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THE WORKS
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

VOL. I.



G. F. Stern & Co.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

*From the original picture in
the possession of Thomas W. Sumner Esq.*

Boston. Published by Hilliard, Gray & Co.

R. Johnson

THE
WORKS
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN;
CONTAINING
SEVERAL POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL TRACTS
NOT INCLUDED IN ANY FORMER EDITION,
AND
MANY LETTERS OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE
NOT HITHERTO PUBLISHED;
WITH
NOTES
AND
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

BY JARED SPARKS.

VOLUME I.

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PREFACE,

BY THE EDITOR.

FEW writers have been so regardless of literary reputation as Franklin. Scarcely any of his compositions were published under his own eye; many of them were not written for the press; and the fame of authorship appears rarely to have been among the motives by which he was induced to employ his pen. It is true, that, in early life and afterwards, he cultivated with uncommon assiduity the art of writing, till he attained a mastery over the language, which has raised his name to the first rank in English literature. Yet it was his primary object, not so much to become distinguished by this accomplishment, as to acquire the power of acting on the minds of others, and of communicating, in the most attractive and effectual manner, such discoveries as he might make, and his schemes for the general improvement, the moral culture, the comfort, and happiness of mankind. He seldom affixed his name to any of his writings. They were mostly designed for a particular purpose; and, when they had answered the end for

which they were intended, he seems to have given himself little concern about their future destiny.

Hence he never took pains to collect and revise for the press any portion of his miscellaneous papers, which had been separately printed, nor to cause a collection of them to be published with his name and under his own supervision; although in two or three instances he rendered some assistance to others, who had voluntarily undertaken the task.

The first collection was published in London in the year 1751. It consisted only of letters and papers on electricity, which he had sent to Peter Collinson, who committed them to the press without the author's knowledge, giving as a reason the extremely interesting nature of their contents, and their importance to the public. A fourth edition of that work, in a handsome quarto volume, was published in 1769, greatly enlarged by the addition of other papers on various philosophical subjects. This edition, and a fifth, which followed it five years afterwards, probably received some degree of attention from the author, as he was then in London. These papers were likewise translated into Latin, French, Italian, and German, and printed in different parts of Europe. In 1772, M. Dubourg made a new collection of Dr. Franklin's writings, embracing all that were in the above work, and many others on miscellaneous subjects, communicated by the author himself, some of which had not before appeared in print. The whole were trans-

lated into French by the editor, illustrated with notes, and published at Paris, in two elegant quarto volumes.

In 1779 another collection was published in London, consisting of political, miscellaneous, and philosophical pieces. These formed a new work, very few of them having been included in any previous edition of the author's writings. The editor was Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, who was for many years an intimate friend and constant correspondent of Dr. Franklin. The task of editorship was performed with a fidelity and success, which were highly commended by the author. The materials are well arranged, and the notes are judicious, appropriate, and valuable.

The above are the only original collections that appeared during the author's lifetime. A compilation from them, in a thin octavo volume, was printed in 1787.

Three years after his death, in 1793, the Messrs. Robinson published in London what they called, in the title-page, the *Works* of Dr. Franklin, comprised in two small volumes. This edition is remarkable as containing the first publication, in the English language, of the Life of Franklin, written by himself. It had lately been published in French, a translation having been made from an original manuscript, which Dr. Franklin had presented to his friend, M. Le Veillard. It was now retranslated into English by a skilful hand. This *retranslation* is the

“Life of Franklin,” which has usually been circulated in Great Britain and the United States, and of which numerous editions have been printed. And even to this day it continues to be read, and to be quoted by respectable writers, as if it were the author’s original work, although the fact of its being a translation is expressly stated in the preface to the first edition, and although more than twenty years have elapsed since the autobiography was published from the original manuscript. As there printed, it comes down no later than to the year 1731. The first volume contains this portion of the autobiography, and the continuation by Dr. Stuber, which had recently appeared in the *Columbian Magazine* at Philadelphia. The second volume consists of essays, the larger portion of which had been written since the publication of Mr. Vaughan’s edition. Another retranslation of the French version of the autobiography was published the same year in London, which is described in the *Monthly Review* as possessing little merit.

The next edition in the order of time was that of Castéra, published in two octavo volumes at Paris, in 1798, being a selection of miscellaneous pieces, with the addition of a few that had been printed separately. They were all translated into French anew. It is a singular circumstance, that the autobiography was translated for this edition from the first English retranslation mentioned above. It thus passed through three changes, first into French, next

from French into English, and then back again into French. The editor does not explain why he preferred this method to that of adopting the first French version. He likewise translated Dr. Stuber's continuation.

In 1806 a larger collection, than had hitherto been made, was published in London by Johnson and Longman, in three volumes, octavo. The editor was a Mr. Marshall. His name is not connected with the work; but he performed his part with good judgment, and used much diligence in searching for essays and papers, that had not before been comprised in any collection. Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, who was then in London, rendered him important assistance.

Dr. Franklin had been dead sixteen years when this edition appeared, and no one of his family had as yet taken measures to publish any of his writings from the original manuscripts. It was known, that, in his will, he had bequeathed all his papers to his grandson, William Temple Franklin, who, soon after his grandfather's death, went to London and made proposals to some of the booksellers for the publication of them. Nothing was done, however, and after a little time no more was heard of these proposals. There was a rumor, that the British ministry interposed, and offered the proprietor of the papers a large remuneration to suppress them, which he accepted. This rumor was so broadly stated in the preface to Johnson's edition, as to amount to a positive charge; and it was reiterated with an as-

surance, that would seem at least to imply, that it was fully sustained by the public opinion.

To this charge William Temple Franklin replied, when, in the year 1817, he published an edition of his grandfather's works from the manuscripts in his possession. In the preface to the first volume he endeavours to explain the reason why he had so long delayed the publication, and he also takes notice of the charge in question. He treats it with indignation and contempt, and appears not to regard it as worthy of being refuted. He was less reserved in conversation. Dr. John W. Francis, of New York, saw him often in London, in the year 1816, while he was preparing his grandfather's papers for the press. "To me," says Dr. Francis, "he peremptorily denied all interference of any official authorities whatever with his intended publication, and assigned, as efficient causes for the non-execution of the task committed to him, the interruption of communication and the hostilities between the French and English nations, and the consequent embarrassments he encountered in collecting the scattered materials." The reason here assigned for delay is not very satisfactory, and there were doubtless others. His father, William Franklin, died in 1813. He had been a pensioner on the British government, in consequence of the part he had taken in the Revolution; and it is probable that he may have been averse to the publication of his father's papers during his lifetime. To say the least, the suspicion that papers were finally

suppressed, for any cause, is without proof and highly improbable. A paper mentioned by Mr. Jefferson, as having been shown to him by Dr. Franklin, and supposed to have been suppressed, was undoubtedly the one relating to a negotiation with Lord Howe and others, for a reconciliation between the two countries, just before Dr. Franklin left England for the last time. This was published by his grandson, and is contained in the fifth volume of the present edition.

The autobiography of Dr. Franklin, as he wrote it, first appeared in his grandson's edition. Many other valuable papers, particularly his official correspondence during his residence in France and numerous private letters, were printed from the original manuscripts. Of the philosophical and political papers, the work comprised only a selection from those that had already been printed. It was first published in three quarto volumes, and afterwards in six volumes octavo. Some time before this edition was put to press in London, another was begun by Mr. William Duane in Philadelphia. Three or four volumes were already printed, when William Temple Franklin's proposals were issued. Subsequently he and Mr. Duane entered into an arrangement, by which both were to have the use of all the materials, and the two works were to be published simultaneously in England and the United States. The Philadelphia edition, in six octavo volumes, includes many philosophical and political papers, and some letters, which are not found in the London edition; and it

has recently been reprinted, with some additions, in two volumes of the royal octavo size. There has also recently been published at Paris, in two small volumes, a selection from Franklin's writings, in Spanish, translated from the French by Mangino.

In the volumes now presented to the public, it has been the Editor's design to make a *complete collection* of the writings of Franklin, as far as they are known to exist, and to add such occasional notes and explanations, as he supposed would be in some degree useful to the reader. The previous collections have been examined, and every piece contained in them has been inserted, except a few, which the Editor was convinced by competent evidence were not written by Franklin. Moreover, a careful search has been made in all the printed books, magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers, in which it was deemed probable that any of the author's writings would be found, in the form either of essays, political tracts, or letters. By this research the mass of materials from printed sources has been considerably enlarged. Seven years ago the Editor published a small volume of Franklin's "Familiar Letters," which were then nearly all printed for the first time, and to which were added several original papers. The entire contents of that volume are embraced in the present work. In short, no printed paper has been omitted, which is known to have been written by Franklin.

The Editor has been fortunate, also, in obtaining

manuscript materials. His researches, as well in the public offices of London and Paris, as in those of the United States, and in many private collections, while he was preparing the "Life and Writings of Washington" for publication, brought into his hands numerous original and unpublished letters of Franklin, of which he has availed himself in this work. But he has been mainly indebted to individuals, who, with a liberality demanding the warmest acknowledgment, have readily contributed such original papers as they possessed.

First, more than twenty original letters were found among the papers of Cadwallader Colden, now in the possession of Mr. David C. Colden, of New York, who politely allowed copies of them to be taken. They are the more valuable, as being of an early date, and containing biographical incidents. Among these papers, also, was the only copy, which has been discovered, of Franklin's original proposal for an American Philosophical Society. *Secondly*, the manuscripts of James Logan have furnished a few letters, and much matter for notes, selected by Mr. J. Francis Fisher, of Philadelphia, from whom the Editor has likewise received many other substantial tokens of kindness in aid of his undertaking, particularly copies of Franklin's letters to John Bartram, the botanist. *Thirdly*, a dozen letters to the Reverend Jared Eliot, of early date, interesting and curious, furnished by Mr. Thomas F. Davies, of New Haven. *Fourthly*, correspondence with James Bowdoin, on

philosophical and political subjects, extending through many years, now in the possession of Mr. Thomas L. Winthrop, of Boston, who, in the most liberal manner, permitted the whole to be inspected, and free use of it to be made. *Fifthly*, more than forty letters to Mary Stevenson, afterwards Mrs. Hewson, and some other original papers, received from her daughter, Mrs. Caldwell, of Philadelphia. *Sixthly*, several letters to his relative, Jonathan Williams, and others to Samuel Franklin, furnished by Mr. Samuel Bradford, of Philadelphia. *Seventhly*, letters to Catherine Ray, afterwards married to William Greene, governor of Rhode Island, some of them of an early date and interesting, received from Mr. William Greene, of Cincinnati. *Eighthly*, letters to Charles Thomson, furnished through the kindness of Mr. William B. Reed, of Philadelphia, who procured them from Mr. John Thomson. *Ninthly*, numerous letters to his sister, Jane Mecom, derived from various sources.

The Reverend Dr. Charles Lowell obtained in Scotland, through the politeness of Mr. Home Drummond and Baron Hume, copies of a few letters to Lord Kames and David Hume, which had not been published. One of those to Hume is important, as affording positive proof, that Dr. Franklin was not the author of the "Historical Review of Pennsylvania," a point that had long been a subject of dispute.

In the Philadelphia Athenæum are volumes of pamphlets, which belonged to Dr. Franklin, and in

some of which are curious marginal notes in his handwriting. The most important of these notes have been selected by the Editor, and they are inserted in the present work. From the manuscripts in the library of the American Philosophical Society he also procured valuable materials, for which, and for numerous kind offices in aid of his inquiries, he is under special obligations to Mr. John Vaughan, the librarian and treasurer of the Society. Dr. Franklin was agent for Massachusetts in London nearly five years, during which time he kept up an uninterrupted correspondence on public affairs with the Speaker of the Assembly. A few only of his letters, written on the business of this agency, have before been published. Copies of all that remain in the Secretary's office have now been obtained, and they are printed in these volumes.

From another source some very interesting letters have been derived, which relate to public events in the author's life during the same period. In the library of George the Third, presented to the British nation by George the Fourth, is a manuscript volume consisting of a correspondence between the Reverend Dr. Cooper, of Boston, Dr. Franklin, and Governor Pownall, for several years immediately preceding the Revolution. The history of this volume is curious. Immediately after the affair at Lexington, the town of Boston was surrounded by American troops, and all intercourse with the country was cut off, except by permission of the British commander; and no per-

son was allowed to pass the lines without being searched. Among the principal men in the town, who were friendly to the cause of the people, was Dr. Cooper, a man distinguished for his abilities and for the influence he had exercised, by his pen and the weight of his character, in opposition to the British claims. With others he obtained a passport to leave the town.

At this time he had in his possession a number of original letters from Dr. Franklin and Governor Pownall, and the drafts of his answers, all of which had an immediate bearing on the controversy between the two countries. Being unwilling to destroy or lose these papers, and apprehensive that they would be taken from him if he attempted to convey them through the lines, he determined to leave them behind, in the hands of a confidential friend, with directions to forward them to him by the first safe opportunity. He accordingly put them together in a parcel; and sent them to Mr. Jeffries, who was then confined to his bed by sickness, and unable to leave the town. These papers Mr. Jeffries deposited in a trunk, which contained other things of his own. As soon as Mr. Jeffries recovered, he likewise went into the country. In the mean time his son, Dr. John Jeffries, adhering to the side of the loyalists, did not choose to accompany his father, but remained in Boston; and his father left many things in his charge, and among others the abovementioned trunk, either not knowing or forgetting that it contained the treas-

ure belonging to his friend. This trunk was nearly a year in the possession of Dr. Jeffries, before he examined its contents, when, upon the evacuation of Boston, collecting his effects in order to embark with the British troops for Halifax, he accidentally discovered the packet of letters, and took it with him. From Halifax he carried it to London, and presented it to a Mr. Thompson, who sent it to the King, with an explanation of the particulars, the substance of which is here given. The original papers are bound in a volume, and a copy of the whole was procured in the King's library by Mr. Richard Biddle, the able and ingenious author of the "Memoirs of Sebastian Cabot," who has obligingly intrusted it to the judgment of the Editor. The letters of both Dr. Franklin and Dr. Cooper, thus furnished, are among the best original materials in the present edition.

But the most important and far the most extensive contributions have been received through the politeness and liberality of Mr. Charles P. Fox, of Philadelphia. When William Temple Franklin went to Europe, not long after his grandfather's death, he took with him Dr. Franklin's letter-books, and some other original manuscripts; but the great mass of papers that had accumulated in his hands while he was minister in France, as well as many others of an earlier date, were left behind at Philadelphia in the possession of Mr. Fox, the father of Mr. Charles P. Fox. They have remained in the family mansion

ever since, now almost fifty years, carefully preserved, and unexamined till they were submitted to the inspection of the Editor. Such of them as were selected for use in preparing this work filled two very large trunks. They consist of original letters written to Dr. Franklin during his residence in France, philosophical tracts, political memoirs, and such miscellaneous papers as would naturally be collected by a man in his situation and employment; and also of a few rough drafts of letters and papers in his own handwriting.

When Dr. Franklin went to France, he left a chest of papers with Mr. Galloway, whom he had made one of his executors, and in whose care he supposed the papers would be safe. The chest was sent to Mr. Galloway's country-seat, a few miles from Philadelphia. A short time only after Dr. Franklin's departure, Mr. Galloway joined the enemy, leaving the papers at his house; and, when the British held possession of Philadelphia, this house was within or near the lines. At the time of the evacuation of the city, the chest was broken open and rifled of a large part of its contents. The remainder were scattered about the floor of the house, trodden under foot, and much injured. Whether this was done by the British troops, or by disaffected Americans, has never been ascertained. Mr. Bache, hearing of the condition of the papers, went to Galloway's house, collected such of them as he could find, and put them again into the chest, which he removed to Philadel-

phia. In this chest, when committed to Mr. Gallo-
way, were the drafts of Dr. Franklin's letters for
twenty years, including the whole period of his resi-
dence in England. These were all taken away,
except a few sheets, which were left behind de-
faced and torn. In short, his most valuable early
papers of every description were in this chest. A
great many of them were lost, and never heard of
afterwards. Such of them as were rescued by Mr.
Bache are among those, which now belong to Mr.
Fox. They have furnished much original matter,
especially more than forty letters from Dr. Frank-
lin to his wife, not before printed.

To many other gentlemen, also, the Editor has
been under obligations for various acts of kindness
and much useful assistance, as well in sending him
original letters, as in communicating facts illustrative
of the writings and life of Franklin. His thanks
are in a particular manner due to Mr. Edward D.
Ingraham for frequent contributions of this kind; and
to Mr. Willard Phillips for the valuable notes, which
he has added to the essays on subjects relating to
political economy. He has likewise been more or
less indebted to Dr. Franklin Bache, Mr. William
Duane, Mr. Job R. Tyson, Mr. Thomas I. Wharton,
Mr. Henry Reed, Mr. Henry D. Gilpin, Dr. James
Mease, Dr. John W. Francis, Mr. Henry Francis,
Mr. George Gibbs, Mr. Caleb Emerson, Mr. William
C. Folger, Mr. Josiah Quincy, Mr. Samuel A. Eliot,
Reverend Dr. Thaddeus Mason Harris, Mr. Isaac P.

Davis, Mr. B. B. Thatcher, Mr. Charles Brown, Mr. Robert L. Emmons, Mr. William Vaughan, and Mr. Petty Vaughan. To these should be added Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, who, although he died soon after the first part of the work was put to press, communicated to the Editor many particulars, which were serviceable in facilitating his labors. Mr. Vaughan's intimate friendship and correspondence with Dr. Franklin, for many years, probably enabled him to contribute more from his personal knowledge, than could have been furnished by any other survivor.

Such are the sources from which the materials for this edition have been derived. The whole number of articles, which have not appeared in any former collection, including letters and miscellaneous pieces, amounts to about six hundred and fifty. Upwards of four hundred and sixty of these have never before been printed. They consist of letters and other papers written either by Franklin, or by some of the most distinguished of his correspondents. In the tables at the end of the tenth volume, each of the pieces now printed for the first time is designated.

In classifying these materials the following arrangement has been adopted.

1. Autobiography.
2. Essays on Religious and Moral Subjects and the Economy of Life.
3. Essays on General Politics, Commerce, and Political Economy.

4. Essays and Tracts, Historical and Political, before the American Revolution.

5. Political Papers during and after the American Revolution.

6. Letters and Papers on Electricity.

7. Letters and Papers on Philosophical Subjects.

8. Correspondence.

Under each head all the articles have been placed in the order in which they were written, with the date of each prefixed, whenever this could be ascertained. The Correspondence is also printed in chronological order, from beginning to end, without regard to the contents of the letters. This method was believed to be preferable to any attempt at a classification, because in numerous instances a single letter treats of various subjects, both of a political and a private nature.

The Editor's notes throughout the work, and the historical remarks at the beginning of many of the essays and political treatises, are intended strictly as illustrations of the author's text, and not as commentaries or critical disquisitions. The substance of these notes and remarks has been drawn, in a great measure, from manuscripts. Mr. Fox's papers, and the public offices in Paris, have furnished copious materials for this part of the work. Some curious particulars, respecting the proceedings of the British ministry and Parliament for a few years after the repeal of the Stamp Act, are selected from the letters of Mr. William Samuel Johnson, who was

the agent from Connecticut in London during that period. His original letter-book is in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the use of it has been freely granted for this occasion. Many interesting and important extracts from Mr. Oswald's correspondence with the British ministry, while he was engaged in negotiating the treaty of peace in Paris, are likewise subjoined as notes to Dr. Franklin's letters on that subject. These extracts were taken from a manuscript volume, containing a copy of Mr. Oswald's entire correspondence, with which the Editor was favored by the Marquis of Lansdown, in addition to other evidences of that nobleman's liberal spirit and enlargement of mind, in aiding his researches for materials illustrative of American history.

A few notes have been selected from Mr. Vaughan's and William Temple Franklin's editions, which are indicated in each case by their initials. For all the notes, except those written by the author, and those for which some other authority is cited, the Editor is responsible.

The first volume consists of a Life of Franklin, being his autobiography, and a Continuation by the Editor. The autobiography has been divided into chapters, of suitable length, for the convenience of readers. In the Continuation the Editor has endeavoured to follow out the author's plan, by confining himself strictly to a narrative of the principal events and incidents of his life, as far as these could

be ascertained from his writings, his public acts, and the testimony of his contemporaries.

The engraved portrait of Dr. Franklin, prefixed to the first volume, is from an original picture now in the possession of Mr. Thomas W. Sumner, of Brookline, Massachusetts. Neither the name of the artist, nor the precise time at which it was painted, is known. The picture formerly belonged to his brother, John Franklin, and it is mentioned in his will, dated in January, 1756. It has been retained in the family ever since. It was painted when Franklin was a young man, probably before he was thirty years old, and twenty-five or thirty years earlier than the portraits, from which any of the other engravings extant have been taken. The head of Mrs. Franklin, contained in this work, is from a picture owned by the Reverend Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton, New Jersey. Both these portraits are of the size of life. They have never before been engraved. The portrait by Duplessis has been generally acknowledged to exhibit the best likeness of Franklin in his old age. The engraving of it for this work was executed in Paris, from the original.

Although the Editor has spared neither labor nor expense in his endeavours to make this edition a complete collection of the writings of Franklin, yet he is constrained to say, in justice to the memory of the author, that he has been less successful than he could have wished. Many papers, known to have once existed, he has not been able to find. Of this

description are numerous letters to his son, written before the Revolution; and also his letters, during a long course of years, to his daughter and his son-in-law, a very few of which have been preserved. Again, his entire correspondence with the Assemblies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Georgia, while he was agent for those colonies in England, has hitherto eluded the most vigilant search. All these papers are probably lost, as well as those taken from the chest in Galloway's house, and others, described by him as important, which he had committed to the charge of his son, before his mission to France. It is possible that other writings may yet be brought to light, which may afford some future editor the means of more entire success.

FEBRUARY, 1840.

CONTENTS
OF THE
TEN VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.
LIFE OF FRANKLIN.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

	Page
Origin and Genealogy of his Family.—His Birth.—His Mother.— Employments in his Boyhood.—Anecdote.—Character of his Father.—Epitaph on his Father and Mother.—Fond of reading. —Apprenticed to his Brother to learn the Printer's Trade.— Writes Ballads.—Intimacy with Collins.—Practises Composition. —Adopts a vegetable Diet.—Studies the Socratic Method of Disputation.—Concerned in publishing a Newspaper.—Disa- grees with his Brother.—Leaves Boston and takes Passage in a Sloop for New York.	1

CHAPTER II.

Journey to Philadelphia.—Adventure in a Boat.—Dr. Brown.—
Burlington.—His first Appearance in Philadelphia.—Quaker
Meeting.—Seeks for Employment as a Printer.—Commences
Work in Keimer's Office.—Forms Acquaintances.—Patronized
by Sir William Keith, Governor of Pennsylvania.—First Inter-
view with him.—Keith proposes to set him up in Business.—
Returns to Boston.—His Father disapproves Keith's Plan.—
Voyage to New York.—Incident on the Passage from Newport.
—Meets his Friend Collins in New York.—They go together to
Philadelphia.—Collins's ill Conduct causes a Separation.—Keith
insists on executing his original Plan, and proposes sending him
to London to purchase Types.—Returns to the Use of animal
Food.—Anecdotes of Keimer.—His Associates, Osborne, Wat-

son, Ralph. — Their Exercises in Composition. — Resolves to visit England, as advised by Governor Keith. 29

CHAPTER III.

Sails for London, accompanied by Ralph. — On his Arrival delivers Letters supposed to be written by the Governor. — Discovers that Keith had deceived him. — His Money exhausted. — Engages to work as a Printer at Palmer's, in Bartholomew Close. — Writes and prints a metaphysical Tract. — Frequents a Club, consisting of Dr. Mandeville and Others. — Disagreement with Ralph and Separation. — Removes to Watts's Printing-house, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. — Habits of the Workmen. — His Expenses of Living. — Feats of Activity in Swimming. — Enters into Mercantile Business with Mr. Denham. — Sir William Wyndham. 53

CHAPTER IV.

Voyage from London to Philadelphia. — His Mercantile Plans defeated by the Death of Mr. Denham. — Accepts an Offer from Keimer to superintend his Printing Establishment. — Description of the Workmen in the Printing-house. — Resolves to separate from Keimer, and commence Business on his own Account. — Engraves the Plates for Paper Money in New Jersey, and prints the Bills. — His Views of Religion. — Account of his London Pamphlet. — A New Version of the Lord's Prayer, with Explanatory Remarks. — Forms a Partnership with Hugh Meredith in the Printing Business. 67

CHAPTER V.

The Junto. — Description of its original Members. — Franklin writes the "Busy Body." — Establishes a Newspaper. — Partnership with Meredith dissolved. — Writes a Tract on the Necessity of a Paper Currency. — Opens a Stationer's Shop. — His Habits of Industry and Frugality. — Courtship. — Marriage. 81

CHAPTER VI.

Origin of the Philadelphia Library. — Mode of obtaining Subscriptions. — Thrives in his Business. — Anecdote of the Silver Spoon and China Bowl. — Religious Sentiments and Remarks on Preaching. — Scheme for arriving at Moral Perfection. — Explanation of the Scheme. — List of Virtues enumerated, and Rules for Practising them. — Division of Time, and the Occupation of each Hour. — Amusing Anecdote. — The Art of Virtue. — A Treatise on that Subject proposed. 98

CHAPTER VII.

Scheme of a Society for extending the Influence of Virtue. — Belief in one God, the Immortality of the Soul, and future Rewards and Punishments. — Poor Richard's Almanac. — Rules for conducting a Newspaper. — Controversy concerning Hemphill, the Preacher. — Studies the French, Italian, and Spanish Languages. — Visits Boston. — The Junto. — Chosen Clerk of the Assembly. — Appointed Postmaster of Philadelphia. — Suggests Improvements in the City Watch. — Establishes a Fire Company. . . . 118

CHAPTER VIII.

Forms an Intimacy with Whitefield. — Building erected for Preachers of all Denominations. — Character of Whitefield, his Oratory and Writings. — Partnerships in the Printing Business. — Proposes a Philosophical Society. — Takes an active Part in providing Means of Defence in the Spanish War. — Forms an Association for that Purpose. — Sentiments of the Quakers. — James Logan. — Anecdote of William Penn. — The Sect called Dunkers. — Religious Creeds. — New-invented Fireplace. . . . 136

CHAPTER IX.

Proposals relating to the Education of Youth. — Subscriptions for that Object. — An Academy established. — Appointed one of the Trustees for managing it. — Partnership with David Hall. — Electrical Experiments. — Chosen a Member of the Assembly. — A Commissioner for making a Treaty with the Indians. — Pennsylvania Hospital. — Writes in Favor of it, and procures Subscriptions. — Advice to Gilbert Tennent. — Suggests Plans for cleaning, paving, and lighting the Streets of Philadelphia. — Project for cleaning the Streets of London. — Appointed Postmaster-general for America. — Receives the Degree of Master of Arts from Harvard and Yale Colleges. . . . 158

CHAPTER X.

Attends a General Convention at Albany, as a Delegate from Pennsylvania. — Proposes a Plan of Union for the Colonies, which is adopted by the Convention. — Interview with Governor Shirley at Boston. — Conversations with Governor Morris on Pennsylvania Affairs. — Assists Mr. Quincy in procuring Aids for New England. — Visits General Braddock's Army in Maryland. — Procures Horses and Wagons to facilitate the March of the Army. — Obtains Supplies for the Officers. — Character of Braddock. — Account of his Defeat in the Battle of the Monongahela. — Braddock

commends his Services in Letters to the Government. — These Services poorly rewarded. — Society for the Relief and Instruction of Germans in Pennsylvania. 176

CHAPTER XI.

Appointed One of the Commissioners for appropriating the public Money for military Defence. — Proposes a Militia Bill, which passes the Assembly. — Commissioned to take Charge of the Frontier, and build a Line of Forts. — Marches at the Head of a Body of Troops. — Account of the March. — Operations at Gnadenhutten. — Indian Massacres. — Moravians at Bethlehem. — Returns to Philadelphia. — Chosen Colonel of a Regiment. — Journey to Virginia. — Declines accepting the Governor's Proposal to lead an Expedition against Fort Duquesne. — Account of his Electrical Discoveries. — Chosen a Member of the Royal Society. — Receives the Copley Medal. 196

CHAPTER XII.

Conversations with Governor Denny. — Disputes between the Governor and Assembly. — Deputed by the Assembly to present a Petition to the King, and to act in England as an Agent for Pennsylvania. — Meets Lord Loudoun in New York. — Anecdotes illustrating his Character. — Sails from New York. — Incidents of the Voyage. — Arrives in England. 214

CONTINUATION,

By JARED SPARKS.

CHAPTER I.

State of Affairs in Pennsylvania. — Defects of the Government. — Legislation. — Conduct of the Proprietaries. — Object of Franklin's Agency in England. — Collinson, Miss Stevenson, Strahan, Governor Shirley, Beccaria, Musschenbroek. — Franklin's Interview with the Proprietaries. — He causes a Letter to be published respecting Pennsylvania. — Delays in his public Business. — He travels in various Parts of England. — Visits the Place in which his Ancestors were born. — Forms an Acquaintance with Baskerville. — Publishes the "Historical Review of Pennsylvania." — Authorship of that Work. 229

CHAPTER II.

Franklin advises the Conquest of Canada.—His Scheme adopted by the Ministry.—Journey to Scotland.—Lord Kames, Robertson, Hume.—“Parable against Persecution.”—First published by Lord Kames.—How far Franklin claimed to be its Author.—His Mission brought to a favorable Termination.—Lord Mansfield’s Agency in the Affair.—Franklin’s Sentiments in Regard to Canada.—Writes a Pamphlet to show that it ought to be retained at the Peace.—Tour to the North of England.—Receives Public Money for Pennsylvania.—Tour in Holland.—Experiments to prove the Electrical Properties of Tourmalin.—Cold produced by Evaporation.—Ingenious Theory for explaining the Causes of Northeast Storms.—Invents a Musical Instrument, called the Armonica.—His Son appointed Governor of New Jersey.—Returns to America. 247

CHAPTER III.

Receives the Thanks of the Assembly.—Tour through the Middle and Eastern Colonies.—Engages again in Public Affairs.—Massacre of Indians in Lancaster.—Franklin’s Pamphlet on the Subject, and his Agency in pacifying the Insurgents.—Colonel Bouquet’s Account of his Public Services.—Disputes revived between the Governor and the Assembly.—Militia Bill defeated.—The Governor rejects a Bill in which the Proprietary Estates are taxed.—The Assembly resolve to petition the King for a Change of Government.—Petition drafted by Franklin.—Chosen Speaker of the Assembly.—Norris, Dickinson, Galloway.—Scheme for Stamp Duties opposed by the Assembly.—Franklin is not elected to the Assembly.—Appointed Agent to the Court of Great Britain.—Sails for England. 270

CHAPTER IV.

Origin of the Stamp Act.—Franklin’s Opposition to it.—His Remarks on the Passage of the Act, in a Letter to Charles Thomson.—False Charges against him in Relation to this Subject.—Dean Tucker.—Effects of the Stamp Act in America.—Franklin’s Examination before Parliament.—Stamp Act repealed.—Mr. Pitt.—Declaratory Act.—American Paper Currency.—Franklin’s Answer to Lord Hillsborough’s Report against it.—New Scheme for taxing the Colonies by supplying them with Paper Money.—Franklin travels in Holland and Germany.—His Ideas of the Nature of the Union between the Colonies and Great Britain.—Plan of a Colonial Representation in Parliament.—Franklin visits Paris.—His “Account of the Causes of the American Discontents.”—Change of Ministry.—Lord Hillsborough at the Head of the

American Department. — Rumor that Dr. Franklin was to have an Office under him.	290
---	-----

CHAPTER V.

Dr. Franklin is appointed Agent for Georgia. — Causes the "Farmer's Letters" to be republished in London. — His Opinion of them. — Chosen President of the American Philosophical Society. — Promotes the Culture of Silk in Pennsylvania. — Encourages his Countrymen to adhere to their Non-importation Agreements. — Journey to France. — Appointed Agent for New Jersey. — His Answers to Mr. Strahan's Queries. — Repeal of some of the American Revenue Acts. — Intimations that he would be removed from Office. — His Remarks on that Subject. — Chosen Agent for the Assembly of Massachusetts. — Singular Interview with Lord Hillsborough. — Objectionable Footing on which the Colonial Agents were placed by his Lordship. — Dr. Franklin makes a Tour through the North of England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. — His Reception by Lord Hillsborough in Ireland. — Irish Parliament. — Richard Bache. — Bishop of St. Asaph.	316
--	-----

CHAPTER VI.

Dr. Franklin meditates a Return to America. — Singular Conduct of Lord Hillsborough. — Walpole's Grant. — Hillsborough's Report against it. — Franklin's Answer. — Reasons for settling a New Colony west of the Alleghanies. — Interview with Lord Hillsborough at Oxford. — Franklin draws up the Report of a Committee appointed to examine the Powder Magazines at Purfleet. — Performs new Electrical Experiments. — Controversy about Pointed and Blunt Conductors. — Lord Dartmouth succeeds Lord Hillsborough. — His Character. — Franklin's Interview with him. — Petitions from the Assembly of Massachusetts. — Franklin writes a Preface to the London Edition of the Boston Resolutions; also "Rules for reducing a Great Empire to a Small One," and "An Edict of the King of Prussia." — Abridges the Book of Common Prayer. — Experiments to show the Effect of Oil in smoothing Waves. — Dubourg's Translation of his Writings.	337
--	-----

CHAPTER VII.

Hutchinson's Letters. — How they first became known to Franklin. — His Motives for transmitting them to Massachusetts. — Proceedings of the Assembly concerning them. — Dr. Cooper's Remarks on that Occasion. — Petition for the Removal of Hutchinson and Oliver presented by Franklin. — Duel between Temple and Whately. — Franklin's Declaration that the Letters had been transmitted by him. — Whately commences against him a Chancery Suit. —	
--	--

Proceedings of the Privy Council on the Petition. — Further Account of those Proceedings. — Wedderburn's abusive Speech. — The Petition rejected. — Franklin dismissed from his Place at the Head of the American Postoffice. 356

CHAPTER VIII.

Franklin remains in England to await the Result of the Continental Congress. — Josiah Quincy, Junior. — Anecdotes. — Death of Dr. Franklin's Wife. — Family Incidents. — He receives and presents the Petition of Congress. — Rejected by Parliament. — Galloway's Plan of Union. — Franklin's Attempts to promote a Reconciliation between the two Countries. — Visits Lord Chatham. — Remarks on Independence. — Mrs. Howe. — He draws up Articles as the Basis of a Negotiation, at the Request of Dr. Fothergill and Mr. Barclay. — Interviews with Lord Howe respecting some Mode of Reconciliation. — He drafts another Paper for that Purpose. — Lord Camden. — Lord Chatham's Motion in Parliament. — Franklin's Interviews with him in forming a Plan of Reconciliation. — This Plan offered to Parliament, and rejected. — Negotiation resumed and broken off. — Franklin sails from England and arrives in Philadelphia. 371

CHAPTER IX.

Chosen a Member of Congress. — Proceedings of Congress. — Preparations for Military Defence. — Petition to the King. — Franklin assists in preparing for the Defence of Pennsylvania, as a Member of the Committee of Safety. — Drafts a Plan of Confederation. — His Services in Congress. — Goes to the Camp at Cambridge on a Committee from Congress. — Chosen a Member of the Pennsylvania Assembly. — Writes Letters to Europe for the Committee of Secret Correspondence. — His Journey to Canada as a Commissioner from Congress. — Declaration of Independence. — Anecdotes. — President of the Convention of Pennsylvania for forming a Constitution. — His Opinion of a Single Legislative Assembly. — His Correspondence with Lord Howe, and Interview with him on Staten Island. — Appointed a Commissioner to the Court of Versailles. — Lends Money to Congress. 393

CHAPTER X.

Voyage to France. — Arrives at Nantes. — Proceeds to Paris, and takes up his Residence at Passy. — His Reception in France. — Influence of his Name and Character. — Pictures, Busts, and Prints of him. — Interview with Count de Vergennes. — Money obtained from the French Court, and Military Supplies sent to the United States. — Contract with the Farmers-General. — Franklin disapproves the Policy of seeking Alliances with the European Powers.

— Lord Stormont. — Application of Foreign Officers for Employment in the American Army. — Lafayette. — Reasons why the French delay to enter into a Treaty with the United States. — Interview with Count de Vergennes on that Subject. — Treaty of Amity and Commerce. — Treaty of Alliance. — Franklin and the other Commissioners introduced at Court. 417

CHAPTER XI.

Preparations for War between France and England. — M. Gérard. — Mr. John Adams. — Secret Advances made to Dr. Franklin for effecting a Reconciliation between England and the United States. — Mr. Hutton. — Mr. Pulteney. — Mr. Hartley. — An Emissary in Disguise. — Franklin's personal Friends in Paris. — Interview with Voltaire. — Franklin appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of France. — Machinations of his Enemies to procure his Recall. — Mr. Arthur Lee. — Mr. Ralph Izard. — Visit of Sir William Jones to Paris. — Franklin instructs the American Cruisers not to seize Captain Cook's Vessel. — Grants Passports to Vessels carrying Supplies to the Moravian Missionaries on the Coast of Labrador. — Paul Jones. — The Marquis de Lafayette. — Mr. Vaughan's Edition of Franklin's Political and Miscellaneous Writings. 438

CHAPTER XII.

A French Army sent to the United States. — Lafayette. — Northern Powers of Europe combine in Defence of Neutrals. — Franklin's Opinion of Privateering. — Correspondence between Count de Vergennes and Mr. Adams. — Franklin's Remarks upon it. — Charges against Franklin by his Enemies, examined and refuted. — New Attempt in Congress to procure his Recall. — Count de Vergennes's Opinion of him as Minister at the French Court. — The numerous Duties of his Office. — Colonel John Laurens. — Franklin proposes to retire from the Public Service. — New Propositions for Peace, through the Agency of Mr. Hartley. — Franklin's Answer to them. — His Friends at Passy and Auteuil. — Madame Brillon. — Madame Helvétius. 459

CHAPTER XIII.

Negotiations for Peace. — Debates on the Subject in the British Parliament. — Change of Ministry. — Mr. Oswald sent to Paris to consult Dr. Franklin on the Mode of Negotiating. — Grenville's Commission; disapproved by Franklin. — Mr. Fox's Views of Independence. — Lord Shelburne's Administration. — Mr. Fitzherbert. — Mr. Oswald commissioned to negotiate the American Treaty. — Essential Articles of the Treaty proposed by Franklin. — Advisable Articles. — Mr. Jay disapproves Mr. Oswald's Commission. — An Alteration required and obtained. — Progress of

the Treaty. — Independence, Boundaries, Fisheries. — Attempts of the British Ministry to secure the Indemnification of the Loyalists. — Mr. Adams joins his Colleagues and resists the British Claims. — Franklin proposes an Article for Indemnifying the Americans for their Losses during the War. — British Claims relinquished. — Treaty signed. — Ratified by Congress. . . . 474

CHAPTER XIV.

Treaty signed without the Knowledge of the Court of France. — Count de Vergennes's Opinion of the Treaty. — Unfounded Suspicions. — Rayneval and Marbois. — Franklin's Explanation of the Grounds upon which he acted. — False Rumor concerning his Exertions in obtaining the Boundaries and Fisheries. — His Financial Contract with Count de Vergennes. — Negotiates a Treaty with Sweden. — Mr. Hartley. — Definitive Treaty of Peace signed. — Franklin's Sentiments on this Occasion. — Animal Magnetism. — Negotiations. — His Request to be recalled is finally granted by Congress. — Treaty with Prussia. — Franklin prepares to return Home. — Journey from Passy to Havre de Grace. — Sails from Southampton and arrives in Philadelphia. . . . 489

CHAPTER XV.

Receives congratulatory Letters and Addresses. — Chosen President of Pennsylvania, and holds the Office three Years. — His private Circumstances. — Appointed a Delegate to the Convention for Framing the Constitution of the United States. — His Speeches in the Convention. — His Religious Opinions. — Extracts from Dr. Cutler's Journal describing an Interview with him. — President of the Society for Political Inquiries. — Neglect of Congress to examine and settle his Accounts. — Various Pieces written by him during the last Year of his Life. — His Illness and Death. — Funeral Ceremonies. — Tribute of Respect paid to him by Congress and other Public Bodies. — Conclusion. . . . 511

APPENDIX.

I. Remarks on the Origin and Genealogy of the Franklin Family,	539
II. Journal of a Voyage from London to Philadelphia,	547
III. Proposals relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania,	569
IV. American Philosophical Society,	576
V. Extracts from a Private Journal,	579
VI. Extracts from a Private Journal,	587
VII. Proceedings of Congress, and of the National Assembly of France, on the Death of Franklin,	592
VIII. Epitaph,	596
IX. Franklin's Will,	599

VOLUME II.

	Page.
ESSAYS ON RELIGIOUS AND MORAL SUBJECTS AND THE ECONOMY OF LIFE,	1
BAGATELLES,	164
ESSAYS ON GENERAL POLITICS, COMMERCE, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY,	251
SUPPLEMENT,	523

VOLUME III.

ESSAYS AND TRACTS, HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL, BEFORE THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,	1
AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA,	105

VOLUME IV.

ESSAYS AND TRACTS, HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL, BEFORE THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, CONTINUED.	
---	--

VOLUME V.

POLITICAL PAPERS, DURING AND AFTER THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,	1
LETTERS AND PAPERS ON ELECTRICITY,	171
APPENDIX.	
I. Watson's Abstract of Franklin's Electrical Experiments and Observations,	487
II. Letter from the Abbé Nollet to Benjamin Franklin,	493
III. Speech of the Earl of Macclesfield, President of the Royal Society, on the Occasion of awarding to Franklin a Medal for his Discoveries in Electricity,	499
IV. Letter from John Baptist Beccaria to Benjamin Franklin,	505
V. Letter from Professor Thorbern Bergman, of Upsal, to Benjamin Wilson,	513
VI. Letter from M. Dubourg to M. de Lor. Parallel between the Theories of Franklin and Nollet,	514

VOLUME VI.

LETTERS AND PAPERS ON PHILOSOPHICAL SUBJECTS.

VOLUME VII.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PART FIRST; COMPRISING PRIVATE LETTERS TO THE TIME OF THE AUTHOR'S FIRST MISSION TO ENGLAND. 1725-1757.	1
PART SECOND; COMPRISING LETTERS, PRIVATE AND OFFICIAL, FROM THE TIME OF THE AUTHOR'S FIRST MISSION TO ENG- LAND, TO THE BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. 1757-1775.	147

VOLUME VIII.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PART SECOND, CONTINUED,	1
PART THIRD; COMPRISING LETTERS, PRIVATE AND OFFICIAL, FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, TO THE END OF THE AUTHOR'S MISSION TO FRANCE. 1775- 1785.	151
APPENDIX.	
I. A Fragment of Polybius; from his Treatise on the Athenian Government,	543
II. Memoir of Sir John Dalrymple; or a Project of Lord Roch- ford to prevent the War,	547

VOLUME IX.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PART THIRD, CONTINUED,	1
JOURNAL OF THE NEGOTIATION OF THE TREATY OF PEACE,	238

VOLUME X.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PART THIRD, CONTINUED, 1

PART FOURTH ; COMPRISING PRIVATE LETTERS FROM THE
TERMINATION OF THE AUTHOR'S MISSION TO FRANCE, TO
THE END OF HIS LIFE. 1785-1790. 215

SUPPLEMENT, 427

INDEXES.

- I. List of the Author's Writings, chronologically arranged, . . . 449
- II. Letters written by Franklin to Individuals and Public Bodies, . . . 464
- III. Letters addressed to Franklin by various Persons, . . . 476
- IV. Miscellaneous Letters, 481
- V. General Index, 485

LIST OF THE PLATES.

	Vol.	Page.
✓1. Portrait of Franklin, Frontispiece,	I.	
✓2. Portrait of Franklin, by Martin, Frontispiece,	II.	
✓3. Portrait of Franklin, by Duplessis, Frontispiece,	III.	
✓4. Houdon's Bust of Franklin, Frontispiece,	IV.	
5. Emblematical Representation,	—	456
✓6. Facsimile of Franklin's Handwriting, Frontispiece,	V.	
7. Electrical Apparatus, (Plate I.)	—	196
8. Electrical Air-Thermometer, (Plate II.)	—	372
9. Electrical Apparatus, (Plate III.)	—	384
10. Electrical Apparatus, (Plate IV.)	—	442
11. Pennsylvania Fireplace, (Plate V.)	VI.	46
12. Profile of the Pennsylvania Chimney and Fireplace.—Stafford- shire Fireplace. (Plate VI.)	—	50
13. Magical Squares, (Plate VII.)	—	102
14. Magical Circle, (Plate VIII.)	—	104
15. Waterspout, (Plate IX.)	—	156
16. Armonica, (Plate X.)	—	248
17. Aurora Borealis, &c., (Plate XI.)	—	420
18. Improvements in Navigation, (Plate XII.)	—	494
19. Chart of the Atlantic Ocean, exhibiting the Course of the Gulf Stream, &c., (Plate XIII.)	—	504
20. Illustrating the Causes and Cure of Smoky Chimneys, (Plate XIV.)	—	542
21. Stove for burning Pit-coal, (Plate XV.)	—	560
✓22. Portrait of Mrs. Franklin, Frontispiece,	VII.	

CHAPTER XV.

Receives congratulatory Letters and Addresses. — Chosen President of Pennsylvania, and holds the Office three Years. — His private Circumstances. — Appointed a Delegate to the Convention for framing the Constitution of the United States. — His Speeches in the Convention. — His Religious Opinions. — Extracts from Dr. Cutler's Journal, describing an Interview with him. — President of the Society for Political Inquiries. — Neglect of Congress to examine and settle his Accounts. — Various Pieces written by him during the last Year of his Life. — His Illness and Death. — Funeral Ceremonies. — Tribute of Respect paid to him by Congress and other Public Bodies. — Conclusion.

As soon as his arrival was known, letters of congratulation were sent to him from all parts of the country. General Washington and Mr. Jay were among the first to welcome him on this occasion. The Assembly of Pennsylvania was then in session, and, the day after he landed, an address was presented to him by that body, in which they congratulate him, in the most cordial manner, on his safe return. "We are confident," they observe, "that we speak the sentiments of this whole country, when we say, that your services, in the public councils and negotiations, have not only merited the thanks of the present generation, but will be recorded in the pages of history, to your immortal honor. And it is particularly pleasing to us, that, while we are sitting as members of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, we have the happiness of welcoming into the State a person, who was so greatly instrumental in forming its free constitution." This was followed by similar addresses from the American Philosophical Society, and the Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. To all of them he returned brief and appropriate answers.

From some of his letters it would appear, that, when he left France, he looked upon his public life as at an end, and anticipated the enjoyment of entire tranquillity and freedom from care, after he should be again restored to the bosom of his family. In this expectation, however, he was disappointed. He had been at home but a few days, when he was elected a member of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. This was a preliminary step to a higher advancement; for, when the Assembly met, in October, he was chosen President of the State, the office being equivalent to that of governor in the other States. The choice was made by the joint ballot of the Assembly and Council. Under the first constitution of Pennsylvania, no individual could serve in the Council, or hold the office of President, more than three successive years, and he was then ineligible for the four years following. Dr. Franklin was annually chosen President till the end of the constitutional term, and each time by a unanimous vote, except the first, when there was one dissenting voice in seventy-seven. This unanimity is a proof, that, notwithstanding his great age and his bodily infirmities, he fulfilled the duties of the station to the complete satisfaction of the electors.

He was apparently at ease in his private circumstances, and happy in his domestic relations. He occupied himself for some time in finishing a house, which had been begun many years before, and in which he fitted up a spacious apartment for his library. In writing to a friend, he said; "I am surrounded by my offspring, a dutiful and affectionate daughter in my house, with six grandchildren, the eldest of whom you have seen, who is now at college in the next street, finishing the learned part of his education; the others promising, both for parts and good dispositions.

What their conduct may be, when they grow up and enter the important scenes of life, I shall not live to see, and I cannot *foresee*. I therefore enjoy among them the present hour, and leave the future to Providence." Again, to another correspondent he wrote; "I am got into my *niche*, after being kept out of it twenty-four years by foreign employments. It is a very good house, that I built so long ago to retire into, without being able till now to enjoy it. I am again surrounded by my friends, with a fine family of grandchildren about my knees, and an affectionate, good daughter and son-in-law to take care of me. And, after fifty years' public service, I have the pleasure to find the esteem of my country with regard to me undiminished." Much of his time was devoted to the society of those around him, and of the numerous visitors, whom curiosity and respect prompted to seek his acquaintance. His attachments to the many intimate friends he had left in Europe were likewise preserved by a regular and affectionate correspondence, in which are manifested the same steadiness of feeling and enlarged benevolence, the same playfulness and charm of style, that are conspicuous in the compositions of his earlier years.

He was elected one of the delegates from Pennsylvania to the Convention for forming the Constitution of the United States, which met at Philadelphia in May, 1787, and continued in session four months. Although he was now in the eighty-second year of his age, and at the same time discharged the duties of President of the State, yet he attended faithfully to the business of the convention, and entered actively and heartily into the proceedings. Several of his speeches were written out and afterwards published. They are short, but well adapted to the occasion, clear, logical, and

persuasive. He never pretended to the accomplishments of an orator or debater. He seldom spoke in a deliberative assembly except for some special object, and then briefly and with great simplicity of manner and language.

After the members of the convention had been together four or five weeks, and made very little progress in the important work they had in hand, on account of their unfortunate differences of opinion and disagreements on essential points, Dr. Franklin introduced a motion for daily prayers. "In the beginning of the contest with Britain," said he, "when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard; and they were graciously answered. All of us, who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? or do we imagine we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time; and, the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that God governs in the affairs of men*. And, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that, 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe, that, without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little, partial, local interests, our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to fu-

ture ages. And, what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest. I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service." The motion was not adopted, as "the convention, except three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary."

These remarks afford some insight into Dr. Franklin's religious sentiments. A good deal has been said on this subject, and sometimes without a due degree either of knowledge or charity. When Dr. Stiles, President of Yale College, questioned him about his religious faith, he replied as follows, only five weeks before his death; "I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe; that he governs it by his Providence; that he ought to be worshipped; that the most acceptable service we can 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 points 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 his system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is like 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; though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it."

This is the most explicit declaration of his faith, which is to be found anywhere in his writings; and, although it is not very precise, yet it is far from that cold and heartless infidelity, which some writers have ascribed to him, and for which charge there is certainly no just foundation.

Whatever may have been the tenor of his opinions on points of faith and doctrine, there are many evidences of his reverence for religion and for the institutions of Christianity. In early life, he composed a little book of prayers, which he was in the habit of using in his devotions. At all times he was ready to contribute liberally towards the erection of churches; and, during Whitefield's several visits to Philadelphia, he not only attended his preaching, but was his intimate companion and friend, having him sometimes as a lodger at his own house. Such was not the society, that an irreligious man would be likely to seek. In a letter of advice to his daughter, it was his solemn injunction, that she should habitually attend public worship. He wrote a Preface to an abridged edition of the Book of Common Prayer, in which he speaks impressively of the obligation and benefits of worship and other religious observances. When a skeptical writer, who is supposed to have been Thomas Paine, showed him in manuscript a work written against religion, he urged him earnestly not to publish it, but to burn it; objecting to his arguments as fallacious, and to his principles as poisoned with the seeds of vice, without tending to any imaginable good. It should, moreover, be observed, that no parts of Dr. Franklin's writings are hostile to religion; but, on the contrary, it is the direct object of some of them to inculcate virtue and piety, which he regarded not more as duties of great moment in the present life, than as an essential pre-

paration for the wellbeing of every individual in a future state of existence.

It is deeply to be regretted, that he did not bestow more attention than he seems to have done on the evidences of Christianity ; because there can be little doubt, that a mind like his, quick to discover truth and always ready to receive it, would have been convinced by a full investigation of the facts and arguments adduced in proof of the Christian revelation ; and especially because the example of such a man is likely to have great influence with others. Yet, when one expresses this regret, or censures this indifference, it behoves him to exercise more justice and candor than have sometimes been used, in representing what he actually believed and taught.

It had long been an opinion of Dr. Franklin, that in a democratical government there ought to be no offices of profit. The first constitution of Pennsylvania contained an article expressive of this sentiment, which was drafted by him. One of his speeches in the national convention was on the same subject. "There are two passions," said he, "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 *honor*, 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. And of what kind are the men that will strive for this profitable preëminence, through all the bustle of cabal, the heat of contention, the infinite mutual abuse of parties, tearing to pieces the best of characters? It will not be the wise and moderate, the lovers of peace and good order, the men fittest for the trust. It will be the bold and the violent, the men of strong passions and indefatigable activity in their selfish pursuits. These will thrust themselves into your government, and be your rulers. And these, too, will be mistaken in the expected happiness of their situation; for their vanquished competitors, of the same spirit, and from the same motives, will perpetually be endeavouring to distress their administration, thwart their measures, and render them odious to the people.” He thought the pleasure of doing good by serving their country, and the respect inspired by such conduct, were sufficient motives for true patriots to give up a portion of their time to the public, without a pecuniary compensation beyond the means of support while engaged in the service. In his own case, he had an opportunity of putting these principles in practice. All the money he received as President of Pennsylvania for three years he appropriated to some object of public utility; and, if the whole fifty years of his public life are taken together, it is believed that his receipts, in the form of compensation or salaries, were not enough to defray his necessary expenses.

The speech made by him at the close of the convention has been commended for its moderation, liberal spirit, and practical good sense. In the concluding part of that speech he says, “I consent to this constitution, because I expect no better, and because I am not

sure that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its *errors* I sacrifice to the public good. I have never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born, and here they shall die. If every one of us, in returning to our constituents, were to report the objections he has had to it, and endeavour to gain partisans in support of them, we might prevent its being generally received, and thereby lose all the salutary effects and great advantages resulting naturally in our favor among foreign nations, as well as among ourselves, from our real or apparent unanimity. Much of the strength and efficiency of any government, in procuring and securing happiness to the people, depends on *opinion*, on the general opinion of the goodness of that government, as well as of the wisdom and integrity of its governors. I hope, therefore, for our own sakes, as a part of the people, and for the sake of our posterity, that we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this constitution, wherever our influence may extend, and turn our future thoughts and endeavours to the means of having it *well administered*. On the whole, Sir, I cannot help expressing a wish, that every member of the convention who may still have objections to it, would with me on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility, and, to make *manifest* our *unanimity*, put his name to this instrument."

The following description presents an interesting picture of Dr. Franklin's appearance and manner at this period of his life. It is an extract from a journal written by the Reverend Dr. Manasseh Cutler, of Hamilton, Massachusetts, who was distinguished as a scholar, and particularly as a botanist. While on a visit at Philadelphia, he called to pay his respects to Dr. Franklin. The extract is dated July 13th, 1787.

“Dr. Franklin lives in Market Street. His house stands up a court, at some distance from the street. We found him in his garden, sitting upon a grass-plot, under a very large mulberry tree, with several other gentlemen and two or three ladies. When Mr. Gerry introduced me, he rose from his chair, took me by the hand, expressed his joy at seeing me, welcomed me to the city, and begged me to seat myself close to him. His voice was low, but his countenance open, frank, and pleasing. I delivered to him my letters. After he had read them, he took me again by the hand, and, with the usual compliments, introduced me to the other gentlemen, who are most of them members of the convention.

“Here we entered into a free conversation, and spent our time most agreeably, until it was quite dark. The tea table was spread under the tree, and Mrs. Bache, who is the only daughter of the Doctor, and lives with him, served it out to the company. She had three of her children about her. They seemed to be excessively fond of their grandpapa. The Doctor showed me a curiosity he had just received, and with which he was much pleased. It was a snake with two heads, preserved in a large phial. It was taken near the confluence of the Schuylkill with the Delaware, about four miles from this city. It was about ten inches long, well proportioned, the heads perfect, and united to the body about one fourth of an inch below the extremities of the jaws. The snake was of a dark brown, approaching to black, and the back beautifully speckled with white. The belly was rather checkered with a reddish color and white. The Doctor supposed it to be full grown, which I think is probable; and he thinks it must be a *sui generis* of that class of animals. He grounds his opinion of its

not being an extraordinary production, but a distinct genus, on the perfect form of the snake, the probability of its being of some age, and there having been found a snake entirely similar (of which the Doctor has a drawing, which he showed us,) near Lake Champlain, in the time of the late war. He mentioned the situation of this snake, if it was travelling among bushes, and one head should choose to go on one side of the stem of a bush, and the other head should prefer the other side, and neither of the heads would consent to come back, or give way to the other. He was then going to mention a humorous matter, that had that day occurred in the convention, in consequence of his comparing the snake to America; for he seemed to forget that every thing in the convention was to be kept a profound secret. But the secrecy of convention matters was suggested to him, which stopped him, and deprived me of the story he was going to tell.

“After it was dark we went into the house, and he invited me into his library, which is likewise his study. It is a very large chamber, and high-studded. The walls are covered with book-shelves, filled with books; besides there are four large alcoves, extending two thirds the length of the chamber, filled in the same manner. I presume this is the largest and by far the best private library in America. He showed us a glass machine for exhibiting the circulation of the blood in the arteries and veins of the human body. The circulation is exhibited by the passing of a red fluid from a reservoir into numerous capillary tubes of glass, ramified in every direction, and then returning in similar tubes to the reservoir, which was done with great velocity, without any power to act visibly upon the fluid, and had the appearance of perpetual motion.

Another great curiosity was a rolling press, for taking the copies of letters or any other writing. A sheet of paper is completely copied in less than two minutes; the copy as fair as the original, and without defacing it in the smallest degree. It is an invention of his own, extremely useful in many situations of life. He also showed us his long, artificial *arm and hand*, for taking down and putting up books on high shelves, which are out of reach; and his great arm-chair, with rockers, and a large fan placed over it, with which he fans himself, keeps off the flies, &c., while he sits reading, with only a small motion of the foot; and many other curiosities and inventions, all his own, but of lesser note. Over his mantel he has a prodigious number of medals, busts, and casts in wax, or plaster of Paris, which are the effigies of the most noted characters in Europe.

“But what the Doctor wished principally to show me was a huge volume on botany, which indeed afforded me the greatest pleasure of any one thing in his library. It was a single volume, but so large, that it was with great difficulty that he was able to raise it from a low shelf, and lift it on the table. But, with that senile ambition, which is common to old people, he insisted on doing it himself, and would permit no person to assist him, merely to show us how much strength he had remaining. It contained the whole of Linnæus’s *Systema Vegetabilium*, with large cuts of every plant, colored from nature. It was a feast to me, and the Doctor seemed to enjoy it as well as myself. We spent a couple of hours in examining this volume, while the other gentlemen amused themselves with other matters. The Doctor is not a botanist, but lamented he did not in early life attend to this science. He delights in Natural History, and expressed an earn-

est wish, that I should pursue the plan that I had begun, and hoped this science, so much neglected in America, would be pursued with as much ardor here as it is now in every part of Europe. I wanted, for three months at least, to have devoted myself entirely to this one volume; but, fearing lest I should be tedious to him, I shut up the volume, though he urged me to examine it longer.

“He seemed extremely fond, through the course of the visit, of dwelling on philosophical subjects, and particularly that of Natural History; while the other gentlemen were swallowed up with politics. This was a favorable circumstance for me; for almost the whole of his conversation was addressed to me, and 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 every thing about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness. He has an incessant vein of humor, accompanied with an uncommon vivacity, which seems as natural and involuntary as his breathing. He urged me to call on him again, but my short stay would not admit. We took our leave at ten, and I retired to my lodgings.” *

While the States were engaged in electing delegates to the convention, there was much speculation as to the results of this experiment, and political discussions abounded in all parts of the country. Partaking of the common impulse, a number of gentlemen in Philadelphia formed themselves into an association, called the *Society for Political Inquiries*, the design of which is well expressed by its name. Dr. Frank-

* Communicated to the Editor by Mr. Caleb Emerson, who transcribed it from the original Journal.

lin was chosen president, and the meetings were usually held at his house. For some time they were well attended; various topics of general politics were discussed; essays were written, and prize questions proposed. But, after having been in operation about two years, the society languished, and it was finally dissolved by the tacit consent of the members. He was also president of a *Society for alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons*.

Dr. Franklin's third and last year's service, as President of Pennsylvania, expired in October, 1788. After that time he held no public office, although he was often consulted on public measures.

His sensibility seems to have been touched by the neglect of Congress to settle his accounts, or even to notice in any way his long and faithful services to the public. Before he left France, his pecuniary transactions were examined in detail by Mr. Barclay, the commissioner appointed by Congress to liquidate and settle the accounts of the agents of the United States, who had been intrusted with the expenditure of public money in Europe. The result of Mr. Barclay's examination differed from Dr. Franklin's statement only seven sols; or about six cents, which sum he had by mistake overcharged. Mr. Barclay was ready to settle the accounts as they then stood; but Dr. Franklin requested that they might be submitted to the inspection of Congress, because he believed there were some other charges, which ought properly to be paid by the public, but which Mr. Barclay did not feel authorized by his instructions to allow. The accounts were accordingly kept open, and transmitted to Congress. One of the first things, which Dr. Franklin did on his arrival in Philadelphia, was to send his grandson to New York, where Congress were then in session, to

obtain a settlement. He returned unsuccessful, being told that necessary documents were expected from France, although the vouchers had all been examined by Mr. Barclay. After waiting a long time, without hearing any thing from Congress on the subject, Dr. Franklin wrote a letter to the President, containing an earnest request that the business might be taken up and considered.

“It is now more than three years,” said he, “that those accounts have been before that honorable body, and, to this day, no notice of any such objection has been communicated to me. But reports have, for some time past, been circulated here, and propagated in the newspapers, that I am greatly indebted to the United States for large sums, that had been put into my hands, and that I avoid a settlement. This, together with the little time one of my age may expect to live, makes it necessary for me to request earnestly, which I hereby do, that the Congress would be pleased, without further delay, to examine those accounts, and if they find therein any article or articles, which they do not understand or approve, that they would cause me to be acquainted with the same, that I may have an opportunity of offering such explanations or reasons in support of them as may be in my power, and then that the accounts may be finally closed. I hope the Congress will soon be able to attend to this business for the satisfaction of the public, as well as in condescension to my request.”

This act of justice was not rendered. The accounts were never settled, nor was any allowance made for what he conceived to be equitable demands for extraordinary services. It is true, that, after this letter was written, the deranged state of the Old Congress, in consequence of the non-attendance of members, may

have prevented its being brought regularly before that body; but there is no apology for the previous neglect of three years; nor does there appear any good reason why the business should not have been resumed, and honorably adjusted by the first Congress under the new constitution.

The zeal with which he had promoted the first establishment of an Academy in Philadelphia, forty years before, was revived during the last year of his life. He believed that the intentions of the original founders had not been fulfilled, in regard to the English school connected with that institution, and that the study of Greek and Latin had gradually gained too great an ascendancy. He wrote a long and very interesting paper, in which he sketched a history of the Academy, with an account of the transactions of its founders and early supporters, claiming a larger attention, than had hitherto been given, to English studies, as well on the ground of utility, as on that of the state of learning in modern times. Committees occasionally met at his house. One evening the conversation turned upon the study of the Greek and Latin languages in schools. Franklin was of the opinion, that they engrossed too much time. He said, that, when the custom of wearing broad cuffs with buttons first began, there was a reason for it; the cuffs might be brought down over the hands, and thus guard them from wet and cold. But gloves came into use, and the broad cuffs were unnecessary; yet the custom was still retained. So likewise with cocked hats. The wide brim, when let down, afforded a protection from the rain and sun. Umbrellas were introduced, yet fashion prevailed to keep cocked hats in vogue, although they were rather cumbersome than useful. Thus with the Latin language. When nearly

all the books in Europe were written in that language, the study of it was essential in every system of education ; but it is now scarcely needed, except as an accomplishment, since it has everywhere given place, as a vehicle of thought and knowledge, to some one of the modern tongues.

At this time, Dr. Franklin was seldom free from acute bodily pain ; but, during short intervals of relief, he wrote several other pieces, which exhibit proofs that his mind never acted with more vigor, or maintained a more cheerful and equable tone. One of these pieces is entitled *The Court of the Press*, in which he remarks with severity on the practice of certain editors of newspapers, who attack the characters of individuals, and shield themselves under a false interpretation of the liberty of the press. Another paper, called a *Comparison of the Conduct of the Ancient Jews and the Antifederalists of the United States*, is intended as a reproof to some of those who opposed the new constitution. Urged by the repeated solicitations of his friends, he likewise employed himself occasionally in writing his memoirs ; but he seems not to have made so much progress in this work, as he had anticipated when he returned from Europe.

He also drew up a *Plan for improving the Condition of the Free Blacks*. His last public act was to sign, as president, a memorial from the Abolition Society of Pennsylvania to Congress ; and the last paper which he wrote was on the same subject. Mr. Jackson, a member of Congress from Georgia, had made a speech in favor of negro slavery. An ingenious parody of this speech was composed by Dr. Franklin, in which Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim is represented as speaking, in the Divan of Algiers, against granting the petition of a sect called *Erika*, who prayed for the abo-

lition of piracy and slavery, as being unjust. In this pretended speech of Ibrahim, the same principles were advanced, and the same arguments were used in defence of plundering and enslaving Europeans, that had been urged by Mr. Jackson in justification of negro slavery. It is dated only twenty-four days before the author's decease; and, as a specimen of happy conception and sound reasoning, it is not inferior to any of his writings.

The state of his health and of his feelings may be inferred from a letter to President Washington, written on the 16th of September, 1789, in which he speaks as follows;

“My malady renders my sitting up to write rather painful to me; but I cannot let my son-in-law, Mr. Bache, part for New York, without congratulating you by him on the recovery of your health, so precious to us all, and on the growing strength of our new government under your administration. For my own personal ease, I should have died two years ago; but, though those years have been spent in excruciating pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present situation. I am now finishing my eighty-fourth year, and probably with it my career in this life; but, in whatever state of existence I am placed in hereafter, if I retain any memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the esteem, respect, and affection, with which I have long been, my dear friend, yours most sincerely.”

Washington's reply was cordial and affectionate. Between these two distinguished patriots, who served their country in different spheres, but with equal fidelity and devotedness, there was ever a sincere friendship and an entire confidence. When General Washington came to Philadelphia as a member of the

national convention for forming the constitution, the first person he called upon was Dr. Franklin; and, when he passed through that city on his way to New York, where he was to be invested with the office of President of the United States, he paid him the same tribute of respect.

Although his malady and his sufferings continued, yet no material change in his health was observed till the first part of April, 1790, when he was attacked with a fever and a pain in the breast. From that time he was constantly under the care of Dr. John Jones, an eminent physician of Philadelphia, who wrote the following account of his illness and death.

“The stone, with which he had been afflicted for several years, had, for the last twelve months of his life, confined him chiefly to his bed; and, during the extremely painful paroxysms, he was obliged to take large doses of laudanum to mitigate his tortures. Still, in the intervals of pain, he not only amused himself by 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 of a private nature, with various persons who waited upon him for that purpose; and, in every instance, displayed not only the readiness and disposition to do good, which were the distinguishing characteristics of his life, but the fullest and clearest possession of his uncommon abilities. He also not unfrequently indulged in those *jeux d’esprit* and entertaining anecdotes, which were the delight of all who heard them.

“About sixteen days before his death, he was seized with a feverish disposition, without any particular symptoms attending it till the third or fourth day, when he complained of a pain in his left breast, which increased till it became extremely acute, attended by

a cough and laborious breathing. During this state, when the severity of his pains drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe, that he was afraid he did not bear them as he ought; acknowledging his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had raised him, from small and low beginnings, to such high rank and consideration among men; and made no doubt but that his present afflictions were kindly intended to wean him from a world in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned him. In this frame of body and mind, he continued until five days before his death, when the pain and difficulty of breathing entirely left him, and his family were flattering themselves with the hopes of his recovery; but an imposthume which had formed in his lungs, suddenly burst, and discharged a quantity of matter, which he continued to throw up while he had power; but, as that failed, the organs of respiration became gradually oppressed; a calm, lethargic state succeeded; and on the 17th instant (April, 1790), about eleven o'clock at night, he quietly expired, closing a long and useful life of eighty-four years and three months." *

In a letter from Dr. Rush to Dr. Price, dated at Philadelphia, a week after this event, the writer says; "The papers will inform you of the death of our late illustrious friend Dr. Franklin. 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 sub-

* Dr. Jones added the following particulars. "In the year 1735, Dr. Franklin had a severe pleurisy, which terminated in an abscess of his lungs; and he was then almost suffocated by the quantity and suddenness of the discharge. A second attack, of a similar nature, happened some years after, from which he soon recovered; and he did not appear to suffer any inconvenience in his respiration from these diseases."

ject 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 among us have vied with each other in paying tributes of respect to his memory." *

The following extracts are from a letter written by Mrs. Mary Hewson to Mr. Viny, one of Dr. Franklin's early friends in England.

"We have lost that valued, that venerable, kind friend, whose knowledge enlightened our minds, and whose philanthropy warmed our hearts. But we have the consolation to think, that, if a life well spent in acts of universal benevolence to mankind, a grateful acknowledgment of Divine favor, a patient submission under severe chastisement, and an humble trust in Almighty mercy, can insure the happiness of a future state, our present loss is his gain. I was the faithful witness of the closing scene, which he sustained with that calm fortitude which characterized him through life. No repining, no peevish expression, ever escaped him, during a confinement of two years, in which, I believe, if every moment of ease could be added together the sum would not amount to two whole months. 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 in-

* See MORGAN'S *Life of Price*, p. 147.

tervals 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 say this to you, because I know it will give you pleasure."

"I never shall forget one day that I passed with our friend last summer. I found him in bed in great agony; but, when that agony abated a little, I asked 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. It is natural for us to wish that an attention to some ceremonies had accompanied that religion of the heart, which I am convinced Dr. Franklin always possessed; but let us, who feel the benefit of them, continue to practise them, without thinking lightly of that piety, which could support pain without a murmur, and meet death without terror."*

The funeral solemnities took place on the 21st of April. It was computed that more than twenty thousand people were assembled. In the procession were the clergy, the Mayor and Corporation of the City, the members of the Executive Council and of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, the Faculty and Students of the College of Philadelphia, the Philosophical Society, and several other societies, followed by a numerous train of citizens. All the bells of the city

* See the London *Monthly Repository*, Vol. XVI. p. 3. An account of Mrs. Hewson and of her family may be seen in the present work, Vol. VII. p. 150. The letter from which the above extracts are taken, is dated at Philadelphia, May 5th, 1790.

were muffled and tolled; the flags of the vessels in the harbour were raised half-mast high; and discharges of artillery announced the time when the body was laid in the earth. Franklin was interred by the side of his wife, in the cemetery of Christ's Church. A plain marble slab covers the two graves, according to the direction in his will, with no other inscription than their names and the year of his decease. It yet remains for the city of his adoption, by erecting an appropriate monument, to render the same tribute of respect to his memory, which the city of his birth has rendered to that of his father and mother.

When the news of his death reached Congress, then sitting in New York, a resolution was moved by Mr. Madison, and unanimously adopted, that the members should wear the customary badge of mourning for one month, "as a mark of veneration due to the memory of a citizen, whose native genius was not more an ornament to human nature, than his various exertions of it have been precious to science, to freedom, and to his country." * A similar resolution was passed by the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. The American Philosophical Society appointed one of their number, the Reverend Dr. William Smith, to pronounce a discourse commemorative of his character and his virtues. Nor were such honors confined to his own country. By a decree of the National Assembly of France, introduced by an eloquent speech from Mirabeau, and seconded by Lafayette and La Rochefoucauld, the members of that body wore a badge of mourning for three days, and the President wrote a letter of condolence to the Congress of the

* See APPENDIX, No. VII.

United States. A public celebration was ordered by the *Commune* of Paris, which was attended by a large concourse of public officers and citizens, and a eulogy was pronounced by the Abbé Fauchet. Many other testimonies of respect were shown by the different scientific and literary societies in Paris, and eulogies were written by some of their most distinguished members.

Dr. Franklin was well formed and strongly built, in his latter years inclining to corpulency; his stature was five feet nine or ten inches; his eyes were grey, and his complexion light. Affable in his deportment, unobtrusive, easy, and winning in his manners, he rendered himself agreeable to persons of every rank in life. With his intimate friends he conversed freely, but with strangers and in mixed company he was reserved, and sometimes taciturn. His great fund of knowledge, and experience in human affairs, contributed to give a peculiar charm to his conversation, enriched as it was by original reflections, and enlivened by a vein of pleasantry, and by anecdotes and ingenious apologues, in the happy recollection and use of which he was unsurpassed.

The strong and distinguishing features of his mind were sagacity, quickness of perception, and soundness of judgment. His imagination was lively, without being extravagant. In short, he possessed a perfect mastery over the faculties of his understanding and over his passions. Having this power always at command, and never being turned aside either by vanity or selfishness, he was enabled to pursue his objects with a directness and constancy, that rarely failed to insure success. It was as fortunate for the world, as it was for his own fame, that the benevolence of such a man was limited only by his means and opportuni-

ties of doing good, and that, in every sphere of action through a long course of years, his single aim was to promote the happiness of his fellow men by enlarging their knowledge, improving their condition, teaching them practical lessons of wisdom and prudence, and inculcating the principles of rectitude and the habits of a virtuous life.

In the preceding narrative it has been the author's design to touch briefly upon all the principal events in the life of Franklin, from the time his own narrative breaks off, according to the method adopted by him in his memoirs of himself, and not to write an essay on his genius and character, nor an historical account of his discoveries as a philosopher and his achievements as a statesman and moralist. Such an attempt would have required much more space than has been allotted to this performance; and in the present case it is the less to be desired, as this biographical sketch is connected with his writings, in which, particularly in his moral essays and correspondence, will be found a better representation of his character and of what he accomplished, than the reader could hope to derive from any other source.
