of gamecocks, too intent on their own deadly encounter to hear an approaching footstep, the combatants almost lost sight of the fact that, under the shelter of their dissensions, the Indian was converting the frontiers of Pennsylvania into a charred and blood-stained wilderness. Occasionally the Assembly had to yield the point with a reservation asserting that its action was not to be taken as a precedent, and once, when England as well as America was feeling the shock of Braddock's defeat, the pressure of public opinion in England was sufficient to coerce the Proprietaries into" adding five thousand pounds to the sum appropriated by the Assembly for the defence of the Province. But, as a general thing, there was little disposition on either side to compromise. The sharpness of the issue was well illustrated in the bill tendered by the Assembly to Governor Morris for his signature after Braddock's defeat. Both before, and immediately after that catastrophe, he had, in reliance upon the critical condition of the public safety, endeavored to drive the Assembly into providing for the defence of the Province without calling upon the proprietary estate for a contribution. The bill in question declared "that all estates, real and personal, were to be taxed, those of the proprietaries *not* excepted." "His amendment," says Franklin in his brief way, "was, for *not* read *only*; a small, but very material alteration."⁵⁵

This dependence of the Governor upon the Assembly for his salary and the dependence of the Assembly upon the Governor for the approval of its enactments brought about a traffic in legislation between them which was one of the most disgraceful features of the Proprietary régime; though it became so customary that even the most honorable Governor did not scruple to engage in it. This traffic is thus described by Franklin in his stirring "Preface to the Speech of Joseph Galloway, Esq.":

Ever since the Revenue of the Quit-rents first, and after that the Revenue of Tavern-Licenses, were settled irrevocably on our Proprietaries and Governors, they have look'd on those Incomes as their proper Estate, for which they were under no Obligations to the People: And when they afterwards concurr'd in passing any useful Laws, they considered them as so many Jobbs, for which they ought to be particularly paid. Hence arose the Custom of Presents twice a Year to the Governors, at" the close of each Session in which Laws were past, given at the Time of Passing. They usually amounted to a Thousand Pounds per Annum. But when the Governors and Assemblies disagreed, so that Laws were not pass'd, the Presents were withheld. When a Disposition to agree ensu'd, there sometimes still remain'd some Diffidence. The Governors would not pass the Laws that were wanted, without being sure of the Money, even all that they call'd their Arrears; nor the Assemblies give the Money without being sure of the Laws. Thence the Necessity of some private Conference, in which mutual Assurances of good Faith might be receiv'd and given, that the Transactions should go hand in hand.

This system of barter prevailed even before Franklin became a member of the Assembly, and how fixed and ceremonious its forms sometimes were we can infer from what happened on one of the semi-annual market days during Governor Thomas' administration. Various bills were lying dormant in his hands. Accordingly the House ordered two of its members to call

⁵⁵ "The shocking news of the strange, unprecedented and ignominious defeat of General Braddock," William Franklin said, "had no more effect upon Governor Morris than the miracles of Moses had on the heart of Pharaoh."

upon him and acquaint him that it had long “waited for his Result” on these bills, and desired to know when they might expect it. They returned and reported that the Governor was pleased to say that he had had the bills long under consideration, and “*waited the Result*” of the House. Then, after the House had resolved itself into a committee of the whole, for the purpose of taking the “Governor’s support” into consideration, there was a further interchange of communications between the House and the Governor; the former reporting “some progress” to the Governor, and the Governor replying that, as he had received assurances of a “*good disposition*,” on the part of the House, he thought it incumbent upon him to show *the like* on his part by sending down the bills, which lay before him, without any amendment. The manifestation of a good disposition was not the same thing as an actual promise to approve the bills; so the wary assembly simply resolved that, on the “passage of such bills as then lay before the Governor, and of the Naturalization Bill, and such other bills as might be presented to him during the pending session, there should be paid to him the sum of five hundred pounds; and that, on the passage of the same bills, there should be paid to him the further sum of one thousand pounds for the current year’s support. Agreeably with this resolution, orders were drawn on the Treasurer and Trustees of the Loan-Office, and, when the Governor was informed of the fact, he appointed a time for passing the bills which was done with one hand, while he received the orders in the other. Thereupon with the utmost politeness he thanked the House for the fifteen hundred pounds as if it had been a free gift, and a mere mark of respect and affection. “*I thank you, Gentlemen*,” he said, “for this *Instance of your Regard*; which I am the more pleased with, as it gives an agreeable Prospect of *future Harmony* between me and the Representatives of the People.”

Despicably enough, while this treaty was pending, the Penns had a written understanding with the Governor, secured by his bond, that they were to receive a share of all money thus obtained from the people whom they sought to load with the entire weight of taxation. Indeed, emboldened as Franklin said by the declining sense of shame, that always follows frequent repetitions of sinning, they later in Governor Denny’s time had the effrontery to claim openly, in a written reply to a communication from the Assembly, with respect to their refusal to bear any part of the expenses entailed on the Province by the Indians, that the excess of these donatives over and above the salary of the Governor should belong to them. By the Constitution, they said, their consent was essential to the validity of the laws enacted by the People, and it would tend the better to facilitate the several matters, which had to be transacted with them, for the representatives of the People to show a regard to them and their interest. The Assembly hotly replied that they hoped that they would always be able to obtain needful laws from the goodness of their sovereign without going to the market for them to a subject. But the hope was a vain one, and to that market, directly or indirectly, the People of Pennsylvania still had to go, for some time to come. To use Franklin’s language, there was no other market that they could go to for the commodity that they wanted.

Do not, my courteous Reader [he exclaims with fine scorn in the “Preface to the Speech of Joseph Galloway, Esq.”] take Pet at our Proprietary Constitution, for these our Bargain and Sale Proceedings in Legislation. ‘Tis a happy Country where Justice, and what was your own before, can be had for Ready Money. ‘Tis another Addition to the Value of Money, and of Course another Spur to Industry. Every Land is not so bless’d. There are Countries where the princely Proprietor claims to be Lord of all Property; where what is your own shall not only be wrested from you, but the Money you give to have it restor’d, shall be kept with it, and your offering so much, being a Sign of your being too Rich, you shall be plunder’d of every Thing that remain’d. These Times are not come here yet: Your present Proprietors have never been more unreasonable hitherto, than barely to insist on your Fighting in Defence of their

Property, and paying the Expences yourselves; or if their estates must, (ah! *must*) be tax'd towards it, that the *best* of their Lands shall be tax'd no higher than the *worst* of yours.

Governor Hamilton, who succeeded Governor Thomas, so far departed from the vicious practice of buying and selling laws as to sign them without prepayment, but, when he observed that the Assembly was tardy in making payment, and yet asked him to give his assent to additional laws, before prior ones had been paid for, he stated his belief to it that as many useful laws had been enacted by him as by any of his predecessors in the same space of time, and added that, nevertheless, he had not understood" that any allowance had been made to him for his support, as had been customary in the Province. The hint proved effective, the money was paid and the bills were approved.

From the time that Franklin became a member of the Assembly until the time that the minor controversy between the Proprietary Party and the Popular Party in Pennsylvania was obscured by the larger controversy between the Crown and all the American Colonies, he was engaged in an almost uninterrupted struggle with the Proprietaries, first, for the annulment of their claim to exemption from taxation, and, secondly, for the displacement of their government by a Royal Government. If there was ever an interlude in this struggle, it was only because, in devising measures for the defence of the Province, a Proprietary Governor found it necessary, at some trying conjuncture, to rely upon the management of Franklin to quiet the Quakers, who constituted a majority of the Assembly and detested both war and the Proprietaries, or upon the general abilities and popularity of Franklin to strengthen his own feeble counsels. If there was any political tranquillity in the Province during this time, it was, to employ one of Franklin's own comparisons, only such tranquillity as exists in a naval engagement between two broadsides. On the one hand were ranged the official partisans and dependents of the Proprietary Government and other adherents of the kind, whose allegiance is likely to be won by the social prestige and political patronage of executive authority. To this faction, in the latter stages of the conflict, was added a large body of Presbyterians whose sectarian sympathies had been excited by the Scotch-Irish uprising against the Indians, of which we have previously spoken. On the other hand were ranged the Quakers, upon whom the burden of resisting the Proprietary encroachments upon the popular rights had mainly rested from the origin of the Province, and middle-class elements of the population whose views and" sympathies were not highly colored by any special influences. The task of preparing resolutions, addresses and remonstrances, voicing the popular criticism of the Proprietaries, was mainly committed to Franklin by the Assembly. It was with him, too, as the ablest and most influential representative of the popular interest that the various Proprietary Governors usually dealt.

We first find him high in favor with Governor Thomas and his Council at the time of the Association because of his activity, when still only Clerk of the Assembly, in providing for the defence of the Province and arousing a martial spirit in its people. This was the period when the Quaker found it necessary to help his conscience out a little with his wit, and when Franklin made good use of the principle that men will countenance many things with their backs that they will not countenance with their faces. The Quaker majority in the Assembly did not relish his intimacy at this time with the members of the Council who had so often trod on their punctilio about military expenditures, and it might have been pleased, he conjectured, if he had voluntarily resigned his clerkship; "but," he declares in the *Autobiography*, "they did not care to displace me on account merely of my zeal for the association, and they could not well give another reason."

Governor Hamilton became so sick of the broils, in which he was involved by the Proprietary instructions, that he resigned. His successor was the Governor Morris whose father loved disputation so much that he encouraged his children to practise it when he was digesting his dinner. Franklin met him at New York when he was on his way to Boston, and Morris was on his way to Philadelphia to enter upon his duties as Governor. So ready for a war of words was the new Governor that, when Franklin returned from Boston to Philadelphia, he and the House had already come to blows, and the conflict never ceased" as long as he remained Governor. In the conflict, Franklin was his chief antagonist. Whenever a speech or message of the Governor was to be answered, he was made a member of the Committee appointed to answer it, and by such committees he was invariably selected to draft the answer. "Our answers," he says, "as well as his messages, were often tart, and sometimes indecently abusive." But the Governor was at heart an amiable man, and Franklin, resolute as he was, when his teeth were fairly set, had no black blood in his veins. Though one might have imagined, he says, that he and the Governor could not meet without cutting throats, so little personal ill-will arose between them that they even often dined together.

One afternoon [he tells us in the *Autobiography*] in the height of this public quarrel, we met in the street. "Franklin," says he, "you must go home with me and spend the evening; I am to have some company that you will like"; and, taking me by the arm, he led me to his house. In gay conversation over our wine, after supper, he told us, jokingly, that he much admir'd the idea of Sancho Panza, who, when it was proposed to give him a government, requested it might be a government of *blacks*, as then, if he could not agree with his people, he might sell them. One of his friends, who sat next to me, says, "Franklin, why do you continue to side with these damn'd Quakers? Had you not better sell them? The Proprietor would give you a good price." "The Governor," says I, "has not yet *blackened* them enough." He, indeed, had laboured hard to blacken the Assembly in all his messages, but they wip'd off his colouring as fast as he laid it on, and plac'd it, in return, thick upon his own face; so that, finding he was likely to be negrofied himself, he, as well as Mr. Hamilton, grew tir'd of the contest, and quitted the Government.

All these disputes originated in the instructions given by the Proprietaries to their Governors not to approve any tax measure enacted by the Assembly that did not expressly" exempt their estates; conduct which Franklin justly terms in the *Autobiography* "incredible meanness."

The ability of Governor Morris to keep on good terms with Franklin in spite of the perpetual wrangling between the Assembly and himself Franklin sometimes thought was due to the fact that the Governor was bred a lawyer and regarded him as simply the advocate of the Assembly and himself as simply the advocate of the Proprietaries. However this was, he sometimes called upon Franklin in a friendly way to advise with him on different points; and occasionally, though not often, Franklin tells us, took his advice. But when the miserable fugitives, who escaped from the *Aceldama* on the Monongahela, brought back to the settlements their awful tale of carnage and horror, and Dunbar and his rout were cravenly seeking the protection of those whom they should have protected, Governor Morris was only too glad to consult, and take the advice of, the strongest man on the American Continent, except the gallant Virginian, young in years, but from early responsibilities and hardships, as well as native wisdom and intrepidity, endowed with a calm judgment and tempered courage far beyond his years, whom Providence almost seemed to have taken under its direct guardianship for its future purposes on the day that Braddock fell. Later, when it appeared as if the Indians would carry desolation and death into the very bowels of Pennsylvania, the Governor was equally glad to place Franklin in charge of its Northwestern Frontier, and to thrust blank military commissions into his hands to be filled up by him as he pleased. And

later still, when the desire of the Governor to consult with Franklin about the proper measures for preventing the desertion of the back counties of Pennsylvania had brought the latter home from the Northwestern Frontier, the Governor did not hesitate, in planning an expedition against Fort Duquesne, to offer Franklin a commission as general. If Franklin had accepted the offer, we are justified, we think, in assuming that he would have won at least as high a degree of credit as that which he accorded to Shirley. "For tho' Shirley," he tells us in the *Autobiography*, "was not a bred soldier, he was sensible and sagacious in himself, and attentive to good advice from others, capable of forming judicious plans, and quick and active in carrying them into execution." No mean summary of the military virtues of Franklin himself as a citizen soldier. But Franklin knew the limitations of his training too well to be allured by such a deceitful honor. There were few civil tasks to which he was not equal, but, when it came to being a military commander, he had the good sense to make an admission like that which Shirley made to him. When a banquet was given to Lord Loudon by the city of New York, Shirley was present, though the occasion was due to the fact that the command previously held by him had just been transferred to Loudon. Franklin noticed that he was sitting in a very low seat. "They have given you, sir, too low a seat," he said. "No matter, Mr. Franklin," replied Shirley, "I find *a low seat* the easiest." When Governor Morris saw that, disputatious as he was, he was no match in that respect for the Assembly, he was succeeded by Governor Denny, who brought over with him from England the gold medal awarded by the Royal Society to Franklin for his electrical discoveries. This honor as well as the political experience of his predecessors was calculated to impress upon the Governor the importance of being on good terms with Franklin. At all events, when the medal was delivered by him to Franklin at a public dinner given to himself, after his arrival at Philadelphia, he added to the gift some very polite expressions of his esteem, and assured Franklin that he had long known him by reputation. After dinner, he left the diners with their wine, and took Franklin aside into another room, and told him that he had been advised by his friends in England to cultivate a friendship with him as the man who was best able to give him good advice, and to make his task easy. Much also was said by the Governor about the good disposition of the Proprietary towards the Province and the advantage that it would be to everyone and to Franklin particularly if the long opposition to the Proprietary was abandoned, and harmony between him and the people restored. No one, said the Governor, could be more serviceable in bringing this about than Franklin himself, who might depend upon his services being duly acknowledged and recompensed. "The drinkers," the *Autobiography* goes on, "finding we did not return immediately to the table, sent us a decanter of Madeira, which the Governor made liberal use of, and in proportion became more profuse of his solicitations and promises."

To these overtures Franklin replied in a proper strain of mingled independence and good feeling, and concluded by expressing the hope that the Governor had not brought with him the same unfortunate instructions as his predecessors. The only answer that the Governor ever gave to this inquiry was given when he settled down to the duties of his office. It then became plain enough that he was under exactly the same instructions as his predecessors; the old ulcer broke out afresh, and Franklin's pen was soon again prodding Proprietary selfishness. But through it all he contrived to maintain the same relations of personal amity with Governor Denny that he had maintained with Governor Morris. "Between us personally," he says, "no enmity arose; we were often together; he was a man of letters, had seen much of the world, and was very entertaining and pleasing in conversation." But the situation, so far as the Province was concerned, was too grievous to be longer borne without an appeal for relief to the Crown. The Assembly had enacted a bill, appropriating the sum of sixty thousand pounds for the King's use, ten thousand pounds of which were to be expended on Lord Loudon's orders, and the Governor, in compliance with his instructions, had refused to give it his approval. This brought things to a head, the House resolved to petition the King to

override the instructions and Franklin was appointed its agent to go over to England and present the petition. His passage was engaged, his sea-stores were actually all on board, when Lord Loudon himself came over to Philadelphia for the express purpose of bringing about an accommodation between the jarring interests. The Governor and Franklin met him at his request, and opened their minds fully to him; Franklin revamping all the old popular arguments, so often urged by him, and the Governor pleading his instructions, the bond that he had given and the ruin that awaited him if he disregarded it. "Yet," says Franklin, "seemed not unwilling to hazard himself if Lord Loudon would advise it." This his Lordship did not choose to do, though Franklin once thought that he had nearly prevailed on him to do it; and finally he entreated Franklin to use his influence with the Assembly to induce it to yield, promising, if it did, to employ unsparingly the King's troops for the defence of the frontiers of Pennsylvania, but stating that, if it did not, those frontiers must remain exposed to hostile incursion. The result was that the packet, in which Franklin engaged passage, sailed off with his sea-stores, while the parties were palavering, and the Assembly, after entering a formal protest against the duress, under which it gave way, abandoned its bill, and enacted another with the hateful exemption in it which was promptly approved by the Governor.

Franklin was now free to embark upon his voyage, whenever he could find a ship ready to sail, but, unfortunately for him, all the packets by which he could sail were at the beck of Lord Loudon, who was the most vacillating of human beings. When Franklin, before leaving Philadelphia," inquired of him the precise time at which a packet boat, that he said would be off soon, would sail, he replied: "I have given out that she is to sail on Saturday next; but I may let you know, *entre nous*, that if you are there by Monday morning, you will be in time, but do not delay longer." Because of detention at a ferry, Franklin did not reach New York before noon on Monday, but he was relieved, when he arrived, to be told that the packet would not sail until the next day. This was about the beginning of April. In point of fact, it was near the end of June when it got off. At the time of Franklin's arrival in New York, it was one of the two packets, that were being kept waiting in port for the dispatches, upon which his Lordship appeared to be always engaged. While thus held up, another packet arrived only to be placed under the same embargo. Each had a list of impatient passengers, and many letters and orders for insurance against war risks from American merchants, but, day after day, his Lordship, entirely unmindful of the impatience and anxiety that he was creating, sat continually at his desk, writing his interminable dispatches. Calling one morning to pay his respects, Franklin found in his ante-chamber Innis, a Philadelphia messenger, who had brought on a batch of letters to his Lordship from Governor Denny, and who told Franklin that he was to call the next day for his Lordship's answer to the Governor, and would then set off for Philadelphia at once. On the strength of this assurance, Franklin the same day placed some letters of his own for delivery in that city in Innis' hands. A fortnight afterwards, he met the messenger in the same ante-chamber. "So, you are soon return'd, Innis" he said. "*Return'd!*" replied Innis, "No, I am not *gone* yet." "How so?" "I have called here by order every morning these two weeks past for his lordship's letter, and it is not yet ready." "Is it possible, when he is so great a writer? for I see him constantly at his *escritoire*." "Yes," says Innis, "but he is like St. George on the signs, *always on horseback, and never rides on.*" Indeed, so purely rotatory was all his Lordship's epistolary energy, unremitting as it seemed to be, that one of the reasons given by William Pitt for subsequently removing him was that "*the minister never heard from him, and could not know what he was doing.*" Finally, the three packets dropped down to Sandy Hook to join the British fleet there. Not knowing but that they might make off any day, their passengers thought it safest to board them before they dropped down. The consequence was that they found themselves anchored at Sandy Hook for about six weeks, "as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean," and driven to the necessity of consuming all their sea-stores and buying more. At length, when

the fleet did weigh anchor, with his Lordship and all his army on board, bound for the reduction of Louisburg, the three packets were ordered to attend it in readiness to receive the dispatches which the General was still scribbling upon the element that was not more mutable than his own purposes. When Franklin had been five days out, his packet was finally released, and stood off beyond the reach of his Lordship's indefatigable pen, but the other two packets were still kept in tow by him all the way to Halifax, where, after exercising his men for some time in sham attacks on sham forts, he changed his mind about besieging Louisburg, and returned to New York with all his troops and the two packets and their passengers. In the meantime, the French and their savage friends had captured Fort George, and butchered many of the garrison after its capitulation. The captain of one of the two packets, that were brought back to New York, afterwards told Franklin in London that, when he had been detained a month by his Lordship, he requested his permission to heave his ship down and clear her bottom. He was asked how long that would require. He answered three days. His Lordship replied, "If you" can do it in one day, I give leave; otherwise not; for you must certainly sail the day after tomorrow." So he never obtained leave, though detained afterwards, from day to day, during full three months. No wonder that an irate passenger, who represented himself as having suffered considerable pecuniary loss, swore after he finally reached London in Franklin's presence, that he would sue Lord Loudon for damages.

As Oxenstiern's son was enjoined by his father to do, Franklin had gone out into the world and seen with what little wisdom it is ruled. "On the whole," he says in the *Autobiography*, "I wonder'd much how such a man came to be intrusted with so important a business as the conduct of a great army; but, having since seen more of the great world, and the means of obtaining, and motives for giving places, my wonder is diminished."

The *Autobiography* makes it evident enough that for Loudon Franklin came to entertain the heartiest contempt.⁵⁶ His Lordship's movements in 1757 he stigmatized as frivolous, expensive and disgraceful to the nation beyond conception. He was responsible, Franklin thought, for the loss of Fort George, and for the foundering of a large part of the Carolina fleet, which, for lack of notice from him, remained anchored in the worm-infested waters of Charleston harbor for three months, after he had raised his embargo on the exportation of provisions. Nor does Franklin hesitate to charge that this embargo, while laid on the pretence of cutting off the enemy from supplies, was in reality laid for the purpose of beating down the price of provisions in the interest of the contractors, in whose profits, it was suspected, that Loudon had a share." Not only did his Lordship decline, on the shallow pretext that he did not wish to mix his accounts with those of his predecessors, to give Franklin the order that he had promised him for the payment of the balance, still due him on account of Braddock's expedition, though liquidated by his own audit, but, when Franklin urged the fact that he had charged no commission for his services, as a reason why he should be promptly paid, his Lordship cynically replied, "O, Sir, you must not think of persuading us that you are no gainer; we understand better those affairs, and know that everyone concerned in supplying the army finds means, in the doing it, to fill his own pockets."

Franklin and his son arrived in London on July 27, 1757. Shortly after he had settled down in his lodgings, he called upon Dr. Fothergill, whose counsel he had been advised to obtain, and who thought that, before an application was made to the British Government, there should be an effort to reach an understanding with the Penns themselves. Then took place the interview

⁵⁶ Franklin's first impressions of Lord Loudon were very different from his later ones. In a letter to Strahan from New York, dated July 27, 1756, he said: "I have had the honour of several conferences with him on our American affairs, and am extremely pleased with him. I think there can not be a fitter person for the service he is engaged in."

between Franklin and Lord Granville, at which his Lordship, after some preliminary discourse, expressed this alarming opinion:

You Americans have wrong ideas of the nature of your constitution; you contend that the King's instructions to his governors are not laws, and think yourselves at liberty to regard or disregard them at your own discretion. But those instructions are not like the pocket instructions given to a minister going abroad, for regulating his conduct in some trifling point of ceremony. They are first drawn up by judges learned in the laws; they are then considered, debated, and perhaps amended in Council, after which they are signed by the king. They are then, so far as they relate to you, the *law of the land*, for the King is the LEGISLATOR OF THE COLONIES.

The correctness of this opinion was combated by Franklin. He told his Lordship that this was new doctrine" to him, and that he had always understood from the American charters that the colonial laws were to be enacted by the assemblies of the Colonies, and that, once enacted and assented to by the King, the King could not repeal or alter them, and that, as the colonial assemblies could not make laws for themselves without his assent, so he could not make laws for them without their assent. The great man's reply was as brief as a great man's reply is only too likely to be when his opinions are questioned by his inferiors. It was merely that Franklin was totally mistaken. Franklin did not think so, and, concerned for fear that Lord Granville might be but expressing the sentiment of the Court, he wrote down what had been said to him as soon as he returned to his lodgings. The utterance reminded him that some twenty years before a bill had been introduced into Parliament by the ministry of that time containing a clause, intended to make the King's instructions laws in the Colonies, but that the clause had been stricken out of it by the House of Commons. For this, he said, the Colonies adored the Commons, as their friends and the friends of liberty, until it afterwards seemed as if they had refused the point of sovereignty to the King only that they might reserve it for themselves.

A meeting between the Proprietaries and Franklin was arranged by Doctor Fothergill. It assumed the form that such meetings are apt to assume, that is of mutual professions of an earnest desire to agree, repetition of the old antagonistic reasonings and a disagreement as stubborn as before. However, it was agreed that Franklin should reduce the complaints against the Proprietaries to writing, and that the Proprietaries were to consider them. When the paper was drawn, they submitted it to their solicitor, Ferdinand John Paris, who had represented them in the celebrated litigation between the Penns and the Lords Baltimore over the boundary line between Pennsylvania" and Maryland, and had written all their papers and messages in their disputes with the Pennsylvania Assembly. "He was," says Franklin, "a proud, angry man, and as I had occasionally in the answers of the Assembly treated his papers with some severity, they being really weak in point of argument and haughty in expression, he had conceived a mortal enmity to me." With Paris, Franklin refused to discuss the points of his paper, and the Proprietaries then, on the advice of Paris, placed it in the hands of the Attorney- and Solicitor-Generals for their opinion and advice. By them no answer was given for nearly a year, though Franklin frequently called upon the Proprietaries for an answer only to be told that they had not yet received the opinion of their learned advisers. What the opinion was when it was finally rendered the Proprietaries did not let Franklin know, but instead addressed a long communication, drawn and signed by Paris, to the Assembly, reciting the contents of Franklin's paper, complaining of its lack of formality as rudeness, and justifying their conduct. They would be willing, they said, to compose the dispute, if the Assembly would send out *some person of candor* to treat with them. Franklin supposed that the incivility imputed to him consisted in the fact that he had not addressed the

Proprietaries by their assumed title of True and Absolute Proprietaries of the Province of Pennsylvania.

The letter of the Proprietaries was not answered by the Assembly. While they were pretending to treat with Franklin, Governor Denny had been unable to withstand the pressure of his situation, and, at the request of Lord Loudon, had approved an act subjecting the estates of the Penns to taxation. When this Act was transmitted to England, the Proprietaries, upon the advice of Paris, petitioned the King to withhold his assent from it, and, when the petition came on for hearing, the parties were represented by counsel. On the one hand it was contended" that the purpose of the Act was to impose an oppressive burden upon the Proprietary estates, and that the assessment under it would be so unequal because of the popular prejudice against the Penns that they would be ruined. To this it was replied that the Act was not conceived with any such purpose, and would not have any such effect, that the assessors were honest and discreet men under oath, and that any advantage that might inure to them individually from over-assessing the property of the Proprietaries would be too trifling to induce them to perjure themselves. It was also urged in opposition to the petition that the money, for which the Act provided, had been printed and issued, and was now in the hands of the inhabitants of the Province, and would be deprived of all value, to their great injury, if the Act did not receive the royal assent merely because of the selfish and groundless fears of the Proprietaries. At this point, Lord Mansfield, one of the counsel for the Proprietaries, led Franklin off into a room nearby, while the other lawyers were still pleading, and asked him if he was really of the opinion that the Proprietary estate would not be unfairly taxed if the Act was executed. "Certainly," said Franklin. "Then," said he, "you can have little objection to enter into an engagement to assure that point." "None at all," replied Franklin. Paris was then called in, and, after some discussion, a paper, such as Lord Mansfield suggested, was drawn up and signed by Franklin and Mr. Charles, who was the agent of Pennsylvania for ordinary purposes, and the law was given the royal assent with the further engagement, upon the part of Franklin and Mr. Charles, that it should be amended in certain respects by subsequent legislation. This legislation, however, the Assembly afterwards declined to enact when a committee, appointed by it, upon which it was careful to place several close friends of the Proprietaries, brought in an unanimous report stating that the yearly tax levied before the order" of the Council reached Pennsylvania had been imposed with perfect fairness as between the Proprietaries and the other tax-payers.

In the most important respect, therefore, Franklin's mission to England had resulted in success. The principle was established by the Crown that the estate of the Proprietaries was subject to taxation equally with that of the humblest citizen of Pennsylvania; and the credit of the paper money, then scattered throughout the province, was saved. The Assembly rewarded its servant, when he returned to Pennsylvania, with its formal thanks and the sum of three thousand pounds. He responded in the happy terms which he always had at his command on occasions of this sort. "He made answer," says the official report, "that he was thankful to the House, for the very handsome and generous Allowance they had been pleased to make him for his Services; but that the Approbation of this House was, in his Estimation, far above every other kind of Recompense."

The Proprietaries punished their servant, Governor Denny, by removing him and threatening him with suit for the breach of his bond, but it is a pleasure to be told in the *Autobiography* that his position was such that he could despise their threats.

While the duel was going on between the Proprietaries and the Assembly, Franklin had some significant things at times to say about it in his familiar letters. As far as we can see, his political course, during this period, was entirely candid and manly. He was on agreeable

personal terms with all the colonial governors, he seems to have cherished an honest desire to be helpful to the Proprietaries, so far as their own illiberality and folly would allow him to be, and it is very plain that he was not without the feeling that the demands of the Popular Party itself were occasionally immoderate. He was quite willing for the sake of peace to concede anything except the essential” points of the controversy, but when it came to these he was immovable as men of his type usually are when they realize that a claim upon them is too unjust or exorbitant even for their pacific temper.

I am much oblig'd to you for the favourable Light you put me in, to our Proprietor, as mention'd in yours of July 30 [he wrote to Peter Collinson in 1754], I know not why he should imagine me not his Friend, since I cannot recollect any one Act of mine that could denominate me otherwise. On the contrary if to concur with him, so far as my little Influence reach'd in all his generous and benevolent Designs and Desires of making his Province and People flourishing and happy be any Mark of my Respect and Dutyful Regard to him, there are many who would be ready to say I could not be suppos'd deficient in such Respect. The Truth is I have sought his *Interest* more than his *Favour*; others perhaps have sought both, and obtain'd at least the latter. But in my Opinion great Men are not always best serv'd by such as show on all Occasions a blind Attachment to them: An Appearance of Impartiality in general gives a Man sometimes much more Weight when he would serve in particular instances.

To the friend to whom these words were written Franklin was disposed to unbosom himself with unusual freedom, and, in the succeeding year, in another letter to Collinson, he used words which showed plainly enough that he thought that the Assembly too was at times inclined to indulge in more hair-splitting and testiness than was consistent with the public welfare.

You will see [he said] more of the same Trifling in these Votes in both sides. I am heartily sick of our present Situation; I like neither the Governor's Conduct, nor the Assembly's; and having some Share in the Confidence of both, I have endeavour'd to reconcile 'em but in vain, and between 'em they make me very uneasy. I was chosen last Year in my Absence and was not at the Winter Sitting when the House sent home that Address to the King, which I am afraid was” both ill-judg'd and ill-tim'd. If my being able now and then to influence a good Measure did not keep up my Spirits I should be ready to swear never to serve again as an Assembly Man, since both Sides expect more from me than they ought, and blame me sometimes for not doing what I am not able to do, as well as for not preventing what was not in my Power to prevent. The Assembly ride restive; and the Governor tho' he spurs with both heels, at the same time reins in with both hands, so that the Publick Business can never move forward, and he remains like St. George on the Sign, Always a Horseback and never going on. Did you never hear this old Catch?

Their was a mad Man—He had a mad Wife,

And three mad Sons beside;

And they all got upon a mad Horse

And madly they did ride.

Tis a Compendium of our Proceedings and may save you the Trouble of reading them.

In a still later letter to the same correspondent, Franklin asserted that there was no reason for excluding Quakers from the House, since, though unwilling to fight themselves, they had

been brought to unite in voting the sums necessary to enable the Province to defend itself. Then, after referring to the defamation, that was being heaped upon him by the Proprietary Party, in the place of the court paid to him when he had exerted himself to secure aids from the House for Braddock and Shirley, he said, "Let me know if you learn that any of their Slanders reach England. I abhor these Altercations and if I did not love the Country and the People would remove immediately into a more quiet Government, Connecticut, where I am also happy enough to have many Friends."

However, there was too much fuel for the fire to die down. The claim of the Proprietaries to exemption from taxation was only the most aggravated result of their" efforts, by their instructions to their Governors, to shape the legislation of the Province in accordance with their own personal aims and pecuniary interests instead of in the spirit of the royal charter, which gave to William Penn, and his heirs, and his, or their, deputies or lieutenants, free, full and absolute power, for the good and happy government of Pennsylvania, to make and enact any laws, according to their best discretion, by and with the advice, assent and approbation of the freemen of the said country, or of their delegates or deputies. In the report of the Committee of Aggrievances of the Assembly, drawn by Franklin, the case of the freemen of the Province against the Penns, which led to Franklin's first mission to England, is clearly stated. They are arraigned not only for seeking to exempt the bulk of their estate from the common burden of taxation, but also, apart from this, for stripping, by their instructions, their governors, and thereby the People themselves, of all real discretion in fixing by legislation the measure and manner in which, and the time at which, aids and supplies should be furnished for the defence of the Province. They had even, the report charged, prohibited their governors, by their instructions, from assenting to laws disposing of interest arising from the loan of bills of credit or money raised by excise taxes—forms of revenue to which the Proprietary estate did not contribute at all—unless the laws contained a clause giving their governors the right to negative a particular application of the sums. Another grievance was the issuance by the governor of commissions to provincial judges, to be held during the will and pleasure of the governors instead of during good behavior, as covenanted by William Penn—a practice which gave the Proprietaries control of the judicial as well as the executive Branch of the provincial government.

For a time, after Franklin returned to Pennsylvania in 1762, there was something like peace between the Proprietaries and the people. When a nephew of Thomas Penn" was appointed governor, the Assembly accepted him as a family pledge of restored good feeling.

The Assembly [Franklin wrote to Dr. Fothergill] received a Governor of the Proprietary family with open arms, addressed him with sincere expressions of kindness and respect, opened their purses to them, and presented him with six hundred pounds; made a Riot Act and prepared a Militia Bill immediately, at his instance, granted supplies, and did everything that he requested, and promised themselves great happiness under his administration.

And no governor was ever so dependent upon the good will of the Assembly. It was during his administration that the Scotch-Irish inhabitants of the frontier, inflamed by Indian outrages, imbrued their hands in the blood of the Conestoga Indians, and, so far from being intimidated by the public proclamations issued by the Governor for their arrest and punishment, marched to the very threshold of Philadelphia itself with the purpose of destroying the Moravian Indians huddled there in terror of their lives. The whole Province outside of the City of Philadelphia was given over to lawlessness and disorder. In the contagious excitement of the hour, a considerable portion of its population even believed that the Quakers had gained the friendship of the Indians by presents, supplied them secretly with

arms and ammunition, and engaged them to fall upon and kill the whites on the Pennsylvania frontier. Under these circumstances, the Governor simply did what Governor Morris and Governor Denny had been compelled to do before him, namely, call in the aid of the man who could in a letter to Peter Collinson truthfully sum up all that there was in the military demonstration which angered Thomas Penn so deeply with the simple utterance, "The People happen to love me." The whole story was told by Franklin to Dr. Fothergill in the letter from which we have just quoted."

More wonders! You know that I don't love the Proprietary and that he does not love me. Our totally different tempers forbid it. You might therefore expect that the late new appointments of one of his family would find me ready for opposition. And yet when his nephew arrived, our Governor, I considered government as government, and paid him all respect, gave him on all occasions my best advice, promoted in the Assembly a ready compliance with everything he proposed or recommended, and when those daring rioters, encouraged by general approbation of the populace, treated his proclamation with contempt, I drew my pen in the cause; wrote a pamphlet (that I have sent you) to render the rioters unpopular; promoted an association to support the authority of the Government and defend the Governor by taking arms, signed it first myself, and was followed by several hundreds, who took arms accordingly. The Governor offered me the command of them, but I chose to carry a musket and strengthen his authority by setting an example of obedience to his order. And would you think it, this proprietary Governor did me the honour, in an alarm, to run to my house at midnight, with his counsellors at his heels, for advice, and made it his headquarters for some time. And within four and twenty hours, your old friend was a common soldier, a counsellor, a kind of dictator, an ambassador to the country mob, and on his returning home, nobody again. All this has happened in a few weeks.

With the retirement of the backwoodsmen from Philadelphia to their homes, sprang up one of the angriest factional contests that Pennsylvania had ever known. Every malignant passion, political or sectarian, that lurked in the Province was excited into the highest degree of morbid life. The Presbyterians, the Churchmen, even some of the Quakers, acclaimed the Paxton Boys as instruments of a just vengeance, and they constituted a political force, which the Governor was swift to utilize for the purpose of strengthening his party. He dropped all efforts to apprehend the murderers of the Conestoga Indians, granted" a private audience to the insurgents, and accused the Assembly of disloyalty, and of encroaching upon the prerogatives of the Crown, only because it had been presumptuous enough to make an appointment to a petty office in a bill tendered to him for his assent. It was during his administration, too, that the claim was made that, even if the Proprietary estate had been subjected to taxation by the Lords in Council, under the terms of one of the amendments, proposed by them, "*the best and most valuable*," of the Proprietary lands "should be tax'd no higher than the *worst and least valuable* of the People's."

When the conflict was reopened, the Assembly boldly brought it to an issue. One of its committees, with Franklin at its head, reported a series of resolutions censuring the proprietaries, condemning their rule as too weak to maintain its authority and repress disorder, and petitioning the King to take over the Government of the Province, after such compensation to the Proprietaries as was just. The Assembly then adjourned to sound the temper of their constituents, and their adjournment was the signal for a pamphlet war attended by such a hail of paper pellets as rarely marked any contest so early in the history of the American Colonies. Among the best of them was the pamphlet written by Franklin, and entitled *Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of our Public Affairs*, which has already been mentioned, and which denounced in no uncertain terms the "insolent Tribunitial VETO,"

with which the Proprietaries were in the habit of declaring that nothing should be done, unless their private interests in certain particulars were served.

On May 14, 1764, the Assembly met again, and was soon deeply engaged in a debate as to whether an address should be sent to the King, praying the abolition of the Proprietary Government. Long did the debate last; Joseph Galloway making the principal argument in support of the proposition, and John Dickinson the principal one” against it. When the vote was taken, the affirmative prevailed, but, as Isaac Norris, who had been a member of the body for thirty years, and its speaker for fifteen, was about to be bidden by it to sign the address, he stated that, since he did not approve it, and yet would have to sign it as speaker, he hoped that he might have time to draft his objections to it. A short recess ensued, and when the members convened again, Norris sent word that he was too sick to be present, and requested that another person should be chosen as speaker. The choice of the body then fell upon Franklin, who immediately signed the paper.

The next sitting of the Assembly was not to be held until the succeeding October, and before that time the annual election for members of the Assembly was to take place. For the purpose of influencing public opinion, Dickinson, upon its adjournment, published his speech with a long preface by Dr. William Smith. Galloway followed suit by publishing his speech with a long preface by Franklin. This preface is one of Franklin’s masterpieces, marked it is true by some quaint conceits and occasional relaxations of energy, but full of power and withering sarcasm. Preceded by such a lengthy and brilliant preface, Galloway must have felt that his speech had little more than the secondary value of an appendix. With the consummate capacity for pellucid statement, which was one of Franklin’s most remarkable gifts, it narrated the manner in which the practice of buying legislation from the Proprietaries had been pursued. With equal force and ingenuity, it demonstrated that five out of the six amendments, proposed by the Lords in Council to the Act, approved by Governor Denny, did not justify the charge that the circumstances, in which they originated, involved any real injustice to the Proprietaries, and that the sixth, which forbade the tender to the Proprietaries of paper bills of fluctuating value, in payment of debts payable to them, under the terms of special” contracts, in coin, if a measure of justice to them, would be also a measure of justice to other creditors in the same situation, who were not mentioned in the amendment.

Referring to the universal practice in America of making such bills a legal tender and the fact that the bills in question would have been a legal tender as respects the members of the Assembly and their constituents as well as the Proprietaries, Franklin’s preface glows like an incandescent furnace in these words:

But if he (the reader) can not on these Considerations, quite excuse the Assembly, what will he think of those *Honourable* Proprietaries, who when Paper Money was issued in their Colony for the Common Defence of their vast Estates, with those of the People, and who must therefore reap, at least, equal Advantages from those Bills with the People, could nevertheless *wish* to be exempted from their Share of the unavoidable Disadvantages. Is there upon Earth a Man besides, with any Conception of what is honest, with any Notion of Honor, with the least Tincture in his Veins of the Gentleman, but would have blush’d at the Thought; but would have rejected with Disdain such undue Preference, if it had been offered him? Much less would he have struggled for it, mov’d Heaven and Earth to obtain it, resolv’d to ruin Thousands of his Tenants by a Repeal of the Act, rather than miss of it, and enforce it afterwards by an audaciously wicked Instruction, forbidding Aids to his King, and exposing the Province to Destruction, unless it was complied with. And yet,—these are *Honourable Men*.... Those who study Law and Justice, as a Science [he added in

an indignant note] have established it a Maxim in Equity, “Qui sentit commodum, sentire debet et onus.” And so consistent is this with the *common* Sense of Mankind, that even our lowest untaught Coblers and Porters feel the Force of it in their own Maxim, (which *they* are *honest enough* never to dispute) “Touch Pot, touch Penny.”

Other passages in the Preface were equally scorching. Replying to the charge of the Proprietaries that the Quaker” Assembly, out of mere malice, because they had conscientiously quitted the Society of Friends for the Church, were wickedly determined to ruin them by throwing the entire burden of taxation on them, Franklin had this to say:

How foreign these Charges were from the Truth, need not be told to any Man in *Pennsylvania*. And as the Proprietors knew, that the Hundred Thousand Pounds of paper money, struck for the defence of their enormous Estates, with others, was actually issued, spread thro’ the Country, and in the Hands of Thousands of poor People, who had given their Labor for it, how base, cruel, and inhuman it was, to endeavour by a Repeal of the Act, to strike the Money dead in those Hands at one Blow, and reduce it all to Waste Paper, to the utter Confusion of all Trade and Dealings, and the Ruin of Multitudes, merely to avoid paying their own just Tax!—Words may be wanting to express, but Minds will easily conceive, and never without Abhorrence!

But fierce as these attacks were, they were mild in comparison with the shower of stones hurled by Franklin at the Proprietaries in the Preface in one of those lapidary inscriptions which were so common in that age. The prefacer of Dickinson’s Speech had inserted in his introduction a lapidary memorial of William Penn made up of tessellated bits of eulogy, extracted from the various addresses of the Assembly itself. This gave Franklin a fine opportunity to retort in a similar mosaic of phrases and to contrast the meanness of the sons with what the Assembly had said of the father.

That these Encomiums on the Father [he said] tho’ sincere, have occur’d so frequently, was owing, however, to two Causes; first, a vain Hope the Assemblies entertain’d, that the Father’s Example, and the Honors done his Character, might influence the Conduct of the Sons; secondly, for that in attempting to compliment the Sons on their own Merits, there was always found an extreme Scarcity of Matter. Hence *the Father, the honored and honorable Father*, was so often” repeated, that the Sons themselves grew sick of it; and have been heard to say to each other with Disgust, when told that A, B, and C. were come to wait upon them with Addresses on some public Occasion, “*Then I suppose we shall hear more about our Father.*” So that, let me tell the Prefacer, who perhaps was unacquainted with this Anecdote, that if he hop’d to curry more Favor with the Family, by the Inscription he has fram’d for that great Man’s Monument, he may find himself mistaken; for,—there is too much in it of *our Father*.

If therefore, he would erect a Monument to the Sons, the Votes of Assembly, which are of such Credit with him, will furnish him with ample Materials for his Inscription.

To save him Trouble, I will essay a Sketch for him, in the Lapidary Style, tho’ mostly in the Expressions, and everywhere in the Sense and Spirit of the Assembly’s Resolves and Messages.

Be this a Memorial

Of T— and R— P—,

P— of P,—

Who, with Estates immense,
 Almost beyond Computation,
 When their own Province,
 And the whole *British* Empire
 Were engag'd in a bloody and most expensive War,
 Begun for the Defence of those Estates,
 Could yet meanly desire
 To have those very Estates
 Totally or Partially
 Exempted from Taxation,
 While their Fellow-Subjects all around them, Groan'd
 Under the Universal Burthen.
 To gain this Point,
 They refus'd the necessary Laws
 For the Defence of their People,
 And suffer'd their Colony to welter in its Blood,
 Rather than abate in the least
 Of these their dishonest Pretensions.
 The Privileges granted by their Father
 Wisely and benevolently
 To encourage the first Settlers of the Province,
 They,
 Foolishly and cruelly,
 Taking Advantage of public Distress,
 Have extorted from the Posterity of those Settlers;
 And are daily endeavouring to reduce them
 To the most abject Slavery:
 Tho' to the Virtue and Industry of those People
 In improving their Country,
 They owe all that they possess and enjoy.
 A striking Instance
 Of human Depravity and Ingratitude;
 And an irrefragable Proof,
 That Wisdom and Goodness
 Do not descend with an Inheritance;

But that ineffable Meanness

May be connected with unbounded Fortune.

It may well be doubted whether any one had ever been subjected to such overwhelming lapidation as this since the time of the early Christian martyrs.

There are many other deadly thrusts in the Preface, and nowhere else are the issues between the Proprietaries and the People so clearly presented, but the very completeness of the paper renders it too long for further quotation.

Franklin, however, was by no means allowed to walk up and down the field, vainly challenging a champion to come out from the opposing host and contend with him. At his towering front the missiles of the Proprietary Party were mainly directed. Beneath one caricature of him were these lines:

“Fight dog, fight bear! You’re all my friends:

By you I shall attain my ends,

For I can never be content

Till I have got the government.

But if from this attempt I fall,

Then let the Devil take you all!”“

Another writer strove in his lapidary zeal to fairly bury Franklin beneath a whole cairn of opprobrious accusations, consuming nine pages of printed matter in the effort to visit his political tergiversation, his greed for power, his immorality and other sins, with their proper deserts, and ending with this highly rhetorical apostrophe:

“Reader, behold this striking Instance of

Human Depravity and Ingratitude;

An irrefragable Proof

That neither the Capital services

of *Friends*

Nor the attracting Favours of the Fair,

Can fix the Sincerity of a Man,

Devoid of Principles and

Ineffably mean:

Whose ambition is

power,

And whose intention is

tyranny.”

The illegitimacy of William Franklin, of course, was freely used during the conflict as a means of paining and discrediting Franklin. In a pamphlet entitled, *What is sauce for a Goose is also Sauce for a Gander*, the writer asserted that the mother of William was a woman named Barbara, who worked in Franklin’s house as a servant for ten pounds a year, that she remained in this position until her death and that Franklin then stole her to the grave in

silence without pall, tomb or monument. A more refined spirit, which could not altogether free itself from the undertow of its admiration for such an extraordinary man, penned these lively lines entitled, "Inscription on a Curious Stove in the Form of An Urn, Contrived in such a Manner As To Make The Flame Descend Instead of Rising from the Fire, Invented by Dr. Franklin."

"Like a Newton sublimely he soared
 To a summit before unattained,
 New regions of science explored
 And the palm of philosophy gained.
 "With a spark which he caught from the skies
 He displayed an unparalleled wonder,
 And we saw with delight and surprise
 That his rod could secure us from thunder.
 "Oh! had he been wise to pursue
 The track for his talents designed,
 What a tribute of praise had been due
 To the teacher and friend of mankind.
 "But to covet political fame
 Was in him a degrading ambition,
 The spark that from Lucifer came
 And kindled the blaze of sedition.
 "Let candor then write on his urn,
 Here lies the renowned inventor
 Whose fame to the skies ought to burn
 But inverted descends to the centre."

The election began at nine o'clock in the morning on October 1, 1764. Franklin and Galloway headed the "Old Ticket," and Willing and Bryan the "New." The latter ticket was supported by the Dutch Calvinists, the Presbyterians and many of the Dutch Lutherans and Episcopalians; the former by the Quakers and Moravians and some of the McClenaghanites. So great was the concourse of voters that, until midnight, it took fifteen minutes for one of them to work his way from the end of the line of eager electors to the polling place. Excitement was at white heat, and, while the election was pending, hands were busy scattering squibs and campaign appeals in English and German among the crowd. Towards three the next morning, the new-ticket partisans moved that the polls be closed, but the motion was opposed by their old-ticket foes, because they wished to bring out a reserve of aged or lame retainers who could not stand long upon their feet. These messengers were dispatched to bring in such retainers from their homes in chairs and litters, and, when the new-ticket men saw the success, with which the old-ticket men were marshalling their recruits, they, too, began to scour the vicinage for votes, and so successful were the two parties in mobilizing their reserves that the polls did not close until three o'clock in the afternoon of the second day. Not until the third day were the some 3900 real and fraudulent

votes cast counted; and, when the count was over, it was found that Franklin and Galloway had been defeated. "Franklin," said an eye-witness of the election, "died like a philosopher. But Mr. Galloway agonized in death like a mortal deist, who has no hopes of a future life."

As for Franklin, his enemies had simply kicked him upstairs. A majority of the persons returned as elected belonged to his faction, and, despite the indignant eloquence of Dickinson, who declared him to be the most bitterly disliked man in Pennsylvania, the Assembly, by a vote of nineteen to eleven, selected him as the agent of the Province to go over to England, and assist Richard Jackson, its standing agent, in "representing, soliciting and transacting the affairs" of the Province for the ensuing year.

The minority protested; and moved that its protest be spread upon the minutes, and, when this motion was denied, it published its remonstrance in the newspapers. This act provoked a pamphlet in reply from Franklin entitled *Remarks on a Late Protest*. Though shorter it is as good, as far as it goes, as the preface to Galloway's speech. He tosses the protestants and their reasons for believing him unfit for the agency on his horns with astonishing ease and strength, calls attention to the trifling majority of some twenty-five votes by which he was returned defeated, and chills the habit that we often indulge of lauding the political integrity and decorum of our American ancestors at our own expense by inveighing against the "many Perjuries procured among the wretched Rabble brought to swear themselves intitled to a Vote" and roundly saying to the protestants to their faces, "Your Artifices did not prevail everywhere; nor your double Tickets, and Whole Boxes of Forged Votes. A great Majority of the new-chosen Assembly were of the old Members, and remain uncorrupted."

Apart from the reference to the illegitimacy of William Franklin, Franklin had passed through the heated contest with the Proprietaries without the slightest odor of fire upon his garments. With his hatred of contention, it is natural enough that he should have written to Collinson, when the pot of contention was boiling so fiercely in Pennsylvania in 1764: "The general Wish seems to be a King's Government. If that is not to be obtain'd, many talk of quitting the Province, and among them your old Friend, who is tired of these Contentions & longs for philosophic Ease and Leisure." But he did not overstate the case when he wrote to Samuel Rhoads in the succeeding year from London, "The Malice of our Adversaries I am well acquainted with, but hitherto it has been Harmless; all their Arrows shot against us, have been like those that Rabelais speaks of which were headed with Butter harden'd in the Sun."

Franklin was a doughty antagonist when at bay, but he had few obdurate resentments, and was quick to see the redeeming virtues of even those who had wronged him. He assisted in the circulation of John Dickinson's famous Farmer's Letters, and curiously enough when Dickinson was the President of the State of Pennsylvania at the close of the Revolution, and the 130,000 pounds which that State had agreed to pay for the vacant lots and unappropriated wilderness lands of the Penns was claimed to be an inadequate consideration by some of them, he gave to John Penn, the son of Thomas Penn, a letter of recommendation to "the Civilities and Friendship" of Dickinson.

I would beg leave to mention it to your Excellency's Consideration [he said], whether it would not be reputable for the Province, in the cooler Season of Peace to reconsider that Act, and if the Allowance made to the Family should be found inadequate, to regulate it according to Equity, since it becomes a Virgin State to be particularly careful of its Reputation, and to guard itself not only against committing Injustice, but against even the suspicion of it.

But nothing better proves what a selfish cur Thomas Penn was than the fact that, more than twenty years after the election, of which we have been speaking, so magnanimous a man as

Franklin could express this sober estimate of his conduct and character in a letter to Jan Ingenhousz:

In my own Judgment, when I consider that for near 80 Years, viz., from the Year 1700, William Penn and his Sons receiv'd the Quit-rents which were originally granted for the Support of Government, and yet refused to support the Government, obliging the People to make a fresh Provision for its Support all that Time, which cost them vast Sums, as the most necessary Laws were not to be obtain'd but at the Price of making such Provision; when I consider the Meanness and cruel Avarice of the late Proprietor, in refusing for several Years of War, to consent to any Defence of the Frontiers ravaged all the while by the Enemy, unless his Estate should be exempted from paying any Part of the Expence, not to mention other Atrocities too long for this letter, I can not but think the Family well off, and that it will be prudent in them to take the Money and be quiet. William Penn, the First Proprietor, Father of Thomas, the Husband of the present Dowager, was a wise and good Man, and as honest to the People as the extream Distress of his Circumstances would permit him to be, but the" said Thomas was a miserable Churl, always intent upon Griping and Saving; and whatever Good the Father may have done for the Province was amply undone by the Mischief received from the Son, who never did anything that had the Appearance of Generosity or Public Spirit but what was extorted from him by Solicitation and the Shame of Backwardness in Benefits evidently incumbent on him to promote, and which was done at last in the most ungracious manner possible. The Lady's Complaints of not duly receiving her Revenues from America are habitual; they were the same during all the Time of my long Residence in London, being then made by her Husband as Excuses for the Meanness of his Housekeeping and his Deficiency in Hospitality, tho' I knew at the same time that he was then in full Receipt of vast Sums annually by the Sale of Lands, Interest of Money, and Quit-rents. But probably he might conceal this from his Lady to induce greater Economy as it is known that he ordered no more of his Income home than was absolutely necessary for his Subsistence, but plac'd it at Interest in Pennsylvania & the Jerseys, where he could have 6 and 7 per Cent, while Money bore no more than 5 per cent in England. I us'd often to hear of those Complaints, and laugh at them, perceiving clearly their Motive. They serv'd him on other as well as on domestic Occasions. You remember our Rector of St. Martin's Parish, Dr. Saunders. He once went about, during a long and severe Frost, soliciting charitable Contributions to purchase Coals for poor Families. He came among others to me, and I gave him something. It was but little, very little, and yet it occasion'd him to remark, "You are more bountiful on this Occasion than your wealthy Proprietary, Mr. Penn, but he tells me he is distress'd by not receiving his Incomes from America." The Incomes of the family there must still be very great, for they have a Number of Manors consisting of the best Lands, which are preserved to them, and vast Sums at Interest well secur'd by Mortgages; so that if the Dowager does not receive her Proportion, there must be some Fault in her Agents. You will perceive by the length of this Article that I have been a little *échauffé* by her making the Complaints you mention to the Princess Dowager of Lichtenstein at Vienna. The Lady" herself is good & amiable, and I should be glad to serve her in anything just and reasonable; but I do not at present see that I can do more than I have done.

And Thomas Penn, too, like St. Sebastian, will never be drawn without *that* arrow in *his* side.

When Franklin was appointed agent, the provincial treasury was empty, but so deeply aroused was public sentiment, in favor of the substitution of a royal for the proprietary government, that the merchants of Philadelphia in a few hours subscribed a sum of eleven

hundred pounds, to defray his expenses. Of this amount, however, he refused to accept but five hundred pounds, and, after a trying passage of thirty days, he found himself again at No. 7 Craven Street.

So far as the immediate object of his mission was concerned, it proved a failure. Before he left Pennsylvania, George Grenville, the Prime Minister of England, had called the agents of the American Colonies, resident at London, together and informed them that a debt of seventy-three millions sterling had been imposed upon England by the recent war, and that he proposed to ask Parliament to place a part of it upon the American Colonies. In the stream of events, which began with this proposal, the proprietary government in Pennsylvania and the royal governments in other American Colonies were alike destined to be swept away.

After the arrival of Franklin in England, the local struggle in Pennsylvania was of too secondary importance to command serious attention; and, beyond a few meagre allusions to it, there is no mention made of it in his letters. The temper of the English Ministry was not friendly to such a revolutionary change as the abolition of the proprietary government, and Franklin, after he had been in England a few years, had too many matters of continental concern to look after to have any time left for a single" phase of the general conflict between the Colonies and the mother country.

Before passing to his share in this conflict, a word should be said about the Albany Congress, in which he was the guiding spirit. In 1754, when another war between England and France was feared, a Congress of Commissioners from the several Colonies was ordered by the Lords of Trade to be held at Albany. The object of the call was to bring about a conference between the Colonies and the Chiefs of the Six Nations as to the best means of defending their respective territories from invasion by the French. When the order reached Pennsylvania, Governor Hamilton communicated it to the Assembly, and requested that body to provide proper presents for the Indians, who were to assemble at Albany; and he named Franklin and Isaac Norris, the Speaker of the Assembly, as the Commissioners from Pennsylvania, to act in conjunction with Thomas Penn and Richard Peters, the Secretary of the Proprietary Government. The presents were provided, and the nominations confirmed by the Assembly, and Franklin and his colleagues arrived at Albany in the month of June, 1754.

He brought his usual zeal to the movement. Before he left Philadelphia, with a view to allaying the jealousies, which existed between the different colonies, he published an article in his *Gazette* pointing out the importance of unanimity, which was accompanied by a woodcut representing a snake severed into as many sections as there were colonies. Each section bore the first letter of the name of a colony, and beneath the whole, in capital letters, were the words, "Join or die." On his way to Albany, he drafted a plan of union, looking to the permanent defence of the colonies, which closely resembled a similar plan of union, put forward thirty-two years before by Daniel Coxe in a tract entitled *A Description of the English Province of Carolina*. The Congress was attended by" Commissioners from all the Colonies except New Jersey, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. One of its members was Thomas Hutchinson, of Massachusetts, who was to bring down on Franklin's head the most trying crisis in his career. James De Lancey, the Lieutenant-Governor of New York, was chosen to be its presiding officer. Mingled with the Commissioners and the inhabitants of Albany, as they walked its streets, were the representatives of the Iroquois, whose tribes had cherished an unappeasable hatred for the French ever since the fatal day when Frontenac had thrown in his fortunes with those of their traditional enemies, the Hurons. Much time had to be expended by the Commissioners in distributing among them the presents that they had brought for them, and in conducting with ceremonious and tedious formality the long powwows in which the Indian heart, if there was such a thing, so dearly delighted. When the

assembly entered upon its deliberations, a committee of seven was appointed by it to consider the objects of the Congress, and it was composed of one commissioner from each colony; Franklin being the member from Pennsylvania, and Thomas Hutchinson the member from Massachusetts. After the Commissioners gathered at Albany, it was found that plans of union had been framed by other members of the Congress besides Franklin. All the plans were compared and considered by the committee, and Franklin's was adopted, amended and reported to the Congress, and was by it, after a long debate, approved, and recommended to the favorable consideration of Parliament and the King whose assent, it was conceded, was essential to its efficacy.

It was a simple but comprehensive scheme of government. The several colonies were to remain independent except so far as they surrendered their autonomy for purposes of mutual defence; there were to be a President-General, appointed and paid by the King, who was to be the executive arm of the Union, and a Grand Council of forty-eight" members, elected by the different Colonial Assemblies, which was to be its legislative organ. The first meeting of the Council was to be at Philadelphia⁵⁷; it was to meet once a year or oftener, if there was need, at such times and places as it should fix on adjournment, or as should be fixed, in case of an emergency, by the call of the President-General, who was authorized to issue such a call, with the consent of seven members of the Council; the tenure of members of the Council was to be for three years, and, on the death or resignation of a member, the vacancy was to be filled by the Assembly of his colony at its next sitting; after the election of the first members of the Council, the representation of the colonies in it was to be in proportion to their respective contributions to the Treasury of the Union, but no colony was to be represented by more than seven nor less than two members; the Council was to have the power to choose its Speaker, and was to be neither dissolved, prorogued nor continued in session longer than six weeks at one time without its consent, or the special command of the Crown; its members were to be allowed for their services ten shillings sterling a day, whether in session or journeying to or from the place of meeting;" twenty-five members were to constitute a quorum, provided that among this number was at least one member from a majority of the Colonies; the assent of the President General was to be essential to the validity of all acts of the Council, and it was to be his duty to see that they were carried into execution, and the President-General and Council were to negotiate all treaties with the Indians, declare war and make peace with them, regulate all trade with them, purchase for the Crown from them all lands sold by them, and not within the limits of the old Colonies; and make and govern new settlements on such lands until erected into formal colonies. They were also to enlist and pay soldiers, build forts and equip vessels for the defence of the Colonies, but were to have no power to impress men in any colony without the consent of its assembly; all military and naval officers of the Union were to be named by the President-General with the approval of the Council, and all civil officers of the Union were to be named by the Council with the approval of the President-General; in case of vacancies, resulting from death or removal, in any such offices, they were

⁵⁷ In connection with this feature of the proposed Plan of Union, Franklin gives us some interesting facts in regard to the distances that could be made in a day's journey in America in 1754. Philadelphia, he said, was named as the place for the first meeting of the Grand Council because it was central, and accessible by high roads, which were for the most part so good that forty or fifty miles a day might very well be, and frequently were, travelled over them. It could also be reached under very favorable conditions by water. In summer the passage from Charleston to Philadelphia often did not consume more than a week. Two or three days were required for the passage from Rhode Island to New York, through the Sound, and the distance between New York and Philadelphia could be covered in two days by stage-boats and wheel-carriages that set out every other day. The transit from Charleston to Philadelphia could be facilitated by the use of the Chesapeake Bay. But, if all the members of the Grand Council were to set out for Philadelphia on horseback, the most distant ones, those from New Hampshire and South Carolina, could probably arrive at their destination in fifteen or twenty days.

to be filled by the Governors of the Provinces in which they occurred until appointments could be made in the regular way; and the President-General and Council were also to have the power to appoint a General Treasurer for the Union and a Local Treasurer for the Union in each colony, when necessary. All funds were to be disbursed on the joint order of the President-General and the Council, except when sums had been previously appropriated for particular purposes, and the President-General had been specially authorized to draw upon them; the general accounts of the Union were to be each year communicated to the several Colonial Assemblies; and, for the limited purposes of the Union, the President-General and the Council were authorized to enact laws, and to levy general duties, imposts and taxes; the laws so enacted to be transmitted to the King in Council for his approbation, and, if not disapproved within three years, to remain in force. A final feature of the plan was the provision that each Colony might in a sudden emergency take measures for its own defence, and call upon the President-General and Council for reimbursement.

The Albany plan of union was one of the direct lineal antecedents of the Federal Constitution. In other words, it was one of the really significant things in our earlier history that tended to foster the habit of union, without which that constitution could never have been adopted. But, when considered in the light of the jealousy with which the mother country then regarded the Colonies, and with which the Colonies regarded each other, it is not at all surprising that the plan recommended by it should have to come to nothing. "Its fate was singular," says Franklin in the *Autobiography*. "The assemblies did not adopt it, as they all thought there was too much *prerogative* in it, and in England it was judg'd to have too much of the *democratic*." Even in Pennsylvania, though the Governor laid it before the Assembly with a handsome tribute to "the great clearness and strength of judgment," with which it had been drawn up, that body, when Franklin was absent, condemned it without giving it any serious consideration. In England it met with the disapproval of the Board of Trade, and "another scheme," to recur to the *Autobiography*, "was form'd, supposed to answer the same purpose better, whereby the governors of the provinces, with some members of their respective councils, were to meet and order the raising of troops, building of forts, etc., and to draw on the treasury of Great Britain for the expense, which was afterwards to be refunded by an act of Parliament laying a tax on America."

The Albany plan was an eminently wise one, and Franklin was probably justified in forming the favorable view of it which he expressed in these words in the *Autobiography*:"

The different and contrary reasons of dislike to my plan makes me suspect that it was really the true medium; and I am still of opinion it would have been happy for both sides the water if it had been adopted. The colonies, so united, would have been sufficiently strong to have defended themselves; there would then have been no need of troops from England; of course, the subsequent pretence for taxing America, and the bloody contest it occasioned, would have been avoided. But such mistakes are not new; history is full of the errors of states and princes.

"Look round the habitable world, how few
Know their own good, or, knowing it, pursue!"

Those who govern, having much business on their hands, do not generally like to take the trouble of considering and carrying into execution new projects. The best public measures are therefore seldom *adopted from previous wisdom, but forc'd by the occasion*.

In the autumn of 1754, Franklin made a journey to Boston. There he met Shirley, and was apprised by him of the plan formed in England for the defence of the Colonies. This

intelligence elicited three notable letters from him to Shirley in which he succinctly but luminously and vigorously stated his objections to the plan. In the first letter, he deprecated in brief but grave general terms a scheme of colonial administration, in which the people of the Colonies were to be excluded from all share in the choice of the Grand Council contemplated by the scheme, and were to be taxed by a Parliament in which they were to have no representation. Where heavy burdens are laid on the people, it had been found useful, he said, to make such burdens as much as possible their own acts. The people bear them better when they have, or think they have, some share in the direction; and, when any public measures are generally grievous, or even distasteful to the people, the wheels of government move more heavily."

In the second letter, Franklin states what in his opinion the people of the Colonies were likely to say of the proposed plan, namely, that they were as loyal as any other subjects of the King; that there was no reason to doubt their readiness to grant such sums as they could for the defence of the Colonies; that they were likely to be better judges of their own military necessities than the remote English Parliament; that the governors, who came to the Colonies, often came merely to make their fortunes, and to return to England, were not always men of the best abilities or integrity, had little in common with the colonists, and might be inclined to lavish military expenditures for the sake of the profit to be derived from such expenditures by them for themselves and their friends and dependents; that members of colonial councils being appointed by the Crown, on the recommendation of colonial governors, and being often men of small estates, and dependent on such governors for place, were too subject to influence; that Parliament was likely to be misled by such governors and councils; and yet their combined influence would probably shield them against popular resentment; that it was deemed an unquestionable right of Englishmen not to be taxed but by their own consent, given through their representatives, and that the Colonies had no representation in Parliament; that to tax the people of the Colonies without such representation, and to exclude them altogether from the proposed plan was a reflection on their loyalty, or their patriotism, or their intelligence, and that to tax them without their consent, was, indeed, more like raising contributions in an enemy's country than the taxation of Englishmen. Such were some of the objections stated in this letter to the imposition of taxes on the Colonies by the British Parliament. There were others of a kindred nature, and still others, based upon the claim that the Colonies were already paying heavy secondary taxes to England. Taxes, paid by landholders and artificers" in England, Franklin declared, entered into the prices paid in America for their products, and were therefore really taxes paid by America to Britain. The difference between the prices, paid by America for these products, and the cheaper prices, at which they could be bought in other countries, if America were allowed to trade with them, was also but a tax paid by America to Britain and, where the price was paid for goods which America could manufacture herself, if allowed by Great Britain to do so, the whole of it was but such a tax. Such a tax, too, was the difference between the price that America received for its own products in Britain, after the payment of duties, and the price that it could obtain in other countries, if allowed to trade with them. In fine, as America was not permitted to regulate its trade, and restrain the importation and consumption of British superfluities, its whole wealth ultimately found its way to Great Britain, and, if the inhabitants of Great Britain were enriched in consequence, and rendered better able to pay their taxes, that was nearly the same thing as if America itself was taxed. Of these kinds of indirect taxes America did not complain, but to pay direct taxes, without being consulted as to whether they should be laid, or as to how they should be applied, could not but seem harsh to Englishmen, who could not conceive that by hazarding their lives and fortunes in subduing and settling new countries, and in extending the dominion and increasing the commerce of the mother country, they had forfeited the native rights of Britons; which they thought that, on these accounts,

might well be given to them, even if they had been before in a state of slavery. Another objection to the scheme, the letter asserted, was the likelihood that the Governors and Councillors, not being associated with any representatives of the people, to unite with them in their measures, and to render these measures palatable to the people, would become distrusted and odious; and thus would" embitter the relations between governors and governed and bring about total confusion. The letter, short as it is, sums up almost all the main points of the more copious argument that was, in a few years, to be made with so much pathos as well as power by the Colonies against the resolve of the British Ministry to tax them without their consent.

Franklin's third letter to Shirley is but the statement in embryo of the sagacious and enlarged views of the policy of Great Britain, with respect to the Colonies, which he subsequently expressed in so many impressive forms. The letter is, first of all, interesting as showing that the subject of promoting a closer union between Great Britain and her colonies by allowing the latter to be represented in Parliament had already been discussed by Shirley and Franklin in conversation. It is also an indication, for all that was said later about the submissive loyalty of the Colonies, that the sense of injustice and hardship worked by the repressive effects of the existing British restrictions on American commerce and manufactures was widely diffused in America. The proposal to allow America representatives in Parliament would, Franklin thought, be very acceptable to the Colonies, provided the presentation was a reasonable one in point of numbers, and provided all the old acts of Parliament, limiting the trade, or cramping the manufactures, of the Colonies, were, at the same time, repealed and the cis-Atlantic subjects of Great Britain put on the same footing of commercial and industrial freedom as its trans-Atlantic subjects, until a Parliament, in which both were represented, should deem it to be to the interest of the whole empire that some or all of the obnoxious laws should be revived. Franklin also was too much of a latter-day American not to believe that laws, which then seemed to the colonists to be unjust to them, would be acquiesced in more cheerfully by them, and be easier of execution, if approved by a Parliament in which they were" represented. The letter ended with a series of original reflections, highly characteristic of the free play, which marked the mental operations of the writer in dealing with any subject, encumbered by short-sighted prejudices. Of what importance was it, he argued, whether manufacturers of iron lived at Birmingham or Sheffield, or both, since they were still within the bounds of Great Britain? Could the Goodwin Sands be laid dry by banks, and land, equal to a large county thereby gained to England, and presently filled with English inhabitants, would it be right to deprive such inhabitants of the common privileges enjoyed by other Englishmen, the right of vending their produce in the same ports, or of making their own shoes, because a merchant or a shoemaker, living on the old land, might fancy it more for his advantage to trade or make shoes for them? Would this be right even if the land was gained at the expense of the State? And would it seem less right if the charge and labor of gaining the additional territory to Great Britain had been borne by the settlers themselves?

Now I look on the colonies [Franklin continued] as so many counties gained to Great Britain, and more advantageous to it than if they had been gained out of the seas around its coasts, and joined to its land: For being in different climates, they afford greater variety of produce, and being separated by the ocean, they increase much more its shipping and seamen; and since they are all included in the British Empire, which has only extended itself by their means; and the strength and wealth of the parts are the strength and wealth of the whole; what imports it to the general state, whether a merchant, a smith, or a hatter, grow rich in Old or New England?

To this question, of course, the nineteenth or twentieth century could only have had one answer; but the eighteenth, blinded by economic delusions, had many.

In the opinion of Franklin, expressed in his letters to Peter Collinson, until the Albany plan of union, or something” like it, was adopted, no American war would ever be carried on as it should be, and Indian affairs would continue to be mismanaged. But he was fair-minded and clear-sighted enough to see that, if some such plan was not adopted, the fault would lie with the Colonies rather than with Great Britain. In one of his letters to Peter Collinson, he declared that, in his opinion, it was not likely that any of them would agree to the plan, or even propose any amendments to it.

Every Body [he said] cries, a Union is absolutely necessary; but when they come to the Manner and Form of the Union, their weak Noddles are perfectly distracted. So if ever there be an Union, it must be form'd at home by the Ministry and Parliament. I doubt not but they will make a good one, and I wish it may be done this winter.

The essential features of the Albany plan of union were all outlined by Franklin three or four years before the Albany Congress met, in a letter to James Parker, his New York partner. A union of the colonies, under existing conditions, was, he thought, impracticable. If a governor became impressed with the importance of such a union, and asked the other colonial governors to recommend it to their assemblies, the request came to nothing, either because the governors were often on ill terms with their assemblies, and were seldom the men who exercised the most influence over them, or because they threw cold water on the request for fear that the cost of such a union might make the people of their colonies less able or willing to give to them, or simply because they did not earnestly realize the necessity for it. Besides, under existing conditions, there was no one to back such a request or to answer objections to it. A better course would be to select half a dozen men of good understanding and address, and send them around, as ambassadors to the different colonies, to urge upon them the expediency of the union.” It would be strange, indeed, Franklin thought, if the six Iroquois tribes of ignorant savages could be capable of forming a union which had lasted for ages, and yet ten or a dozen English colonies be incapable of forming a similar one. These views were elicited by a pamphlet on the importance of gaining and preserving the friendship of the Indians, which had been sent to Franklin by Parker, and they constitute a natural introduction to a brief review of the relations sustained by one of the most reasonable of the children of men to perhaps the most unreasonable of all the children of men, the Indian of the American forest.

With the Indians, their habits, characteristics, polity and trade Franklin was very conversant. Repeatedly, during his lifetime, the frontiers of Pennsylvania were harried by the tomahawk and scalping-knife. In a letter, written a few months after Braddock's defeat to Richard Partridge, he mentions, for instance, that the savages had just surprised and cut off eight families near Shamokin, killing and scalping thirteen grown persons and kidnapping twelve children. In another letter to Peter Collinson, written the next year, he made this appalling summary of what, with the aid of the French, the revenge of the Delawares for the imposition practised upon them in the Walking Purchase was supposed to have cost the Province. “Some Hundreds of Lives lost, many Farms destroy'd and near £100,000 spent, yet,” he added, “the Proprietor refuses to be taxed except for a trifling Part of his Estate.” During the incursions of this period, the Indian war-parties pushed their outrages to a point only eighty miles from Philadelphia. A diarist, Thomas Lloyd, who accompanied Franklin on his expedition to Gnadenhutten, gives us this ghastly description of what they found there:

Here all round appears nothing but one continued scene of horror and destruction. Where lately flourished a happy and peaceful village, it is now all silent and desolate; the houses burnt; the inhabitants butchered in the most shocking manner;” their

mangled bodies, for want of funerals, exposed to birds and beasts of prey; and all kinds of mischief perpetrated that wanton cruelty can invent.

Not even a Rizpah left to brood over the scalpless forms, and to drive away the buzzard and the wild things of the forest! In this scene, and the pettier but similarly tragic scenes of death and havoc, furnished, from time to time, over a wide range of frontier territory, by lonely fields and cabins, upon which the tomahawk had ruthlessly descended, is to be found the psychology of the furious passions, which hurried the wretched Conestoga Indians out of existence, and of the outspoken or covert sympathy, which made a mockery of the attempt to bring their butchers to justice. Even men cooler than the Paxton Boys, hardened by revolting cruelties, not distinguishable from those inflicted by talon or tooth, except in their atrocious refinements of torture, and yet brought home in some form or other to almost every fireside in Pennsylvania, came to think of killing and mutilating an Indian with no more compunction than if he were a rattlesnake. James Parton mentions with a natural shudder the fact that Governor John Penn, after the retirement of the Paxton Boys from Philadelphia, offered the following bounties: For every captive male Indian of any hostile tribe one hundred and fifty dollars; for every female captive one hundred and thirty-eight dollars, for the scalp of a male Indian one hundred and thirty-four dollars, for the scalp of a female Indian fifty dollars. To Franklin himself, when on the Gnadenhutten expedition, fell the duty of instructing a Captain Vanetta, who was about to raise a company of foot-soldiers for the protection of upper Smithfield, while its inhabitants were looking after their corn, that forty dollars would be allowed and paid by the Provincial Government for each Indian scalp produced by one of his men with the proper attestations. How" accustomed even Franklin became to the ever-repeated story of Indian barbarities, and to occasional reprisals by the whites, hardly less shocking, is revealed by a brief letter from him to Peter Collinson in 1764, in which, with the dry conciseness of an old English chronicler, he reports the narratives of a British soldier, Owens, who had deserted to the Indians, and a white boy, whom Owens had brought back with him from captivity, together with five propitiatory Indian scalps, when he returned to his former allegiance.

The Account given by him and the Boy [wrote Franklin] is, that they were with a Party of nine Indians, to wit, 5 men, 2 Women, and 2 Children, coming down Susquehanah to fetch Corn from their last Year's Planting Place; that they went ashore and encamp'd at Night and made a Fire by which they slept; that in the Night Owens made the White Boy get up from among the Indians, and go to the other side of the Fire; and then taking up the Indians' Guns, he shot two of the Men immediately, and with his Hatchet dispatch'd another Man together with the Women and Children. Two men only made their escape. Owens scalp'd the 5 grown Persons, and bid the White Boy scalp the Children; but he declin'd it, so they were left.

Franklin, however, was not the man to say, as General Philip Sheridan was many years afterwards to be reputed to have said, that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. In the course of his varied life, he had many opportunities for becoming familiarly acquainted with the history and character of the Indians, and forming a just judgment as to how far their fiendish outbreaks were due to sheer animal ferocity, and how far to the provocation of ill-treatment by the whites; and he was too just not to know and declare that almost every war between the Indians and the whites in his time had been occasioned by some injustice of the latter towards the former. As far back as 1753, he" and Isaac Norris, the Speaker of the Assembly, were appointed commissioners by it to unite with Richard Peters, the Secretary of the Proprietary Government, in negotiating a treaty with the western Indians at Carlisle, and the manner, in which this treaty was conducted, is told in the *Autobiography* in his lively way. In 1756, he again served as a commissioner, this time with William Logan and Richard Peters, two

members of the Governor's Council, and Joseph Fox, William Masters and John Hughes, three members of the Assembly, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty at Easton with Teedyuscung, the King of the Delawares. At this conference, Governor Denny himself was likewise present. In 1763, he was appointed one of the commissioners to expend the money appropriated by the Assembly for levying a military force to defend the Pennsylvania frontier against the Indians. The Albany Congress, as we have seen, brought him into direct personal contact with the Iroquois who, to a fell savagery only to be compared with that of the most ferocious beasts of the jungle, united a capacity for political cohesion and the rudiments of civilized life which gave them quite an exceptional standing in the history of the American Indian. By virtue of these circumstances, to say nothing of other sources of knowledge and information, Franklin obtained an insight, at once shrewd and profound, into everything that related to the American Indian, including the best methods by which his good will could be conciliated and his trade secured. The following remarks in his *Canada Pamphlet* give us a good idea of the mobility and special adaptation to his physical environment which made the Indian, in proportion to his numbers, the most formidable foe that the world has ever seen:

They go to war, as they call it, in small parties, from fifty men down to five. Their hunting life has made them acquainted with the whole country, and scarce any part of it is impracticable" to such a party. They can travel thro' the woods even by night, and know how to conceal their tracks. They pass easily between your forts undiscovered; and privately approach the settlements of your frontier inhabitants. They need no convoys of provisions to follow them; for whether they are shifting from place to place in the woods, or lying in wait for an opportunity to strike a blow, every thicket and every stream furnishes so small a number with sufficient subsistence. When they have surpriz'd separately, and murder'd and scalp'd a dozen families, they are gone with inconceivable expedition through unknown ways, and 'tis very rare that pursuers have any chance of coming up with them. In short, long experience has taught our planters, that they cannot rely upon forts as a security against *Indians*: The inhabitants of *Hackney* might as well rely upon the tower of *London* to secure them against highwaymen and housebreakers.

This is the Indian seen from the point of view of the soldier and colonial administrator. He is fully as interesting, when considered by Franklin in a letter to Richard Jackson from the point of view of the philosopher:

They visit us frequently, and see the advantages that arts, sciences, and compact societies procure us. They are not deficient in natural understanding; and yet they have never shown any inclination to change their manner of life for ours, or to learn any of our arts. When an Indian child has been brought up among us, taught our language, and habituated to our customs, yet, if he goes to see his relatives, and makes one Indian ramble with them, there is no persuading him ever to return. And that this is not natural to them merely as Indians, but as men, is plain from this, that when white persons, of either sex, have been taken prisoners by the Indians, and lived a while with them, though ransomed by their friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first opportunity of escaping again into the woods, from whence" there is no redeeming them. One instance I remember to have heard, where the person was brought home to possess a good estate; but, finding some care necessary to keep it together, he relinquished it to a younger brother, reserving to himself nothing but a gun and a match-coat, with which he took his way again into the wilderness.

So that I am apt to imagine that close societies, subsisting by labour and art, arose first not from choice but from necessity, when numbers, being driven by war from their hunting grounds, and prevented by seas, or by other nations, from obtaining other hunting grounds, were crowded together into some narrow territories, which without labour could not afford them food.

A man had to be humorous, indeed, to see anything humorous in the American Indian, but Franklin's sense of the ludicrous was equal to even that supreme achievement. We have already referred to the image of hell that he saw in the nocturnal orgies of the drunken Indians at Carlisle. Prudently enough, they were not allowed by the Provincial Commissioners to have the rum that was in store for them until they had ratified the treaty entered into on that occasion; an artifice that doubtless proved quite as effective in hastening its consummation as the one adopted by Chaplain Beatty of distributing the rum before, instead of after, prayers, did in securing the punctual attendance of Franklin's soldiers at them. But diabolical as were the gestures and yells of the drink-crazed Indians, men and women, at Carlisle, Franklin contrived to bring away a facetious story from the conference for the *Autobiography*. The orator, who called on the Commissioners the next day, after the debauch, for the purpose of apologizing for the conduct of himself and his people,

laid it upon the rum; and then endeavoured to excuse the rum by saying, "'*The Great Spirit, who made all things, made everything for some use, and whatever use he design'd anything for, that use it should always be put to. Now, when he made rum, he said 'Let this be for the Indians to get drunk with'; and it must be so.*"... And indeed [adds Franklin] if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for cultivators of the earth, it seems not improbable that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited the seacoast.

There is another good Indian story in the letter from Franklin to Richard Jackson from which we have recently quoted. When everything had been settled at a conference between the Six Nations and some of the Colonies, and nothing remained to be gone through with but a mutual exchange of civilities, the English Commissioners told the Indians that they had in their country a college for the instruction of youth in the various languages, arts and sciences, and that, if the Indians were willing, they would take back with them a half-dozen of their brightest lads and bring them up in the best manner. The Indians, after weighing the proposal, replied that they remembered that some of their youths had formerly been educated at that college, but that it had been observed that for a long time, after they returned to their friends, they were absolutely good for nothing; being neither acquainted with the true methods of killing deer, catching beaver, or surprising an enemy. The proposition, however, they regarded as a mark of kindness and good will on the part of the English, which merited a grateful return, and therefore, if the English gentlemen would send a dozen or two of their children to Opondago, the Great Council would take care of their education, bring them up in what was really the best manner, and make men of "them."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Another good Indian story is told by Franklin in his *Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America*: "A Swedish Minister, having assembled the chiefs of the Susquehanah Indians, made a Sermon to them, acquainting them with the principal historical Facts on which our Religion is founded; such as the Fall of our First Parents by eating an Apple, the coming of Christ to repair the Mischief, his Miracles and Suffering, &c. When he had finished, an Indian Orator stood up to thank him. 'What you have told us,' says he, 'is all very good. It is indeed bad to eat Apples. It is better to make them all into Cyder. We are much oblig'd by your kindness in coming so far, to tell us these Things which you have heard from your Mothers. In return, I will tell you some of those we have heard from ours. In the Beginning, our Fathers had only the Flesh of Animals, to subsist on; and if their Hunting was unsuccessful, they were starving. Two of our young Hunters, having kill'd a

That the whites had much to answer for in their intercourse with the Indians Franklin saw clearly. The Canada Pamphlet speaks of the goods sold to them by French and English traders as loaded with all the impositions that fraud and knavery could contrive to enhance their value, and in one of Franklin's notes on the Albany plan of union he referred many Indian wars to cheating, practised by Indian traders on Indians, whom they had first made drunk. These traders he termed on another occasion, "the most vicious and abandoned Wretches of our Nation." "I do not believe we shall ever have a firm peace with the Indians," he wrote to Thomas Pownall in 1756, "till we" have well drubbed them." This was the natural language of a man who had no toleration for wanton applications of force but did not shrink from applying it, when nothing else would answer. But no man could have been more fearless than he in denouncing outrages committed by the whites upon inoffensive Indians, or Indians of any sort, when not on the war path. "It grieves me," he wrote to Sir William Johnson in 1766, "to hear that our Frontier People are yet greater Barbarians than the Indians, and continue to murder them in time of peace."

His views about the proper methods of controlling the Indians and securing their trade were worthy of his liberal and enlightened mind. Their friendship he deemed to be of the greatest consequence to the Colonies, and the best way to make sure of it, he thought, was to regulate trade between the whites and the Indians in such a way as to convince the latter that, as between France and England, the English goods were the best and cheapest, and the English merchants the most honorable, and to form a union between the Colonies strong enough to make the Indians feel that they could depend on it for protection against the French, or that they would suffer at its hands if they should break with it. The Indian trade, for which the colonists had sacrificed so much blood and treasure, was, he boldly reminded his auditors, in his famous examination before the House of Commons, not an American but a British interest, maintained with British manufactures for the profit of British merchants and manufacturers. In a letter to Cadwallader Colden, he even suggested that the Government should take it over, and furnish goods to the Indians at the cheapest prices, without regard to profit, as Massachusetts had done.

Other suggestions of Franklin with respect to the conduct of the Indian trade were hardly less interesting. Pittsburg, he contended, after the restoration of peace in 1759, should be retained by the English, with a small tract" of land about it for supplying the fort with provisions, and with sufficient hunting grounds in its vicinity for the peculiar needs of their Indian friends. A fort, and a small population of sober, orderly people there, he thought, would help to preserve the friendship of the Indians by bringing trade and the arts into close proximity to them, and would bridle them, if seduced from their allegiance by the French, or would, at least, stand in the gap, and be a shield to the other American frontiers.

Deer, made a Fire in the Woods to broil some Part of it. When they were about to satisfy their Hunger, they beheld a beautiful young Woman descend from the Clouds, and seat herself on that Hill, which you see yonder among the blue Mountains. They said to each other, it is a Spirit that has smelt our broiling Venison, and wishes to eat of it; let us offer some to her. They presented her with the Tongue; she was pleas'd with the Taste of it, and said, "Your kindness shall be rewarded; come to this Place after thirteen Moons, and you shall find something that will be of great Benefit in nourishing you and your children to the latest Generations." They did so, and, to their surprise, found Plants they had never seen before; but which, from that ancient time, have been constantly cultivated among us, to our great Advantage. Where her right Hand had touched the Ground, they found Maize; where her left hand had touch'd it, they found Kidney-Beans, and where her Back side had sat on it they found Tobacco.' The good Missionary, disgusted with this idle Tale, said: 'What I delivered to you were sacred Truths; but what you tell me is mere Fable, Fiction, and Falsehood.' The Indian, offended, reply'd, 'My brother, it seems your Friends have not done you Justice in your Education; they have not well instructed you in the Rules of common Civility. You saw that we, who understand and practise those Rules, believ'd all your stories; why do you refuse to believe ours?'"

Another suggestion of his was that, in time of peace, parties should be allowed to issue from frontier garrisons on hunting expeditions, with or without Indians, and enjoy the profits of the peltry that they brought back. In this way, a body of wood-runners would be formed, well acquainted with the country and of great value in time of war as guides and scouts. Every Indian was a hunter, every Indian was a disciplined soldier. They hunted in precisely the same manner as they made war. The only difference was that in hunting they skulked, surprised and killed animals, and, in making war, men. It was just such soldiers that the colonies needed; for the European military discipline was of little use in the woods. These words were penned four or five years before the battle of the Monongahela confirmed so bloodily their truth. Franklin also thought that a number of sober, discreet smiths should be encouraged to reside among the Indians. The whole subsistence of Indians depended on their keeping their guns in order. They were a people that thought much of their temporal, but little of their spiritual interests, and, therefore, a smith was more likely to influence them than a Jesuit. In a letter to his son, he mentions that he had dined recently with Lord Shelburne, and had availed himself of the occasion to urge that a colony should be planted in the Illinois country for furnishing provisions to military garrisons more cheaply, clinching the hold of the English upon the country, and building up "a strength which, in the event of a future war, might easily be poured down the Mississippi upon the lower country, and into the Bay of Mexico, to be used against Cuba or Mexico itself.

The reader has already had brought to his attention the provisions of the Albany plan of union which were intended to vest in the government sketched by it the control of Indian treaties, trade and purchases.

The ignorance of the Indian character, which prevailed in England, often, we may be sure, brought a smile to the face of Franklin. Among his writings are remarks made at the request of Lord Shelburne on a plan for regulating Indian affairs submitted to him by the latter. It is to be regretted that the circumstances of the case were such that it was impossible for Franklin to escape the restraints of official gravity even when he was assigning the rambling habits of the Indians as his reason for believing that an Indian chief would hardly be willing to reside permanently with one of the functionaries, who was to aid in carrying the plan into effect, or when he was giving the high value, that the Indian attached to personal liberty, and the low value, that he attached to personal property, as his reason for thinking that imprisonment for debt was scarcely consistent with aboriginal ideas of equity. The plan was of a piece with the suggestion attributed to Dean Tucker that the colonies should be protected from Indian incursions by clearing away the trees and bushes from a tract of land, a mile in width, at the back of the colonies. As Benjamin Vaughan said, this brilliant idea not only involved a first cost (not to mention the fact that trees and bushes grow again when cut down) of some £128,000 for every hundred miles but quite overlooked the fact that the Indians, like other people, knew the difference between day and night. He forgot, said Franklin, "that there is a night in every twenty-four hours."

The distinction, which Franklin enjoyed in England," during his first mission to that country, was due to his philosophical and literary reputation, but his second mission to England and the colonial agencies, held by him while it lasted, afforded him an opportunity for playing a conspicuous part in the stirring transactions, which ushered in the American Revolution. Apart from all other considerations, his place in the history of these transactions will always be an extraordinary one because of the consummate wisdom and self-restraint exhibited by him in his relations to the controversy that finally ended in a fratricidal war between Great Britain and her colonies, which should never have been kindled. To the issues, involved in this controversy, he brought a vision as undimmed by political bigotry and false economic conceptions of colonial dependence as that of a British statesman of the present day. It is easy

to believe that, if his counsels had been heeded, Great Britain and the communities, which make up the American Union, would now be connected by some close organic or federative tie. It is, at least, certain that no other Englishman on either side of the Atlantic saw as clearly as he did the true interests of both parties to the fatal conflict, or strove with such unerring sagacity and sober moderation of purpose to avert the breach between the two great branches of the English People. In no way can the extreme folly, which forced independence upon the colonies, be better measured than by contrasting the heated vehemence of Franklin's later feelings about the King and Parliament with his earlier sentiments towards the country that he did not cease to call "home" until to call it so would have been mockery. Devoted attachment to England, the land endeared to him by so many ties of family, intellectual sympathy and friendship, profound loyalty to the British Crown, deep-seated reverence for the laws, institutions and usages of the noble people, in whose inheritance of enlightened freedom he vainly insisted upon having his full share as an Englishman, were all" characteristics of his, before the alienation of the colonies from Great Britain.⁵⁹

His earlier utterances breathe a spirit of ingrained loyalty to the British Crown. The French were "mischievous neighbors," France "that perfidious nation." "I congratulate you on the defeat of Jacobitism by your glorious Duke," he wrote to Strahan in 1746, after the Duke of Cumberland had earned his title of "The" Butcher" at Culloden. "I pray God to preserve long to Great Britain the English Laws, Manners, Liberties, and Religion," was an exclamation seven years later in one of his letters to Richard Jackson. "Wise and good prince," "the best of Kings," "Your good King," are some of the terms in which he expressed his opinion of his royal master. In the light of later events, there is something little short of amusing about the horoscope which he framed of the reign of George the Third in a letter to Strahan a year or so before the passage of the Stamp Act. Replying to forebodings of Strahan, Franklin said of the Prince, whom he styled "Our virtuous young King":

On the contrary, I am of Opinion that his Virtue and the Consciousness of his sincere Intentions to make his People happy will give him Firmness and Steadiness in his Measures and in the Support of the honest Friends he has chosen to serve him; and

⁵⁹ When asked in the course of his examination before the House of Commons what the temper of America towards Great Britain was before the year 1763, Franklin made this reply: "The best in the world. They submitted willingly to the government of the Crown, and paid, in all their courts, obedience to acts of parliament. Numerous as the people are in the several provinces, they cost you nothing in forts, citadels, garrisons, or armies, to keep them in subjection. They were governed by this country at the expence only of a little pen, ink and paper. They were led by a thread. They had not only a respect, but an affection for Great-Britain; for its laws, its customs and manners, and even a fondness for its fashions, that greatly increased the commerce. Natives of Britain were always treated with particular regard; to be an Old England man was, of itself, a character of some respect, and gave a kind of rank among us."

How little colored by the exigencies of the moment these words were is made apparent in a letter from Franklin to Francis Maseres after the independence of the Colonies had been acknowledged by England. "The true *loyalists* were the people of America, against whom they (the Tories) acted. No people were ever known more truly loyal, and universally so, to their sovereigns. The Protestant succession in the House of Hanover was their idol. Not a Jacobite was to be found from one end of the Colonies to the other. They were affectionate to the people of England, zealous and forward to assist in her wars, by voluntary contributions of men and money, even beyond their proportion. The King and Parliament had frequently acknowledged this by public messages, resolutions, and reimbursements. But they were equally fond of what they esteemed their rights; and, if they resisted when those were attacked, it was a resistance in favour of a British constitution, which every Englishman might share in enjoying, who should come to live among them; it was resisting arbitrary impositions, that were contrary to common right and to their fundamental constitutions, and to constant ancient usage. It was indeed a resistance in favour of the liberties of England, which might have been endangered by success in the attempt against ours; and therefore a great man in your Parliament did not scruple to declare, he *rejoiced that America had resisted*. I, for the same reason, may add this very resistance to the other instances of their loyalty."

when that Firmness is fully perceiv'd, Faction will dissolve and be dissipated like a Morning Fog before the rising Sun, leaving the rest of the Day clear with a Sky serene and cloudless. Such after a few of the first Years will be the future course of his Majesty's Reign, which I predict will be happy and truly glorious.

In his letter to Polly about the French King and Queen, whom he had seen dining in state, which was written the year after the repeal of the Stamp Act, he declared, in his fear that he might seem to be too well pleased with them, that no Frenchman should go beyond him in thinking his own King and Queen, "the very best in the World, and the most amiable." The popular commotions in the succeeding year, with their watch cry of Wilkes and Liberty, seemed to him to indicate that some punishment was preparing for a people, who were ungratefully abusing the best Constitution and the best King that any nation was ever blessed with. As late as 1770, he wrote to Dr. Samuel Cooper, "Let us, therefore, hold fast our Loyalty to our" King, who has the best Disposition towards us, and has a Family Interest in our Prosperity." Indeed, even two years later than this, he complacently wrote to his son, "The King, too, has lately been heard to speak of me with great regard." Strangely enough it was not until two years before the battle of Bunker Hill that he awoke sufficiently from his fool's paradise to write to his son, "Between you and I, the late Measures have been, I suspect, very much the King's own, and he has in some Cases a great Share of what his Friends call *Firmness*." Even then he hazarded the opinion that by painstaking and proper management the wrong impression of the colonists that George the Third had received might be removed. Down to this time so secretly had the King pursued the insidious system of corruption by which he kept his Parliamentary majority unmurmuringly subservient to his system of personal government, that Franklin does not appear to have even suspected that his was the master hand, or rather purse, which shaped all its proceedings against America. When the whole truth, however, was made manifest to Franklin, his awakening was correspondingly rude and unforgiving. How completely reversed became the current of all his feelings towards George the Third, after the Revolution began, we have already seen in some of our references to letters written by him to his English friends, in which the King, whom he once revered, was scored in terms of passionate reprobation.

Tenacious, too, was the affection with which Franklin clung to England and the English people. Some years before the passage of the Stamp Act, he wrote to Lord Kames from London that he purposed to give form to the material that he had been gathering for his *Art of Virtue* when he returned to his *other* country, that is to say, America.

Of all the enviable Things England has [he wrote a few years" later to Polly], I envy it most its People. Why should that petty Island, which compar'd to America, is but like a stepping Stone in a Brook, scarce enough of it above Water to keep one's Shoes dry; why, I say, should that little Island enjoy in almost every Neighbourhood, more sensible, virtuous, and elegant Minds, than we can collect in ranging 100 Leagues of our vast Forests?

How eagerly even when he was in the New World he relished the observations of his friend Strahan on current English politics, we have already seen. We have also already seen how seriously he entertained even the thought of transferring his family for good to England. Indeed his intense loyalty to English King and People, together with his remoteness from the contagious excitement of the Colonies over the passage of the Stamp Act, caused him for a time, with a curious insensibility to the real state of public opinion in America, to lag far behind the revolutionary movement in that country. Not only, before he was fully aroused to the stern purpose of his fellow-countrymen to resist the collection of the stamp tax to the last extremity, did he recommend his friend John Hughes to the British Ministry as a stamp-tax

collector, and send to his partner Hall a large quantity of paper for the use of the *Gazette*, of such dimensions as to secure a saving in stamps for its issues, but he wrote to Hughes in these terms besides:

If it (the Stamp Act) continues, your undertaking to execute it may make you unpopular for a Time, but your acting with Coolness and Steadiness, and with every Circumstance in your Power of Favour to the People, will by degrees reconcile them. In the meantime, a firm Loyalty to the Crown & faithful Adherence to the Government of this Nation, which it is the Safety as well as Honour of the Colonies to be connected with, will always be the wisest Course for you and I to take, whatever may be the Madness of the Populace or their blind Leaders," who can only bring themselves and Country into Trouble and draw on greater Burthens by Acts of Rebellious Tendency.

The rashness of the Virginia Assembly in relation to the Stamp Act he thought simply amazing.

Much better known is the letter that he wrote about the same time to Charles Thomson. After stating that he had done everything in his power to prevent the passage of the Stamp Act, he said:

But the Tide was too strong against us. The nation was provoked by American Claims of Independence, and all Parties joined in resolving by this act to settle the point. We might as well have hindered the sun's setting. That we could not do. But since 'tis down, my Friend, and it may be long before it rises again, let us make as good a night of it as we can. We may still light candles. Frugality and Industry will go a great way toward indemnifying us. Idleness and Pride tax with a heavier hand than Kings and Parliaments; if we can get rid of the former, we may easily bear the latter.

Six months later, when the loud and fierce protest of his fellow-countrymen against the Stamp Act had reached his ear, and convinced him that they were more likely to light camp-fires than candles, he held a very different language. Asked, during his famous examination before the House of Commons, whether he thought that the people of America would submit to pay the Stamp Tax, if it were moderated, he replied, "No, never, unless compelled by force of arms." Public leaders, after all, to use Gladstone's happy image with regard to the orator, do little more than give back in rain what they receive in mist from the mass of men. But with the repeal of the Stamp Act, and part of the duties imposed upon America, Franklin would readily have lapsed in every respect into his old affectionate relations to England, if Parliament had not, by its unwise reservation of its right to tax America, fallen" into the bad surgery, to use his own words, of leaving splinters in the wound that it had inflicted. It now seems strange enough that, after the turbulent outbreak in America, which preceded the repeal, he should have been willing to accept a post under the Duke of Grafton, and to remain in England for some time longer if not for the rest of his life; yet such is the fact. When he heard through a friend that the Duke had said that, if he chose rather to reside in England than to return to his office as Deputy Postmaster-General for America, it would not be the Duke's fault, if he was not well provided for, he declared in the polished phrases of a courtier that there was no nobleman, to whom he could from sincere respect for his great abilities and amiable qualities so cordially attach himself, or to whom he should so willingly be obliged for the provision mentioned, as to the Duke of Grafton, if his Grace should think that he could in any station, where he might be placed, be serviceable to him and to the public. To any one who knows what a profligate the Duke was, during the most scandalous part of his career, this language sounds not a little like the conventional phrases in which Franklin, during his mission to France, assured Crocco, the blackmailing emissary of the piratical

emperor of Morocco that he had no doubt but that, as soon as the affairs of the United States were a little settled, they would manifest equally good dispositions as those of his master and take all the proper steps to cultivate and secure the friendship of a monarch, whose character, Franklin knew, they had long esteemed and respected.

But in the same letter to his son, in which the declaration about the Duke of Grafton was recalled, Franklin made it clear that he was unwilling, by accepting office, to place himself in the power of any English Minister committed to the fatuous policy of taxing America. It was not until forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, and an American Whig could no longer hold an English office" without reproach, that his innate conservatism of character yielded to the forces which were slowly but certainly rending the two countries apart. Three years after the repeal of the Stamp Act, which he dubbed "the mother of mischief," he wrote to Jean Baptiste Le Roy of the popular disturbances in Boston as "sudden, unpremeditated things, that happened only among a few of the lower sort." A month later, he wrote to Dr. Cooper:

I have been in constant Pain since I heard of Troops assembling at Boston, lest the Madness of Mobs, or the Insolence of Soldiers, or both, should, when too near each other, occasion some Mischief difficult to be prevented or repaired, and which might spread far and wide. "I hope however," he added, "that Prudence will predominate, and keep all quiet."

A little later still, in another letter to the same correspondent, after saying that he could scarcely conceive a King of better dispositions, of more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of all his subjects than was George the Third, he further and truly said: "The Body of this People, too, is of a noble and generous Nature, loving and honouring the Spirit of Liberty, and hating arbitrary Power of all sorts. We have many, very many, friends among them."

As late as the autumn of 1774 he was grieved to hear of mobs and violence and the pulling down of houses in America, which the friends of America in England could not justify, and which gave a great advantage to the enemies of America in that country. He was in perpetual anxiety, he wrote Thomas Cushing, lest the mad measures of mixing soldiers among a people whose minds were in such a state of irritation might be attended with some mischief, for an accidental quarrel, a personal insult, an imprudent order, an insolent execution of even a prudent one, or twenty other things might produce a tumult, unforeseen, and, therefore, impossible to be prevented," in which such a carnage might ensue as to make a breach that could never afterwards be healed. That the insults of Wedderburn, heaped upon Franklin in the Privy Council Chamber, under circumstances, calculated to make him feel as if all England were pillorying him, and his subsequent dismissal from the office of Deputy Postmaster-General for America, exerted some degree of corrosive influence upon his mind cannot be denied; but he still kept up his counsels of patience to his people upon the other side of the Atlantic until patience no longer had any meaning, and, when his last efforts, just before he left England for Independence Hall, to bring about a satisfactory adjustment of the quarrel between Great Britain and her colonies finally came to nothing, the tears that Priestley tells us wet his cheeks, as he was leaving England, were proof enough that even a nature, little given to weakness, might well grow faint at the thought of such a tragic separation as that of England and the thirteen colonies nurtured at her breast. But no one can read the life of Franklin without feeling that there never was a time when his heart was not wholly true to the just rights of America. In America, he might miss the companionship of the learned and distinguished friends from whose conversation he derived so much profit and pleasure in England and France. Only such a capital as London or Paris could fully gratify the social and intellectual wants of a man whose survey of human existence was so little subject

to cramping restrictions of any kind. But it was the very breadth of Franklin's character which made him first of all an American, instinct with the free spirit of the New World, and faithful to the democratic institutions and ideals, which thrived on its freshness and exemption from inherited complications. Over and over again, when he is abroad, he compares the economic and political conditions of his own country with those of foreign countries to the marked disadvantage of the latter. The painful impression, left upon his mind by the squalor and misery of the lower orders of the Irish people, is manifest enough in his correspondence.

Ireland is in itself [he declared in a letter to Thomas Cushing] a poor Country, and Dublin a magnificent City; but the appearances of general extreme poverty among the lower people are amazing. They live in wretched hovels of mud and straw, are clothed in rags, and subsist chiefly on potatoes. Our New England farmers, of the poorest sort, in regard to the Enjoyment of all the Comforts of life, are princes when compared to them. Such is the effect of the discouragements of industry, the non-residence not only of pensioners, but of many original landlords, who lease their lands in gross to undertakers that rack the tenants and fleece them skin and all to make estates to themselves, while the first rents, as well as most of the pensions, are spent out of the country. An English gentleman there said to me, that by what he had heard of the good grazing in North America, and by what he saw of the plenty of flax-seed imported in Ireland from thence, he could not understand why we did not rival Ireland in the beef and butter trade to the West Indies, and share with it in its linen trade. But he was satisfied when I told him that I supposed the reason might be, *our people eat beef and butter every day, and wear shirts themselves.*

In short, the chief exports of Ireland seem to be pinched off the backs and out of the bellies of the miserable inhabitants.

Darker and more forbidding still glooms the background of the joyous hours spent by Franklin in Ireland, Scotland and England in these painful words which he wrote to Dr. Joshua Babcock in the early part of 1772:

I have lately made a Tour thro' Ireland and Scotland. In those Countries a small Part of the Society are Landlords, great Noblemen, and Gentlemen, extremely opulent, living in the highest Affluence and Magnificence: The Bulk of the People Tenants, extremely poor, living in the most sordid Wretchedness, in dirty Hovels of Mud and Straw, and clothed only in Rags.

I thought often of the Happiness of New England, where every Man is a Freeholder, has a Vote in publick Affairs, lives in a tidy, warm House, has plenty of good Food and Fewel, with whole cloaths from Head to Foot, the Manufacture perhaps of his own Family. Long may they continue in this Situation! But if they should ever envy the Trade of these Countries, I can put them in a Way to obtain a Share of it. Let them with three fourths of the People of Ireland live the Year round on Potatoes and Buttermilk, without shirts, then may their Merchants export Beef, Butter, and Linnen. Let them, with the Generality of the Common People of Scotland, go Barefoot, then may they make large exports in Shoes and Stockings: And if they will be content to wear Rags, like the Spinners and Weavers of England, they may make Cloths and Stuffs for all Parts of the World.

Farther, if my Countrymen should ever wish for the honour of having among them a gentry enormously wealthy, let them sell their Farms & pay rack'd Rents; the Scale of the Landlords will rise as that of the Tenants is depress'd, who will soon become poor, tattered, dirty, and abject in Spirit. Had I never been in the American Colonies,

but was to form my Judgment of Civil Society by what I have lately seen, I should never advise a Nation of Savages to admit of Civilization: For I assure you, that, in the Possession & Enjoyment of the various Comforts of Life, compar'd to these People every Indian is a Gentleman: And the Effect of this kind of Civil Society seems only to be, the depressing Multitudes below the Savage State that a few may be rais'd above it.

America on the other hand, as Franklin pictured it, was the land of neither the very rich nor the very poor, but one in which "a general happy mediocrity" prevailed. It was not a Lubberland, nor a Pays de Cocagne, where the streets were paved with half-peck loaves, and the houses tiled with pancakes, and where the fowls flew about ready roasted, crying Come eat me! These were" all wild imaginations. On the contrary, it was a land of labor, but also a land where multitudes of emigrants from foreign lands, who would never have emerged from poverty, if they had remained at home, had, with savings out of the wages, earned by them, after they arrived in America, acquired land, and, in a few years, become wealthy farmers. It was a land, too, where religious infidelity was unknown, and where all the means of education were plenteous, the general manners simple and pure, and the temptations to vice and folly fewer than in England.

The contrast between political conditions in Great Britain and political conditions in America was in Franklin's opinion equally unfavorable to Great Britain. Loyal as he was to the King, attached as he was to the English people, he harbored a deep feeling of aversion and contempt for the Parliament which he did not realize was but the marionette of the King. When certain residents of Oxford, after being confined for some days in Newgate for corrupt practices, knelt before the Speaker of the House of Commons, and received his reprimand, Franklin wrote to Galloway:

The House could scarcely keep countenances, knowing as they all do, that the practice is general. People say, they mean nothing more than to *beat down the price* by a little discouragement of borough jobbing, now that their own elections are all coming on. The price indeed is grown exorbitant, no less than *four thousand pounds* for a member.

In the same letter, a grim story is told of the callous levity with which the Parliamentary majority regarded its own debasement. It was founded upon a bill brought in by Beckford for preventing bribery and corruption at elections, which contained a clause obliging every member to swear, on his admission to the House, that he had not directly or indirectly given any bribe to any elector. This clause was so generally opposed as answering no" end except that of inducing the members to perjure themselves that it was withdrawn. Commenting on the incident, Franklin said:

It was indeed a cruel contrivance of his, worse than the gunpowder plot; for that was only to blow the Parliament up to heaven, this to sink them all down to ——. Mr. Thurlow opposed his bill by a long speech. Beckford, in reply, gave a dry hit to the House, that is repeated everywhere. "The honourable gentleman," says he, "in his learned discourse, gave us first one definition of corruption, then he gave us another definition of corruption, and I think he was about to give us a third. Pray does that gentleman imagine *there is any member of this House that does not KNOW* what corruption is?" which occasioned only a roar of laughter, for they are so hardened in the practice, that they are very little ashamed of it.

Later Franklin wrote to Galloway that it was thought that near two million pounds would be spent in the Parliamentary election then pending, but that it was computed that the Crown

had *two millions a year in places and pensions to dispose of*. On the same day, he wrote to his son, "In short, this whole venal nation is now at market, will be sold for about two millions, and might be bought out of the hands of the present bidders (if he would offer half a million more) by the very Devil himself." To Thomas Cushing he wrote that luxury brought most of the Commons as well as Lords to market, and that, if America would save for three or four years the money she spent in the fashions and fineries and fopperies of England, she might buy the whole Parliament, minister and all.

Over against these depraved electoral conditions he was in the habit of placing the simpler and purer conditions of his native land. In most of the Colonies, he declared in his *Rise and Progress of the Differences between Great Britain and her American Colonies*, there was no such thing as standing candidate for election. There was neither treating nor bribing. No man expressed the least inclination to be chosen. Instead of humble advertisements, entreating votes and interest, one saw before every new election requests of former members, acknowledging the honor done them by preceding elections, but setting forth their long service and attendance on the public business in that station, and praying that in consideration thereof some other person might be chosen in their room. After a dissolution, the same representatives might be and usually were re-elected without asking a vote or giving even a glass of cider to an elector. On the eve of his return to America in 1775, the contrast between the extreme corruption prevalent in the old rotten state and the glorious public virtue, so predominant in rising America, as he expressed it, assumed a still more aggravated form. After mentioning in his last letter to his friend Galloway the "Numberless and needless Places, enormous Salaries, Pensions, Perquisites, Bribes, groundless Quarrels, foolish Expeditions, false Accounts or no Accounts, Contracts and Jobbs," which in England devoured all revenue, and produced continual necessity in the midst of natural plenty, he said:

I apprehend, therefore, that to unite us intimately will only be to corrupt and poison us also. It seems like Mezentius's coupling and binding together the dead and the living.

"Tormenti genus, et sanie taboque fluentes,

Complexu in misero, longâ sic morte necabat."

However [he added with his readily re-awakened loyalty to the mother country], I would try anything, and bear anything that can be borne with Safety to our just Liberties, rather than engage in a War with such near relations, unless compelled to it by dire Necessity in our own Defence.

Nor was any American of Franklin's time more profoundly conscious than he of the growing power and splendid destiny of the Colonies. His familiarity with America was singularly minute and accurate. He had supped at its inns and sojourned in its homes, been delayed at its ferries and crippled on its roads. In one way or another, he had acquired a correct and searching insight into almost everything that related to its political, social and industrial life. His answers to the questions put to him during his famous examination before the House of Lords have been justly reputed to be among the most striking of all the proofs of ability that he ever gave, marked as they were by great wisdom and acuteness, marvellous conciseness as well as clearness of statement, invincible tact and dexterity. But in no respect are these answers more remarkable than in the knowledge that they display of colonial America in all its relations. Accompanying this knowledge, too, was unquestionably a powerful feeling of affection for the land of his birth which renders us more or less skeptical as to whether he was at all certain of himself on the different occasions when he expressed his willingness to die in some other land than his own.

I have indeed [he wrote to his son from England in 1772] so many good kind Friends here, that I could spend the Remainder of my Life among them with great Pleasure, if it were not for my American connections, & the indelible Affection I retain for that dear Country, from which I have so long been in a State of Exile.

At all times the tread of those coming millions of human beings, which the family fecundity of America made certain, sounded majestically in his ears. Referring to America in a letter to Lord Kames in the year after the repeal of the Stamp Act, he employed these significant words:”

She may suffer at present under the arbitrary power of this country; she may suffer for a while in a separation from it; but these are temporary evils that she will outgrow. Scotland and Ireland are differently circumstanced. Confined by the sea, they can scarcely increase in numbers, wealth and strength, so as to overbalance England. But America, an immense territory, favoured by Nature with all advantages of climate, soil, great navigable rivers, and lakes, &c. must become a great country, populous and mighty; and will, in a less time than is generally conceived, be able to shake off any shackles that may be imposed on her, and perhaps place them on the imposers. In the mean time, every act of oppression will sour their tempers, lessen greatly, if not annihilate the profits of your commerce with them, and hasten their final revolt; for the seeds of liberty are universally found there, and nothing can eradicate them.

Even, if confined westward by the Mississippi and northward by the St. Lawrence and the Lakes, he thought that, in some centuries, the population of America would amount to one hundred millions of people.

Such were the prepossessions brought by Franklin to the controversy between Great Britain and her colonies. In his view he was none the less an Englishman because he was an American, and, as the controversy gained in rancor, his dual allegiance to the two countries led to no little misconstruction. To an unknown correspondent he wrote several years after the repeal of the Stamp Act that he was becoming weary of talking and writing about the quarrel, “especially,” he said, “as I do not find that I have gained any point, in either country, except that of rendering myself suspected by my impartiality; in England of being too much an American, and in America, of being too much an Englishman.”

His view of the legal tie between England and the Colonies was very simple. How, he wrote to William Franklin, the people of Boston could admit that the” General Court of Massachusetts was subordinate to Parliament, and yet, in the same breath, deny the power of Parliament to enact laws for them, he could not understand; nor could he understand what bounds the Farmer’s Letters set to the authority in Parliament, which they conceded, to “regulate the trade of the Colonies.” It was difficult, he thought, to draw lines between duties for regulation and those for revenue; and, if Parliament was to be the judge, it seemed to him that the distinction would amount to little. Two years previously, however, when examined before the House of Commons; he had stated that, while the right of a Parliament in which the colonies were not represented to impose an internal tax upon them was generally denied in America, he had never heard any objection urged in America to duties laid by Parliament to regulate commerce; and, when he was asked whether there was any kind of difference between the two taxes to the colonies on which they might be laid, he had a prompt answer:

I think the difference is very great. An external tax is a duty laid on commodities imported; that duty is added to the first cost and other charges on the commodity, and, when it is offered to sale, makes a part of the price. If the people do not like it at that

price, they refuse it; they are not obliged to pay it. But an internal tax is forced from the people without their consent, if not laid by their own representatives.

And then, when asked immediately afterwards whether, if the external tax or duty was laid on the necessities of life imported into Pennsylvania, that would not be the same thing in its effects as an internal tax, he doubtless filled the minds of his more insular auditors with astonishment by replying, "I do not know a single article imported into the Northern Colonies, but what they can either do without, or make themselves."

Another neat answer in the examination was his answer" when asked whether there was any kind of difference between a duty on the importation of goods and an excise on their consumption:

Yes, a very material one; an excise, for the reasons I have just mentioned, they (the colonists) think you can have no right to lay within their country. But the sea is yours; you maintain, by your fleets, the safety of navigation in it, and keep it clear of pirates; you may have therefore a natural and equitable right to some toll or duty on merchandizes carried through that part of your dominions, towards defraying the expence you are at in ships to maintain the safety of that carriage.

Finally he grew weary of the repeated effort to fix the reproach of inconsistency upon the colonies because of their acquiescence in Parliamentary regulation of their commerce; and, when asked whether Pennsylvania might not, by the same interpretation of her charter, object to external as well as internal taxation without representation, he replied:

They never have hitherto. Many arguments have been lately used here to show them, that there is no difference, and that, if you have no right to tax them internally, you have none to tax them externally, or make any other law to bind them. At present they do not reason so; but in time they may possibly be convinced by these arguments.

Nearly ten years later, Franklin had in a conversation with Lord Chatham at his country seat a notable opportunity to say something further with respect to Parliamentary regulations of American commerce. On this occasion, the great English statesman, then earnestly engaged in a last effort to avert the approaching rupture, observed that the opinion prevailed in England that America aimed at setting up for itself as an independent state; or at least getting rid of the Navigation Acts; and" Franklin assured him that, having more than once travelled almost from one end of the continent to the other, and kept a great variety of company, eating, drinking and conversing with them freely, he never had heard in any conversation from any person, drunk or sober, the least expression of a wish for a separation, or hint that such a thing would be advantageous to America. And, as to the Navigation Act, he said that the main material part of it, that of carrying on trade in British or Plantation bottoms, excluding foreign ships from colonial ports, and navigating with three fourths British seamen was as acceptable to America as it could be to Britain. Indeed, he declared, America was not even against regulations of the general commerce by Parliament, provided such regulations were *bona fide* for the benefit of the whole empire, not for the small advantage of one part to the great injury of another, such as obliging American ships to call in England with their wine and fruit from Portugal or Spain, the restraints on American manufactures in the woollen and hat-making branches, the prohibiting of slitting-mills, steel-works and the like.

In the opinion of Franklin, Great Britain and America were legally connected as England and Scotland were before the Union by having one common sovereign. He denied that the instructions of the King had the force of law in the Colonies, as Lord Granville had contended, or that the King and Parliament had any legislative authority over them. "Something," he told his son, "might be made of either of the extremes; that Parliament has a

power to make *all laws* for us, or that it has a power to make *no laws* for us; and I think the arguments for the latter more numerous and weighty than those for the former.” The King with his Plantation Parliaments was, in his opinion, the sole legislator of his American subjects, and, in that capacity, was, and ought to be, free to exercise his own judgment, unrestrained and” unlimited by the English Parliament.⁶⁰ That the Colonies were originally constituted distinct states and intended to be continued such, was clear to him, he wrote to Dr. Cooper, from a thorough consideration of their first charters and the whole conduct of the crown and nation towards them until the Restoration. Since that time Parliament had usurped an authority of making laws for them which before it had not, and America had for some time submitted to the usurpation partly through ignorance and inattention and partly from its weakness and inability to contend. He wished therefore that such expressions as “the supreme authority of Parliament,” “the subordinacy of our Assemblies to the Parliament” and the like were no longer employed in the colonies. These opinions were formed at a time when he labored under the egregious error of supposing that, in spite of the wicked machinations of his Parliament, the King regarded his colonies with the eye of mild paternal favor; but they remained his opinions long after he ceased to be the cheat of this delusion.

How far Franklin’s idea of the legal bond between Great Britain and the Colonies was a correct one is a technical inquiry that we need not discuss; but his conception of the solidarity of interests which should exist between all parts of the British Empire was as generous and glowing as any federal rhapsodist of the present day could form.” When he expounded it to Lord Chatham at Hayes, the latter in his grand way declared that it was a sound one, worthy of a great, benevolent and comprehensive mind. And such it was. The truth is that Franklin was an Imperialist, and the union which he saw was that of a vast English-speaking empire, made up of parts, held in harmony with each other not only by their common English heritage but also by a measure of self-government liberal enough to assure to each of them an intelligent and sympathetic administration of its particular interests. Until the colonial history of England began, all great empires, he told Lord Chatham, had crumbled first at their extremities, because

Countries remote from the Seat and Eye of Government which therefore could not well understand their Affairs for want of full and true Information, had never been well governed but had been oppress’d by bad Governors, on Presumption that Complaint was difficult to be made and supported against them at such a distance.

Had this process of disintegration not been invited in recent years by wrong politics (which would have Parliament to be omnipotent, though it ought not to be so unless it could at the same time be omniscient) they might have gone on extending their Western Empire, adding Province to Province, as far as the South Sea.

It has long appeared to me [he said in his *Tract relative to the Affair of Hutchinson’s Letters*], that the only true British Politicks were those which aim’d at the Good of the *Whole British Empire*, not that which sought the Advantage of *one Part* in the Disadvantage of the others; therefore all Measures of procuring Gain to the Mother Country arising from Loss to her Colonies, and all of Gain to the Colonies arising

⁶⁰ The view that Franklin took of the constitutional tie between Great Britain and America was expressed in many different forms. One of the concisest is to be found in a letter to his grandnephew Jonathan Williams, dated Feb. 12, 1786, and, therefore, written after the tie, whatever its exact nature was, had become a subject for the historian rather than the politician. Speaking of a controversy in which Williams had been involved, he says: "It seems to me that instead of discussing *When* we ceas'd to be British Subjects you should have deny'd our *ever having been such*. We were Subjects to the King of G. Britain, as were also the Irish, the Jersey and Guernsey People and the Hanoverians, but we were American Subjects as they were Irish, Jersey and Hanoverian Subjects. None are British Subjects but those under the Parliament of Britain."

from or occasioning Loss to Britain, especially where the Gain was small and the Loss great, every Abridgment of the Power of the Mother Country, where that Power was not prejudicial” to the Liberties of the Colonists, and every Diminution of the Privileges of the Colonists, where they were not prejudicial to the Welfare of the Mo. Country, I, in my own Mind, condemned as improper, partial, unjust, and mischievous; tending to create Dissensions, and weaken that Union, on which the Strength, Solidity, and Duration of the Empire greatly depended; and I opposed, as far as my little Powers went, all Proceedings, either here or in America, that in my Opinion had such Tendency.

But in no words of Franklin is his inspiring idea of British unity more strikingly expressed than in one of his letters to Lord Howe during the Revolutionary War.

Long did I endeavour, with unfeigned and unwearied Zeal [was his touching language] to preserve from breaking that fine and noble China Vase, the British Empire; for I knew, that, being once broken, the separate Parts could not retain even their Shares of the Strength and Value that existed in the Whole, and that a perfect Reunion of those Parts could scarce ever be hoped for. Your Lordship may possibly remember the tears of Joy that wet my Cheek, when, at your good Sister’s in London, you once gave me Expectations that a Reconciliation might soon take place.

That there was only one way in which the fair vase upon which his eye lingered so fondly and proudly could for certainty be preserved from irreparable ruin, namely, by admitting the colonies to representation in the British Parliament, Franklin saw with perfect clearness. Repeatedly the thought of such a union emerges from his correspondence only to be dismissed as impracticable. As far back as 1766, he wrote from London to Cadwallader Evans these pregnant words:

My private opinion concerning a union in Parliament between the two countries is, that it would be best for the whole.” But I think it will never be done. For though I believe, that, if we had no more representatives than Scotland has, we should be sufficiently strong in the House to prevent, as they do for Scotland, anything ever passing to our disadvantage; yet we are not able at present to furnish and maintain such a number, and, when we are more able, we shall be less willing than we are now. The Parliament here do at present think too highly of themselves to admit representatives from us, if we should ask it; and, when they will be desirous of granting it, we shall think too highly of ourselves to accept of it. It would certainly contribute to the strength of the whole, if Ireland and all the dominions were united and consolidated under one common council for general purposes, each retaining its particular council or parliament for its domestic concerns. But this should have been more early provided for. In the infancy of our foreign establishments it was neglected, or was not thought of. And now the affair is nearly in the situation of Friar Bacon’s project of making a brazen wall round England for its eternal security. His servant, Friar Bungey, slept while the brazen head, which was to dictate how it might be done, said *Time is*, and *Time was*. He only waked to hear it say, *Time is past*. An explosion followed, that tumbled their house about the conjuror’s ears.

In a subsequent letter to his son in 1768, Franklin again indulges the same day dream, and again reaches the conclusion that such a union would be the best for the whole, and that, though particular parts might find particular disadvantages in it, they would find greater advantages in the security arising to every part from the increased strength of the whole. But such a union, he concluded, was not likely to take place, while the nature of the existing

relation was so little understood on both sides of the water, and sentiments concerning it remained so widely different.

Nothing, therefore, remained for Franklin to do except to fall back upon this relation and to make the best of it, to insist that the only constitutional tie between England” and the Colonies was the King, and that Parliament had no more right to tax America than to tax Hanover, though the legislative assemblies of the colonies would always be ready in the future as they had been in the past to honor the requisitions for pecuniary aids made upon them by the King, through his Secretary of State; to combat the political and economic dogmas and the national prejudices which stood in the way of the full recognition by England of the fact that her true interest was to be found in the liberal treatment of the Colonies; to warn the Colonies that their connection with England was attended with too many obligations and advantages to be hastily or prematurely forfeited by rash resentments, so long as there was any definite prospect of their appeal to English self-interest and good-feeling not proving in vain; and finally to couple the warning with the suggestion that they should unceasingly keep up the assertion of their just rights, and be prepared, all else failing, to maintain them with an unabated military spirit. It was not to be expected of a man so conservative and constant in nature, and bound to England by so many strong and endearing associations, that he should wage a solitary combat for American rights on English soil before he or any man had reason to know how bitterly the Stamp Act would be returned upon the head of Parliament by America, but never, after the temper of his countrymen in regard to it, was made manifest to him, were his elbows again out of touch with those of his compatriots in America. To their assistance and to the assistance as well of the great body of wise and generous Englishmen, who loved liberty too much at home to begrudge it to Englishmen in America, he brought his every resource, his scientific fame, his social gifts, his personal popularity, his knowledge of the world and the levers by which it is moved, the sane, searching mind, too full of light for bigotry, superstition, or confusion, the pen that enlisted” satirical point as readily as grave dissertation in the service of instruction. It cannot be doubted that his exertions should be reckoned among the potent influences that secured the repeal of the Stamp Act. To Charles Thomson he wrote that he had reprinted everything from America that he thought might help their common cause. His examination before the House of Commons was published and had a great run. “You guessed aright,” he wrote to Lord Kames with regard to the repeal, “in supposing that I would not be a *mute in that play*. I was extremely busy, attending Members of both Houses, informing, explaining, consulting, disputing, in a continual hurry from morning to night, till the affair was happily ended.”

Some years after the repeal of the Stamp Act, he wrote to Jane Mecom that, at the time of the repeal, the British Ministry were ready to hug him for the assistance that he had afforded them in bringing it about. From the time of the repeal until he returned to America in 1775, his one absorbing object was to create a better understanding between England and her colonies, and to avert the possibility of war between them. Among the things with which he had to contend in accomplishing his aims was the haughty spirit in which the English people were disposed to look down upon the colonists, and to resent any manifestation of independence upon their part as insolent. It was this spirit which made him feel that the assent of England would never be obtained to the representation of America in Parliament.

I am fully persuaded with you [he wrote to Lord Kames], that a *Consolidating Union*, by a fair and equal representation of all the parts of this Empire in Parliament, is the only firm basis on which its political grandeur and prosperity can be founded. Ireland once wished it, but now rejects it. The time has been, when the colonies might have been pleased with it; they are now *indifferent* about it; and if it is much” longer delayed, they too will *refuse it*. But the pride of this people can not bear the thought of

it, and therefore it will be delayed. Every man in England seems to consider himself as a piece of a sovereign over America; seems to jostle himself into the throne with the King, and talks of *our subjects in the Colonies*.

This was the sentiment of England in general. In the guard-room and barracks, it assumed at times the grosser form of such contempt as that which led General Clarke to believe as we have seen that the emasculation of all the male Americans would be little more than a holiday task for a handful of British grenadiers. Along with this haughty spirit went a crass ignorance of America and Americans which Franklin despaired of ever enlightening except by good-natured ridicule. An illustration of the manner in which he employed this agency is found in his letter to the Editor of a Newspaper. It had been claimed, he said, that factories in America were impossible because American sheep had but little wool, and the dearness of American labor rendered the profitable working of iron and other materials, except in some few coarse instances, impracticable.

Dear Sir [was his reply], do not let us suffer ourselves to be amus'd with such groundless Objections. The very Tails of the American Sheep are so laden with Wooll, that each has a little Car or Waggon on four little Wheels, to support & keep it from trailing on the Ground. Would they caulk their Ships, would they fill their Beds, would they even litter their Horses with Wooll, if it were not both plenty and cheap? And what signifies Dearness of Labour, when an English shilling passes for five and Twenty? Their engaging 300 Silk Throwsters here in one Week, for New York, was treated as a Fable, because, forsooth, they have "no Silk there to throw." Those, who made this Objection, perhaps did not know, that at the same time the Agents from the King of Spain were at Quebec to contract for 1000 Pieces of Cannon" to be made there for the Fortification of Mexico, and at New York engaging the annual Supply of woven Floor-Carpets for their West India Houses, other Agents from the Emperor of China were at Boston treating about an Exchange of raw Silk for Wooll, to be carried in Chinese Junks through the Straits of Magellan.

Another thing, with which Franklin had to contend, was the misrepresentations that the colonial governors were constantly making about American conditions. These misrepresentations were in keeping with the unworthy character of some of them and with the transitory relation that almost all of them bore to the Colonies, of which they were the executives. What the Americans truly thought of them is pointedly expressed in Franklin's *Causes of the American Discontents*.

They say then as to Governors [he declared], that they are not like Princes whose posterity have an inheritance in the Government of a nation, and therefore an interest in its prosperity; they are generally strangers to the Provinces they are sent to govern, have no estate, natural connexion, or relation there, to give them an affection for the country; that they come only to make money as fast as they can; are sometimes men of vicious characters and broken fortunes, sent by a Minister merely to get them out of the way; that as they intend staying in the country no longer than their government continues, and purpose to leave no family behind them, they are apt to be regardless of the goodwill of the people, and care not what is said or thought of them after they are gone.

That such men were biased and untrustworthy witnesses touching American conditions goes without saying, but, when discontent became deeply implanted in the breasts of the colonists, their partisan and perverted reports to the English Government as to the state of America did much to mislead their masters. The burden of these reports as a rule was that the disaffected were "few in numbers and persons of little consequence, that the colonists of property and

social standing were satisfied, and inclined to submit to Parliamentary taxation, that it was impossible to establish manufacturing industries in America, and that, if Parliament would only steadily persist in the exercise of its legislative authority over America, the non-importation agreements and other defensive measures adopted by its people would be abandoned.

But the most intractable of all the obstacles with which Franklin had to contend was the policy of commercial and industrial restriction, partly the result of economic purblindness, peculiar to the time, and partly the result of sheer selfishness, which England relentlessly pursued in her relations to the colonies. Every suggestion that this policy should be relaxed was met by its more extreme champions, such as George Grenville, with the statement that the Acts of Navigation were the very Palladium of England. On no account were the Colonies to be allowed to import wine, oil and fruit directly from Spain and Portugal, or to even import iron directly from foreign countries. Enlarged as was the understanding of Lord Chatham himself, it could not tolerate the thought that America should be permitted to convert any form of crude material into manufactured products. Every hat made in America, every shipload of emigrants that left the shores of England for America, was jealously regarded as signifying so much pecuniary loss to England. The colonists were to be mere *adscripti glebæ*, mere tillers of the American soil for the purpose of wringing from it the price of the manufactured commodities, with which they were to be exclusively supplied by the factories and shops of the mother country. The idea that, in any other sense, the expanding numbers and wealth of America could inure to the benefit of England, was one that seemed to be wholly foreign to its consciousness. To this Little England Franklin steadfastly opposed his conception of an Imperial England, based upon the freedom of all its parts to contribute to the wealth and importance of the whole by the full enjoyment of all their peculiar natural gifts and advantages.

No one can more sincerely rejoice than I do [he wrote to Lord Kames in 1760], on the reduction of Canada; and this is not merely as I am a colonist, but as I am a Briton. I have long been of opinion, that the *foundations of the future grandeur and stability of the British Empire lie in America*; and though, like other foundations, they are low and little seen, they are, nevertheless, broad and strong enough to support the greatest political structure human wisdom ever yet erected.

These words, splendid as was the vision by which they were illumined, were but the utterance in another form of the thought that he had expressed nine years before in America in his essay on the *Increase of Mankind*. Speaking of the population of the colonies at that time he said:

This Million doubling, suppose but once in 25 years, will, in another Century, be more than the People of *England*, and the greatest Number of *Englishmen* will be on this Side the Water. What an Accession of Power to the *British Empire* by Sea as well as Land! What Increase of Trade and Navigation! What Numbers of Ships and Seamen! We have been here but little more than 100 years, and yet the Force of our Privateers in the late War, united, was greater, both in Men and Guns, than that of the whole *British Navy* in Queen *Elizabeth's* time.

Indeed so fully possessed was he even as late as 1771 with the federative spirit, which has brought recruits from Canada and Australia to the side of England in recent wars that, after urging upon Thomas Cushing the importance of a well-disciplined militia being maintained by Massachusetts, for her protection against invasion by a foreign foe, he added, "And what a Glory would it be for us to send, on any trying Occasion, ready and effectual Aid to our Mother Country!" It is only by reading such words as these that we can begin to

divine what the divulsion of England and America has really meant to the vast host of human beings throughout the world who speak the English tongue.

To all the shallow sophistries or sottish errors, that tended to falsify his glorious dream of world-wide British unity, Franklin presented a merciless intellect. With regard to the intention of Parliament to tax the colonies, he had these pointed words to say in a letter to Peter Collinson in 1764: "What we get above a Subsistence we lay out with you for your Manufactures.

"Therefore what you get from us in Taxes you must lose in Trade. The Cat can yield but her skin."

Even more acute was his letter to the *Public Advertiser* on a proposed Act to prevent emigration from England. Such an Act, he declared, was unnecessary, impracticable, impolitic and unjust. What is more, with an insight into the laws governing population, superior to that of any man of his time, he made his assertions good. To illustrate this claim in part, we need go no further than what he had to say about the necessity of the Act.

As long as the new situation shall be *far* preferable to the old [he said], the emigration may possibly continue. But when many of those, who at home interfered with others of the same rank (in the competition for farms, shops, business, offices, and other means of subsistence), are gradually withdrawn, the inconvenience of that competition ceases; the number remaining no longer half starve each other; they find they can now subsist comfortably, and though perhaps not quite so well as those who have left them, yet, the inbred attachment to a native country is sufficient to overbalance a moderate difference; and thus the emigration ceases naturally." The waters of the ocean may move in currents from one quarter of the globe to another, as they happen in some places to be accumulated, and in others diminished; but no law, beyond the law of gravity, is necessary to prevent their abandoning any coast entirely. Thus the different degrees of happiness of different countries and situations find, or rather make, their level by the flowing of people from one to another; and where that level is once found, the removals cease. Add to this, that even a real deficiency of people in any country, occasioned by a wasting war or pestilence, is speedily supplied by earlier and more prolific marriages, encouraged by the greater facility of obtaining the means of subsistence. So that a country half depopulated would soon be re-peopled, till the means of subsistence were equalled by the population. All increase beyond that point must perish, or flow off into more favourable situations. Such overflowings there have been of mankind in all ages, or we should not now have had so many nations. But to apprehend absolute depopulation from that cause, and call for a law to prevent it, is calling for a law to stop the Thames, lest its waters, by what leave it daily at Gravesend, should be quite exhausted.

Twenty-three years before he had stated the same truths more sententiously in his essay on the *Increase of Mankind*.

In fine [he said in that essay] a Nation well regulated is like a Polypus; take away a Limb, its Place is soon supply'd; cut it in two, and each deficient Part shall speedily grow out of the Part remaining. Thus if you have Room and Subsistence enough, as you may by dividing, make ten Polypes out of one, you may of one make ten Nations, equally populous and powerful; or rather increase a Nation ten fold in Numbers and Strength.

Franklin clearly saw that, with the increase of population in the colonies, the demand for British manufactures would increase *pari passu*, and that, with the increased demand for

them, the population of Great Britain would increase, perhaps, tenfold. Much as he made of the economic conditions that tended to give a purely agricultural direction to the energies of America, he laughed to scorn the idea that America would always remain in a state of industrial subjection to England.

Only consider *the rate of our Increase* [he wrote to Peter Collinson, after stating that it was folly to expect that America would always be supplied with cloth by England] and tell me if you can increase your Wooll in that Proportion, and where, in your little Island you can feed the Sheep. Nature has put Bounds to your Abilities, tho' none to your Desires. Britain would, if she could, manufacture & trade for all the World; England for all Britain;—London for all England;—and every Londoner for all London. So selfish is the human Mind! But 'tis well there is One above that rules these Matters with a more equal Hand.

The agency that Franklin held for Pennsylvania in the first instance, and the agencies that he afterwards held for Massachusetts, New Jersey and Georgia, too, afforded him a solid standing for influencing public opinion both in England and America. He was actually in England, and, at the same time, in incessant correspondence with the popular leaders in America. With the beginning of the agitation for the repeal of the Stamp Act he entered upon a course of political activity which added greatly, in another form, to the reputation already acquired by him as a man of science. For his services in securing the repeal, including the flood of light that his answers, when examined before the House of Commons, shed upon the points at issue between the two countries, he was repaid by the English Ministry with attentions which he describes by a term as strong as "caress." Even when the dust of the conflict had thickened, and popular sentiment in England had ranged itself more and more on the side of the King and Parliament, his advice was still eagerly sought by Chatham, Camden, Shelburne and Burke and other liberal and sagacious English statesmen, when they were vainly striving in opposition to restore sanity to the distracted counsels that were menacing the security of the Empire.⁶¹ Those must have been proud moments for Franklin, when the elder Pitt, whom he had come to regard in the earlier stages of his maturer life in England as an "inaccessible," received him as an honored guest under his roof at Hayes, or conferred with him at No. 7 Craven Street, or delivered him to the doorkeepers in the House of Lords, saying aloud, "This is Dr. Franklin, whom I would have admitted into the House." There have been few men who might not have envied the privilege of intimate communion with a man not greater, when he was making his country the mistress of the world, than, when decrepit, and in a hopeless minority, he rose in the House of Lords to plead with a voice, inspired not only by his own matchless eloquence but by all that was best in the history and temper of England for the removal of His Majesty's troops from the town of Boston. On the other side of the Atlantic, too, as the final catastrophe drew nearer, Franklin acquired a position, as the champion of the Colonies, which led Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts to say of the memorable report, made by a committee to the town meeting, held in Boston on November 20, 1772, that "although at its first appearance it was considered as their own work, yet they had little more to do than to make the necessary alterations in the arrangement of materials prepared for them by their great director in England, whose counsels they obeyed, and in whose wisdom and dexterity they had an implicit faith."

And with entire truth it can be said that, until war became inevitable, Franklin used his influence in both countries with the unwavering purpose of promoting the best interests of

⁶¹ "Your medallion is in good company; it is placed with those of Lord Chatham, Lord Camden, Marquis of Rockingham, Sir George Saville, and some others, who honoured me with a show of friendly regard, when in England." (Letter from Franklin to Geo. Whatley, May 18, 1787.)

both. The representation of America in Parliament at that time he saw was impracticable, and it is hard to believe, though the imbecility of a government without a sanction had not yet been forced upon his attention by the Articles of Confederation, that so practical a man could have had much faith in the steady efficacy of mere requisitions for aids by the Crown on the colonial assemblies. But, within the limits set him by the insurmountable barriers of the hour, it can not be doubted, bold as such an assertion may be, that the wisest thing that both England and the Colonies could have done, if such an idea is conceivable, would have been to leave the controversy between them to his sole arbitration. The most striking tribute that can be paid to the wisdom and open-mindedness of Franklin is to say that, if this had been done, an accommodation would unquestionably have been reached with due regard to the honor, dignity and essential interests of both countries. His attitude in England was that of a loyal friend to both parties to the controversy, who, as he viewed it, had no cause for disagreement that a temperate and sensible man would not know how to readily remove. To the British public he addressed with numerous variations the following arguments: Notwithstanding the rapid increase of population in America, its area was so vast, and contained so much vacant land, that even such artisans as it had soon drifted into the possession and cultivation of land. The danger, therefore, of industrial competition between the two countries was very remote. The people of America, however, would multiply so rapidly that, in the course of a brief time, the demand for manufactures would increase to such an extent that Great Britain would be powerless alone to supply it. He had satisfied himself by an inspection of the cloth factories in Yorkshire that, with a population doubling as did that of America every twenty-five years, Great Britain would in the future be unable to keep the Americans clothed. It was not right that the interests of a particular class of British merchants, tradesmen or artificers should outweigh those of all the King's subjects in the Colonies. Iron was to be found everywhere in America, and beaver furs were the natural productions of that country; hats, nails and steel were wanted there as well as in England. It was of no importance to the common welfare of the empire whether a subject of the King got his living by making hats on one or the other side of the water, whether he grew rich on the Thames or the Ohio, in Edinburgh or Dublin. Yet the hatters of England had obtained an act in their own favor, restraining that manufacture in America in order to oblige the Americans to send their beaver to England to be manufactured, and to purchase back the hats loaded with the charges of a double transportation. In the same manner, had a few nail-makers and a still smaller body of steel-makers (perhaps there were not a half-dozen of these in England) been able to totally forbid by an Act of Parliament the erecting of slitting mills or steel-furnaces in America. All money made by America in trade, or derived by it from fisheries, the produce of the soil or commerce, finally centred in England; yet, though America was drained of all its specie in the purchase of English goods, often mere luxuries and superfluities, she was not even allowed to issue paper money, however carefully safeguarded, to take its place. The idea that the numerous and separate colonies might become dangerous to the mother country was visionary. They were so jealous of each other that they had been wholly unable to agree upon a union for their common defence or to unite in requesting the mother country to establish one for them. The truth was that they loved England much more than they loved each other. There remained among them so much respect, veneration and affection for Britain, that, if cultivated prudently, with kind usage, and tenderness for their privileges, they might be easily governed still for ages, without force, or any considerable expense. Parliament had no constitutional right to levy a direct tax of any kind on America. The King was the only bond between America and Great Britain. In the beginning, no claim had been made by Parliament of a right to even regulate American commerce, but the power had long been exercised by it without any objection on the part of the colonies, and could, at any rate, be reasonably defended on the ground that Great Britain was put to a great expense

in policing the seas over which American commerce moved. If England felt that she could not rely upon the voluntary grants of America, to defray the charges imposed upon her by America, then the logical and proper thing to do before she levied direct taxes upon America was to provide for the representation of the Colonies in Parliament. Until that was done, if it was practicable to do it, she should confine herself to the old constitutional practice of requisitions for pecuniary aid, issued by the Secretary of State, at the instance of the Crown, to the Legislative Assemblies of America. These requisitions of a gracious King had been freely honored in the past. Indeed, the pecuniary burden of the wars, which had been carried on in America, though they were not of her kindling, had been borne by America in a larger proportion to her means than England. But to impose a stamp or tea duty upon America by Act of Parliament was simple madness. No taxes of that sort would ever be collected in America except such as were stained with blood. If Parliament, in which America was not represented, had the right to take from her a penny in a pound, what was there to hinder it from calling, whenever it pleased, for the other nineteen shillings and" eleven pence? The only result of a continued attempt to tax America would be the complete loss of her respect and affection, and all the political and commercial advantages that accompanied them. It was a mistake to heed the statements of the Colonial Governors as to the limited extent of popular disaffection in America and the inability of the Colonies to dispense with English manufactures. Their dependence was such as to render them more eager to conciliate court than colonial favor. It was also a mistake to suppose that America could not either make or forego any articles whatsoever that she was in the habit of buying from England. Men would tax themselves as heavily to gratify their resentment as their pride. The Americans had resolved to wear no more mourning, and it was now totally out of fashion with near two millions of people. They had resolved to eat no more lamb, and not a joint of lamb had since been seen on any of their tables, but the lambs themselves were all alive with the prettiest of fleeces on their backs imaginable. Look, too, at the pitiful sum of eighty pounds which was all that the odious tea duty banned by America had produced in a year to defray the expense of some hundreds of thousands of pounds incurred by England in maintaining armed ships and soldiers to support the innumerable officeholders charged with the duty of enforcing the tax.

The argument addressed by Franklin to America was equally earnest. The protection that England could afford her, the office of umpire that England could perform for her, in case of disputes between the Colonies, so that they could go on without interruption with their improvements, and increase their numbers, were the advantages that America enjoyed in her connection with England.

By the Exercise of prudent Moderation on her part, mix'd with a little Kindness [Franklin wrote to Thomas Cushing],” and by a decent Behaviour on ours, excusing where we can excuse from a Consideration of Circumstances, and bearing a little with the Infirmities of her Government, as we would with those of an aged Parent,⁶² tho’

⁶² This idea is advanced also in *The Mother Country, A Song*, which Jared Sparks thought was probably written by Franklin about the time of the Stamp Act or a little later:

"We have an old mother that peevish is grown;
She snubs us like children that scarce walk alone;
She forgets we're grown up and have sense of our own;
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.
If we don't obey orders, whatever the case,
She frowns, and she chides and she loses all pati-
Ence, and sometimes she hits us a slap in the face,
Which nobody can deny, etc.

firmly asserting our Privileges, and declaring that we mean at a proper time to vindicate them, this advantageous Union may still be long continued. We wish it, and we may endeavour it; but God will order it as to His Wisdom shall seem most suitable. The Friends of Liberty here, wish we may long preserve it on our side the Water, that they may find it there if adverse Events should destroy it here. They are therefore anxious and afraid, lest we should hazard it by premature Attempts in" its favour. They think we may risque much by violent Measures and that the Risque is unnecessary, since a little Time must infallibly bring us all we demand or desire, and bring it us in Peace and Safety. I do not presume to advise. There are many wiser men among you, and I hope you will be directed by a still superior Wisdom.

Every personal difference Franklin contended did not justify a quarrel nor did every act of oppression on the part of the mother country justify a war. The policy, which he laid down for the Colonies, was to exercise patience and forbearance, and to look to political changes in England and their own rapidly increasing numbers and wealth for the ultimate redress of their grievances, but, in the meantime, to reaffirm fearlessly their constitutional rights on every proper occasion. This policy is again and again recommended in his letters to his friends and political correspondents over-sea. Even before the Stamp Act was actually repealed, he wrote to Charles Thomson expressing the hope that, when that happened, the behavior of America would be so prudent, decent and grateful that their friends in England would have no reason to be ashamed, and their enemies in England, who had predicted that Parliamentary indulgence would only make them more insolent and ungovernable, would find themselves, and be found, false prophets. After the repeal of the Stamp Act, in a letter to Galloway, he expressed deep regret that the English merchants, who had helped to secure that result, and to communicate the knowledge of it, at their expense to America, should feel that the Americans had proved themselves ingrates, and he accordingly said that he hoped that some decent acknowledgments or thanks would be sent to these merchants by the colonial assemblies. When the idea of taxing America was subsequently revived, he wrote to the same correspondent that he knew not what to advise, but that they should all do their endeavors on both sides" the water to lessen the present unpopularity of the American cause, conciliate the affections of the British towards them, increase by all possible means the number of their friends, and be careful not to weaken their hands, and strengthen their enemies, by rash proceedings on their side; the mischiefs of which were inconceivable. In a letter to the printer of the *Gazetteer*, signed "New England," he said: "I only hate calumniators and boutefeus on either side the water, who would for the little dirty purposes of faction, set brother against

Her orders so odd are, we often suspect
That age has impaired her sound intellect.
But still an old mother should have due respect,
Which nobody can deny, etc.
Let's bear with her humors as well as we can;
But why should we bear the abuse of her man?
When servants make mischief, they earn the rattan,
Which nobody should deny, etc.
Know too, ye bad neighbours, who aim to divide
The sons from the mother, that still she's our pride;
And if ye attack her we're all of her side,
Which nobody can deny, etc.
We'll join in her lawsuits, to baffle all those,
Who, to get what she has, will be often her foes;
For we know it must all be our own, when she goes,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny."

brother, turn friends into mortal enemies, and ruin an empire by dividing it.” In a letter to Cadwallader Evans, in 1768, he even approved the idea that America should manufacture only such things as England neglected.

These are but scant gleanings from the numerous letters in which, down to the very last, Franklin unweariedly repeated his counsels of self-restraint to his fellow-countrymen. Accompanying them was every word of good cheer that he thought might tend to make this self-restraint easier. Several times he assured his American correspondents that, in the debate with the mother country, America had the sympathy of all Europe. For a long time, he endeavored to allay the resentment of his countrymen, under the sting of parliamentary injustice, by voicing the delusion that the King did not share the sentiments of the corrupt legislature which, as a matter of fact, he was all the time corrupting for the purpose of fostering such sentiments. Every indication of a favorable disposition towards the Colonies upon the part of the English People, during the alternations of anxiety and confidence that his mind underwent with the rise and fall of English ministries, friendly or unfriendly to America, was promptly observed by him and reported to America. At times, it is plain enough that he thought a war it would be; yet as late as 1775, when he believed that the adverse ministry of that time was tottering, his sanguine nature” reached the conclusion in a letter to James Bowdoin that the redoubled clamor of the trading, manufacturing and Whig interests in England would infallibly overthrow all the enemies of America, and produce an acknowledgment of her rights and satisfaction for her injuries. Parliament rarely gave him any occasion to speak of it except in terms of mingled amazement and indignation; but it is agreeable to remember that, in a letter in 1774 to Jane Mecom, he made grateful mention of “the generous and noble friends of America” in both houses, whose names, dear to the highest traditions of human genius and public spirit, should never be forgotten in any movement to reintegrate in some form the broken fragments of the china vase in which Franklin saw a symbol of the unity of the British Empire.

Accompanying Franklin’s counsels of patience, however, was also an unceasing warning to America not to alter for a moment her posture of resistance and protest. “If under all the Insults and Oppressions you are now exposed to,” he told Dr. Cooper, “you can prudently, as you have lately done, continue quiet, avoiding Tumults, but still resolutely keeping up your Claim and asserting your Rights, you will finally establish them, and this military Cloud that now blusters over you will pass away, and do no more Harm than a Summer Thunder Shower.” “The Colonies,” he wrote subsequently to Robert Morris and Thomas Leach, “have Adversaries enow to their common Privileges: They should endeavour to agree among themselves, and avoid everything that may make ill-Blood and promote Divisions, which must weaken them in their common Defence.” To Thomas Cushing he wrote that America should continue from time to time to assert its rights in occasional solemn resolves and other public acts, never yielding them up, and avoiding even the slightest expressions that seemed confirmatory of the claim that had been set up against” them. As the end of it all became more and more obvious, his note of warning assumed an additional significance. In a letter to Thomas Cushing in 1773, he wrote:

But our great Security lies, I think, in our growing Strength, both in Numbers and Wealth; that creates an increasing Ability of assisting this Nation in its Wars, which will make us more respectable, our Friendship more valued, and our Enmity feared; thence it will soon be thought proper to treat us not with Justice only, but with Kindness, and thence we may expect in a few Years a total Change of Measures with regard to us; unless, by a Neglect of military Discipline, we should lose all martial Spirit, and our Western People become as tame as those in the Eastern Dominions of

Britain, when we may expect the same Oppressions; for there is much Truth in the Italian saying, *Make yourselves Sheep, and the Wolves will eat you.*

Indeed the almost miraculous way in which the population and wealth of America were increasing from year to year was one of the facts which entered most deeply into Franklin's calculation of the resources upon which she could rely not for the purpose of breaking away from the British connection but for the purpose of preventing it from being abused by England. No one saw more clearly than he that the day would come when some descendant, such as Gladstone, of one of his British contemporaries might well apostrophize America as a daughter that, at no very distant time, would, whether fairer or less fair, be unquestionably stronger than the mother.⁶³ To Thomas Cushing he wrote in 1773 that the longer England delayed the accommodation, which finally "for her own sake she must obtain, the worse terms she might expect, since the inequality of power and importance that then subsisted between her and America was daily diminishing; while the latter's sense of her own rights and of England's injustice was continually increasing.

Optimistic on the whole, however, as was Franklin's outlook during the interval of political strife which preceded the American Revolution, intently as he watched every ebb and flow of English feeling, while this period lasted, it is manifest that in its later stages he realized that the currents upon which he was being borne were steadily moving towards the jaws of the maelstrom. This is apparent enough in his perspicacious letter of May 15, 1771, to the Committee of Correspondence in Massachusetts.

I think one may clearly see, in the system of customs to be exacted in America by act of Parliament, the seeds sown of a total disunion of the two countries, though, as yet, that event may be at a considerable distance. The course and natural progress seems to be, first, the appointment of needy men as officers, for others do not care to leave England; then, their necessities make them rapacious, their office makes them proud and insolent, their insolence and rapacity make them odious, and, being conscious that they are hated, they become malicious; their malice urges them to a continual abuse of the inhabitants in their letters to administration, representing them as disaffected and rebellious, and (to encourage the use of severity), as weak, divided, timid, and cowardly. Government believes all; thinks it necessary to support and countenance its officers; their quarreling with the people is deemed a mark and consequence of their fidelity; they are therefore more highly rewarded, and this makes their conduct still more insolent and provoking.

The resentment of the people will, at times and on particular incidents, burst into outrages and violence upon such officers, and this naturally draws down severity and acts of further oppression from hence. The more the people are dissatisfied, the more rigor will be thought necessary; severe punishments will be inflicted to terrify; rights and privileges will be abolished; greater force will then be required to secure execution and submission; the expense will become enormous; it will then be thought proper, by fresh exactions, to make the people defray it; thence, the British nation and government will become odious, the subjection to it will be deemed no longer tolerable; war ensues, and the bloody struggle will end in absolute slavery to America, or ruin to Britain by the loss of her colonies; the latter most probable, from America's growing strength and magnitude.

⁶³ "But there can hardly be a doubt, as between the America and the England of the future, that the daughter, at some no very distant time, will, whether fairer or less fair, be unquestionably yet stronger than the mother.

"O matre forti filia fortior." *Kin Beyond Sea*, by William E. Gladstone.

But, as the whole empire must, in either case, be greatly weakened, I cannot but wish to see much patience and the utmost discretion in our general conduct, that the fatal period may be postponed, and that, whenever this catastrophe shall happen, it may appear to all mankind that the fault has not been ours.

Franklin's written comments upon the American controversy between the passage of the Stamp Act and his return to America in 1775 are usually marked by a sobriety and dignity of expression worthy of their wisdom. It is only at times that the strong character, habitually held in leash by innate prudence and severely disciplined self-control, breaks out into impatience. Naturally enough now and then he has a word of scorn for the graceless venality which made Westminster almost as much a market as Smithfield, and was, after all, the real thing that rendered England deaf to the warning "Time is" of Friar Bacon's brazen mouth-piece.

Many think the new Parliament will be for reversing the late proceedings [he wrote to Galloway in 1774], but that depends on the Court, on which every Parliament seems to be dependent; so much so, that I begin to think a Parliament here of little Use to the People: For since a Parliament is always to do as a ministry would have it, why should we not be govern'd by the Ministry in the first Instance? They could" afford to govern us cheaper, the Parliament being a very expensive Machine, that requires a vast deal of oiling and greasing at the People's Charge; for they finally pay all the enormous Salaries of Places, the Pensions, and the Bribes, now by Custom become necessary to induce the Members to vote according to their Consciences.

Franklin would have been more than human if he had not had a resentful word to say too, when, as the result of the refusal of the Americans to drink any tea, except such as was smuggled into America, free of the detested duty, by the commercial rivals of England, the East India Company could no longer meet its debts, let alone pay dividends and the annuity of four hundred thousand pounds, payable by it to the British Government, and bankruptcy was following bankruptcy like a series of falling bricks, and thousands of Spitalfield and Manchester weavers were starving, or subsisting upon charity. "Blessed Effects of Pride, Pique, and Passion in Government, which should have no Passions," was the caustic observation of Franklin in one of his letters to his son. Bitterness welled up again in his throat when, after he had been bayed by the Privy Council, and dismissed from his office, a special instruction was issued to the Governor of Massachusetts not to sign any warrant on the Treasury for the purpose of paying him any salary as the agent of Massachusetts or reimbursing him for any expenses incurred on her behalf.

The Injustice [he said in his *Tract Relative to the Affair of Hutchinson's Letters*] of thus depriving the People there of the Use of their own Money, to pay an Agent acting in their Defence, while the Governor, with a large Salary out of the Money extorted from them by Act of Parliament, was enabled to pay plentifully Maudit and Wedderburn to abuse and defame them and their Agent, is so evident as to need no Comment. But this they call Government!

Indecent, however, as was the treatment accorded by the Privy Council to the man, who had striven so loyally, so zealously and so wisely to promote the greatness and glory of England, it hardly conveyed a ruder shock to his mind than that which it received later when he saw the plan for the settlement of the American Controversy drafted by Lord Chatham rejected by the House of Lords, with as much contempt he told Charles Thomson, "as they could have shown to a Ballad offered by a drunken Porter."

To hear so many of these *Hereditary* Legislators [he said in his *Account of Negotiations in London*], declaiming so vehemently against, not the Adopting merely, but even the *Consideration* of a Proposal so important in its Nature, offered by a Person of so weighty a Character, one of the first Statesmen of the Age, who had taken up this Country when in the lowest Despondency, and conducted it to Victory and Glory, thro' a War with two of the mightiest Kingdoms in Europe; to hear them censuring his Plan, not only for their own Misunderstandings of what was in it, but for their Imaginations of what was not in it, which they would not give themselves an Opportunity of rectifying by a second Reading; to perceive the total Ignorance of the Subject in some, the Prejudice and Passion of others, and the wilful Perversion of Plain Truth in several of the Ministers; and upon the whole to see it so ignominiously rejected by so great a Majority, and so hastily too, in Breach of all Decency, and prudent Regard to the Character and Dignity of their Body, as a third Part of the National Legislature, gave me an exceeding mean Opinion of their Abilities, and made their Claim of Sovereignty over three Millions of Virtuous, sensible People in America seem the greatest of Absurdities, since they appear'd to have scarce Discretion enough to govern a Herd of Swine. *Hereditary Legislators!* thought I. There would be more Propriety, because less Hazard of Mischief, in having (as in some University of Germany) *Hereditary Professors of Mathematicks*.

Yet this is the Government [Franklin declared in the letter" to Charles Thomson, in which he used the simile of the ballad and the drunken porter, and also referred to equally rash conduct upon the part of the House of Commons], by whose Supreme Authority, we are to have our Throats cut, if we do not acknowledge, and whose dictates we are implicitly to obey, while their conduct hardly entitles them to Common Respect.

But it was only after he had been shamelessly and publicly proscribed, under circumstances which gave him good reason to believe that he was but the vicarious victim of a People unfeelingly doomed to the cruel alternatives of fratricidal resistance or vassalage, that he gave way, though still engaged in a last effort to stave off the evil day of separation, to such reproachful or denunciatory utterances as these. Indeed, as it is a satisfaction to a stupid man to know that Homer sometimes nodded, and to a vicious man to know that the character of Washington is supposed to have been at last successfully fly-specked by some petty scandal-monger, so it ought to be a relief to a hasty man to know that Franklin was once on the point of succumbing entirely to a sudden flaw of anger. Goaded beyond endurance by the reflections, which he had just heard in the House of Lords on everything American, including American courage, honesty and intelligence, reflections as contemptuous, he said, as if his countrymen were the lowest of mankind, and almost of a different species from the English of Britain, he drew up a heated protest, as the agent of Massachusetts, demanding from Great Britain present satisfaction for the blockade of Boston, and stating that satisfaction for the proposed exclusion of Massachusetts from the Newfoundland and other fisheries, if carried into effect, would probably also some day be demanded. When he showed the paper to his friend, Thomas Walpole, a member of the House of Commons, Walpole, we are told by him, looked at it and him several times alternately, as if he apprehended" him to be out of his senses. However, Franklin asked him to lay it before Lord Camden, which he undertook to do. When it came back to Franklin, it was with a note from Walpole telling him simply that it was thought that it might be attended with dangerous consequences to his person, and contribute to exasperate the nation. The caution that Franklin exhibited before permitting the protest to pass from his possession suggests the idea that, in writing it, he was merely seeking a safe vent for the mental ferment of the moment. It was doubtless well for him that the paper

got no further; for it is painful to relate that the disposition was not wanting in England to construe some of his letters to Thomas Cushing as treasonable. In a letter to Cushing, he said that he was not conscious of any treasonable intention, but that, after the manner in which he had recently been treated in the matter of the Hutchinson letters, he was not to wonder if less than a small lump in his forehead was voted a horn. Six months later, he wrote to Galloway that it was thought by many that, if the British soldiers and the New Englanders should come to blows, he would probably be taken up; for the ministerial people affected everywhere to represent him as the cause of all the misunderstanding. We know nothing better calculated to show how hopeless it is for the lamb downstream to convince the wolf upstream that the water flowing by him was not muddied from below than the fact that, during the debate over Lord Chatham's conciliatory Plan, Lord Sandwich referred to Franklin as one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies that England had ever known. That is to say, Franklin, the loyal Englishman who, in one of his early papers on electricity, could not even mention the King without adding, "God preserve him," who had shrunk in the beginning from the agitation against the Stamp Act as little less than treason, who had deprecated the Boston tea-party as lawless" violence, and had, from first to last, condemned mob-license in every form in America as steadfastly as tyranny in England.

The wonder is that he should not have reached the decision sooner than he did that there was nothing to be gained for his country by his longer sojourn in England. His intercourse, as an American agent with Lord Hillsborough, when Secretary of State for America and First Commissioner to the Board of Trade, was alone enough to bring him to such a decision.⁶⁴ As an Irishman, familiar with the repressive policy of England in Ireland, Hillsborough could not well approve of British restrictions upon American commerce and manufactures; but there his sympathy with America ceased. Franklin truly said that the agents of the Colonies in England were quite as useful to England as to the Colonies, since they had more than once by timely advice kept the English Government from making mistakes arising out of ignorance of special conditions peculiar to America. But this view was not shared by Hillsborough. He insisted that no agent from Massachusetts should be recognized in England, who was not appointed, from year to year, by the General Court of Massachusetts by an act, to which the Governor of that colony had given his assent. As the Governor was dependent for his appointment upon the British Ministry, and would hardly fail to name any one as agent, who might be selected by it, such a tenure was equivalent to vesting the selection of the agent in Hillsborough himself, whose wishes, when selected, the agent was not likely to oppose. Under such conditions, an agent would be of no value to the colony, Franklin declared, and, under such conditions, he further declared," he would not be willing himself to hold the post. "His Character is Conceit, Wrongheadedness, Obstinacy, and Passion." Such were the terms in which Franklin summed up the moral attributes of Hillsborough to Dr. Cooper, after he had vainly striven for several years to give the former some salutary conception of the importance of ascertaining the real sentiments and wants of America. The letter, in which these terms were employed, was accompanied by minutes of a spirited dialogue between Franklin and Hillsborough, which almost makes us regret that the former, among his other literary ventures, had not tested his qualifications as a playwright. The part of Hillsborough in the colloquy was to let Franklin fully know in language of mixed petulance and contempt that he declined to recognize him as an agent.

No such appointment shall be entered [he is minuted as declaring]. When I came into the administration of American affairs, I found them in great disorder. By *my*

⁶⁴ Jared Sparks hardly overstates the case when he asserts that the policy and acts of Lord Hillsborough contributed more, perhaps, than those of any other man towards increasing the discontents which led to the separation of the Colonies from Great Britain.

firmness they are now something mended; and, while I have the honour to hold the seals, I shall continue the same conduct, the same *firmness*. I think my duty to the master I serve, and to the government of this nation, requires it of me. If that conduct is not approved, *they* may take my office from me when they please. I shall make them a bow, and thank them; I shall resign with pleasure. That gentleman knows it, (*pointing to Mr. Pownall*), but, while I continue in it, I shall resolutely persevere in the same Firmness. (*Spoken with great warmth, and turning pale in his discourse, as if he was angry at something or somebody besides the agent, and of more consequence to himself.*)

Then follows Franklin's reply:

B. F. (*Reaching out his hand for the paper, which his Lordship returned to him*). I beg your Lordship's pardon for taking up so much of your time. It is, I believe, of no great importance whether the appointment is acknowledged or not, for I' have not the least conception that an agent can *at present* be of any use to any of the colonies. I shall therefore give your Lordship no further trouble. (*Withdrew.*)

As the dialogue discloses, Hillsborough had quite enough enemies already to render it prudent for him to abstain from making another of a man who had declared in the letter, with which it was enclosed, that, if there was to be a war between them, he would do his best to defend himself, and annoy his adversary little, regarding the story of the Earthen Pot and Brazen Pitcher.

One encouragement I have [Franklin said in his letter], the knowledge, that he is not a whit better lik'd by his Colleagues in the Ministry, than he is by me, that he can not probably continue where he is much longer, and that he can scarce be succeeded by anybody, who will not like me the better for his having been at Variance with me.

Later, Franklin wrote to Thomas Cushing:

This Man's Mandates have been treated with Disrespect in America, his Letters have been criticis'd, his Measures censur'd and despis'd; which has produced in him a kind of settled Malice against the Colonies, particularly ours, that would break out into greater Violence if cooler Heads did not set some Bounds to it. I have indeed good Reason to believe that his Conduct is far from being approved by the King's other Servants, and that he himself is so generally dislik'd by them that it is not probable he will continue much longer in his present Station, the general Wish here being to recover (saving only the Dignity of Government) the Good-Will of the Colonies, which there is little reason to expect while they are under his wild Administration. Their permitting so long his Eccentricities (if I may use such an Expression) is owing, I imagine, rather to the Difficulty of knowing how to dispose of or what to do with a man of his wrong-headed bustling Industry, who, it is apprehended, may be more mischievous out of Administration than in it, than to any kind of personal Regard for him.

The Earthen Pot and the Brazen Pitcher *did* collide, and, contrary to every physical law, it was not the Earthen Pot that suffered. Certain Americans, including Franklin himself, and certain Englishmen had applied to the Crown for a tract of land between the Alleghanies and the Ohio River, and their petition was referred to the Board of Trade of which Hillsborough was President. It asked for the right to settle two million, five hundred thousand acres. Hillsborough, who was secretly hostile to the grant, for the purpose of over-loading the application, deceitfully suggested that the applicants should ask for enough land to constitute a province; whereupon Franklin took him at his word and changed the acreage petitioned for

to twenty-three million acres. When the report of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, drafted by Hillsborough, was made, it opposed the grant.

If a vast territory [said His Majesty's Governor of Georgia, in a letter to the Commissioners, which is quoted in the Report], be granted to any set of gentlemen, who really mean to people it, and actually do so, it must draw and carry out a great number of people from Great Britain; and I apprehend they will soon become a kind of separate and independent people, and who will set up for themselves; that they will soon have manufactures of their own; that they will neither take supplies from the mother country, nor from the provinces, at the back of which they are settled; that, being at a distance from the seat of government, courts, magistrates, &c., &c., they will be out of the reach and control of law and government; that it will become a receptacle and kind of asylum for offenders, who will fly from justice to such new country or colony.

To this report, which sought to confine America to practically the same limits as those fixed by the French, Franklin, with his knowledge of American conditions," and breadth of vision, made such a crushing reply that, when the report and the reply came before the Privy Council, the application for the grant, partly because of the strength of Franklin's reply, and, partly from dislike to Hillsborough, was approved. Mortified by this action, Hillsborough resigned his office, and was succeeded by Lord Dartmouth, the nobleman described by Cowper as "One who wears a coronet, and prays."

In keeping with the deceit, practiced by Hillsborough, in endeavoring to give an extravagant turn to the Ohio petition, was his previous bearing towards Franklin after the interview with the latter, at which he paid such a fulsome tribute to his own firmness. During the year preceding the action of the Privy Council, Franklin had heard that Hillsborough had expressed himself about him in very angry terms, calling him a Republican, a factious, mischievous fellow, and the like. Nevertheless, a few weeks later, when he was in Ireland, Hillsborough pressed him so warmly to call upon him at his country-seat, upon his way to the North of Ireland, that he did so, and was detained there no less than four days, in the enjoyment of a hospitality so assiduous that his host, Franklin tells us, even put his oldest son, Lord Kilwarling, into his phaeton with him, to drive him a round of forty miles, that he might see the country, the seats, manufactures, etc., and moreover covered him with his own great coat lest he should take cold. Later, after both Franklin and Hillsborough had returned to London, the former called upon the latter repeatedly for the purpose of thanking him for his civilities in Ireland. On each day, he was told that his Lordship was not at home, although on two of them he had good reason to know the contrary. On the last of the two, which was one of his Lordship's levee days, the porter, seeing Franklin, came out and surlily chid the latter's coachman for opening the door of his coach before he had inquired whether his" Lordship was at home. Then, turning to Franklin, he said, "My Lord is not at home." "I have never since been nigh him," Franklin wrote to his son, "and we have only abused one another at a distance."

During the year succeeding the action of the Privy Council, when Franklin was with his friend Lord Le Despencer at Oxford, Lord Hillsborough, upon being told by Lord Le Despencer, as they were descending the stairs in Queen's College, that Franklin was above, reascended them immediately, and, approaching Franklin in the pleasantest manner imaginable, said, "Dr. Franklin, I did not know till this Minute that you were here, and I am come back *to make you my Bow!* I am glad to see you at Oxford, and that you look so well," &c.

In Return for this Extravagance [Franklin said in a letter to his son], I complimented him on his Son's Performance in the Theatre, tho' indeed it was but indifferent, so that Account was settled. For as People say, when they are angry, *If he strikes me, I'll strike him again*; I think sometimes it may be right to say, *If he flatters me, I'll flatter him again*. This is *Lex Talionis*, returning Offences in kind. His Son however (Lord Fairford), is a valuable young Man, and his Daughters, Ladys Mary and Charlotte, most amiable young Women. My Quarrel is only with him, who, of all the Men I ever met with, is surely the most unequal in his Treatment of People, the most insincere, and the most wrong-headed.

Such was the man, to whom the oversight of American affairs was committed at a highly critical period in the relations of England and the Colonies. Speaking of Hillsborough's successor, Lord Dartmouth, Franklin said, "he is truly a good Man, and wishes sincerely a good Understanding with the Colonies, but does not seem to have Strength equal to his Wishes." This minister was wise enough to recognize the agents of the American colonies, including Franklin, again, despite the stand taken by Hillsborough against them. But, when Lord Chatham's conciliatory plan was so summarily rejected by the House of Lords, Dartmouth, though he had, when the motion was first made, suggested that it should be deliberately considered, was later swept along unresistingly by the majority. In his account of the incident, Franklin said, "I am the more particular in this, as it is a Trait of that Nobleman's Character, who from his Office is suppos'd to have so great a Share in American affairs, but who has in reality no Will or Judgment of his own, being with Dispositions for the best Measures, easily prevail'd with to join in the worst."

But it is in the history of the Hutchinson letters that we find the most convincing proof of the hopelessness of Franklin's task in his endeavor to bring public opinion in England over to his generous views of her true interests. On one occasion, when speaking in terms of warm resentment of the conduct of the ministry in dispatching troops to Boston, he was to his great surprise, to use his own words, assured by a gentleman of character and distinction that the action of the ministry in this, and the other respects, obnoxious to America, had been brought about by some of the most reputable persons among the Americans themselves. He was skeptical, and the gentleman, whose name he never revealed, being desirous of establishing the truth of his statement to the satisfaction of both Franklin and Franklin's countrymen, called upon Franklin a few days afterwards, and exhibited to him letters from Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson and Secretary Andrew Oliver of Massachusetts, and other residents of that colony which only too conclusively confirmed what had been said. The gentleman would not permit copies to be taken of the letters, but he delivered the originals to Franklin with the express understanding that they were not to be printed, that no copies were to be taken of them, that they were to be shown only to a few leading men in Massachusetts, and were to be carefully returned. Franklin transmitted them, subject to these conditions, to Thomas Cushing of the Committee of Correspondence at Boston. He did so, he tells us, because he thought that to shift the responsibility for the recent ministerial measures from England to America would tend to restore good feeling between the people of Massachusetts and England, and, moreover, because he felt that intelligence of such importance should not be withheld from the constituents whose agent he was. In his communication, accompanying the letters, Franklin stipulated that they were to be read only by the members of the Massachusetts Committee of Correspondence, Messrs. Bowdoin and Pitts of the Council, Drs. Chauncey, Cooper and Winthrop, and a few such other persons as Cushing might select; and were to be returned in a few months to him; but it is not true, as was afterwards alleged by his enemies, that his communication was attended by any effort to conceal his personal relations to the

letters. A part of the communication is too good a specimen of the precision that Franklin always brought to the language of rebuke or condemnation not to be quoted at length.

As to the writers [he said], I can easily as well as charitably conceive it possible, that a Man educated in Prepossessions of the unbounded Authority of Parliament, &c. may think unjustifiable every Opposition even to its unconstitutional Exactions, and imagine it their Duty to suppress, as much as in them lies, such Opposition. But when I find them bartering away the Liberties of their native Country for Posts, and negotiating for Salaries and Pensions extorted from the People; and, conscious of the Odium these might be attended with, calling for Troops to protect and secure the Enjoyment of them: When I see them exciting Jealousies in the Crown, and provoking it to Wrath against so great a Part of its most faithful Subjects; creating Enmities between the different” Countries of which the Empire consists; occasioning a great Expence to the *Old* Country for Suppressing or Preventing imaginary Rebellions in the *New*, and to the new Country for the Payment of needless Gratifications to useless Officers and Enemies; I can not but doubt their Sincerity even in the political Principles they profess, and deem them mere Time-servers seeking their own private Emolument, thro’ any Quantity of Publick Mischief; Betrayers of the Interest, not of their native Country only, but of the Government they pretend to serve, and of the whole English Empire.

Later, after strong representations had been made to Franklin by Cushing that the letters could be put to no effective use, unless they could be retained or copied, Franklin obtained leave from the gentleman, who had entrusted them to him, to authorize Cushing to show them to any persons that he chose. The fact that the letters were in Boston was soon noised abroad, whereupon the Assembly required them to be laid before it, though under its promise that they would not be printed. An occasion or pretext for disregarding this promise soon arose, when copies were produced in the House by a member who was said to have received them from England. Then the Assembly adopted a series of indignant resolutions, declaring, among other things, that the authors of the letters were justly chargeable with the great corruption of morals, and all the confusion, misery and bloodshed which had been the natural effects of the introduction of troops into the Province, and that it was its bounden duty to pray that his Majesty would be pleased to remove Hutchinson and Oliver forever from the Government thereof. These resolutions were duly followed by a petition for the removal which was transmitted to Franklin and by him transmitted to Lord Dartmouth, who laid it before the King.

When the news reached England that the letters had been published in Massachusetts, there was great curiosity” to know who had transmitted them. Thomas Whately, a London banker, and the brother of William Whately, then deceased, to whom they were written, was suspected; he suspected John Temple, a former Governor of New Hampshire, who had had access to the papers of the decedent, and, his suspicions having been brought to the attention of Temple, the latter called upon him, denied all knowledge of the letters, and demanded a public exoneration. The written statement from Whately which followed was not satisfactory to Temple, and he challenged the former to a duel in which Whately was severely wounded. Up to this time, it was not known except to a few persons that Franklin had forwarded the letters to America; nor even for a time after the duel did he feel that it was incumbent upon him to tell the world that he had done so. But, when he heard that the duel would probably be renewed, as soon as Whately recovered his strength, he felt discharged from the obligation of silence that he had previously recognized to the person from whom he had received the letters, and published a communication in the *Public Advertiser* stating that it was impossible for Whately to have sent the letters to Boston, or for Temple to have purloined them from

Whately, because they had never been in Whately's possession, and that he, Franklin alone, was the person who "obtained and transmitted to Boston the letters in question."⁶⁵

Franklin had put his head into the lion's jaws. While he was preparing for his return to America, for the purpose of attending to a matter arising out of the operations of the American Post-office Department, he received a notice from the Clerk of the Privy Council, informing him that the Lords of the Committee for Plantation Affairs would "meet at the Cockpit on Tuesday, January 11, 1774, at noon, for the purpose of considering the petition for the removal of Hutchinson and Oliver, which had been referred to the Council by the King, and requiring him to be present. A similar notice was sent to Bollan, the London Agent of the Massachusetts Council. When the petition came on for hearing, at the request of Franklin, its consideration was postponed for some three weeks, so that he could retain counsel to face Alexander Wedderburn, the Solicitor-general, who had been retained by Israel Mauduit, the agent of the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts.

The counsel retained by Franklin were John Dunning, a former Solicitor-general, and subsequently Lord Ashburton, and John Lee, who later became the Solicitor-general under the administration of Charles James Fox. When the hearing did take place, it proved for every reason a memorable one. Edmund Burke could not recollect that so many Privy Councillors had ever attended a meeting of the Council before. There were no less than thirty-five in attendance. The Lord President Gower presided. In the audience, among other persons, were the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord North, the Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne, Edmund Burke, Joseph Priestley, Jeremy Bentham, Arthur Lee, of Virginia, then a law student in London, who had been selected by the Legislature of Massachusetts to act as its agent, in the event of the absence or death of Franklin, Ralph Izard, of South Carolina, who had borne Temple's challenge to Thomas Whately, and Dr. Edward Bancroft, who was afterwards at Paris with Franklin. The hearing was opened by the reading of the letter written by Franklin to Lord Dartmouth, when transmitting the petition to him, the petition itself, the resolutions of the Massachusetts Assembly and the letters upon which they were based. In Franklin's opinion, Dunning and Lee in their "pleas" acquitted themselves very handsomely." Dunning's points, Burke thought, were "well and ably put." The appeal of the Massachusetts Assembly, Dunning argued was to the wisdom and goodness of his Majesty; they were asking a favor, not demanding justice. As they had no impeachment to make, so they had no evidence to offer. Of similar tenor was the address of John Lee. The reply of Wedderburn was pointed and brilliant, and as rabid as if he had been summing up against an ordinary criminal at an ordinary assize.

The letters, could not have come to Dr. Franklin [he argued], by fair means. The writers did not give them to him; nor yet did the deceased correspondent, who, from our intimacy, would otherwise have told me of it. Nothing, then, will acquit Dr. Franklin of the charge of obtaining them by fraudulent or corrupt means, for the most malignant of purposes, unless he stole them from the person who stole them. This argument is irrefragable. I hope, my lords, you will mark and brand the man, for the honor of this country, of Europe, and of mankind. Private correspondence has hitherto been held sacred in times of the greatest party rage, not only in politics but religion.... He has forfeited all the respect of societies and of men [the orator went on]. Into what companies will he hereafter go with an unembarrassed face, or the honest intrepidity of virtue? Men will watch him with a jealous eye; they will hide their papers from

⁶⁵ On Jan. 28, 1820, John Adams stated in a letter to Dr. Hosack, of New York, that Temple had told him in Holland that he had communicated the Hutchinson letters to Dr. Franklin, though "I swear to you," he said to Adams, "that I did not procure them in the manner represented."

him, and lock up their escritoirs. He will henceforth esteem it a libel to be called a *man of letters*; *homo TRIUM litterarum*! [*Trium litterarum homo*, a man of three letters, was a fur, or thief]. But [continued Wedderburn], he not only took away the letters from one brother; but kept himself concealed till he nearly occasioned the murder of the other. It is impossible to read his account, expressive of the coolest and most deliberate malice, without horror. Amidst these tragical events, of one person nearly murdered, of another answerable for the issue, of a worthy governor hurt in his dearest interests, the fate of America in suspense; here is a man, who, with the utmost insensibility of remorse, stands up and avows himself the author of all. I can compare it only to Zanga, in Dr. Young's *Revenge*:

"Know then 'twas—I;

I forged the letter, I disposed the picture;

I hated, I despised, and I destroy."

I ask, my Lords, whether the revengeful temper attributed by poetic fiction only, to the bloody African, is not surpassed by the coolness and apathy of the wily American?

More than one bystander has recorded the impressions left upon his mind by this savage philippic.

I was not more astonished [Jeremy Bentham tells us] at the brilliancy of his lightning, than astounded at the thunder that accompanied it. As he stood, the cushion lay on the council table before him; his station was between the seats of two of the members, on the side of the right hand of the Lord President. I would not for double the greatest fee the orator could on that occasion have received, been in the place of that cushion; the ear was stunned at every blow.

"At the sallies of his sarcastic wit," Priestley declares, "all the members of the Council, the President himself not excepted, frequently laughed outright. No person belonging to the Council behaved with decent gravity, except Lord North, who, coming late, took his stand behind the chair opposite to me." Burke spoke of the attack on "Poor Dr. Franklin" as "beyond all bounds and decency," and the language, used by Lord Shelburne, in describing it to Lord Chatham, was hardly, if any, less emphatic. "The behavior of the Judges," he said, "exceeded, as was agreed on all hands, that of any committee of elections." Dunning's rejoinder to Wedderburn was wholly ineffective. His voice, always thick, was, from illness, feebler and huskier than usual even in his first address, and, exhausted as he was by standing for three hours in a room, in which no one was allowed to sit but the Privy Councillors themselves, who were supposed on such occasions to be the immediate representatives of the King, his second address was hardly audible. Lee was equally ineffective. Wedderburn's speech, therefore, which from a purely forensic point of view was really a masterpiece, was left to assert its full effect, to become the sensation of every Club in London, and to win the plaudit of every bigoted or unreflecting Englishman. "All men," Fox said, "tossed up their hats and clapped their hands in boundless delight at it."

What of Franklin during the malignant assault? The apartment, in which the hearing took place, was a small one. At one end, was an open fireplace, with a recess on each side of it. The Council table stretched from a point near this fireplace to the other end of the room. The Lord President sat at its head, and the other councillors were ranged in seats down its sides. Such spectators as had been able to secure the highly-prized privilege of being present remained standing throughout the session. In the chimney recess to the left of the President, stood Franklin with Burke and Priestley nearby. The dialectical ability and skill, which made

his examination before the House of Commons so famous, he now had no opportunity to display; and unfailing fortitude was all that he could oppose to the outrage for which he had been singled out. With that, however, his uncommon strength of character abundantly supplied him.

The Doctor was dressed in a full dress suit of spotted Manchester velvet [Dr. Edward Bancroft wrote years afterwards to William Temple Franklin], and stood *conspicuously erect*, without the smallest movement of any part of his body. The muscles of his face had been previously composed, so as to afford a placid, tranquil expression of countenance, and he did not suffer the slightest alteration of it to appear during the continuance of the speech, in which he was so harshly and improperly treated. In short, to quote the words which he employed concerning himself on another occasion, he kept "his countenance as immovable as if his features had been made of wood."

Alone, in the recess on the left hand of the president, stood Benjamin Franklin [is the account of Bentham], in such position as not to be visible from the situation of the president, remaining the whole time like a rock, in the same posture, his head resting on his left hand; and in that attitude abiding the pelting of the pitiless storm.

Nothing but Jedburgh justice, of course, was to be expected from such a Committee in such a case, represented by such an advocate. Its report, dated the same day as its sitting, and as likely as not drafted beforehand, found that the letters had been surreptitiously obtained, and contained "nothing reprehensible"; that the petition was based on resolutions, formed on false and erroneous allegations; and was groundless, vexatious and scandalous; and calculated only for the seditious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamor and discontent in the province; and that nothing had been laid before the Committee which did, or could, in their opinion, in any manner, or in any degree, impeach the honor, integrity, or conduct of the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor. Wherefore, the Lords of the Committee were humbly of the opinion that the petition ought to be dismissed. This recommendation was approved by the King, and an order was issued by him that the petition be dismissed, as answering the character imputed to it by the Committee. Nor did vengeance stop here. On the second day, after the Committee rose, Franklin was handed a communication from the Postmaster-General, informing him in brief terms that the King had "found it necessary" to dismiss him from the office of Deputy Postmaster-General in America.

In reporting the manner in which he had been affronted by the Privy Council to his Massachusetts constituents," Franklin used language in keeping with the sober spirit in which he had striven from the beginning to bring about an understanding between England and her Colonies.

What I feel on my own account [he said], is half lost in what I feel for the public. When I see, that all petitions and complaints of grievances are so odious to government, that even the mere pipe which conveys them becomes obnoxious, I am at a loss to know how peace and union are to be maintained or restored between the different parts of the empire. Grievances cannot be redressed unless they are known; and they cannot be known but through complaints and petitions. If these are deemed affronts, and the messengers punished as offenders, who will henceforth send petitions? And who will deliver them? It has been thought a dangerous thing in any state to stop up the vent of griefs. Wise governments have therefore generally received petitions with some indulgence, even when but slightly founded. Those, who think themselves injured by their rulers, are sometimes, by a mild and prudent answer, convinced of their error. But where complaining is a crime, hope becomes despair.

His fellow-Americans were not so self-restrained. The American Post Office was shunned by its former patrons, and letters were delivered largely by private agencies, effigies of Wedderburn and Hutchinson were carried about the streets of Philadelphia, and, at night, were burnt, we are told, by Joseph Reed, "with the usual ceremonies, amidst the acclamations of the multitude." "Nothing can exceed," the same narrator adds, "the veneration in which Dr. Franklin is now held, but the detestation we have of his enemies." Wedderburn, who had complained in his speech of the attention paid by the press to the movements of Franklin, as though he were a great diplomatic character, had more occasion than ever to sneer at his public prominence. Hutchinson was compelled to resign his office, and to retire from execration in America to a slender pension and obscurity in England. Even in England, Horace Walpole stayed the pen, to which we are indebted for so many charming letters, long enough to write:

"Sarcastic Sawney, swol'n with spite and prate,
On silent Franklin poured his venal hate,
The calm philosopher, without reply,
Withdrew, and gave his country liberty."⁶⁶

Lord John Russell has said that it is "impossible to justify the conduct of Franklin" in the matter of the Hutchinson letters, and from time to time the same idea has been more or less hesitatingly advanced by others. Its justice, we confess, has never been apparent to us. That the letters did pass into the possession of Franklin, under the circumstances stated by him, which certainly do not reflect in any manner upon his honor, can hardly be doubted, unless mere suspicion is to give the lie to a life of uniform integrity. The mode, in which they were transmitted to America, under the restrictions imposed by him, was attended with so little regard to secrecy, so far as his connection with them was concerned, that Dr. Cooper wrote to him, "I can not, however, but admire your honest openness in this affair, and noble negligence of any inconveniences that might arise to yourself in this essential service to our injured country." It was not until the letters had been printed in America, contrary to his engagement with the gentleman, who had handed them to him, that he expressed the wish to Dr. Cooper that the fact of his having sent them should be kept secret, and not then until his

⁶⁶ Worldly success has rarely been less effective in gilding an unworthy character than it was in the case of Wedderburn. American indignation over his tirade against Franklin, indecent as it was under the circumstances, would seem to be somewhat overdone, when we remember the professional license allowed from time immemorial to the pleas of lawyers. It is enough to say that we can safely leave his English contemporaries to take care of his forbidding reputation. The searing irons of two of the most ferocious satirists of literary history have left ineffaceable scars upon his forehead. In the *Rosciad* Churchill lifted the veil from the future in these terms:

"To mischief train'd, e'en from his mother's womb,
Grown old in fraud, tho. yet in manhood's bloom,
Adopting arts, by which gay villains rise,
And reach the heights, which honest men despise."

"In vain," Junius wrote to the Duke of Grafton, some ten years later, "would our gracious sovereign have looked round him for another character as consummate as yours. Lord Mansfield shrinks from his principles; Charles Fox is yet in blossom; and as for Mr. Wedderburn, there is something about him which even treachery can not trust." But the "gracious sovereign," to whom Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Rosslyn, sold his Whig principles, when they had reached just the right stage of merchantable maturity, was equally hard upon him. "When he died," Lord Brougham tells us, "after a few hours' illness, the intelligence was brought to the King, who, with a circumspection abundantly characteristic, asked the bearer of it if he was quite *sure* of the fact, as Lord Rosslyn had not been ailing before; and, upon being assured that a sudden attack of gout in the stomach had really ended the days of his late servant and once assiduous courtier, his majesty was graciously pleased to exclaim: 'Then he has not left a worse man behind him.'"

inclinations on the subject were pointedly sounded by Dr. Cooper. As soon as they threatened to cause bloodshed, which he had a chance to avert, he made his connection with them public, and assumed the full responsibility for his act. Moreover, he truly said of the letters, when he assumed this responsibility in his communication to the *Public Advertiser*, "They were not of the nature of *private* letters between friends. They were written by public officers to persons in public stations, on public affairs, and intended to procure public measures; they were therefore handed to other public persons, who might be influenced by them to produce those measures." Little can be added to this convincing statement. If a political agent of England in Boston had, under the same circumstances, come into possession of letters from English officials in England to Cushing or Dr. Cooper, revealing a deliberate intent on the part of the writers to initiate measures aimed at the just prerogatives of the Crown or Parliament, who would have thought the worse of him if he had transmitted them to King or Parliament? Were letters designed to help along the introduction of a military force into Boston for the purpose of abridging the political liberties of its people entitled to any higher degree of privacy? The accusation that Franklin had violated the confidence of private correspondence came with but poor grace, to say the least, from a Government which made a practice of breaking the seals of letters, and of no letters oftener than of those of Franklin, entrusted to its care. Indeed, not only were the seals of Franklin's letters frequently broken, and the letters read, but, in some instances, the letters were permanently retained by the English Government.

It was the fashion in England for a long time to ascribe the intense resentment felt by Franklin against England, after war broke out between that country and the colonies, to the indignity to which he was subjected by the Privy Council, and his dismissal from office. The statement is not supported by the facts. That these circumstances made a deep impression upon his mind is undeniable, but it was really not until he found himself in America in 1775 that he gave himself up to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by his remaining longer in England. After his removal from office, he still counselled his correspondents in America to adhere to a policy of patience and self-restraint, and in a letter to Thomas Cushing and others, written only a few days after the hearing at the Cockpit, he termed the destruction of the tea at Boston an unwarrantable destruction of private property and "an Act of violent Injustice." To all the efforts of Lord Chatham and his high-minded associates, after this hearing, to bring about a reconciliation between England and America, he lent the full weight of his advice" and experience. And, when some of the members of the British Ministry, after it, ashamed to deal with him directly, covertly opened up an interchange of proposals with him through David Barclay, Dr. Fothergill and Lord Howe, in regard to the terms upon which a reconciliation might still be reached, he entered into the negotiations with a spirit singularly free from personal bitterness. There are few things more pathetic in the history of sundered ties than the account that Priestley has given us of the last days that Franklin spent in England in 1775. "A great part of the day above-mentioned that we spent together," Priestley tells us, "he was looking over a number of American newspapers, directing me what to extract from them for the English ones; and in reading them, he was frequently not able to proceed for the tears literally running down his cheeks." These, however, were not womanish tears, but rather such iron tears as ran down Pluto's cheeks. Never was there a time after the heart of America was laid bare to Franklin by the remonstrance against the Stamp Act when he was not unflinchingly prepared, if the painful necessity was forced upon him, to unite with his countrymen in defying the armed power of England. As the fateful issue of the protracted controversy approached nearer and nearer, his language became bolder and bolder.

The eyes of all Christendom [he wrote to James Bowdoin a few days before he left England in 1775], are now upon us, and our honour as a people is become a matter of

the utmost consequence to be taken care of. If we tamely give up our rights in this contest, a century to come will not restore us in the opinion of the world; we shall be stamped with the character of dastards, poltrons and fools; and be despised and trampled upon, not by this haughty, insolent nation only, but by all mankind. Present inconveniences are, therefore, to be borne with fortitude, and better times expected.

“Informes hyemes reducit

Jupiter; idem

Summovet. Non si male nunc, et olim

Sic erit.”⁶⁷

When he reached the shores of his native land, it was to hear that, while he was at sea, the battles of Lexington and Concord had been fought, and that the veins of the two countries, which he had striven so hard to keep closed, were already open and running.⁶⁸

From that day, Franklin took his place with Washington, the Adamses, Jefferson and Patrick Henry as an inflexible champion of armed resistance to England. If he humored the more timid patriots, who were disposed to make still further appeals to English generosity, it was not because he shared their fallacious hopes but because he did not wish one column of the revolutionary movement to get too far in advance of the other. At this period of his life, his reputation was already very great. The English Tories believed or affected to believe that he was the father of all the mischief responsible for the American crisis. The English Whigs leaned upon his advice and assistance as those of a man who had the welfare of the entire British Empire deeply at heart. How he was regarded at home, is well illustrated in what General” Nathanael Greene and Abigail Adams had to say of him when he subsequently visited Washington’s head-quarters during the siege of Boston as a member of the Committee appointed by Congress to confer with Washington and delegates from the New England Colonies as to the best plan for raising, maintaining and disciplining the continental army. Recalling an occasion at this time, when Franklin had been brought under his observation, Greene wrote, “During the whole evening, I viewed that very great man with silent admiration.” The language of Abigail Adams was not less intense.

I had the pleasure of dining with Dr. Franklin [she said], and of admiring him, whose character from my infancy I had been taught to venerate. I found him social but not talkative; and, when he spoke, something useful dropped from his tongue. He was grave, yet pleasant and affable. You know I make some pretensions to physiognomy, and I thought I could read in his countenance the virtues of his heart, among which, patriotism shone in its full lustre: and with that is blended every virtue of a Christian.

Those were dramatic hours when highly wrought feelings readily ran into hyperbole; nor had any Madame Helvétius come along yet with her “Hélas! Franklin,” and disordered skirts.

⁶⁷ It is hard to think of a man, whose life was so essentially urban as that of Franklin, becoming a backwoodsman, but such he was ready to become, if necessary. In his *Hints for a Reply to the Protests of Certain Members of the House of Lords against the Repeal of the Stamp Act*, he uses this resolute language: "I can only Judge of others by myself. I have some little property in America. I will freely spend nineteen shillings in the pound to defend my right of giving or refusing the other shilling, and, after all, if I can not defend that right, I can retire cheerfully with my little family into the boundless woods of America, which are sure to afford freedom and subsistence to any man who can bait a hook or pull a trigger."

⁶⁸ In 1780, Franklin wrote from Passy to Georgiana Shipley: "I am unhappily an Enemy, yet I think there has been enough of Blood spilt, and I wish what is left in the Veins of that once lov'd People, may be spared by a Peace solid and everlasting."

The reputation, which called forth these tributes, brought Franklin at once to the very forefront of the American Revolution, when he arrived at Philadelphia. The morning after his arrival, he, Thomas Willing and James Wilson, were elected by the Assembly of Pennsylvania as additional deputies to the Continental Congress that was to meet in Philadelphia in a few days, and he was re-elected to Congress at every succeeding election until his departure for France. By the first Congress, he was appointed Chairman of a Committee to devise a postal system for America; and when this Committee recommended the appointment of a Postmaster-General and various postal subordinates, and the establishment of a line of posts from Falmouth (now Portland) in Maine to Savannah, with as many cross posts as the Postmaster-General might think fit, Franklin was elected by Congress the Postmaster-General for the first year. He was also appointed by Congress one of the members of a committee to draw up a declaration, to be published by Washington when he took command of the American army, but the paper drafted by him does not appear to have ever been presented by him to Congress. At any rate, it adds nothing to his literary reputation, and is disfigured by one of the unseasonable *facetiae* into which he had a way of wandering at times on grave occasions, after he found his feet again in the easy slippers of his old American environment.

Franklin also made some wise suggestions to Congress with respect to the best method of preventing the depreciation of the paper money issued by it. His first suggestion was that the bills should bear interest. This suggestion was rejected. His next was that, instead of the issuance of any more paper money, what had already been issued should be borrowed back upon interest. His last was that the interest should be paid in hard money, but both of the latter suggestions, though approved by Congress, were approved too late to accomplish their objects. After due tenderness had been exhibited by him to John Dickinson and the other members of Congress, who still clung to the hope of a reconciliation with England, Franklin brought forward a plan for the permanent union and efficient government of the Colonies. Under this plan each colony was to retain its internal independence, but its external relations, especially as respected resistance to the measures of the English Ministry, were committed to an annually-elected Congress. The supreme executive authority of the union was to be vested in a council of twelve, to be elected by the Congress. Ireland, Canada, the West Indies, Bermuda, Nova Scotia and Florida as well as the thirteen colonies within the present limits of the United States, were to be invited to join the confederacy. The union was to last until British oppression ceased, and reparation was made to the Colonies for the injuries inflicted upon them; which, of course, under the circumstances, meant until the Greek Calends. The plan was referred to a committee, but it was never acted upon by the House; being too bold a project to suit the cautious scruples of John Dickinson and the other moderate members of the Continental Congress, who dreaded the effect of a project of union upon the mind of the King, while the petition of Congress to him was pending. Among other important committees upon which Franklin served, when a member of the first Continental Congress, was one to investigate the sources of saltpetre; another to treat with the Indians; another to look after the engraving and printing of the continental paper money; another to consider Lord North's conciliatory resolution; another on salt and lead; and still another to report a plan for regulating and protecting the commerce of the Colonies. At the next session of the Congress, he was equally active. Among the things in which we find him engaged at this session, are the arrangement of a system of posts and expresses for the rapid transmission of dispatches; the establishment of a line of packets between America and Europe; an effort to promote the circulation of the continental money; and the preparation of instructions for the American generals. It was at this session of Congress, too, that Thomas Lynch, of South Carolina, Benjamin Harrison, of Virginia, and himself were appointed the committee to visit Washington's camp before Boston. The journey to Boston consumed thirteen days, and the

conference, which followed with the American Commander-in-Chief and the delegates” from the New England Colonies, resulted in many judicious conclusions with regard to the organization of the American army, and the conduct of the war, and, moreover, was an additional assurance to Washington and New England that, in the military operations before Boston, they could count upon the support of all America. It is obvious enough from writings, found among the papers of Franklin in his handwriting, that months before the Declaration of Independence was signed he was fully ready to renounce all allegiance to Great Britain. When the more conservative members of Congress so far yielded to their fears as to adopt, with the aid of some of the members from New England, a declaration that independence was not their aim, Franklin approved a plan then formed by Samuel Adams of bringing at least all the New England provinces together in a confederacy. “If you succeed,” he said to Adams, “I will cast in my lot among you.” This was six months before the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin also served with John Jay and Thomas Jefferson upon a committee to interview a mysterious foreigner who had repeatedly expressed a desire to make a confidential communication to Congress. The stranger, who possessed a military bearing and spoke with a French accent, assured the committee that his most Christian Majesty, the King of France, had heard with pleasure of the exertions made by the American Colonies in defence of their rights and privileges, wished them success, and would, when necessary, manifest in a more open manner his friendly sentiments towards them. But, as often as he was asked by the committee for his authority for conveying such flattering assurances, he contented himself with drawing his hand across his throat, and saying, “Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head.”

When the report of this committee was made to Congress, a motion on the strength of it to send envoys to” France was defeated, but later a committee composed of Benjamin Harrison, John Dickinson, Thomas Johnson, John Jay and Franklin was appointed “to correspond secretly with friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world.” The duties of this committee were mainly discharged by Franklin, who had, as we have seen, contracted many durable friendships abroad with men whose aid might mean much to America. To Charles W. F. Dumas, a native of Switzerland, residing at The Hague, he wrote, asking him to sound secretly the ambassadors of the different Powers, other than Great Britain, there for the purpose of ascertaining whether any of their courts were inclined to aid the Colonies or to form alliances with them, to let the mercantile world know that America was prepared to pay very high prices for arms, gunpowder and saltpetre, to send to America two engineer officers qualified to direct siege operations, construct forts and field-works and command artillery, and to receive and forward all letters that passed between the committee and its friends and agents abroad. A draft for one hundred pounds sterling accompanied the letter, together with an assurance from the committee that Dumas’ services would be “considered and honorably rewarded by Congress.” A similar letter was sent to Arthur Lee in London, accompanied by a remittance of two hundred pounds as his compensation. By the same ship went a letter from Franklin to Don Gabriel de Bourbon of Spain, in which, after thanking the Prince for the copy which he had sent him of the handsome *Sallust*, printed several years before at the royal press at Madrid, Franklin cleverly leads the attention of the Prince on to the consideration of a rising state which seemed likely soon to act a part of some importance on the stage of human affairs, and to furnish materials for a future *Sallust*. This letter, in which literary sympathy, the high-bred courtesy of a Spanish *hidalgo* and” political address are mingled with the happiest effect, is a good example of what it meant to America to have such a man as Franklin as her world-interpreter. These letters were all entrusted to the care of a special messenger, Thomas Story. Soon after he left America, M. Penet, a merchant of Nantes, sailed for France with a contract from the committee for furnishing arms, ammunition and clothing to the American army and various letters from Franklin to friends of his in France, including

his devoted pupil, Dr. Dubourg. Subsequently, before a reply had been received to any of the letters written by Franklin on its behalf, the committee decided to send an agent to Paris duly empowered to treat with the French King. Silas Deane, a Yale graduate, and a man, who might have left an unblemished reputation as an American patriot behind him, if Arthur Lee had not hounded him out of France and America into England, was selected for this mission. He was selected, Adams is so unkind as to intimate, because he was a Congressman who had lost his seat in Congress. For him Franklin drew up a letter of instruction, fixing the character that he was to assume, that of a merchant, when he reached France, mentioning the persons friendly to America with whom he was to establish a familiar intercourse, and prescribing the manner in which he was to approach M. de Vergennes, the French Minister, for the purpose of soliciting the friendship and assistance of France.

Another important call was made upon the services of Franklin, when with Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, as his colleagues, he was appointed by Congress to visit Canada, and to endeavor to rescue our affairs in that country from the lamentable condition of confusion and distress into which they had fallen. Quebec had been assaulted by Montgomery and Arnold, and had repelled the assault, Montgomery being killed and Arnold wounded in the attempt, and the American army was" wasting away in the face of the intense cold, hunger and the small-pox. For the Continental paper money the Canadians had come to entertain a supreme contempt, and their attitude towards the Americans, with whom they had so often been at war in their earlier history, was in every respect that of distrust and aversion. With the committee went John Carroll, the brother of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who had been educated for the priesthood in France, and spoke its language with perfect fluency. It was thought at the time that for the Commission to take with it to Catholic and French Canada such a companion was a masterly stroke of policy. The powers, with which the Commission were clothed, were of a plenary description; to admit Canada into the union of the Colonies, when brought over to the American cause by the appeals of the Commissioners, and to admit it with a republican form of government, to settle disputes between the civil and military authorities in Canada, and to exercise an extraordinary degree of authority in one form or another with respect to the military forces of America there. They were even to take steps to establish a newspaper in Canada to help along the American propaganda.

Of all the episodes in the life of Franklin, this is the one upon which the reader dwells with the least satisfaction. He was entirely too old for the fatigues and hardships of the long April journey of five hundred miles from Philadelphia to New York, and up the Hudson, and over Lakes George and Champlain, and across the country at the head of Lake Champlain to Montreal. The distance between Philadelphia and New York was covered by the party in two days, the journey up the Hudson to Albany was made in a sloop, engaged for them by Lord Stirling, and from Albany to the country seat of General Philip Schuyler at Saratoga, thirty-two miles from Albany, they were conveyed over deep roads in a large country-wagon" furnished by the General. Here it was that Franklin, debilitated by the exposure and shocks, to which his frame had been subjected, began to apprehend that he had undertaken a fatigue which, at his time of life, might prove too much for him, and sat down to write to some of his friends by way of farewell. After a few days' rest at Saratoga, the party, preceded by General Schuyler, went forward to Lake George. Though it was the middle of April, the lakes of that country were still covered with ice, and the roads with six inches of snow. After two days and a half of further travel, the southern end of the lake was reached. So encumbered with ice was it that the batteau, equipped with an awning for a cabin, with which General Schuyler had provided the party, took about thirty-six hours to traverse the thirty-six miles between the southern extremity of the lake and its northern. Then came the portage over the neck of land between Lake George and Lake Champlain, and the re-embarkation,

after a delay of five days, on the waters of the latter lake. The portage was effected by placing the batteau on wheels and yoking it up to a string of oxen. Three days and a half more brought the party to St. John's, near the head of Lake Champlain, after a strenuous struggle with baffling ice and head winds. Another day's journey in *calèches* brought them to Montreal where they were received by Arnold and a concourse of officers and citizens, and saluted with military honors.

It is enough to say that the Commissioners found American credit in Canada sunk to the lowest point. Even the express, sent by them from St. John's to tell Arnold of their arrival at that point, was held at a ferry for the ferriage charge until a friend, who was passing, changed an American paper dollar for him into silver; nor would the *calèches* have come for the Commissioners if this friend had not engaged to pay the hire. Military defeat, violated contracts, discredited paper money and" the anticipated coming of a British force overhung like a bank of nimbus cloud the entire horizon of American hopes in Canada. The Commissioners could not borrow money either upon the public or upon their own private credit. In a letter to Congress after they had been in Canada a week, they declared that, if money could not be had to support the American army in Canada with honor, so as to be respected instead of being hated by the people, it was their firm and unanimous opinion that it would be better to immediately withdraw it. With his usual public spirit, Franklin advanced on the credit of Congress to Arnold and other servants of Congress three hundred and fifty-three pounds in gold out of his own pocket—a loan which proved of great service in procuring provisions for the American army at a time of dire necessity. Two days after the letter of the Commissioners to Congress was written, news came to Montreal that a British fleet, full of troops, had reached Quebec, and landed a force, which had routed the small American army there. The decision was at once reached that there was nothing for the American forces to do but to retire to St. John's, and to prepare to resist at that point the advance of the British. This decision was acted upon at once, and the next morning Franklin, attended by John Carroll, set out on his return to Philadelphia; leaving his fellow-commissioners to oversee the retreat to St. John's and the establishment of defensive works at that point. With the assistance of General Schuyler, he and his companion passed safely down the lakes to Albany, and from Albany, after they had again enjoyed the General's hospitality, they were conveyed by his chariot to New York. Here Franklin wrote to his fellow-commissioners that he grew daily more feeble, and thought that he could hardly have got along so far but for Mr. Carroll's friendly assistance and tender care of him. Some symptoms of the gout, he further said, had appeared," which made him believe that his indisposition had been a smothered fit of that disorder, which his constitution wanted strength to form completely. But, with the reappearance of his old malady, came back the wit which, indeed, seems to have languished but little at any time under the rigors of his arduous mission. After congratulating Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll upon the recent capture of a British prize, loaded with seventy-five tons of gunpowder and a thousand carbines with bayonets, he further wrote: "The German Auxiliaries are certainly coming. It is our Business to prevent their Returning."

In the early part of June, Franklin was again in Philadelphia after an absence of about ten weeks. A little later the Declaration of Independence was reported to Congress by the committee, consisting of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Robert R. Livingston, Roger Sherman and himself, which had been elected by Congress to draft it, and after a debate, during which John Adams won only less reputation in defending, than Jefferson in writing, it, was adopted and given to the world, whose political opinions it was to influence so profoundly. Owing to a serious attack of the gout, Franklin had no hand in its preparation beyond suggesting a few verbal alterations. His part, however, in the adoption of the Articles

of Confederation was more active. To the plan of allowing the thirteen States to vote on all questions by States, and of giving to each State, without reference to population or wealth, a single vote, he was strongly opposed; so much so that he even thought at one time of counselling Pennsylvania not to enter into the union if the plan was adopted. He hotly declared that a confederation upon such iniquitous terms would not last long. But we know from what Jefferson tells us that he also had his humorous fling at it. "At the time of the union of England and Scotland," he said, "the Duke of Argyle was most violently opposed to that measure, and among other things" predicted that, as the whale had swallowed Jonah, so Scotland would be swallowed by England." "However," added Franklin, "when Lord Bute came into the government, he soon brought into its administration so many of his countrymen that it was found, in event, that Jonah had swallowed the whale."

About the same time, Franklin, Jefferson and John Adams were appointed a committee by Congress to hit upon a device for the seal of the Confederacy. No more congenial task could possibly have been set for Franklin, whose ingenuity always revelled in conceits of this kind. A device, based upon the drowning of Pharaoh, and accompanied by the motto, "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God," was suggested by him, and was made by the Committee, together with the Eye of Providence in a radiant triangle, the motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, and other elaborate features a part of its recommendation. As soon as Franklin was safely out of the country in France, Congress, perhaps not forgetting his story of John Thompson, the latter, rejected as too redundant the entire complicated design except the *E Pluribus Unum* and the Eye of Providence.

In the summer of 1776, Franklin also endeavored to carry out in another form his idea of preventing the Hessians from returning to their own country by assisting in distributing among them tobacco wrapped in copies of an address offering in the name of Congress a tract of land to every soldier who should desert the British service. Congress could not see why, if these hirelings were to be sold, they should not do the selling themselves instead of their Princes.

It was in the summer of 1776, too, that Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge, of South Carolina, were elected a committee by Congress to call upon Lord Howe at Staten Island for the purpose of ascertaining whether he had any authority to negotiate a treaty of peace, and, if so, of learning what that authority was, and of receiving such propositions as he should think fit to make. Lord Howe was at the time the Admiral of the King's naval forces in America and joint commissioner with his brother General William Howe to grant pardons to such of the American rebels as should be ready to renew their allegiance to the King. On his arrival in July, 1776, at Sandy Hook, he had taken steps to distribute throughout the Colonies a declaration explaining the nature of the commission committed to his brother and himself. At the same time, he had written a letter to Franklin indicating his earnest desire to be instrumental in restoring peace between England and America. The same carrier delivered a copy of the declaration to Congress and the letter to Franklin. Both the declaration and the letter were given rude rebuffs. Congress ordered the declaration to be inserted in the newspapers so that, as it said, the few, who still remained suspended by a hope, founded either in the justice or moderation of their late King, might now at length be convinced that the valor alone of their country was to save its liberties. Franklin, after obtaining the permission of Congress, sent a reply to Lord Howe's letter by the hand of Colonel Palfrey of the American army. It is one of the best letters that he ever wrote, and told Lord Howe such blunt truths, and gave him such candid advice that, after reading it with surprise repeatedly flitting over his face, Lord Howe remarked to Colonel Palfrey with a gentleness as honorable to his amiable character as to that of Franklin that his old friend had expressed himself very warmly. Then subsequently had followed the disaster on Long Island, and the arrival of

General Sullivan on parole at Philadelphia with a verbal message from Lord Howe to Congress, stating that he would like to confer with some of its members as private individuals though he could not yet treat with Congress itself. The result was the appointment of the committee to call upon him at Staten Island.” The conference between the committee and Lord Howe took place at a house on that island and came to nothing. The committee had no authority to do anything except to receive proposals from Lord Howe, who really had no seasonable proposition to make, and Lord Howe had no authority to do anything except to grant pardons to persons who were not conscious of having committed any offence. When he stated in polite terms that he could not confer with the members of the committee as a committee of Congress but only as gentlemen of great ability and influence in the colonies, Adams declared in his emphatic way that he was willing to consider himself for a few moments in any character which would be agreeable to his Lordship except that of a British subject. “Mr. Adams,” gravely observed Lord Howe, “is a decided character.” All three of the Commissioners one by one made it clear to Lord Howe that the colonies were irrevocably committed to Independence. There was, therefore, nothing for him to do except to say in the end, “I am sorry, gentlemen, that you have had the trouble of coming so far to so little purpose.” Minutes of this interesting conference were jotted down by Henry Strachey, Lord Howe’s Secretary, and he has recorded two highly characteristic utterances of Franklin on the occasion. Such, Lord Howe declared, were his feelings towards America, on account of the honor conferred upon his family, by its recognition of the services rendered to it by his eldest brother (Viscount Howe), that, if America should fall, he would feel and lament it like the loss of a brother. Franklin’s answer to this generous outburst is thus recorded by Strachey. “Dr. Franklin (with an easy air, a collected countenance, a bow, a smile, and all that *naïveté* which sometimes appeared in his conversation and often in his writings), My Lord, we will use our utmost endeavors to save your Lordship that mortification.” Later, when Lord Howe assured Franklin that it was the commerce,” the strength, the men of America rather than her money that Great Britain wanted, Franklin, ever alive to the military advantage possessed by the Colonies in the amazing capacity for reproduction of their people, replied, “Ay, My Lord, we have in America a pretty considerable manufactory of men.” Strachey supposed that he meant to convey by this remark the impression that the American army was a large one, but Lord Howe knew Franklin’s turn of mind better, and penciled on the margin of Strachey’s manuscript, “No; their increasing population.”

Lord Howe seems to have borne himself on this occasion in every respect like a gallant gentleman. When the three members of Congress reached the shore opposite to Staten Island, after the journey from Philadelphia, which Adams had made on horseback, and Franklin and Rutledge in chairs, they found a barge from him awaiting them with an officer in it as a hostage for their safe return from the island. Adams suggested that the hostage should be dispensed with, and his colleagues, he tells us in his grandiose way, “exulted in the proposition and agreed to it instantly.” The fact was communicated to the officer, who bowed his assent, and re-embarked with the Americans. When Lord Howe saw the barge approaching the beach of the island, he walked down to meet it, and the Hessian regiment, which attended him, was drawn up in two lines facing each other. Upon seeing that the officer, whom he had sent over to the Jersey shore, had returned, Lord Howe exclaimed, “Gentlemen, you make me a very high compliment, and you may depend upon it I will consider it as the most sacred of things.” When the party landed, he shook hands very cordially with Franklin, and, after being introduced to Adams and Rutledge, conducted the three between the two files of Hessians to the house where the conference was to take place; all four chatting pleasantly together as they walked along. Adams, who was far too intense an American not to hate savagely a Hessian, fresh from the cattle-pen of his Prince, described these soldiers as “looking fierce as ten Furies, and making all the grimaces, and gestures, and

motions of their muskets with bayonets fixed, which, I suppose, military etiquette requires, but which we neither understood nor regarded." The house, which was to be the scene of the conference, was dilapidated and dirty from military use, but the apartment, into which the Americans were ushered, had been hung with moss and branches by Lord Howe with such refinement of taste that Adams subsequently pronounced it "not only wholesome, but romantically elegant." After reaching it, the whole party, including the colonel of the Hessian regiment, sat down to a collation "of good claret, good bread, cold ham, tongues, and mutton." When the repast was over, the colonel withdrew, the table was cleared and the fruitless conference began.

Nor was the activity of Franklin after his return from England limited to his duties as a member of Congress. If he fell asleep at times, when questions were under discussion by that body, it might well have been because he had no other time to sleep. Shortly after his return, he was elected Chairman of the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety, which was charged with the duty of arming and defending the Province, and of issuing bills of credit to defray the expense. In this office, he proved quite as fertile in expedients as he had done at the time of the Association years before. In the course of a year, the Delaware was effectively protected by forts and batteries and by a marine *chevaux-de-frise*, planned by Franklin himself; so much so that, when a British fleet attempted several years later to ascend the river, its progress was blocked for two months. Other features of the defensive plans adopted by the committee" were row-galleys, fully armed and manned, of which Josiah Quincy spoke in a letter to Washington as "Dr. Franklin's row-galleys."

In the morning at six [Franklin wrote to Priestley], I am at the Committee of Safety, appointed by the Assembly to put the Province in a state of defence; which committee holds till near nine, when I am at the Congress, and that sits till after four in the afternoon. Both these bodies proceed with the greatest unanimity, and their meetings are well attended. It will scarce be credited in Britain, that men can be as diligent with us from zeal for the public good, as with you for thousands per annum. Such is the difference between uncorrupted new states, and corrupted old ones.

To the period when the Committee of Safety was holding its sessions belongs a story which William Temple Franklin tells us of his grandfather. Some of the more intolerant Pennsylvanians asked the Committee to call upon the Episcopal clergy to refrain from prayers for the King.

The measure [said Franklin, who always preserved his sense of proportion] is quite unnecessary; for the Episcopal clergy, to my certain knowledge, have been constantly praying, these twenty years, that "*God would give to the king and his council wisdom*"; and we all know that not the least notice has ever been taken of that prayer.

While a member of Congress and the Committee of Safety, Franklin was also elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, but, as the members of that body were still required before taking their seats to pledge their allegiance to the King, he was unwilling to actually take his seat. The Assembly was under the dominion of John Dickinson, the leader of the Proprietary Party, and was very reluctant to break finally with the Crown." Nevertheless, it re-elected Franklin to Congress, though he alone of the nine delegates, elected from Pennsylvania to that body, was unhesitatingly in favor of independence. This position of isolation he was not condemned to occupy long. At a subsequent election, the party in Pennsylvania, which shared Franklin's views, obtained the upper hand, followed the lead of Congress in repudiating all authority derived from the King and declared the Proprietary Government dissolved. For a time, there was no government of any kind in Pennsylvania for even the most elementary needs of society. The result, however, was an impressive

illustration of the fact that all government is by no means on paper, for, at a later period of his life, Franklin told Sir Samuel Romilly that, while this anarchical condition lasted, order was perfectly preserved in every part of Pennsylvania, and that no man, who should have attempted to take advantage of the situation, for the purpose of evading the payment of a debt, could have endured the contempt with which he would have been visited.

The first step towards the restoration of civil government was taken by the Committee of Safety. It advised the people of Pennsylvania to elect delegates to a conference; they responded by doing so, and the delegates met at Philadelphia, sat five days, renounced allegiance to the King, took an oath of obedience to Congress and issued a call to the people to elect delegates to meet in convention and to form a constitution. At the election, which ensued, Franklin was one of the eight delegates elected from Philadelphia, and, when the convention met, he was unanimously chosen its President. On account of his duties as a member of Congress, his attendance upon the sessions of the convention was irregular, but it was regular enough to exert a marked influence over the proceedings of the body. In one respect, that is in the adoption of a single legislative chamber, the constitution framed by the convention bore the unmistakable impress of his peculiar political ideas.⁶⁹

A few weeks after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, Franklin received a long letter from Dubourg addressed to "My Dear Master," which justified at least the inference that Vergennes leaned towards the cause of the Colonies. Encouraged by this letter, Congress elected three envoys to represent America in France: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Silas Deane. Deane was already in France. Jefferson was compelled by the ill health of his wife to decline, and Arthur Lee, then in London, was elected in his stead.

After a voyage of thirty days in the *Reprisal*, commanded by Captain Wickes, a small war-vessel in the service of Congress, Franklin reached Quiberon Bay. Thence he proceeded by land to Nantes and from Nantes to Paris. After his arrival at Paris, he lodged at the Hôtel d'Hambourg, in the Rue de l'Université, until he found a home in the house at Passy placed at his disposal by M. Donatien LeRay de Chaumont. For a time, he courted retirement, but, as France was drawn more and more closely into concert with the American rebels, his activity became more and more open, until the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga induced that country to abandon the policy of connivance and secret assistance, which it had pursued behind the screen, supplied by the commercial adventures of Caron de Beaumarchais, even before Franklin landed in Europe, and to enter into the treaty of alliance with the United States which made Adams, Lee and himself our fully acknowledged representatives at the French Court. The circumstances, under which the news of Burgoyne's capitulation was communicated to Franklin and his colleagues, constitute one of the most thrilling moments in history. The messenger, who conveyed it, was Jonathan Loring Austin, a young New Englander, and the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of War; and he was sent in a swift vessel for the very purpose by the State of Massachusetts. "Whatever in thy wise providence thou seest best to do with the young man, we beseech thee most fervently, at all events, to

⁶⁹ Franklin's three political hobbies were gratuitous public service, a plural executive and a single legislature. Through his influence, the second and third of these two ideas were engrafted upon the Revolutionary Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania, and were later ably defended by him, when assailed. The manner in which he illustrated his opposition to a bi-cameral legislature is well-known. "Has not," he said, "the famous political Fable of the Snake, with two Heads and one Body, some useful Instruction contained in it? She was going to a Brook to drink, and in her Way was to pass thro' a Hedge, a Twig of which opposed her direct course; one Head chose to go on the right side of the Twig, the other on the left; so that time was spent in the Contest, and, before the Decision was completed, the poor Snake died with thirst." As far as carrying the idea of gratuitous public service into execution was concerned, Franklin, of course, might as well have attempted to grow pineapples in the squares of Philadelphia.

preserve the packet,” is the tactless petition that Dr. Cooper is said to have addressed to Heaven on the Sunday before Austin sailed. The rumor of his coming preceded his arrival at Passy, and, when his chaise was heard in the court of the Hôtel de Chaumont, Deane, Arthur and William Lee, Ralph Izard, Dr. Bancroft, Beaumarchais and Franklin went out to meet him. “Sir,” said Franklin, “*is Philadelphia taken?*” “Yes, sir,” replied Austin. At this Franklin clasped his hands and turned as if to go back into the house. “But, sir,” said Austin, “I have greater news than that. General Burgoyne and his whole army are prisoners of war!” The night of American adversity was now for the first time lit up by a real augury of dawn, and the treaties of amity and commerce and alliance between France and the United States, in the existing state of French feeling, followed almost as a matter of course.

When, weak from his long voyage, Franklin started out on the journey from the seashore to Paris, which led him at one point through the forest haunts of a bloodthirsty gang of robbers, he was seventy years of age. “Yet,” he could” truly declare some ten years later to George Whatley, “had I gone at seventy, it would have cut off twelve of the most active years of my life, employed too in matters of the greatest importance.” These were indeed years of precious service to his country and of a fame for himself as resplendent as any in modern history which lacks the lustre of military glory. What Washington was to America in the field, Franklin was to her in the foreign relations upon which it may well be doubted whether the success of her arms did not at times depend. To obtain material aid in the form of money and munitions of war, soldiers and fleets from the one powerful country in Europe, which manifested a disposition to side actively with America, was the cardinal object of American policy after the outbreak of the Revolution, and rarely has any man ever been more richly qualified for the accomplishment of any object than was Franklin for the accomplishment of this. In the first place, his liberal and sympathetic nature, with its unrivalled capacity for assimilating foreign usages and habits of thought and feeling, slid without the slightest friction into every recess of its French environment. This was a fact of supreme importance in the case of a people so distinctive in point of race and temperament, and so irredeemably wedded to their own national prepossessions and prejudices as the French. Doubtless, Franklin was too wise a man not to have courted French favor, in a social sense, to some extent as a matter of political policy. Then, too, there is every reason to know that he was sincerely grateful to France for the benefits which she showered upon his country and himself. But it was mainly the spell of La Belle France herself, with her cordial appeal to his delight in existence, which finally produced the state of mutual affection that enabled him to say with truth that he loved the French and that they loved him. What this meant to our cause we can easily divine when we remember how wholly some of the colleagues of Franklin” failed to recommend themselves to the good will of the people, whose good will it was of the utmost concern to America that they should conciliate, or to abstain from untimely dissensions. The exact reverse of what Franklin said of himself might be said of them. They disliked the French People, and the French People disliked them.⁷⁰ More than once it required all the management of Franklin to placate feelings that they had aroused in Vergennes, the French Minister, by lack of tact or good judgment. On one occasion, after being lectured by Adams, on the subject of the American paper money, held by citizens of France, Vergennes wrote to Franklin that nothing could be less analogous than the language of Adams to the alliance subsisting between his Majesty and the United States. In the same letter, he asked Franklin to lay the whole correspondence between Adams and himself before Congress, adding that his Majesty flattered himself that that Assembly, inspired with

⁷⁰ In his Diary John Adams states shortly after his arrival in France that it was said among other things that Arthur Lee had given offence by an unhappy disposition, and by indiscreet speeches before servants and others concerning the French nation and government—despising and cursing them.

principles different from those which Mr. Adams had discovered, would convince his Majesty that they knew how to prize those marks of favor which the King had constantly shown to the United States. No choice was left to Franklin except to comply with the request and to do what he could to satisfy Vergennes that the sentiments of Congress and of Americans generally were very different from those of Adams. But unfortunately, before the correspondence between Adams and Vergennes could reach Congress, Adams had again, by his officious conduct in another particular, elicited a sharp rebuke from Vergennes. This correspondence, too, Vergennes requested Franklin to lay before Congress, which Franklin did" with comments not more severe than the occasion called for, but which the pride of Adams, already deeply infected with the jealousy of Franklin, which he shared with Arthur Lee, so far as his manlier and wholesomer nature allowed, never fully forgave. "He," Vergennes said of Adams, in a letter to La Luzerne, "possesses a rigidity, a pedantry, an arrogance and a vanity which render him unfit to treat political questions."

After peace was restored between Great Britain and the United States, the strictures of Adams upon Vergennes and France became so imprudent and outspoken that Franklin wrote to Robert Morris:

I hope the ravings of a certain mischievous madman here against France and its ministers, which I hear of every day, will not be regarded in America, so as to diminish in the least the happy union that has hitherto subsisted between the two nations, and which is indeed the solid foundation of our present importance in Europe.

Four months later, Franklin, to use his own words, hazarded a mortal enmity by making this communication to Robert R. Livingston:

I ought not, however, to conceal from you, that one of my Colleagues is of a very different Opinion from me in these Matters. He thinks the French Minister one of the greatest Enemies of our Country, that he would have straitned our Boundaries, to prevent the Growth of our People; contracted our Fishery, to obstruct the Increase of our Seamen; and retained the Royalists among us, to keep us divided; that he privately opposes all our Negotiations with foreign Courts, and afforded us, during the War, the Assistance we receiv'd, only to keep it alive, that we might be so much the more weaken'd by it; that to think of Gratitude to France is the greatest of Follies, and that to be influenc'd by it would ruin us. He makes no Secret of his having these Opinions, expresses them publicly, sometimes in presence of English Ministers," and speaks of hundreds of Instances which he could produce in Proof of them.

All this Franklin believed to be

as imaginary as I know his Fancies to be, that Count de V. and myself are continually plotting against him, and employing the News-Writers of Europe to depreciate his Character, &c. But as Shakespear says, "Trifles light as Air, &c." I am persuaded, however, that he means well for his Country, is always an honest Man, often a wise one, but sometimes, and in some things, absolutely out of his senses.

A clever and just flash of characterization but for the usual inability of Franklin to refer abnormal conduct to anything short of dementia.⁷¹ In the latter part of the same year, Franklin again had occasion to write to Robert Morris,

⁷¹ Deprived of its epigrammatic form, this estimate does not differ so very greatly from that of Jefferson a few years later: "He is vain, irritable and a bad calculator of the force and probable effects of the motives which govern men. This is all the ill which can possibly be said of him. He is as disinterested as the being who made him; he is profound in his views and accurate in his judgment, except when a knowledge of the world is

My Apprehension that the Union between France and our States might be diminished by Accounts from hence, was occasioned by the extravagant and violent Language held here by a Public Person, in public Company, which had that Tendency; and it was natural for me to think his Letters might hold the same Language, in which I was right; for I have since had Letters from Boston informing me of it. Luckily here, and I hope there, it is imputed to the true Cause, a Disorder in the Brain, which, tho' not constant, has its Fits too frequent.

Apart from more general considerations, as Franklin was, at the very time that Adams was holding this kind" of discourse, soliciting more money from Vergennes for the United States, it was natural enough that he should fear the tendency of such ungrateful and provoking language to chill the liberality of the French Minister. It is agreeable, however, to recollect that in the succeeding year the able, upright and patriotic statesman, who had to such a conspicuous degree the defects of his virtues, was so far restored to reason, that Franklin could write to William Temple Franklin that he had walked to Auteuil on Saturday to dine with Mr. A. &c., with whom he went on comfortably.

As to how far Arthur Lee succeeded in ingratiating himself with Vergennes, the correspondence of that Minister with the French Minister in America enables us to judge without difficulty. In one letter, he wrote that he had too good an opinion of the intelligence and wisdom of the members of Congress and of all true patriots to suppose that they would allow themselves to be led astray by the representations of a man (Lee) whose character they ought to know.

As to Dr. Franklin [he continued], his conduct leaves nothing for Congress to desire. It is as zealous and patriotic, as it is wise and circumspect; and you may affirm with assurance, on all occasions where you think proper, that the method he pursues is much more efficacious than it would be if he were to assume a tone of importunity in multiplying his demands, and above all in supporting them by menaces, to which we should neither give credence nor value, and which would only tend to render him personally disagreeable.

The writer might as well have added "as is Arthur Lee." In another letter, Vergennes stated that the four millions more that France had decided to grant Dr. Franklin would convince Congress that they had "no occasion to employ the false policy of Mr. Izard and Mr. Lee to procure succors."⁷²

necessary to form a judgment. He is so amiable, that I pronounce you will love him if ever you become acquainted with him. He would be, as he was, a great man in Congress."

⁷² On Oct. 29, 1778, Vergennes finally wrote to Gérard, the French Minister at Philadelphia, that his fear of Lee and of *ses entours* made the communication of state secrets to him impossible, and he instructed Gérard to inform Congress that Lee's conduct had "created the highest disgust" in the courts of France and Spain. It is doubtful whether any man of the same degree of parts, courage and patriotic constancy as Arthur Lee was ever more irredeemably condemned by the general verdict of his contemporaries or posterity. It would be a profitless task to bring together the most notable of these judgments. Jefferson summed up most of them in a few words: "Dr. Lee," he said, "was his (Franklin's) principal calumniator, a man of much malignity, who, besides enlisting his whole family in the same hostility, was enabled, as the agent of Massachusetts with the British Government, to infuse it into that State with considerable effect. Mr. Izard, the Doctor's enemy also, but from a pecuniary transaction, never countenanced these charges against him. Mr. Jay, Silas Deane, Mr. Laurens, his colleagues also, ever maintained towards him unlimited confidence and respect." Silas Deane, the most efficient envoy except Franklin sent abroad by Congress during the Revolution, derived a degree of unaffected pleasure from the respect felt for Franklin in France that contrasts most favorably with the base jealousy of Arthur Lee and the ignoble jealousy of John Adams. After telling how the French populace on a certain occasion showed Franklin a measure of deference seldom paid to their first princes of the blood, he says: "When he attended the operas and

For very different reasons, even Jay, with his admirable character, did not achieve any success in dealing with the French people beyond the kind of success which the French themselves damn with the phrase *succès d'estime*. The complaint that M. Grand made of him, when he was in Spain, "that he always appeared very much buttoned up," was hardly less applicable to him when he was transferred to Paris as one of our Peace Commissioners. "Mr. Jay," diarizes Adams, "likes Frenchmen as little as Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard did. He says they are not a moral people; they know not what it is; he don't like any Frenchman; the Marquis de Lafayette is clever, but he is a Frenchman."

John Laurens, too, when he came over to Paris to solicit money for the American army, *beau sabreur* as he was, handled the French as awkwardly as the rest. "He" was indefatigable, while he staid," Franklin wrote to William Carmichael, "and took true Pains, but he *brusqu'd* the Ministers too much, and I found after he was gone that he had thereby given more Offence than I could have imagin'd." The truth is that, until the watchful detachment of Adams and Jay from their foreign environment became of some service to the United States in helping to assure to them the full fruits of their victory in the final shuffle of diplomacy over the Treaty of Peace, Franklin after the return of Silas Deane to America was the only one of our diplomatic representatives who can be said to have earned his salt in France.⁷³ The rest, so far from promoting the objects of the French mission, did much to jeopard its success. The United States could well have afforded to keep them all at home and to pay them double the amount of the salaries which were wasted upon them abroad. They either could not rise above the limitations and prejudices of foreigners in dealing with a people peculiarly tenacious of their own national views and" characteristics, or were too lacking in diplomatic instinct and *savoir faire* to hold their own grating idiosyncracies of temper and disposition in check, when it was of the highest importance to their country that they should do so; or they were so restive under the pre-eminence of Franklin as to be unable to control the envy and ill-feeling, which harassed his peace, and tended to discredit the cause, in which they were engaged. Congress did not do many wise things in regard to our interests in France during the Revolution, but undoubtedly it did one, when it finally brought the discord of its envoys in that country to an end by declining to accept the resignation of Franklin and appointing him the sole Ambassador of the United States at Paris.⁷⁴ Under no circumstances, does his

plays, similar honors were paid him, and I confess I felt a joy and pride which was pure and honest, though not disinterested, for I considered it an honor to be known to be an American and his acquaintance."

⁷³ John Adams admits in his Diary that Deane was "active, diligent, subtle and successful, having accomplished the great purpose of his mission to advantage." After the recall of Deane from France, Franklin wrote of him to Henry Laurens: "Having lived intimately with him now fifteen months, the greatest part of the time in the same House, and been a constant witness of his public Conduct, I can not omit giving this Testimony, tho. unasked, in his Behalf, that I esteem him a faithful, active, and able Minister, who, to my Knowledge, has done in various ways great and important Service to his Country, whose Interests I wish may always, by every one in her employ, be as much and as effectually promoted." On other occasions, Franklin spoke in equally laudatory terms of the abilities and services of Deane. But when Deane, soured by the persistent malevolence of Arthur Lee and the injustice of Congress, was weak enough to fall away from "the glorious cause," Franklin gave him up. "I see no place for him but England," he wrote to Robert Morris. "He continues, however, to sit croaking at Ghent chagrined, discontented, and dispirited." Franklin, however, was too nice a judge of conduct, and of the balanced considerations, which have to be taken into account in passing upon it, not to refer later to Deane as "poor, unhappy Deane,"—language such as he would have been the last man in the world to use with regard to a perfidious scoundrel like Benedict Arnold.

⁷⁴ The Diary of John Adams shows that shortly after he arrived in France Franklin took pains to lay before him the lamentable situation created by the impracticable tempers of the Lees and Izard. It would have been well for the reputation of Adams if this conversation had resulted in a thorough understanding between Franklin and himself, but the bias that he brought to France as a member of the Adams-Lee faction in Congress and the inability of his egotistical, jealous, suspicious and bustling, though honorable and fearless, nature, to reconcile itself to the overshadowing fame and influence of Franklin at the French Court drew him into working relations

success" in obtaining succor for America from France stand out so clearly as when contrasted with the futile missions of Arthur Lee, William Lee, Ralph Izard, Francis Dana and John Jay to other courts than that of France. So far from obtaining any material aid for the United States from the countries, to which they were accredited, and should never have been sent,⁷⁵ they had to fall back upon Franklin himself for their own subsistence; though it is only fair to them to say that some of them were allowed by these countries too little freedom of approach to make an impression of any kind upon them, good or otherwise. For the bad feeling entertained by Adams, Lee and Izard towards Franklin there is no valid reason for holding Franklin responsible. It is plain that he did not lack the inclination to be on friendly terms with Adams; and there is no evidence that he in any way provoked the malice which he suffered at the hands of Arthur Lee, or the passionate animosity which he excited in Ralph Izard. As late as 1780, after the return of Adams to Europe as a peace" commissioner, Franklin wrote to William Carmichael that Adams and himself lived on good terms with each other, though the former, he added, had never communicated anything of his business to him, and he had made no inquiries of him. If Franklin did not live on good terms with Arthur Lee, it was because no one, unless it were Adams, or Ralph Izard, when drawn to Lee by common jealousy of Franklin, could live on good terms with a man whose character was so hopelessly soured and perverted by suspicion and spleen. It was doubtless with entire truth that Franklin in a letter to William Carmichael, in which he termed Lee the most malicious enemy that he ever had, declared that there was not the smallest cause for his enmity. It had been inspired in England, as it had been revived in France, simply by the brooding desire of Lee to displace Franklin. In 1771, he made it plain in a letter from England to Samuel Adams that Franklin, in his opinion, was not too good to be the instrument of Lord Hillsborough's treachery in pretending that all designs against the charter of Massachusetts had been laid aside.

The possession of a profitable office at will, the having a son in a high post at pleasure, the grand purpose of his residence here being to effect a change in the government of Pennsylvania, for which administration must be cultivated and courted

with Lee and Izard, which abundantly verified all that Franklin had said to him about them. "There are two men in the world," he declares in his Diary, "who are men of honor and integrity, I believe, but whose prejudices and violent tempers would raise quarrels in the Elysian fields, if not in Heaven." At times the vanity of Adams—easily mortified, easily elated as all vanity is—was humbled by some fresh proof of the dwarfing prominence of Franklin. "Neither Lee nor myself is looked upon of much consequence," he observes in his Diary. On another occasion, when Arthur Lee suggested that the papers of the mission should be kept in a room in his own house, Adams objected for the reason, among others, that nine tenths of the public letters would ever be carried where Dr. Franklin was. These were but temporary reactions. When down, the vanity of Adams was soon on its legs again. The reminder given by Vergennes to the officious, tactless reasonings and strictures, to which he was subjected by Adams, that Franklin was the sole American plenipotentiary in France, and the steps that the latter was compelled to take, both by the request of Vergennes and his own sense of the peril, that such injudicious conduct on the part of Adams signified to the American cause, to smooth over the rupture, sent Adams off to Holland in a resentful but subdued state of mind. But his success in negotiating a loan in Holland and the prospect of engaging in a matter of such supreme importance as the final negotiations for peace lifted him up to giddy heights of intoxicated self-importance again. Referring to the loan in his Diary, he says: "The compliment of *Monsieur, Vous êtes le Washington de la négociation* (Sir, you are the Washington of the negotiation) was repeated to me by more than one person.... A few of these compliments would kill Franklin if they should come to his ears." His observations in his Diary on Jay and Franklin, when he came over to France to participate with them in the final negotiations for peace, are equally characteristic. "Between two as subtle spirits as any in this world, the one malicious, the other, I think honest, I shall have a delicate, a nice, a critical part to act. Franklin's cunning will be to divide us; to this end he will provoke, he will insinuate, he will intrigue, he will manœuvre. My curiosity will at least be employed in observing his invention and his artifice."

⁷⁵ "I think," said Franklin in a letter to Charles W. F. Dumas, in 1778, "that a young State like a young Virgin, should modestly stay at home, & wait the Application of Suitors for an Alliance with her; and not run about offering her Amity to all the World; and hazarding their Refusal." "Our Virgin," he added a line or so later, "is a jolly one; and tho. at present not very rich, Will in time be a great Fortune."

[Lee wrote], are circumstances which, joined with the temporizing conduct he has always held in American affairs, preclude every rational hope that, in an open contest between an oppressive administration and a free people, Dr. Franklin can be a faithful advocate for the latter.

In another letter he intimated a suspicion that Dr. Franklin had been “bribed to betray his trust.” The motive for such communications is made clear enough by still another letter that he sent over to Boston stating that, while Dr. Franklin frequently assured him that he would sail for Philadelphia in a few weeks, he believed he “would not quit them till he was gathered to his fathers.”⁷⁶ The insidious calumnies that Lee sowed in Massachusetts, when he was coveting Franklin’s agency for that colony, were only too effective for a time in creating even in the minds of such men as Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Josiah Quincy an impression unfavorable to Franklin’s fidelity to the American cause. How little based on any real misgivings as to the character of the man, whose place he craved, were the innuendoes and accusations of Lee, may be inferred from his statement at the time of the Privy Council outrage that Franklin bore the assaults of Wedderburn “with a firmness and equanimity which conscious integrity can inspire.” In a letter to Lord Shelburne in 1776, he even spoke of Franklin as “our *Pater Patriæ*.”

In France, the same sense of having a young man’s revenue withered out by tedious expectation led to similar misrepresentations and intrigue. This time, the object was to bring about the transfer of Franklin from France, where the jealousy of Lee was incessantly inflamed by his great reputation and influence, to some other post, and the appointment of Lee himself as his successor. If the change had not been such as to foreshadow utter ruin to American interests in France, the letters that Arthur Lee wrote to his brother Richard Henry Lee in the prosecution of these aims would be little less than ludicrous. “My idea of adapting characters and places is this,” he said in one letter, “Dr. F. to Vienna, as the first, most” respectable, and quiet; Mr. Deane to Holland.... France remains the centre of political activity, and here, therefore, I should choose to be employed.” There was but one way, he said in another letter to his brother, of bringing to an end the neglect, dissipation, and private schemes, which he saw in every department of the American Mission at Paris, and that was the plan he had before suggested of appointing the Dr. *honoris causa* to Vienna, Mr. Deane to Holland, and Mr. Jennings to Madrid, and of leaving him (Lee) at Paris. To Samuel Adams he wrote that he had been at the several courts of Spain, Vienna and Berlin, and found that of France to be the great wheel that moved them all. He would, therefore, be much obliged to Adams for remembering that he should prefer being at the court of France.

Lee was a man of considerable ability, though his incurable defects of disposition and temper almost wholly deprived him of the profitable use of it, and he was from first to last, when in Europe, loyal to the American cause. But, if there ever was a person born under the malignant sign, Scorpio, it was he. He was

“More peevish, cross and splenetic
Than dog distract or monkey sick.”

⁷⁶ Franklin was entirely cognizant of the motive by which Lee was influenced. Referring in a letter to Thomas Cushing, dated July 7, 1773, to censure with which he had been visited for supposed neglect in not sending earlier intelligence to Massachusetts of certain English measures affecting her welfare, he said, "This Censure, tho. grievous, does not so much surprize me, as I apprehended from the Beginning, that between the Friends of an old Agent, my Predecessor, who thought himself hardly us'd in his Dismission, and those of a young one impatient for the Succession, my situation was not likely to be a very comfortable one, as my Faults could scarce pass unobserved."

In the course of his suspicious, jealous and quarrelsome life he appears to have inflicted a venomous sting upon almost every human being that ever crossed the path of his inordinate and intriguing ambition. In the monopoly of intelligence and public virtue that he arrogated to himself he was not unlike the French woman who was credited by Franklin with the assertion that she met with nobody but herself that was always in the right. With a few exceptions, no prominent American in France, when he was in that country, escaped his insidious defamation. Silas Deane was the accomplice of Beaumarchais in his effort to make the United States pay for free gifts of the French King. Franklin was a cunning rogue ever on the watch to line the pockets of his grandnephew, Jonathan Williams; indeed Lee did not scruple to term him "the father of corruption"; every day gave him fresh reasons for suspecting William Carmichael; John Paul Jones was merely the captain of "a cruising job of Chaumont and Dr. Franklin." And so on with the other contemporaries, whose character he did his best to tarnish with the breath of calumny, ever actuated as he was by the sinister, backward-spelling disposition which

"Never gives to truth and virtue that

Which simpleness and merit purchaseth."

What both Lee and Adams could not forgive in Franklin was the fact that, though there were three American envoys at Paris, the French Ministry and People would have it that there was only one, "*le digne Franklin*,"⁷⁷ "*le plus grand philosophe du siècle*," "*l'honneur de l'Amérique, et de l'humanité*." The wounded sense of self-importance, awakened by this fact, assumed in Adams, except in his more extravagant moments, no worse form than that of quickened self-assertion, or the charge that Franklin was grown too inert, from years and physical infirmities, to conduct the routine business of the mission with the proper degree of order and system, or was too susceptible to social and academic flattery to keep a vigilant eye upon the more selfish side of French policy. But in the case of Lee, lacerated vanity not only led him along finally to the conclusion that Deane and Franklin were both rascals, but early convinced him that all their transactions, even the simplest, where he was concerned, were shaped by a desire to slight or affront him, or to deprive him of his just privileges and standing as one of the Commissioners. He had hardly been in France a year before his perverse pen was lecturing and scolding Franklin as if he were one of the most arbitrary and inconsiderate of men instead of one of the most reasonable and considerate. At first, Franklin did not reply to such letters, but his failure to reply simply supplied Lee with another excuse for scolding. At last, Lee, after taxing him with tardiness in settling the accounts of the Commissioners, and with keeping him in the dark about the mission on which M. Gérard had been sent to America, expressed the hope that he would not treat this letter from him as he had many others with the indignity of not answering it.

It is true [said Franklin], that I have omitted answering some of your Letters, particularly your angry ones, in which you, with very magisterial Airs, school'd and documented me, as if I had been one of your Domestics. I saw in the strongest Light the Importance of our living in decent Civility towards each other, while our great Affairs were depending here. I saw your jealous, suspicious, malignant and quarrelsome Temper, which was daily manifesting itself against Mr. Deane, and

⁷⁷ On one occasion this expression gave rise to an incident that is worth recalling. We tell it as it is told by Parton. A large cake was sent to the apartment in which the envoys were assembled, bearing this inscription: *Le digne Franklin*—the worthy Franklin. Upon reading the inscription, Mr. Deane said: "As usual, Doctor, we have to thank you for our accommodation, and to appropriate your present to our joint use." "Not at all," said Franklin, "this must be intended for all the Commissioners; only these French people can not write English. They mean no doubt, Lee, Deane, Franklin." "That might answer," remarked the magnanimous Lee, "but we know that whenever they remember us at all they always put you first."

almost every other Person you had any Concern with: I therefore pass'd your Affronts in Silence; did not answer but burnt your angry Letters, and received you when I next saw you with the same Civility as if you had never wrote them.

These words are taken from a letter in which Franklin replied in detail to all the grievances vented in Lee's letter. On the day before, he had written a curter" reply which gives us a good idea of what his anger was at flood-tide.

It is true [this reply began], I have omitted answering some of your Letters. I do not like to answer angry Letters. I hate Disputes. I am old, can not have long to live, have much to do and no time for Altercation. If I have often receiv'd and borne your Magisterial Snubbings and Rebukes without Reply, ascribe it to the right Causes, my Concern for the Honour & Success of our Mission, which would be hurt by our Quarrelling, my Love of Peace, my Respect for your good Qualities, and my Pity of your Sick Mind, which is forever tormenting itself, with its Jealousies, Suspensions & Fancies that others mean you ill, wrong you, or fail in Respect for you. If you do not cure yourself of this Temper it will end in Insanity, of which it is the Symptomatick Forerunner, as I have seen in several Instances. God preserve you from so terrible an Evil: and for his sake pray suffer me to live in quiet.

The petition was not heeded. Cut off by his impracticable temper and the dis-esteem of the French Ministry from any participation in the more important transactions of the Mission, the industrious malice of Lee found employment in accusations of speculation against the other agents of the United States in France and in petty refinements over the proper methods of keeping the accounts and papers of the Commissioners. Everything that he touched threw out thorns and exuded acrid juices. Franklin might well have said of him what he said of his brother, William Lee, that he was not only a disputatious but a very artful man. He pursued Deane with such plausible misrepresentations, when the latter sought justice at the hands of Congress, that the unhappy man was finally hurried, to use Franklin's phrase, into joining his friend, Arnold. How he harried Jonathan Williams, we have already seen. So well understood was his litigious, malevolent temper that, when the State of Virginia" desired to purchase arms and military stores in France, several merchants refused to have any dealings with him, and one firm dealt with him only to be involved in the usual web of fine-spun suspicion and controversy.

I hope, however [wrote Franklin to Patrick Henry, at the time Governor of Virginia, who had solicited Franklin's assistance in the matter], that you will at length be provided with what you want, which I think you might have been long since, if the Affair had not been in Hands, which Men of Honour and Candour here are generally averse to dealing with, as not caring to hazard Quarrels and Abuses in the settlement of their Accounts.

He dared not meddle, he said, with the dispute in which Lee was engaged, "being charg'd by the Congress to endeavour at maintaining a good Understanding with their other Servants," which was, "indeed, a hard task with some of them," he declared.

As his acquaintance with Lee and his brother, William Lee, extended, Franklin became more and more wary in dealing with them. This was illustrated in his attitude towards the papers of Thomas Morris, the brother of Robert Morris, and the Commercial Agent of the United States at Nantes. When this gentleman, who, according to one of his contemporaries, "turned out the greatest drunkard the world ever produced," had duly paid the forfeit of his bibulous life, William Lee, with the aid of an order from the French Ministry, secured possession of all his papers, public and private, and, when on the eve of setting out for Germany, placed the trunk

containing them sealed in the custody of Franklin. The key, Franklin told him, he would rather have in the keeping of Arthur Lee. A correspondence followed between Franklin and John Ross, who had obtained an order from Congress for the delivery of the trunk to him. If it had been Pandora's box, Franklin could not have undertaken the delivery of the papers in a more gingerly manner.

I am glad [he wrote to Ross], an Order is come for delivering them to you. But as the Dispute about them may hereafter be continued, and Papers suspected to be embezzled by somebody; and as I have sign'd a terrible long Receipt for the Trunk, of which I have no copy, and only remember that it appear'd to be constructed with all the Circumspection of the Writers Motto, *Non incautus futuri* and that it fill'd a Half Sheet so full there was scarce Room for the Names of the four Evidences he requir'd to witness it; I beg you will not expect me to send it to you at Nantes but appoint who you please to receive it for you here. For I think I must deliver it before Witnesses, who may certify the State of the Seals; nothing being more likely than that Seals on a Trunk may rub off in the Carriage on so long a Journey; and then I should be expos'd to the Artful Suggestions of some who do not love me, & whom I conceive to be of very malignant Dispositions.

Afterwards, when Arthur Lee informed Franklin that, unless he was furnished with money by him, he would have to give up the thought of proceeding to Spain, Franklin replied dryly: "As I can not furnish the Expence, and there is not, in my Opinion, any Likelihood at Present of your being received at that Court, I think your Resolution of returning forthwith to America is both wise and honest." And, even when he supposed that he was finally rid of the gad-fly, which had annoyed him so long, and that Lee was off for America, with his poisoned ink-well and busy pen, Franklin took pains that he should not have everything his own way, though a thousand leagues distant. "There are some Americans returning hence," he wrote to Samuel Cooper, "with whom our people should be upon their guard, as carrying with them a spirit of enmity to this country. Not being liked here themselves, they" dislike the people; for the same reason, indeed, they ought to dislike all that know them."

Three days later, he wrote to Joseph Reed, of Pennsylvania, a letter in which, after denying a false statement made about the writer by Lee, he said, "He proposes, I understand, to settle in your Government. I caution you to beware of him; for, in sowing Suspicions and Jealousies, in creating Misunderstandings and Quarrels among friends, in Malice, Subtilty, and indefatigable industry, he has I think no equal." A few days later, he wrote to William Carmichael, "Messrs. Lee and Izard are gone to L'Orient, in order to embark in the *Alliance* together, but they did not travel together from hence. No soul regrets their departure. They separately came to take leave of me, very respectfully offering their services to carry any dispatches, etc."

But gone the gad-fly was not yet. After Lee reached L'Orient, the officers and men of the *Alliance* refused to weigh anchor until certain claims of theirs to wages and prize money were complied with, and, while John Paul Jones, their captain, was away at Paris, engaged in an effort to hasten the payment of the prize-money, Captain Peter Landais, acting under the advice of Arthur Lee and Commodore Gillon, took possession of the ship and sailed off for America. As soon as the news of the mutiny came to Franklin, he suspected that Arthur Lee was at the bottom of it.

I have no doubt [he wrote to Samuel Wharton, in regard to Landais] that your suspicion of his Adviser is well founded. That Genius must either find or make a Quarrel wherever he is. The only excuse for him that his Conduct will admit of, is his

being at times out of his Senses. This I always allow, and am persuaded that if some of the many Enemies he provokes do not kill him sooner he will die in a madhouse.

The sequel of this high-handed proceeding afforded Franklin another opportunity to question Lee's mental soundness. The *Alliance* was not long out before Landais exhibited such flightiness that its passengers deposed him, and placed the ship in command of its first lieutenant. Commenting on the incident, Franklin wrote to Samuel Cooper:

Dr. Lee's accusation of Capt. Landais for Insanity was probably well founded; as in my Opinion would have been the same Accusation, if it had been brought by Landais against Lee; For tho' neither of them are permanently mad, they are both so at times; and the Insanity of the Latter is the most Mischievous.

How truly high-handed the rape of the *Alliance* was, will be realized, when the reader is told that at the time Landais had been deprived of the captaincy of the *Alliance*, upon the charge of gross misconduct in the glorious engagement between the *Serapis* and the *Bon Homme Richard*, and was looking forward to a court-martial in America upon specifications involving a capital offence; that he had abandoned the ship, and that Jones, who had won imperishable honor and renown in the conflict between the *Serapis* and the *Bon Homme Richard*, had been placed in command of her by Franklin, and had been in command of her for eight months; and that Franklin had in a letter to Landais sternly refused to restore her to him.

Of William Lee, Franklin had, as we have just seen, very much the same opinion that he had of Arthur Lee. When he talked to Franklin of nominating Jonathan Williams, his grandnephew, and Mr. Lloyd in the place of Thomas Morris and himself as the Commercial Agents of the United States at Nantes, Franklin wrote to Williams: "I question whether there be Flesh enough upon the Bone for two to pick. I doubt its being worth your while to" accept of it. I did not thank him for mentioning you because I do not wish to be much oblig'd to him and less to be a little oblig'd."

Not long after this, Franklin had less cause to think well of William Lee than ever. Upon representations being made by Ralph Izard and him to the three Commissioners, Arthur Lee, Deane and Franklin, that, though they had been appointed Ministers to the courts of Berlin, Vienna and Florence by Congress, no provision for their expenses had reached them, the three Commissioners asked what sums they would require. William Lee replied that he could not exactly compute in advance what he would need, but that, if he was empowered to draw upon the banker of the Commissioners, he would certainly only draw from time to time for such sums as were absolutely necessary; and that it was therefore a matter of little importance at what amount the credit was fixed. "It would however look handsome & confidential," he said, "if the sum were two Thousand Louis." Thereupon, Franklin tells us, the Commissioners "did frankly but unwarily give the Orders." Soon afterwards, Deane and Franklin were informed that William Lee and Izard had gone directly to the banker of the Commissioners, and drawn out the whole amount of the credit, and had deposited it to their own account exclusively. After that, even an order from Congress, empowering William Lee and Izard to draw upon the Commissioners for their expenses at foreign courts, was unavailing to open Franklin's purse strings. Doubtless, he wrote with calm irony to the Committee on Foreign Affairs at home, Congress, when it passed its resolution, intended to supply the Commissioners with funds for meeting the drafts of William Lee and Izard. And, to make things still worse for the disappointed beneficiaries of the resolution, he further said: "I could have no intention to distress them, because I must know it is out of my" Power, as their private Fortunes and Credit will enable them at all times to pay their own Expences."

Arthur Lee had taken good care to protect himself against any such afterclaps. In a formal letter to him, refusing to accede to his suggestion that no orders should be drawn upon the banker of the Commissioners, unless signed by all three of the Commissioners, Franklin told him flatly that he did not choose to be obliged to ask Mr. Lee's consent, whenever he might have occasion to draw for his subsistence, as that assent could not be expected from any necessity of a reciprocal compliance on Mr. Franklin's part, Mr. Lee having secured his subsistence by taking into his own disposition 185,000 livres, and his brother, by a deception on the Commissioners, 48,000.

Ralph Izard, of South Carolina, was very closely linked with Arthur Lee in Franklin's mind. Though appointed by Congress Commissioner to the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany at Florence, this court refused to receive him for fear of offending England, and he remained in Paris during the entire period of his appointment. In a letter to James Lovell, Franklin stated that he had made it a constant rule to answer no angry, affronting or abusive letters, of which he had received many, and long ones, from Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard. The hostility of Izard to Franklin, due in the main to the same causes as Arthur Lee's, was whetted partly by the fact that he was not consulted, when the treaty of alliance was entered into between the American Commissioners and France, and partly by the fact that Franklin refused to honor some of his pecuniary applications. In a letter from Passy to Francis Hopkinson, Franklin, as we have seen, said that he deserved Izard's enmity because he might have avoided it by paying him a compliment which he neglected, but elsewhere in his correspondence he rests this enmity upon substantially the same grounds as that of Arthur Lee. When Izard assailed him, because he had not conferred" with him in relation to the treaty of alliance, Franklin replied that he would give his letter a full answer when he had the honor of seeing him. "But," he said, "I must submit to remain some days under the Opinion you appear to have form'd not only of my poor Understanding in the general Interests of America, but of my Defects in Sincerity, Politeness & Attention to your Instructions."

It is doubtful whether a letter in which, in reply to an application for money, he reminded Izard of the latter's own pecuniary independence, was ever sent; but part of it is too pointed not to bear quotation. After dwelling upon the many calls upon the funds in the hands of the Commissioners, it goes on in these words:

In this Situation of our Affairs, we hope you will not insist on our giving you a farther Credit with our Banker, with whom we are daily in danger of having no farther Credit ourselves. It is not a Year since you received from us the sum of Two Thousand Guineas, which you thought necessary on Acc^t of your being to set out immediately for Florence. You have not incurr'd the Expence of that Journey. You are a Gentleman of Fortune. You did not come to France with any Dependence on being maintained here with your Family at the Expence of the United States, in the Time of their Distress, and without rendering them the equivalent Service they expected.

Izard seems to have had the kind of temper that heats as readily as iron but cools off as slowly as a footbrick, wrapped up in flannels.⁷⁸ Speaking of the indignity, to which Franklin had been subjected in his sight before the Privy" Council, he said: "When Dr. Franklin was so unmercifully bespattered by Wedderburn, I sat upon thorns; and had it been me that was so grossly insulted, I should instantly have repelled the attack, in defiance of every

⁷⁸ "It must," Adams says in his letter to the Boston *Patriot* of Aug. 21, 1811, with the whiff of bombast that is wafted to us from so many of his vigorous and vivid utterances, "suffice to say that Mr. Izard, with a fund of honor, integrity, candor and benevolence in his character, which must render him eternally estimable in the sight of all moral and social beings, was, nevertheless, the most passionate, and in his passions the most violent and unbridled in his expressions, of any man I ever knew."

consequence.” It is not unlikely that he would have been as good as his word, so prompt was the second, who had borne the challenge from Temple to Whately, to give free play to his irascible and imperious nature. But Graydon is our authority for the statement, too, that as long as four years after Izard had returned in the *Alliance* from France to the United States, the name of Franklin could not be mentioned in his presence without hurrying him into a state of excitement.

Altogether, our readers will agree with us, we are sure, in thinking that few things in our national history are calculated to leave a more painful impression upon the mind than the conduct of some of the men, who were supposed to represent the United States abroad, while Franklin, in spite of the jarring discords, of which he was the innocent author, was manfully struggling with the responsibilities which belonged in part to others, but never really rested upon any but his own old shoulders (as he termed them). By character and temperament, in some instances, they were conspicuously unfitted for the delicate tasks of diplomacy, and were too raw and rigidly set in their personal and national prejudices besides ever to succeed in repressing their dislike for the French. There can be no doubt, Jay aside, that they would have quarrelled with each other as rancorously as they did with Franklin but for the cohesion created by their common jealousy of him. How indefensible their attitude towards him was becomes all the more apparent when we recollect that rarely has any man ever been endowed with a mind or nature better fitted to disarm malice than those of Franklin. It is a hard judgment, not to be formed without due allowance for the extent to which the testimony of history” is always suborned by the glamour of a great reputation, but it is nevertheless, we believe, only a just judgment, to declare that Franklin spoke the simple truth when he wrote to William Carmichael, “Lee and Izard are open, and, so far, honourable Enemies; the Adams, if Enemies, are more covered. I never did any of them the least Injury, and can conceive no other Source of their Malice but Envy.” The excessive respect, shown him in France by all ranks of people, he said in the same letter, and the little notice taken of them, was a mortifying circumstance, but it was what he could neither prevent nor remedy.

This “excessive respect,” or justly deserved fame, as the biographer of Franklin might call it, was another thing which contributed to Franklin’s brilliant success at the Court of France. When he arrived in that country, he was no stranger there. His two previous visits to it had made him well acquainted with Turgot, Quesnay, Dupont de Nemours, the elder Mirabeau, Dubourg and Morellet and the other members of the group, known as the Physiocrats, whose speculative passion for Agriculture was one of the active intellectual forces of the time. His literary and scientific attainments had likewise won him the favor of other famous Frenchmen. These are facts of no slight importance, when we recall the extent to which the currents of French thought, on the eve of the French Revolution, were fed and directed by men of letters and philosophers. When Franklin found himself in France, for the third time, he was a member of the Royal Society at London and the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, and had been honored with academic degrees not only by Yale, Harvard and William and Mary in his own country, but by Oxford in England and St. Andrews in Scotland.⁷⁹ An

⁷⁹ In the latter part of his life, it must have severely taxed the memory of Franklin to recollect all the honors paid to him by educational institutions and learned societies of one kind or another. The honorary degree of Master of Arts was conferred on him in July, 1753, by Harvard College, and in September of the same year by Yale College. In April, 1756, the degree of Master of Arts was bestowed on him by William and Mary College. In 1759, he received the degree of Doctor in Laws from the University of St. Andrews, and in 1762, he was made a Doctor of Civil Laws by the University of Oxford. At various times in his life, he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, an Honorary Fellow of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, a member of the Royal Society of London, one of the eight foreign associates of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, an honorary member of the Medical Society of London, the first foreign associate of the Royal Society

edition of his scientific works had been" translated into French by his friend Dubourg, and his *Way to Wealth* had been translated into the same language, and distributed broadcast by bishops and curés among the members of their flocks as incentives to industry and frugality. It was in France, too, that D'Alibard had verified the sublime hypothesis of Franklin by drawing down the lightning from the clouds. Moreover, before he left England at the end of his second mission to that country, his activity and prominence in resisting the arbitrary measures of the British Ministry had made his political influence and standing thoroughly familiar to the French Cabinet, which had for many years kept a close watch upon every movement or event that portended a revolt of the American Colonies. Along with these solid claims to the attention and respect of the French people were certain other circumstances that strongly tended to heighten the fame of Franklin. It was the era when the modern Press was beginning to assert its new-born power, and the fur cap, one of the badges of the mediæval printer, that he wore, was hardly necessary to remind the newspapers of that day, with all their facilities for rouging public reputation by artful and persistent publicity, that Franklin was first of all a printer. It was also the era when the idea of the universal brotherhood of men of all classes and races made an uncommonly strong appeal" to democratic and humanitarian impulses. Such an age could readily enough regard a man like Franklin as a true citizen of the world, a veritable friend of man and a torch-bearer of the new social and political freedom. It was also the era when it was the mode to indulge dreams of primitive beatitude and idyllic simplicity, and around no figure could such dreams more naturally gather than that of the venerable and celebrated man, whose thin white hair, worn straight without wig or powder, plain dress and frank, direct speech seemed to make him the ideal exemplar of a state of society devoid of monarch, aristocrat or hierarch.⁸⁰

That Franklin, when he came to Paris, as the representative of a country, which was not only at war with the hereditary enemy of France, but had fearlessly avowed general political sentiments, that France herself was eager to avow, should, with his fame, simple manners and social charm, have excited for a time the surpassing enthusiasm which he did is not surprising; for what the French ardently admire they usually festoon with fireworks and crown with flowers; but that this enthusiasm should have continued, so far as we can see, wholly unabated for nine years, is a surprising thing, indeed, when" we recollect how inclined the fickle populace of every country is to beat in its hour of inevitable reaction the idol before which it has prostrated itself in its hour of infatuation. While in France, Franklin was not simply the mode, he was the rage. Learned men from every part of Europe thought a visit to Paris quite incomplete, if it did not include a call upon him. Even the Emperor Joseph, "a King by trade," as he once termed himself, intrigued to meet him *incognito*. Among the many letters that he received from individuals, distinguished or obscure, who sought to flatter him or to draw upon his wisdom or treasured knowledge, was Robespierre—then a young

of Medicine at Paris, and a member of other learned societies or academies at Padua, Turin, Orleans, Madrid, Rotterdam, Göttingen and elsewhere.

⁸⁰ "It would be difficult," says Count Ségur, "to describe the eagerness and delight with which the American envoys, the agents of a people in a state of insurrection against their monarch, were received in France, in the bosom of an ancient monarchy. Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the luxury of our capital, the elegance of our fashions, the magnificence of Versailles, the still brilliant remains of the monarchical pride of Louis XIV., and the polished and superb dignity of our nobility on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the almost rustic apparel, the plain but firm demeanor, the free and direct language of the envoys, whose antique simplicity of dress and appearance seemed to have introduced within our walls, in the midst of the effeminate and servile refinement of the eighteenth century, some sages contemporary with Plato, or republicans of the age of Cato and of Fabius. This unexpected apparition produced upon us a greater effect in consequence of its novelty, and of its occurring precisely at the period when literature and philosophy had circulated amongst us an unusual desire for reforms, a disposition to encourage innovations, and the seeds of an ardent attachment to liberty."

advocate at Arras—who sent him a copy of his argument in defence of the lightning rod before the Council of Artois, and Marat who, true enough to his future, was investigating the physical laws of heat and flame. In the letter to Franklin, by which the copy of his argument was accompanied, Robespierre spoke of Franklin as “a man whose least merit is to be the most illustrious *savant* of the world.” To have a Franklin stove in its fireplace, with a portrait of Franklin on the wall above it, grew to be a common feature of the home of the wealthier householder in Paris. His spectacles, his marten fur cap, his brown coat, his bamboo cane became objects of general imitation. Canes and snuff-boxes were carried *à la Franklin*. Portraits, busts and medallions of him were multiplied without stint. Among the busts were some in Sèvres china, set in blue stones with gold borders, and among the medallions were innumerable ones made of clay dug at Passy.

The clay medallion of me [Franklin wrote to Sarah Bache] you say you gave to Mr. Hopkinson was the first of the kind made in France. A variety of others have been made since of different sizes; some to be set in the lids of snuff-boxes, and some so small as to be worn in rings; and the numbers sold are” incredible. These, with the pictures, busts, and prints (of which copies upon copies are spread everywhere) have made your father’s face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do anything that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it.

It was computed that some two hundred different kinds of representations of his face were turned out to be set in rings, watches, snuff-boxes, bracelets, looking-glasses and other chattels. One print of him is said to have made the fortune of the engraver. Particularly striking is the testimony of John Adams to the fame of Franklin when in France, which is part of the remarkable letter published by him in the *Boston Patriot* on May 11, 1811, in answer to Franklin’s strictures on his conduct in France:

His reputation was more universal than that of Leibnitz or Newton, Frederick or Voltaire; and his character more beloved and esteemed than any or all of them.... His name was familiar to government and people, to kings, courtiers, nobility, clergy, and philosophers, as well as plebeians, to such a degree that there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen, a *valet de chambre*, coachman or footman, a lady’s chambermaid, or a scullion in a kitchen, who was not familiar with it, and who did not consider him as a friend to human kind. When they spoke of him, they seemed to think he was to restore the golden age.

To the pen of Adams we are also indebted for an account of the first public meeting between Voltaire and Franklin, which also testified with such dramatic *éclat* to the place occupied by Franklin in the hearts of the French people. This was at the hall of the Academy of Science in Paris.

Voltaire and Franklin were both present, and there presently arose a general cry that M. Voltaire and M. Franklin should be introduced to each other. This was done, and they bowed and spoke to each other. This was no satisfaction;” there must be something more. Neither of our philosophers seemed to divine what was wished or expected; they, however, took each other by the hand. But this was not enough; the clamor continued, until the explanation came out. “*Il faut s’embrasser, à la Française.*” The two aged actors upon this great theatre of philosophy and frivolity then embraced each other, by hugging one another in their arms, and kissing each other’s cheeks, and then the tumult subsided. And the cry immediately spread through the whole kingdom, and, I suppose, over all Europe, “*Qu’il était charmant de voir embrasser Solon et Sophocle!*”

A few weeks later Voltaire was dead, and, in the fall of the same year, his Apotheosis was celebrated by the Lodge of Nine Sisters—a Freemason's Lodge in Paris. An account of this memorable occasion was subsequently published by the officers of the Lodge. Madame Denis, the niece of Voltaire, and the Marchioness of Villette, whom he called his *Belle et Bonne*, and under whose roof he died, were present. After various addresses and strains of orchestral music, a clap of thunder was heard. Then

the sepulchral pyramid disappeared, great light succeeded the gloom which had prevailed till now, an agreeable symphony sounded in the place of the mournful music, and an immense picture of the apotheosis of Voltaire was disclosed. The picture represented Corneille, Racine and Molière above Voltaire as he leaves his tomb. Truth and Beneficence present him to them. Envy pulls at his shroud, in the wish to hold him back, but is driven away by Minerva. Higher up may be seen Fame, publishing the triumph of Voltaire.

Crowns were then laid upon the heads of La Dixmerie, the orator, Gauget, the painter, and Franklin, who lifted them from their heads and laid them at the feet of Voltaire's image.

Madame Campan in her *Memoirs* mentions another" occasion on which the most beautiful of three hundred women was designated to place a crown of laurel on Franklin's head, and to kiss him on each cheek.

Add to all these evidences of popular admiration and affection the intimate footing maintained by Franklin in so many French homes, and we begin to understand how powerfully his public and social standing helped to swell the resistless tide of sympathy and enthusiasm which bore down all opposition to the French alliance.

But far more than to his mere congeniality with the social spirit of the French People, or to his literary and scientific fame, or to his kinship with all the liberal tendencies of the eighteenth century in America and Europe, was the success of Franklin at the French court due to those general attributes of mind and character which he brought to every exigency of his private or public life: his good sense, his good feeling, his perfect equipoise, his tact, his reasonableness, his kindly humor. It was these things which, above everything else, enabled him to surmount all the trying difficulties of his situation, and to give to the world the most imposing example of fruitful pecuniary solicitation that it has ever known. The firm hold that he obtained upon the esteem and good will of Vergennes, "that just and good man" he terms him in one of his letters, was but the merited reward of personal qualities which invite, secure and retain esteem and good will under all human conditions. Vergennes, who held the keys of the French money-chest, and directed the policies of France, respected, trusted and liked Franklin, because Franklin, at any rate, duly recognized and acknowledged the generous motives which had, in part, inspired French intervention in the American contest, because he exhibited a considerate appreciation of the sacrifices which it cost France, still bleeding from her last struggle with Great Britain, to make such large and repeated loans to the United States, and because his tactful" and discreet applications for pecuniary assistance for his country were never marked by disgusting importunity or thinly veiled menaces. How true this is we have already seen; and its truth is still further confirmed by the testimony of Franklin's successor, Jefferson, who, when asked in Paris, whether he replaced Franklin, was in the habit of replying, "No one can replace him, sir; I am only his successor." After stating the circumstances, including his own association with Franklin at Paris, which had convinced him that the charge of subservience to France, made against Franklin, had not a shadow of foundation, Jefferson pays this impressive tribute to him:

He possessed the confidence of that Government in the highest degree, insomuch, that it may truly be said, that they were more under his influence than he under theirs. The fact is, that his temper was so amiable and conciliatory, his conduct so rational, never urging impossibilities, or even things unreasonably inconvenient to them, in short, so moderate and attentive to *their* difficulties as well as our own, that what his enemies called subserviency, I saw was only that reasonable disposition, which, sensible that advantages are not all to be on one side, yielding what is just and liberal, is the more certain of obtaining liberality and justice. Mutual confidence produces, of course, mutual influence, and this was all which subsisted between Dr. Franklin and the government of France.

To Jefferson we are also indebted for the statement that, when he was in France, there appeared to him more respect and veneration attached to the character of Franklin than to that of any other person in the same country, foreign or native.

The volume of multifarious tasks performed by Franklin in France was immense. The most valuable service rendered by him to the United States was in obtaining from the French King the pecuniary aids which helped Congress to defray the expenses of the Revolutionary War.” It has been truly said that he, and not Robert Morris, was the real financier of the Revolution. Until the triumph of the patriot cause was assured, he was the only one of the American envoys in Europe whose pecuniary solicitations met with any material success. Sometimes even such sums as were obtained by others outside of France were more attributable to his indirect influence than to their own direct efforts. No matter upon whom Congress might recklessly draw drafts, they were certain to come around to the aged negotiator, who appeared to be able to secure money from France even when France had no money for herself. He might be told that a loan which he had just procured from Vergennes was positively the last that France could make, and, yet, when he was compelled by desperation at home to give another reluctant rub to his magic lamp, there always stood the French servitor with his chest of gold. The aggregate amount of the loans and gifts made by France to the United States was on February 21, 1783, little short of forty-three millions of francs. It was these loans and gifts, transformed into munitions of war and military supplies, which again and again infused reviving life into the fainting bosom of his country, and enabled her soldiers to turn an undaunted face to her foes. How a man of Franklin’s years could have borne up under such frightful anxieties as those imposed upon him by the pecuniary demands of Congress and her other foreign envoys, to say nothing of additional burdens, it is difficult to understand. In the second year after his arrival in France, when drafts began to pour in on him from Congress, he reminded it that the envoys had not undertaken to do more than to honor its bills for interest on certain specified sums; and this reminder was frequently repeated. It might as well have been syllabled to the winds. Though most of the limited cargoes of tobacco and other products remitted by Congress as a basis of credit fell into the” hands of the ever-watchful British cruisers, almost every ship brought over bills upon the envoys or large orders for clothing, arms and ammunition. At one time, they had notice that bills for interest had been drawn on them to the amount of two million and a half, when they did not have a fifth of that sum on deposit with their banker.

In a letter to the Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1779, Franklin, who was really our sole envoy for the purpose of paying such bills, enumerates the great quantities of clothing, arms, ammunition and naval stores, which the envoys had sent over to America, the heavy drafts paid by them that Congress had drawn in favor of officers returning to France, or of other persons, the outlays of the envoys for the benefit of American prisoners, the amounts advanced by them to other agents of the United States, the freight charges paid by them and the sums expended by them in fitting out Captain Conygham and

the *Raleigh*, *Alfred*, *Boston*, *Providence*, *Alliance*, *Ranger* and other frigates. "And now," he concluded, "the Drafts of the Treasurer of the Loans coming very fast upon me, the Anxiety I have suffered, and the Distress of Mind lest I should not be able to pay them, has for a long time been very great indeed." This was but one of the earlier crises in the financial experience which led Franklin to say that his seemed to be the Gibeonite task of drawing water for all the congregation of Israel. The point of the observation becomes still more manifest when the reader is told that drafts were also frequently drawn on Franklin by the European agents of the Committee of Commerce of Congress, and that even the foreign agents of individual States of the Union, finding that no American abroad but he seemed to have any credit, applied to him for assistance in effecting loans for their principals. Indeed, one agent of the United States, a Mr. Bingham, did not scruple, without authority from Congress, or any other source, to notify Franklin that the *Deane* and the "*General Gates* had just arrived at Martinique and were in need of overhauling and provisions, and that he would have to draw upon him for the expense. This was too much even for Franklin's patience, and, when Mr. Bingham's bills were returned protested, that gentleman loudly complained that his credit had been effectually ruined. And, as the necessities of Congress became greater and greater, it almost wholly ceased to recognize that there were any limitations upon its right to draw upon Franklin, or that there was even any reason why it should notify him that such drafts were drawn. It simply drew, hit or miss. For pursuing this course in regard to him, there was at least the excuse that, no matter how freely it drew upon him, he somehow contrived to preserve the credit of Congress unstained. But Congress had no such excuse for drawing bills in this reckless manner, as it did too often, upon John Jay, Henry Laurens or John Adams. It is a laughable fact that, when some of its bills drawn upon Henry Laurens reached Europe, the drawee, who had never arrived in Holland, the country to which he was accredited, at all, was a prisoner in the Tower. As none of the other envoys, upon whom Congress drew, had any resource but to beg Franklin to pay the drafts, these drafts might as well have been drawn upon him in the first instance. No wonder that, with this accumulation of responsibility upon his shoulders, Franklin should have written to John Jay in Spain in these terms:

But the little Success that has attended your late applications for money mortified me exceedingly; and the Storm of Bills, which I found coming upon us both has terrified and vexed me to such a Degree, that I have been deprived of Sleep, and so much indispos'd by continual anxiety, as to be render'd almost incapable of writing.

This very letter, however, bears witness to his remarkable aptitude for dunning without incurring its odious" penalties. Overcoming his almost invincible reluctance, he said, he had made another application to the French Court for more money, and had been told to make himself easy as he would be assisted with what was necessary. Indeed, so generous was its conduct on this occasion that, when Franklin, in part payment for the loan, proposed that Congress should provision the French army in America with produce demanded from the States, his Majesty declined the proposal, saying that to furnish his army with such a large quantity of provisions as it needed might straiten Congress. "You will not wonder at my loving this good prince," Franklin concluded.

Amid all the cruel embarrassments of his situation, however, he never abated one jot of heart or hope, nor for one moment lost sight of the imperial future which he so clearly foresaw for the country that was adding sixty thousand children to her numbers annually. In this same letter, he let Jay know that in his opinion no amount of present distress should induce the United States to make the concessions to Spain that she was disposed to hold out as the price of her assistance. "Poor as we are," his indomitable spirit declared, "yet, as I know we shall be rich, I would rather agree with them to buy at a great Price the whole of their Right on the Mississippi, than sell a Drop of its waters. A Neighbour might as well ask me to sell my

Street Door.” Loyal, too, to Congress he remained from first to last. The worst that he was willing to say in a letter to Thomas Ruston of its rash conduct in flooding the world with bills that for all it knew might never be paid was a quiet, “That body Is, as you suppose, not well skill’d in Financing.”

Less than two months after his letter to Jay, we find him again appealing to Vergennes for pecuniary aid with which to enable Congress to co-operate with the French forces in America, and, a few weeks later, when the vitality of the American cause was at its lowest point,” he again takes up, on fresh calls from Congress, the same tedious refrain. The letter written by him to Vergennes on this occasion is one of his supplicatory masterpieces. He lays before the French Minister evidence that the spirit of the United States is unbroken, and that the recent success of the British in Carolina was chiefly due to the lack of the necessary means for “furnishing, marching, and paying the Expence of Troops sufficient to defend that Province.” He tells him that Lafayette had written that it was impossible to conceive, without seeing it, the distress that the troops had suffered for want of clothing; and that Washington, too, had written to him that the situation of the United States made one of two things essential to them, a peace, or the most vigorous aid of their allies, particularly in the article of money. For the aid, so necessary in the present conjuncture, he said, they could rely on France alone, and the continuance of the King’s goodness towards them. And then he concluded with these affecting but not altogether artless words:

I am grown old. I feel myself much enfeebled by my late long Illness, and it is probable I shall not long have any more Concern in these Affairs. I therefore take this Occasion to express my Opinion to your Excellency, that the present Conjuncture is critical; that there is some Danger lest the Congress should lose its Influence over the people, if it is found unable to procure the Aids that are wanted; and that the whole System of the New Governt in America may thereby be shaken; that, if the English are suffer’d once to recover that Country, such an Opportunity of effectual Separation as the present may not occur again in the Course of Ages; and that the Possession of those fertile and extensive Regions, and that vast Sea Coast, will afford them so Broad a Basis for future Greatness, by the rapid growth of their Commerce, and Breed of Seamen and Soldiers, as will enable them to become the *Terror of Europe*, and to exercise with impunity that Insolence, which is so natural to their Nation, and” which will increase enormously with the Increase of their Power.

Hard upon the heels of this letter came a letter from John Adams, inquiring whether Franklin could furnish funds for paying bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds sterling which had been drawn by Congress on Adams. Franklin replied by saying that he had not yet received a positive answer to his last appeal for aid to the French King, but that he had, however, two of the Christian Graces, Faith and Hope, though his faith was only that of which the Apostle speaks—the evidence of things not seen. In truth, he declared, he did not see at that time how so many bills drawn at random on the Ministers of Congress in France, Spain and Holland were to be paid. But all bills drawn upon them by Congress should be accepted at any risk; and he would accordingly do his best, and, if those endeavors failed, he was ready to break, run away or go to prison with Adams, as it should please God. His endeavors were successful, so startlingly successful that Vergennes informed him that his Majesty, to give the States a signal proof of his friendship, had resolved to grant them the sum of six millions, not as a loan, but as a free gift. But the announcement was accompanied by the significant statement that, as the supplies previously purchased in France by the United States, were supposed to be of bad quality, the Ministers would themselves take care of the purchase, with part of the gift, of such articles as were urgently needed in America, and the balance, remaining after these purchases, was to be drawn for by General Washington upon M.

d'Harvelay, Garde du Trèsoir Royal. "There was no room to dispute on this point," Franklin wrote to Samuel Huntington, "every donor having the right of qualifying his gifts with such terms as he thinks proper"; but the restrictions upon the gift would" seem, after all, to have been waived. Shortly after the six millions was promised, Colonel Laurens, who was supposed by Washington to be peculiarly competent to state the needs of the American army, arrived in France, and to him Franklin delegated the task of making purchases for Congress with part of the sum. Franklin was already supporting Adams, Dana, Jay and Carmichael on the proceeds of his persuasive approaches to the French King, and, at best, the arrival of Laurens would have meant little except another ministerial mouth to feed. Unfortunately, however, it signified much more to Franklin's peace. Before returning to America, with two millions and a half of the six millions, Laurens made such free use of the remainder that Franklin, unable to meet bills, with which he was threatened, was compelled to write to Adams not to accept any more bills that were expected to be paid by him without notice to him, and to Jay that, if the bills drawn upon him some months before could not be paid by him, they would have to go to protest. "For," Franklin said, "it will not be in my Power to help you. And I see that nothing will cure the Congress of this Madness of Drawing upon the Pump at Aldgate, but such a Proof that its Well has a Bottom."

To make things worse, though Congress continued to draw bills upon Franklin after the gift of the six millions, it deprived him of the ability to use that fund by forbidding any portion of it to be used without its order. Franklin by prompt action did succeed in intercepting a part of the six millions, which Laurens had taken to Holland, and which was about to follow him to America. Speaking of this in a letter to William Jackson, who had come over with Laurens, and was very angry with Franklin for detaining the amount, Franklin wrote, "I see, that nobody cares how much I am distressed, provided they can carry their own Points. I must, therefore, take what care I can of mine, theirs and mine being equally intended" for the Service of the Public." It would have been well for Jackson if he had let the matter rest there, but he did not, and had the temerity to write to Franklin a saucy letter to which he replied in these terms:

These Superior Airs you give yourself, young Gentleman, of Reproof to me, and Reminding me of my Duty do not become you, whose special Department and Employ in Public Affairs, of which you are so vain, is but of yesterday, and would never have existed but by my Concurrence, and would have ended in Disgrace if I had not supported your enormous Purchases by accepting your Drafts. The charging me with want of oeconomy is particularly improper in *you*, when the only Instance you know of it is my having indiscreetly comply'd with your Demand in advancing you 120 Louis for the Expence of your Journey to Paris and when the only Instance I know of your oeconomizing Money is your sending me three Expresses, one after another, on the same Day, all the way from Holland to Paris, each with a Letter saying the same thing to the same purpose.

One of the transactions, mentioned in this correspondence, is a good illustration of the pecuniary "afterclaps," to use Franklin's term, to which Franklin was frequently subjected. He had agreed to pay for goods for the United States to the amount of fifteen thousand pounds. Instead of the purchases amounting to fifteen thousand pounds, they amounted to fifty thousand, and he persistently refused to pay for them. Jackson then hurried express to him, urged that the goods were bought by order of Colonel Laurens, that they were on shipboard, and that, if Franklin did not pay for them, they would have to be relanded and returned, or sold; which would be a disgrace, he insisted, to the United States. In the end, Franklin accepted the bills for the whole amount, and applied to the French Ministry for the money with which to pay for them. The application was a particularly" disagreeable one to

him, not only because all the fiscal calculations of the French Government for the year had been completed, but because no part of the purchase price of the goods would be expended in France. At first, the grant was absolutely refused, but at length Franklin obtained it, and hoped that the difficulty was over. It was not. Afterwards, the officers of the ship decided that she was overloaded, and the goods were transferred to two other ships, whose owners required Franklin to either buy the ships, or to pay them a freight bill nearly equal to the value of the ships. This whole transaction was bad enough, but William Jackson at least had the grace to notify Franklin that the bills in this instance were about to descend upon him before their descent. This, we know from a mildly reproachful letter, written by Franklin to John Paul Jones, a Mr. Moylan was not kind enough to do when he drew upon Franklin for nearly one hundred thousand livres for supplies ordered by Jones for the *Ariel*.

These are but typical instances of the financial complications in which Franklin was involved from time to time while he was drawing water for all the congregation of Israel. Long after their date, bills were still making his life miserable.

This serves chiefly to acquaint you [he wrote on one occasion to John Adams] that I will endeavour to pay the Bills that have been presented to you drawn on Mr. Laurens. But you terrify me, by acquainting me that there are yet a great number behind. It is hard that I never had any information sent me of the Sums drawn, a Line of Order to pay, nor a Syllable of Approbation for having paid any of the Bills drawn on Mr. Laurens, Mr. Jay or yourself.

To John Jay about the same time he wrote, "The cursed Bills, as you justly term them, do us infinite Prejudice." In a letter to John Adams, he speaks of "the dreaded" Drafts." At times it looked as if the stream of French bounty was at last exhausted. "With the million mentioned," he wrote to John Adams in substantially the same terms as he had written to Robert Morris two days before, "I can continue paying to the end of February, and then, if I get no more I must shut up shop." This was in January, 1782, when France, in addition to assisting the United States with a fleet and army, had advanced great additional sums to them since the beginning of the preceding year. At this time, for very shame Franklin could scarcely pluck up courage enough to make another pecuniary application to the French Ministry. In giving in a letter to John Jay his reasons for not holding out the hope of pecuniary relief to him, he said, "I had weary'd this friendly & generous Court with often repeated after-clap Demands, occasioned by these unadvised (as well as ill advis'd) & therefore unexpected Drafts, and was ashamed to show my Face to the Minister." In the same letter, Franklin also said: "We have been assisted with near 20 Millions since the Beginning of last Year, besides a Fleet and Army; and yet I am oblig'd to worry [them] with my Solicitations for more, which makes us appear insatiable."

But the most interesting passage in this letter is the following: "You mention my Proposing to repay the Sum you want in America. I had try'd that last year. I drew a Bill on Congress for a considerable Sum to be advanced me here, and paid in provisions for the French Troops. My Bill was not honoured!" Worst of all, when Bills from Congress still showered upon him, after its promise that no more bills would be drawn on him subsequent to a fixed date, he began to suspect that the drawing was still going on, and that the bills were antedated. To no American was the heedless reliance of Congress upon the generosity of France more mortifying than to him. He repeatedly suggested the obligation of his own country to look more to self-help and less to the aid of her friendly and generous ally, and, at times, in his characteristic way, he would demonstrate arithmetically how easy it would be for the United States to support the burden of the war themselves if they would only keep down the spirit of luxury and extravagance at home, and cease to buy so many foreign gewgaws and

superfluities and so much tea. "In my opinion, the surest way to obtain liberal aid from others is vigorously to help ourselves," he wrote to Robert R. Livingston. "It is absurd," he said later in another letter to Robert Morris, "the pretending to be lovers of liberty while they (the American people) grudge paying for the defence of it." He was generously prompt always also to ascribe any temporary interruption to the flow of French subsidy to the pressing necessities of France herself. Full, too, always he was of simple-hearted gratitude to France for the princely help that she had given to the American cause. No one knew better than he that this help originated partly in selfish policy, and was continued partly because it had been extended too liberally already to be easily discontinued. "Those, who have begun to assist us," he shrewdly observed to Jay, when counselling him that every first favor obtained from Spain was *tant de gagné*, "are more likely to continue than to decline." Every appeal that he ever made in his life to liberality in any form took the bias of self-interest duly into account. But he was merely true to his settled principle that human character is an amalgam of both unselfish and selfish motives, when, realizing that the aid rendered by France to the United States originated partly in the glow of a generous enthusiasm for the cause of human liberty and fraternity, he wrote to Robert R. Livingston on August 12, 1782, a letter in which, after stating that the whole amount of the indebtedness, then due by the United States to France, amounted to eighteen million livres, exclusive of the Holland loan guaranteed by the King of France, he said:

In reading it [a statement of the account] you will discover several fresh marks of the King's goodness towards us, amounting to the value of near two millions. These, added to the free gifts before made to us at different times, form an object of at least twelve millions, for which no returns but that of gratitude and friendship are expected. These, I hope, may be everlasting.

In a subsequent letter to Vergennes, Franklin referred to the King as our "Friend and Father." But naturally enough deep-seated gratitude found its most impressive utterance when the long and bloody war was at an end, the independence of the United States fully established and Franklin ready, as he wrote to Robert R. Livingston, to say with old Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

May I beg the favour of you, Sir [he wrote to Vergennes, when he was soon to leave France forever], to express respectfully for me to his Majesty, the deep Sense I have of all the inestimable Benefits his Goodness has conferr'd on my Country; a Sentiment that it will be the Business of the little Remainder of Life now left me, to impress equally on the Minds of all my Countrymen. My sincere Prayers are, that God may shower down his Blessings on the King, the Queen, their children, and all the royal Family to the latest Generations!

It would be irksome to detail all the loans obtained by Franklin from the French King, and all the terrifying drafts drawn upon him. Profuse from first to last as were the bills, which he was called upon to pay, he appears to have met them all, with a few exceptions, whether drawn upon Adams, Jay, Laurens or himself. Nor, when an extortioner attempted to perpetrate an outrage upon the United States, did he fail to oppose him with a wit quite as keen as his and with a spirit far more resolute. Such a skinflint seems to have been De Neufville, of Amsterdam, who offered on one occasion to borrow money for the United States, provided that their representatives hypothecated to his firm, in the name of the whole Congress of the Thirteen United States, as security for the loan, all the lands, cities, territories and possessions of the said Thirteen States, present or prospective. After mercilessly analyzing in a letter to John Adams the unconscionable covenants by which this tremendous hypothecation was to be accompanied, Franklin ended with these observations:

By this time, I fancy, your Excellency is satisfy'd, that I was wrong in supposing J. de Neufville as much a Jew as any in Jerusalem (a reference to what he had said in a former letter) since Jacob was not content with any per cents, but took the whole of his Brother Esau's Birthright, & his Posterity did the same by the Cananites, & cut their Throats into the Bargain; which, in my Conscience, I do not think M. J. de Neufville has the least Inclination to do by us,—while he can get anything by our being alive.

The immediate occasion for this letter was the refusal of De Neufville to allow the goods which had bred trouble between Franklin and William Jackson to be delivered to the agents of the United States until a claim for damages that he had preferred against the United States was satisfied. "We have, you observe" Franklin had written in an earlier letter to John Adams, "our Hands in the Lyon's Mouth; but if Mr. N. is a Lyon, I am a Bear, and I think I can hug & gripe him till he lets go our Hands." And he was as good as his word, and let De Neufville know that, if he did not deliver the goods, the bills drawn by him on Franklin for the price, though accepted, would not be paid. A few days later, in another letter to Adams with respect to the same matter, Franklin said in regard to a" proposal of settlement made by De Neufville, "I think that the less we have to do with that Shark the better; his jaws are too strong, his teeth too many and his appetite immensely voracious." Before the episode was ended, De Neufville was only too glad to dispatch his son to Paris to beseech the bear to relax his hug.

There was still another reason why the arrival of bills from America should be feared by Franklin. They were drawn in three sets each, and there was constant danger, as the sets came in at different times, of the same bill being paid more than once. In fact, repeated efforts were fraudulently made to palm off duplicates and triplicates as firsts upon Franklin. To shut off frauds, the minutest inspection of the bills, as they were presented for payment, was indispensable, and, for this task, Franklin, Congress having wholly ignored his request for a secretary, had no one to help him but Temple and the French clerk at fifty louis a year. The task was rendered especially laborious by the fact that a host of the bills was drawn by Congress in very small amounts for the payment of interest abroad.

Far less tedious, of course, but still burdensome enough, was the labor of copying the dispatches that left Franklin's hands. At one time, the Atlantic was so alive with British cruisers that a dispatch on its way to Congress from France had almost as little chance of escape as a jettisoned dog in a shark-infested sea.

Adams [stated one of the letters in 1777 of our envoys in France], by whom we wrote early this summer, was taken on this coast, having sunk his dispatches. We hear that Hammond shared the same fate on your coast. Johnson, by whom we wrote in September, was taken going out of the channel, and poor Captain Wickes (of the *Reprisal*) who sailed at the same time, and had duplicates, we just now hear foundered near Newfoundland, every man perishing but the cook.

It was a batch of papers tossed into the ocean, and snatched up by a nimble British sailor, before they sank," that first apprised the British Ministry of the treaty for an alliance hatching between Holland and the United States, and led Great Britain to declare war promptly against Holland. With such perilous conditions to face, Franklin's dispatches were sometimes copied as often as seven times. Besides the copy retained by him, and the copy sent to Congress, other copies were later sent to Congress by the next ships leaving France for the United States.

Another most onerous function imposed upon Franklin, until the appointment of Thomas Barclay, a merchant, as Consul-General to France, was that of purchasing supplies for Congress and fitting out ships. Special provision for this function should, of course, have been made by Congress, so as to leave him free to give his attention to what he termed his political duties, but it was not until after he had repeatedly begged Congress to relieve him from it that Congress first appointed for that purpose Colonel Palfrey, who was lost at sea, on his way over to France, and then Barclay. In the meantime, Franklin had suffered infinite annoyance in the performance of duties for which he had no time, and insisted that he had no knowledge or training. Writing to Jonathan Williams about the dispatch of certain goods to America, he said:

At this Distance from the Ports, and unacquainted as I am with such Affairs, I know not what to advise about getting either that Cloathing or the small Arms and Powder at L'Orient or the Cloth of Mr. Ross transported to America; and yet everybody writes to me for Orders, or Advice, or Opinion, or Approbation, which is like calling upon a blind Man to judge of Colours.

Writing later to Williams about the same matter, when it had assumed a still more vexatious aspect, he peremptorily turned down a project laid before him by Williams, saying with an ebullition of impatience quite unlike the ordinary tenor of his even temper, "I have been too" long in hot Water, plagu'd almost to Death with the Passions, Vagaries, and ill Humours and Madnesses of other People. I must have a little Repose."

Another office performed by Franklin, though no special commission for the purpose was ever issued to him by Congress, was that of a Judge in Admiralty. A large quantity of blank commissions for privateers having been sent to him by Congress shortly after his arrival in France, he delivered them to cruisers, fitted out in the ports of France, and manned by smugglers, who knew every creek and cove on the English coast which they had so often visited by night as well, to use a simile employed by one of Franklin's correspondents, as they knew the corners of their beds. The alarm and loss created by these privateers was no mean offset to the destructive efficiency of the British cruisers. One privateer, the *Black Prince*, took in the course of three months more than thirty sail. Such was the apprehension excited by the depredations of American privateers that the seacoasts of England were kept in a constant state of panic, and the premium rate on marine insurance was largely enhanced. As prizes were brought into French harbors, the papers seized in them were examined by Franklin for the purpose of passing upon their legality and the liability of the prizes to sale. It was also under the patronage of Franklin and Deane that the *Reprisal*, the first American ship to fire a gun or capture a prize in European waters, the *Lexington*, a sloop-of-war, of fourteen guns, fitted out by Congress, and commanded by Captain Johnson, the *Dolphin*, a cutter of ten guns, purchased by our envoys from M. de Chaumont, and the *Surprise*, a cutter, commanded by the doughty Captain Gustavus Conyngham, inflicted such injury upon English commerce, including the capture of the Lisbon packet by Captain Wickes, that the French Ministry was compelled to heed the remonstrances of Lord Stormont, the English Minister, so far as to make" a deceitful show, in one form or another, of vindicating the outraged neutrality of France. But, when the flimsiest ruses were allowed by the French Ministry to circumvent its interdiction of the abuse of its ports by American ships, with prizes in tow, and Captain Conyngham and his crew, after passing a few days in luxury in a French prison, found means in some unaccountable manner to escape, just as two English men-of-war were coming over to ask that they be delivered to them as pirates, there was little fear anywhere along the French coast, or in the breasts of our envoys, that any sternly vigorous embargo was likely to be laid upon the privateering activities of the United States by anything except the naval energy of England itself.

At this time, Franklin was eager to retaliate the destruction and suffering wantonly inflicted upon some of the defenceless seacoast towns of America by the British. He, therefore, advised Congress to put three frigates into the very best fighting trim, and to send them, loaded with tobacco, as if they were common merchantmen, to Nantes or Bordeaux, but with instructions, when they reached the one or the other port, to make off suddenly for some unsuspecting British port, pounce upon the vessels in its harbor, levy contributions, burn, plunder and get away before any harm could be done to them by a counterstroke.

The burning or plundering of Liverpool or Glasgow [he said] would do us more essential service than a million of treasure and much blood spent on the continent. It would raise our reputation to the highest pitch, and lessen in the same degree that of the enemy. We are confident it is practicable, and with very little danger.

In a letter to Lafayette, too, Franklin stated that the coasts of England and Scotland were extremely open and defenceless, and that there were many rich towns in those countries near the sea “which 4 or 5000 Men, landing unexpectedly, might easily surprize and destroy, or exact from them a heavy Contribution taking a part in ready Money and Hostages for the rest.” He even calculated in livres the amounts that might be demanded of Bristol, Bath, Liverpool, Lancaster and other English towns.

But the most eventful thing that Franklin ever did in relation to American activity on the sea was to invite John Paul Jones to take command of a fine frigate that the envoys had ordered from Holland, but had been compelled by the vigilance of Great Britain to turn over to France, when but partially built. While at Brest, Jones received a confidential note from Franklin telling him that the King had asked the loan of him to the French navy for a while, and wished him to take command of the frigate. “She is at present,” he said, “the property of the King; but, as there is no war yet declared, you will have the commission and flag of the United States, and act under their orders and laws.” The frigate, however, was far from being completed, and the thought of a stranger being placed in command of her was highly irritating to French naval officers with a mind to promotion. Chafing under the delay and uncertainty, occasioned by these circumstances, Jones, whose remarkable literary facility, despite his lack of education, is at least one illustration of the truth of Dogberry’s saying that reading and writing come by nature, wrote impatient appeals to the French Minister, Franklin, the members of the Royal Family and the King himself.

While in this humor, his eye happened to fall upon a maxim in one of Poor Richard’s Almanacs, “If you would have your business done, go; if not, send.” He heeded the suggestion, proceeded to Versailles and secured an order for the purchase of the forty-gun ship, which, in honor of his monitor, he called the *Bon Homme Richard*. What she did, old as she was, with her heroic commander,” and her medley crew of Americans, Irish, English, Scotch, French, Portuguese, Maltese and Malay sailors, before she relaxed her dying clutch upon the *Serapis*, and sank, immortalized by a splendid victory, to the bottom of the ocean, there is no need for the biographer of Franklin to tell. It is enough to say that for Franklin Jones ever entertained a feeling little short of passionate reverence. “The letter which I had the honor to receive from your Excellency to-day ... would make a coward brave,” was his reply to one of Franklin’s wise and humane letters of instruction. This letter is evidence enough that Franklin was not so incensed by the ruthless conduct at times of the British in America as to be lost to the clemency of his own abstract views about the proper limits of warfare.

Altho’ [he said] the English have wantonly burnt many defenceless Towns in America, you are not to follow this Example, unless where a Reasonable Ransom is refused; in which Case, your own generous feelings, as well as this Instruction, will

induce you to give timely Notice of your Intention, that sick and ancient Persons, Women and Children, may be first removed.

The relief of American prisoners in England was another thing which continually taxed the attention of Franklin during the Revolutionary War. "I was sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not," was a reproach that no one of them could justly address to him. His nature was a truly compassionate one, and, in few respects, does it show to greater advantage than in his unceasing efforts to secure the exchange of his unhappy countrymen, confined at Portsmouth and Plymouth, or, that failing, to provide them with all the pecuniary succor in his power, in addition to that so generously extended to them by many kind hearts in England.⁸¹ In his friend," David Hartley, a man, whose peaceful and humane instincts even the vilest passions of war could not efface, he had an agent in a position to reach the ear of the English Ministry for the purpose of promoting the exchange of prisoners. For different reasons, the task was a painfully slow one. In the beginning, all American prisoners were committed to prison upon the charge of high treason, a charge entirely inconsistent with the idea of exchange. Besides, England was reluctant to relinquish the advantage that she had, until the treaty of alliance between France and America was consummated, in the fact that American ships had nowhere to confine their prisoners except under their own hatches. They tried to meet this difficulty by releasing English prisoners on parole on their each promising that they would secure the release of an American prisoner, but the English Admiralty, after some hesitation, finally refused to surrender a single American prisoner in exchange for such paroled Englishmen. Commenting upon this fact, along with another incident, Franklin wrote to James Lovell, "There is no gaining anything upon these Barbarians by Advances of Civility or Humanity." At last, however, several cartels were agreed upon, and he enjoyed the great happiness of seeing some hundred or so American captives brought over to France and released. He was still, however, to incur a great disappointment when, owing to the fear on the part of Holland of provoking English resentment, the five hundred prisoners, transferred to Holland by John Paul Jones, after his engagement with the *Serapis*, had to be exchanged for French instead of American prisoners. The French Ministry promised to make this disappointment good by advancing to Franklin an equal number of English prisoners taken by French ships, but the English Ministry promptly met this promise by refusing to exchange American prisoners for any English prisoners except such as had been captured by American ships. It was also a great disappointment to Franklin that he could not induce the English Ministry to give its assent to a formal proposition from him that prisoners, taken by either country, should be immediately released upon the understanding that an equal number of prisoners held by the other should also be released. The high-minded conduct of Hartley, inspired in part by the hope that lenient treatment of American prisoners might help to re-unite the two countries, was all the more admirable, when contrasted with the harsh words, in which Franklin sometimes in his letters to him inveighed against the English King, Parliament and People. It is inconceivable that even Hartley would not have gradually wearied of well-doing, if his perfect knowledge of Franklin's benevolent nature had not taught him how to make liberal allowances for his friend's occasional gusts of indignation.

This indignation was usually visited upon the English King and Ministry, but upon one occasion it was visited upon the English people as well.

It is now impossible [he wrote to Hartley] to persuade our people, as I long endeavoured, that the war was merely ministerial, and that the nation bore still a good

⁸¹ Compassion, it must be confessed, was not the only motive that made Franklin so eager to secure the freedom of his imprisoned countrymen. "If we once had our Prisoners from England," he wrote to M. de Sartine on Feb. 13, 1780, "several other privateers would immediately be manned with them."

will to us. The infinite number of addresses printed in your gazettes, all approving this conduct of your government towards us, and encouraging our destruction by every possible means, the great majority in Parliament constantly manifesting the same sentiments, and the popular public rejoicings on occasion of any news of the slaughter of an innocent and virtuous people, fighting only in defence of their just rights; these, together with the recommendations of the same measures by even your celebrated moralists and divines, in their writings and sermons, that are cited approved and applauded in your great national assemblies; all join in convincing us, that you are no” longer the magnanimous and enlightened nation, we once esteemed you, and that you are unfit and unworthy to govern us, as not being able to govern your own passions.

Indeed, in this letter Franklin even told Hartley that, if the resentment of the English people did not speedily fall on their ministry, the future inhabitants of America would detest the name of Englishman as much as the children in Holland did those of Alva and Spaniard. But, scold as he might England and her rulers, he deeply appreciated the magnanimity of the good man, who even took pains to see that sums placed in his hands by Franklin were duly applied to the relief of the prisoners for whose liberty he strove so disinterestedly. Referring in one of his letters to Hartley to two little bills of exchange that he had sent to him for this purpose, he said, “Permit me to repeat my thankful Acknowledgments for the very humane and kind part you have acted in this Affair. If I thought it necessary I would pray God to bless you for it. But I know he will do it without my Prayers.”

Correspondingly stern was the rebuke of Franklin for the heartless knave, Thomas Digges, equal even to the theft of an obolus placed upon the closed eyelids of a dead man as the price of his ferriage across the Styx—who drew upon Franklin in midwinter for four hundred and ninety-five pounds sterling for the relief of the American prisoners, and converted all but about thirty pounds of the sum to his own personal use. “We have no Name in our Language,” said Franklin in a letter to William Hodgson, “for such atrocious Wickedness. If such a Fellow is not damn’d, it is not worth while to keep a Devil.”

Besides Hartley, to say nothing of this William Hodgson, a merchant, who performed offices for Franklin similar to those of Hartley, there was another Englishman whose humanity with regard to American prisoners elicited the grateful acknowledgments of Franklin. This was Thomas” Wren, a Presbyterian minister at Portsmouth, who was untiring in soliciting contributions from his Christian brethren in England, and applying the sums thus obtained by him, as well as the weekly allowances sent to him by Franklin, to the wants of American prisoners in Forton Prison. “I think some public Notice,” Franklin wrote to Robert R. Livingston, “should be taken of this good Man. I wish the Congress would enable me to make him a Present, and that some of our Universities would confer upon him the Degree of Doctor.” The suggestion bore fruit, Congress sent Wren a vote of thanks, and the degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him by Princeton College. He, too, did not need the prayers of Franklin to receive the blessings reserved for the few rare spirits who can hear the voice of the God of Mercy even above the tumult of his battling children.

There were many other engrossing claims of a public or quasi-public nature upon Franklin’s attention in France. In the earlier stages of the Revolutionary War, he was fairly besieged by foreign officers eager to share in its peril and glory. Several of those recommended by him to Congress—such as Steuben—gave a good account of themselves in America, but the number of those, who had no special title to his recommendation, was so great, that his ingenuity and sense of humor were severely strained to evade them or laugh them off.

You can have no Conception [he wrote to a friend] how I am harass'd. All my Friends are sought out and teiz'd to teize me. Great officers of all Ranks, in all Departments; Ladies, great and small, besides professed Sollicitors, worry me from Morning to Night. The Noise of every Coach now that enters my Court terrifies me. I am afraid to accept an Invitation to dine abroad, being almost sure of meeting with some Officer or Officer's Friend, who, as soon as I am put in a good Humour by a Glass or two of Champaign, begins his Attack upon me. Luckily I do not often in my sleep dream myself in these" vexatious Situations, or I should be afraid of what are now my only Hours of Comfort. If, therefore, you have the least remaining Kindness for me, if you would not help to drive me out of France, for God's sake, my dear friend, let this your 23rd Application be your last.

The friend to whom this letter was written was a Frenchman, and the lecture that Franklin read to him in it on the easy-going habits of his countrymen in giving recommendations is also worthy of quotation:

Permit me to mention to you [he said] that, in my Opinion, the natural complaisance of this country often carries People too far in the Article of *Recommendations*. You give them with too much Facility to Persons of whose real Characters you know nothing, and sometimes at the request of others of whom you know as little. Frequently, if a man has no useful Talents, is good for nothing and burdensome to his Relations, or is indiscreet, Profligate, and extravagant, they are glad to get rid of him by sending him to the other end of the World; and for that purpose scruple not to recommend him to those that they wish should recommend him to others, as "*un bon sujet, plein de mérite,*" &c. &c. In consequence of my crediting such Recommendations, my own are out of Credit, and I can not advise anybody to have the least Dependence on them. If, after knowing this, you persist in desiring my Recommendation for this Person, who is known neither to *me* nor to *you*, I will give it, tho', as I said before, I ought to refuse it.

The subject was one that repeatedly awakened his humorous instincts.

You can have no conception of the Arts and Interest made use of to recommend and engage us to recommend very indifferent persons [he wrote to James Lovell]. The importunity is boundless. The Numbers we refuse incredible: which if you knew you would applaud us for, and on that Account" excuse the few we have been prevail'd on to introduce to you. But, as somebody says,

"Poets lose half the Praise they would have got,

Were it but known what they discreetly blot."

The extent to which Silas Deane yielded to the solicitations of eager candidates abroad for military honor was one of the things that helped to destroy his standing with Congress. A second letter was written by Franklin to Lovell in which he had a word of extenuation for Deane's weakness in this respect.

I, who am upon the spot [he said] and know the infinite Difficulty of resisting the powerful Solicitations here of great Men, who if disoblig'd might have it in their Power to obstruct the Supplies he was then obtaining, do not wonder, that, being a Stranger to the People, and unacquainted with the Language, he was at first prevail'd on to make some such Agreements, when all were recommended, as they always are, as *officiers expérimentés, braves comme leurs épées, pleins de Courage, de Talents, et de Zèle pour notre Cause,* &c. &c. in short, mere Cesars, each of whom would have been an invaluable Acquisition to America.

Franklin even had the temerity to draft this *jeu d'esprit* to suit the character of the more extreme class of applications made to him for military employment, and it was actually used at times according to William Temple Franklin.

The bearer of this, who is going to America, presses me to give him a Letter of Recommendation, tho' I know nothing of him, not even his Name. This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here. Sometimes, indeed one unknown Person brings another equally unknown, to recommend him; and sometimes they recommend one another! As to this Gentleman, I must refer you to himself for his Character and Merits, with which he is certainly better acquainted than I can possibly be. I recommend him however to those Civilities, which every Stranger, of whom one knows no Harm, has a Right to; and I request you will do him all the good Offices, and show him all the Favour that, on further Acquaintance, you shall find him to deserve.

An ill-balanced man might have fretted himself into an angry outbreak or a state of physical decline under the exasperation of such importunities, but none of the petty annoyances of Franklin's position were too rough to withstand the smoothing effect of his unctuous humor. It was like the oil that he was in the habit of carrying around with him in the hollow joint of a bamboo cane during the period of his life when he was testing the tranquillizing effect of oil upon ruffled water.

At times, however, the unreasonableness of some of the applicants was too much even for Rabelais in his easy chair.

First [he wrote to a M. Lith], you desired to have Means procur'd for you of taking a Voyage to America "*avec sureté*"; which is not possible, as the Dangers of the Sea subsist always, and at present there is the additional Danger of being taken by the English. Then you desire that this may be *sans trop grandes Dépenses*, which is not intelligible enough to be answer'd, because, not knowing your Ability of bearing expences, one can not judge what may be *trop grandes*. Lastly, you desire Letters of Address to the Congress and to General Washington; which it is not reasonable to ask of one who knows no more of you, than that your name is Lith, and that you live at Bayreuth.

Another applicant, who thirsted for military renown, was one, Louis Givanetti Pellion, "ci-devant Garde du Corps de S. M. le Roi de Sardaigne, aujourd'hui Contrôleur de la Cour de S. Mo susdite." "I know how," this gentleman wrote, "to accommodate myself to all climates, manners, circumstances, and times. I am passionately" fond of travel, I love to see the great world, its armies and navies. Neither cards, nor wine nor women have any influence over me; but a ship, an army, long voyages, all these are Paradise to me."

It was also Franklin's lot to receive many letters of inquiry about the New World from individuals in Europe, who were thinking of migrating to America for peaceable purposes. What of its climate, its trade, its people, its laws? These were some of the questions relating to the New Eldorado which these individuals wished answered. To all who questioned him about the opportunities held out by America, when he did not simply refer the questioners to Crèvecoeur's "Letters from an American Farmer," his answers were substantially the same. The emigrants to America would find a good climate, good air, good soil, good government, good laws and liberty there, but no Lotus Land. One Reuben Harvey wrote to him from Cork that about one hundred poor Irish tradesmen and husbandmen desired to settle in America. Franklin replied sententiously, "They will go to a Country where People do not Export their Beef and Linnen to import Claret, while the Poor at home live on Potatoes and wear Rags.

Indeed America has not Beef and Linnen sufficient for Exportation because every man there, even the poorest, eats Beef and wears a Shirt.”

Numerous letters came to him from authors inviting his literary criticism, or asking him to accord to them the honor of permitting them to dedicate their works to him. Allamand, the Warden of the forests and waters of the Island of Corsica, wished to know from him what canals there were in America. None, he replied, unless a short water-way, cut, it was said, in a single night across a loop formed by a long bend in Duck Creek, in the State of Delaware, could be called such. Projectors of all kinds solicited his views about their several projects, sane or crack-brained. Sheer beggars, as we have already seen,” were likewise among his correspondents. One, La Baronne de Randerath, tells him that she has been advised by the doctors to take her husband to Aix, and, as her justification for requesting a loan from Franklin for the purpose, she mentions that her husband and Franklin are both Masons, though members of different lodges. Another letter requests him to exercise his influence with the Minister of Marine in behalf of the writer, a sea captain, who wishes to be discharged from the King’s service. Dartmouth College, Brown University, Princeton College and Dickinson College all appealed to him for his aid in their efforts to secure money or other gifts abroad. In a word, he was not only world-famous but paid fully all the minor as well as major penalties of world-fame.

How curdled by the animosities of the Revolutionary War was the milk of human kindness even in such an amiable breast as that of Franklin, we have already had reason enough to know. His nature yielded slowly to the intense feelings, aroused by the long conflict between Great Britain and her Colonies, but it was equally slow to part with them when once inflamed. The most notable thing about his attitude towards Great Britain, after the first effusion of American blood at Lexington, was the inexorable firmness with which he repelled all advances upon the part of England that fell short of the recognition of American Independence. When the English Ministry fully realized that Great Britain was not waging war against a few rebellious malcontents but against a whole people in arms, overture after overture was informally made to Franklin by one English emissary or another, in the effort to dissolve the alliance between France and the United States, and to restore, as far as possible, the old connection between Great Britain and America. Among the first of these emissaries was Franklin’s good friend, James Hutton. Franklin received him with the most” affectionate kindness, but a letter, which he wrote to Hutton, after Hutton had returned to England, showed how entirely fruitless the journey of the latter had been. A peace, Franklin said, England might undoubtedly obtain by dropping all her pretensions to govern America, but, if she did not, with the peace, recover the affections of the American people, it would be neither a lasting nor a profitable one. To recover the respect and affection of America, England must tread back the steps that she had taken and disgrace the American advisers and promoters of the war, with all those who had inflamed the nation against America by their malicious writings; and all the ministers and generals who had prosecuted the war with such inhumanity. A little generosity, in the way of territorial concessions added to the counsels of necessity, would have a happy effect. For instance, Franklin said, if England would have a real friendly as well as able ally in America, and avoid all occasions of future discord, which would otherwise be continually arising along its American frontiers, it might throw in Canada, Nova Scotia and the Floridas.

Hutton was succeeded by William Pulteney, a member of Parliament. All of his propositions were predicated upon the continued dependence of America. Every proposition, Franklin let him know, which implied the voluntary return of America to dependence on Great Britain was out of the question. The proper course for Great Britain, in his judgment, was to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and to enter into such a treaty of peace,

friendship and commerce with them as France itself had formed. The concluding words of Franklin's letter were hardly necessary to convince Pulteney of the hopelessness of his task. "May God at last," they ran, "grant that Wisdom to your national Councils, which he seems long to have deny'd them, and which only sincere, just, and humane Intentions can merit or expect." "Ten days before this letter was written, the American envoys had been presented to the French King. Then followed David Hartley and Mr. George Hammond, the father of the George Hammond, who, many years afterwards, became Minister Plenipotentiary from England to the United States. When they arrived at Paris, it was only to find that the treaty of alliance between France and the United States had already been signed, and to learn soon afterwards that one of its clauses obliged the United States to make common cause with France, in case England declared war against her. How authentic were the credentials of the next emissary it is impossible to say, but Franklin was entirely confident that he came over to France under the direct patronage of George III. The circumstances were these. One morning, a lengthy letter was thrown into a window of Franklin's residence at Passy, written in English, dated at Brussels, and signed Charles de Weissenstein. The letter conjured Franklin in the name of the Just and Omniscient God, before whom all must soon appear, and by his hopes of future fame, to consider if some expedient could not be devised for ending the desolation of America and preventing the war imminent in Europe. It then declared that France would certainly at last betray America, and suggested a plan for the union of England and America. Under the plan, among other things, judges of the American courts were to be named by the King, and to hold their offices for life, and were to bear titles either as peers of America, or otherwise, as should be decided by his Majesty; there were to be septennial sessions of Congress, or more frequent ones, if his Majesty should think fit to call Congress together oftener, but all its proceedings were to be transmitted to the British Parliament, without whose consent no money was ever to be granted by Congress, or any separate State of America to the Crown; the chief offices of the American civil list were to be named in the plan, and the compensation attached to them was to be paid by America; the naval and military forces of the Union were to be under the direction of his Majesty, but the British Parliament was to fix their extent, and vote the sums necessary for their maintenance. It was also proposed by the letter that, to protect Franklin, Washington, Adams, Hancock and other leaders of the American Revolution from the personal enmity in England, by which their talents might otherwise be kept down, they were to have offices or pensions for life at their option. The promise was also made that, in case his Majesty, or his successors, should ever create American peers, then those persons, or their descendants, were to be among the first peers created, if they desired. Moreover, *Mr. Washington* was to have immediately a brevet of lieutenant-general, and all the honors and precedence incident thereto, but was not to assume or bear any command without a special warrant, or letter of service for that purpose, from the King.

The writer further asked for a personal interview with Franklin for the purpose of discussing the details of the project, or, he stated, if that was not practicable, he would be in a certain part of the Cathedral of Notre Dame on a certain day at noon precisely, with a rose in his hat, to receive a written answer from Franklin which he would transmit directly to the King himself. Franklin laid the letter before his colleagues, and it was agreed that it should be answered by him, and that both it and the answer should be laid before Vergennes, and that the answer should be sent or kept back as Vergennes believed best. The French Minister decided that it had best not be sent. At the hour fixed for the interview, however, an agent of the French police was on hand, and he reported that a gentleman, whose name he afterwards ascertained to be an Irish one by tracking him to his hotel, did appear at the appointed time, and, finding no one to meet him, wandered about the Cathedral, looking at the altars and pictures, but never losing sight of the place suggested for the tryst, and often returning to it,

and gazing anxiously about him as if he expected some one. The scornful tone of the letter, drafted by Franklin, which is not unlike one of the scolding speeches, with which the Homeric heroes expressed their opinions of each other, leaves little room for doubt that he truly believed himself to be assailing no less a person than the bigoted King himself. After some savage thrusts, which remind us of those aimed by Hamlet at Polonius behind the arras, he bursts out into these exclamatory words:

This proposition of delivering ourselves, bound and gagged, ready for hanging, without even a right to complain, and without a friend to be found afterwards among all mankind you would have us embrace upon the faith of an act of Parliament! Good God! An act of your Parliament! This demonstrates that you do not yet know us, and that you fancy we do not know you; but it is not merely this flimsy faith, that we are to act upon; you offer us *hope*, the hope of places, pensions, and peerages. These, judging from yourselves, you think are motives irresistible. This offer to corrupt us, Sir, is with me your credential, and convinces me that you are not a private volunteer in your application. It bears the stamp of British court character. It is even the signature of your King.

The next bearer of the olive branch, who came over to Paris, came under very different auspices. This was William Jones, afterwards Sir William Jones, who was at the time affianced to Anna Maria Shipley. He did not come as the representative of the King or his Ministers, but as the representative of the generous and patriotic Englishmen, who had cherished the same dream of world-wide British unity as Franklin himself, and whose sacrifices in behalf of their fellow-Englishmen in America” should be almost as gratefully remembered by us as the Continental soldiers who perished at Monmouth or Camden. Draping his thoughts with academic terms, he submitted a paper to Dr. Franklin entitled *A Fragment from Polybius* in which England, France, the United States and Franklin are given names borrowed from antiquity, and various suggestions are made for the settlement of the existing controversy between Great Britain and America. England becomes Athens, France, Caria, America, the Islands, and Franklin, Eleutherion; and Jones himself is masked as an Athenian lawyer.

This I *know* [observes the latter-day Athenian] and positively pronounce, that, while Athens is Athens, her proud but brave citizens will never *expressly* recognize the independence of the Islands; their resources are, no doubt, exhaustible, but will not be exhausted in the lives of us and of our children. In this resolution all parties agree.

There should be, the writer suggested, “a perfect coordination between Athens and the Thirteen United Islands, they considering her not as a parent, whom they must obey, but as an elder sister, whom they can not help loving, and to whom they shall give pre-eminence of honor and co-equality of power.” Other suggestions were that the new constitutions of the Islands should remain intact, but that, on every occasion, requiring acts for the general good, there should be an assembly of deputies from the Senate of Athens, and the Congress of the Islands, who should fairly adjust the whole business, and settle the ratio of the contributions on both sides; that this committee should consist of fifty Islanders and fifty Athenians, or of a smaller number chosen by them, and that, if it was thought necessary, and found convenient, a proportionate number of Athenian citizens should have seats, and the power of debating and voting on questions of common concern in the great assembly of the Islands,” and a proportionable number of Islanders should sit with the like power in the Assembly at Athens. The whole reminds the reader of the classical fictions to which the first Parliamentary reporters were driven by press censorship. The paper, drafted by Jones, was little more than a mere literary exercise, prompted by ingenuous enthusiasm, but we may be sure that it kindled

in Franklin very different feelings from those aroused in him by the insidious appeal of Charles de Weissenstein.

The shortcomings, which Franklin is supposed by his enemies to have exhibited in France with respect to the duties of his post, require but little attention. Apart from a lack of clerical neatness and system, such as might more justly be imputed as a serious reproach to a book-keeper or clerk, they rest upon evidence easily perverted by enmity or jealousy.⁸² Adams had no little to say about Franklin's love of ease and tranquillity, the social and academic distractions, to which he was subject, and the extent to which his time was consumed by curious visitors. It is a sufficient answer to all such disparagement to declare that he successfully dispatched an enormous amount of public business with but very little aid, and unflinchingly bore a load of responsibility only less weighty than that of Washington; that no spy, such as obtained secret access to the papers of Silas Deane and Arthur Lee for the purposes of the British Government, ever abstracted any valuable information from his papers; and that his position in the polite and learned world, and the popular curiosity, excited by his fame, were among the things which tended most effectually to recommend him to the favor of the French People and Ministry. The effort was also made by John Adams to create the impression that Franklin was unduly subservient to the influence of France, and that, but for the superior firmness of John Jay and himself, the United States would not have concluded a peace with England on terms anything like so favorable as those actually obtained from her.

In what respects Franklin can be truly said to have been servile to French influence, it is impossible to see. If by this is meant that he did not share the prejudices of Adams and Jay against the French people, did not harbor their keen distrust of the motives of the French ministry and did not feel as free as they to ignore the proprieties, arising out of the profound obligations of America to France, the reflection is just enough. Neither Adams nor Jay ever succeeded in making himself sufficiently acceptable to the French people or ministry, or obtained sufficient benefits from them for his countrymen, to feel any sense of personal indebtedness to them, or to be inclined to show any unusual degree of consideration to them. This was true of Jay, if for no other reason, because his intercourse with them was but limited in point of time. Franklin, on the other hand, was the idol of the French people, and received from Vergennes as decisive proofs of confidence as one individual can confer upon another. No one could have been in a better position than he was to know that the French alliance was hardly more the fruit of selfish policy upon the part of the French ministry, or of a desire upon its part to avenge historic injuries, than of the generous sensibility of the French people to the liberal and democratic impulses, which were hurrying them on to the fiercest outbreak of uncalculating enthusiasm that the world has ever seen. He had never entered the cabinet of the French Minister to sue for pecuniary aid without coming away with a fresh cordial for the drooping energies of his people. That upright and able minister, he wrote to Samuel Huntington, on one occasion, had never promised him anything which he did not punctually perform.⁸³ No matter how dark were the thick clouds that enveloped the fate of his country,

⁸² A Commissioner, Thomas Barclay, was appointed by Congress to audit the accounts of all the servants of the United States who had been entrusted with the expenditure of money in Europe during the Revolutionary War. "I rendered to him," said Franklin in a letter to Cyrus Griffin, the President of Congress, dated Nov. 29, 1788, "all my accounts, which he examined, and stated methodically. By this statement he found a balance due me on the 4th of May, 1785, of 7,533 livres, 19 sols, 3 den., which I accordingly received of the Congress banker; the difference between my statement and his being only seven sols, which by mistake I had overcharged;—about three pence half penny sterling."

⁸³ The dogged steadfastness with which Vergennes pursued his task of humbling the pride and power of England through her rebellious colonies was in keeping with the main point of what Choiseul had said about him as the French Ambassador at Constantinople: "The Count de Vergennes has something to say against whatever is

no matter how acute was the pecuniary distress of France herself, there was always another million at the bottom of the stocking of the French tax-payer for the land of freedom and opportunity. Franklin had even known what it was to beg for a loan from the French King and to receive it as a gracious gift. He would have been fashioned of ignoble materials, indeed, if he had been too quick, in seeking the selfish advantage of his country, to forget the extraordinary magnanimity of her ally, and to suspect a disposition upon her part to deprive the United States of the just rewards of the triumph, which they might never have achieved but for her. And he, at any rate, with his strong sense of justice, was not likely to commit himself with unhesitating alacrity to a coldblooded scramble for concessions from England to America which took no account of the fact that France not only had the interests of America, but also her own necessities to consult, and that it was as essential to her interests that America should not make peace with England before she did, as it was to the interests of America that France should not make peace with England before America did." In the Treaty of Alliance, France had assumed no obligation to the United States except that of continuing to wage war against England until their independence was acknowledged, and of not concluding any peace with England that did not include them. She had never bound herself to secure to America the right of fishery on the Newfoundland Banks, or to oppose every restriction upon the extension of her western boundaries. In the course of the war, there was a time when the situation of America was so desperate that Vergennes was, with perfect fidelity to the American cause, brought to the conclusion that the Thirteen States might well afford to surrender a part of their territory to England as the price of independence; and this was a conclusion to which any honest American mind might have been brought under the circumstances. And, even after this crisis had passed, and negotiations for peace were pending between Great Britain and the Allies, it is not surprising that he should not have foreseen that he would ever have occasion to say, as he did after England and America came to terms, that England had bought rather than made a peace, but should have thought that England might still hold out stubbornly enough to cause even America to feel that she could be reasonably expected by France to forego more than one minor expectation to make certain of her independence. There was also the fact, which could hardly escape the attention of a man so deferential to the authority of his principals as Franklin always was, that Congress had positively instructed its Commissioners to make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the minister of its generous ally, the King of France, to undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace or a truce without the knowledge and concurrence of the Minister and King, and ultimately to govern themselves by their advice and opinion.

And there was also the fact that Franklin had always" had such marked success in influencing the conclusions of Vergennes, that he might well have confided in his ability to bring the French minister over to any reasonable views that he might form about the results that America had the right to expect from the Peace; particularly as Vergennes had long been possessed with a haunting fear that America might be detached from her alliance with France.

In the light of all these circumstances, it is not strange that Franklin should have been reluctant, in the first instance, to unite with Adams and Jay in signing the preliminary treaty of peace with England without previously consulting with Vergennes; for that is the only tangible foundation for the claim that he was too submissive to the selfish designs of France; and there is no substantial evidence that any real point was gained by America by the act, or

proposed to him, but he never finds any difficulty in carrying out his instructions. Were we to order him to send us the Vizier's head, he would write that it was dangerous, but the head would come." The levity of Maurepas, as President of the Council of State, and the grave diligence of Vergennes, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, led D'Aranda to say of them, "I chat with M. de Maurepas, I negotiate with M. de Vergennes."

that it awakened any feeling in Vergennes profounder than the passing disappointment, born of realized distrust and affronted pride, which led him to write to M. de la Luzerne, the French Minister to the United States, immediately after it as follows:

I think it proper that the most influential members of Congress should be informed of the very irregular conduct of their Commissioners in regard to us. You may speak of it not in the tone of complaint. I accuse no person; I blame no one, not even Dr. Franklin. He has yielded too easily to the bias of his colleagues, who do not pretend to recognize the rules of courtesy in regard to us. All their attentions have been taken up by the English whom they have met in Paris. If we may judge of the future from what has passed here under our eyes, we shall be but poorly paid for all that we have done for the United States, and for securing to them a national existence.

When we recollect how faithfully France had rejected every effort upon the part of England to treat for peace with her separately, and insisted that the treaty of peace" between England and France, on the one hand, and the treaty of peace between England and the United States, on the other, should go hand in hand, how entirely Vergennes had refrained from inquiring into the course of the pending negotiations between England and our commissioners, which resulted in the signing of the preliminary treaty of peace between England and the United States; and how singularly limited was the measure of concession that France asked for herself from England, these words cannot be read by any true American without a highly painful impression.

When Franklin appealed, after the peace, to both Adams and Jay to deny the statement, current in America, that he had not stood up stoutly for American rights, when the peace was being concluded, Jay complied with unreserved emphasis, and Adams with a reluctant note which rendered his testimony but the stronger. The truth is that, if Franklin's conduct during the peace negotiations was not admirable in every respect, it was only because he found that he could not decline to unite with his colleagues in violating the instruction of Congress without breaking with them and hazarding discord that might be fatal to the interests of his country. He did not, of course, believe that France, after the enormous sacrifices that she had made for American independence, was engaged in a treacherous effort to shackle the growth of the United States. He could not readily have entertained such a totally ungrounded suspicion as that which led Jay, when he learnt that De Rayneval was going over to London to have an interview with Shelburne, to leap to the conclusion that it was for the purpose of confounding American aspirations, and to inform Shelburne that now was the time for England to outbid France for the favor of America by executing at once preliminary articles of peace, conceding to America the points about which she was most concerned. The overture was a bold one, but if it had not been accepted" in the manner that it was, and had been communicated by Shelburne to Vergennes, it might have been attended by consequences inimical to the Alliance which even the personal influence of Franklin might not have been able to prevent. Franklin was too prudent to risk rashly the support of an ally, from which the United States still found it necessary to borrow money, even after their independence was acknowledged, and too grateful to risk lightly the friendship of an ally which had not only aided the United States with soldiers, ships and money to secure their independence, but had repeatedly declined to treat with England except on the basis of American independence. His inclination naturally and properly enough was to maintain with Vergennes until the last the frank and intimate relations that he had always maintained with him; to avoid everything that might have the least savor of faithlessness or sharp practice in the opinion of our ally, and to rely upon our growing importance and the ordinary appeals of argument and persuasion for a peace at once fair and just to both the United States and France. But never once from the time that he wrote to Lord Shelburne the brief letter, that initiated the negotiations for peace

between England and the United States, until the day that he threw himself, after the consummation of peace, into the arms of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, saying, "My friend! Could I have hoped at my age to enjoy such a happiness," was he animated by any purpose except that of securing for his countrymen the most generous terms that he could. It is by no means improbable that, if he had been our sole negotiator, he would not only have obtained for us all that was secured by his Fellow-Commissioners and himself but Canada besides, and would, moreover, have saved the United States the reproach that justly attached to them because of the precipitate signature of the preliminary articles of peace. As we have already seen, the acquisition of Canada by the United States was something that he had definitely in mind even before the negotiations for peace began, and, when they did begin, this was one of the things that he specified in a memorandum that he gave to Oswald, the British envoy, as concessions that it was advisable for England to make, and we also know from the correspondence of Oswald that it was a topic to which his conversation frequently turned. With such address did he ply Oswald upon this point that the latter went so far as to say that it might be conceded. To compass it, he was even willing to agree that the Loyalists should be compensated by the United States for their losses; which was the point upon which the English Ministry was most earnestly bent, and the one which aroused in him feelings of the deepest antagonism. What a trifling recompense the compensation of the Loyalists would have been for such an addition to our national domain as Canada we hardly need say; nor need we dilate upon the far-sighted statesmanship which so surely foresaw what futurity held in store for a country which, as late as 1760, had been gravely proposed to be exchanged with France for the Island of Guadeloupe. It is to be regretted by the United States, if the present happy lot of Canada is to be the subject of regret at all, that the desire of Franklin to secure Canada for them was not more urgently seconded by Adams and Jay. The former was enthusiastically resolved, as was but proper, to secure for New England the right to fish on the Newfoundland Banks, and the latter was especially eager, as any statesman with the slightest glow of imagination might well have been, to remove every obstacle in our pathway westward. Neither appears to have been zealously alive to the considerations, which led Franklin to cast a covetous eye upon Canada, and to make it one of the primary objects of his efforts to promote the interests of America during the peace negotiations. On the other hand, Franklin was not less impressed than they were with the importance of our North Eastern Fisheries and our Western Destiny; and was quite as stiff as they in maintaining our rights with respect to them. Moreover, when the insistence of the English Ministry upon compensation for the Loyalists threatened to be the only rock, upon which the negotiations were likely to split, it was his suggestiveness which relieved the situation by proposing, as an offset to the losses of the Loyalists, the payment by England of the pecuniary losses wantonly inflicted by her upon the inhabitants of such towns as Fairfield and Norfolk on our Atlantic seaboard. After this timely counter-claim, a compromise was soon reached, under which it was agreed that the Loyalists should be referred to the justice of the individual States with a favorable recommendation from the Commissioners. This was but a diplomatic way of disposing of the proposition adversely without seeming to do so, for Shelburne as well as the American Commissioners must have realized that the recommendation was the only form of indemnity that the Loyalists were likely to obtain.

Friendly as Franklin was to the French Court, it was only where some treaty stipulation was involved, or some definite rule of courtesy was to be observed, that he recognized the right of France to influence the course of the negotiations between England and the American Commissioners. He knew as well as Adams and Jay that French policy, partly because of considerations, peculiar to France herself, and partly because of obligations, that France owed to Spain, differed in some very material respects from American policy. But he entertained the belief, and justly entertained the belief, that this was no reason why Vergennes should

necessarily be moved by the settled, perfidious purpose of arresting an agreement between England and America until the negotiations between England and France and Spain had gone too far for the United States to be any longer in the position to” insist effectively upon their fishery and boundary claims. The disposition of the French Minister to contemplate contingencies, in which concessions would have to be made by America, was in Franklin’s judgment “due to the moderation of the minister and to his desire of removing every obstacle to speedy negotiations for peace”; and there is no real reason to believe that he was not right. It is quite true that Marbois, when he was the French Secretary of Legation in the United States, in his famous letter to Vergennes, which the English were at pains to bring to the notice of John Jay, suggested to Vergennes that he should let the Americans know that their pretensions to the Newfoundland fisheries were not well founded, and that the French King did not mean to support them; but, as Vergennes wrote to M. de la Luzerne, the successor of Gérard, the opinion of Marbois was not necessarily that of the King, and, moreover the views of his letter had not been followed. When Franklin made his suggestion to Oswald in respect to Canada, he did not bring it to the knowledge of Vergennes. In the very commencement of the negotiations between England and the United States, he let it be known to Grenville, the envoy of Charles James Fox, that, when Great Britain acknowledged the independence of America, the treaty, that America had made with France for gaining it, ended, and no conventional tie remained between America and France but that of the treaty of commerce which England, too, might establish between America and herself, if she pleased. Indeed, Vergennes himself clearly recognized the right of the American Commissioners to make the best terms that they could for themselves in the matter of the fisheries, the western boundaries or any other object of American policy.

We are [he wrote Luzerne on April 9, 1782], and shall always be, disposed to consent that the American plenipotentiaries” in Europe should treat according to their instructions directly and without our intervention with those of the Court of London, while we on our side shall treat in the same way, provided that the two negotiations continue at the same rate, and that the two treaties shall be signed the same day, and shall not be good the one without the other.

The hesitation of Franklin about executing the preliminary articles of peace between England and the United States was not due to any doubt as to the technical right of the American Commissioners to sign it, aside from the instruction of Congress that they were not to take any important step without the advice of the French Ministry. He hesitated to sign it because he was subject to this instruction, and also because he felt that for the Commissioners to sign such a treaty, without taking Vergennes into their confidence, was hardly compatible with the scrupulous deference due to such a timely, generous and powerful ally as France had proved herself to be and might be again. His reason for disregarding the instruction of Congress, and uniting with his colleagues in signing the articles doubtless was that he deemed it unwise, in any view of the case, not to subordinate his own judgment, after full discussion, to that of the majority of the Commission in a case where, if the French Minister were acting in bad faith, it was but proper that his bad faith should be anticipated, and where, if he were acting in good faith, his resentment was not likely to be more serious than that which is usually visited upon a mere breach of diplomatic decorum. The execution of the articles was expressly made subject to the proviso that they were to have no force, if England did not reach an understanding with France also. Without such a proviso, the action of our Commissioners, of course, would have merited the contempt of the world. With it, Franklin was left free to say, disingenuously it must be confessed, to Vergennes that, in signing the articles, the Commissioners had at the most” been guilty of neglecting a point of *bienséance*. No one knew better than he that no such soothing pretence could be set up by Adams and Jay, and

that, even as respected himself, though the extent of his offence consisted, as Vergennes truly divined, in yielding to the bias of his colleagues, he had been drawn into a position in which it was impossible for him to separate himself wholly from either the motives or the moral responsibilities of his colleagues. In transmitting with them to Congress a copy of the articles, he united with them in this statement:

As we had reason to imagine that the Articles respecting the boundaries, the refugees and fisheries, did not correspond with the policy of this court, we did not communicate the preliminaries to the Minister until after they were signed, and not even then the separate Article. We hope that these considerations will excuse our having so far deviated from the spirit of our instructions. The Count de Vergennes, on perusing the Articles, appeared surprised, but not displeased, at their being so favorable to us.

The separate article was one fixing the northern boundary of West Florida, in case Great Britain, at the conclusion of the war, should recover, or be put in possession of, that Province. In reply to a letter from Robert R. Livingston, disapproving the manner, in which the articles had been signed, Franklin said that they had done what appeared to all of them best at the time, and, if they had done wrong, the Congress would do right, after hearing them, to censure them. The nomination by Congress of five persons to the service, he further said, seemed to mark that they had some dependence on their joint judgment, since one alone could have made a treaty by direction of the French Ministry, as well as twenty. But there can be no doubt that the individual views of Franklin about the aims of the French Court, in relation to the United States, are to be” found not in the letter of the Commissioners to Congress, but in his own words in this same reply to Livingston:

I will only add [he said] that, with respect to myself, neither the Letter from M. de Marbois, handed us thro’ the British Negotiators (a suspicious Channel) nor the Conversations respecting the Fishery, the Boundaries, the Royalists, &c., recommending Moderation in our Demands, are of Weight sufficient in my Mind to fix an Opinion, that this Court wish’d to restrain us in obtaining any Degree of Advantage we could prevail on our Enemies to accord; since those Discourses are fairly resolvable, by supposing a very natural Apprehension, that we, relying too much on the Ability of France to continue the War in our favour, and supply us constantly with Money, might insist on more Advantages than the English would be willing to grant, and thereby lose the Opportunity of making Peace, so necessary to all our friends.

It is impossible, however, to believe that Franklin could have taken such a step except with grave misgivings as to its effect on the mind of Vergennes. This is shown by the reserve which he, as well as his fellow-commissioners, maintained towards Vergennes, while the preliminary articles were being matured.

According to the injunctions of Congress [Vergennes wrote to Luzerne], they should have done nothing without our participation. I have pointed out to you, Sir, that the King would not have sought to interest himself in the negotiations, save in so far as his offices might be necessary to his friends. The American Commissioners will not say that I have sought to intervene in their business, still less that I have wearied them by my curiosity. They have kept themselves carefully out of my way.

It must have taxed even the nice judgment of Franklin to calculate precisely the degree of resentment that the act of the Commissioners would excite. He took the precaution of sending a copy of the articles to Vergennes the day after they were signed. His receipt of them

was” followed by an ominous silence. Some days later, Franklin called upon Vergennes, and the latter took pains to let him perceive that the signing of the articles had little in it which could be agreeable to the King, and Franklin advanced such excuses for his colleagues and himself as the case permitted. According to Vergennes, the conversation was amicable, but for a time it did not efface the impression that his mind had received. A week or so later, when Franklin proposed to send the preliminary articles to America by a ship, for which an English passport had been provided, and was soliciting a loan of twenty millions of francs from France, Vergennes gave him a bad quarter of an hour.

I am at a loss sir [he said] to explain your conduct, and that of your colleagues on this occasion. You have concluded your preliminary articles without any communication between us, although the instructions from Congress prescribe that nothing shall be done without the participation of the King. You are about to hold out a certain hope of peace to America, without even informing yourself on the state of the negotiation on our part. You are wise and discreet, sir; you perfectly understand what is due to propriety; you have all your life performed your duties. I pray you to consider how you propose to fulfill those, which are due to the King! I am not desirous of enlarging these reflections; I commit them to your own integrity. When you shall be pleased to relieve my uncertainty, I will entreat the King to enable me to answer your demands.

The reply of Franklin was almost abject.

Nothing [he said] has been agreed in the preliminaries contrary to the interests of France; and no peace is to take place between us and England, till you have concluded yours. Your observation is, however, apparently just, that, in not consulting you before they were signed, we have been guilty of neglecting a point of *bienséance*. But, as this was not from” want of respect for the King, whom we all love and honour, we hope it will be excused, and that the great work, which has hitherto been so happily conducted, is so nearly brought to perfection, and is so glorious to his reign, will not be ruined by a single indiscretion of ours. And certainly the whole edifice sinks to the ground immediately, if you refuse on that account to give us any further assistance.

Again, unpromising as the conditions were, there was no resisting the voice of the seductive mendicant. France did not lend the twenty millions of francs to the United States because she did not have that much to lend; but she did lend six. If any loss of dignity or self-respect was suffered on this occasion it was not by her.

The definitive treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States was signed at Paris on September 3, 1783, and was ratified a few months later by both the contracting powers. Several weeks after it was signed, Franklin again tendered his resignation to Congress, but it was not accepted until March 7, 1785. Three days later, Jefferson, who had been in France ever since August, 1784, for the purpose of co-operating with Franklin and Adams in the negotiation of commercial treaties with England and other European countries, was appointed the American plenipotentiary at the Court of Versailles in the place of Franklin.

Shortly after the return of Franklin to Philadelphia, he was elected President of the Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and, in 1787, he was elected a member of the convention which adopted the Federal Constitution. There was only one man in the United States whose claims to the Presidency of the Convention could possibly be deemed paramount to his; and that was Washington. The nomination of Washington to the position was to have been made by him, but the weather on the day, fixed for it, was too bad to permit him at his advanced age, and in his infirm condition, to venture” abroad. The honor of making the nomination, therefore, fell to Robert Morris, another member of the Pennsylvania

delegation. It was thought becoming and graceful in Pennsylvania, Madison tells us, to pass by her own distinguished citizen as President, and to take the lead in giving that pre-eminence to the late Commander-in-Chief of the American Army, which the country felt to be his due.⁸⁴ At the next session of the Convention, Franklin was present, and thereafter he attended its sessions regularly for five hours each day for more than four months. His stone made it impossible for him to stand long upon his feet, and, when he participated on any important occasion in the discussions of the body, it was his habit to reduce his thoughts to writing, and to have them read to the body by one of his colleagues, usually James Wilson. Copies of these speeches were made by Madison from the original manuscripts for his reports of the debates of the Convention, and, unlike the speeches of the other leading members of the Assembly, the speeches of Franklin have consequently come down to us in their entirety. Of his general course in the Convention, it is enough to say that it was strongly marked by liberalism, faith in the popular intelligence and virtue, and the aversion to arbitrary power which was always such a prominent feature of his conduct in every relation. He had a quick eye to the abuses of authority, and it is probable that, if he had been a younger man, when the Convention met, and had lived until the clash between the Federalists and the Republicans arose, he would have been a Republican. Inane idealism, lack of energy and resolution did not belong to his character, but, to say nothing more, what he had seen of the workings of monarchical and aristocratic institutions, during the long dispute between England and her colonies, was not calculated to prejudice him in their favor.⁸⁵

The compensation that should be paid to the Chief Magistrate of the Union was the first topic to which he formally addressed himself as a member of the Convention. In his opinion, no pecuniary compensation should be paid to him. The argument that he pursued in support of his proposition was one that he had often made with respect to the Government of Great Britain.

Sir [he said] there are two Passions which have a powerful Influence in the Affairs of Men. These are *Ambition and Avarice*; the Love of Power and the Love of Money. Separately, each of these has great Force in prompting Men to Action; but when united in View of the same Object, they have in many Minds the most violent Effects. Place before the Eyes of such Men a Post of *Honour*, that shall at the same time be a Place of *Profit*, and they will move Heaven and Earth to obtain it. The vast Number of such Places it is that renders the British Government so tempestuous. The Struggles for them are the true source of all those Factions which are perpetually dividing the Nation, distracting its Councils, hurrying it sometimes into fruitless and mischievous Wars, and often compelling a Submission to dishonorable Terms of Peace.

⁸⁴ In a letter to William Carmichael in 1788, after saying that he presumed that there would not be a vote against the election of Washington to the Presidency, Jefferson added: "It is more doubtful who will be Vice-President. The age of Dr. Franklin, and the doubt whether he would accept it, are the only circumstances that admit a question, but that he would be the man." Some twenty-two years afterwards, he wrote to Col. William Duane that he believed that a greater or better character than Franklin had rarely existed.

⁸⁵ Optimist and thorough-going democrat as Franklin was, Shays' Rebellion and the heated conflict of opposing principles, concomitant with the adoption of the Federal Constitution, set up a slight current of reaction in his sanguine nature. On May 25, 1789, he wrote to Charles Carroll of Carrollton: "We have been guarding against an evil that old States are most liable to, *excess of power*, in the rulers; but our present danger seems to be *defect of obedience* in the subjects." Some six months later, in his *Queries and Remarks respecting Alterations in the Constitution of Pennsylvania*, he quoted the advice of the prophet, "Stand in the old ways, view the ancient Paths, consider them well, and be not among those that are given to Change." But in this instance Franklin was really invoking the spirit of conservatism in aid of liberalism; for the occasion for the Biblical reference was the suggestion that the Pennsylvania Assembly should no longer consist of a single chamber but of an Upper House based on property and a Lower House based on population.

The argument, of course, fell upon deaf ears. It really presupposes a numerous class, at once sufficiently free from pecuniary anxieties to give its exclusive attention to public duties, and sufficiently qualified to discharge them with the requisite degree of success. Such a class was not to be found in America, at any rate, and, even if it was, it would have been invidious in the eyes of a democratic community to limit the enjoyment of public office to it. The subsequent history of the Republic showed that, in the beginning of our national existence, even moderate salaries did not suffice to keep some of the ablest men in the United States from declining or resigning federal office. The long journeys and the bad roads and taverns of that day were probably responsible for this state of things. In the first thirty years after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, no less than one hundred and ten seats in the United States Senate were resigned, and Washington experienced great difficulty in inducing lawyers to accept positions even on the Supreme Bench of the United States. It is a remarkable fact that, during the first thirty years after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, ten persons either declined to serve as associate justices of the Supreme Court, or resigned the office. It is a still more remarkable fact that both Jay and Ellsworth resigned as Chief Justice after brief terms of office. There was, however, undoubtedly an element of expediency in the views of Franklin, for it is no uncommon thing in the United States to see the supervisory functions of certain offices, connected with the educational or eleemosynary systems of the country, more efficiently and faithfully exercised, when exercised without pay by men, in whom public spirit or philanthropic zeal is highly developed, than they would be," if exercised by the very different kind of men who would be attracted to them, if salaried.

In connection with another question, the extent to which the superior wealth and population of the larger states were to be represented in Congress, it was the fortune of Franklin to exert a powerful and decisive influence. The debate over this question was so protracted and heated, the smaller States demanding equal representation with the larger in both Houses of Congress, and the larger repelling the claim as utterly unreasonable and unjust, that it looked, at one time, as if the Convention would break up like a ship lodged on a fatal rock. Then it was that Franklin found out to his surprise that his colleagues did not set the same value as himself upon the harmonizing influence of prayer. Not only was his suggestion that the proceedings of the Convention be opened each day with it rejected, but the controversy became more acrimonious than ever; John Dickinson, one of the members from Delaware, who always had a way of chafing in harness, even declaring that rather than be deprived of an equality of representation in the Legislature he would prefer to be a foreign subject. At this point, Franklin came forward with a proposition of compromise, accompanied by one of his happy illustrations.

The diversity of opinion [he said] turns on two points. If a proportional representation take place, the small States contend that their liberties will be in danger. If an equality of votes is to be put into its place, the larger States say their money will be in danger. When a broad table is to be made, and the edges of the planks do not fit, the artist takes a little from both, and makes a good joint.

He then proposed that all the States should have an equal number of delegates in Congress, and that on all questions affecting the authority or sovereignty of a State, or, when appointments and confirmations were" under consideration, every State should have an equal vote, but that on bills to raise or expend money every State should have a vote proportioned to its population. This compromise did not meet with the favor of the smaller States. Under the lead of Dickinson, they still contended for unvarying equality between them and the larger States. At length, a committee was appointed to consider the matter, and to report a compromise, and Franklin was one of its members. It came back with a plan, proposed by his constructive intellect, namely, that, in the Senate, every State should have equal

representation, but that, in the other House, every State should have a representation proportioned to its population; and that bills to raise or expend money should originate in the other House. The report of the committee was adopted, and no device of the Constitution has, in practice, more strikingly vindicated the wisdom of the brain by which it was conceived than that hit upon by Franklin for disarming the jealousy and fears of the smaller States represented in the Convention.

He approved the proposed article making the presidential term of office seven years, and declaring its incumbent ineligible for a second term. The sagacity of this conclusion has been confirmed by experience. There was nothing degrading, Franklin thought, in the idea of the magistrate returning to the mass of the people; for in free governments rulers are the servants, and the people are their superiors and sovereigns. The same popular bias manifested itself when the proposition was made to limit the suffrage to freeholders. "It is of great consequence," he said, "that we should not depress the virtue and public spirit of our common people, of which they displayed a great deal during the war, and which contributed principally to the favorable issue of it." The British statute, setting forth the danger of tumultuous meetings, and, under that pretext, narrowing the right of suffrage to persons having freeholds of a certain value, was soon followed, he added, by another, subjecting the people, who had no votes, to peculiar labors and hardships. Some days later, Madison informs us, he expressed his dislike to everything that tended to debase the spirit of the common people. If honesty was often the companion of wealth, and, if poverty was exposed to peculiar temptations, it was not less true, he declared, that the possession of property increased the desire for more property. Some of the greatest rogues he was ever acquainted with were the richest rogues. They should remember the character which the Scriptures require in rulers, that they should be men hating covetousness. The Constitution would be much read and attended in Europe, and, if it should betray a great partiality to the rich, would not only cost them the esteem of the most liberal and enlightened men there, but discourage the common people from removing to America.

He strongly favored the clause giving Congress the power to impeach the President. When the head of the government cannot be lawfully called to account, the people have no recourse, he said, against oppression but revolution and assassination. These, it should be recollected, were the utterances of a man who was from age too near the end of political ambition to be possibly influenced by demagogic designs of any sort. Franklin also opposed the idea of conferring an absolute veto upon the President, and the requirement of fourteen years' residence as a condition of citizenship. Four years he believed to be enough. He approved the article making an overt act essential to the crime of treason, and exacting the evidence of two witnesses to establish the overt act.

He also forcibly expressed his views with regard to the respective powers with which the two Houses of Congress should be invested. When the Convention was drawing to a close, he urged its members in a tactful and persuasive speech to lay aside their individual disappointments, and to give their work to the world with the stamp of unanimity. As is well known, when the last members were signing, he looked towards the President's chair, at the back of which there was a representation of a rising sun, and, after observing to some of his associates near him that painters had found it difficult in their art to distinguish a rising from a setting sun, he concluded with this exultant peroration: "I have often and often, in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that behind the President, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting: but now, at length, I have the happiness to know, that it is a rising and not a setting sun." And a rising sun, indeed, it was, starting out upon its splendid circuit like the sun in the lines of Charles Lamb, "with all his fires and travelling glories round him."

The opinions of Franklin with regard to general political topics are always acute and interesting, and, unlike the opinions of most great men, even the greatest, are rarely, if ever, flecked by the errors of his time. In some quarters, there has been a disposition to reproach him with being an advocate of what since his day has come to be known in the United States as rag or fiat money. The reproach loses sight of the fact that the currency problems, with which he had to deal, did not turn upon the true respective functions of paper and real money, under conditions that permit their application to their several natural and proper uses. No such conditions existed in America during the colonial period or the Revolutionary War. There was no California, Alaska, Nevada, or Colorado then. "Gold and Silver," Franklin said in 1767, in his *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money*, "are not the Produce of *North-America*, which has no Mines."

Every civilized community, unless it is to be remanded to mere barter, must have some kind of convenient" medium for the exchange of commodities and the payment of debts, even though it be no better than wampum or tobacco. Paper money, whether it bore interest or not, and whether it was a legal tender or not, was, unsupported by any real provision for its redemption, a dangerous currency for America, in her early history, as it is for any country, whatever its state of maturity; but she had no choice. It was either that or something not even as good on the whole for monetary purposes. Not only were there no gold or silver mines in North America, but the balance of trade between the Colonies and Great Britain was so greatly in favor of the latter country that even such gold and silver coin, as found its way to them, was at once drawn off to her.

However fit [bitterly declared Franklin in the pamphlet, to which we have just referred], a particular Thing may be for a particular Purpose, wherever that Thing is not to be had, or not to be had in sufficient Plenty, it becomes necessary to use something else, the fittest that can be got, in lieu of it.

In America, this undoubtedly was a paper currency, even though issued as real, and not representative, money. At times, in the history of the Colonies, it worked much pecuniary loss and debasement of morals, but, makeshift as it was, it was the best makeshift that the situation of the Colonies allowed; and, when New England petitioned for the Act of Parliament, depriving it of the legal-tender quality within her limits, it was only, Franklin contended, because the close intercourse between the four provinces, of which she was constituted, and the large supply of hard money, derived by her from her whale and cod fisheries, took the sting out of the act. But, when the act was afterwards extended to the other colonies, it became a real grievance, and, as such, was stated by Franklin, in his examination before the House of Commons, to be one of the" causes, which had lessened the respect of the Colonies for Parliament. "It seems hard therefore," he said in the paper just mentioned, "to draw all their real Money from them, and then refuse them the poor Privilege of using Paper instead of it." In the same essay, the circumstances, in which the need for a paper currency in the Colonies originated, are stated in his perspicuous manner: "The Truth is, that the Balance of their Trade with Britain being generally against them, the Gold and Silver is drawn out to pay that Balance; and then the Necessity of some Medium of Trade has induced the making of Paper Money, which could not be carried away."

In his capacity as colonial agent, Franklin earnestly strove to secure the repeal of the British legislation, forbidding the use of paper money in the Colonies as a legal tender, and he even enlisted for this purpose the aid of a large body of London merchants, engaged in the American trade, but his efforts met with slight success. Some of the members of the Board of Trade, who had united in recommending the restraint upon colonial paper money, were, it was said, at the time in the state of mind of Soame Jenyns, who had laughingly declared,

when he was asked as a member of the Board to concur in some measure, "I have no kind of objection to it, provided we have heretofore signed nothing to the contrary."⁸⁶ Worse still, Grenville threw out the chilling suggestion in the House of Commons that Great Britain should make the paper money for the Colonies, issue it upon loan there, take the interest and apply it as Parliament might think proper.⁸⁷ This suggestion, and the interest excited by it led to a letter from Franklin to Galloway in which he said that he was not for applying again very soon for a repeal of the restraining act. "I am afraid," he remarked, "an ill use will be made of it. The plan of our adversaries is to render Assemblies in America useless; and to have a revenue independent of their grants, for all the purposes of their defence, and supporting governments among them."

These comments were followed by the suggestion that the Pennsylvania Assembly might be petitioned by the more prominent citizens of Pennsylvania to authorize a moderate emission of paper money, though without the legal-tender feature; the petition to be accompanied by a mutual engagement upon the part of the petitioners to take the money in all business transactions at rates fixed by law. Or, perhaps, Franklin said, a bank might be established that would meet the currency needs of the community. In any event, should the scarcity of money continue, they would rely more upon their own industrial resources, to the detriment of the British merchant, and by keeping in Pennsylvania the real cash, that came into it, would, in time, have a quantity sufficient for all their occasions. The same thought, tinged with a trace of resentment, emerges in one of his letters to Lord Kames:

As I think a scarcity of money will work with our other present motives for lessening our fond extravagance in the use of the superfluous manufactures of this country, which unkindly grudges us the enjoyment of common rights, and will tend to lead us naturally into industry and frugality, I am grown more indifferent about the repeal of the act, and, if my countrymen will be advised by me, we shall never ask it again.⁸⁸

The relations sustained by Franklin to the Continental paper currency we have already seen. There was an apparent element of inconsistency in his suggestion that it should bear interest; for interest-bearing bills, he had contended in his *Remarks and Facts Concerning American*

⁸⁶ This remark brings up in a timely way another member of the Board of Trade, Lord Clare, whose habits were such as to aid us in understanding why the Board did not always retain a clear recollection of its past transactions. Speaking of an interview with him, Franklin wrote to his son: "He gave me a great deal of flummery; saying, that though at my Examination (before the House of Commons) I answered some of his questions a little pertly, yet he liked me, from that day, for the spirit I showed in defence of my country; and at parting, after we had drank a bottle and a half of claret each, he hugged and kissed me, protesting he never in his life met with a man he was so much in love with."

⁸⁷ The story told by Franklin of a running colloquy between George Grenville, who had on one occasion, as usual, been denouncing the Americans as rebels and Colonel Onslow, a warm friend of America, is good enough to be related. After recalling the Roman practice of sending a commission to a disaffected province for the purpose of investigating the causes of its discontent, Onslow declared his willingness, if the House of Commons should think fit to appoint them, to go over to America *with that honorable gentleman*. "Upon this there was a great laugh, which continued some time, and was rather increased by Mr. Grenville's asking, 'Will the gentleman engage, that I shall be safe there? Can I be assured that I shall be allowed to come back again to make the report?' As soon as the laugh was so far subsided, as that Mr. Onslow could be heard again, he added: 'I can not absolutely engage for the honorable gentleman's safe return, but if he goes thither upon this service, I am strongly of opinion the *event* will contribute greatly to the future quiet of both countries.' On which the laugh was renewed and redoubled."

⁸⁸ The principal features of a plan for the issuance of a stable colonial currency proposed by Franklin and Governor Pownall to the British Ministry, in 1764, 1765 and 1766 were these: bills of credit to a certain amount were to be printed in England for the use of the Colonies; and a loan office was to be established in each colony, empowered to issue the bills, take security for their payment and receive payment of them. They were to be paid in full in ten years, and were to bear interest at the rate of five per centum per annum; and one tenth of the principal was to be paid each year with the proper proportion of interest. They were to be a legal tender.

Paper Money, were objectionable as currency, because it was tedious to calculate interest on one of them, as often as it changed hands, and also because a distinct advantage was to be gained by hoarding them.

The Continental bills depreciated so rapidly that in 1777 the price of a bushel of salt at Baltimore was nine pounds. Three years later, the price of a yard of cassimere in America was \$300, and of a yard of jean and habit cloth \$60. Inflated as the bills were, Franklin with his cheerful habit of mind was not at a loss to say a good word for them. There was some advantage to the general public, at any rate, he wrote to Stephen Sayre, in the facility with which taxes could be paid off with the depreciated" paper. Congress, he wrote to Dr. Cooper, had blundered in not earlier adopting his suggestion that the interest on the bills should be paid in real money.

The *only Remedy* now [he said] seems to be a Diminution of the Quantity by a vigorous Taxation, of great nominal Sums, which the People are more able to pay, in proportion to the Quantity and diminished Value; and the *only Consolation* under the Evil is, that the Publick Debt is proportionably diminish'd with the Depreciation; and this by a kind of imperceptible Tax, everyone having paid a Part of it in the Fall of Value that took place between his receiving and Paying such Sums as pass'd thro' his hands.

In this same letter, Franklin declared that it was a mystery to foreign politicians how America had been able to continue a war for four years without money, and how it could pay with paper that had no previously fixed fund appropriated specifically to redeem it. "This Currency, as we manage it," he said, "is a wonderful Machine. It performs its Office when we issue it; it pays and clothes Troops, and provides Victuals and Ammunition; and when we are obliged to issue a Quantity excessive, it pays itself off by Depreciation." The paper he subsequently wrote to Thomas Ruston had really operated as a tax, and was perhaps the most equal of all taxes, since it depreciated in the hands of holders of money, and thereby taxed them in proportion to the sums they held and the time they held them, which generally was in proportion to men's wealth.

All this, of course, was but making the best of a *pis-aller*. Franklin in a sense held a brief for paper money all his life, because, during almost his whole life, his country had to put up with paper money, whether she wanted to do so or not. When the Revolutionary War was over, he could be less of an advocate, and more of a judge with respect to such money; and the change is neatly illustrated in the words that he wrote from Philadelphia to the Duc de la" Rochefoucauld in 1787. "Paper money in moderate quantities has been found beneficial; when more than the occasions of commerce require, it depreciated and was mischievous; and the populace are apt to demand more than is necessary."

To see at once how quickly Franklin could evade the danger, lurking in the proposition, urged by John Adams upon Vergennes, that the subjects of King Louis were as fairly amenable to the will of Congress, in reducing the value of paper money in their hands to one part in forty, as the Americans themselves, and yet how perfectly Franklin understood the workings of a depreciated paper currency, we need but turn to a letter from him to M. Le Veillard dated Feb. 17, 1788.

Where there is a free government [he said in this letter] and the people make their own laws by their representatives, I see no injustice in their obliging one another to take their own paper money. It is no more so than compelling a man by law to take his own note. But it is unjust to pay strangers with such money against their will. The making of paper money with such a sanction is however a folly, since, although you

may by law oblige a citizen to take it for his goods, you cannot fix his prices; and his liberty of rating them as he pleases, which is the same thing as setting what value he pleases on your money, defeats your sanction.

Franklin was a free-trader, but his opinions with regard to import duties are sometimes streaked with Protectionist reasoning. All the natural leanings of such a broad-minded man were, it almost goes without saying, in favor of unrestricted commerce. His general attitude towards commercial restrictions was emphatically expressed in one of his letters to Peter Collinson from which we have already quoted.

In time perhaps [he said] Mankind may be wise enough to let Trade take its own Course, find its own Channels, and regulate its own Proportions, etc. At present, most of the” Edicts of Princes, Placaerts, Laws & Ordinances of Kingdoms & States for that purpose, prove political Blunders. The Advantages they produce not being *general* for the Commonwealth; but *particular*, to private Persons or Bodies in the State who procur’d them, and *at the Expence of the rest of the People*.

Many years later, he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan, “The making England entirely a free port would have been the wisest step ever taken for its advantage.” In recent years, his *Wail of a Protected Manufacturer* has been reprinted and widely circulated in England by the opponents of the Fair Trade movement:

Suppose a country, X, which has three industries—cloth, silk, iron—and supplies three other countries—A, B, and C—therewith, wishes to increase the sale and raise the price of cloth in favour of its cloth-makers.

To that end X prohibits the importation of cloth from A.

In retaliation A prohibits silks coming from X.

The workers in silk complain of the decline in their trade.

To satisfy them X excludes silk from B.

B, to retaliate, shuts out iron and hardware against X.

Then the makers of iron and hardware cry out that their trades are being ruined.

So X closes its doors against iron and hardware from C.

In return C refuses to take cloth from X.

Who is the gainer by all these prohibitions?

Answer

All the four countries have diminished their common fund of the enjoyments and conveniences of life.

The open ports of the United States, after the conclusion of the American Revolution, were a source of keen gratification to Franklin. They had brought in, he thought, a vast plenty of foreign goods, and occasioned a demand for domestic produce; so that America enjoyed the double advantage of buying what they consumed cheap, and of selling what they could spare dear.”

The following views in a letter from him to Jared Eliot, as far back as the year 1747, sound like a recent tariff reform speech in Congress:

First, I imagine that the Five Per Cent Duty on Goods imported from your Neighbouring Governments, tho’ paid at first Hand by the Importer, will not upon the

whole come out of his Pocket, but be paid in Fact by the Consumer; for the Importer will be sure to sell his Goods as much dearer as to reimburse himself; so that it is only another Mode of Taxing your own People tho' perhaps meant to raise Money on your Neighbours.

But then follows what a free trader, using Franklin's own coarse phrase, might call "spitting in the soup." "Yet, if you can make some of the Goods, heretofore imported, among yourselves, the advanc'd price of five per cent may encourage your own Manufacture, and in time make the Importation of such Articles unnecessary, which will be an Advantage."

In another place, he employed language in harmony with the importance that the Protectionist assigns to his favorite system as a means of building up local markets for the produce of the farmer.⁸⁹ It may be truly said, however, as has already been hinted, that Franklin was never more friendly to the principle of international free trade than in the latter years of his life. In his letter to Le Veillard of Feb. 17, 1788, he used language which demonstrates that he was still convinced that import duties are paid by the consumer, and in an earlier letter to Robert R. Livingston in 1783 he said that he felt inclined to believe that a State, which left all her ports open to all the world, upon equal terms, would, by that means, have foreign commodities cheaper, sell its own productions dearer and be on the whole the most prosperous.

For export duties, he had a fierce contempt. "To lay duties on a commodity exported, which our neighbours want," he wrote to James Lovell in 1778, "is a knavish attempt to get something for nothing. The statesman who first invented it had the genius of a pickpocket, and would have been a pickpocket if fortune had suitably placed him."

How thoroughly Franklin understood the principles, which regulate the ebb and flow of population, we have had occasion to note.

With equal intelligence, he laid bare the pauperizing effect of aid injudiciously extended to the poor in too generous a measure. Commenting in his essay on the Laboring Poor on the liberal provision, made for indigence in England, he said:

I fear the giving mankind a dependance on anything for support, in age or sickness, besides industry and frugality during youth and health, tends to flatter our natural indolence, to encourage idleness and prodigality, and thereby to promote and increase poverty, the very evil it was intended to cure; thus multiplying beggars instead of diminishing them.

In his essay, Franklin makes the interesting statement that the condition of the poor in England was by far the best in Europe; "for that," he adds, "except in England and her American colonies, there is not in any country of the known world, not even in Scotland or Ireland, a provision by law to enforce a support of the poor. Everywhere else necessity reduces to beggary." The whole essay is a highly ingenious argument to the effect that it is "a misconception to think of a rich man as the sole possessor of his wealth, and that in one way or another the laboring poor have the usufruct of the entire clear income of all the property owners in the community. Nobody knew better than Poor Richard that no help is worth speaking of save that which promotes self-help.

⁸⁹ "Here in England," Franklin wrote to Humphrey Marshall on Apr. 22, 1771, "it is well known and understood, that whenever a Manufacture is established which employs a Number of Hands, it raises the Value of Lands in the neighbouring Country all around it; partly by the greater Demand near at hand for the produce of the Land; and partly from the Plenty of Money drawn by the Manufacturers to that part of the Country. It seems therefore the Interest of all our Farmers and Owners of Lands, to encourage our Young Manufactures in preference to foreign ones imported among us from distant Countries."

The support of the poor [he wrote to Richard Jackson] should not be by maintaining them in idleness, but by employing them in some kind of labour suited to their abilities of body, as I am informed begins to be of late the practice in many parts of England, where workhouses are erected for that purpose. If these were general, I should think the poor would be more careful, and work voluntarily to lay up something for themselves against a rainy day, rather than run the risk of being obliged to work at the pleasure of others for a bare subsistence, and that too under confinement.

For Agriculture, Franklin always had an appreciative word. "Agriculture," he observed in a letter to Cadwallader Evans, "is truly *productive of new wealth*; manufacturers only change forms, and, whatever value they give to the materials they work upon, they in the meantime consume an equal value in provisions, &c."

His other observations on Agriculture are worthy of being read for the light that they cast on his own character, if for no other reason. It is, he declared, in a letter to Jonathan Shipley, "the most useful, the most independent, and therefore the noblest of Employments." Another remark of his in his *Positions to be Examined, Concerning National Wealth* is that there seemed to him but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth:

The first is by *war*, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors. This is *robbery*. The second by *commerce*, which is *generally* cheating. The third by *agriculture*, the only *honest way*, wherein man receives a real increase" of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favour, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry.

The same spirit gives life to the following observations too in his essay on "The Internal State of America": "The Agriculture and Fisheries of the United States are the great Sources of our Encreasing Wealth. He that puts a Seed into the Earth is recompens'd, perhaps, by receiving twenty out of it; and he who draws a Fish out of our Waters, draws up a Piece of Silver."

In Franklin's time as now there was a feeling that the farmer did not receive his full share of the blessings of organized society. In his *Price of Corn, and Management of the Poor*, he makes a farmer say, "I am one of that class of people, that feeds you all, and at present is abused by you all. In short I am a *farmer*."

Franklin's views about punishment were also conspicuously worthy of his kind heart and sound sense. His letter to Benjamin Vaughan on the Criminal Laws is one of his best essays, and merited the honor conferred on it by Samuel Romilly, when he added it in the form of an appendix to his own observations on *Dr. Madan's Thoughts on Executive Justice*. In the course of his feeling exposures of existing fallacies with respect to the philosophy of punishment, Franklin, who did not scruple to say that there would be less crime, if there were no criminal laws, asked these searching questions:

I see, in the last Newspaper from London, that a Woman is capitally convicted at the Old Bailey, for privately stealing out of a Shop some Gauze, value 14 Shillings and three pence; is there any Proportion between the Injury done by a Theft, value 14/3, and the Punishment of a human Creature, by Death, on a Gibbet? Might not that Woman, by her Labour, have made the Reparation ordain'd by God, in paying fourfold? Is not all Punishment inflicted beyond the Merit of the Offence," so much Punishment of Innocence? In this light, how vast is the annual Quantity of not only *injured*, but *suffering* Innocence, in almost all the civilized States of Europe!

That Franklin was opposed to imprisonment for debt it is hardly necessary to say. His sense of humor, if nothing else, was sufficient to point out to him the absurdity of depriving a

debtor of all means of earning money until he earned enough to satisfy his creditors. John Baynes, in his *Journal*, informs us that, in a conversation with him, Franklin expressed his disapprobation of “this usage” in very strong terms. He said he could not compare any sum of money with imprisonment—they were not commensurable quantities.

Both slavery and the slave trade were held by Franklin in just reprobation, but his views on these subjects, it must be confessed, would be weightier, if he had not trafficked at one time in slaves himself. As it is, he occupies somewhat the same equivocal position as that which inspired Thomas Moore to pen the blackguard lines in which he pictured the American slaveholding patriot as dreaming of Freedom in his bondmaid’s arms.⁹⁰ The economic truth, however, of what he had to say about Slave Labor in his essay on “The Increase of Mankind” is undeniable.

Tis an ill-grounded Opinion [he declared] that by the Labour of slaves, *America* may possibly vie in Cheapness of Manufactures with *Britain*. The Labour of Slaves here can never be so cheap here as the Labour of working Men is in *Britain*. Anyone may compute it. Interest of Money is in the Colonies from 6 to 10 per Cent. Slaves one with another cost 30£ Sterling per Head. Reckon then the Interest of the first Purchase of a Slave, the Insurance or Risque on his Life, his” Cloathing and Diet, Expences in his Sickness and Loss of Time, Loss by his Neglect of Business (Neglect is natural to the Man who is not to be benefited by his own Care or Diligence), Expence of a Driver to keep him at Work, and his Pilfering from Time to Time, almost every Slave being *by Nature* a Thief, and compare the whole Amount with the Wages of a Manufacturer of Iron or Wool in *England*, you will see that Labour is much cheaper there than it ever can be by Negroes here.

In this essay, the introduction of slaves is enumerated as one of the causes that diminish the growth of white population.

The Negroes brought into the *English Sugar Islands* [he says] have greatly diminish’d the Whites there; the Poor are by this Means deprived of Employment, while a few Families acquire vast Estates; which they spend on Foreign Luxuries, and educating their Children in the Habit of those Luxuries; the same Income is needed for the Support of one that might have maintain’d 100. The Whites who have Slaves, not labouring, are enfeebled, and therefore not so generally prolific; the Slaves being work’d too hard, and ill fed, their Constitutions are broken, and the Deaths among them are more than the Births; so that a continual Supply is needed from *Africa*. The Northern Colonies, having few Slaves, increase in Whites. Slaves also pejorate the Families that use them; the white Children become proud, disgusted with Labour, and being educated in Idleness, are rendered unfit to get a Living by Industry.⁹¹

⁹⁰ The patriot, fresh from Freedom's Councils come,
Now pleas'd retires to lash his slaves at home;
Or woo, perhaps, some black Aspasia's charms,
And dream of freedom in his bondswoman's arms.
To Thomas Hume, Esq., M.D.
From the City of Washington.

⁹¹ By his will Franklin released his son-in-law from the payment of a bond for £2172, 5s, with the request that he would immediately after the death of the testator set free "his negro man Bob."

IV. Franklin As A Man Of Science

Franklin, as we have said, was primarily a man of action. If we do not always think of him as deeply involved in what Goethe calls "being's ocean, action's storm," it is only because he moved from appointed task to appointed task with such frictionless self-command and ease. But, throughout his life, his mind was quick to make excursions into the domain of philosophical speculation and experiment, whenever business cares or political responsibilities allowed it to do so. Poor Richard would seem to have little in common with Prometheus, but Prometheus, if Condorcet is to be believed, as well as Poor Richard, Franklin was; to say nothing of other transmigrations. That his interest in natural phenomena began at a very early age, is disclosed by his *Journal of a Voyage from London to Philadelphia* in 1726, when he was in his twenty-first year. Throughout the course of this voyage, his faculties were intently concentrated upon all the marvels of the sea and its setting. With sedulous minuteness, he registers the state of the winds each day, and records the impression made on him by every object with a secret at its heart, to be plucked out by an inquisitive mind. A lunar rainbow, an eclipse of the sun, which darkened ten twelfths of his disk, an eclipse of the moon, which spread over six digits of her surface, dolphins in their bright mail of mixed green, silver and" gold, a shark moving around the ship in a slow, majestic manner, and attended by an obsequious retinue of pilot fish, schools of harried flying fish, groups of young crabs, clinging to seaweeds, with indented leaves about three quarters of an inch long, and small yellow berries filled with nothing but wind, a white, tropical bird, said never to be seen further north than latitude 40, and marked by short wings and a single tail feather, other birds, too near the western continent not to be Americans, are among the things that the open-eyed and thoughtful youth jotted down in his Journal in terms that plainly enough indicated not only the eager curiosity but the exactitude of a future man of science. As almost always, the child was but the father of the man. Upon each of his subsequent six voyages across the Atlantic, Franklin exhibited the same, though severer, and more practised, vigilance in observing everything that the ocean, including the instruments of commerce afloat on it, have for a penetrating and suggestive intelligence. How essentially he was a man of science, is demonstrated by the fact that, whenever he was on the element, where alone he could hope for exemption from the political demands of his countrymen, his intellect turned at once with ardor to the study of Nature. Old and feeble as he was, he wrote no less than three valuable dissertations on his last voyage across the Atlantic, one on the causes and cure of smoky chimneys, one on his smoke-consuming stove, and a third, distinguished by an extraordinary wealth of knowledge and observation, on the construction, equipment and provisioning of ships, and the winds, currents and temperature of the sea; which was accompanied by valuable thermometric tables, based upon observations made by him during three of his transatlantic voyages. The maritime essay was written with the closest regard to detail, and contains such a mass of information and luminous comment as has rarely been condensed into the same space. It makes up some" thirty-four quarto pages of Smyth's edition of Franklin's works, exclusive of the thermometric notes. The other two essays occupy some forty-nine pages more. All three are elucidated by numerous explanatory charts and illustrations, and are marked by the mastery of scientific principles, which no mere artificer or artisan could have displayed in discussing such topics; but, at the same time, they could not have been more intensely practical, as respects minutiae of construction, if Franklin had been a professional sailor, mason or stove-maker. The maritime observations range from the Chinese method of dividing the hulls of vessels into separate compartments, which is now regarded as one of the most efficient devices for securing the safety of ocean greyhounds, to

an inquiry into the reason why fowls served up at sea are usually too tough to be readily masticated and the best means of dishing soup on a rolling and pitching vessel.

After his return in his youth from London to Philadelphia, Franklin was for a long time too much immersed in business and civic projects to give much attention to natural phenomena. “Why does the flame of a candle tend upward in a spire?”, “whence comes the dew, that stands on the outside of a tankard that has cold water in it in the summer time?”, are among the few questions of a scientific nature that he appears to have framed for the discussions of the Junto; and they are elementary enough. But with the coming of pecuniary ease, the natural bent of his mind soon asserted itself. While in Boston in 1746, he happened to see some electrical experiments performed by a Dr. Spence, who had recently arrived from Scotland. They were clumsily conducted, but crude as they were, they filled his mind with mixed sensations of surprise and delight; so much so that, when, shortly after his return to Philadelphia from Boston, the Library Company found itself the owner of a glass tube, for the production of electricity by friction, given to it by Peter Collinson,” then a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, with instructions for its use, he eagerly availed himself of Collinson’s generosity to repeat the experiments that he had witnessed at Boston, and, by continuous practice, became very expert in making them as well as others. Indeed, his house was soon overrun to such an extent with eager visitors that he was compelled in self-defence to relieve it of its congestion by supplying some of his friends with similar tubes blown at the Philadelphia glass-house. One of these friends was his ingenious neighbor, Kinnersley, who chanced at the time to be out of business. Franklin advised him to exhibit the experiments for profit, and followed up the advice by preparing two lectures for him, in which the details of the experiments were clearly set forth. Kinnersley himself employed skilled workmen to make the necessary electrical apparatus for him, modelled upon the rough agencies designed by Franklin for himself, and used in his own exhibitions. The lectures, when delivered by him in Philadelphia, were so well attended that he made a tour of all the chief towns of the Colonies with a considerable degree of pecuniary success. Some years later, similar instructions given by Franklin to Domien, a Greek priest, proved so useful to him on a long tramp that he wrote to his benefactor that he had lived eight hundred miles upon electricity, and that it had been meat, drink and clothing to him. When Franklin last heard from him, he was contemplating a journey from Havana to Vera Cruz, thence through Mexico to Acapulco, on its western coast, and from Acapulco to Manila, and from Manila through China, India, Persia and Turkey to his home in Transylvania; all with electricity as his main *viaticum*.

Franklin’s own experiments fortunately ended in something better than vagabondage, however respectable or profitable. Grateful to Collinson for his timely gifts, he wrote to him several letters, laying before him the results of the Philadelphia experiments. Collinson procured for” these letters the privilege of being read before the Royal Society, where they did not excite enough notice to be printed among its Transactions. Another letter, one to Kinnersley, in which Franklin propounded the identity of lightning and electricity, he sent to Dr. Mitchell, an acquaintance of his, and also a member of the Royal Society, who replied by telling him that it had been read before the Society, but had been laughed at by the connoisseurs. Then it was that the happy obstetric suggestion of Dr. Fothergill that the letters were of too much value to be stifled led Collinson to gather them together for publication by Cave in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. They were not published in this magazine, but Cave did bring them out in pamphlet form with a preface by Dr. Fothergill. The event showed that he and the general public had more acumen than the sages of the Royal Society, for the letters, when subsequently published in a quarto volume, with additions by Franklin, ran through five editions, without the cost of a penny to Cave for copyright. It was from France, however, that they first received the full meed of prompt approbation that they deserved. A copy of them

happened to fall into the hands of Buffon, who prevailed upon D'Alibard to translate them into French. Their publication in that language provoked an attack upon them by the Abbé Nollet, Preceptor in Natural Philosophy to the Royal Family, and the author of a popular theory of Electricity. At first, the Abbé could not believe that America was capable of producing such letters, and insisted that they must have been fabricated at Paris for the purpose of discrediting his system. In fact, he even doubted whether there was such a person as Franklin, but, afterwards, being convinced upon that point, he published a volume of letters, mainly addressed to Franklin, in which he defended his own theory, and denied the accuracy of Franklin's experiments and conclusions. Le Roy, of the Royal Academy of Sciences, rejoined on behalf of Franklin, who had decided to let the truth be its own champion, and easily refuted the Abbé. The papers could not have asked for a better advertisement than this controversy. They were further translated into the Italian, German and Latin languages, and Franklin's theory of electricity was so generally adopted by the learned men of Europe, in preference to that of the Abbé, that the latter lived, Franklin tells us, to see himself the last of his sect, except Monsieur B. of Paris, his *élève* and immediate disciple. It is surprising that even the solitary *élève* should have been left clinging to his master; for, in the meantime, the most momentous experiment, suggested by Franklin in his letters, had been performed, substantially in the manner outlined by him, with brilliant success, by D'Alibard, on a hill at Marly-la-Ville, where a pointed rod of iron, forty feet high, and planted on an electric stand, had been erected for the purpose of carrying it into execution. When a thundercloud passed over the rod on May 10, 1752, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the persons, set by D'Alibard to watch it, had drawn near "and attracted from it sparks of fire, perceiving the same kind of commotions as in the common electrical experiments." A week later, the fire and crackling sound, elicited by M. de Lor from a rod, erected at his house in Paris on a cake of resin, and electrified by a cloud between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, told the same story. He had previously performed what he called the "Philadelphia experiments" in the presence of Louis XV., who seems to have been as much delighted with them as if they had been a new mistress. In a short time, they became so popular that we are told by Franklin that "all the curious of Paris flocked to see them." One of the results of the fame acquired by him in France was a letter written by Dr. Wright, an English physician, then in Paris, to a member of the Royal Society, apprising the latter of the excitement that the experiments had created" in France, and expressing his astonishment that Franklin's papers had been so little noticed in England. Quickened by Dr. Wright's words, the Society reconsidered the letters which had been read before them, and caused an abstract of them and the other letters on electricity, sent to England by Franklin, to be printed among its Transactions. Afterwards, when several members of the Society had themselves drawn down lightning from the clouds, it elected Franklin a member, and, in view of the fact that the honor had not been sought by him, voted that he "was not to pay anything"; which meant that he was to be liable for neither admission fee nor annual dues, and was even to receive his copy of the Transactions of the Society free of charge. Nor did it stop here. It also awarded to Franklin, for the year 1753, the Copley gold medal, accompanied by an address, in which Lord Macclesfield, its President, endeavored to make full amends to him for its belated recognition of the value of his discoveries.

The suggestion by Franklin, which led to the experiments of D'Alibard and De Lor, is as matter-of-fact as a cooking recipe.

To determine the question [he said in a letter to Peter Collinson] whether the clouds that contain lightning are electrified or not, I would propose an experiment to be try'd where it may be done conveniently. On the top of some high tower or steeple, place a kind of centry box,... big enough to contain a man and an electrical stand. From the

middle of the stand let an iron rod rise and pass bending out of the door, and then upright 20 or 30 feet, pointed very sharp at the end. If the electrical stand be kept clean and dry, a man standing on it when such clouds are passing low, might be electrified and afford sparks, the rod drawing fire to him from a cloud. If any danger to the man should be apprehended (though I think there would be none), let him stand on the floor of his box, and now and then bring near to the rod the loop of a wire that has one end fastened to the leads, he holding it by a wax" handle; so the sparks, if the rod is electrified, will strike from the rod to the wire, and not affect him.

Before the news of the success achieved by D'Alibard and De Lor reached Franklin, he himself had conducted a similar experiment "though made in a different and more easy manner." This experiment has become one of the veriest commonplaces of physical science. It was performed, when a thunder gust was coming on, in a field near Philadelphia, with such simple materials as a silk kite, topped off with a foot or more of sharp pointed wire, and controlled by a twine string, equipped with a key for casting off the electric sparks, and ending in a silk ribbon to secure the safety of the hand that held it. The whole construction is set out in a letter written to Collinson by Franklin shortly after the incident, in which, with his usual modesty, the latter describes the kite as if he had had nothing to do with it. Something like the feelings of Sir Isaac Newton, when the falling apple brought to his ear the real music of the spheres, must have been those of Franklin, when the loose filaments of twine bristled up stiffly, as if stirred by some violated instinct of wild freedom, and the stream of sparks from the key told him that he was right in supposing that the mysterious and appalling agency, which had for centuries been associated in the human mind with the resistless wrath of Omnipotence, was but the same subtle fluid that had so often lit up his electrical apparatus with its playful corruscations.

The letters to Collinson contained another suggestion almost equally pregnant. Speaking of the power of pointed conductors to draw off electricity noiselessly and harmlessly, Franklin asked,

May not the knowledge of this power of points be of use to mankind, in preserving houses, churches, ships, &c. from the stroke of lightning, by directing us to fix on the highest parts of those edifices, upright rods of iron made sharp as a needle, and gilt to prevent rusting, and from the foot of those rods a wire down the outside of the building into the ground, or down round one of the shrouds of a ship, and down her side till it reaches the water? Would not these pointed rods probably draw the electrical fire silently out of a cloud before it came nigh enough to strike, and thereby secure us from that most sudden and terrible mischief?

The suggestion was but slowly adopted, not in Europe, indeed, at all, until the efficacy of the lightning rod in protecting buildings had been generally recognized in America. In time, however, the device came into use both in Great Britain and on the Continent; Voltaire being one of the first persons in Geneva to erect one, and, wherever it was erected, it helped to confirm the fame of Franklin by its silent effect upon the human imagination. In recent years, the lightning rod, once in almost universal use in America, has fallen into neglect, but the explanation of this fact is to be found not in any just doubts about its utility, when properly constructed, affixed and grounded, but in the growth of fire insurance, and the inutility, or danger, of such rods, if carelessly set in place.⁹²

⁹² The lightning rod in its origin encountered the same religious misgivings as inoculation and insurance and many other ideas which have promoted human progress and happiness. The Rev. Thomas Prince at the time of the Lisbon earthquake thought that the more lightning rods there were the greater was the danger that the earth might become perilously surcharged with electricity. "In Boston," he said, "are more erected than anywhere else

The domestication of lightning and the invention of the lightning rod were the two things to which Franklin was principally indebted for his brilliant reputation as a philosopher. At this day, the application of electricity to common uses is so familiar to us that it is hard, without a little reflection, to realize how well calculated his electrical achievements were to send a thrill of astonishment and awe through the human mind. Of all the manifestations of the physical world, lightning with its inscrutable, swift, and all but irresistible, stroke, followed by the sublime detonations of thunder, is the one most suggestive of supernatural influence exerted by an all-powerful deity. The mythological dreams of the Greeks, the visions of the Old Testament, the simple emotions of the savage had all paid their homage of dread to the fearful force—like a madman pitilessly destructive, and yet like a madman diverted from its rage by the barest trifle—which had clothed Jove with the greater part of his grandeur, licked up even the water that was in the trench about the altar, built by Elijah in the name of the Lord, and filled the breast of the Indian with superstitious terror. Discovery, that laid bare the real nature and destructive limits of this force, could not fail to excite an extraordinary degree of attention everywhere. It was the singular fortune of Franklin, though a practical, sober-minded denizen of the earth, if ever man was, to have enjoyed in his day a reputation not unlike that of a divinity of the upper ether.⁹³ It so happens that the atmosphere was, in one way or another, the home of all the scientific problems which engaged his interest most deeply. His philosophical Pegasus, so little akin to the humble brute bestrid by Poor Richard, was “a beast for Perseus—pure air and fire”; and especially, it is needless to say, was this true of his relations to the lightning. When the fact became known throughout the civilized world that human ingenuity had succeeded in even snaring it, Franklin was exalted” for a time to a seat on Olympus. All the literature of the period, as well as that of a much later period, bears out the statement that rarely has any single, peaceful incident ever so fired the human imagination.⁹⁴ For many years, the natural background for a portrait of Franklin might have been a bank of cloud lit up by the incessant play of summer lightning. *Eripuit coelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis*, was but the mightiest of the electrical discharges that flattery poured upon him. Turn where we may to the poetry of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and of the earlier part of the nineteenth, whether epigram or otherwise, we are likely to come upon some imprint left upon the thought of those periods by the subjugation of lightning.

The interest of Franklin in electrical science was but another sequel of the world-wide avidity with which learned men had recently turned to the study of that subject. One of them, Grey, had pursued a series of experiments for the purpose of determining the relative conductivity of various substances, another, Du Fay, had erroneously classified electricity as resinous and

in New England; and Boston seems to be more dreadfully shaken. Oh! there is no getting out of the Mighty Hand of God! If we think to avoid it in the Air we can not in the Earth. Yea, it may grow more fatal."

⁹³ The lines under the portrait of Franklin by Cochin do not hesitate to exalt him above the most powerful forces of Nature and the authority of the Gods:

"C'est l'honneur et l'appui du nouvel hémisphère,
Les flots de l'Océan s'abaissent à sa voix;
Il réprime ou dirige à son gré le tonnerre.
Qui désarme les dieux peut-il craindre les rois?"

⁹⁴ "With Franklin grasp the lightning's fiery wing," is a line in Thomas Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*. In his *Age of Bronze*, Byron asks in one place why the Atlantic should "gird a tyrant's grave"

"While Franklin's quiet memory climbs to heaven,
Calming the lightning which he thence hath riven."
And in another place in the same poem he speaks of

"Stoic Franklin's energetic shade,
Robed in the lightnings which his hand allayed."
Crabbe in his tribute to "Divine Philosophy" in the *Library* exclaims,
"Tis hers the lightning from the clouds to call,
And teach the fiery mischief where to fall."

vitreous, and the perfected Leyden Jar particularly had given a new momentum to the progress of electrical investigation. Into this movement, after witnessing Dr. Spence's awkward experiments at Boston, Franklin threw himself with the utmost enthusiasm, and his discovery of the identity of lightning and electricity and his lightning-rod conception were but the chief fruits of this enthusiasm. Between the *Autobiography* and his letters, we are at no loss to follow closely the steps by which he reached all the results which have given him such a high position as an electrical investigator. "I purchased all Dr. Spence's apparatus ..." he tells us in the *Autobiography*, "and I proceeded in my electrical experiments with great alacrity." How keen this alacrity became, after he had been rubbing for a time the glass tube, sent over to Philadelphia by Collinson, may be seen in what he wrote to Collinson himself on March 28, 1747:

For my own part, I never was before engaged in any study that so totally engrossed my attention and my time as this has lately done; for what with making experiments when I can be alone, and repeating them to my Friends and Acquaintance, who, from the novelty of the thing, come continually in crouds to see them, I have, during some months past, had little leisure for anything else.

The result of this experimentation was the various letters to Collinson and others that constitute Franklin's highest claim to distinction as a man of science. By following them in their chronological order, the reader can trace with little difficulty the genesis of each of his more valuable conclusions touching electricity. They are distinguished by remarkable simplicity and force of reasoning and by a clearness of statement as transparent as crystal. Moreover, they are even enlivened at times by gleams of fancy or humor. In a word they indisputably merit the judgment that Sir Humphry Davy, no mean judge of style as well as scientific truth, passes upon them:

The style and manner of his publication on electricity are almost as worthy of admiration as the doctrine it contains." He has endeavoured to remove all mystery and obscurity from the subject. He has written equally for the uninitiated and the philosopher; and he has rendered his details amusing as well as perspicuous, elegant as well as simple. Science appears in his language in a dress wonderfully decorous, the best adapted to display her native loveliness. He has in no instance exhibited that false dignity, by which philosophy is kept aloof from common applications; and he has sought rather to make her a useful inmate and servant in the common habitations of man, than to preserve her merely as an object of admiration in temples and palaces.

While recalling these words, it is not amiss to recall, too, what Lord Brougham had to say about the agencies with which Franklin conducted his experiments.

He could make an experiment [said Brougham] with less apparatus and conduct his experimental inquiry to a discovery with more ordinary materials than any other philosopher we ever saw. With an old key, a silk thread, some sealing wax and a sheet of paper he discovered the identity of lightning and electricity.

The truth of these observations is strikingly instanced in a story told of Franklin in Pettigrew's *Life of Lettsom*. When Henry Smeathman was insisting that the flight of birds is on inclined planes, and that they could not fly at all, but would simply float with the wind, if they were not heavier than the air, Franklin launched half a sheet of paper obliquely into the air, observing, as he watched its course, that that was an evident proof of the propriety of Smeathman's doctrines.

In a letter to Collinson, dated July 11, 1747, Franklin communicated to him the earliest results of his experimental use of the glass tube that Collinson had sent over to Philadelphia.

The first phenomenon, which fixed his attention, was the wonderful effect of pointed bodies in drawing off the electrical fire. This was the lightning rod” in its protoplasmal stage. The manner in which he described the experiment, by which this particular truth was demonstrated, is a good specimen of his remarkable faculty for simple and clear statement:

Place an iron shot of three or four inches diameter on the mouth of a clean dry glass bottle. By a fine silken thread from the ceiling, right over the mouth of the bottle, suspend a small cork ball, about the bigness of a marble; the thread of such a length, as that the cork ball may rest against the side of the shot. Electrify the shot, and the ball will be repelled to the distance of four or five inches, more or less, according to the quantity of Electricity. When in this state, if you present to the shot the point of a long slender sharp bodkin, at six or eight inches distance, the repellency is instantly destroy’d, and the cork flies to the shot. A blunt body must be brought within an inch, and draw a spark, to produce the same effect. To prove that the electrical fire is *drawn off* by the point, if you take the blade of the bodkin out of the wooden handle, and fix it in a stick of sealing wax, and then present it at the distance aforesaid, or if you bring it very near, no such effect follows; but sliding one finger along the wax till you touch the blade, and the ball flies to the shot immediately. If you present the point in the dark, you will see, sometimes at a foot distance, and more, a light gather upon it, like that of a firefly, or glowworm; the less sharp the point, the nearer you must bring it to observe the light; and, at whatever distance you see the light, you may draw off the electrical fire, and destroy the repellency. If a cork ball so suspended be repelled by the tube, and a point be presented quick to it, tho’ at a considerable distance, ‘tis surprising to see how suddenly it flies back to the tube. Points of wood will do near as well as those of iron, provided the wood is not dry; but perfectly dry wood will no more conduct electricity than sealing-wax.

The repellency between the ball and the shot was likewise destroyed, Franklin stated, 1, by sifting fine sand on it; this did it gradually, 2, by breathing on it, 3, by making a smoke about it from burning wood, and 4, by candlelight,” even though the candle was at a foot distance; these did it suddenly.

The same result was also produced, he found, by the light of a bright coal from a wood fire, or the light of red-hot iron; but not at so great a distance. Such was not the effect, however, he said, of smoke from dry resin dropped on hot iron. It was merely attracted by both shot and cork ball, forming proportionable atmospheres round them, making them look beautifully, somewhat like some of the figures in Burnet’s or Whiston’s *Theory of the Earth*.

Franklin also noted the fact that, unlike fire-light, sunlight, when thrown on both cork and shot, did not impair the repellency between them in the least.

In the same letter, guided by the belief that he had formed that electricity is not created by friction but, except when accumulated or depleted by special causes, is equally diffused through material substances generally, he also reached the conclusion that electrical discharges are due to circuits set up by substances that offer little resistance to the transit of the electrical current between bodies charged with more than the ordinary quantity of electrical energy and bodies not in that condition. In other words, electricity is always alert to restore its equilibrium when lost, and, if accumulated beyond its normal measure in one body, seeks with violent eagerness, as soon as a favorable medium of transmission is presented to it, to pass on its surplus of electrical energy to another body less amply supplied.

These conceptions, too, which lie at the very foundations of modern electrical science, are illustrated by Franklin with extraordinary simplicity and clearness as follows:

1. A person standing on wax, and rubbing the tube, and another person on wax drawing the fire, they will both of them, (provided they do not stand so as to touch one another) appear” to be electrised, to a person standing on the floor; that is, he will perceive a spark on approaching each of them with his knuckle.
2. But, if the persons on wax touch one another during the exciting of the tube, neither of them will appear to be electrised.
3. If they touch one another after exciting the tube, and drawing the fire as aforesaid, there will be a stronger spark between them, than was between either of them and the person on the floor.
4. After such strong spark, neither of them discover any electricity.

These appearances we attempt to account for thus: We suppose, as aforesaid, that electrical fire is a common element, of which every one of the three persons above mentioned has his equal share, before any operation is begun with the tube. A, who stands on wax and rubs the tube, collects the electrical fire from himself into the glass; and his communication with the common stock being cut off by the wax, his body is not again immediately supply’d. B, (who stands on wax likewise) passing his knuckle along near the tube, receives the fire which was collected by the glass from A; and his communication with the common stock being likewise cut off, he retains the additional quantity received. To C, standing on the floor, both appear to be electrised: for he having only the middle quantity of electrical fire, receives a spark upon approaching B, who has an over quantity; but gives one to A, who has an under quantity. If A and B approach to touch each other, the spark is stronger, because the difference between them is greater: After such touch there is no spark between either of them and C, because the electrical fire in all is reduced to the original equality. If they touch while electrising, the equality is never destroy’d, the fire only circulating. Hence have arisen some new terms among us: We say, B, (and bodies like circumstanced) is electrised *positively*; A, *negatively*. Or rather, B is electrised *plus*; A, *minus*. And we daily in our experiments electrise bodies *plus* or *minus*, as we think proper. To electrise *plus* or *minus*, no more needs to be known than this, that the parts of the tube or sphere that” are rubbed, do, in the instant of the friction, attract the electrical fire, and therefore take it from the thing rubbing: The same parts immediately, as the friction upon them ceases, are disposed to give the fire they have received, to anybody that has less. Thus you may circulate it, as Mr. *Watson* has shown; you may also accumulate or subtract it upon, or from anybody, as you connect that body with the rubber or with the receiver, the communication with the common stock being cut off.

The same letter recounts some of the tricks that Franklin and his fellow-experimenters were in the habit of making their new plaything perform. They fired spirits, lit candles just blown out, mimicked lightning, produced sparks with the touch of the finger, on the human hand or face, and gave electrical kisses. Other feats consisted in animating an artificial spider in such a way as to keep him oscillating in a very lifelike and entertaining manner between two wires, and lighting up the gilding on the covers of a book with a brilliant flash. This letter also shows that the provincial philosophers had already made improvements in the usual electrical methods. They had found that it was better to fill the phial with granulated lead than with water because of the superior facility with which the former could be warmed, and kept warm and dry in a damp place. They rubbed their tubes with buckskin, and, by observing certain precautions, such as never sully the tubes by handling them, and keeping them in tight, close-fitting cases of pasteboard, lined with flannel, increased their efficiency. Their

spheres for charging phials with electricity were mounted on iron axes with a small handle on one end, with which they could be set revolving like a common grindstone. It was in this same letter that Franklin with his usual generosity was careful to state that the power of pointed bodies to throw off as well as draw off the electrical fire was a discovery of his friend Hopkinson, and that the revolving sphere used by them was the invention of his friend Syng. About a month later, Franklin wrote to Collinson that, in the course of further experiments, he had observed several phenomena which made him distrust some of his former conclusions. "If there is no other use discover'd of Electricity," he said, "this however is something considerable, that it may *help to make a vain man humble*."

Another letter from Franklin to Collinson, written about two weeks later, communicated to him some valuable observations upon "M. Muschenbroeck's wonderful bottle"—the Leyden Jar. This bottle was a mere ordinary bottle, with a common cork in its neck, into which a common wire had been inserted. He wrote that, at the same time that the wire and the top of the bottle were electrised positively or plus, the bottom of the bottle was electrised negatively or minus, in exact proportion; the consequence was that, whatever quantity of electrical fire was thrown in at the top, an equal quantity went out at the bottom until, if the process was kept up long enough, the point was reached in the operation, when no more could be thrown into the upper part of the bottle, because no more could be drawn out of the lower part. If the attempt was made to throw more in, the fire was spewed back through the wire, or flew out in loud cracks through the sides of the bottle.

He also noted that an equilibrium could not be restored in the bottle by inward communication or contact of the parts, but only by a communication, formed without the bottle between its top and bottom.

He also noted that no electrical fire could be thrown into the top of the bottle, when none could get out at its bottom, either because the bottom was too thick, or because it stood on some non-conducting material, and likewise that, when the bottle was electrified, but little of the electrical fire could be drawn from the top by touching the wire, unless an equal quantity could at the same time get in at the bottom.

So wonderfully [he adds] are these two states of electricity, the *plus* and *minus*, combined and balanced in this miraculous bottle! situated and related to each in a manner that I can by no means comprehend! If it were possible that a bottle should in one part contain a quantity of air strongly compressed, and in another part a perfect vacuum, we know the equilibrium would be instantly restored *within*. But here we have a bottle containing at the same time a *plenum* of electrical fire, and a *vacuum* of the same fire; and yet the equilibrium cannot be restored between them but by a communication without! though the *plenum* presses violently to expand, and the hungry vacuum seems to attract as violently in order to be filled.

The letter concludes with an elaborate statement of the experiments by which the correctness of its conclusions could be established.

Franklin's next discovery communicated to Collinson in a letter dated the succeeding year was that, when the bottle was electrified, the electric fluid resided in the glass itself of the bottle. The manner in which he proved this fact is a good example of his inductive thoroughness.

Purposing [he said] to analyze the electrified bottle, in order to find wherein its strength lay, we placed it on glass, and drew out the cork and wire, which for that purpose had been loosely put in. Then taking the bottle in one hand, and bringing a finger of the other near its mouth, a strong spark came from the water, and the shock

was as violent as if the wire had remained in it, which shewed that the force did not lie in the wire. Then, to find if it resided in the water, being crouded into and condensed in it, as confin'd by the glass, which had been our former opinion, we electrified the bottle again, and, placing it on glass, drew out the wire and cork as before; then, taking up the bottle, we decanted all its water into an empty bottle, which likewise stood on glass; and taking up that other bottle, we expected, if the force resided in the" water, to find a shock from it; but there was none. We judged then, that it must either be lost in decanting, or remain in the first bottle. The latter we found to be true; for that bottle on trial gave the shock, though filled up as it stood with fresh unelectrified water from a teapot.

By a similar course of experimentation with sash glass and lead plates, he also demonstrated that the form of the glass in the bottle was immaterial, that the power resided in the glass as glass, and that the non-electrics in contact served only like the armature of a loadstone to unite the force of the several parts, and to bring them at once to any point desired; it being the property of a non-electric that the whole body instantly receives or gives what electric fire is given to, or taken from, anyone of its parts. These experiments suggested the idea of intensifying the application of electrical forces by grouping numerous electrical centres.

We made [he said] what we called an *electrical battery*, consisting of eleven panes of large sash-glass, arm'd with thin leaden plates, pasted on each side, placed vertically, and supported at two inches distance on silk cords, with thick hooks of leaden wire, one from each side, standing upright, distant from each other, and convenient communications of wire and chain, from the giving side of one pane, to the receiving side of the other; that so the whole might be charged together, and with the same labour as one single pane; and another contrivance to bring the giving sides, after charging, in contact with one long wire, and the receivers with another, which two long wires would give the force of all the plates of glass at once through the body of any animal forming the circle with them. The plates may also be discharged separately, or any number together that is required.

When the idea of the electrical battery was formed by him, Franklin was not aware that Smeaton and Bains" had previously assembled panes of glass for the purpose of giving an electrical shock.

At the time that this letter was written, Franklin had added to his electrical exploits that of electrifying a mezzotint of the King in such a manner that, if anyone attempted to take the crown off his head, he would receive a "terrible blow."

If the picture were highly charged [he said], the consequence might perhaps be as fatal as that of high treason.

The operator [he continues], who holds the picture by the upper end, where the inside of the frame is not gilt, to prevent its falling, feels nothing of the shock, and may touch the face of the picture without danger, which he pretends is a test of his loyalty. If a ring of persons take the shock among them, the experiment is called *The Conspirators*.

Another far more significant exploit was the application of electrical energy in such a way as to set an electrical Jack revolving with such force and swiftness as to carry a spitted fowl around before a fire with a motion fit for roasting.

This wheel was driven by an electrical battery, but Franklin also devised what he called a self-moving wheel that was, by a different electrical method, revolved with so much force and rapidity that he thought that it might be used for the ringing of chimes and the movement

of light-made orreries. And after observing that a thin glass bubble, about an inch in diameter, weighing only six grains, being half filled with water, partly gilt on the outside, and furnished with a wire hook, gave, when electrified, as great a shock as a man can well bear, Franklin exclaims, "How great must be the quantity (of electrical fire) in this small portion of glass! It seems as if it were of its very substance and essence. Perhaps if that due quantity of electrical fire so obstinately retained by glass, could be separated from it, it would no longer be" glass; it might lose its transparency, or its brittleness, or its elasticity."

This letter also reaches the conclusion that bodies, having less than the common quantity of electricity, repel each other, as well as those that have none.

It concludes with a lively paragraph:

Chagrined a little that we have been hitherto able to produce nothing in this way of use to mankind; and the hot weather coming on, when electrical experiments are not so agreeable, it is proposed to put an end to them for this season, somewhat humorously, in a party of pleasure on the banks of *Skuylkil*. Spirits, at the same time, are to be fired by a spark sent from side to side through the river, without any other conductor than the water; an experiment which we some time since performed, to the amazement of many. A turkey is to be killed for our dinner by the *electrical shock*, and roasted by the *electrical jack*, before a fire kindled by the *electrified bottle*; when the healths of all the famous electricians in *England, Holland, France and Germany* are to be drank in *electrified bumpers*, under the discharge of guns from the *electrical* battery.

An electrified bumper, a note to the letter explained, was a small thin glass tumbler, nearly filled with wine, and charged, which, when brought to the lips of a person, gave him a shock, if he was close-shaved, and did not breathe on the liquor. Another note states that the biggest animal that the experimenters had yet killed was a hen.

A later letter to Collinson on the phenomena of thunder-gusts takes Franklin away from the Leyden Jar of the laboratory to the stupendous batteries of the outer universe—from the point of a bodkin to the lofty natural or artificial objects, upon which lightning descends from the illimitable sky. "As electrified clouds pass over a country," he remarks, "high hills and high trees, lofty towers, spires, masts of ships, chimneys, &c., as so many prominencies and points, draw the electrical fire, and the whole" cloud discharges there." From this observation to the lightning rod was but a short step.

Another letter to Collinson in the succeeding year brings us to the lightning rod in principle if not in name. Speaking of what a sea captain had said of luminous objects, which had settled on the spintles at the topmast heads of his ship before an electrical shock, and burned like very large torches, he says:

According to my opinion, the electrical fire was then drawing off, as by points, from the cloud; the largeness of the flame betokening the great quantity of electricity in the cloud: and had there been a good wire communication from the spintle heads to the sea, that could have conducted more freely than tarred ropes, or masts of turpentine wood, I imagine there would either have been no stroke; or, if a stroke, the wire would have conducted it all into the sea without damage to the ship.

In the same letter, there is an adumbration of his grandest experiment, when he speaks of the flash from two of his jars as "our mimic lightning."

This letter also shows that with electricity Franklin had frequently imparted polarity to needles and reversed it at pleasure. Wilson, at London, he said, had failed to produce these

results because he had tried it on too large masses and with too small force. The letter also evidences the fact that he had employed the electric spark for the practical purpose of firing gunpowder.

Another letter to Collinson dated July 29, 1750, is accompanied by an additional paper on the properties and effects of the Electrical Matter. It acknowledges the debt that Franklin owed to Collinson for the glass tube and the instructions which attended it, and to the Proprietary for the generous present of a complete electrical apparatus which "that bountiful benefactor to our library," as he calls him, had made to it. The telegraph, the Marconi tower, the telephone, the electric bulb, the electric automobile and the trolley car rise up before us when we read this observation in the paper that accompanied the letter: "The beneficial uses of this electric fluid in the creation, we are not yet well acquainted with, though doubtless such there are, and those very considerable." The paper is the most important that Franklin ever wrote on electricity; containing as it does the two suggestions which, when carried into execution, made his name famous throughout the world, that is to say, his suggestion, already quoted by us at length, that houses, churches and ships might be protected by upright rods of iron, and his suggestion, already quoted by us, too, as to how the identity of lightning and electricity could be established. The point of the bodkin and the electrified shot and ball, and the mimic brightness, agility and fury of the lurking fire in the wonderful bottle had led, step by step, to two of the most splendid conceptions in the early history of electrical science.⁹⁵

With the discovery that electricity and lightning were the same thing, the real achievements of Franklin in the province of electricity came to an end. But he still continued his electrical experiments with undiminished ardor. We find him on one occasion prostrating with a single shock six persons who were so obliging as to lend" themselves to the pursuit of scientific truth. Twice he was the victim of his own inadvertence. Speaking of one of these occasions, in a letter to a friend in Boston, he said:

The flash was very great, and the crack as loud as a pistol; yet, my senses being instantly gone, I neither saw the one nor heard the other; nor did I feel the stroke on my hand, though I afterwards found it raised a round swelling where the fire entered, as big as half a pistol-bullet; by which you may judge of the quickness of the electrical fire, which by this instance seems to be greater than that of sound, light, or animal sensation.... I then felt what I know not how well to describe; a universal blow throughout my whole body from head to foot, which seemed within as well as without; after which the first thing I took notice of was a violent quick shaking of my body, which gradually remitting, my sense as gradually returned, and then I thought the bottles must be discharged, but could not conceive how, till at last I perceived the chain in my hand, and recollected what I had been about to do. That part of my hand and fingers, which held the chain, was left white, as though the blood had been driven out, and remained so eight or ten minutes after, feeling like dead flesh; and I had a numbness in my arms and the back of my neck, which continued till the next morning, but wore off. Nothing remains now of this shock, but a soreness in my

⁹⁵ The inductive process by which Franklin arrived at the identity of lightning and electricity was set forth in one of his letters to John Lining, of Charleston, dated March 18, 1755. The minutes kept by him of his experiments and observations, contained, he said, the following entry: "November 7, 1749. Electrical fluid agrees with lightning in these particulars. 1. Giving light. 2. Colour of the light. 3. Crooked direction. 4. Swift motion. 5. Being conducted by metals. 6. Crack or noise in exploding. 7. Subsisting in water or ice. 8. Rending bodies it passes through. 9. Destroying animals. 10. Melting metals. 11. Firing inflammable substances. 12. Sulphureous smell. The electric fluid is attracted by points. We do not know whether this property is in lightning. But since they agree in all particulars wherein we can already compare them, is it not probable they agree likewise in this? Let the Experiment be made."

breast-bone, which feels as if it had been bruised. I did not fall, but suppose I should have been knocked down, if I had received the stroke in my head. The whole was over in less than a minute.

On the second occasion, while making ready to give a healing shock to a paralytic, he received a charge through his own head. He did not see the flash, hear the report or feel the stroke.

When my Senses returned [he told Jan Ingenhousz], I found myself on the Floor. I got up, not knowing how that had happened. I then again attempted to discharge the Jars; but one of the Company told me they were already discharg'd," which I could not at first believe, but on Trial found it true. They told me they had not felt it, but they saw I was knock'd down by it, which had greatly surprised them. On recollecting myself, and examining my Situation, I found the Case clear. A small swelling rose on the Top of my Head, which continued sore for some Days; but I do not remember any other Effect good or bad.

One of Franklin's contemporaries, Professor Richmann, of St. Petersburg, did not fare so well; for a stroke of the lightning that he had allured from the clouds brought his life to an end. Priestley, however, seems to have regarded such a death as a form of euthanasia. At any rate, in speaking of this martyr of science in his *History of Electricity* he terms him "the justly envied Richmann."

After Franklin learned how to impound lightning, his intercourse with electricity was more familiar than ever.

In September, 1752 [he wrote to Collinson], I erected an iron rod to draw the lightning down into my house, in order to make some experiments on it, with two bells to give notice when the rod should be electrify'd: a contrivance obvious to every electrician.

I found the bells rang sometimes when there was no lightning or thunder, but only a dark cloud over the rod; that sometimes, after a flash of lightning, they would suddenly stop; and, at other times, when they had not rang before, they would, after a flash, suddenly begin to ring; that the electricity was sometimes very faint, so that, when a small spark was obtain'd, another could not be got for some time after; at other times the sparks would follow extremely quick, and once I had a continual stream from bell to bell, the size of a crow quill: Even during the same gust there were considerable variations.

In the winter following I conceived an experiment, to try whether the clouds were electrify'd *positively* or *negatively*.

The result of these experiments, conducted with Franklin's usual painstaking completeness, was the conclusion on his part that thunder-clouds are, as a rule, in a negatively" electrical state, and that, therefore, generally speaking, they do not discharge electricity upon the earth, but receive it from the earth. For the most part, he said, "*tis the earth that strikes into the clouds, and not the clouds that strike into the earth.*"

The thoroughness with which he addressed himself to the study of electricity was very marked. His investigation was as searching and minute as that of an anatomist engaged in the dissection of nervous tissue. Under his hands, the bare Leyden Jar became a teeming storehouse of instruction and amusement. He collected electricity from common objects by friction, he brought it down from the sky, he sought its properties in amber, in the tourmaline stone, in the body of the torpedo; he thought that he discerned it in the radiance of the Aurora

Borealis. He put it through all its vagaries, juggled with it, teased it, cowed it until it confessed its kinship with the tempestuous heavens. He tested its destructive effects upon hens and turkeys, its therapeutic value to paralytic patients, its efficacy as a corrective of tough meat. He even, it is said, charged the railing under his windows with it to repel loafers standing about his front door. And, in his relations to electricity, as to everything else, his purposes were always those of practical utility. In one of his papers, he admits that he cannot tell why points possess the power of drawing off the electrical fire;

nor is it of much importance to us [he adds] to know the manner in which nature executes her laws. 'Tis enough if we know the laws themselves. 'Tis of real use to know that china left in the air unsupported will fall and break; but *how* it comes to fall, and *why* it breaks, are matters of speculation. 'Tis a pleasure indeed to know them, but we can preserve our china without it.

He anticipated, or, in some instances, all but anticipated, several of the more important discoveries of modern" electrical science. He knew that, when a number of Leyden jars are connected up under certain conditions, the extent, to which each jar can be charged from a given source, varies inversely as the number of jars. For a time, he was puzzled by the fact that the light of a candle, or of a fire-coal, or of red-hot iron, would destroy the repellency between his electrified ball and shot, but that the light of the sun would not. But it was not long before he hit upon this ingenious explanation:

This different Effect probably did not arise from any difference in the light, but rather from the particles separated from the candle, being first attracted and then repelled, carrying off the electric matter with them; and from the rarefying the air, between the glowing coal or red-hot iron, and the electrised shot, through which rarefied air the electric fluid could more readily pass.

Referring to what Franklin had to say about the action of sunlight in this connection, Arthur Schuster, in his *Some Remarkable Passages in the Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, observes: "Had Franklin used a clean piece of zinc instead of iron shot he might have anticipated Hertz's discovery of the action of strong light on the discharge of gases."

In the course of one of his experiments with an electrified can, Franklin reached the conclusion that a cork, which he had lowered into the can, was not attracted to its internal surface, as it would have been to its external, because the mutual repulsion of the two inner opposite sides of the can might prevent the accumulation of an electrical atmosphere upon them. From the same experiment, the genius of Henry Cavendish deduced his law that electrical repulsion varies inversely as the square of the distance between the charges.

Instead of declining, it can truly be said that the reputation of Franklin as an electrical investigator and writer" has increased with the progress of electrical science. "We shall, I am sure," remarks Professor J. J. Thomson in his *Electricity and Matter*, "be struck by the similarity between some of the views which we are led to take by the results of the most recent researches, with those enunciated by Franklin in the very infancy of the subject." Nor should we omit a tribute of Dr. William Garnett, in his *Heroes of Science*, in regard to the statements in Franklin's first letters to Collinson. "They are," he says, "perfectly consistent with the views held by Cavendish and by Clerk Maxwell, and, though the phraseology is not that of modern text-books, the statements themselves can hardly be improved upon to-day."

If Franklin achieved a higher degree of success in the electrical than in any other scientific field, it was partly, at any rate, because he never again had the opportunity to give such continuous attention to scientific pursuits. To him this was at times a source of very great disappointment. In one of his letters to Beccaria, dated Sept. 21, 1768, he tells the latter that,

preoccupied as he was, he had constantly cherished the hope of returning home, where he could find leisure to resume the philosophical studies that he had shamefully put off from time to time. In a letter, some eleven years later, from Paris, to the same correspondent, he said that he was then prevented by similar distractions from pursuing those studies in which he always found the highest satisfaction, and that he was grown so old as hardly to hope for a return of the leisure and tranquillity, so necessary for philosophical disquisitions. To Sir Joseph Banks he was inspired some years later, by recent astronomical discoveries, made under the patronage of the Royal Society, to write: "I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon, since I cannot have the happiness of knowing what will be known 100 years hence," Indeed, to him, leisure, whether only the seclusion of a thirty-day voyage across the Atlantic, or" the final cessation of public life, was but another term for recurrence to his scientific predilections. When he received his leave from Congress to return home from Paris, he wrote joyously to Ingenhousz: "I shall now be free of Politicks for the Rest of my Life. Welcome again my dear Philosophical Amusements." There was, to use his own expression, still too much flesh on his bones for his countrymen to allow him any time except for political experiments; but, for proof of the eager interest that he felt in science, and of the prominent position, that he occupied in the scientific world of America, until the last, we need go no further than the fact that, when he died, the meetings of the American Philosophical Society had, for some time, been held at his home in Philadelphia.

How far Franklin might have added to his reputation as a man of science, if he had not become engrossed by political duties and cares, is mere matter of surmise. But there can be no doubt that he was eminently fitted in many respects for scientific inquiry. The scientific temperament he possessed in the very highest degree. He loved the truth too much to allow the workings of human weakness in himself or others to deface its fair features. In reporting to Collinson the electrical achievements, which crowned him with such just renown, he almost invariably spoke of them as if they were the joint achievements of a group of collaborators, of whom he was but one. The generous alacrity, with which he credits to his friends Hopkinson, Kinnersley, or Syng exclusively special discoveries or inventions, made by them, shows conclusively enough how little this was true. There is no reason to believe that his letters to Collinson on electricity would ever have been published but for the unsolicited initiative of Dr. Fothergill and Collinson; or that they would ever have been translated into French but for the spontaneous persuasion that Buffon brought to bear upon D'Alibard. In a letter to Collinson, after expressing distrust of an" hypothesis, advanced by him in former letters to the same correspondent, he declares that he is ashamed to have expressed himself in so positive a manner. Indeed, he said, he must request Collinson not to expose those letters, or, if he communicated them to any of his friends, at least to conceal the name of the author. His attitude towards his scientific triumphs was, when not that of entire self-effacement, always that of unaffected humility.

I am indebted for your preceding letter [he wrote in his forty-seventh year to John Perkins] but business sometimes obliges one to postpone philosophical amusements. Whatever I have wrote of that kind, are really, as they are entitled, but *Conjectures* and *Suppositions*; which ought always to give place, when careful observation militates against them. I own I have too strong a penchant to the building of hypotheses; they indulge my natural indolence: I wish I had more of your patience and accuracy in making observations, on which, alone, true philosophy can be founded.

Equally candid and noble are other observations in a subsequent letter to the same correspondent. Referring to certain objections, made by Perkins to his theory of water spouts, he observed:

Nothing certainly can be more improving to a Searcher into Nature, than Objections judiciously made to his Opinions, taken up perhaps too hastily: For such Objections oblige him to re-study the Point, consider every Circumstance carefully, compare Facts, make Experiments, weigh Arguments, and be slow in drawing Conclusions. And hence a sure Advantage results; for he either confirms a Truth, before too lightly supported; or discovers an Error, and receives Instruction from the Objector.

In this View I consider the Objections and Remarks you sent me, and thank you for them sincerely.

When he found that he was in error, it cost him no struggle to recant. For a while he believed the sea to be” the grand source of lightning, and built up an imposing fabric of conclusions upon the belief; but he did not hesitate afterwards to admit that he had embraced this opinion too hastily. The same thing is true of the opinion that he held for a time, that the progress of a ship westward, across the Atlantic, is retarded by the diurnal motion of the earth. He supposed that the melting brought about by the action of lightning was a cold fusion until holes burnt in a floor by portions of a molten bell wire convinced him that this was not so.

I was too easily led into that error [he said] by accounts given even in philosophical books, and from remote ages downwards, of melting money in purses, swords in scabbards, etc. without burning the inflammable matters that were so near those melted metals. But men are, in general, such careless observers, that a philosopher can not be too much on his guard in crediting their relations of things extraordinary, and should never build an hypothesis on anything but clear facts and experiments, or it will be in danger of soon falling, as this does, like a house of cards.

In one of his letters to Collinson, he declared that, even though future discoveries should prove that certain conjectures of his were not wholly right, yet they ought in the meantime to be of some use by stirring up the curious to make more experiments and occasion more exact disquisitions. Following out the same thought in another letter to Collinson he concluded: “You are at liberty to communicate this paper to whom you please; it being of more importance that knowledge should increase, than that your friend should be thought an accurate philosopher.” In a letter to John Lining, in which he described the experiment from which Cavendish deduced the law of which we have spoken, he observed:

I find a frank acknowledgement of one’s ignorance is not only the easiest way to get rid of a difficulty, but the likeliest” way to obtain information, and therefore I practise it: I think it an honest policy. Those who affect to be thought to know everything, and so undertake to explain everything often remain long ignorant of many things that others could and would instruct them in, if they appeared less conceited.

The fact is that Franklin had such a keen sense of the dignity and invincibility of truth that he could not be induced to enter into any personal controversy about it. His feelings with regard to such controversies are pointedly expressed in the *Autobiography* in connection with the attack made by the Abbé Nollet upon his electrical experiments.

I once purpos’d [he said] answering the abbé, and actually began the answer; but, on consideration that my writings contain’d a description of experiments which anyone might repeat and verify, and if not to be verifi’d, could not be defended; or of observations offer’d as conjectures, and not delivered dogmatically, therefore not laying me under any obligation to defend them; and reflecting that a dispute between two persons, writing in different languages, might be lengthened greatly by mistranslations, and thence misconceptions of one another’s meaning, much of one of the abbé’s letters being founded on an error in the translation, I concluded to let my

papers shift for themselves, believing it was better to spend what time I could spare from public business in making new experiments, than in disputing about those already made.

But in this instance, too, after all, he acted upon the principle, stated in one of his letters to Cadwallader Colden, that he who removes a prejudice, or an error from our minds contributes to their beauty, as he would do to that of our faces who should clear them of a wart or a wen. He went through his experiments again, and satisfied himself that the Abbé had not shaken his positions. At one time, when he was hesitating as to whether he should reply to him, he heard that D'Alibard was preparing to do so. "Perhaps," he wrote to his friend, James Bowdoin, "it may then appear unnecessary for me to do anything farther in it. And will not one's vanity be more gratified in seeing one's adversary confuted by a disciple, than even by one's self?" When Wilson published a pamphlet, contending that lightning rods should be blunt rather than pointed, he simply observed, "I have not answered it, being averse to Disputes."

Not only his temperament but his general mental attitude was instinctively scientific. As we have seen, while Whitefield's other auditors were standing mute and spellbound, he was carefully computing the distance that the words of the orator would carry. As we have also seen, when his soldiers were cutting down the giant pines at Gnadenhutten, he had his watch out, deep in his observation of the time that it took them to fell a tree. When his friend, Small, complained of deafness, he wrote to him that he had found by an experiment at midnight that, by putting his thumb and fingers behind his ear, and pressing it out and enlarging it as it were with the hollow of his hand, he could hear the tick of a watch at the distance of forty-five feet which was barely audible at a distance of twenty feet without these aids. Even in his relations to the simplest concerns of life, he had always the eye of a man of science to weight, measure, dimension and distance. If anyone wishes to see how easily he reduced everything to its scientific principles, let him read Franklin's letter to Oliver Neave, who thought that it was too late in life for him to learn to swim. With the confidence bred by a proper sense of the specific gravity of the human body as compared with that of water, Franklin said, there was no reason why a human being should not swim at the first trial. If Neave would only wade out into a body of water, until it came up to his breast and by a cast of his hand sink an egg to the bottom, between him and the shore, where it would be visible, but could not be reached except by diving, and then endeavor to recover it, he would be surprised to find what a buoyant thing water was.

Franklin also had all the inquisitiveness of a born philosopher. The winds, the birds, the fish, the celestial phenomena brought to his attention on his first voyage from England, the sluggish movement of his ship on his voyage to England in 1757, the temperature and movement of the Gulf Stream, the social and religious characteristics of the Moravians, Indian traits and habits, the still flies in their bath of Madeira wine—all excited his insatiable curiosity, and started him off on interesting trains of observation or reflection.

He was in the 78th year of his age, when, in the sight of fifty thousand people, one of the balloons recently invented by the Montgolfiers, and inflated with gas, produced by pouring oil of vitriol on iron filings, ascended from the Champs de Mars, shining brightly in the sun during the first stages of its ascent, then dwindling until it appeared scarcely larger than an orange, and then melting away in the clouds that had never before been invaded by such a visitant. But so fresh still was his interest in every triumph of human ingenuity, that it required a long letter to Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, supplemented by two postscripts, to disburthen his mind of the sensations and thoughts excited by the thrilling spectacle. Mingled in this letter with many precise details of size, weight and

distance are the speculations of the Parisians with respect to the practical uses to which the toy might be put. Some believed that, now that men might be supported in the air, nothing was wanted but some light handy instruments to give and direct motion. Others believed that a running footman, or a horse, slung and suspended under such a globe, so as to diminish the weight of their feet on the ground to perhaps eight or ten pounds, might, with a fair wind, run in a" straight line across country as fast as that wind, and over hedges, ditches and even waters. Still other fantasies were that in time such globes might be kept anchored in the air for the purpose of preserving game, or converting water into ice; or might be turned to pecuniary profit as a means of giving recreation-seekers a chance, at an altitude of a mile, to see far below them a vast stretch of the terrestrial surface. Already, said Franklin, one philosopher, M. Pilâtre de Rozier, had applied to the Academy for the privilege of ascending in a larger Montgolfier in order to make certain scientific experiments. The peasants at Gonesse, however, who had seen the balloon, cut adrift on the Champs de Mars, fall to the earth, had regarded it with very different feelings from the citizens of Paris. Frightened, and conceiving from its bounding a little, when it touched the ground, that there was some living animal in it, they had attacked it with stones and knives, so that it was much mangled.

With a subsequent letter to Dr. Price, Franklin enclosed a small balloon, which his grandson had filled with inflammable air the night before, and which, after mounting to the ceiling of Franklin's chamber, had remained rolling about there for some time. "If a Man," this letter suggestively asks, "should go up with one of the large ones, might there not be some mechanical Contrivance to compress the Globe at pleasure; and thereby incline it to descend, and let it expand when he inclines to rise again?" The same eager curiosity about the balloon was manifested by Franklin in many other later letters. Another great one, he informed Banks, had gone up from Versailles. It was supposed to have been inflated with air, heated by burning straw, and to have risen about two hundred toises; but did not continue long at that height, and, after being wafted in a horizontal direction by the wind, descended gently, as the air in it grew cooler. "So vast a Bulk," said Franklin, "when it began to rise so" majestically in the Air, struck the Spectators with Surprise and Admiration. The Basket contain'd a Sheep, a Duck & a Cock, who except the Cock receiv'd no hurt by the fall." Another balloon of about five feet in diameter, the same letter stated, had been sent up about one o'clock in the morning with a large lanthorn under it by the Duke de Crillon at an entertainment, given by him, during the preceding week, in the Bois de Boulogne in honor of the birth of two Spanish princes. These were but a few of many recent ascensions. Most interesting of all, however, a new balloon, designed by Messieurs Charles and Robert, who were men of science and mechanical dexterity, was to carry up a man.

Another balloon, described by Franklin in one of his letters to Banks, was open at the bottom, and was fed with heated air from a grate, fixed in the middle of the opening, which was kept replenished with faggots and sheaves of straw by men, posted in a wicker gallery, attached to the outside of the lower part of the structure. By regulating the amount of fire in the grate, the balloon could be given an upward or downward direction at pleasure.

It was thought, Franklin said, that a balloon of this type, because of the rapidity and small expense, with which it could be inflated, might be made useful for military purposes.

Still another balloon described by Franklin in the same letter was one which was to be first filled with "permanently elastic inflammable air," and then closed. It was twenty-six feet in diameter, and made of gores of red and white silk, which presented a beautiful appearance. There was a very handsome triumphal car, to be suspended from it, in which two brothers, the Messrs. Robert, were to ascend with a table for convenience in jotting down their thermometric and other observations. There was no telling, Franklin declared, how far

aeronautic improvements” might be pushed. A few months before, the idea of witches riding through the air on a broomstick, and that of philosophers upon a bag of smoke would have appeared equally impossible and ridiculous. The machines, however, he believed, would always be subject to be driven by the winds, though perhaps mechanic art might find easy means of giving them progressive motion in a calm, and of slanting them a little in the wind. English philosophy was too bashful, and should be more emulous in this field of competition. If, in France, they did a foolish thing, they were the first to laugh at it themselves, and were almost as much pleased with a *bon mot* or a good *chanson*, that ridiculed well the disappointment of the project, as they might have been with its success.

The experiment might be attended with important consequences that no one could foresee.

Beings of a frank and—nature far superior to ours [the letter continued] have not disdained to amuse themselves with making and launching balloons, otherwise we should never have enjoyed the light of those glorious objects that rule our day and night, nor have had the pleasure of riding round the sun ourselves upon the balloon we now inhabit.

In due course, the Messrs. Robert, accompanied by M. Charles, a professor of experimental philosophy, and an enthusiastic student of aeronautics, made their perilous venture, which was likewise fully chronicled by Franklin. The spectators, he said, were infinite, crowding about the Tuileries, on the quays and bridges, in the fields and streets, and at the windows, and on the roofs, of houses. The device of stimulating flagging ascent by dropping sand bags from the car was one of the features of this incident, and so was the device of protecting the envelope of the balloon from rupture by covering it with a net, as well as that of lowering it by letting a part of its contents escape through a valve controlled by a cord.”

Between one and two o’clock [Franklin’s narrative states] all eyes were gratified with seeing it rise majestically from among the trees, and ascend gradually above the buildings, a most beautiful spectacle. When it was about two hundred feet high, the brave adventurers held out and waved a little white pennant, on both sides their car, to salute the spectators who returned loud claps of applause.

When Franklin last saw the vanishing form of this balloon, it appeared no bigger than a walnut. The experiment proved a most prosperous one. From first to last the aerial navigators retained perfect command of their air-ship, descending, when they pleased, by letting some of the air in it escape, and rising, when they pleased, by discharging sand; and at one time skimming over a field so low as to be able to talk to some laborers. Pleased as Franklin was with the experiment, he wrote to Henry Laurens that he yet feared that the machine would hardly become a common carriage in his time, though, being the easiest of all *voitures*, it would be extremely convenient to him, now that his malady forbade him the use of the old ones over a pavement. The idea, however, was such an agreeable one to him that, when he returned to Philadelphia, he wrote to his friend Jean Baptiste Le Roy that he sometimes wished that he had brought a balloon from France with him sufficiently large to raise him from the ground, and to permit him, without discomfort from his stone, to be led around in his novel conveyance by a string, attached to it, and held by an attendant on foot.

On the whole, it appeared to Franklin that the invention of the balloon was a thing of great importance.

Convincing sovereigns of the Folly of Wars [he wrote to Ingenhousz] may perhaps be one Effect of it; since it will be impracticable for the most potent of them to guard his Dominions. Five thousand Balloons, capable of raising two Men each could not cost more than Five Ships of the Line; and” where is the Prince who can afford so to cover

his Country with Troops for its Defence, as that Ten Thousand Men descending from the Clouds might not in many places do an infinite deal of mischief, before a Force could be brought together to repel them?

But nothing happened in Franklin's time, nor has happened since, to warrant the belief that human flying-devices of any sort will ever be free enough from danger to human life to be a really useful vehicle of transportation in times of peace. So far their principal value has been during war, when human safety has little to choose between the earth and the sky, but it is fair to say that Franklin would have loathed war even more deeply than he did, if he could have lived to see them in the form of aeroplane or dirigible, making their way through the air like winged monsters of the antediluvian past, and dropping devilish agencies of death and desolation upon helpless innocence, and the fairest monuments of human industry and art. Poor M. Pilâtre de Rozier, whom we have already mentioned, and who was no less a person than the Professor of Chemistry, at the *Athénée Royale*, of which he was the founder, fell with a companion, from an altitude of one thousand toises to the rocky coast near *Boulogne-sur-Mer*, and was, as well as his companion, dashed to pieces. Since his time the discharioted Phaetons, who have fallen from the upper levels of the atmosphere, even when not engaged in war, with the same fearful result, have been numerous enough to constitute a ghastly necrology. Nor, it would appear, was the peril under the conditions of aerial navigation in its earliest stages limited to the aeronaut himself. In dissuading Ingenhousz from attempting a balloon experiment, Franklin said that it was a serious thing to draw out from their affairs all the inhabitants of a great city and its environs, and that a disappointment made them angry. At Bordeaux lately, a person, who pretended to send up a balloon, and had received" money from many people, not being able to make it rise, the populace were so exasperated that they pulled down his house, and had like to have killed him. Anyone, who has ever heard the execrations hurled at the head of a baseball umpire in the United States, when one of his decisions has failed to command general assent, will experience no difficulty, we are sure, in understanding the force of the impulse that provoked this outbreak of Gallic excitement.

The enthusiasm, aroused in Franklin by the balloon, is not more noticeable than his brooding desire to find some practical use for it. The visionary speculation, which seeks to take the moon in its teeth, was no part of his character. He grew no orchids in the air. To use his homely words in a letter to Charles Thomson, he made no shoes for feet that he had never measured. Every conclusion, every hypothesis had to be built upon a basis of patient observation and gradual induction; every invention or discovery had to have some useful application.

At an earlier period than that of the discovery of the balloon, his inquisitive spirit had led him to the study of marsh-gas and the pacifying effect of oil upon troubled waters. In 1764, he had reason to believe that a friend of his had succeeded in igniting the surface of a river in New Jersey, after stirring up the mud beneath it, but his scientific friends in England found it difficult to believe that he had not been imposed upon; and the Royal Society withheld from publication among its Transactions a paper on the experiment, written by Dr. Finley, the President of Princeton College, and read before it. Franklin twice tried it in England without success, and he prosecuted his investigation with such energy and persistency that he finally contracted an intermittent fever by bending over the stagnant water of a deep ditch, and inhaling its foul breath, or, as would now be said, by being bitten by a mosquito hovering about it."

In 1757, when on one of the ships, bound on Lord Loudon's fool's errand to Louisburg, he observed that the water in the wake of two of them was remarkably smooth, while that in the wake of the others was ruffled by the wind, which was blowing freshly, and, when he spoke

of the circumstance to his captain, the latter answered somewhat contemptuously, as if to a person ignorant of what everybody else knew, "The cooks have, I suppose, been just emptying their greasy water through the scuppers, which has greased the sides of those ships a little." The incident, and what he had read in Pliny about the practice among the seamen of Pliny's time of calming rough seas with oil, made him resolve to test the matter by experiment at the first opportunity. This intention was afterwards strengthened, when he was again at sea in 1762, by the "wonderful quietness" of oil, resting on the surface of an agitated bed of water in the glass lamp swinging in his cabin, and by the supposition of an old sea captain that the phenomenon was in keeping with the practice, pursued by the Bermudians, of putting oil on water, when they would strike fish. By the same captain, he was told that he had heard that fishermen at Lisbon were in the habit of emptying a bottle or two of oil on the sea, when the breakers on the bar at that port were running too high for their boats to cross it in safety. From another person, he learnt that, when divers in the Mediterranean needed more light for their business, they spewed out from their mouths now and then a small quantity of oil, which, rising to the surface, smoothed out its refracting waves. This additional information supplied his curiosity with still further fuel. It all ended in his dropping a little oil from a cruet on a large pond at Clapham. The fluid spread with surprising swiftness over the surface, on which it had fallen; but he found that he had made the mistake of dropping it on the leeward, instead of the windward, side of the pond. When this mistake was repaired, and a teaspoonful of oil was poured on its windward side, where the waves were in an incipient state, and the oil could not be driven back on the shore, an instant calmness diffused itself over a space several yards square, which extended gradually until it reached the lee side of the pond, making all that quarter of it, perhaps half an acre, as smooth as a looking-glass. After this, he took with him, whenever he went into the country, a little oil, in the upper hollow joint of his bamboo cane for the purpose of repeating his experiment, whenever he had a chance to do so, and, when he did repeat it, it was usually with success.

Far from being so successful, however, was the experiment when, on a blustering, unpleasant day, he attempted, with the co-operation of Sir Joseph Banks and other friends, to still the surf on a shore at Portsmouth with oil poured continually on the sea, at some distance away, through a hole, somewhat bigger than a goose quill, in the cork of a large stone bottle, though the effusion did flatten out a considerable tract of the sea to such an extent that a wherry, making for Portsmouth, seemed to turn into that tract of choice, and to use it from end to end as a piece of turnpike road. All this is described by Franklin in a letter to William Brownrigg, dated November 7, 1773, in which he cited some other illustrations of the allaying effect of oil on waves besides those that we have mentioned, and developed the philosophy of the subject with that incomparable clarity of his, not unlike the action of oil itself in subduing refractions of light.

Now I imagine [he says] that the wind, blowing over water thus covered with a film of oil, can not easily *catch* upon it, so as to raise the first wrinkles, but slides over it, and leaves it smooth as it finds it. It moves a little the oil indeed, which being between it and the water, serves it to slide with, and prevents friction, as oil does between those parts of a machine" that would otherwise rub hard together. Hence the oil dropped on the windward side of a pond proceeds gradually to leeward, as may be seen by the smoothness it carries with it, quite to the opposite side. For the wind being thus prevented from raising the first wrinkles, that I call the elements of waves, cannot produce waves, which are to be made by continually acting upon, and enlarging those elements, and thus the whole pond is calmed.

And the water in which the Bermudian struck his fish is not more limpid than these observations suggested by the Portsmouth experiment:

I conceive, that the operation of oil on water is, first, to prevent the raising of new waves by the wind; and, secondly, to prevent its pushing those before raised with such force, and consequently their continuance of the same repeated height, as they would have done, if their surface were not oiled. But oil will not prevent waves being raised by another power, by a stone, for instance, falling into a still pool; for they then rise by the mechanical impulse of the stone, which the greasiness on the surrounding water cannot lessen or prevent, as it can prevent the winds catching the surface and raising it into waves. Now waves once raised, whether by the wind or any other power, have the same mechanical operation, by which they continue to rise and fall, as a *pendulum* will continue to swing a long time after the force ceases to act by which the motion was first produced; that motion will, however, cease in time; but time is necessary. Therefore, though oil spread on an agitated sea may weaken the push of the wind on those waves whose surfaces are covered by it, and so, by receiving less fresh impulse, they may gradually subside; yet a considerable time, or a distance through which they will take time to move, may be necessary to make the effect sensible on any shore in a diminution of the surf; for we know, that, when wind ceases suddenly, the waves it has raised do not as suddenly subside, but settle gradually, and are not quite down till after the wind has ceased. So, though we should, by oiling them, take off the effect of wind on waves already raised, it is not to be expected that those waves should be instantly levelled. The motion they have received will, for some time, continue; and, if the shore is not far distant, they arrive there so soon, that their effect upon it will not be visibly diminished.

Nor was it on Clapham Pond and at Portsmouth alone that Franklin, when in England, tested the tranquillizing properties of oil. He performed the same experiment on Derwentwater and a small pond near the house of John Smeaton, the celebrated engineer, at Austhorpe Lodge; and also on a large sheet of water at the head of the Green Park. And the idea that there was something almost supernatural about his quick insight and fertility of conception, of which we find more than one trace in the utterances of his contemporaries, is suggested in an interesting manner in the account left to us by the Abbé Morellet of one of these experiments, which he witnessed when Colonel Barre, Dr. Hawkesworth, David Garrick, Franklin and himself happened to be guests of Lord Shelburne at Wycombe in 1772.

It is true [the Abbé says] it was not upon the waves of the sea but upon those of a little stream which flowed through the park at Wycombe. A fresh breeze was ruffling the water. Franklin ascended a couple of hundred paces from the place where we stood, and simulating the grimaces of a sorcerer, he shook three times upon the stream a cane which he carried in his hand. Directly the waves diminished and soon the surface was smooth as a mirror.

On one occasion, William Small wrote to him from Birmingham that Matthew Boulton had “astonished the rural philosophers exceedingly by calming the waves *à la Franklin*.”

Struck, when travelling on a canal in Holland, with the statement of a boatman that their boat was going slow because the season had been a dry one, and the water in the canal was not as deep as usual, Franklin, by experiment” with a trough and a little boat borrowed for the purpose, established the fact that the friction caused by the displacement by a moving boat of shallow water is measurably greater than that caused by the displacement by such a boat of deeper water. Under like conditions in other respects, the difference, he concluded, in a distance of four leagues, was the difference between five and four hours.

A conversation with Captain Folger, of Nantucket, produced far more important consequences. Influenced by what the captain told him of the knowledge that the Nantucket

whalers had acquired of the retarding effect of the Gulf Stream upon navigation, Franklin induced him to plot for him the dimensions, course and swiftness of the stream, and to give him written directions as to how ships, bound from the Newfoundland Banks to New York, might avoid it, and at the same time keep clear of certain dangerous banks and shoals. The immediate object of Franklin was to procure information for the English Post Office that would enable the mail packets between England and America to shorten their voyages. At his instance, Captain Folger's drawing was engraved on the old chart of the Atlantic at Mount and Page's, Tower Hill, and copies of it were distributed among the captains of the Falmouth packets. Ever afterwards the Gulf Stream was a favorite field of investigation to him, when at sea, and its phenomena were mastered by him with remarkable thoroughness. It was generated, he conjectured, by the great accumulation of water on the eastern coast of America created by the trade winds which constantly blew there. He found that it was always warmer than the sea on each side of it, and that it did not sparkle at night; and he assigned to its influence the tornadoes, waterspouts and fogs by which its flow was attended.

Franklin also possessed to a striking degree the inventive capacity which is such a valuable qualification for experimental philosophy. We have already seen how ready his mechanical skill was in supplying printing deficiencies. Speaking of the pulse glasses, made by Nairne, in which water could be brought to the boiling point with the heat of the hand, he tells us:

I plac'd one of his glasses, with the elevated end against this hole (a hole that he had opened through the wainscot in the seat of his window for the access of outside air); and the bubbles from the other end, which was in a warmer situation, were continually passing day and night, to the no small surprize of even philosophical spectators.

As he sat in his library at Philadelphia, in his last years, he was surrounded by various objects conceived by his own ingenuity. The seat of his chair became a step-ladder, when reversed, and to its arm was fastened a fan that he could work with a slight motion of his foot. Against his bookcase rested "the long arm" with which he lifted down the books on its upper shelves. The hours, minutes and seconds were told for him by a clock, of his own invention, with only three wheels and two pinions, in which even James Ferguson, mathematician as he was, had to confess that he experienced difficulty in making improvements. The very bifocal glasses, now in such general use, that he wore were a triumph of his own quick wit. Describing this invention of his in a letter to George Whatley, he said:

I therefore had formerly two Pair of Spectacles, which I shifted occasionally, as in travelling I sometimes read, and often wanted to regard the Prospects. Finding this Change troublesome, and not always sufficiently ready, I had the Glasses cut, and half of each kind associated in the same Circle.... By this means, as I wear my Spectacles constantly, I have only to move my Eyes up or down, as I want to see distinctly far or near, the proper Glasses being always ready. This I find more particularly convenient since my being in France, the Glasses that serve me best at Table to see what I eat, not being the best to see the Faces of those on the other Side" of the Table who speak to me; and when one's Ears are not well accustomed to the Sounds of a Language, a Sight of the Movements in the Features of him that speaks helps to explain; so that I understand French better by the help of my Spectacles.

The shrinking that a mahogany box, given to him in England, underwent, when subjected to the atmospheric conditions of America, suggested a hygrometer to him which Nairne afterwards constructed in accordance with his plans.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ The standing of Franklin as an inventor would be better established if he had not been so resolute in his unwillingness to take out patents upon his inventions. Besides the various inventions mentioned by us in the

His mind seems to have had no torpid moments, except, perhaps, when some Congressional orator was speaking. When, in early life, he had nothing else better to do, he would address himself to making magic squares and circles as intricate as Rosamond's walk. "He took it into his head," James Logan wrote to Collinson, "to think" of *magical squares*, in which he outdid Frenicle himself, who published above eighty pages in folio on that subject alone." Not willing to be outdone even by Stifelius, Franklin drew a square of such extraordinary numerical properties that not only did the numbers on all the rows and diagonals on its face total 2056, but the sum of the numbers on every group of 16 smaller squares on its face, when revealed through a hole in a piece of paper, moved backwards and forwards over its face, equalled precisely 2056 too. He likewise drew a

magick circle, consisting of 8 concentric circles, and 8 radial rows, filled with a series of numbers, from 12 to 75, inclusive, so disposed as that the numbers of each circle or each radial row, being added to the central number 12, they made exactly 360, the number of degrees in a circle; and this circle had, moreover, all the properties of the square of 8.

Both of these conceits were duly forwarded to Collinson and, with regard to the square of 16, Franklin wrote to him playfully that he made no question but that he would readily allow that it was the most magically magical of any magic square ever made by any magician. From the terms of this letter, it is plain that the practical intellect of Franklin was a little ashamed of these feats as but *difficiles nugæ*, but his misgivings were somewhat soothed by the suggestion of Logan that they might not be altogether useless if they produced by practice an habitual readiness and exactness in mathematical disquisitions.

Hardly more profitable than the magic squares but indicative, too, of the same mental initiative, was the scheme formed by Franklin for a new alphabet and a reformed mode of spelling. In the new alphabet, the first effort was to arrange the letters in what was supposed to be a more natural order than that of the old alphabet by beginning with the simple sounds framed by the breath with no or very little help from the tongue, teeth and" lips, and proceeding gradually forward from sounds, produced at the back of the mouth, to the sound produced by closing the lips, that is *m*. The *c* of the old alphabet was omitted, *k* being left to supply its hard sound, and *s* its soft, and *k* being also left to supply the place of *q*, and with an *s* added, the place of *x*. *W* as well as *q* and *x* was also dismissed from service, the vowel *u*, sounded as *oo*, being relied upon to perform its function. *Y* also went by the board, *i* taking its place, where used singly, and two vowels, where used as a diphthong. *J* was superseded by an entirely new symbol, shaped something like a small *h*, and sounded as *ish*, when used singly, but subserving various other offices, when conjoined with *d*, *t* and *z*. As a whole, the new alphabet was so systematized that the sound of any letter, vowel or consonant was always the

text, he was the father of other valuable mechanical conceptions. The first hint of the art of engraving upon earthenware appears to have originated with him. Moved by his constant desire to inculcate moral truths, he suggested about 1753 to a correspondent the idea of engraving from copper plates on square chimney tiles "moral prints"; "which," to use his words, "being about our Chimneys, and constantly in the Eyes of Children when by the Fireside, might give Parents an Opportunity, in explaining them, to impress moral Sentiments." He also appears to have anticipated the Argand burner. A description has come down to us of a lamp devised by him which, with only three small wicks, had a lustre equal to six candles. It was fitted with a pipe that supplied fresh and cool air to its lights. If Franklin did not invent, he was the first to communicate to his friend, Mr. Viny, the wheel manufacturer at Tenderden, Kent, the art of flexing timber used in making wheels for vehicles. But of few things did Franklin take a gloomier view than the fate of the inventor as his observations in a letter to John Lining, dated March 18, 1755, demonstrate. "One would not," he said, "of all faculties or qualities of the mind, wish, for a friend, or a child, that he should have that of invention. For his attempts to benefit mankind in that way, however well imagined, if they do not succeed, expose him, though very unjustly, to general ridicule and contempt; and, if they do succeed, to envy, robbery, and abuse."

same, wherever it occurred, or whatever its alphabetical collocation. Nor did the new alphabet contain any silent letters, or fail to provide a letter for every distinct sound in the language. The difference between short and long vowels was compassed by a single vowel where short, and a double one, where long. For illustration, “mend” remained “mend” and “did,” “did,” but “remained” reappeared as “remeened,” and “deed” as “diid.” Typographical obstacles prevent us from bringing to the eye of the reader a specimen of the reformed alphabet and spelling as they looked on a printed page. They, of course, issued from the mind of Franklin as stillborn as his reformed Episcopal Prayer Book. His only proselytes appear to have been Polly, who even wrote a letter to him in the strange forms, and his loving sister, Jane, who was delighted to have another language with which to express her affection for him. Our world is one in which some things are made but others make themselves, and, however arbitrary their character, will not allow themselves to be made over, even at the behest of such merciless rationalism as that of Franklin.”

In the latter part of Franklin’s life, Noah Webster, the lexicographer, also formed a scheme for the reform of the alphabet, and Franklin had the pleasure of writing to him, “Our Ideas are so nearly similar, that I make no doubt of our easily agreeing on the Plan.” Several years later, Webster, in his *Dissertations on the English Language*, stated that Franklin had compiled a dictionary, based upon his own reformatory system, and procured the types for printing it, but, finding himself too old to prosecute his design, had offered both manuscript and types to him. “Whether this project, so deeply interesting to this country,” Webster said, “will ever be effected; or whether it will be defeated by insolence and prejudice, remains for my countrymen to determine.”

Another thing upon which the ingenuity of Franklin was brought to bear, as the reader has already been told, was the Armonica. In his letter to Beccaria, extolling its merits, he describes it with a wealth of detail, not only thoroughly in keeping with his knack for mechanics, but showing that to music as to everything else, that won the favor of his intellect, he brought the ken of a man of science. The letter concludes with a dulcet compliment, which harmonizes well with its subject: “In honour of your musical language (the Italian), I have borrowed from it the name of this instrument, calling it the Armonica.” In one of his papers, he drew up instructions for the proper use of the instrument which nothing but the most intimate familiarity with its operation could have rendered possible.

Admiration has often been expended upon the acuteness with which Franklin, in a letter to Lord Kames, accounted for the pleasure afforded by the old Scotch tunes, as compared with the pleasure afforded by the difficult music of his day, which, he said, was of the same nature as that awakened by the feats of tumblers and rope-dancers. The reason was this. The old Scotch melodies were composed by the minstrels of former days, to be played on the harp,” accompanied by the voice. The harp was strung with wire (which gives a sound of long continuance) and had no contrivance like that in the modern harpsichord, by which the sound of the preceding note could be stopped, the moment a succeeding note began. To avoid *actual* discord, it was therefore necessary that the succeeding emphatic note should be a chord with the preceding, as their sounds must exist at the same time. Hence arose that beauty in those tones that had so long pleased, and would please forever, though men scarce knew why.

The most useful invention of Franklin was what came to be known as the Franklin stove. With modifications, it is still in use, and the essay written on it by Franklin, entitled *An Account of the New-invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces*, is one of the best illustrations of the capacity of his scientific genius to adapt itself to the hardest and barest offices that human comfort and convenience could impose upon it with a nicety and accuracy of trained insight

and touch worthy of the cleverest journeyman, a command of scientific principles to be expected only of a professional student, and a gift of clear, lively expression which reminds us of the remark of Stella that Dean Swift could write agreeably even about a broomstick. The principle upon which the Franklin stove was constructed was that of making the heat from its open fireplace, after first ascending to its top, descend in such a manner at its back, before passing off into the chimney, as to diffuse by radiation through the room, in which it stood, a large part of its warmth. The essay enumerates the different methods of heating rooms then in use: the great, open, smoky chimney-place, that the unremitting labor of one man could scarce keep supplied with fuel, and that gave out little more heat for human warmth than a fire outdoors; this chimney-place reduced to a smaller size with jambs, and free, to a great extent from the reproach of smokiness, yet, with its contraction setting up strong currents of" whistling and howling air, which reminded Franklin of the Spanish proverb,

"If the Wind blows on you thro' a Hole,
Make your Will, and take Care of your Soul";

the expensive and intricate French fireplaces with hollow backs, hearths and jambs of iron; the Holland stove, which shut off the sight of the fire, and could not conveniently be used for any purposes except those of warmth; the German stove which was subject to very much the same disadvantages as the Holland stove; and charcoal fires in pots which emitted disagreeable and dangerous fumes and were used chiefly in the shops of handicraftsmen. From the shortcomings of all these methods of heating rooms, the Franklin stove, its inventor contended, was exempt. It diffused heat equally throughout a whole room; if you sat in an apartment warmed by it, you were not scorched before, while you were frozen behind; nor were you exposed to the drafts from which so many women, particularly, got colds in the head, rheums and defluxions that fell upon their jaws and gums, and destroyed early many a fine set of teeth in the northern colonies, and from which so many persons of both sexes contracted coughs, catarrhs, toothaches, fevers, pleurisies and other diseases. It kept a sick room supplied with a fresh and yet properly tempered flow of pure air. It conserved heat. It economized fuel. With it, Franklin said, he could make his room twice as warm as it used to be with a quarter of the wood that he used to consume. If you burned candles near it, they did not flare and run off into tallow as in the case of ordinary fireplaces with their excessive drafts. It corrected most smoky chimneys. It prevented all kinds of chimneys from fouling, and if they fouled made them less likely to fire, and, if they fired, made the fire easier to repress. A flame could be speedily kindled in it with the help of the shutter or trap-bellows" that went along with it. A fire could be readily extinguished in it, or could be so secured in it that not one spark could fly out of it to do any damage. A room once warmed remained warm all night. "With all these Conveniences," concludes Franklin, "you do not lose the pleasing Sight nor Use of the Fire, as in the Dutch Stoves, but may boil the Tea-Kettle, warm the Flat-Irons, heat Heaters, keep warm a Dish of Victuals by setting it on the Top, &c. &c."

Some years after the publication of this essay, Franklin devised an improvement in the open chimney-place which tended to abate drafts and check the escape of heat up the chimney by contracting the chimney opening, bringing its breast down to within three feet of the hearth, and placing an iron frame just under this breast, with grooves on each side of the frame, in which an iron plate could be slid backwards and forwards at pleasure, for the purpose of cutting off the mouth of the chimney entirely from the chimney itself, when there was no fire on the hearth, or of leaving a space of not more than two inches for the escape of smoke between the further edge of the plate and the back of the chimney-mouth. This improved

chimney-place was described by Franklin in letters to Alexander Dick and James Bowdoin. The letter to Bowdoin seems to leave little to be said on the subject of chimneys. It indicates that Franklin had subjected them to a scrutiny hardly less close than that which he had fixed upon the Leyden Jar. In connection with the currents and reverse currents, set up in them in summer by the relations of inequality, which the air in them sustains, at different hours of the day and night, to the outside temperature, he suggests that joints of meat might keep for a week or more during the hottest weather in chimney-openings, if well wrapt three or four fold in wet linen cloths, sprinkled once a day with water to prevent evaporation. Butter and milk in vessels and bottles covered with wet cloths" might, he thought, be preserved in the same way. And he even thought, too, that the movements of air in chimneys might, with the aid of smoke-jack vanes, be applied to some mechanical purposes, where a small but pretty constant power only was needed. To appreciate how patiently and exhaustively Franklin was in the habit of pursuing every course of observation or reflection opened up by his scientific propensities, the whole of this letter, which had much more to say on the subject of chimneys than we have mentioned, should be read.

At a later period of his life, Franklin describes to Turgot what he called his new stove. The novel feature of this consisted of an aerial syphon by which the smoke from the fireplace of the stove was first drawn upwards through the longer leg of the syphon, and then downwards through its shorter leg, and over burning coals, by which it was kindled into flame and consumed.

The ingenuity of Franklin was also exerted very successfully in the rectification of smoky chimneys. In his essay on the causes and cure of such chimneys, written on his last ocean voyage, he resolved the causes into no less than nine heads, and stated with his accustomed perspicuity and precision the remedy for each cause. In his time, the art of properly carrying off smoke through chimneys was but imperfectly understood by ordinary builders and mechanics, and it was of too humble a nature to tempt discussion by such men of science as were capable of clearly expounding the physical principles upon which it rested. It was not strange, therefore, that Franklin, who deemed nothing, that was useful, to be beneath the dignity of philosophy, should have acquired in his time the reputation of being a kind of "universal smoke doctor" and should have been occasionally consulted by friends of his, such as Lord Kames, about refractory chimneys. The only smoky chimney, that seems to have completely baffled his investigation, recalls in a way the philosopher," who thought that he had discovered a new planet, but afterwards found that what he saw was only a fly in the end of his telescope. After exhausting every scientific resource in an effort to ascertain why the chimney in the country-house of one of his English friends smoked, Franklin was obliged to own the impotence for once of his skill; but, subsequently, his friend, who made no pretensions to the character of a fumist, climbed to the top of the funnel of his chimney by a ladder, and, on peering down into it, found that it had been filled by nesting birds with twigs and straw, cemented with clay, and lined with feathers.

Nor was the attention given by Franklin to ventilation by any means confined to chimneys. Air vitiated by human respiration also came in for a share of it. Describing an experiment by which he demonstrated the manner in which air affected in this way is purified, Alexander Small said:

The Doctor confirmed this by the following experiment. He breathed gently through a tube into a deep glass mug, so as to impregnate all the air in the mug with this quality. He then put a lighted bougie into the mug; and upon touching the air therein the flame was instantly extinguished; by frequently repeating the operation, the bougie gradually preserved its light longer in the mug, so as in a short time to retain it to the

bottom of it; the air having totally lost the bad quality it had contracted from the breath blown into it.

Franklin became deeply interested in the brilliant course of investigation pursued by Priestley with respect to gases, and several penetrating glances of his into the relations of carbonic acid gas to vegetation have come down to us. Observing on a visit to Priestley the luxuriance of some mint growing in noxious air, he suggested to Priestley that “the air is mended by taking something from it, and not by adding to it.” He hoped, he said in a letter to Priestley, that the nutriment derived by vegetation” from carbonic acid gas would give some check to the rage of destroying trees that grew near houses, which had accompanied recent improvements in gardening from an opinion of their being unwholesome.

Just as he was consulted about the best methods of protecting St. Paul’s Cathedral and the arsenals at Purfleet from lightning, so he was also consulted by the British Government as to the best method for ventilating the House of Commons. “The personal atmosphere surrounding the members,” he thought, “might be carried off by making outlets in perpendicular parts of the seats, through which the air might be drawn off by ventilators, so placed, as to accomplish this without admitting any by the same channels.” The experiment might be tried upon some of our City Councilmen. Principles of ventilation, expounded by Franklin, were also utilized by the Messrs. Adam of the Adelphi, in the construction of the large room built by them for the meetings of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts. We also find him suggesting openings, close to the ceilings of rooms, and communicating with flues, constructed alongside of chimney flues, as effective means for ventilating rooms.

With all his primary and secondary gifts for scientific research, it is difficult to believe that, if Franklin had not been diverted from it by engrossing political cares, he would have added both to his special reputation as a student of electricity and to his general reputation as a man of science. As it was, his civic activity and popular leadership in Pennsylvania, his several agencies abroad, his participation in the American Revolution, his career as Minister to France, and his official duties, after his return, made such imperious demands upon his time that he had little or no leisure left for scientific pursuits. This picture of his situation which he presented in a letter to Ingenhousz, when he was in France, was more or less true of almost every part of his life after he became famous:”

Besides being harass’d with too much Business, I am expos’d to numberless Visits, some of Kindness and Civility, many of mere idle Curiosity, from Strangers of America & of different Parts of Europe, as well as the Inhabitants of the Provinces who come to Paris. These devour my Hours, and break my Attention, and at Night I often find myself fatigu’d without having done anything. Celebrity may for a while flatter one’s Vanity, but its Effects are troublesome. I have begun to write two or three Things, which I wish to finish before I die; but I sometimes doubt the possibility.

Some of the reflections of Franklin on scientific subjects, such as his early letters to Cadwallader Colden with regard to “perspirants and absorbents” are, to use his own expression in one of them, too plainly *ultra crepidam* to have any value. Of others, we might fairly say that his knowledge of the topics which he handled in them was hardly deep enough to deserve any praise more confident than that which he allowed himself when writing to Cadwallader Colden in 1751 of the Philadelphia Experiments. “So,” he said to Colden in this letter, “we are got beyond the skill of *Rabelais*’s devils of two years old, who, he humorously says, had only learnt to thunder and lighten a little round the head of a cabbage.” All the same, even aside from his electrical experiments, Franklin acquired no little fame as a philosopher, made more than one fruitful suggestion to fellow-workers of his in the domain of science and contributed many useful observations to the general fund of scientific thought.

Apparently his views on medical topics were held in very considerable respect. In 1777, he was elected a member of the Royal Medical Society of Paris, and in 1787 an honorary member of the Medical Society of London. Many works on medical subjects were dedicated to him by their authors. He was one of the commission which exposed the imposture of Mesmer. There are few things that give us a better idea of the extraordinary celebrity enjoyed by him than the wide currency obtained by a spurious opinion of his, ascribing great merit to tobacco ashes as a remedy for dropsy. It won such an extensive circulation, and brought down on his head such a flood of questions from physicians and others, that he was compelled to deny flatly the truth of the story. One person, Lord Cadross, afterwards the Earl of Buchan, firmly believed that he would have perished at the hands of a professional physician, who wished to blister him, when he was afflicted with a fever, if Franklin had not dissented from the treatment. Franklin probably deserved no higher credit for his dissent on this occasion than that of sharing the opinion of Sir John Pringle, who was convinced that, out of every one hundred fevers, ninety-two cured themselves. So far as we can see, there is nothing in the works of Franklin to warrant the belief that he possessed any uncommon degree of medical knowledge, though he was full of curiosity with regard to medicine as with regard to every other branch of human learning. In one of his letters to Colden, written in his fortieth year, he expressed the hope that future experiment would confirm the idea that the yaws could be cured by tar-water. In a later letter to Colden, he expressed his pleasure at hearing more instances of the success of the poke-weed “in the Cure of that horrible Evil to the human Body, a Cancer.” At his suggestion, a young physician, with the aid of Sanctorius’ balance, tested alternately each hour, for eight hours, the amount of the perspiration from his body, when naked, and when warmly clad, and found that it was almost as great during the hours when he was naked. By his investigations into the malady known in his time popularly as “the dry bellyache,” and learnedly as the “*colica Pictonum*,” he conferred a real benefit upon medical science. His views upon the subject received the honor of being incorporated with due acknowledgments into Dr. John Hunter’s essay on the *Dry Bellyache of the Tropics*. Summarily speaking they were that the complaint was a form of lead poisoning.

I have long been of opinion [he wrote to Dr. Cadwallader Evans in 1768] that that distemper proceeds always from a metallic cause only; observing that it affects, among tradesmen, those that use lead, however different their trades,—as glaziers, letter-founders, plumbers, potters, white-lead makers, and painters;... although the worms of stills ought to be of pure tin, they are often made of pewter, which has a great mixture in it of lead.

The year before this letter was written, Franklin had found on reading a pamphlet, containing the names and vocations of the persons, who had been cured of the colic at Charité, a Parisian hospital, that all of them had followed trades, which handle lead in some form or other. On going over the vocations, he was at first puzzled to understand why there should be any stonecutters or soldiers among the sufferers, but his perplexity was cleared up by a physician at the hospital, who informed him that stonecutters frequently used melted lead for fixing the ends of iron balustrades in stone, and that the soldiers had been employed as laborers by painters, when grinding colors. These facts were long afterwards communicated by Franklin to Benjamin Vaughan in a letter, in which he cited other incidents, interesting partly because they corroborated his theory, and partly because they are additional proofs of his vigilance and patience in collecting facts, before advancing an hypothesis, as well as of a memory, which retained every instructive circumstance imparted to it by eye or ear as imperishably as hardening cement retains the impression of a dog’s foot. When he was a boy at Boston, Franklin said, it was discovered that New England rum, which had produced the dry bellyache and paralyzed the limbs in North Carolina, had been made by distilleries with

leaden still-heads and worms. Later," when he was in London, he had been warned by an old workman at Palmer's printing-house, as well as by an obscure pain in his own hands, that it was a dangerous practice to handle a heated case of types. About the same time, a letter-founder in the same close at Palmer's, in a conversation with him, ascribed the existence of the ailment among his workmen to the fact that some of them were slovenly enough to go to their meals with unwashed hands that had come into contact with molten lead. He had also observed in Derbyshire that the smoke from lead furnaces was pernicious to grass and other vegetables, and in America had often observed that streaks on shingle roofs, made by white lead, washed from balusters or dormer window frames, were always entirely free from moss. He had also been told of a case where this colic had afflicted a whole family, and was supposed to be due to the corrosive effect of the acid in leaves, shed upon the roof, from which the family derived the supply of rain water, upon which it relied for drink.

More important still than the insight that Franklin obtained into the Painter's Colic was the insight which he obtained into the salutary effect of the custom which is now almost universal, except in the homes of the ignorant and squalid, of sleeping at night in rooms with the windows up. This custom, as well as the outdoor regimen, which has proved of such signal value in the treatment of tuberculosis, originated in hygienic conceptions identical with those steadfastly inculcated by him. His opinions with regard to colds and the benefits of pure air were expressed at many different times, and in many different forms, but nowhere so conveniently for the purposes of quotation as in a letter which he wrote to Dr. Benjamin Rush in 1773.

I hope [he said in this letter] that after having discovered the benefit of fresh and cool air applied to the sick, people will begin to suspect that possibly it may do no harm to the" well. I have not seen Dr. Cullen's book, but am glad to hear that he speaks of catarrhs or colds by contagion. I have long been satisfied from observation, that besides the general colds now termed *influenzas* (which may possibly spread by contagion, as well as by a particular quality of the air), people often catch cold from one another when shut up together in close rooms, coaches, &c., and when sitting near and conversing so as to breathe in each other's transpiration; the disorder being in a certain state. I think, too, that it is the frouzy, corrupt air from animal substances, and the perspired matter from our bodies, which being long confined in beds not lately used, and clothes not lately worn, and books long shut up in close rooms, obtains that kind of putridity, which occasions the colds observed upon sleeping in, wearing, and turning over such bedclothes, or books, and not their coldness or dampness. From these causes, but more from too full living, with too little exercise, proceed in my opinion most of the disorders, which for about one hundred and fifty years past the English have called *colds*.

As to Dr. Cullen's cold or catarrh *a frigore*, I question whether such an one ever existed. Travelling in our severe winters, I have suffered cold sometimes to an extremity only short of freezing, but this did not make me *catch cold*. And, for moisture, I have been in the river every evening two or three hours for a fortnight together, when one could suppose I might imbibe enough of it to *take cold* if humidity could give it; but no such effect ever followed. Boys never get cold by swimming. Nor are people at sea, or who live at Bermudas, or St. Helena, small islands, where the air must be ever moist from the dashing and breaking of waves against their rocks on all sides, more subject to colds than those who inhabit part of a continent where the air is driest. Dampness may indeed assist in producing putridity and those miasmata which infect us with the disorder we call a cold; but of itself can never by a little addition of moisture hurt a body filled with watery fluids from head to foot.

Franklin's belief that colds and overeating often went hand in hand also found expression in one of his letters" to Polly Stevenson. When sending her an account of some seamen, who had experienced considerable relief from thirst by wearing clothes kept constantly wet with salt water, he said, "I need not point out to you an Observation in favour of our Doctrine, that you will make on reading this Paper, that, *having little to eat*, these poor People in wet Clothes Day and Night *caught no cold*." In every, or in practically every, case, he seems to have referred colds to what he rather vaguely calls a siziness and thickness of the blood, resulting from checked perspiration, produced by different agencies, including a gross diet.

Thus [he says in his *Notes and Hints for Writing a Paper Concerning what is called Catching Cold*], People in Rooms heated by a Multitude of People, find their own Bodies heated; thence the quantity of perspirable Matter is increased that should be discharged, but the Air, not being changed, grows so full of the same Matter, that it will receive no more. So the Body must retain it. The Consequence is, the next Day, perhaps sooner, a slight putrid Fever comes on, with all the Marks of what we call a Cold, and the Disorder is suppos'd to be got by coming out of a warm Room, whereas it was really taken while in that Room.

He did not shrink from any of the consequences of his reasoning about colds however extreme.

Be so kind as to tell me at your leisure [he wrote to Barbeu Dubourg], whether in France, you have a general Belief that moist Air, and cold Air, and damp Shirts or Sheets, and wet Floors, and Beds that have not lately been used, and Clothes that have not been lately worn, and going out of a warm Room into the Air, and leaving off a long-worn Wastecoa, and wearing leaky Shoes, and sitting near an Open Window, or Door, or in a Coach with both Glasses down, are all or any of them capable of giving the Distemper we call *a Cold*, and you *a Rheum, or Catarrh*? Or are these merely *English* ideas?

His views on the wholesomeness of fresh air were far in advance of the general intelligence of his time, and were expressed in spirited terms. After stating in a letter to Jean Baptiste Le Roy that he had become convinced that the idea that perspiration is checked by cold was an error as well as the idea that rheum is occasioned by cold, he added:

But as this is Heresy here, and perhaps may be so with you, I only whisper it, and expect you will keep my Secret. Our Physicians have begun to discover that fresh Air is good for People in the Small-pox & other Fevers. I hope in time they will find out that it does no harm to People in Health.

At times his language on what he called *aerophobia* grew highly animated.

What Caution against Air [he said in a letter to Thomas Percival], what stopping of Crevices, what wrapping up in warm Clothes, what shutting of Doors and Windows! even in the midst of Summer! Many London Families go out once a day to take the Air; three or four Persons in a Coach, one perhaps Sick; these go three or four Miles, or as many Turns in Hide Park, with the Glasses both up close, all breathing over & over again the same Air they brought out of Town with them in the Coach with the least change possible, and render'd worse and worse every moment. And this they call *taking the Air*.

Indeed, there is at times something just a little ludicrous in the uncompromising fervor with which Franklin insisted upon his proposition. It seemed strange he said, in the letter from which we have just quoted, that a man whose body was composed in great part of moist fluids, whose blood and juices were so watery, and who could swallow quantities of water

and small beer daily without inconvenience, should fancy that a little more or less moisture in the air should be of such importance; but we abound in absurdity and inconsistency.”

It is a delightful account that John Adams gives us of a night which he spent in the same bed with Franklin at New Brunswick, on their way to the conference with Lord Howe:

The chamber [Adams tells us] was little larger than the bed, without a chimney, and with only one small window. The window was open, and I, who was an invalid, and afraid of the air in the night, shut it close. “Oh!” says Franklin, “don’t shut the window, we shall be suffocated.” I answered I was afraid of the evening air. Dr. Franklin replied, “The air within this chamber will soon be, and indeed is now, worse than that without doors. Come, open the window and come to bed, and I will convince you. I believe you are not acquainted with my theory of colds.” Opening the window and leaping into bed, I said I had read his letters to Dr. Cooper, in which he had advanced that nobody ever got cold by going into a cold church or any other cold air, but the theory was so little consistent with my experience, that I thought it a paradox. However, I had so much curiosity to hear his reasons, that I would run the risk of a cold. The Doctor then began a harangue upon air and cold, and respiration and perspiration, with which I was so much amused that I soon fell asleep, and left him and his philosophy together; but I believe they were equally sound and insensible within a few minutes after me, for the last words I heard were pronounced as if he was more than half asleep. I remember little of the lecture, except that the human body, by respiration and perspiration, destroys a gallon of air in a minute; that two such persons as we were now in that chamber would consume all the air in it in an hour or two; that by breathing over again the matter thrown off by the lungs and the skin, we should imbibe the real cause of colds, not from abroad, but from within.

At times Franklin merely gave hints to brother philosophers and left them to run the hints down. For instance, he suggested to M. De Saussure, of Geneva, who succeeded” in ascending Mont Blanc, the idea of ascertaining the lateral attraction of the Jura Mountains for the purpose of discovering the mean density of the earth upon the Newtonian theory of gravitation. This was subsequently done with complete success by Nevil Maskelyne on Mt. Schellion in Perthshire. To Ingenhousz he suggested the idea of “hanging a weight on a spiral spring, to discover if bodies gravitated differently to the earth during the conjunctions of the sun and moon, compared with other times.”

He gave very close study to the philosophy of waterspouts and whirlwinds and came to the conclusion that they were generated by the same causes, and were of the same nature, “the only Difference between them being, that the one passes over Land, the other over Water.” He was the first person to discover that northeast storms did not begin in the northeast at all. The manner in which he did it is another good illustration of his quickness in noting the significance of every fact by which his attention was challenged. He desired to observe a lunar eclipse at nine o’clock in the evening at Philadelphia, but his efforts were frustrated by a northeast storm, which lasted for a night and a day, and did much damage all along the Atlantic coast. To his surprise he afterwards learnt from the Boston newspapers that the eclipse had been visible there, and, upon writing to his brother for particulars, was informed by him that it had been over for an hour when the storm set in at Boston; though it was apparently fair to assume that the storm began sooner at Boston than at Philadelphia. This information and further inquiry satisfied him that northeast storms commence southward and work their way to the northeast at the rate of a hundred miles an hour. When we read the words in which he stated his theory of such storms, we begin to understand what Sir

Humphry Davy meant in saying that science appeared in Franklin's" language in a dress wonderfully decorous, and best adapted to display her native loveliness.

Suppose [he said to Jared Eliot] a great tract of country, land and sea, to wit, Florida and the Bay of Mexico, to have clear weather for several days, and to be heated by the sun, and its air thereby exceedingly rarefied. Suppose the country northeastward, as Pennsylvania, New England, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, to be at the same time covered with clouds, and its air chilled and condensed. The rarefied air being lighter must rise, and the denser air next to it will press into its place; that will be followed by the next denser air, that by the next, and so on. Thus, when I have a fire in my chimney, there is a current of air constantly flowing from the door to the chimney; but the beginning of the motion was at the chimney, where the air being rarefied by the fire rising, its place was supplied by the cooler air that was next to it, and the place of that by the next, and so on to the door. So the water in a long sluice or mill-race, being stopped by a gate, is at rest like the air in a calm; but as soon as you open the gate at one end to let it out, the water next the gate begins first to move, that which is next to it follows; and so, though the water proceeds forward to the gate, the motion which began there runs backward, if one may so speak, to the upper end of the race, where the water is last in motion.

It may be truly said of every province of scientific research into which Franklin ventured that he brought to it a bold and original spirit of speculation which gave it new interest and meaning. Even when he was not the first to kindle a light, he had a happy and effective way of trimming it anew and freshening its radiance. To Collinson he wrote on one occasion, "But I must own I am much in the *Dark* about *Light*." But noonday is not more luminous than what he had to say on the subject in this letter.

May not all the Phaenomena of Light [he asked] be more conveniently solved, by supposing universal Space filled with" a subtle elastic Fluid, which, when at rest, is not visible, but whose Vibrations affect that fine Sense the Eye, as those of Air do the grosser Organs of the Ear? We do not, in the Case of Sound, imagine that any sonorous Particles are thrown off from a Bell, for Instance, and fly in strait Lines to the Ear; why must we believe that luminous Particles leave the Sun and proceed to the Eye? Some Diamonds, if rubbed, shine in the Dark, without losing any Part of their Matter. I can make an Electrical Spark as big as the Flame of a Candle, much brighter, and, therefore, visible farther, yet this is without Fuel; and, I am persuaded no part of the Electric Fluid flies off in such Case to distant Places, but all goes directly, and is to be found in the Place to which I destine it. May not different Degrees of Vibration of the above-mentioned Universal Medium occasion the Appearances of different Colours? I think the Electric Fluid is always the same; yet I find that weaker and stronger Sparks differ in apparent Colour; some white, blue, purple, red; the strongest, White; weak ones, red. Thus different Degrees of Vibration given to the Air produce the 7 different Sounds in Music, analagous to the 7 Colours, yet the Medium, Air, is the same.

"Universal Space, as far as we know of it," he declared in his *Loose Thoughts on a Universal Fluid*, "seems to be filled with a subtil Fluid, whose Motion, or Vibration is called Light." And he then proceeds to found on this statement a series of speculations marked by too high a degree of temerity to have much scientific value. One sentiment in the paper, however, is well worth recalling as showing how clearly its author had grasped the conservation of matter. "The Power of Man relative to Matter," he observed, "seems limited to the dividing it, or mixing the various kinds of it, or changing its Form and Appearance by different

Compositions of it; but does not extend to the making or creating of new Matter, or annihilating the old.”

The Science of Palæontology was in its infancy during the lifetime of Franklin. Many years before Cuvier gave” the name of mastodon to the prehistoric beast, whose fossil remains had been brought to sight from time to time in different parts of the world, George Croghan, the Indian trader, sent to Franklin a box of tusks and grinders, which had been found near the Ohio, and which he supposed to be parts of a dismembered elephant. In his reply of thanks, Franklin observed that the tusks were nearly of the same form and texture as those of the African and Asiatic elephant. “But the grinders differ,” he added, “being full of knobs, like the grinders of a carnivorous animal; when those of the elephant, who eats only vegetables, are almost smooth. But then we know of no other animal with tusks like an elephant, to whom such grinders might belong.” The fact that, while elephants inhabited hot countries only, fragments such as those sent to him by Croghan were found in climates like those of the Ohio Territory and Siberia, looked, Franklin concluded, “as if the earth had anciently been in another position, and the climates differently placed from what they are at present.”

Contrasting the observations of this letter with the paper read long afterwards by Thomas Jefferson before the American Philosophical Society on the bones of a large prehistoric quadruped resembling the sloth, William B. Scott, the American palæontologist, remarks:

Franklin’s opinions are nearer to our present beliefs than were Jefferson’s, written nearly forty years later. Of course, we now know that Franklin was mistaken in supposing that such bones were found only in what is now Kentucky and in Peru, and his comparison of the teeth of the mastodon with the “grinders of a carnivorous animal” is not very happy, but the inferences are remarkably sound, when we consider the state of geological knowledge in 1767.

In a letter to Antoine Court de Gébelin, the author of the *Monde Primitif*, Franklin gave him a valuable caution, in” relation to apparent linguistic variations. Strangers, who learnt the language of an Indian nation, he said, finding no orthography, formed each his own orthography according to the usual sounds given to the letters in his own language. Thus the same words of the Mohawk language, written by an English, a French and a German interpreter, often differed very much in the spelling.

Franklin’s letters to Herschel, Maskelyne, Rittenhouse, Humphrey Marshall and James Bowdoin reveal a keen interest in astronomy, but this is not one of the fields from which he came off *cum laude*. Gratifying to the pride of an American, however, is an observation which he made to William Herschel, when the latter sent to him for the American Philosophical Society a catalogue of one thousand new nebulæ and star-clusters and stated at the same time that he had discovered two satellites, which revolved about the Georgian planet. In congratulating him on the discovery, Franklin said:

You have wonderfully extended the Power of human Vision, and are daily making us Acquainted with Regions of the Universe totally unknown to mankind in former Ages. Had Fortune plac’d you in this part of America, your Progress in these Discoveries might have been still more rapid, as from the more frequent clearness of our Air, we have near one Third more in the year of good observing Days than there are in England.

The production of cold by evaporation was another subject which enlisted the eager interest of Franklin. In co-operation with Dr. Hadley, the Professor of Chemistry at Cambridge, England, he was so successful in covering a ball with ice by wetting it from time to time with ether, and blowing upon the ether with a bellows, that he could write to John Lining in these

words: “From this experiment one may see the possibility of freezing a man” to death on a warm summer’s day, if he were to stand in a passage through which the wind blew briskly, and to be wet frequently with ether, a spirit that is more inflammable than brandy, or common spirits of wine.”

Geology was in its infancy during Franklin’s time, but he hazarded some conjectures about the formation of the earth that are perhaps not less trustworthy than those advanced by riper geologists. In the letter, in which these conjectures were communicated to the Abbé Soulavie, he said:

Part of the high county of Derby being probably as much above the level of the sea, as the coal mines of Whitehaven were below it, seemed a proof that there had been a great *bouleversement* in the surface of that Island (Great Britain), some part of it having been depressed under the sea, and other parts which had been under it being raised above it.... Such changes in the superficial parts of the globe [he continued] seemed to me unlikely to happen if the earth were solid to the centre. I therefore imagined that the internal parts might be a fluid more dense, and of greater specific gravity than any of the solids we are acquainted with; which therefore might swim in or upon that fluid. Thus the surface of the globe would be a shell, capable of being broken and disordered by the violent movements of the fluid on which it rested.

The letter contains other speculations equally bold:

It has long been a supposition of mine that the iron contained in the substance of this globe, has made it capable of becoming as it is a great magnet. That the fluid of magnetism exists perhaps in all space; so that there is a magnetical North and South of the universe as well as of this globe, and that if it were possible for a man to fly from star to star, he might govern his course by the compass. That it was by the power of this general magnetism this globe became a particular magnet. In soft or hot iron the fluid of magnetism is naturally diffused equally; when within the influence of the magnet, it is drawn to one end of the Iron, made denser there, and rare at” the other, while the iron continues soft and hot, it is only a temporary magnet: If it cools or grows hard in that situation, it becomes a permanent one, the magnetic fluid not easily resuming its equilibrium. Perhaps it may be owing to the permanent magnetism of this globe, which it had not at first, that its axis is at present kept parallel to itself, and not liable to the changes it formerly suffered, which occasioned the rupture of its shell, the submersions and emersions of its lands and the confusion of its seasons.

It was probably, Franklin thought, different relations between the earth and its axis in the past that caused much of Europe, including the mountains of Passy, on which he lived, and which were composed of limestone rock and sea shells, to be abandoned by the sea, and to change its ancient climate, which seemed, he said, to have been a hot one.

The physical convulsions to which the earth had been subject in the past were, however, in his opinion beneficent.

Had [he said in a letter to Sir John Pringle] the different strata of clay, gravel, marble, coals, limestone, sand, minerals, &c., continued to lie level, one under the other, as they may be supposed to have done before these convulsions, we should have had the use only of a few of the uppermost of the strata, the others lying too deep and too difficult to be come at; but the shell of the earth being broke, and the fragments thrown into this oblique position, the disjointed ends of a great number of strata of different kinds are brought up to-day, and a great variety of useful materials put into our power, which would otherwise have remained eternally concealed from us. So

that what has been usually looked upon as a *ruin* suffered by this part of the universe, was, in reality, only a preparation or means of rendering the earth more fit for use, more capable of being to mankind a convenient and comfortable habitation.

The scientific conjectures of Franklin may not always have been sound, but they are invariably so readable that we experience no difficulty in understanding why the Abbé Raynal should have preferred his fictions to other men's truths.

V. Franklin As A Writer

Franklin, as Hume truly said, was the first great man of letters, for whom Great Britain was beholden to America, and, among his writings, are some that will always remain classics. But it is a mistake to think of him as in any sense a professional author. He was entirely accurate when he declared in the *Autobiography* that prose-writing had been of great use to him in the course of his life and a principal means of his advancement; but always to him a pen was but an implement of action. When it had accomplished its purpose, he threw it aside as a farmer discards a worn-out plowshare, or a horse casts a shoe.⁹⁷ There is nothing in his writings or his utterances to show that he ever regarded himself as a literary man, or ever harbored a thought of permanent literary fame. The only productions of his pen, which suggest the sandpaper and varnish of a professional writer, are his Bagatelles, such as *The Craven Street Gazette* and *The Ephemera*, composed for the amusement of his friends; and, in writing them, the idea of permanency was as completely absent from his mind as it was from that of the Duke of Crillon, when he sent up his balloon in honor of the two Spanish princes. The greater part of his writings were composed in haste, and published anonymously, and without revision. And, when once published, if they did not remain dispersed and neglected, it was only because their merits were too great for them not to be snatched from the "abhorred abyss of blank oblivion" by some disciple or friend of his, who had more regard for posterity than he had. So far as we are aware, no edition of his scientific essays or other writings was ever in the slightest degree prompted by any personal concern or request of his. As soon as the didactic purpose of the earlier chapters of the *Autobiography* had been gratified by the composition of those chapters, it was only by incessant proddings and importunities that he could be induced to bring his narrative down to as late a period as he did. When Lord Kames expressed a desire to have all his publications, the only ones on which he could lay his hands were the *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.*, the *Account of the New-invented Pennsylvanian Fireplaces*, and some little magazine sketches. He had had, he wrote Lord Kames, daily expectations of procuring some of his performances from a friend to whom he had formerly sent them, when the author was in America, but this friend had at length told him that he could not find them. "Very mortifying this to an author," said Franklin, "that his works should so soon be lost!" When Jefferson called upon him, during his last days, he placed in the former's hands the valuable manuscript of his negotiations with Lord Howe, and it was not until he had twice told Jefferson to keep it, in reply to statements by Jefferson that he would return it, after reading it, that the recipient could realize that the intention was to turn over the manuscript to him absolutely. In a letter to Vaughan, he mentions that, after writing a parable, probably that on Brotherly Love, he laid it aside and had not seen it for thirty years, when a lady, a few days before, furnished him with a copy that she had preserved.

The indifference of Franklin to literary reputation is all the more remarkable in view of the clearness with which he foresaw the increased patronage that the future had in store for English authors. "I assure you," he wrote on one occasion to Hume, "it often gives me pleasure to reflect, how greatly the *audience* (if I may so term it) of a good English writer will, in another century or two, be increased by the increase of English people in our

⁹⁷ What Sir Walter Scott said of Jonathan Swift is as true of Franklin: "Swift executed his various and numerous works as a carpenter forms wedges, mallets, or other implements of his art, not with the purpose of distinguishing himself, by the workmanship bestowed on the tools themselves, but solely in order to render them fit for accomplishing a certain purpose, beyond which they were of no value in his eyes."

colonies.” Twenty-four years later, he had already lived long enough to see his prescience in this respect to no little extent verified.

By the way [he wrote to William Strahan], the rapid Growth and extension of the English language in America, must become greatly Advantageous to the book-sellers, and holders of Copy-Rights in England. A vast audience is assembling there for English Authors ancient, present, and future, our People doubling every twenty Years; and this will demand large and of course profitable Impressions of your most valuable Books. I would, therefore, if I possessed such rights, entail them, if such a thing be practicable, upon my Posterity; for their Worth will be continually augmenting.

This grave advice was followed by the jolly laugh that was never long absent from the intercourse between Franklin and Strahan. “This,” Franklin said, “may look a little like Advice, and yet I have drank no *Madeira* these Ten Months.”

The manner in which Franklin acquired the elements of his literary education is one of the inspiring things in the history of knowledge. At the age of ten, as we have seen, he was done forever with all schools except those of self-education and experience; but he had one of those” minds that simply will not be denied knowledge. Even while he was pouring tallow into his father’s moulds, he was reading the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Burton’s *Historical Collections*, “small chapmen’s books, and cheap, 40 or 50 in all,” Plutarch’s *Lives*, Defoe’s *Essay on Projects* and Cotton Mather’s *Essay upon the Good that is to be Devised and Designed by those who desire to answer the Great end of Life, and to do Good while they Live*; all books full of wholesome and stimulating food for a hungry mind. Happily for him, his propensity for reading found ampler scope when his father bound him over as an apprentice to James Franklin. Here he had access to better books.

An acquaintance with the apprentices of book-sellers [he tells us in the *Autobiography*] enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted.

This clandestine use of what did not belong to him or to his obliging young friends was an illicit enjoyment; but was one of those offences, we may be sure, for which the Recording Angel has an expunging tear. More legitimate was the use that he made of the volumes lent to him by Mr. Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, and who frequented the printing-house, took notice of him and invited him to his library, and very kindly lent him such books as he chose to read. As we have seen, it was not long before Benjamin struck a bargain with his brother, by which the obligation of the latter to board him was commuted into a fixed weekly sum, which, though only half what had been previously paid by James for his weekly board, proved large enough to afford the boy a fund for buying books with. Not only under this” arrangement did he contrive to save for this purpose one half of the sum allowed him by James but also to secure an additional margin of time for reading.

My brother and the rest [Franklin tells us in the *Autobiography*] going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast, which often was no more than a bisket or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry-cook’s, and a glass of water, had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking.

Then it was that he read Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* and the *Art of Thinking* by "Messrs. du Port Royal." To the same period belongs his provoking dalliance with the Socratic method of reasoning.

From reading the works of others to what Sir Fopling Flutter called "the natural sprouts" of one's own brain is always but a short step for a clever and ambitious boy. Franklin's first literary ventures were metrical ones, the lispings that filled the mind of his uncle Benjamin with such glowing anticipations, and "some little pieces" which excited the commercial instincts of James Franklin to the point of putting Benjamin to composing occasional ballads. The subject of one ballad, *The Light House Tragedy*, was the death by drowning of Captain Worthilake and his two daughters; another ballad was a sailor's song on the taking of Teach (or Blackbeard), the flagitious pirate. The opinion of these ballads held by Franklin is probably just enough, if we may judge by his subsequent irruptions into the province of Poetry.

They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-Street-ballad style [he says in the *Autobiography*], and when they were printed he (James Franklin) sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being recent, having" made a great noise. This flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one.

From the doggerel, thus condemned by the hard head of Josiah, Benjamin turned to prose. Believing that in oral discussion with his friend Collins on the qualifications of women for learning, he had been borne down rather by the fluency than the logic of his antagonist, he reduced his arguments to writing, copied them in a fair hand and sent them to Collins. He replied, and Franklin rejoined, and no less than three or four letters had been addressed by each of the friends to the other when the correspondence happened to fall under the eye of Josiah. Again the son had reason to be thankful for the candid discernment of the father, for Josiah pointed out to him that, while he had the advantage of Collins in correct spelling and pointing (thanks to the printing-house) he fell far short of Collins in elegance of expression, method and perspicuity, all of which he illustrated by references to the correspondence.

The son realized the justice of the father's criticisms, and resolved to amend his faults. The means to which he resorted he has laid before us in the *Autobiography*:

About this time [he says] I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I" found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales, and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavoured to reduce them into the best order,

before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method of the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious. My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still thought a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it.

The next step in Benjamin's literary development was when he contrived to disguise his handwriting and thrust the first of his Silence Dogood letters under the door of his brother's printing-house; and we can readily imagine what his feelings were when the group of contributors to the *Courant*, who frequented the place, read it and commented on it, in his hearing, and afforded him what he terms in the *Autobiography* the exquisite pleasure of finding that it met with their approbation; and that in their different guesses at the author none were named but men of some character in the town for learning and ingenuity. Encouraged by his success, he wrote and communicated to the *Courant* in the same furtive way the other letters in the Silence Dogood series, keeping his secret, he tells us, until his small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, when he disclosed his authorship, only to arouse the jealousy of the churlish brother, who, alone of the *Courant* circle, failed to regard him with augmented respect. If there was no extrinsic evidence to fix the authorship of the Dogood letters, their intrinsic characteristics, incipient as they are, would be enough to disclose the hand of Franklin. The good dame, who finally succumbed to the rhetoric of her reverend master and protector, after he had made several fruitless attempts on the more topping part of her sex, bears very much the same family lineaments as the Anthony Afterwit and Alice Addertongue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Deprived of her good husband by inexorable death, when her sun was in its meridian altitude, she proceeds to gratify her natural inclination for observing and reproving the faults of others, and to open up her mind in a way that leaves us little room for doubt as to who the lively, free-spirited and free-spoken boy was that she concealed beneath her petticoats. "A hearty Lover of the Clergy and all good Men, and a mortal Enemy to arbitrary Government & unlimited Power," she was, she assures us in one letter, besides being courteous and affable, good-humored (unless first provoked) and handsome, and sometimes witty. In her next paper, she tells us that she had from her youth been indefatigably studious to gain and treasure up in her mind all useful and desirable knowledge, especially such as tends to improve the mind and enlarge the understanding. With this frontispiece, she, from time to time, delivers her views" on various topics with glib vivacity, set off by Latin quotations. In one letter, she falls asleep in her usual place of retirement under the Great Apple Tree, and is transported in a dream to the Temple of Learning (Harvard College), which we can only hope was not quite so bad as it appeared to be when seen through the distorting medium of her slumbers. Describing the concourse of outgoing students, she says, "Some I perceiv'd took to Merchandizing, others to Travelling, some to one Thing, some to another, and some to Nothing; and many of them from henceforth, for want of Patrimony, liv'd as poor as church Mice, being unable to dig, and asham'd to beg, and to live by their Wits it was impossible." In another letter, Silence unsparingly lashes the existing system of female education. "Their Youth," she says, borrowing the words of an "ingenious writer," is spent to teach them to

stitch and sow, or make Baubles. “They are taught to read indeed and perhaps to write their Names, or so; and that is the Heighth of a Womans Education.”

In another letter, she holds up hoop-petticoats to laughter. If a number of them, she declared, were well mounted on Noddle’s Island, they would look more like engines of war for bombarding the town than ornaments of the fair sex; and she concludes by asking her sex, “whether they, who pay no Rates or Taxes, ought to take up more Room in the King’s Highway, than the Men, who yearly contribute to the Support of the Government.”

Another letter makes unmerciful fun of an Elegy upon the much Lamented Death of Mrs. Mehitebell Kitel, the wife of Mr. John Kitel, of Salem etc.

Two lines,

“Come let us mourn, for we have lost a
Wife, a Daughter, and a Sister,”

affords Silence an opportunity for some merry satire. Contrasting these lines with Dr. Watts’

“Gunston the Just, the Generous, and the Young,”

she says:

The latter (Watts) only mentions three Qualifications of *one* Person who was deceased, which therefore could raise Grief and Compassion but for *One*. Whereas the former, (*our most excellent Poet*) gives his Reader a Sort of an Idea of the Death of *Three Persons*, viz.

—a Wife, a Daughter, and a Sister,

which is *Three Times* as great a Loss as the Death of *One*, and consequently must raise *Three Times* as much Grief and Compassion in the Reader.

It was a pity, Silence added, that such an excellent piece should not be dignified with a particular name. Seeing that it could not justly be called either *Epic*, *Sapphic*, *Lyric* or *Pindaric*, nor any other name yet invented, she presumed it might (in honour and remembrance of the dead) be called the Kitelic.

The next letter on freedom of speech was, or purported to be, an extract from the *London Journal*, and is written in such a totally masculine spirit that the reader might well have exclaimed like Hugh Evans in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*: “I like not when a ‘oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler.” This is one of its masculine sentiments: “Who ever would overthrow the Liberty of a Nation, must begin by subduing the Freeness of Speech; a *Thing* Terrible to Publick Traytors.”

And this is another, phrased very much as Grover Cleveland might have phrased it. “The Administration of Government is nothing else but the Attendance of the *Trustees of the People* upon the Interest and Affairs of the People.”

The next letter inveighs against hypocritical pretenders to religion. It had for some time, Silence says, been a” question with her whether a commonwealth suffers more by hypocritical pretenders to religion, or by the openly profane; but she is inclined to think that the hypocrite is the most dangerous person of the two, especially if he sustains a post in the Government, and his conduct is considered as it regards the public. The local application of these remarks to Boston at the time could be left to take care of itself.

The next letter gives us another peep under Silence’s petticoats, for it advances a plan for the insurance of widows, worked out with actuarial precision, and bearing the unmistakable

earmarks of the projecting spirit of the founder of the Junto. "For my own Part," Silence ends, "I have nothing left to live on, but Contentment and a few Cows; and tho' I cannot expect to be reliev'd by this Project, yet it would be no small Satisfaction to me to See it put in Practice for the Benefit of Others."

The next letter contains a missive from Margaret After cast, a forlorn Virgin, well stricken in years and repentance, to Silence, in which the writer, prompted by the provision for widows proposed by Silence, begs her to form a project also for the relief of "all those penitent Mortals of the fair Sex, that are like to be punish'd with their Virginity until old Age, for the Pride and Insolence of their Youth."

The next letter is a clever discourse on drunkenness. It hints at the truth that Franklin afterwards insisted upon in the "Dialogue between Horatio and Philocles" that we must stint sensual pleasure to really enjoy it, and sets forth a vocabulary of cant terms for intoxication similar to that subsequently published by him in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

The next letter is on the forbidding subject of night-walkers. The familiarity that it exhibits with the peripatetic side of Boston Common after dark at that day makes it a little difficult for us to understand why Franklin" should ever have had occasion to tell us in the *Autobiography*, as he does, how on his second voyage from Boston to New York, a grave, sensible, matronlike Quakeress rescued him from the clutches of two young women, who afterwards proved to be a couple of thievish strumpets.

The final letter in the series is on the danger of religious zeal, if immoderate.

We have referred to these letters at some length, not only because they are not too immature to be even now read with pleasure for their wit and humor, but because they help to give us a still more faithful idea of the rebellious youth of Franklin, which, if it had not been so full of scornful protest against the whole system of New England Puritanism, might have shaded off, with the chastening effects of time, into too passive a type of liberalism for such a career as his.

From the Dogood letters Benjamin passed as we have seen to the editorship of the *Courant* and to the gibes at the Boston clergy and magistracy, which ended in his ignominious flight from that city. But never was there a time in his youth, however restive under the check-rein, when his love of books was not the chief resource of his life. When on his return from Boston to Philadelphia, after receiving his father's blessing, it was the fact that he had a great many books with him which led Governor Burnet of New York to send for him, and to show him his large library, and to discourse with him at considerable length about books and authors. He had previously begun to have "some acquaintance among the young people" of Philadelphia "that were lovers of reading," and subsequently came those academic strolls with Osborne, Watson and Ralph through the woods along the Schuylkill. And later even London, with all its tumult and dissipation, could not long extinguish his thirst for the sweet, cool wells of human thought and sentiment from which the soul" of a gifted boy drinks with such passionate eagerness. Circulating libraries were unknown at that time, but he agreed on reasonable terms with Wilcox, a bookseller, with an immense collection of second-hand books, whose shop was next door to his place of lodging in Little Britain, that he might take home and read and return any of his wares. We have already quoted the passages in the *Autobiography* in which he tells us that, during the eighteen months that he was in London in his youth, he spent little upon himself except in seeing plays, and for books; and that he read considerably.

The *Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, which he wrote while in London, of little value as it was in itself, yet also aided in confirming his literary tendencies;

for it arrested the attention of Lyons, the author of *The Infallibility of Human Judgment*, who introduced him to Bernard Mandeville, the author of the *Fable of the Bees*, “a most facetious, entertaining companion,” and Dr. Henry Pemberton, the author of *A View of Sir I. Newton’s Philosophy*.

The love of reading, thus acquired by Franklin in early life, never deserted him, and was afterwards strengthened by his own ever-increasing library, which, before his death, became so large that he had to build a spacious room for its reception at his home in Philadelphia, the books owned by the other members of the Junto, the extensive library of James Logan at Stenton, and the collections of the Philadelphia Library Company. Even when his private business was too exacting to allow him time for any other form of recreation, he still found time for reading, including the acquirement of several modern languages, and the consequence was that, when he began to write in earnest, he was well supplied with all the materials for literary workmanship.

While Franklin never became a professional writer, he was very scrupulous about the typographical dress of what he wrote and not a little of a purist in his choice of words. Nor does he seem to have been less averse than authors usually are to editorial mutilation. Among his letters is one to Woodfall, the printer of Junius’ Letters, asking him to take care that the compositor observed “strictly the Italicking, Capitalling and Pointing” of the copy enclosed with the letter. Referring in a letter to William Franklin to a reprint in the *London Chronicle* of his “Edict by the King of Prussia,” he said:

It is reprinted in the *Chronicle*, where you will see it, but stripped of all the capitalizing and italicizing, that intimate the allusions and mark the emphasis of written discourses, to bring them as near as possible to those spoken: printing such a piece all in one even small character, seems to me like repeating one of Whitefield’s sermons in the monotony of a schoolboy.

On another occasion he was led by the alterations made in the text of one of his papers to write to William Franklin in these terms: “The editor of that paper, one Jones, seems a Grenvillian, or is very cautious, as you will see by his corrections and omissions. He has drawn the teeth and pared the nails of my paper, so that it can neither scratch nor bite.”

Among the many delightful letters of Franklin is one that he wrote in his extreme old age to Noah Webster, acknowledging the receipt of a copy of the latter’s *Dissertations on the English Language*, and applauding his zeal for preserving the purity of the English language both in its expressions and pronunciation; and in correcting the popular errors into which several of the States were continually falling with respect to both. In this letter, the writer again takes occasion to reprobate the use in New England of the word “improved” in the sense of “employed.” The word in that signification appears to have been decidedly obnoxious to him, for he had previously banned it in a letter to Jared Eliot. Among the ludicrous instances that he gave in his letter to Webster of its use in its perverted sense was an obituary statement to the effect that a certain deceased country gentleman had been for more than thirty years *improved* as a justice of the peace. He also found, he said, that, during his absence in France, several newfangled words had been introduced into the parliamentary vocabulary of America, such as the verb formed from the substantive “Notice,” as “*I should not have NOTICED this, were it not that the Gentleman, &c.,*” the verb formed from the substantive “Advocate,” as “*the Gentleman who ADVOCATES or has ADVOCATED that Motion, &c.,*” and the verb formed from the substantive “progress,” the most awkward and abominable of the three, as “*the committee, having PROGRESSED resolved to adjourn.*” He also found that the word “opposed,” though not a new word, was used in a new manner, as “*the Gentlemen who are OPPOSED to this Measure.*” From these verbal criticisms he

passed to the advantages that had inured to the French language from obtaining the universal currency in Europe previously enjoyed by Latin. It was perhaps, he thought, owing to the fact that Voltaire's treatise on Toleration was written in French that it had exerted so sudden and so great an effect on the bigotry of Europe as almost entirely to disarm it. The English language bid fair to occupy a place only second to that of the French, and the effort therefore should be to relieve it still more of all the difficulties, however small, which discouraged its more general diffusion. A book, ill-printed, or a pronunciation in speaking, not well articulated, would render a sentence unintelligible, which from a clear print, or a distinct speaker, would have been immediately comprehended.

Instead of diminishing, however, the obstacles to the extension of the English language, Franklin declared, had increased. The practice, for illustration, of beginning" all substantives with a capital letter, which had done so much to promote intelligibility, had been laid aside. And so, from the same fondness for an even and uniform appearance, had been the practice of italicizing important words, or words which should be emphasized when read. Another innovation was the use of the short round s instead of the long one which had formerly served so well to distinguish a word readily by its varied aspect. Certainly the omission of these prominent letters made the line appear more even, but it rendered it less immediately legible; as the paring all men's noses might smooth and level their faces, but would render their physiognomies less distinguishable. All these, Franklin said, were improvements backwards, and classed with them too should be the modern fancy that gray printing—read with difficulty by old eyes—unless in a very strong light and with good glasses, was more beautiful than black. A comparison between a volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, printed between the years 1731 and 1740, and one printed in the last ten years would demonstrate the contrary. Lord Chesterfield pleasantly remarked this difference to Faulkener, the printer of the *Dublin Journal*, when he was vainly making encomiums on his own paper as the most complete of any in the world. "But, Mr. Faulkener," said my Lord, "don't you think it might be still farther improved by using Paper and Ink not quite so near of a Colour"? Another point in favor of clear and distinct printing was that it afforded the eye, when it was being read aloud, an opportunity to take a look forward in time to supply the voice with the proper modulations for coming words. But, if words were obscurely printed or disguised by omitting the capitals and the long s, or otherwise, the reader was apt to modulate wrong, and, finding that he had done so, would be obliged to go back, and begin the sentence again, with a loss of pleasure to his hearers."

Two features, however, of the old system of printing did not meet with the approval of Franklin. It was absurd to place the interrogation point at the end of a sentence where it is not descried until it is too late for the inflection of interrogation to be given. The practice of the Spanish of putting this point at the beginning of the sentence was more sensible. The same reasoning was applicable to the practice of putting the stage direction "aside" at the end of a sentence.

Nice, however, as were the prejudices of Franklin with respect to the use of words, some of his own did not escape the vigilant purism of Hume, who, notwithstanding his admiration for Franklin, as the first great man of letters produced by America, was, where fastidious diction was concerned, not unlike John Randolph of Roanoke, whose exquisite fidelity to correct English impelled him even on his death-bed, when asked whether he *lay* easily, to reply with marked emphasis, "I *lie* as easily as a dying man can." After reading Franklin's Canada pamphlet and essay on Population, Hume took exception to several of his expressions; as is shown by one of the latter's letters to him.

I thank you [wrote Franklin] for your friendly admonition relating to some unusual words in the pamphlet. It will be of service to me. The “*pejorate*” and the “*colonize*,” since they are not in common use here, I give up as bad; for certainly in writings intended for persuasion and for general information, one can not be too clear; and every expression in the least obscure is a fault. The “*unshakeable*” too, though clear, I give up as rather low. The introducing new words, where we are already possessed of old ones sufficiently expressive, I confess must be generally wrong, as it tends to change the language; yet, at the same time, I can not but wish the usage of our tongue permitted making new words, when we want them, by composition of old ones whose meanings are already well understood. The German allows of it, and it is a common” practice with their writers. Many of our present English words were originally so made; and many of the Latin words. In point of clearness, such compound words would have the advantage of any we can borrow from the ancient or from foreign languages. For instance, the word *inaccessible*, though long in use among us, is not yet, I dare say, so universally understood by our people, as the word *uncomeatable* would immediately be, which we are not allowed to write. But I hope with you, that we shall always in America make the best English of this Island our standard, and I believe it will be so.

Franklin has left behind him his own conception of what constitutes a good piece of writing.

To be good [he says] it ought to have a tendency to benefit the reader, by improving his virtue or his knowledge. But, not regarding the intention of the author, the method should be just; that is, it should proceed regularly from things known to things unknown, distinctly and clearly without confusion. The words used should be the most expressive that the language affords, provided that they are the most generally understood. Nothing should be expressed in two words that can be as well expressed in one; that is, no synonymes should be used, or very rarely, but the whole should be as short as possible, consistent with clearness; the words should be so placed as to be agreeable to the ear in reading; summarily it should be smooth, clear and short, for the contrary qualities are displeasing.

Though entirely familiar, as we know from one of his letters, with the fate that befell Gil Blas, when he was so imprudent as to comply with the invitation of his master, the Archbishop, Franklin did not shrink from the peril of telling Benjamin Vaughan at his request what the faults of his writings were; and the terms in which he performed this delicate and hazardous office were suggested in part at least by his own methods of composition.”

Your language [he told Vaughan] seems to me to be good and pure, and your sentiments generally just; but your style of composition wants perspicuity, and this I think owing principally to a neglect of method. What I would therefore recommend to you is, that, before you sit down to write on any subject, you would spend some days in considering it, putting down at the same time, in short hints, every thought which occurs to you as proper to make a part of your intended piece. When you have thus obtained a collection of the thoughts, examine them carefully with this view, to find which of them is properest to be presented *first* to the mind of the reader that he, being possessed of that, may the more easily understand it, and be better disposed to receive what you intend for the *second*; and thus I would have you put a figure before each thought, to mark its future place in your composition. For so, every preceding proposition preparing the mind for that which is to follow, and the reader often anticipating it, he proceeds with ease, and pleasure, and approbation, as seeming continually to meet with his own thoughts. In this mode you have a better chance for a

perfect production; because the mind attending first to the sentiments alone, next to the method alone, each part is likely to be better performed, and I think too in less time.

The writings of Franklin as a whole were true to his literary ideals, for they are, as a rule, smooth, clear and short; and the paper of preliminary hints that he drew up for the composition of the *Autobiography* was in accord with his advice to Vaughan in regard to the value of such aids to perspicuity. His familiar letters, agreeable as they are, bear evidence at times of haste and lack of revision, and even his more informal writings, other than letters, occasionally betray a certain sort of carelessness of construction and expression. This is conspicuously true of the *Autobiography*, and, indeed, it is one of the merits of that work, so perfectly is it in keeping with its easy, meandering narrative. But, generally speaking, the compositions of Franklin are fully in harmony with his best standards of literary accomplishment. They are flowing and euphonious," moving with a steady, smooth and sometimes powerful, current from things known to things unknown, distinctly and lucidly without confusion. They are as clear as a trout stream. If one of his sentences is read a second time, it is not for his meaning, but merely for a renewal of the gratification that the mind derives from a thought presented free from the slightest trace of intercepting obscurity. They are so concise that the endeavor to make an abstract of one of them is likely to result in a sacrifice of brevity. But smoothness, clearness, and brevity, are far from being the only merits of Franklin's writings. He was not richly endowed with imagination; though he was by no means destitute of that sovereign faculty; placid and sober as the ordinary operations of his mind were. But Fancy, the graceful sister of Imagination, Invention, Wit and Humor, and remarkable powers of statement and reasoning, all, except humor in its more wayward moods, under the complete sway of a sound judgment, gave life and strength to almost all that he wrote. His similes and metaphors are often strikingly original and apt; never more so than when they light up with a sudden flash the dark core of some abstruse scientific problem. A vivacity of spirits that nothing could long depress, accompanied by a quick but kindly sense of the ludicrous rises like bubbles of mellow wine to the surface of his intimate letters, and other lighter compositions; and, when associated with conceptions lured from the bright heaven of invention, and elaborated with the utmost finish, as in the case of his *Bagatelles*, imparts to his productions a quality that does not belong to any but the best creations of literary genius. It is interesting to note how even the most intractable subject, the new-invented Pennsylvania fireplace, smoky chimneys, interest calculations become suffused with some sort of intellectual charm, born of absolute transparency of speech, if nothing else, as soon as they pass through the luminous" and tapestried cells of his spacious mind. That mind, indeed, like all minds of the same comprehensive character, in which the balance has not been lost between the subjective and objective faculties, was prone to see everything in large pictorial outlines. Fable, epilogue, parable, a story that was not so much the jest of a moment as the wisdom of all time, a historical incident, that pointed some grave moral, or enforced some invaluable truth, came naturally to his mind as they might well do to the minds of all men who are creed-founders, or teachers, in any sense, on a large scale, of the mass of men, as he was. How naturally such methods of instruction belonged to him is well illustrated in the story told of him by John Adams. One evening, at a social gathering, shortly before he left England, at the close of his second mission to that country, a gentleman expressed the opinion that writers like Æsop and La Fontaine had exhausted the resources of fable. Franklin, so far from concurring with this view, declared that many new and instructive fables could still be invented, and, when asked whether he could think of one, replied that, if he was furnished with pen and paper, he would produce one forthwith. The pen and paper were handed to him, and, in a few minutes, he summed up the existing relations between England and America in this fable:

Once upon a time, an eagle, scaling round a farmer's barn, and espying a hare, darted down upon him like a sunbeam, seized him in his claws, and remounted with him in the air. He soon found that he had a creature of more courage and strength than a hare; for which, notwithstanding the keenness of his eyesight, he had mistaken a cat. The snarling and scrambling of the prey was very inconvenient; and, what was worse, she had disengaged herself from his talons, grasped his body with her four limbs, so as to stop his breath, and seized fast hold of his throat with her teeth. "Pray," said the eagle, "let go your hold, and I will release you." "Very" fine," said the cat, "I have no fancy to fall from this height, and be crushed to death. You have taken me up, and you shall stoop, and let me down." The eagle thought it necessary to stoop accordingly.

In the course of the preceding pages, we have had occasion to refer at considerable length to not a few of Franklin's writings, but by no means to all. Among the best of his published pamphlets, is the one entitled *The Interest of Great Britain considered with regard to her Colonies and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadeloupe*. Remarkable as it may now seem, when the peace of 1763 between Great Britain and France was approaching, there was some division of opinion in the former country as to whether she should insist upon the cession by France to her of Canada or Guadeloupe, then one of the rich sugar islands of the West Indies; and the object of this pamphlet was to establish the superior claims of Canada. It is written with great lucidity and force of argument, and is especially valuable for its revelations of the extent to which the acquisition of Canada by England was opposed in England for fear that it would tend to augment the power and precipitate the independence of the American Colonies. Richard Jackson is alleged to have had a share in its composition, exactly what Benjamin Vaughan was unable to say after a careful investigation before the publication of his edition of Franklin's writings in 1779. For our part, we find it difficult to believe that he could have had any considerable share in its production. Internal evidences of authorship are undoubtedly misleading, but it is hard to read this paper, so similar to Franklin's other pamphlets in point of peculiarities of diction and method without exclaiming, "St. Dunstan or the Devil!" Its intimate, nay perfect, familiarity with Indian habits and characteristics could not well have been possessed by anyone who had never personally mixed with the Indians," and formed his knowledge of them from his own and other first-hand information. The arguments, too, employed in the pamphlet to allay English jealousy of colonial aggrandizement, are the same that are found scattered through Franklin's other writings. There is also the fact that the authorship of the paper is referred to in the paper itself throughout in the first person singular. There is also the fact that in the same letter to Hume, in which Franklin disclaims the authorship of the *Historical Review*, he told him, in reply to one of his criticisms, that he gave up as rather low the word "unshakeable," used in the Canada pamphlet, but said nothing to indicate that the pamphlet was not wholly his own. More conclusive are the words in the paper of hints upon which the composition of the *Autobiography* was based. "*Canada delenda est*. My Pamphlet. Its reception and effect." Certainly a man, whose relations to his own productions were always marked by an uncommon degree of modesty, if not of indifference, and whose generosity in awarding due credit to the labors of others was one of his most striking and laudable qualities, was scarcely the man to have used such words as these about a pamphlet, mainly or largely the work of another hand. There is besides the fact that in the Franklin collection of the Pennsylvania Historical Society there is a copy of the pamphlet indorsed in the handwriting of Franklin as presented "to the Rev. Dr. Mayhew, from his humble servt, the Author."

In view of these circumstances we should say that the probabilities decidedly are that the connection of Jackson with the pamphlet, whatever it may have been, was of a purely subordinate character.

The papers, written by Franklin from time to time during the controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies, before the sword grew too impatient to remain in its scabbard, such as his letters to the *London Chronicle* and the *London Public Advertiser*, his Answers to Strahan's *Queries respecting American Affairs*, his essay on *Toleration in Old England and New England*, his *Tract relative to the Affair of Hutchinson's Letters*, and his *Account of Negotiations in London for effecting a Reconciliation between Great Britain and the American Colonies* were, taken as a whole, pamphleteering or narration of a very interesting and effective order. The substance of the majority of them is found in his Examination before the House of Commons, as the quintessence of most that is best in *Poor Richard's Almanac* is found in Father Abraham's Speech. They are written, as a rule, in a singularly clear and readable style, present with unusual skill and cogency all the points of the colonial argument, and display the insight of an almost faultlessly honest and sane intelligence into the true obligations and interests of the mother country and her disaffected children. Among these graver productions, Franklin also contributed to the American controversy, in addition to the humorous letter to the press, in which he held up to English ignorance of America, as one of the finest spectacles in nature, the grand leap of the whale, in his chase of the cod up Niagara Falls, two papers worthy of the satirical genius of Swift. One is his *Edict by the King of Prussia* and the other is his *Rules by Which a Great Empire May be Reduced to a Small One*. In the first piece, Frederick the Great is gravely credited with an edict, in which, after reciting that Great Britain was colonized in the beginning by subjects of his renowned ducal ancestors, led by Hengist, Horsa, Hella, Uff, Cerdicus, Ida and others, he proceeds to impose *seriatim* upon the English descendants of these German colonists in terms, exactly like those employed by the prohibitory and restrictive statutes of Great Britain, bearing upon the commerce and industry of America, all the disabilities and burdens under which America labored. The parallel is sustained with unbroken spirit and the happiest irony from beginning to end. After all the manacles by which the freedom of America was restrained have been duly fastened by the arbitrary mandates of the edict upon Great Britain herself, it concludes with these words:

We flatter ourselves, that these our royal regulations and commands will be thought just and reasonable by our much-favoured colonists in England; the said regulations being copied from their statutes of 10 and 11 William III. c. 10, 5 Geo. II. c. 22, 23 Geo. II. c. 29, 4 Geo. I. c. 11, and from other equitable laws made by their parliaments; or from instructions given by their Princes; or from resolutions of both Houses, entered into for the good government of their *own colonies in Ireland and America*.

The second paper commences in this manner:

“An ancient Sage boasted, that, tho' he could not fiddle, he knew how to make a *great city* of a *little one*. The science that I, a modern simpleton, am about to communicate, is the very reverse.” Then, assuming as a postulate that a great empire, like a great cake, is most easily diminished at the edges, the paper goes on to point out one by one as the best means for reducing such an empire to a small one the very British policies and abuses that were then producing incurable disaffection in the mind of America, and menacing the power and prestige of Great Britain herself. These two papers, though clothed in forms that belong to literature rather than to politics, assert the whole case of the Colonies against Great Britain almost, if not altogether, as fully as the Declaration of Independence afterwards did. They have in every respect the polished completeness given by Franklin to all the productions of his pen that called for the exercise of true literary art, and deserve to be included in any separate publication of the best creations of his literary genius. They both met with the popular favor that they merited. The Rules was read with such eagerness that it was reprinted

in the *Public Advertiser* at the request of many individuals and some associations of individuals, and this notwithstanding the fact that it had been copied in several other newspapers and *The Gentleman's Magazine*. So great was the demand for the issue of the *Advertiser*, in which the Edict appeared, that, the day after its appearance, Franklin's clerk could obtain but two copies of it, though he endeavored to obtain more both at the office of the *Advertiser* and elsewhere. Its authorship being unknown except to a few of the writer's friends, he had the pleasure besides, he tells us, of hearing it spoken of in the highest terms as the keenest and severest piece that had been published in London for a long time. Lord Mansfield, he was informed, said of it that it was very able and artful indeed, and would do mischief by giving in England a bad impression of the measures of government, and in the Colonies by encouraging them in their contumacy. Among the persons taken in by its apparent genuineness was Paul Whitehead.

I was down at Lord Le Despencer's [Franklin wrote to William Franklin] when the post brought that day's papers. Mr. Whitehead was there, too, (Paul Whitehead, the author of *Manners*,) who runs early through all the papers, and tells the company what he finds remarkable. He had them in another room, and we were chatting in the breakfast parlour, when he came running in to us, out of breath, with the paper in his hand. Here! says he, here's news for ye! *Here's the King of Prussia, claiming a right to this kingdom!* All stared, and I as much as anybody; and he went on to read it. When he had read two or three paragraphs, a gentleman present said, *Damn his impudence, I dare say, we shall hear by next post that he is upon his march with one hundred thousand men to back this.* Whitehead who is very shrewd, soon after began to smoke it, and looking in my face said, *I'll be hanged if this is not some of your American jokes upon us.* The reading went on, and ended with abundance of laughing, and a general verdict that it was a fair hit; and the piece was cut out of the paper and preserved in My Lord's collection.

There are some humorous passages in other contributions made by Franklin, in one assumed character or another, to the American controversy. The dialogue as well as the fable was, as the reader is aware, one of his striking methods of arresting popular attention when he wished to make an impression upon the popular mind. In an anonymous letter to the *Public Advertiser*, he undertook to defend Dr. Franklin from the charge of ingratitude to the Ministry, which had, it was alleged, given him the Post Office of America, offered him a post of five hundred a year in the Salt Office, if he would relinquish the interests of his country and made his son a colonial governor. As it was a settled point in government in England that every man had his price, it was plain, the letter declared, that the English Ministers were bunglers in their business, and had not given him enough. Their Master had as much reason to be angry with them as Rodrigue in the play with his apothecary for not effectually poisoning Pandolpho, and they must probably make use of the Apothecary's Justification, as urged in the following colloquy:

Scene IV. *Rodrigue* and *Fell*, the Apothecary

Rodrigue. You promised to have this Pandolpho upon his Bier in less than a Week; 'tis more than a Month since, and he still walks and stares me in the face.

Fell. True and yet I have done my best Endeavours. In various ways I have given the Miscreant as much Poison as would have kill'd an Elephant. He has swallow'd Dose after Dose; far from hurting him, he seems the better for it. He hath a wonderfully strong Constitution. I find I can not kill him but by cutting his Throat, and that, as I take it, is not my Business.

Rodrigue. Then it must be mine.

Another letter, signed "A Londoner," illustrates the difficulty which the sober good-sense of Franklin, always" disposed to reduce things to their material terms, experienced in understanding the recklessness with which the British Government was hazarding the commercial value of the colonies.

To us in the Way of Trade comes now, and has long come [he said] all the superlucration arising from their Labours. But will our reviling them as Cheats, Hypocrites, Scoundrels, Traitors, Cowards, Tyrants, &c., &c., according to the present Court Mode in all our Papers, make them more our Friends, more fond of our Merchandise? Did ever any Tradesmen succeed, who attempted to drub Customers into his Shop? And will honest John Bull, the Farmer, be long satisfied with Servants, that before his Face attempt to kill his *Plow Horses*?

In his eager desire to influence public sentiment in England in behalf of the Colonies, Franklin even devised and distributed a rude copper plate engraving, visualizing the woful condition to which Great Britain would be reduced, if she persisted in her harsh and unwise conduct towards her colonies. Many impressions of this engraving were struck off at his request on the cards which he occasionally used in writing his notes, and the design he also had printed for circulation on half sheets of paper with an explanation and a moral of his composition. The details of the illustration, which are all duly elucidated in the explanation, are those of abject and irredeemable ruin. The limbs of Britannia, duly labelled Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York and New England respectively, lie scattered about her, and she herself, with her eyes and arm stumps, uplifted to Heaven, is seen sliding off the globe, with a streamer inscribed *Date Obolum Bellisario* thrown across all that remains of her legs. Her shield, which she is unable to handle, lies useless by her side. The leg, labelled New England, has been transfixed by her lance. The hand of the arm, labelled Pennsylvania, has released its grasp upon a small spray of laurel. The English oak" has lost its crown, and stands a bare trunk with briars and thorns at its feet, and a single dry branch sticks out from its side. In the background are Britannia's ships with brooms at their topmastheads denoting that they are for sale. The moral of the whole was that the Thames and the Ohio, Edinburgh and Dublin were all one, and that invidious discriminations in favor of one part of the Empire to the prejudice of the rest could not fail to be attended with the most disastrous consequences to the whole State.

Nothing produced by Franklin between the date of his return from his second mission to England and his departure from America for France needs to be noticed. The two or three papers from his pen, which belong to this period, are distinctly below his ordinary standards of composition. Nor are any of the graver writings composed by him during the remainder of his life with some exceptions very noteworthy. In one, his comparison of Great Britain and the United States in regard to the basis of credit in the two countries, he presented with no little ability the proposition that, by reason of general industry, frugality, ability, prudence and virtue, America was a much safer debtor than Britain; to say nothing of the satisfaction that generous minds were bound to feel in reflecting that by loans to America they were opposing tyranny, and aiding the cause of liberty, which was the cause of all mankind. The object of this paper was to forward the loan of two millions of pounds sterling that the United States were desirous of procuring abroad. Unfortunately, the matter was one not to be settled by argument but by the Bourse, which has a barometric reasoning of its own. In another paper, thrown into the form of a catechism, Franklin, by a series of clever questions and answers, brings to the attention of the world the fact that it would take one hundred and forty-eight years, one hundred and nine days and twenty-two" hours for a man to count the English

national debt, though he counted at the rate of one hundred shillings per minute, during twelve hours of each day. That the shillings, making up this enormous sum, would weigh sixty-one millions, seven hundred and fifty-two thousand, four hundred and seventy-six Troy pounds, that it would take three hundred and fourteen ships, of one hundred tons each, or thirty-one thousand, four hundred and fifty-two carts to move them, and that, if laid close together in a straight line, they would stretch more than twice around the circumference of the earth, are other facts elicited by the questions of the catechism. It concludes in this manner:

Q. When will government be able to pay the principal?

A. When there is more money in England's treasury than there is in all Europe.

Q. And when will that be?

A. Never.

This was very ingenious and clever, and has been imitated a hundred times over since by *ad captandum* statisticians, but it needed an interest default on the part of John Bull to make it effective.

Franklin's conceit in the Edict that Saxony was as much the mother country of England as England was of America was, it must be admitted, made to do rather more than its share of service. It reappeared in his *Vindication and Offer from Congress to Parliament*, when, in repelling the charge that America was ungrateful to England, he said that there was much more reason for retorting that charge on Britain which not only never contributed any aid, nor afforded, by an exclusive commerce, any advantages, to Saxony, *her* mother country, but no longer since than the last war, without the least provocation, subsidized the King of Prussia, while he ravaged that mother country, and carried fire and sword into its capital, the fine City of Dresden."

The same conceit also reappeared a second time in the *Dialogue between Britain, France, Spain, Holland, Saxony and America*, which he wrote soon after he arrived in France as one of our envoys. In this lively dialogue, Britain beseeches Spain, France and Holland successively not to supply America with arms. Spain reminds her of her intervention in behalf of the Dutch, and expresses surprise at her impudence. France reminds her of her intervention in behalf of the Huguenots, and tells her that she must be a little silly, and Holland ends by informing her defiantly that, with the prospect of a good market for brimstone, she, Holland, would make no scruple of even sending her ships to Hell, and supplying the Devil with it. America then takes a hand, and denounces Britain as a bloodthirsty bully, to which Britain replies as quickly as her choking rage will permit by denouncing America as a wicked—Whig-Presbyterian—serpent. To this America rejoins with the statement that she will not surrender her liberty and property but with her life, and some additional statements which cause Britain to exclaim: "You impudent b—h! Am not I your Mother Country? Is that not a sufficient Title to your Respect and Obedience?" At this point Saxony, for the first time breaks in:

"*Mother Country!* Hah, hah, he! What Respect have *you* the front to claim as a Mother Country? You know that *I* am *your* Mother Country, and yet you pay me none. Nay, it is but the other day, that you hired Ruffians to rob me on the Highway, and burn my House. For shame! Hide your Face and hold your Tongue. If you continue this Conduct, you will make yourself the Contempt of Europe!"

This is too much for even the assurance of the dauntless termagant who, before the American war was over, was to be engaged in conflict at one time with every one of the other parties to the dialogue except Saxony."

“O Lord,” she exclaims in despair, “where are my friends?” The question does not remain long unanswered.

“France, Spain, Holland, and Saxony, all together. Friends! Believe us, you have none, nor ever will have any, ‘till you mend your Manners. How can we, who are your Neighbours, have any regard for you, or expect any Equity from you, should your Power increase, when we see how basely and unjustly you have us’d both your own Mother—and your own Children?”

With such rollicking fun, did Franklin, beguile his Gibeonite tasks.

A letter of information to those who would remove to America, an essay on the *Elective Franchises enjoyed by the Small Boroughs in England*, the three essays on Smoky Chimneys, the New Stove, and Maritime Topics, *The Retort Courteous*, in which some pithy reasons were given why Americans were slow in paying their old debts to British merchants, the *Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia*, the *Address of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage*, the *Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks*, the essay on *The Internal State of America* and the paper on *Good Whig Principles* make up the bulk of the graver pamphlets and papers written by Franklin between the beginning of his mission to France and his death. Some, if not all, of them have already come in for our attention, and most of them invite no special comment. All, like everything that he wrote, even the *marginalia* on the books that he read, have some kind of salt in them that keeps them sweet, assert itself as time will.

Other serious papers of Franklin, not inspired by political motives, belong to an earlier date, and, with the exception of those, to which we have more than barely” referred in previous chapters of this book, call for a word of comment. Two, *The Hints for Those that would be Rich* and the *Advice to a Young Tradesman* are merely echoes of *Poor Richard’s Almanac* but are good examples of the teachings that make Franklin the most effective of all propagandists. “He that loses 5s. not only loses that Sum, but all the Advantage that might be made by turning it in Dealing, which, by the time that a young Man becomes old, amounts to a comfortable Bag of Money.” This is a typical sentence taken from the Hints. After reading such a discourse as the *Advice to a Young Tradesman*, it is easy enough to see why it was that pecuniary truisms took on new life when vitalized by the mind of Franklin. Money he tells the young tradesman is of the prolific, generating nature. “He that kills a breeding sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds.” The young novice is also told that the most trifling actions that affect a man’s credit are to be regarded. “The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but, if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day.” The paper ends with this pointed sermon:

In short, the way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, *industry* and *frugality*; that is, waste neither *time* nor *money*, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality nothing will do, and with them everything. He that gets all he can honestly, and saves all he gets (necessary expenses excepted) will certainly become *rich*, if that Being who governs the world, to whom all should look for a blessing on their honest endeavours, doth not, in his wise providence, otherwise determine.

Scattered through the works of Franklin are various miscellaneous productions of no slight literary value. The *Parable against Persecution* was an ancient conception, old, we are told

by Jeremy Taylor in his *Liberty of Prophesying*, as the Jews' Books. Franklin never claimed more credit for it, as he stated in a letter to Vaughan, "than what related to the style, and the addition of the concluding threatening and promise." These qualifications, however, leave him quite a different measure of credit from that of an artist who merely touches up a portrait by another hand, as a perusal of the parable will satisfy any reader. The incident, upon which the story turns, is the reception by Abraham into his tent of a stranger who fails to bless God at meat. Abraham expels him from the tent with blows for not worshipping the most high God, Creator of Heaven and Earth; only to be rebuked by the Almighty in these impressive words: "Have I borne with him these hundred and ninety and eight years, and nourished him, and cloathed him, notwithstanding his rebellion against me; and couldst not thou, who art thyself a sinner, bear with him one night?"

Only less felicitous was Franklin's *Parable on Brotherly Love*. Simeon, Levi and Judah are successively denied by their brother Reuben the use of an axe which he had bought of the Ishmaelite merchants, and which he highly prized. Therefore, they buy axes themselves from the Ishmaelites, and, as luck will have it, while Reuben is hewing timber on the river bank, his axe slips into the water and is lost. Reuben then applies to each of his three brothers in turn for the use of their axes. Simeon reminds him of his selfishness, and flatly refuses. Levi reproaches him, but adds that he will be better than he, and will lend his axe to him. Reuben, however, is too ashamed to accept it. Judah, seeing the grief and shame in his countenance, anticipates the request and exclaims, "My brother, I know thy loss; but why should it trouble thee?" Lo, have I not an axe that will serve both thee and me!" And then the lovely parable continues in these words:

And Reuben fell on his neck, and kissed him, with tears, saying, "Thy kindness is great, but thy goodness in forgiving me is greater. Thou art indeed my brother, and whilst I live, will I surely love thee."

And Judah said, "Let us also love our other brethren: behold, are we not all of one blood?" And Joseph saw these things, and reported them to his father Jacob.

And Jacob said, "Reuben did wrong, but he repented. Simeon also did wrong; and Levi was not altogether blameless. But the heart of Judah is princely. Judah hath the soul of a king. His father's children shall bow down before him, and he shall rule over his brethren."

The papers contributed by Franklin to the *Busy-Body* and the *Pennsylvania Gazette* clearly indicate the influence of Addison and Steele. The Ridentius and Eugenius of the second issue, Ridentius, the wight, who gave himself an hour's diversion on the cock of a man's hat, the heels of his shoes or on one of his unguarded expressions or personal defects, Eugenius who preferred to make himself a public jest rather than be at the pains of seeing his friend in confusion, pale phantoms though they be, are palpably imitations of the Spectator and Tatler. So are the Cato of the third issue of the *Busy-Body*, whose countenance revealed habits of virtue that made one forget his homespun linen and seven days' beard, and the Cretico of the same issue, the "sowre Philosopher" who commanded nothing better from his dependents than the submissive deportment, which was like the worship paid by the Indians to the Devil.

Unlike these characters, the Patience of the fourth issue of the *Busy-Body* is a real creature of flesh and blood. She writes to the Busy-Body for advice, informing him that she is a single woman, and keeps a shop in the town for her" livelihood, and has a certain neighbor, who is really agreeable company enough, and has for some time been an intimate of hers, but who, of late, has tried her out of all patience by her frequent and long visits. She cannot do a thing in the world but this friend must know all about it, and her friend has besides two children

just big enough to run about and do petty mischief, who accompany their mother on her visits and put things in the shop out of sorts; so that the writer has all the trouble and pesterment of children without the pleasure—of calling them her own.

Pray, Sir [concludes the unhappy Patience], tell me what I shall do; and talk a little against such unreasonable Visiting in your next Paper; tho' I would not have her affronted with me for a great Deal, for sincerely I love her and her Children, as well, I think, as a Neighbour can, and she buys a great many Things in a Year at my Shop. But I would beg her to consider that she uses me unmercifully, Tho' I believe it is only for want of Thought. But I have twenty Things more to tell you besides all this: There is a handsome Gentleman, that has a Mind (I don't question) to make love to me, but he can't get the least Opportunity to—O dear! here she comes again; I must conclude, yours, &c.

This letter is made the subject of some sensible comments by the *Busy-Body* on the importance of remembering the words of the Wise Man, "Withdraw thy Foot from the House of thy Neighbour, lest he grow weary of thee, and so hate thee." Later the same caution was to be conveyed in Poor Richard's, "Fish and Visitors smell after three days." The paper ends with the approval by the *Busy-Body* of the Turkish practice of admonishing guests that it is time for them to go, without actually asking them to do so, by having a chafing dish with the grateful incense of smoking aloes rising from it brought into the room and applied to their beards."

Even more lifelike than Patience are Anthony Afterwit, Celia Single, Mr. and Mrs. Careless and Alice Addertongue, the figures brought to our eye by the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Indeed, Addison himself would have had no occasion to be ashamed of them, if they had been figments of his own fancy. In his letter to the editor of the *Gazette*, Anthony Afterwit told him that about the time that he first addressed his spouse her father let it be known that, if she married a man of his liking, he would give two hundred pounds with her on the day of marriage, and that he had made some fine plans, and had even, in some measure, neglected his business on the strength of this assurance, but that, when the old gentleman saw that the writer was pretty well engaged, he, without assigning any reason, grew very angry, forbade him the house and told his daughter that, if she married him, he would not give her a farthing. However (as the father foresaw), he stole a wedding, and took his wife to his house, where they were not in quite so poor a condition as the couple described in the Scotch song who had

"Neither Pot nor Pan,

But four bare Legs together,"

for he had a house tolerably furnished for an ordinary man. His wife, however, was strongly inclined to be a gentlewoman. His old-fashioned looking-glass was one day broke, "*No Mortal could tell which way*," she said, and was succeeded by a large fashionable one. This in turn led to another table more suitable to such a glass, and the new table to some very handsome chairs. Thus, by degrees, he found all his old furniture stored up in the garret and everything below altered for the better.

Then, on one pretext or another, came along a tea-table with all its appurtenances of china and silver, a maid, a clock, and a pacing mare, for which he paid twenty pounds. The result was that, receiving a very severe" dun, which mentioned the next court, he began in earnest to project relief. His dear having gone over the river the preceding Monday to see a relation, and stay a fortnight, because she could not bear the heat of the town, he took his turn at alterations. He dismissed the maid, bag and baggage; he sold the pacing mare, and bought a good milch cow with three pounds of the money; he disposed of the tea-table, and put a

spinning wheel in its place; he stuffed nine empty tea canisters with flax, and with some of the money, derived from the sale of the tea-furniture, he bought a set of knitting needles; “for to tell you a truth, which I would have go no farther,” added honest Anthony, “*I begin to want stockings.*” The stately clock he transformed into an hour glass, by which he had gained a good round sum, and one of the pieces of the old looking-glass, squared and framed, supplied the place of the old one. In short, the face of things was quite changed, and he had paid his debts and found money in his pocket. His good dame was expected home next Friday, and, if she could conform with his new scheme of living, they would be the happiest couple, perhaps, in the Province, and, by the blessings of God, might soon be in thriving circumstances. He had reserved the great glass for her, and he would allow her, when she came in, to be taken suddenly ill with the *headache*, the *stomachache*, the fainting fits, or whatever other disorder she might think more proper, and she might retire to bed as soon as she pleased, but, if he did not find her in perfect health, both of body and mind, the next morning, away would go the aforesaid great glass, with several other trinkets, to the *vendue* that very day.

That the wife of Anthony did succumb to the situation, we know, for it was an unfortunate reference to her that caused Celia Single to write her letter to the editor of the *Gazette*. During the morning of the preceding Wednesday, she said, she happened to be in at Mrs. Careless’, when the husband of that lady returned from market, and showed his wife some balls of thread which he had bought. “My Dear,” says he, “I like mightily these Stockings, which I yesterday saw Neighbour Afterwit knitting for her Husband, of Thread of her own Spinning. I should be glad to have some such stockins myself: I understand that your Maid Mary is a very good Knitter, and seeing this Thread in Market, I have bought it, that the Girl may make a Pair or two for me.” Then, according to Celia, there took place in her presence a dialogue between husband and wife so animated that, knowing as she did that a man and his wife are apt to quarrel more violently, when before strangers, than when by themselves, she got up and went out hastily. She was glad, however, to understand from Mary, who came to her of an errand in the evening, that the couple dined together pretty peaceably (the balls of thread, that had caused the difference, being thrown into the kitchen fire).

The story, beginning with the reply of Mrs. Careless to the offensive suggestion of Mr. Careless, is too good not to be reproduced in full.

Mrs. Careless was just then at the Glass, dressing her Head, and turning about with the Pins in her Mouth, “Lord, Child,” says she, “are you crazy? What Time has Mary to knit? Who must do the Work, I wonder, if you set her to Knitting?” “Perhaps, my Dear,” says he, “you have a mind to knit ‘em yourself; I remember, when I courted you, I once heard you say, that you had learn’d to knit of your Mother.” “I knit Stockins for you!” says she; “not I truly! There are poor Women enough in Town, that can knit; if you please, you may employ them.” “Well, but my Dear,” says he, “you know *a penny sav’d is a penny got*, A pin a day is a groat a year, every little makes a muckle, and there is neither Sin nor Shame in Knitting a pair of Stockins; why should you express such a mighty Aversion to it? As to *poor* Women, you know we are not People of Quality, we have no Income to maintain us but” what arises from my Labour and Industry: Methinks you should not be at all displeas’d, if you have an Opportunity to get something as well as myself.”

“I wonder,” says she, “how you can propose such a thing to me; did not you always tell me you would maintain me like a Gentlewoman? If I had married Captain ——, he would have scorn’d even to mention Knitting of Stockins.” “Prithee,” says he, (a little nettled,) “what do you tell me of your Captains? If you could have had him, I

suppose you would, or perhaps you did not very well like him. If I did promise to maintain you like a Gentlewoman, I suppose 'tis time enough for that, when you know how to behave like one; Meanwhile 'tis your Duty to help make me able. How long, d'ye think, I can maintain you at your present Rate of Living?" "Pray," says she, (somewhat fiercely, and dashing the Puff into the Powder-box,) "don't use me after this Manner, for I assure you I won't bear it. This is the Fruit of your poison Newspapers; there shall come no more here, I promise you." "Bless us," says he, "what an unaccountable thing is this? Must a Tradesman's Daughter, and the Wife of a Tradesman, necessarily and instantly be a Gentlewoman? You had no Portion; I am forc'd to work for a Living; you are too great to do the like; there's the Door, go and live upon your Estate, if you can find it; in short, I don't desire to be troubled w'ye."

And then it was that Celia Single gathered up her skirts and left.

The letter from Alice Addertongue to the editor of the *Gazette* is exactly in the manner of the *School for Scandal*, written many years later. She is a young girl of about thirty-five, she says, and lives at present with her mother. Like the Emperor, who, if a day passed over his head, during which he had conferred no benefit on any man, was in the habit of saying, *Diem perdidit, I have lost a Day*, she would make use of the same expression, were it possible for a day to pass over her head, during which she" had failed to scandalize someone; a misfortune, thanks be praised, that had not befallen her these dozen years.

My mother, good Woman, and I [the forked tongue plays precisely as it might have done in the mouth of Lady Sneerwell] have heretofore differ'd upon this Account. She argu'd, that Scandal spoilt all good Conversation; and I insisted, that without it there would be no such Thing. Our Disputes once rose so high, that we parted Tea-Tables, and I concluded to entertain my Acquaintance in the Kitchen. The first Day of this Separation we both drank Tea at the same Time, but she with her Visitors in the Parlor. She would not hear of the least Objection to anyone's Character, but began a new sort of Discourse in some queer philosophical Manner as this; "I am mightily pleas'd sometimes," says she, "when I observe and consider, that the World is not so bad as People out of humour imagine it to be. There is something amiable, some good Quality or other, in everybody. If we were only to speak of People that are least respected, there is such a one is very dutiful to her Father, and methinks has a fine Set of Teeth; such a one is very respectful to her Husband; such a one is very kind to her poor Neighbours, and besides has a very handsome Shape; such a one is always ready to serve a Friend, and in my opinion there is not a Woman in Town that has a more agreeable Air and Gait." This fine kind of Talk, which lasted near half an Hour, she concluded by saying, "I do not doubt but everyone of you have made the like Observations, and I should be glad to have the Conversation continu'd upon this Subject." Just at that Juncture I peep'd in at the Door, and never in my Life before saw such a Set of simple vacant Countenances. They looked somehow neither glad, nor sorry, nor angry, nor pleas'd, nor indifferent, nor attentive; but (excuse the Simile) like so many blue wooden images of Rie Doe. I in the Kitchen had already begun a ridiculous Story of Mr. ——'s Intrigue with his Maid, and his Wife's Behaviour upon the Discovery; at some Passages we laugh'd heartily, and one of the gravest of Mama's Company, without making any Answer to her Discourse, got up *to go and see what the Girls were so merry about*: She was follow'd by a Second," and shortly by a Third, till at last the old Gentlewoman found herself quite alone, and, being convinc'd that her Project was impracticable, came herself and finish'd her Tea with us; ever since which *Saul also has been among the Prophets*, and our Disputes lie dormant.

It was in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, too, that Franklin published his “Dialogue between Philocles and Horatio,” in which Philocles twice meets Horatio in the fields, and, in accents full of persuasive blandishment, diverts his feet from the pursuit of sensual pleasure into paths of contentment and peace. In the first dialogue, the moralist takes as his thesis the proposition that self-denial is not only the most reasonable but the most pleasant thing in the world. In the second, he holds up to Horatio the constant and durable happiness, so unlike the chequered, fleeting pleasures of Sense, which springs from acts of humanity, friendship, generosity and benevolence. One maxim in the last dialogue is worth many of the sayings of Poor Richard: “The Foundation of all Virtue and Happiness is Thinking rightly.”

Other papers from the hand of Franklin that appeared in the *Gazette* were *A Witch Trial at Mount Holly*, *An Apology for Printers*, *A Meditation on a Quart Mugg*, *Shavers and Trimmers*, and *Exporting of Felons to the Colonies*.

In the “Witch Trial at Mount Holly,” Franklin describes in a highly humorous manner the results of the ordeals to which a man and a woman, accused by a man and a woman of witchcraft, were subjected. One of these ordeals consisted in weighing the accused in scales against a Bible for the purpose of seeing whether it would prove too heavy for them.

Then [the facetious narrative relates] came out of the House a grave, tall Man carrying the Holy Writ before the supposed Wizard etc., (as solemnly as the Sword-Bearer of London before” the Lord Mayor) the Wizard was first put in the Scale, and over him was read a Chapter out of the Books of Moses, and then the Bible was put in the other Scale, (which, being kept down before) was immediately let go; but, to the great surprize of the Spectators, Flesh and Bones came down plump, and outweighed that great good Book by abundance. After the same Manner the others were served, and their Lumps of Mortality severally were too heavy for Moses and all the Prophets and Apostles.

This ordeal was followed by the Trial by Water. Both accused and accusers were stripped, except that the women were not deprived of their shifts, bound hand and foot and let down into the water by ropes from the side of a barge. The rest is thus told:

The accused man being thin and spare with some Difficulty began to sink at last; but the rest, every one of them, swam very light upon the Water. A Sailor in the Flat jump’d out upon the Back of the Man accused thinking to drive him down to the Bottom; but the Person bound, without any Help, came up some time before the other. The Woman Accuser being told that she did not sink, would be duck’d a second Time; when she swam again as light as before. Upon which she declared, That she believed the Accused had bewitched her to make her so light, and that she would be duck’d again a Hundred Times but she would duck the Devil out of her. The Accused Man, being surpriz’d at his own swimming, was not so confident of his Innocence as before, but said, “If I am a Witch, it is more than I know.” The more thinking Part of the Spectators were of Opinion that any Person so bound and placed in the Water (unless they were mere Skin and Bones) would swim, till their breath was gone, and their Lungs fill’d with Water. But it being the general Belief of the Populace that the Women’s Shifts and the Garters with which they were bound help’d to support them, it is said they are to be tried again the next Warm Weather, naked.

In the “Apology for Printers,” Franklin defends his guild with much point and good sense, in terms modern enough” to be fully applicable to newspapers at the present time. It was inspired by the resentment which his advertisement relating to Sea Hens and Black Gowns excited, and, though written in a half-humorous style, states the difficulties of an editor,

between his duty to publish everything, and the certainty of private resentment, if he does, with about as much felicity of presentation as they are ever likely to be stated. Among the various solid reasons, set forth in formal numerical sequence, that he gave, by way of mitigation, for publishing the advertisement, he mentioned these, too:

“6. That I got Five Shillings by it.

“7. That none who are angry with me would have given me so much to let it alone.”

In answer to the accusation that printers sometimes printed vicious or silly things not worth reading, he charged the fact up to the vicious taste of the public itself. He had known, he said, a very numerous impression of Robin Hood’s songs to go off in the Province at 2 s. per book in less than a twelvemonth, when a small quantity of David’s Psalms (an excellent version) had lain upon his hands about twice that long.

In the “Meditation on a Quart Mugg” Franklin begins with the exclamation, “Wretched, miserable, and unhappy Mug!” and traces with mock sympathy all the misfortunes of its ignoble and squalid career from the time that it is first forced into the company of boisterous sots, who lay all their nonsense, noise, profane swearing, cursing and quarrelling on it, though it speaks not a word, until the inevitable hour when it is broken into pieces, and finds its way for the most part back to Mother Earth. The paper is only a trifle, but a trifle fashioned with no little skill to hit the fancy of an age that, as Franklin’s “Drunkard’s Vocabulary” (also published in the *Gazette*) shows, had innumerable cant terms for the condition for which the mug was held to such an unjust responsibility.”

The paper on “Shavers and Trimmers” is not so happy and well sustained, but its classifications of the different species of persons, answering these descriptions, is not without humor. One sentence in it, when Franklin speaks of the species of Shavers and Trimmers, who “cover (what is called by an eminent Preacher) *their poor Dust* in tinsel Cloaths and gaudy Plumes of Feathers,” reads like a paragraph in the *Courant*. “A competent Share of religious Horror thrown into the Countenance,” he says, “with proper Distortions of the Face, and the Addition of a lank Head of Hair, or a long Wig and Band, commands a most profound Respect to Insolence and Ignorance.”

The paper on the “Exporting of Felons to the Colonies” is marked by the grim, biting irony of Swift, but was no severer than the practice of setting British criminals at large in America deserved. Such tender parental concern, Franklin said, called aloud for due returns of gratitude and duty, and he suggested that these returns should assume the form of rattlesnakes, “Felons-convict from the Beginning of the World.” In the spring of the year, when they first crept out of their holes, they were feeble, heavy, slow and easily taken, and, if a small bounty was allowed per head, some thousands might be collected annually, and transported to Britain. There he proposed that they should be carefully distributed in St. James’ Park, in the Spring Gardens, and other pleasure resorts about London, and in the gardens of all the nobility and gentry throughout the nation, but particularly in the gardens of the Prime Ministers, the Lords of Trade and Members of Parliament; for to them they were most particularly obliged. Such a paper, it is needless to say, was better calculated for its purpose than a thousand appeals of the ordinary type would have been.

The speech of Polly Baker is one of the most famous of Franklin’s *jeux d’esprit*. The introduction to it states” that it was delivered when she was prosecuted for the fifth time for having a bastard child, and with such effect that the court decided not to punish her; indeed with such effect that one of her judges even married her the next day, and in time had fifteen children by her. The perfectly ingenuous manner in which the traverser refuses to admit that she has committed any offence whatever and insists that, in default of honorable suitors, she

has but dutifully, though irregularly, complied with the first and great command of nature and nature's God—increase and multiply—is undoubtedly, coarse as it is, a stroke of art, but the performance is too gross for modern scruples.

More decorous reading is the fictitious discourse by a Spanish Jesuit on the “Meanes of disposing the Enemie to Peace,” which Franklin, during his first mission to England, contributed to the *London Chronicle* for the purpose of rousing the English people to a sense of the artifices, that were being employed by the French to build up a party in England for peace at any price. In the introduction to the discourse, it is stated that it was taken from a book containing a number of discourses, addressed by the Jesuit to the King of Spain in 1629, and that nothing was needed to render it *apropos* to the existing situation of England except the substitution of France for Spain. The discourse points out in detail, with shrewd insight into all the selfish and timid impulses, by which a society is corrupted or enervated, when cunningly practised upon, the different classes in the country of the enemy that could be manipulated in one way or another until no sound but that of Peace, Peace, Peace would be heard from any quarter.

The Craven Street Gazette, written in mock court language, and replete with the subtle suggestions of household intimacy, is one of the most exquisite triumphs of Franklin's wit and fancy.

This morning [it begins], Queen Margaret, accompanied by her first maid of honour, Miss Franklin, (Sally Franklin) set” out for Rochester. Immediately on their departure, the whole street was in tears—from a heavy shower of rain. It is whispered, that the new family administration which took place on her Majesty's departure, promises, like all other new administrations, to govern much better than the old one.

We hear, that the great person (so called from his enormous size), of a certain family in a certain street, is grievously affected at the late changes, and could hardly be comforted this morning, though the new ministry promised him a roasted shoulder of mutton and potatoes for his dinner.

It is said, that the same great person intended to pay his respects to another great personage this day, at St. James's, it being coronation-day; hoping thereby a little to amuse his grief; but was prevented by an accident, Queen Margaret, or her maid of honour having carried off the key of the drawers, so that the lady of the bed-chamber could not come at a laced shirt for his Highness. Great clamours were made on this occasion against her Majesty.

And so the *Gazette* goes on, gay and graceful as the play of sunshine on the surface of a dimpled sea, from incident to incident that took place during the absence of Queen Margaret (Mrs. Stevenson) and Miss Franklin, investing each with a ceremonious dignity and importance that never descend to buffoonery.

These are some of the occurrences chronicled as taking place on the first Sunday after the departure of the Queen. Walking up and down in his room we might observe was one of Franklin's ways of taking exercise.

Lord and Lady Hewson walked after dinner to Kensington, to pay their duty to the Dowager, and Dr. Fatsides made four hundred and sixty-nine turns in his dining-room, as the exact distance of a visit to the lovely Lady Barwell, whom he did not find at home; so there was no struggle for and against a kiss, and he sat down to dream in the easy-chair that he had it without any trouble.

And these are some of the observations made under the date of the succeeding Tuesday.

It is remark'd, that the Skies have wept every Day in Craven Street, the Absence of the Queen.

The Publick may be assured that this Morning a certain *great* Personage was asked very complaisantly by the Mistress of the Household, if he would chuse to have the Blade-Bone of Saturday's Mutton that had been kept for his Dinner to-day *broil'd* or *cold*. He answer'd gravely, *If there is any Flesh on it, it may be broil'd; if not, it may as well be cold*. Orders were accordingly given for Broiling it. But when it came to Table, there was indeed so very little Flesh, or rather none, (Puss having din'd on it yesterday after Nanny)⁹⁸ that if our new Administration had been as good Oeconomists as they would be thought, the Expence of Broiling might well have been saved to the Publick, and carried to the Sinking Fund. It is assured the *great* Person bears all with infinite Patience. But the Nation is astonish'd at the insolent Presumption, that dares treat so much Mildness in so cruel a manner!

Under the same date is made the announcement that at six o'clock, that afternoon, news had come by the post that her Majesty arrived safely at Rochester on Saturday night. "The Bells," the *Gazette* adds, "immediately rang—for Candles to illuminate the Parlour, the Court went into Cribbidge, and the Evening concluded with every other Demonstration of Joy." This is followed by a letter to the *Gazette* from a person signing himself "Indignation," who says that he makes no doubt of the truth of the statement that a certain great person is half-starved on the blade-bone of a sheep by a set of the most careless, worthless, thoughtless, inconsiderate, corrupt, ignorant, blundering, foolish, crafty & knavish ministers" that ever got into a house and pretended to govern a family and provide a dinner. "Alas for the poor old England of Craven Street!" this correspondent exclaims, "If they continue in Power another Week, the Nation will be ruined. Undone, totally undone, if I and my Friends are not appointed to succeed them."

This letter is accompanied by another signed, "A Hater of Scandal," which takes "Indignation" to task, and declares that the writer believes that, even if the Angel Gabriel would condescend to be their minister, and provide their dinners, he would scarcely escape newspaper defamation from a gang of hungry, ever-restless, discontented and malicious scribblers. It was a piece of justice, he declared, that the publisher of the *Gazette* owed to their righteous administration to undeceive the public on this occasion by assuring them of the fact, which is that there was provided and actually smoking on the table under his royal nose at the same instant as the blade-bone as fine a piece of ribs of beef roasted as ever knife was put into, with potatoes, horse-radish, pickled walnuts &c. which his Highness might have eaten, if so he had pleased to do.

Along with the political intelligence and the letters the *Gazette* also contains these notices and stock quotations:

Marriages, none since our last—but Puss begins to go a Courting.

Deaths, In the back Closet and elsewhere, many poor Mice.

Stocks Biscuit—very low. Buckwheat & Indian Meal—both sour. Tea, lowering daily—in the Canister. Wine, shut.

⁹⁸ There is the following reference to Nanny in a letter from Franklin to Deborah, dated June 10, 1770, "Poor Nanny was drawn in to marry a worthless Fellow, who got all her Money, and then ran away and left her. So she is return'd to her old Service with Mrs. Stevenson, poorer than ever, but seems pretty patient, only looks dejected."

The *Petition of the Letter Z* was a humorous offshoot of Franklin's Reformed Alphabet. In a formal complaint after the manner of a bill in chancery, to the worshipful Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Censor-General, Z complains that his claims to respect are as good as those of the other letters of the Alphabet, but that he had not only been placed at its tail, when he had as much right as any of his companions to be at its head, but by the injustice of his enemies had been totally excluded from the word Wise and his place filled by a little hissing, crooked, serpentine, venomous letter, called S, though it must be evident to his worship and to all the world that W, I, S, E does not spell *Wize* but *Wise*. The petition ends with the prayer that, in consideration of his long-suffering and patience, the petitioner may be placed at the head of the Alphabet, and that S may be turned out of the word *wise*, and the Petitioner employed instead of him.

Z did not make out his case, for at the foot of the petition is appended this order: "Mr. Bickerstaff, having examined the allegations of the above petition, judges and determines, that Z be admonished to be content with his station, forbear reflections upon his brother letters, and remember his own small usefulness, and the little occasion there is for him in the Republic of Letters, since S whom he so despises can so well serve instead of him."

Some of the liveliest of the lighter papers of Franklin were written during the course of his French Mission. His inimitable *Journey to the Elysian Fields* and *Conte* have already received our attention in an earlier chapter. Among the others was *The Sale of the Hessians*, *The Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle*, *The Ephemera*, *The Whistle*, his letter to the Abbé de la Roche, communicating to him the *petite chanson à boire* that he had written forty years before, his letter to the Abbé Morellet on wine, the *Dialogue between him and the Gout*, *The Handsome and Deformed Leg* and *The Economical Project*. If there was nothing else to support the claim of Franklin to the authorship of *The Sale of the Hessians*, the difficulty of abridging it would be one proof. Its humor is as trenchant as that of Frederick the Great in levying the same toll upon these hirelings, when passing through his dominions on their way to America, pursuant to the mercenary engagements between their German masters and George III., as that levied by him upon other cattle. The paper is thrown into the form of a letter from the Count De Schaumbergh to the Baron Hohendorf, commanding the Hessian troops in America. It begins as follows:

Monsieur de Baron:—On my return from Naples, I received at Rome your letter of the 27th December of last year. I have learned with unspeakable pleasure the courage our troops exhibited at Trenton, and you cannot imagine my joy on being told that of the 1,950 Hessians engaged in the fight, but 345 escaped. There were just 1,605 men killed, and I can not sufficiently commend your prudence in sending an exact list of the dead to my minister in London. This precaution was the more necessary, as the report sent to the English Ministry does not give but 1,455 dead. This would make 483,450 florins instead of 643,500 which I am entitled to demand under our convention. You will comprehend the prejudice which such an error would work in my finances, and I do not doubt you will take the necessary pains to prove that Lord North's list is false and yours correct.

This is another paragraph:

I am about to send to you some new recruits. Don't economize them. Remember glory before all things. Glory is true wealth. There is nothing degrades the soldier like the love of money. He must care only for honour and reputation, but this reputation must be acquired in the midst of dangers. A battle gained without costing the conqueror any blood is an inglorious success, while the conquered cover themselves with glory by perishing with their arms in their hands. Do you remember that of the 300

Lacedaemonians who defended the defile of Thermopylae, not one returned? How happy should I be could I say the same of my brave Hessians!

It is true that their King, Leonidas, perished with them: but things have changed, and it is no longer the custom for princes" of the empire to go and fight in America for a cause with which they have no concern.

The Baron is further commended for sending back to Europe that Dr. Crumerus who was so successful in curing dysentery, and is told that it is better that the Hessians should burst in their barracks than fly in a battle, and tarnish the glory of the Count's arms.

Besides [the Count continues], you know that they pay me as killed for all who die from disease, and I don't get a farthing for runaways. My trip to Italy, which has cost me enormously, makes it desirable that there should be a great mortality among them. You will therefore promise promotion to all who expose themselves; you will exhort them to seek glory in the midst of dangers; you will say to Major Maundorff that I am not at all content with his saving the 345 men who escaped the massacre of Trenton. Through the whole campaign he has not had ten men killed in consequence of his orders. Finally, let it be your principal object to prolong the war and avoid a decisive engagement on either side, for I have made arrangements for a grand Italian opera, and I do not wish to be obliged to give it up. Meantime I pray God, my dear Baron de Hohendorf, to have you in his holy and gracious keeping.

The *Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle* is distinguished by the same sort of cool, dry mocking verisimilitude. Captain Gerrish, of the New England Militia, is supposed to write a letter in which he says that the members of a recent expedition against the Indians were struck with horror to find among the packages of peltry captured by them eight large ones containing scalps of their unhappy country-folks taken in the last three years by the Seneca Indians from the heads of inhabitants of the frontiers of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and sent by them as a present to Colonel Haldimand, the Governor of Canada; to be forwarded by him to England. The scalps, Captain Gerrish" asserts, were accompanied by a curious letter to the Governor from one, James Craufurd. Then is set forth this letter which describes with the minuteness of a mercantile invoice the contents of each of the eight packages of scalps, some of Congress soldiers, some of farmers surprised in their houses at night, some of farmers killed in their houses by day, some of farmers killed in the fields, some of women, some of boys, some of girls and some of little infants ripped from the womb. The contents of several of the packages are described as mixed lots. The letter also fully explains the Indian triumphal marks painted upon the different scalps, which were all cured, dried and stretched like the pelts of the otter or beaver on hoops. The black circle denoted that the victim had perished at night, the little red foot that he had died in defence of his life and family, the little yellow flame that he had been tortured at the stake. The hair braided in the Indian fashion meant that the victim was a mother, other tokens that the victim was a boy or a girl. A band fixed to the hoop of one of the scalps signified that the head to which it had been attached was that of a rebel clergyman. Many gruesome tokens are explained in the same systematic and businesslike manner. Along with several other passages from a speech of Conejogatchie in Council, the letter also communicates one in which the speaker declares that his people wished the scalps to be sent across the water to the great King that he might regard them and be refreshed. In concluding his own letter, Captain Gerrish states that Lieutenant Fitzgerald would have undertaken to convey the scalps to England and to hang them all up some dark night on the trees in St. James' Park, where they could be seen from the King and Queen's Palaces in the morning. But this proposal, the *Chronicle* says, was not approved in Boston. It was proposed instead to

make the scalps up in decent little packets, and to seal and direct them; one to the King containing a sample” of every kind for his museum, one to the Queen, with some of women and children; the rest to be distributed among both Houses of Parliament, and a double quantity to be given to the Bishops. The relations of the *Chronicle* to this production were, of course, as purely fictitious as every other part of it. Associated with the performance, as another publication in the *Chronicle*, is a fictitious letter, too, from Paul Jones to Sir Joseph Yorke, the English Ambassador to Holland, in which he defends himself with considerable spirit from the charge of being a pirate, and reminds Sir Joseph of the freebooting principles upon which England was waging war against America. When he read this letter, Horace Walpole wrote to the Countess of Ossory, “Have you seen in the papers an excellent letter of Paul Jones to Sir Joseph Yorke? Elle nous dit bien des vérités! I doubt poor Sir Joseph cannot answer them! Dr. Franklin himself, I should think, was the author. It is certainly written by a first-rate pen, and not by a common man of war.”

The Ephemera was addressed to Madame Brillon, and is one of the most justly famous of all Franklin’s writings. In a letter to William Carmichael, he states that the thought was partly taken from a little piece of some unknown writer, which he had met with fifty years before in a newspaper. Another proof, we might say in passing, how little disposed Franklin was to borrow from Richard Jackson, or any one else without due acknowledgment.

So dependent is every part of this paper for its effect upon the whole that to quote only a portion of it would be as futile as an effort to divide a bubble without destroying it. These are the precise words in full of this bewitching little production:

You may remember, my dear friend, that when we lately spent that happy day in the delightful garden and sweet society of the Moulin Joly, I stopt a little in one of our walks,” and staid some time behind the company. We had been shown numberless skeletons of a kind of little fly, called an ephemera, whose successive generations, we were told, were bred and expired within the day. I happened to see a living company of them on a leaf, who appeared to be engaged in conversation. You know I understand all the inferior animal tongues; my too great application to the study of them is the best excuse I can give for the little progress I have made in your charming language. I listened through curiosity to the discourse of these little creatures; but as they, in their national vivacity, spoke three or four together, I could make but little of their conversation. I found, however, by some broken expressions that I heard now and then, they were disputing warmly on the merit of two foreign musicians, one a *cousin*, the other a *moscheto*; in which dispute they spent their time, seemingly as regardless of the shortness of life as if they had been sure of living a month. Happy people! thought I, you are certainly under a wise, just, and mild government, since you have no public grievances to complain of, nor any subject of contention but the perfections and imperfections of foreign music. I turned my head from them to an old grey-headed one, who was single on another leaf, and talking to himself. Being amused with his soliloquy, I put it down in writing, in hopes it will likewise amuse her to whom I am so much indebted for the most pleasing of all amusements, her delicious company and heavenly harmony.

It was [said he] the opinion of learned philosophers of our race, who lived and flourished long before my time, that this vast world, the Moulin Joly, could not itself subsist more than eighteen hours; and I think there was some foundation for that opinion, since, by the apparent motion of the great luminary that gives life to all nature, and which in my time has evidently declined considerably towards the ocean at the end of our earth, it must then finish its course, be extinguished in the waters that

surround us, and leave the world in cold and darkness, necessarily producing universal death and destruction. I have lived seven of those hours, a great age, being no less than four hundred and twenty minutes of time. How very few of us continue so long! I have seen generations born," flourish, and expire. My present friends are the children and grandchildren of the friends of my youth, who *are now*, alas, no more! And I must soon follow them; for, by the course of nature, though still in health, I cannot expect to live above seven or eight minutes longer. What now avails all my toil and labor, in amassing honey-dew on this leaf, which I cannot live to enjoy! What the political struggles I have been engaged in, for the good of my compatriot inhabitants of this bush, or my philosophical studies for the benefit of our race in general! for, in politics, what can laws do without morals? Our present race of ephemerae will in a course of minutes become corrupt, like those of other and older bushes, and consequently as wretched. And in philosophy how small our progress! Alas! art is long, and life is short! My friends would comfort me with the idea of a name, they say, I shall leave behind me; and they tell me I have lived long enough to nature and to glory. But what will fame be to an ephemera who no longer exists? And what will become of all history in the eighteenth hour, when the world itself, even the whole Moulin Joly, shall come to its end, and be buried in universal ruin?

To me, after all my eager pursuits, no solid pleasures now remain, but the reflection of a long life spent in meaning well, the sensible conversation of a few good lady ephemerae, and now and then a kind smile and a tune from the ever amiable *Brillante*.

The Whistle, too, was addressed to Madame Brillon and is also one of the most celebrated of Franklin's bagatelles, but is scarcely equal, we think, to the best of them.

In his opinion, Franklin said, they might all draw more good from the world than they did if they would take care not to give too much for whistles. With this foreword, he tells his story. When a child of seven years of age, his friends on a holiday filled his pocket with coppers, and, being charmed with the sound of a whistle that he met by the way in the hands of another boy, he voluntarily offered," and gave all his money for one. He then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with his whistle, but disturbing the entire family. But his brothers and sisters told him that he had given four times as much for the whistle as it was worth, put him in mind of what good things he might have bought with the rest of the money and laughed at him so much for his folly that he cried with vexation. The lesson, however, was of use to him, so that often, when he was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, he said to himself, "*Don't give too much for the whistle*," and he saved his money. And so, when he grew up, came into the world and observed the actions of men, he thought he met with many, very many who gave too much for the whistle.

He then mentions who some of these men were, the man ambitious of court favor, the man covetous of political popularity, the miser, the slave of pleasure, the devotee of fashion, the beautiful, sweet-tempered girl, married to an ill-natured brute of a husband, and, after the mention of each, comes the running comment, "This man gives too much for his whistle," or its equivalent.

Yet [Franklin concludes], I ought to have charity for these unhappy people, when I consider, that, with all this wisdom of which I am boasting, there are certain things in the world so tempting, for example, the apples of King John, which happily are not to be bought; for if they were put to sale by auction, I might very easily be led to ruin myself in the purchase, and find that I had once more given too much for the *whistle*.

The reader has already had occasion to know what kind of fruit these apples of King John were, and in whose orchard they grew.

To realize what an indifferent poet Franklin was, and yet at the same time what a master of prose, one has but to first read his *petite chanson à boire* beginning,”

“Fair Venus calls; her voice obey,”

and then his letter to the Abbé Morellet on wine. The letter was written to repay the Abbé for some of his excellent drinking songs.

“In vino veritas,” said the sage, [is the way Franklin begins]. Before Noah, when men had nothing but water to drink, they could not find the truth, so they went astray, and became abominably wicked, and were justly exterminated by the water that they were fond of drinking. Good man Noah, seeing that this bad drink had been the death of all his contemporaries, contracted an aversion to it, and God to quench his thirst, created the vine, and revealed to him the art of making wine. With its aid, Noah discovered many and many a truth, and, since his time, the word “divine” has been in use, meaning originally to discover by means of wine.... Since that time, too, all excellent things, even deities themselves, have been called divine or divinities.

Men speak of the conversion of water into wine at the marriage of Cana as a miracle. But this change is worked every day by the goodness of God under our eyes. Witness the water, that falls from the skies upon our vineyards, and then passes into the roots of the vines to be converted into wine, a constant proof that God loves us, and that he is pleased to see us happy. The miracle in question was performed merely to hasten the operation on an occasion of sudden need that made it indispensable.

It is true that God has also taught men how to reduce wine to water; but what kind of water? Why *l'eau-de-vie*.

Franklin then begs his Christian brother to be kindly and beneficent like God and not to spoil his good work. When he saw his table companion pour wine into his glass he should not hasten to pour water into it. Why should he desire to drown the truth? His neighbor was likely to know better what suited him than he. Perhaps he does not like water, perhaps he wishes only a few drops of it out of complaisance to the fashion of the day, perhaps he” does not wish another to see how little he puts in his glass. Water then should be offered only to children; it was a false and annoying form of politeness to do otherwise. This the writer told the Abbé as a man of the world, and he would end as he had begun, like a good Christian, by making one very important religious observation suggested by the Holy Scriptures. While the Apostle Paul had gravely advised Timothy to put wine into his water for his health, not one of the Apostles, nor any of the Holy Fathers, had ever advised anyone to put water into wine.

The “Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout” owes its value not so much to its humor as to the knowledge that it incidentally affords us of the personal habits of the former and his intimacy with Madame Helvétius and Madame Brillon. Along with the reproaches and twinges of pain which evoke repeated Ehs! and Ohs! from Franklin, as the colloquy proceeds, the Gout contrives to communicate to us no little information on these subjects in terms in which physiology, hygiene and gallantry are each made to do duty. He tells Franklin that he, the Gout, very well knows that the quantity of meat and drink proper for a man, who takes a reasonable degree of exercise, is too much for another who never takes any. If his, Franklin’s, situation in life is a sedentary one, his amusements and recreations at least should be active. He ought to walk or ride, or, if the weather prevents that, play at billiards. But, instead of gaining an appetite for breakfast by salutary exercise, he amuses himself with books, pamphlets or newspapers, which commonly are not worth the reading. Yet he eats an

inordinate breakfast, four dishes of tea, with cream, and one or two buttered toasts, with slices of hung beef, which the Gout fancies are not things the most easily digested. Immediately afterwards he sits down to write at his desk or converse with persons who apply to him on business. Thus the time passes till one without any kind of bodily exercise. This might be pardoned" out of regard, as Franklin said, for his sedentary condition, but what is his practice after dinner? Walking in the beautiful gardens of those friends with whom he had dined would be the choice of men of sense. His was to be fixed down to chess, where he was found engaged for two or three hours! This was his perpetual recreation, which was the least eligible of any for a sedentary man, because, instead of accelerating the motion of the fluids, the rigid attention it required helped to retard the circulation and obstruct internal secretions. Wrapped in the speculations of this wretched game, he destroyed his constitution. What could be expected from such a course of living but a body replete with stagnant humours, ready to fall a prey to all kinds of dangerous maladies, if he, the Gout, did not occasionally bring him relief by agitating those humors, and so purifying or dissipating them. If it was in some nook or alley in Paris deprived of walks that Franklin played awhile at chess after dinner, this might be excusable, but the same taste prevailed with him in Paris, at Auteuil Montmartre or Sanois, places where there were the finest, gardens and walks, a pure air, beautiful women and most agreeable and instructive conversation; all of which he might enjoy by frequenting the walks. At this point, Franklin, after some more prolonged Ehs! and Ohs!, manages to remind the Gout that it is not fair to say that he takes no exercise when he does so very often in going out to dine and returning in his carriage; but this statement the Gout brushes brusquely aside. That of all imaginable exercises, he asserts, is the most slight and insignificant, if Franklin alludes to the motion of a carriage suspended on springs. By observing the degree of heat obtained by different kinds of motion, we may form an estimate of the quantity of exercise given by each. Thus, for example, if Franklin should turn out to walk in winter with cold feet, in an hour's time he would be in a glow all over; if he should ride on horseback, the same effect would scarcely be" perceived by four hours' round trotting, but, if he should loll in a carriage, such as he had mentioned, he might travel all day, and gladly enter the last inn to warm his feet by a fire.⁹⁹ Providence has appointed few to roll in carriages, while it has given to all a pair of legs, which are machines infinitely more commodious and serviceable. He should observe, when he walked, that all his weight was alternately thrown from one leg to the other; this occasions a great pressure upon the vessels of the foot, and repels their contents. When relieved by the weight being thrown on the other foot, the vessels of the first are allowed to replenish, and, by a return of this weight, this repulsion again succeeds; thus accelerating the circulation of the blood, with the result that the cheeks are ruddy and the health established.

Behold [the Gout is then artfully made to say], your fair friend at Auteuil (Madame Helvétius); a lady who received from bounteous nature more really useful science, than half a dozen such pretenders to philosophy as you have been able to extract from

⁹⁹ These conclusions about physical exercise had been previously expounded by Franklin to his son in a letter, dated Aug. 19, 1772, in which he expressed his concern at hearing that William was not well. In that connection they do not seem quite so pedantic. The writer thought that, when tested by the amount of corporeal warmth produced, there was, roughly speaking, more exercise in riding one mile on horseback than five in a coach, more in walking one mile on foot than five on horseback, and more in walking one mile up and down stairs than five on a level floor. He also had a good word to say for the use of the dumb-bell as a "compendious" form of exercise; stating that by the use of dumb-bells he had in forty swings quickened his pulse from sixty to one hundred beats in a minute, counted by a second watch. Warmth, he supposed, generally increased with a rapid pulse. Upon one occasion in France, when John Adams told him that he fancied that he did not exercise so much as he was wont, he replied: "Yes, I walk a league every day in my chamber. I walk quick, and for an hour, so that I go a league; I make a point of religion of it."

all your books. When she honours you with a visit, it is on foot. She walks all hours of the day, and leaves indolence, and its concomitant maladies, to be endured by her” horses. In this see at once the preservative of her health and personal charms.

Nor does the Gout go off before he is with equal art made to say a flattering word about the Brillons.

You know [he declares], M. Brillon’s gardens, and what fine walks they contain; you know the handsome flight of an hundred steps, which lead from the terrace above to the lawn below. You have been in the practice of visiting this amiable family twice a week, after dinner, and it is a maxim of your own, that “a man may take as much exercise in walking a mile, up and down stairs, as in ten on level ground.” What an opportunity was here for you to have had exercise in both these ways. Did you embrace it, and how often?

Franklin is bound to admit that he cannot immediately answer the question, and the Gout answers it for him. “Not once,” he says, and then goes on to chide Franklin with the fact that, during the summer, he is in the habit of going to M. Brillon’s at six o’clock and contenting himself with the view from his terrace, tea and the chess-board, though the charming lady, with her lovely children and friends, are eager to walk with him, and entertain him with their agreeable conversation.

A little more interchange of conversation and poor Franklin in despair asks, “What then would you have me do with my carriage?” and the Gout replies, “Burn it if you choose; you would at least get heat out of it once in this way.” In the end, Franklin promises that, if his persecutor will only leave him, he will never more play at chess, but will take exercise daily, and live temperately—a promise the Gout tells him that, with a few months of good health, “will be forgotten like the forms of last year’s clouds.”

“The Handsome and Deformed Leg” divides the world into two classes, the happy, who fix their eyes on the bright” side of things and enjoy everything, and the unhappy, who fix their eyes on the dark side of things, and criticise everything; and thereby render themselves completely odious. An old philosophical friend of his, Franklin said, carefully avoided any intimacy with the latter class of people. He had, like other philosophers, a thermometer to show him the heat of the weather, and a barometer to mark when it was likely to prove good or bad; but, there being no instrument invented to discern at first sight whether a person had their unpleasant disposition, he, for that purpose, made use of his legs, one of which was remarkably handsome, and the other, by some accident, crooked and deformed. If a stranger, at the first interview, regarded his ugly leg more than his handsome one, he doubted him. If he spoke of it and took no notice of the handsome leg, that was sufficient to determine this philosopher to have no further acquaintance with him.

Everybody [concludes Franklin] has not this two-legged Instrument, but every one with a little Attention, may observe Signs of that carping, fault-finding Disposition, & take the same Resolution of avoiding the Acquaintance of those infected with it. I therefore advise those critical, querulous, discontented, unhappy People, that if they wish to be respected and belov’d by others, & happy in themselves they should *leave off looking at the ugly leg*.

“The Economical Project” is a happy combination of humor and prudential instruction, and was written about the time when the Quinquet lamp was an object of general public curiosity. An inquiry having been started on one occasion in his presence, Franklin says, as to whether its brightness was not offset by its lavish consumption of oil, he went home, and to bed, three or four hours after midnight, with his head full of the subject. At about six in the morning, he

was awakened by a noise, and was surprised to find his room full of light. At first, he imagined that he was surrounded by a number of Quinquet lamps, but, on rubbing his eyes, he perceived that the light came in at the windows, and, when he got up and looked out to see what caused it, he saw the sun just rising above the horizon. His servant had forgotten the preceding evening to close the shutters. Looking at his watch, and finding that it was but six o'clock, and still thinking it something extraordinary that the sun should rise so early, he consulted an almanac, and ascertained that it was just the hour for sunrise on that day, and, moreover, he learned from the almanac that the sun would rise still earlier every day till towards the end of June. His readers, he was sure, would be as much astonished as he was when they heard that the sun rises so early, and especially when he assured them that it gives light as soon as it rises. He was convinced of this. He was certain of his fact. One could not be more certain of any fact. On repeating his observation the three following mornings, he found always precisely the same result.

Yet when he spoke of the matter it was to incredulous countenances. One auditor, a learned natural philosopher, assured him that he must certainly be mistaken as to the light coming into his room, for, it being well known that there could be no light abroad at that hour, it followed that none could enter from without, and that, of consequence, his open windows, instead of letting in the light, must have only served to let out the darkness. This philosopher, Franklin confessed, puzzled him a little, but subsequent observation confirmed him in his first opinion. On the strength of these facts, Franklin enters upon a series of elaborate calculations to demonstrate that, between the 20th of March and 20th of September, the Parisians, because of their habit of preferring candlelight in the evening to sunlight in the morning, had consumed sixty-four millions and fifty thousand pounds of candles," which, at an average price of thirty sols per pound, made ninety-six millions and seventy-five thousand livres tournois. An immense sum! that the City of Paris might save every year by the economy of using sunshine instead of candles; to say nothing of the period of the year during which the days are shorter. This computation is succeeded by a number of suggestions as to the different means by which such of the Parisians as did not amend their hours upon learning from this paper that it is daylight when the sun rises could be induced to reform their habits.

For his discovery, Franklin further said that he demanded neither place, pension, exclusive privilege nor any other reward whatever. He was looking only to the honor of it. He would not deny, when he was assailed by little, envious minds, that the ancients knew that the sun rises at certain hours. They too possibly had almanacs, but it does not follow that they knew that it gives light as soon as it rises. That was what he claimed as his discovery. It was certainly unknown to the moderns, at least to the Parisians; which to prove he need use but one plain, simple argument. It was impossible that a people as well-instructed, judicious and prudent as any in the world, all professing to be lovers of economy, and subject to onerous taxation, should have lived so long by the smoky, unwholesome and enormously expensive light of candles, if they had really known that they might have as much pure light of the sun for nothing.

A Letter from China in which a sailor, who had passed some time in that country, is made to narrate in a simple, bald way what he saw and experienced while there, is worth reading, if only because of the evidence that it furnishes that almost every trifle from Franklin's pen has a certain literary quality. One sentence in the letter at any rate possesses the true Franklin flavor; that in which the wanderer states that in China stealing, robbing and" housebreaking are punished severely, but that cheating is free there in everything, as cheating in horses is among gentlemen in England.

Other humorous or satirical compositions from the hand of Franklin belong to the period between his return from the French mission and his death.

His letter to the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on the *Abuse of the Press*, deprecates in a familiar and jocular way the scurrilous license which marked the newspaper controversies of the time. After recalling insulting epithets heaped upon other public servants, he mentions that he, too, the unanimous choice as President of the Council and Assembly of Pennsylvania, had been denounced as "*An old Rogue*," who had given his assent to the Federal Constitution merely to avoid the refunding of money that he had purloined from the United States.

There is—indeed [the letter ends], a good deal of manifest *Inconsistency* in all this, and yet a Stranger, seeing it in your own Prints, tho' he does not believe it all, may probably believe enough of it to conclude, that Pennsylvania is peopled by a Set of the most unprincipled, wicked, rascally and quarrelsome Scoundrels upon the Face of the Globe. I have sometimes, indeed, suspected that those Papers are the Manufacture of foreign Enemies among you, who write with a view of disgracing your Country, and making you appear contemptible and detestable all the World over; but then I wonder at the Indiscretion of your Printers in publishing such Writings! There is, however, one of your *Inconsistencies* that consoles me a little, which is, that tho' *living*, you give one another the characters of Devils; *dead*, you are all Angels! It is delightful, when any of you die, to read what good Husbands, good Fathers, good Friends, good Citizens, and good Christians you were, concluding with a Scrap of Poetry that places you, with certainty, every one in Heaven. So that I think Pennsylvania a good country *to dye in*, though a very bad one *to live in*.

The *Comparison of the Conduct of the Ancient Jews and of the Anti-Federalists in the United States of America* belongs to the same category as *Plain Truth* rather than to the class of writings which Franklin termed "Bagatelles." The parallel, however, between the jealousy, worked upon by insidious men, pretending public good, but with nothing really in view except private interest, which led the Israelites to oppose the establishment of the New Constitution, after the flight from Egypt, and the hostility of the Anti-Federalists to the work of the Convention of 1787, is pursued with such cleverness as to lift it out of the province of the ordinary newspaper essay. There is an unwonted strain of solemnity in its last sentences.

To conclude [Franklin declares], I beg I may not be understood to infer, that our General Convention was divinely inspired, when it form'd the new federal Constitution, merely because that Constitution has been unreasonably and vehemently opposed; yet I must own I have so much Faith in the general Government of the world by *Providence*, that I can hardly conceive a Transaction of such momentous Importance to the Welfare of Millions now existing, and to exist in the Posterity of a great Nation, should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenc'd, guided, and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent and beneficent Ruler, in whom all inferior Spirits live, and move, and have their Being.

Of the *Account of the Supremest Court of Judicature in Pennsylvania, viz., the Court of the Press*, in which Franklin suggested that formal cognizance should be taken of the Cudgel as well as of the Liberty of the Press, we have already said enough.

The pretended speech of Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a member of the Divan of Algiers against the Petition of the Erika or Purists, asking that Piracy and Slavery be abolished, was written by him on the eve of his death," and is one of his best satirical thrusts. It was a parody on a speech that had been lately delivered in Congress in defence of negro slavery by Mr. Jackson of Georgia, and its wit consists in the art with which it appositely urges in justification of the

Algerian practice of plundering and enslaving Christians all the considerations urged by Jackson in his plea for African slavery. In his letter, conveying Sidi's speech to the *Federal Gazette*, Franklin states that it might be found in Martin's Account of the former's consulship, anno 1687, and we are told that this statement caused many persons to apply to bookstores and libraries for Martin's supposed work. Then, as now, there could be no better means for determining how matter-of-fact a person was than to test his sense of humor with one of Franklin's facetious cheats.

The exact time at which the *Petition of the Left Hand to those who have the Superintendency of Education* was written is unknown. Its *motif* is not unlike that of the *Petition of the Letter Z*. It complains that from infancy the petitioner had been led to consider her sister as a being of more elevated rank. She had been suffered to grow up without the least instruction while nothing was spared in the education of the latter, who had had masters to teach her writing, drawing, music and other accomplishments. If by chance the Petitioner touched a pencil, a pen or a needle, she was bitterly rebuked, and more than once had been beaten for being awkward and wanting a graceful manner.

But conceive not Sirs [says the left hand further], that my complaints are instigated merely by vanity. No; my uneasiness is occasioned by an object much more serious. It is the practice in our family, that the whole business of providing for its subsistence falls upon my sister and myself. If any indisposition should attack my sister,—and I mention it in confidence upon this occasion, that she is subject to the gout, the rheumatism, and cramp, without making mention of other" accidents,—what would be the fate of our poor family? Must not the regret of our parents be excessive, at having placed so great a difference between sisters who are so perfectly equal? Alas! we must perish from distress; for it would not be in my power even to scrawl a suppliant petition for relief, having been obliged to employ the hand of another in transcribing the request which I have now the honour to prefer to you.

One of the essays of Franklin is an essay which he termed a "bagatelle," but which is of a different cast from most of his papers bearing that designation. This is the essay on the *Morals of Chess*. As a mere literary production, it possesses remarkable merit, but it is more valuable still for the singular union of wisdom and benevolence found in all of the writer's precepts relating to the conduct of life. It is only upon the contracted face of an ordinary chess-board that the sagacious reflections and salutary counsels of this paper are based, but many of them are quite extensive enough in their application to be suitable for the morals of the wider chess-board on which men and women themselves are the pawns, and the universal currents of human nature and human existence the players. By playing at chess, Franklin thought, we may learn foresight, circumspection, caution and hopefulness. When playing it, if the agreement is that the rules of the game shall be strictly observed, they should be strictly observed by both parties. If the agreement is that they shall not be strictly observed, one party should claim no indulgence for himself that he is not willing to grant to his adversary. No false move should ever be made by a player to extricate himself from a difficulty or to gain an advantage. There can be no pleasure in playing with a person once detected in such an unfair practice. If your adversary is long in playing, you should not hurry him, or express any uneasiness at his delay, nor sing, nor whistle, nor look at your watch, nor take up a book to read, nor tap with your feet on the floor, or with your" fingers on the table, nor do anything that may disturb his attention. For all these things displease, and they do not show your skill in playing but your craftiness or your rudeness.

You should not endeavor to amuse and deceive your adversary by pretending to have made bad moves in order to render him confident and careless and inattentive to your schemes.

This is fraud and deceit, not skill. If you gain the victory, you should not give way to exultation or insult, nor show too much pleasure. On the contrary, you should endeavor to console your adversary, and soothe his wounded pride by every sort of civil expression that may be used with truth, such as, "You understand the game better than I, but you are a little inattentive," or "You play too fast," or "You had the best of the game, but something happened to divert your thoughts, and that turned it in my favour." If you are simply a spectator, you should observe the most perfect silence; for, if you give advice, you offend both parties, him, against whom you give it, because it may cause the loss of his game, him, in whose favour you give it, because though it be good, and he follows it, he loses the pleasure he might have had, if you had permitted him to think until it had occurred to himself.

And thus this essay, so full of wholesome, kind advice from a counsellor, who loved men none the less because he knew all their failings and foibles as well as virtues, continues a little longer, until the reader, already won over to its perfect rectitude of sentiment and purpose, entirely forgets how obvious are all the truisms of its stating that he has so often offended. The measure of self-abnegation, suggested by the conclusion of the essay, is, we fear, rather too exacting for the tug of chess-board selfishness upon the weaker side of human nature. If it is agreed that the rules of the game are not to be rigorously enforced," then, says Franklin, moderate your desire of victory over your adversary, and be pleased with one over yourself. Do not snatch eagerly at every advantage offered by his unskilfulness or inattention, but point out to him kindly that by such a move he places or leaves a piece in danger and unsupported; or that by another he will put his king in a perilous situation &c. "By this generous civility (so opposite to the unfairness above forbidden) you may, indeed, happen to lose the game to your opponent," the close of the essay declares, "but you will win what is better, his esteem, his respect, and his affection, together with the silent approbation and goodwill of impartial spectators."

We shall not linger upon the letters of Franklin. The substance of them has already been worked into this book too freely for that. It is sufficient to say that they are among the very best in the English language. It would be idle to compare them with those of Gray, Horace Walpole, Cowper, Byron or Fitzgerald, the acknowledged masters of that form of composition. Franklin was not a conscious man of letters at all, and is not to be judged by such academic standards. If he was, we might say that Cowper aerated with a little of Walpole most nearly, though, after all, but remotely, suggests a true conception of what Franklin was as a letter-writer. Few men were ever saner than Cowper was during his really lucid intervals; but then Cowper was not a man of business, a statesman or a philosopher, and the elixir of Walpole's gaiety differs from that of Franklin's as a stimulant of the wine-shop differs from fresh air and sunshine. The official and semi-official letters of Franklin contain some of the most solid and sagacious of his reflections and observations on political topics. His familiar letters to his kinsfolk and friends often run out into thoughts upon the management of our individual lives and our relations to the visible and invisible universe which are likely to be" a part of the currency of human wisdom as long as human society lasts. And almost all of his known letters have value enough to make us feel, when still another of the thousands written by him happens to be reclaimed from loss, as Reuben in his parable might have felt, if he had recovered his precious axe.

Among the cleverest of his letters was his familiar one to his daughter on the Order of the Cincinnati. If his advice had been asked, he said, he perhaps would not have objected to their wearing their ribbon and badge themselves, if they derived pleasure from such trivial things, but he certainly should have objected to the idea of making the honor hereditary. And this was the amusing and original way in which he presented his views on the subject:

For Honour, worthily obtain'd (as for Example that of our Officers), is in its Nature a *personal* Thing, and incommunicable to any but those who had some Share in obtaining it. Thus among the Chinese, the most ancient, and from long Experience the wisest of Nations, honour does not *descend*, but *ascends*. If a man from his Learning, his Wisdom, or his Valour, is promoted by the Emperor to the Rank of Mandarin, his Parents are immediately entitled to all the same Ceremonies of Respect from the People, that are establish'd as due to the Mandarin himself; on the supposition that it must have been owing to the Education, Instruction, and good Example afforded him by his Parents, that he was rendered capable of serving the Publick.

This *ascending* Honour is therefore useful to the State, as it encourages Parents to give their Children a good and virtuous Education. But the *descending Honour*, to Posterity who could have no Share in obtaining it, is not only groundless and absurd, but often hurtful to that Posterity, since it is apt to make them proud, disdaining to be employ'd in useful Arts, and thence falling into Poverty, and all the Meannesses, Servility, and Wretchedness attending it; which is the present case with much of what is called the *Noblesse* in Europe. Or if" to keep up the Dignity of the Family, Estates are entailed entire on the Eldest male heir, another Pest to Industry and Improvement of the Country is introduc'd, which will be followed by all the odious mixture of pride and Beggary, and idleness, that have half depopulated [and *decultivated*] Spain; occasioning continual Extinction of Families by the Discouragements of Marriage [and neglect in the improvement of estates].

I wish, therefore, that the Cincinnati, if they must go on with their Project, would direct the Badges of their Order to be worn by their Parents, instead of handing them down to their Children. It would be a good Precedent, and might have good Effects. It would also be a kind of Obedience to the Fourth Commandment, in which God enjoins us to honour our Father and Mother, but has nowhere directed us to honour our Children. And certainly no mode of honouring those immediate Authors of our Being can be more effectual, than that of doing praiseworthy Actions, which reflect Honour on those who gave us our Education; or more becoming, than that of manifesting, by some public Expression or Token, that it is to their Instruction and Example we ascribe the Merit of those Actions.

But the Absurdity of *descending Honours* is not a mere Matter of philosophical Opinion; it is capable of mathematical Demonstration. A Man's Son, for instance, is but half of his Family, the other half belonging to the Family of his Wife. His Son, too, marrying into another Family, his Share in the Grandson is but a fourth; in the Great Grandson, by the same Process, it is but an Eighth; in the next Generation a Sixteenth; the next a Thirty-second; the next a Sixty-fourth; the next an Hundred and Twenty-eighth; the next a Two hundred and Fifty-sixth; and the next a Five hundred and twelfth; thus in nine Generations, which will not require more than 300 years (no very great Antiquity for a Family), our present Chevalier of the Order of Cincinnatus's Share in the then existing Knight, will be but a 512th part; which, allowing the present certain Fidelity of American Wives to be insur'd down through all those Nine Generations, is so small a Consideration, that methinks no reasonable Man would hazard for the" sake of it the disagreeable Consequences of the Jealousy, Envy, and Ill will of his Countrymen.

Let us go back with our Calculation from this young Noble, the 512th part of the present Knight, thro' his nine Generations, till we return to the year of the Institution. He must have had a Father and Mother, they are two. Each of them had a Father and

Mother, they are four. Those of the next preceding Generation will be eight, the next Sixteen, the next thirty-two, the next sixty-four, the next one hundred and Twenty-eight, the next Two hundred and fifty-six, and the ninth in this Retrocession Five hundred and twelve, who must be now existing, and all contribute their Proportion of this future *Chevalier de Cincinnatus*. These, with the rest, make together as follows:

2
4
8
16
32
64
128
256
512

1022

One Thousand and Twenty-two Men and Women, contributors to the formation of one Knight. And if we are to have a Thousand of these future Knights, there must be now and hereafter existing One Million and Twenty-two Thousand Fathers and Mothers, who are to contribute to their Production, unless a Part of the Number are employ'd in making more Knights than One. Let us strike off then the 22,000, on the Supposition of this double Employ, and then consider whether, after a reasonable Estimation of the Number of Rogues, and Fools, and Royalists and Scoundrels and Prostitutes, that are mix'd with, and help to make up necessarily their Million of Predecessors, Posterity will have much reason to boast of the noble Blood of the then existing Set of Chevaliers de Cincinnatus. [The future genealogists, too, of these" Chevaliers, in proving the lineal descent of their honour through so many generations (even supposing honour capable in its nature of descending), will only prove the small share of this honour, which can be justly claimed by any one of them; since the above simple process in arithmetic makes it quite plain and clear that, in proportion as the antiquity of the family shall augment, the right to the honour of the ancestor will diminish; and a few generations more would reduce it to something so small as to be very near an absolute nullity.] I hope, therefore, that the Order will drop this part of their project, and content themselves, as the Knights of the Garter, Bath, Thistle, St. Louis, and other Orders of Europe do, with a Life Enjoyment of their little Badge and Ribband, and let the Distinction die with those who have merited it. This I imagine will give no offence. For my own part, I shall think it a Convenience, when I go into a Company where there may be Faces unknown to me, if I discover, by this Badge, the Persons who merit some particular Expression of my Respect; and it will save modest Virtue the Trouble of calling for our Regard, by awkward roundabout Intimations of having been heretofore employ'd in the Continental Service.

The Gentleman, who made the Voyage to France to provide the Ribands and Medals, has executed his Commission. To me they seem tolerably done; but all such Things are criticis'd. Some find Fault with the Latin, as wanting classic Elegance and

Correctness; and, since our Nine Universities were not able to furnish better Latin, it was pity, they say, that the Mottos had not been in English. Others object to the Title, as not properly assumable by any but Gen. Washington, [and a few others] who serv'd without Pay. Others object to the *Bald Eagle* as looking too much like a *Dindon*, or Turkey. For my own Part, I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen as the Representative of our Country; he is a Bird of bad moral Character; he does not get his living honestly; you may have seen him perch'd on some dead Tree, near the River where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the Labour of the Fishing-Hawk; and, when that diligent Bird has at length taken a Fish, and is bearing it to his Nest for the support of his Mate and young ones, the Bald Eagle pursues him, and takes it" from him. With all this Injustice he is never in good Case; but, like those among Men who live by Sharping and Robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. Besides, he is a rank Coward; the little *King Bird*, not bigger than a Sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the District. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America, who have driven all the *King-birds* from our Country; though exactly fit for that Order of Knights, which the French call *Chevaliers d'Industrie*.

I am, on this account, not displeas'd that the Figure is not known as a Bald Eagle, but looks more like a Turk'y. For in Truth, the Turk'y is in comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America. Eagles have been found in all Countries, but the Turk'y was peculiar to ours; the first of the Species seen in Europe being brought to France by the Jesuits from Canada, and serv'd up at the Wedding Table of Charles the Ninth. He is, [though a little vain and silly, it is true, but not the worse emblem for that,] a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards, who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a *red* Coat on.

Nor need we dwell longer either upon Franklin as a poet. Considered seriously as such, he was undoubtedly one of the kind, that, as Horace says, neither Gods nor men can endure. But he should not be seriously regarded as a poet at all. We should bring no severer judgment, to his couplets than was brought to them by the plowmen and frontiersmen, who kept *Poor Richard's Almanac* suspended over their mantelpieces; and his anacreontics should be read, as they were sung, after the edge of criticism has been dulled by a bottle or so. It is only fair to Poor Richard, however, to say that no one had a poorer opinion of his gifts as a poet than himself. "I know as thee," he says in one of his prefaces, "that I am no *Poet born*: and it is a Trade I never learnt, nor indeed could learn. *If I make Verses, 'tis in Spight of Nature and my Stars, I write.*" In another preface, after honoring his friend" Taylor, of Ephemerides fame, with a considerable number of lines, he exclaims: "Souse down into Prose again, my Muse; for Poetry's no more thy Element, than Air is that of the Flying-Fish." And we need go no further than one of Franklin's lively letters to Polly, at which we have already glanced, to satisfy ourselves that he placed quite as low an estimate on his verses as Poor Richard did on his. Speaking of the Muse, which he mentioned in his letter as having visited him that morning, he observes in his light-hearted way:

This Muse appear'd to be no Housewife. I suppose few of them are. She was *drest* (if the Expression is allowable) in an *Undress*, a kind of slatternly *Negligée*, neither neat nor clean, nor well made; and she has given the same sort of Dress to my Piece. On reviewing it, I would have reform'd the lines and made them all of a Length, as I am told Lines ought to be; but I find I can't lengthen the short ones without stretching them on the Rack, and I think it would be equally cruel to cut off any Part of the long ones. Besides the Superfluity of *these* makes up for the Deficiency of *those*; and so,

from a Principle of Justice, I leave them at full Length, that I may give you, at least in one Sense of the Word, *good Measure*.

Of all the productions of Franklin, the *Autobiography* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*, are those upon which his literary fame will chiefly rest. Of the former, we have already said too much to say much more about it. It is the only thing written by Franklin that can properly be called a book, and even it is marked by the brevity which he regarded as one of the essentials of good writing. If he did not write other books, it was not, so far as we can see, because, as has been charged, he lacked constructive capacity, but rather because, when he resorted to the pen, he did it not for literary celebrity, but for practical purposes of the hour, best subserved by brief essays or papers. It is true that in writing the early chapters of the *Autobiography*, which brought his life down to the year 1730, he was not exactly writing for the moment, but, still, the motive by which he was actuated was a purely practical one. "They were written to my Son," he said in a letter to Matthew Carey, "and intended only as Information to my Family." Even in the later chapters, which brought his life down to his fiftieth year, he still had a similar incentive to literary effort, highly congenial with the general bent of his character, that is to say, the opportunity that they afforded him to point to his business success as an example of what might be accomplished by frugality and industry. "What is to follow," he wrote to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, "will be of more important Transactions: But it seems to me that what is done will be of more general Use to young Readers; as exemplifying strongly the Effects of prudent and imprudent Conduct in the Commencement of a Life of Business." Two days later, he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan from Philadelphia that he was diligently employed in writing the *Autobiography*, to which his persuasions had not a little contributed.

To shorten the work [he said], as well as for other reasons, I omit all facts and transactions, that may not have a tendency to benefit the young reader, by showing him from my example, and my success in emerging from poverty, and acquiring some degree of wealth, power, and reputation, the advantages of certain modes of conduct which I observed, and of avoiding the errors which were prejudicial to me.

To the limited nature of the inducements to the composition of the *Autobiography*, disclosed by these letters, it was due that the interest of Franklin in the subsequent continuation of the work was too languid for the completion of the whole plan of the *Autobiography*, as intimated in the Hints which he gives of its intended scope," notwithstanding the urgent appeals which his friends never ceased to make to him to complete it.

If one of the effects of the fearless self-arraignment of the *Autobiography* has been to lower the standing of Franklin in some respects with posterity, we should remember the unselfish motive, which induced him to turn his youthful errors to the profit of others, and also the fact that he had his own misgivings about the bearing upon his reputation of such outspoken self-exposure, and submitted the propriety of publishing the *Autobiography* unreservedly to the judgment of friends who were certainly competent judges in every regard of what the moral sense of their time would approve.

I am not without my Doubts concerning the Memoirs, whether it would be proper to publish them, or not, at least during my Life time [he wrote to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld], and I am persuaded there are many Things that would, in Case of Publication, be best omitted; I therefore request it most earnestly of you, my dear Friend, that you would examine them carefully & critically, with M. Le Veillard, and give me your candid & friendly Advice thereupon, as soon as you can conveniently.

Later, he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan from Philadelphia that he had, of late, been so interrupted by extreme pain, which obliged him to have recourse to opium, that, between the effects of both, he had but little time, in which he could write anything, but that his grandson was copying what was done, which would be sent to Vaughan for his opinion by the next vessel; for he found it a difficult task to speak decently and properly of one's own conduct, and felt the want of a judicious friend to encourage him in scratching out. The next time that Franklin wrote to Vaughan it was when opium alone could render existence tolerable to him, but in the interim, he had happily discovered that he could dictate even when he could not write."

What is already done [he said] I now send you, with an earnest request that you and my good friend Dr. Price [later in the letter he calls him "my dear Dr. Price"] would be so good as to take the trouble of reading it, critically examining it, and giving me your candid opinion whether I had best publish or suppress it; and if the first, then what parts had better be expunged or altered. I shall rely upon your opinions, for I am now grown so old and feeble in mind, as well as body, that I can not place any confidence in my own judgment.

Of the same tenor was a still later letter to M. Le Veillard, in which Franklin expressed the hope that Le Veillard would, with the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, read the *Memoirs* over carefully, examine them critically and send him his friendly, candid opinion of the parts that he would advise him to correct or expunge, in case he should think that the work was generally proper to be published, but, if he judged otherwise, that he would inform him of that fact, too, as soon as possible, and prevent him from incurring further trouble in the endeavor to finish the work. The world has reason to be thankful that the fate of the *Autobiography* should thus have been left to the decision of men who, even if they had not lived in the eighteenth century, would have been robust enough, in point of intelligence and morals, to believe that the youthful *errata* laid bare in that book were more than atoned for by the manly and generous aims that inspired it.

Of the *Autobiography* it is enough now to say that it is one of the few books which have arrested and permanently riveted the attention of the whole civilized world. Commenting in it on the copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*, "in Dutch, finely printed on good paper, with copper cuts," which the drunken Dutchman, whom he drew up by the shock-pate from the waters of New York Bay, on his first journey to Philadelphia, handed to him to dry, Franklin says: "I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more" generally read than any other book, except perhaps the Bible." The *Autobiography* is hardly less popular. It, too, has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and has been printed and reprinted until it is one of the most widely-read books in existence. Such it is likely to remain always, not simply because it was written by a very famous man, who possessed, to an extraordinary degree, the power of impressing his thoughts and fancies on the hearts and imagination of the human race, but because it tells a story of self-conquest and self-promotion full of warning, guidance and hope for every human being, who wishes to make the best of his own opportunities and powers. As a mere composition, dressed though it is like the poetic Muse described by Franklin in his letter to Polly "in a kind of slatternly Negligée," it is one of the masterpieces of literature. Its very careless loquacity is but suggestive of a mind overflowing with its own profusion of experience and reflection. There is no better test of the extent, to which a writer has proved himself equal to the highest possibilities of his art, than to ask how readily his conceptions can be pictured; for the mind of a great writer is but a gallery hung with such pictures as the painter reduces to material form and color. Tried by this test, the universal popularity of the *Autobiography* can be readily understood. The Book of Genesis, the plays of

Shakespeare, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the novels of Sir Walter Scott, are not more easily illustrated than are the incidents depicted to the life in its early chapters. Some of them wear a hard and coarse aspect as if they had been struck off from ruder plates than any belonging to the present state of the art of engraving, but this is only another proof of the fidelity of Franklin to his eighteenth century background. We might as well quarrel with the squalor and sluttishness of Hogarth's scenes.

Poor Richard's Almanac, including the "Way to Wealth," or Father Abraham's Speech is Franklin's other" master-work. One would hardly look to almanac-making for a classic contribution to letters, but it is not extravagant to say that Poor Richard is one of the most lifelike figures in the literature of the world. Nestor, Falstaff, Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, Sir Roger de Coverley, Captain Dugald Dalgetty and Colonel Newcome are not more distinctly delineated, or rather we should say are not more manifest to the eye and palpable to the touch. To the people of Pennsylvania, its tradesmen, its farmers, even its rude borderers, he was a personage fully as real as the colonial governor at Philadelphia, and far more popular. Thousands of its inhabitants never turned over the pages of any other book except those of the Bible. And finally the wise sayings of Poor Richard, in the form of the "Way to Wealth," applicable as they were to the primal and universal conditions of human existence everywhere, became known from the Thames to the Ganges. The middle of the eighteenth century was the heyday of almanac-making, and the best proof of the durable stuff, of which *Poor Richard's Almanac* was woven, is the utter oblivion that has overtaken all his competitors except those who are preserved in his pages like flies in amber. The prefaces of *Poor Richard*, the proverbial maxims with which his almanacs are bestrewn, the compendious speech on which these maxims are finally strung like bright beads, have survived, because they were adapted, with consummate art, to the simple habits and mental wants of the rude audience, to which they were addressed. For upwards of thirty years, Poor Richard, with a distinctness and consistency of character as perfect as those of Santa Claus, made his annual bow to the People of Pennsylvania, and served up to their delighted palates his highly seasoned *ollapodrida* of mock astrology, homely wisdom and coarse jollity in prose and verse. Sometimes the humor is mere horse laughter. But always the shrewd, worldly-wise, merry-tempered old philomath and stargazer" hits the fancy of his readers with unerring accuracy between wind and water. His weather predictions and prognostications of planetary conjunctions are just serious enough for unlettered rustics whose minds have been partially but not wholly disabused of the belief that rain comes with the change of the moon. His proverbs are the proverbs of men whose lives are too meagre and straitened to permit them to forget his saying that if you will not hear Reason she'll surely rap your knuckles. His humor is the humor of men whose grave, weather-beaten features do not relax into a smile or grin except under the compelling influence of some broad joke or ridiculous spectacle. Just as the most successful inventor is the one who invents the device that has the widest application to material uses, so the most successful writer is the one who conceives the thoughts that have the widest application to the moral and intellectual needs of mankind. The thoughts that Poor Richard conceived or adopted are such thoughts; for what he taught was full of significance to every man who desires to obtain a correct insight into the moral and economic laws that govern the world for the purpose of winning its favor; which means all men except those who either prey on the world or merely drift along with its current.

In the Prefaces to his *Almanac*, Poor Richard manages to keep both his wife Bridget and himself close to the footlights. In the first preface, he says that, if he were to declare that he wrote almanacs with no other view than of the public good, he should not be sincere.

The plain Truth of the Matter is [he confesses], I am excessive poor, and my Wife, good Woman, is, I tell her, excessive proud; she cannot bear, she says, to sit spinning

in her Shift of Tow, while I do nothing but gaze at the Stars; and has threatned more than once to burn all my Books and Rattling-Traps (as she calls my Instruments) if I do not make some profitable Use of them for the Good of my Family.

In the preface of the succeeding year he announces that the patronage of his readers the year before had made his circumstances much easier. His wife had been enabled to get a pot of her own, and was no longer obliged to borrow one from a neighbor; nor had they ever since been without something of their own to put in it. She had also got a pair of shoes, two new shifts, and a new, warm petticoat, and for his part he had bought a second-hand coat, so good that he was no longer ashamed to go to town or be seen there. These things had rendered Bridget's temper so much more pacific than it used to be that he might say that he had slept more, and more quietly within the last year than in the three foregoing years put together.

In a later preface, he declares that, if the generous purchaser of his labors could see how often his fi-pence helped to light up the comfortable fire, line the pot, fill the cup and make glad the heart of a poor man and an honest good old woman, he would not think his money ill laid out, though the almanac of his Friend and Servant, R. Saunders, were one half blank paper.

A year later, Mistress Saunders avails herself of the fact that her good man had set out the week before for Potowmack to visit an old stargazer of his acquaintance, and to see about a little place for the couple to settle, and end their days on, to scratch out the preface to the copy of the almanac for that year which he had left behind him for the press, because it had undertaken to let the world know that she, who had already been held out in former prefaces as proud and loud and the possessor of a new petticoat, had lately, forsooth, taken a fancy to drink a little tea now and then. Upon looking over the months, she saw that he had put in abundance of foul weather this year, and therefore she had scattered here and there, where she could find room, some fair, pleasant sunshiny days for the good women to dry their clothes in. If what she promised did not come to pass, she would at any rate have shown her goodwill."

In the next preface, referring to the impression that the great yearly demand for his almanac had made him so rich that he should call himself Poor Dick no longer, and pretending that he and the printer were different persons, Poor Richard says:

When I first begun to publish, the Printer made a fair Agreement with me for my copies, by Virtue of which he runs *away with* the greatest Part of the Profit—However much good may't do him; I do not grudge it him; he is a Man I have a great Regard for, and I wish his Profit ten times greater than it is. For I am, dear Reader, his as well as thy

Affectionate Friend,
R. Saunders.

But the five pence came in too rapidly for the almanac-maker to persist in putting up a poor mouth of this kind. In his twelfth year, after frankly admitting that he had labored not for the benefit of the public but for the benefit of his own dear self, not forgetting in the meantime his gracious consort and Duchess, the peaceful, quiet, silent Lady Bridget, he states that, whether his labors had been of any service to the public or not, he must acknowledge that they had been of service to him.

It was by such personal touches as these that Poor Richard made Bridget and himself as familiar to his patrons as the signs of the Zodiac. Astrology itself was, of course, too good a subject for keen ridicule to be spared. Formerly, Poor Richard declares in one preface, no prince would make war or peace, nor any general fight a battle without first consulting an astrologer, who examined the aspects and configurations of the heavenly bodies, and marked

the lucky hour. But “now,” he goes on, “the noble art (more shame to the age we live in) is dwindled into contempt; the Great neglect us, Empires make Leagues, and Parliaments Laws without advising with us; and scarce any other use is made of our learned” labours than to find the best time of cutting corns or gelding Pigs.”

In many sly ways, Poor Richard let his readers know that his forecasts are not to be accepted too seriously. It is no wonder, he says in his fifth preface, that, among the multitude of astrological predictions, some few should fail; for, without any defect in the art itself, ‘tis well known that a small error, a single wrong figure overseen in a calculation, may occasion great mistakes, but, however the almanac-makers might miss it in other things, he believed it would be generally allowed that they always hit the day of the month, and that, he supposed, was esteemed one of the most useful things in an almanac. In another issue of the almanac, he indulges in a great variety of confident predictions as to the year 1739. The crabs will go sidelong and the rope-makers backwards, the belly will wag before, and another part of the body, which we shall not name, but he does, will sit down first, Mercury will so confound the speech of people that, when a Pennsylvanian will wish to say panther, he will say *painter*, and, when a New Yorker will attempt to say *this*, he will say *diss*, and the people of New England and Cape May will not be able to say *cow* for their lives, but will be forced to say *keow* by a certain involuntary twist in the root of their tongues. As for Connecticut men and Marylanders, they will not be able to open their mouths but *sir* shall be the first or last syllable they will pronounce, and sometimes both.

Some of his other predictions are that the stone blind will see but very little, the deaf will hear but poorly and the dumb will not speak very plain, while whole flocks, herds and droves of sheep, swine and oxen, cocks and hens, ducks and drakes, geese and ganders will go to pot, but the mortality will not be altogether so great among cats, dogs and horses. As for age, it will be incurable because of the years past, and, towards the fall, some people will be seized” with an unaccountable inclination to eat their own ears. But the worst disease of all will be a certain most horrid, dreadful, malignant, catching, perverse and odious malady, almost epidemical, insomuch that many will run mad upon it. “I quake for very Fear,” exclaims Poor Richard, “when I think on’t; for I assure you very few will escape this Disease, which is called by the learned Albumazar *Lacko ’mony*.”

That the orange trees in Greenland will go near to fare the worse for the cold, that oats will be a great help to horses and that there will not be much more bacon than swine, are still other prophecies hazarded by the astrologer.

In another preface, he declares that he has gone into retirement, and that it is time for an old man such as he is to think of preparing for his Great Remove. Then follow these impatient statements:

The perpetual Teasing of both Neighbours and Strangers, to calculate Nativities, give Judgments on Schemes, erect Figures, discover Thieves, detect Horse-Stealers, describe the Route of Run-a-ways and stray’d Cattle; the Croud of Visitors with a 1000 trifling Questions; *will my Ship return Safe? Will my Mare win the Race? Will her next Colt be a Pacer? When will my Wife die? Who shall be my Husband, and HOW LONG first? When is the best time to cut Hair, trim Locks or sow Sallad?* These and the like Impertinences I have now neither Taste nor Leisure for. I have had enough of ‘em. All that these angry Folks can say, will never provoke me to tell them where I live. I would eat my Nails first.

At times the horse laughter is even slightly flavored with the stercoraceous smell of the stable.

Ignorant Men [says Poor Richard in his seventh preface] wonder how we Astrologers foretell the Weather so exactly, unless we deal with the old black Devil. Alas! 'tis as easy as.... For Instance; the Stargazer peeps at the heavens thro' a long Glass: He sees perhaps TAURUS, or the Great Bull, in a mighty Chafe, stamping on the Floor of his House, swinging his Tail about, stretching out his Neck, and opening wide his Mouth. 'Tis natural from these Appearances to judge that this furious Bull is puffing, blowing and roaring. Distance being consider'd and Time allow'd for all this to come down, there you have Wind and Thunder. He spies perhaps VIRGO (or the Virgin;) she turns her Head round as it were to see if anybody observ'd her; then crouching down gently, with her Hands on her Knees, she looks wistfully for a while right forward. He judges rightly what she's about: And having calculated the Distance and allow'd Time for its Falling, finds that next Spring we shall have a fine *April* shower.

In his preface for 1754, Poor Richard advances the proposition that the first astrologers were honest husbandmen, and he proceeds to prove it partly by the names of the Zodiacal signs, which were related for the most part, he asserts, to rural affairs. The Ram, the Bull, the Twins, the Crab, the Lion, the Wench, the Balance, the Scorpion, the Archer, the Goat, the Waterbearer, the Fish, one by one he tells them off in the course of his demonstration, making his own comments on their several meanings as he goes along. The Lion and the Wench, he says, were intended by the Ancients to mark the summer months and dog days when those creatures were most mischievous. The Balance, one of the autumnal signs, was intended by them to mark out the time for weighing and selling the summer's produce, or for holding courts of justice in which they might plague themselves and their neighbors. The Scorpion, with the sting in his tail, certainly denoted the paying of costs. The Goat accompanies the short days and long nights of winter, to show the season of mirth, feasting and jollity; for what could Capricorn mean but dancing or cutting of capers? Lastly came Pisces, or the two Shads, to signify the approaching return of those fish up the rivers. "Make your Wears, hawl your Seins, Catch" 'em and pickle 'em, my Friends," advised Poor Richard "they are excellent Relishars of Old Cyder."

But Poor Richard's prefaces are not altogether made up of hearty, hilarious jests and loud guffaws. The raillery, with which he plies his rival philomath, Titan Leeds, would be as admirable as any humor in his writings, if it were not borrowed so manifestly from Dean Swift's ridicule of Partridge, the almanac-maker. In his very first preface in 1733, he says that he would have published an almanac many years before had he not been restrained by his regard for his good friend and fellow-student, Mr. Titan Leeds, whose interest he was extremely unwilling to hurt.

But this Obstacle (I am far from speaking it with Pleasure) [declares Poor Richard] is soon to be removed, since inexorable Death, who was never known to respect Merit, has already prepared the mortal Dart, the fatal Sister has already extended her destroying Shears, and that ingenious Man must soon be taken from us. He dies, by my Calculation made at his Request, on Oct. 17, 1733. 3 h. 29 m. p.m. at the very instant of the [** symbol for conjunction] of [** symbol for Sun] and [** symbol for Mercury]. By his own Calculation he will survive till the 26th of the same Month. This small Difference between us we have disputed whenever we have met these 9 Years past; but at length he is inclinable to agree with my Judgment: Which of us is most exact, a little Time will now determine. As therefore these Provinces may not longer expect to see any of his Performances after this Year, I think myself free to take up the Task, and request a share of the publick Encouragement.

To these assertions Leeds returned a hot answer in his American Almanac for the succeeding year. Notwithstanding the false prediction of the writer, who proposed to succeed him in the writing of almanacs, he had, he said, by the mercy of God lived to write a diary for the year 1734 and to publish the folly and ignorance of the presumptuous author, whom he did not scruple, in the rising tide of his wrath, to term “a Fool and a Lyar” and “a” conceited Scribler.” This, of course, was just what Poor Richard was calculating on. In his next preface, he is at his very best.

In the Preface to my last Almanack [he says], I foretold the Death of my dear old Friend and Fellow-Student, the learned and ingenious Mr. *Titan Leeds*, which was to be on the 17th of *October*, 1733, 3 h. 29 m. p.m. at the very Instant of the [**symbol for conjunction] of [**Symbol for Sun] and [**Symbol for Mercury]. By his own Calculation he was to survive till the 26th of the same Month, and expire in the Time of the Eclipse, near 11 o’clock a.m. At which of these Times he died, or whether he be really yet dead, I can not at this present Writing positively assure my Readers; forasmuch as a Disorder in my own Family demanded my Presence, and would not permit me as I had intended, to be with him in his last Moments, to receive his last Embrace, to close his Eyes, and do the Duty of a Friend in performing the last Offices to the Departed. Therefore it is that I can not positively affirm whether he be dead or not; for the Stars only show to the Skilful, what will happen in the natural and universal Chain of Causes and Effects; but ‘tis well known, that the Events which would otherwise certainly happen at certain Times in the Course of Nature are sometimes set aside or postpon’d for wise and good Reasons by the immediate particular Dispositions of Providence; which particular Dispositions the Stars can by no Means discover or foreshow. There is however (and I can not speak it without Sorrow) there is the strongest Probability that my dear Friend is no more; for there appears in his Name, as I am assured, an Almanack for the year 1734, in which I am treated in a very gross and unhandsome Manner; in which I am called *a false Predictor, an Ignorant, a conceited Scribler, a Fool, and a Lyar*. Mr. Leeds was too well bred to use any Man so indecently and so scurrilously, and moreover his Esteem and Affection for me was extraordinary: So that it is to be feared that Pamphlet may be only a Contrivance of somebody or other, who hopes perhaps to sell two or three Years Almanacks still, by the sole Force and Virtue of Mr. *Leeds*’ Name; but certainly, to put Words into the Mouth of a Gentleman and a Man of Letters, against his Friend, which” the meanest and most scandalous of the People might be ashamed to utter even in a drunken Quarrel, is an unpardonable Injury to his Memory, and an Imposition upon the Publick.

Mr. *Leeds* was not only profoundly skilful in the useful Science he profess’d, but he was a Man of *exemplary* Sobriety, a most *sincere Friend*, and an *exact Performer of his Word*. These valuable Qualifications, with many others so much endear’d him to me, that although it should be so, that, contrary to all Probability, contrary to my Prediction and his own, he might possibly be yet alive, yet my Loss of Honour as a Prognosticator, can not afford me so much Mortification, as his Life, Health and Safety would give me Joy and Satisfaction.

By these observations, the burden was again imposed upon Titan Leeds of demonstrating that he was still alive, and accordingly in his next preface his indignant shade did not fail to take notice of them.

But, with the succeeding revolution of the earth about the sun, Poor Richard was at his sport again.

Whatever may be the Musick of the Spheres [he said], how great soever the Harmony of the Stars, 'tis certain there is no Harmony among the Stargazers; but they are perpetually growling and snarling at one another like strange Curs, or like some Men at their Wives: I had resolved to keep the Peace on my own part, and affront none of them; and I shall persist in that Resolution: But having receiv'd much Abuse from *Titan Leeds* deceas'd (*Titan Leeds* when living would not have us'd me so!) I say, having receiv'd much Abuse from the Ghost of *Titan Leeds*, who pretends to be still living, and to write Almanacks in Spight of me and my Predictions, I can not help saying, that tho' I take it patiently, I take it very unkindly. And whatever he may pretend, 'tis undoubtedly true that he is really defunct and dead. First because the Stars are seldom disappointed, never but in the Case of wise Men, *sapiens dominabitur astris*, and they foreshow'd his Death at the Time I predicted it. Secondly, 'Twas requisite" and necessary he should die punctually at that Time, for the Honour of Astrology, the Art professed both by him and his Father before him. Thirdly, 'Tis plain to every one that reads his two last Almanacks (for 1734 and 35) that they are not written with that *Life* his Performances use to be written with; the Wit is low and flat, the little Hints dull and spiritless, nothing smart in them but *Hudibras's Verses* against Astrology at the Heads of the Months in the last, which no Astrologer but a *dead one* would have inserted, and no man *living* would or could write such Stuff as the rest.

In a later preface, Poor Richard complains that certain ill-willers of his, despited at the great reputation that he had gained by exactly predicting another man's death, had endeavored to deprive him of it all at once in the most effective manner by reporting that he himself was never alive. It was not civil treatment, he said, to endeavor to deprive him of his very being, and to reduce him to a non-entity in the opinion of the public; but, so long as he knew himself to walk about, eat, drink and sleep, he was satisfied that there was really such a man as he was, whatever they might say to the contrary. As his printer seemed as unwilling to father his offspring as he was to lose the credit of them, to clear him entirely as well as to vindicate his own honor he made this public and serious declaration, which he desired might be believed, to wit, that what he had written theretofore and did now write neither had been nor was written by any other man or men, person or persons whatsoever. Those who were not satisfied with this must needs be very unreasonable.

To cap the climax of all this fun, Poor Richard finally published, in one of his prefaces, a letter, alleged by him to have been written to him by *Titan Leeds* from the other world, which stated that the writer was grieved at the aspersions cast on Poor Richard by avaricious publishers of almanacs, who envied his success, and pretended that the writer remained alive many years after the hour" predicted for his death by Poor Richard, and certified that he, *Titan Leeds*, did die presently at that hour with a variation only of 5 m. 53 sec.; which must be allowed to be no great matter in such cases. Nay more, in this letter *Titan Leeds* was made to predict that another Pennsylvania philomath and competitor of Poor Richard, one John Jerman would be openly reconciled to the Church of Rome, and give all his goods and chattels to the Chapel, being perverted by a certain country schoolmaster.

In a former year, Poor Richard had already charged Jerman with making such flexible prophecies as "Snow here or in New England," "Rain here or in South Carolina," "Cold to the Northward," "Warm to the Southward." If he were to adopt that method, he said, he would not be so likely to have his mistakes detected, but he did not consider that it would be of any service to anybody to know what weather it was 1000 miles off, and therefore he always set down positively what weather his reader would have, be he where he might be at

the time. All he modestly desired was only the favorable allowance of a day or two before and a day or two after the precise day against which the weather was set.

On another previous occasion, Poor Richard had made his readers a promise about Jerman which he does not seem to have ever redeemed. "When my Brother J-m-n," he said, "erected a Scheme to know which was best for his sick Horse, to sup a new-laid Egg, or a little Broth, he found that the Stars plainly gave their Verdict for Broth, and the Horse having sup'd his Broth;—Now, what do you think became of that Horse? You shall know in my next."

When the prediction of Titan Leeds from beyond the grave that Jerman would apostatize was duly published, the latter resented it; and, in his Almanac for the year 1742, Poor Richard felt it necessary to say a word about the matter himself."

My last Adversary [he declared] is J. J—n, Philomat., who *declares and protests* (in his preface, 1741) that the *false Prophecy put in my Almanack, concerning him, the Year before, is altogether false and untrue: and that I am one of Baal's false Prophets*. This *false, false Prophecy* he speaks of, related to his Reconciliation with the Church of Rome; which, notwithstanding his Declaring and Protesting, is, I fear, too true. Two Things in his elegiac Verses confirm me in this Suspicion. He calls the first of *November* by the name of *All Hallows Day*. Reader; does not this smell of Popery? Does it in the least savour of the pure Language of Friends? But the plainest Thing is; his Adoration of Saints, which he confesses to be his Practice, in these Words, page 4.

"When any Trouble did me befall,

To my dear *Mary* then I would call."

Did he think the whole World were so stupid as not to take Notice of this? So ignorant as not to know, that all Catholicks pay the highest Regard to the *Virgin Mary*? Ah! Friend *John*, we must allow you to be a *Poet*, but you are certainly no Protestant. I could heartily wish your Religion were as good as your Verses.

Mingled with the other contents of *Poor Richard's Almanac* were pointed maxims and sayings worthy of Lord John Russell's happy definition of a proverb "the wit of one and the wisdom of many," and at times first- or second-hand verses also.

Among the best of the latter are the following:

When Robin now three days had married been,
And all his friends and neighbours gave him joy,
This question of his wife he asked then,
Why till her marriage day she proved so coy?
Indeed said he, 'twas well thou didst not yield,
For doubtless then my purpose was to leave thee:
O, sir, I once before was so beguil'd,
And was resolved the next should not deceive me."

Poetry for December, 1734

By Mrs. Bridget Saunders, my Dutchess in answer to the December verses of last year.

He that for the sake of drink neglects his trade,
And spends each night in taverns till 'tis late,

And rises when the sun is four hours high,
 And ne'er regards his starving family,
 God in his mercy may do much to save him
 But, woe to the poor wife, whose lot is to have him.

* * * *

Time eateth all things, could old poets say.
 But times are chang'd, our times *drink* all away

* * * *

Old Batchelor would have a wife that's wise,
 Fair, rich and young a maiden for his bed;
 Not proud, nor churlish, but of faultless size
 A country housewife in the city bred.
 He's a nice fool and long in vain hath staid;
 He should bespeak her, there's none ready made.

And this is Poor Richard's version of how Cupid and Campaspe played for kisses:

My love and I for kisses play'd,
 She would keep stakes, I was content,
 But when I won, she would be paid,
 This made me ask her what she meant:
 Quoth she, since you are in the wrangling vein
 Here take your kisses, give me mine again.

The first preface to *Poor Richard's Almanac* appeared in the issue for 1733. In 1758, the proverbs and sayings, scattered through the preceding issues of the publication, were assembled in the *Way to Wealth* or *Father Abraham's Speech*. Even John Bach McMaster in his" brief, though admirable, work on Franklin as a man of letters found that he could not abridge this renowned production; so we offer no apology for inserting it here in its entirety:

Courteous Reader

I have heard that nothing gives an Author so great Pleasure, as to find his Works respectfully quoted by other learned Authors. This Pleasure I have seldom enjoyed; for tho' I have been, if I may say it without Vanity, an *eminent Author* of Almanacks annually now a full Quarter of a Century, my Brother Authors in the same Way, for what Reason I know not, have ever been very sparing in their Applauses, and no other Author has taken the least Notice of me, so that did not my Writings produce me some solid *Pudding*, the great Deficiency of *Praise* would have quite discouraged me.

I concluded at length, that the People were the best Judges of my Merit; for they buy my Works; and besides, in my Rambles, where I am not personally known, I have frequently heard one or other of my Adages repeated, with, *as Poor Richard says*, at the End on 't; this gave me some Satisfaction, as it showed not only that my Instructions were regarded, but discovered likewise some Respect for my Authority;

and I own, that to encourage the Practice of remembering and repeating those wise Sentences, I have sometimes *quoted myself* with great Gravity.

Judge, then how much I must have been gratified by an Incident I am going to relate to you. I stopt my Horse lately where a great Number of People were collected at a Vendue of Merchant Goods. The Hour of Sale not being come, they were conversing on the Badness of the Times and one of the Company call'd to a plain clean old Man, with white Locks, "Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the Times? Won't these heavy Taxes quite ruin the Country? How shall we be ever able to pay them? What would you advise us to?" Father *Abraham* stood up, and reply'd, "If you'd have my Advice, I'll give it you in short, for *A Word to the Wise is enough*, and *many Words won't fill a Bushel*, as *Poor Richard*" says." They join'd in desiring him to speak his Mind, and gathering round him, he proceeded as follows;

"Friends," says he, "and Neighbours, the Taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the Government were the only Ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our *Idleness*, three times as much by our Pride, and four times as much by our *Folly*; and from these Taxes the Commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an Abatement. However let us hearken to good Advice, and something may be done for us; *God helps them that help themselves*, as *Poor Richard* says, in his Almanack of 1733.

"It would be thought a hard Government that should tax its People one-tenth Part of their *Time*, to be employed in its Service. But *Idleness* taxes many of us much more, if we reckon all that is spent in absolute *Sloth*, or doing of nothing, with that which is spent in idle Employments or Amusements, that amount to nothing. *Sloth*, by bringing on Diseases, absolutely shortens Life. *Sloth, like Rust, consumes faster than Labour wears; while the used Key is always bright* as *Poor Richard* says. *But dost thou love Life, then do not squander Time, for that's the stuff Life is made of*, as *Poor Richard* says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that *The sleeping Fox catches no Poultry*, and that *There will be sleeping enough in the Grave*, as *Poor Richard* says.

"*If Time be of all Things the most precious, wasting Time must be*, as *Poor Richard* says, *the greatest Prodigality*; since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost Time is never found again; and what we call Time enough, always proves little enough*: Let us then be up and doing, and doing to the Purpose; so by Diligence shall we do more with less Perplexity. *Sloth makes all Things difficult, but Industry all easy*, as *Poor Richard* says; and *He that riseth late must trot all Day, and shall scarce overtake his Business at Night*; while *Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him*, as we read in *Poor Richard*, who adds, *Drive thy Business, let not that drive thee; and Early to Bed, and early to rise, makes a Man healthy, wealthy, and wise*.

"So what signifies *wishing* and *hoping* for better Times. We" may make these Times better, if we bestir ourselves. *Industry need not wish*, as *Poor Richard* says, *and he that lives upon Hope will die fasting. There are no Gains without Pains; then Help Hands, for I have no Lands*, or if I have, they are smartly taxed. And, as *Poor Richard* likewise observes, *He that hath a Trade hath an Estate; and he that hath a Calling, hath an Office of Profit and Honour*; but then the *Trade* must be worked at, and the *Calling* well followed, or neither the *Estate* nor the *Office* will enable us to pay our Taxes. If we are industrious, we shall never starve; for, as *Poor Richard* says, *At the working Man's House Hunger looks in, but dares not enter*. Nor

will the Bailiff or the Constable enter, for *Industry pays Debts, while Despair encreaseth them*, says *Poor Richard*. What though you have found no Treasure, nor has any rich Relation left you a Legacy, *Diligence is the Mother of Goodluck* as *Poor Richard* says and *God gives all Things to Industry*. Then plough deep, while *Sluggards sleep*, and you shall have Corn to sell and to keep, says *Poor Dick*. Work while it is called To-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered To-morrow, which makes *Poor Richard* say, *One to-day is worth two To-morrows*, and farther, *Have you somewhat to do To-morrow, do it To-day*. If you were a Servant, would you not be ashamed that a good Master should catch you idle? Are you then your own Master, *be ashamed to catch yourself idle*, as *Poor Dick* says. When there is so much to be done for yourself, your Family, your Country, and your gracious King, be up by Peep of Day; *Let not the Sun look down and say, Inglorious here he lies*. Handle your Tools without Mittens; remember that *The Cat in Gloves catches no Mice*, as *Poor Richard* says. 'Tis true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed, but stick to it steadily; and you will see great Effects, for *Constant Dropping wears away Stones*, and by *Diligence and Patience the Mouse ate in two the Cable*; and *Little Strokes fell great Oaks*, as *Poor Richard* says in his Almanack, the Year I cannot just now remember.

"Methinks I hear some of you say, *Must a Man afford himself no Leisure?* I will tell thee, my friend, what *Poor Richard* says, *Employ thy Time well, if thou meanest to gain Leisure; and, since thou are not sure of a Minute, throw not away an Hour.*" Leisure is Time for doing something useful; this Leisure the diligent Man will obtain, but the lazy Man never; so that, as *Poor Richard* says *A Life of Leisure and a Life of Laziness are two Things*. Do you imagine that Sloth will afford you more Comfort than Labour? No, for as *Poor Richard* says, *Trouble springs from Idleness, and grievous Toil from needless Ease*. Many without Labour, would live by their Wits only, but they break for want of Stock. Whereas Industry gives Comfort, and Plenty, and Respect: *Fly Pleasures, and they'll follow you. The diligent Spinner has a large Shift; and now I have a Sheep and a Cow, everybody bids me good Morrow*; all which is well said by *Poor Richard*.

"But with our Industry, we must likewise be *steady, settled, and careful*, and oversee our own Affairs *with our own Eyes*, and not trust too much to others; for, as *Poor Richard* says

*I never saw an oft-removed Tree,
Nor yet an oft-removed Family,
That throve so well as those that settled be.*

And again, *Three Removes is as bad as a Fire*; and again, *Keep thy Shop, and thy Shop will keep thee*; and again, *If you would have your Business done, go; if not, send,* and again,

*He that by the Plough would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive.*

And again, *The Eye of a Master will do more Work than both his Hands*; and again, *Want of Care does us more Damage than Want of Knowledge*; and again, *Not to oversee Workmen, is to leave them your Purse open*. Trusting too much to others' Care is the Ruin of many; for, as the Almanack says, *In the Affairs of this World, Men are saved, not by Faith, but by the Want of it*; but a Man's own Care is profitable; for,

saith *Poor Dick*, *Learning is to the Studious*, and *Riches to the Careful*, as well as *Power to the Bold*, and *Heaven to the Virtuous*, And farther, *If you would have a faithful Servant, and one that you like, serve yourself*. And again, he adviseth to Circumspection and Care, even in the smallest Matters, because sometimes *A little Neglect may breed great Mischief*; adding, *for want of a" Nail the Shoe was lost; for want of a Shoe the Horse was lost; and for want of a Horse the Rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the Enemy; all for want of Care about a Horse-shoe Nail*.

“So much for Industry, my Friends, and Attention to one’s own Business; but to these we must add *Frugality*, if we would make our *Industry* more certainly successful. A Man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, *keep his Nose all his Life to the Grindstone*, and die not worth a Groat at last. *A fat Kitchen makes a lean Will*, as *Poor Richard* says; and

Many Estates are spent in the Getting,

Since Women for Tea forsook Spinning and Knitting,

And Men for Punch forsook Hewing and Splitting.

If you would be wealthy, says he, in another Almanack, *think of Saving as well as of Getting: The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her Outgoes are greater than her Incomes*.

“Away then with your expensive Follies, and you will not then have so much Cause to complain of hard Times, heavy Taxes, and chargeable Families; for, as *Poor Dick* says,

Women and Wine, Game and Deceit,

Make the Wealth small and the Wants great.

And farther, *What maintains one Vice, would bring up two Children*. You may think perhaps, that a *little Tea*, or a *little Punch* now and then, Diet a *little* more costly, Clothes, a *little* finer, and a *little* Entertainment now and then, can be no *great Matter*; but remember what *Poor Richard* says, *Many a Little makes a Mickle*; and farther, *Beware of little Expences; A small Leak will sink a great Ship*; and again, *Who Dainties love, shall Beggars prove*; and moreover, *Fools make Feasts, and wise Men eat them*.

“Here you are all got together at this Vendue of *Fineries* and *Knicknacks*. You call them *Goods*; but if you do not take Care, they will prove *Evils* to some of you. You expect they will be sold *Cheap*, and perhaps they may for less than they cost; but if you have no Occasion for them, they must be *dear* to you. Remember what *Poor Richard* says; “*Buy what thou hast no Need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy Necessaries*. And again, *At a great Pennyworth pause a while*: He means, that perhaps the Cheapness is *apparent* only, and not *Real*; or the bargain by straitening thee in thy Business, may do thee more Harm than Good. For in another Place he says, *Many have been ruined by buying good Pennyworths*. Again, *Poor Richard* says, *’tis foolish to lay out Money in a Purchase of Repentance*; and yet this Folly is practised every Day at Vendues, for want of minding the Almanack. *Wise Men*, as *Poor Dick* says, *learn by others Harms, Fools scarcely by their own*; but *felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*. Many a one, for the Sake of Finery on the Back, have gone with a hungry Belly, and half-starved their Families. *Silks and Sattins, Scarlet and Velvets*, as *Poor Richard* says, *put out the Kitchen Fire*.

“These are not the *Necessaries of Life*; they can scarcely be called the *Conveniences*; and yet only because they look pretty, how many *want to have them*! The *artificial* Wants of Mankind thus become more numerous than the *Natural*; and, as *Poor Dick* says, *for one poor Person, there are an hundred indigent*. By these, and other Extravagancies, the Genteel are reduced to poverty, and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who through Industry and Frugality have maintained their Standing; in which Case it appears plainly, that *A Ploughman on his Legs is higher than a Gentleman on his Knees*, as *Poor Richard* says. Perhaps they have had a small Estate left them, which they knew not the Getting of; they think, *’tis Day, and will never be Night*; that a little to be spent out of so much, is not worth minding; *a Child and a Fool*, as *Poor Richard* says, *imagine Twenty shillings and Twenty Years can never be spent but, always taking out of the Meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the Bottom*; as *Poor Dick* says, *When the Well’s dry, they know the Worth of Water*. But this they might have known before, if they had taken his Advice; *If you would know the Value of Money, go and try to borrow some; for, he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing*; and indeed so does he that lends to such People, when he goes *to get it in again*. *Poor Dick* farther advises, and says,”

Fond Pride of Dress is sure a very Curse;

E’er Fancy you consult, consult your Purse.

And again, *Pride is as loud a Beggar as Want, and a great deal more saucy*. When you have bought one fine Thing, you must buy ten more, that your Appearance may be all of a Piece; but *Poor Dick* says, *’Tis easier to suppress the first Desire, than to satisfy all that follow it*. And ’tis as truly Folly for the Poor to ape the Rich, as for the Frog to swell, in order to equal the ox.

Great Estates may venture more,

But little Boats should keep near Shore.

’Tis, however, a Folly soon punished; for *Pride that dines on Vanity, sups on Contempt*, as *Poor Richard* says. And in another Place, *Pride breakfasted with Plenty, dined with Poverty, and supped with Infamy*. And after all, of what Use is this *Pride of Appearance*, for which so much is risked so much is suffered? It cannot promote Health, or ease Pain; it makes no Increase of Merit in the Person, it creates Envy, it hastens Misfortune.

What is a Butterfly? At best

He’s but a Caterpillar drest

The gaudy Fop’s his Picture just,

as *Poor Richard* says.

“But what Madness must it be to *run in Debt* for these Superfluities! We are offered, by the Terms of this Vendue, *Six Months’ Credit*; and that perhaps has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spare the ready Money, and hope now to be fine without it. But, ah, think what you do when you run in Debt; *you give to another Power over your Liberty*. If you cannot pay at the Time, you will be ashamed to see your Creditor; you will be in Fear when you speak to him; you will make poor pitiful sneaking Excuses, and by Degrees come to lose your Veracity, and sink into base downright lying; for, as *Poor Richard* says *The second Vice is Lying, the first is running in Debt*. And again, to the same Purpose, *Lying rides upon Debt’s Back*.

Whereas a free-born *Englishman* ought not to” be ashamed or afraid to see or speak to any Man living. But Poverty often deprives a Man of all Spirit and Virtue: *’Tis hard for an empty Bag to stand upright*, as *Poor Richard* truly says.

“What would you think of that Prince, or that Government, who should issue an Edict forbidding you to dress like a Gentleman or a Gentlewoman, on Pain of Imprisonment or Servitude? Would you not say, that you were free, have a Right to dress as you please, and that such an Edict would be a Breach of your Privileges, and such a Government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put yourself under that Tyranny, when you run in Debt for such Dress! Your Creditor has Authority, at his Pleasure to deprive you of your Liberty, by confining you in Goal for Life, or to sell you for a Servant, if you should not be able to pay him! When you have got your Bargain, you may, perhaps, think little of Payment; but *Creditors*, *Poor Richard* tells us, *have better Memories than Debtors*; and in another Place says, *Creditors are a superstitious Sect, great Observers of set Days and Times*. The Day comes round before you are aware, and the Demand is made before you are prepared to satisfy it, Or if you bear your Debt in Mind, the Term which at first seemes so long, will, as it lessens, appear extreamly short. *Time* will seem to have added Wings to his Heels as well as Shoulders. *Those have a short Lent*, saith *Poor Richard*, *who owe Money to be paid at Easter*. Then since, as he says, *The Borrower is a Slave to the Lender, and the Debtor to the Creditor*, disdain the Chain, preserve your Freedom; and maintain your Independency; Be *industrious* and *free*; be *frugal* and *free*. At present, perhaps, you may think yourself in thriving Circumstances, and that you can bear a little Extravagance without Injury; but,

For Age and Want, save while you may;

No Morning Sun lasts a whole Day.

as *Poor Richard* says. Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever while you live, Expençe is constant and certain; and *’tis easier to build two Chimnies, than to keep one in Fuel*, as *Poor Richard* says. So, *Rather go to Bed supperless than rise in Debt.*”

Get what you can, and what you get hold;

’Tis the Stone that will turn all your lead into Gold,

as *Poor Richard* says. And when you have got the Philosopher’s Stone, sure you will no longer complain of bad Times, or the Difficulty of paying Taxes.

“This Doctrine, my Friends, is *Reason* and *Wisdom*; but after all, do not depend too much upon your own *Industry*, and *Frugality*, and *Prudence*, though excellent Things, for they may all be blasted without the Blessing of Heaven; and therefore, ask that Blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember, *Job* suffered, and was afterwards prosperous.

“And now to conclude, *Experience keeps a dear School, but Fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that*; for it is true, *we may give Advice, but we cannot give Conduct*, as *Poor Richard* says: However, remember this, *They that won’t be counselled, can’t be helped*, as *Poor Richard* says: and farther, *That, if you will not hear Reason, she’ll surely rap your Knuckles.*”

Thus the old Gentleman ended his Harangue. The People heard it and approved the Doctrine, and immediately practised the contrary, just as if it had been a common Sermon; for the Vendue opened, and they began to buy extravagantly, notwithstanding, his Cautions and their own Fear of Taxes. I found the good Man had

thoroughly studied my Almanacks, and digested all I had dropt on these Topicks during the Course of Five and twenty Years. The frequent Mention he made of me must have tired any one else, but my Vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious that not a tenth Part of the Wisdom was my own, which he ascribed to me, but rather the *Gleanings* I had made of the Sense of all Ages and Nations. However, I resolved to be the better for the Echo of it; and though I had at first determined to buy Stuff for a new Coat, I went away resolved to wear my old One a little longer. *Reader*, if thou wilt do the same, thy Profit will be as great as mine, *I am, as ever, thine to serve thee,*

Richard Saunders.

Imperfect as this chapter is, it is adequate enough, we hope, to make the reader feel that Sydney Smith was not altogether insensible to natural obligations when he told his daughter that he would disinherit her, if she did not admire everything written by Franklin.

Summary

Such was Benjamin Franklin, as mirrored for the most part in his own written and oral utterances. Whether his fame is measured by what he actually accomplished, or by the impression that he made upon his contemporaries, or by the influence that he still exercises over the human mind, he was a truly great man.¹⁰⁰ Not simply because he was one of the principal actors in a revolutionary movement destined to establish in the free air of the Western World on lasting foundations, and on a scale of moral and material grandeur, of which history furnishes few examples, a state, without king, noble or pontiff, and deriving its inspiration and energy solely from the will of the People; nor yet merely because his brilliant discoveries in the province of electricity conspicuously helped to convert one of the most elusive and defiant of all the forces of nature into an humble and useful drudge of modern industry and progress; nor yet merely because, in addition to many other productions, marked by the indefinable charm of unerring literary intuition, he wrote several which are read in every part of the globe where a printed page is read; nor even because of all these things combined. They are, of course, the main pillars upon which his splendid fame rests. But what imparts to Franklin his aspect of greatness, and endows him with his irresistible appeal to the interest and admiration of the whole human race is the” striking extent to which he was, in point of both precept and example, representative of human existence in all its more rational, more fruitful and more sympathetic manifestations. His vision was not that of the enthusiast; his was no Pentecostal tongue—cloven and aflame. He took little account of the higher spiritual forces which at times derange all the sober, prudent calculations of such a materialist as Poor Richard, and his message to mankind was blemished, as we have seen, by the excessive emphasis placed by it upon pecuniary thrift and the relations of pecuniary thrift to sound morals as well as physical comfort. But all the same, limited to the terrestrial horizon as he is, he must be reckoned one of the great leaders and teachers of humanity. He loved existence, shared it joyously and generously with his fellow-creatures, and vindicated its essential worth by bringing to bear upon everything connected with the conduct of life the maxims of a serene and almost infallible wisdom, and by responding with a mind as completely free from the prejudices and errors of his age as if he had lived a hundred years later, and with a heart as completely unconstrained by local considerations as if men were all of one blood and one country, to every suggestion that tended to make human beings happier, more intelligent and worthier in every respect of the universe which he found so delightful. It is this harmony with the world about him, this insight into what that world requires of everyone who seeks, to make his way in it, this enlightenment, this sympathy with human aspirations and needs everywhere, together with the rare strain of graphic and kindly instruction by which they were accompanied that cause the name of Franklin to be so often associated with those of the other great men whose fame is not the possession of a single class or land, but of all mankind. The result is that, when the faces of the few individuals, who are recognized by the entire world as having in the different ages of human” history rendered service to the entire world, are ranged in plastic repose above the shelves of some public library or along the walls of some other institution, founded for the promotion of human knowledge or well-being, the calm, meditative face of Franklin is rarely missing.

It is to be regretted that a character so admirable and amiable in all leading respects as his, so strongly fortified by the cardinal virtues of modesty, veracity, integrity and courage, and so

¹⁰⁰ In the judgment of Matthew Arnold, Franklin was "a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom America has yet produced."

sweetly flavored with all the finer charities of human benevolence and affection, should in some particulars have fallen short of proper standards of conduct. But it is only just to remember that the measure of his lapses from correct conduct is to be mainly found in humorous license, for which the best men of his own age, like Dr. Price and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, had only a laugh,¹⁰¹ and in offences against sexual morality, which, except so far as they assumed in his youth the form of casual intercourse with low women, whose reputations were already too sorely injured to be further wounded, consisted altogether in the adoption by a singularly versatile nature of a foreign code of manners which imposed upon the members of the society, by which it was formed, the necessity of affecting the language of gallantry even when gallantry itself was not actually practised. There is at any rate no evidence to show that the long married life of Franklin, so full of domestic concord and tenderness, was ever sullied by the slightest violation of conjugal fidelity.

On the whole, therefore, it is not strange that, repelled as we are at times by some passing episode or revelation” in his life or character, everyone who has lingered upon his career finds it hard to turn away from it except with something akin to the feelings of those friends who clung to him so fondly. He was so kind, so considerate, so affectionate, so eager to do good, both to individuals and whole communities, that we half forget the human conventions that his bountiful intellect and heart overflowed. Of him it can at least be said that, if he had some of a man’s failings, he had all of a man’s merits; and his biographer, in taking leave of him, may well, mindful of his eminent virtues as well as of his brilliant achievements and services, waive all defence of the few vulnerable features of his life and conduct by summing up the final balance of his deserts in the single word engraved upon the pedestal of one of his busts in Paris at the time of his death. That word was “Vir”—a Man, a very Man.

THE END

I'm Julie, the woman who runs [Global Grey](#) - the website where this ebook was published. These are my own formatted editions, and I hope you enjoyed reading this particular one.

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¹⁰¹ In his *Jeu d'esprit*, commonly known as *The Choice of a Mistress*, Franklin gave various reasons why an elderly mistress should be preferred to a younger one; and, in a letter to him on Aug. 12, 1777, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, after expressing the hope that he continued to enjoy his usual health and the flow of spirits, which contributed to make the jaunt to Canada so agreeable to his fellow-travellers, adds: "Mr. John Carroll, and Chase are both well; the latter is now at Congress, and has been so fully and constantly employed that I believe he has not had leisure to refute your reasons in favor of the old ladies."