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FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD

LIFE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

By William M. Thayer

Author of "From Farm House to White House," "From Log Cabin to White House," "From Pioneer Home to White House," "From Tannery to White House," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED

1889.

PREFACE

The life of Benjamin Franklin is stranger than fiction. Its realities surpass the idealities of novelists. Imagination would scarcely venture to portray such victories over poverty, obscurity, difficulties, and hardships. The tact, application, perseverance, and industry, that he brought to his life-work, make him an example for all time. He met with defeats; but they inspired him to manlier efforts. His successes increased his desire for something higher and nobler. He was satisfied only with *going up still higher*. He believed that "one to-day is worth two to-morrows"; and he acted accordingly, with the candle-shop and printing office for his school-room, and Observation for his teacher. His career furnishes one of the noblest examples of success for the young of both sexes to study. We offer his life as one of the brightest and best in American history to inspire young hearts with lofty aims.

The first and principal source of material for this book was Franklin's "Autobiography." No other authority, or treasure of material, can take the place of that. Biographies by Sparks, Sargent, Abbott, and Parton have freely consulted together with "Franklin in France," and various eulogies and essays upon his life and character.

That Franklin was the real father of the American Union, is the view which the author of this biography presents. It is the view of Bancroft, as follows:—

"Not half of Franklin's merits have been told. He was the true father of the American Union. It was he who went forth to lay the foundation of that great design at Albany; and in New York he lifted up his voice. Here among us he appeared as the apostle of the Union. It was Franklin who suggested the Congress of 1774; and but for his wisdom, and the confidence that wisdom inspired, it is a matter of doubt whether that Congress would have taken effect. It was Franklin who suggested the bond of the Union which binds these States from Florida to Maine. Franklin was the greatest diplomatist of the eighteenth century. He never spoke a word too soon; he never spoke a word too much; he never failed to speak the right word at the right season."

The closing years of Franklin's life were so identified with the Union of the States, and the election and inauguration of Washington as the first President, that his biography becomes a fitting companion to the WHITE HOUSE SERIES.

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BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD.

I.

FROM OLD ENGLAND TO NEW ENGLAND.

"I am tired of so much persecution under the reign of our corrupt king," said a neighbor to Josiah Franklin, one day in the year 1685, in the usually quiet village of Banbury, England, "and I believe that I shall pull up stakes and emigrate to Boston. That is the most thriving port in America."

"Well, I am not quite prepared for that yet," replied Franklin. "Our king is bad enough and tyrannical enough to make us all sick of our native land. But it is a great step to leave it forever, to live among strangers; and I could not decide to do it without a good deal of reflection."

"Nor I; but I have reflected upon it for a whole year now, and the more I reflect the more I am inclined to emigrate. When I can't worship God here as my conscience dictates, I will go where I can. Besides, I think the new country promises much more to the common people than the old in the way of a livelihood."

"Perhaps so; I have not given the subject much attention. Dissenters have a hard time here under Charles II, and we all have to work hard enough for a livelihood. I do not think you can have a harder time in Boston."

Josiah Franklin was not disposed to emigrate when his neighbor first opened the subject. He was an intelligent, enterprising, Christian man, a dyer by trade, was born in Ecton, Leicestershire, in 1655, but removed to Banbury in his boyhood, to learn the business of a dyer of his brother John. He was married in Banbury at twenty-two years of age, his wife being an excellent companion for him, whether in prosperity or adversity, at home among kith and kin, or with strangers in New England.

"You better consider this matter seriously," continued the neighbor, "for several families will go, I think, if one goes. A little colony of us will make it comparatively easy to leave home for a new country."

"Very true; that would be quite an inducement to exchange countries, several families going together," responded Franklin. "I should enjoy escaping from the oppression of the Established Church as much as you; but it is a too important step for me to take without much consideration. It appears to me that my business could not be as good in a new country as it is in this old country."

"I do not see why, exactly. People in a new country must have dyeing done, perhaps not so much of it as the people of an old country; but the population of a new place like Boston increases faster than the older places of our country, and this fact would offset the objection you name."

"In part, perhaps. If Benjamin could go, I should almost feel that I must go; but I suppose it is entirely out of the question for him to go."

Benjamin was an older brother of Josiah, who went to learn the trade of a dyer of his brother John before Josiah did. The Benjamin Franklin of this volume, our young hero, was named for him. He was a very pious man, who rendered unto God the things that are God's with full as much care as he rendered unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. He was a very intelligent, bright man, also quite a poet for that day, and he invented a style of short-hand writing that he used in taking down sermons to which he listened. In this way he accumulated several volumes of sermons, which he held as treasures.

"I have not spoken with your brother about the matter," replied the neighbor. "I think it would be more difficult for him to arrange to go than for most of us, at least for the present. I intend to speak with him about it."

"He will not want me to go if he can not," added Josiah, "and I shall think about it a good while before I should conclude to go without him. We have been together most of our lives, and to separate now, probably never to meet again, would be too great a trial."

"You will experience greater trials than that if you live long, no doubt," said the neighbor, "but I want you should think the matter over, and see if it will not be for your interest to make this change. I will see you again about it."

While plans are being matured, we will see what Doctor Franklin said, in his "Autobiography," about his ancestors at Ecton:

"Some notes, which one of my uncles, who had the same curiosity in collecting family anecdotes, once

put into my hands, furnished me with several particulars relative to our ancestors. From these notes I learned that they lived in the same village, Ecton, in Northamptonshire, on a freehold of about thirty acres, for at least three hundred years, and how much longer could not be ascertained. This small estate would not have sufficed for their maintenance without the business of a smith [blacksmith] which had continued in the family down to my uncle's time, the eldest son being always brought up to that employment, a custom which he and my father followed with regard to their eldest sons. When I searched the records in Ecton, I found an account of their marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, as the registers kept did not commence previous thereto. I, however, learned from it that I was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations back. My grandfather, Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived in Ecton till he was too old to continue his business, when he retired to Banbury, Oxfordshire, to the house of his son John, with whom my father served an apprenticeship. There my uncle died and lies buried. We saw his grave-stone in 1758. His eldest son, Thomas, lived in the house at Ecton, and left it with the land to his only daughter, who, with her husband, one Fisher, of Wellingborough, sold it to Mr. Ioted, now lord of the manor there. My grandfather had four sons, who grew up, viz.: Thomas, John, Benjamin, and Josiah."

"I do not know how you like it, but it arouses my indignation to have our meeting broken up, as it was last week," remarked Josiah Franklin to the aforesaid neighbor, a short time after their previous interview. "If anything will make me exchange Banbury for Boston it is such intolerance."

"I have felt like that for a long time, and I should not have thought of leaving my native land but for such oppression," replied the neighbor, "and what is worse, I see no prospect of any improvement; on the other hand, it appears to me that our rights will be infringed more and more. I am going to New England if I emigrate alone."

"Perhaps I shall conclude to accompany you when the time comes. There do not appear to be room in this country for Dissenters and the Established Church. I understand there is in New England. I may conclude to try it."

"I am glad to hear that. We shall be greatly encouraged if you decide to go. I discussed the matter with Benjamin since I did with you, and he would be glad to go if his business and family did not fasten him here. I think he would rather justify your going."

"Did he say so?"

"No, not in so many words. But he did say that he would go if his circumstances favored it as much as your circumstances favor your going."

"Well, that is more than I supposed he would say. I expected that he would oppose any proposition that contemplated my removal to Boston. The more I think of it the more I am inclined to go."

The Franklins, clear back to the earliest ancestors, had experienced much persecution. Some of them could keep and read their Bible only by concealing it and reading it in secret. The following, from Franklin's "Autobiography," is an interesting and thrilling incident:

"They had an English Bible, and, to conceal it and place it in safety, it was fastened open with tapes under and within the cover of a joint-stool. When my great-grandfather wished to read it to his family, he placed the joint-stool on his knees, and then turned over the leaves under the tapes. One of the children stood at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor coming, who was an officer of the spiritual court. In that case the stool was turned down again upon its feet, when the Bible remained concealed under it as before. This anecdote I had from Uncle Benjamin."

The Dissenters from the Established Church loved their mode of worship more, if any thing, than members of their mother church. But under the tyrannical king, Charles II, they could not hold public meetings at the time to which we refer. Even their secret meetings were often disturbed, and sometimes broken up.

"It is fully settled now that we are going to New England," said the aforesaid neighbor to Josiah Franklin subsequently, when he called upon him with two other neighbours, who were going to remove with him; "and we have called to persuade you to go with us; we do not see how we can take no for an answer."

"Well, perhaps I shall not say no; I have been thinking the matter over, and I have talked with Benjamin; and my wife is not at all averse to going. But I can't say *yes* to-day; I may say it to-morrow, or sometime."

"That is good," answered one of the neighbors; "we must have one of the Franklins with us to be well equipped. Banbury would not be well represented in Boston without one Franklin, at least."

"You are very complimentary," replied Franklin; "even misery loves company, though; and it would be almost carrying home with us for several families to emigrate together. The more the merrier."

"So we think. To escape from the intolerant spirit that pursues Dissenters here will make us merry, if nothing else does. Home is no longer home when we can worship God as we please only in secret."

"There is much truth in that," continued Franklin. "I am much more inclined to remove to New England than I was a month ago. The more I reflect upon the injustice and oppression we experience, the less I think of this country for a home. Indeed, I have mentally concluded to go if I can arrange my affairs as I hope to."

"Then we shall be content; we shall expect to have you one of the company. It will be necessary for us to meet often to discuss plans and methods of emigration. We shall not find it to be a small matter to break up here and settle there."

It was settled that Josiah Franklin would remove to New England with his neighbors, and preparations were made for his departure with them.

These facts indicate the standing and influence of the Franklins. They were of the common people, but leading families. Their intelligence, industry, and Christian principle entitled them to public confidence and respect. Not many miles away from them were the Washingtons, ancestors of George Washington, known as "the father of his country." The Washingtons were more aristocratic than the Franklins, and possessed more of the world's wealth and honors. Had they been near neighbors they would not have associated with the Franklins, as they belonged to a different guild. Such were the customs of those times.

Thomas Franklin was a lawyer, and "became a considerable man in the county,—was chief mover of all public-spirited enterprises for the county or town of Northampton, as well as of his own village, of which many instances were related of him; and he was much taken notice of and patronized by Lord Halifax." Benjamin was very ingenious, not only in his own trade as dyer, but in all other matters his ingenuity frequently cropped out. He was a prolific writer of poetry, and, when he died, "he left behind him two quarto volumes of manuscript of his own poetry, consisting of fugitive pieces addressed to his friends." An early ancestor, bearing the same Christian name, was imprisoned for a whole year for writing a piece of poetry reflecting upon the character of some great man. Note, that he was not incarcerated for writing bad poetry, but for libelling some one by his verse, though he might have been very properly punished for writing such stuff as he called poetry. It is nothing to boast of, that his descendant, Uncle Benjamin, was not sent to prison for producing "two quarto volumes of his own poetry," as the reader would believe if compelled to read it.

Dr. Franklin said, in his "Autobiography": "My father married young, and carried his wife with three children to New England about 1685. The conventicles [meetings of Dissenters] being at that time forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed in the meetings, some considerable men of his acquaintance determined to go to that country, and he was prevailed with to accompany them thither, where they expected to enjoy their religion with freedom."

Boston was not then what it is now, and no one living expected that it would ever become a city of great size and importance. It contained less than six thousand inhabitants. The bay, with its beautiful islands, spread out in front, where bears were often seen swimming across it, or from one island to another. Bear-hunting on Long Wharf was a pastime to many, and twenty were killed in a week when they were numerous.

In the rear of the town stood the primeval forests, where Red Men and wild beasts roamed at their pleasure. It is claimed that an Indian or pioneer might have traveled, at that time, through unbroken forests from Boston to the Pacific coast, a distance of more than three thousand miles, except here and there where western prairies stretched out like an "ocean of land," as lonely and desolate as the forest itself. That, in two hundred years, and less, sixty millions of people would dwell upon this vast domain, in cities and towns of surprising wealth and beauty, was not even thought of in dreams. That Boston would ever grow into a city of three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, with commerce, trade, wealth, learning, and influence to match, the wildest enthusiast did not predict. A single fact illustrates the prevailing opinion of that day, and even later. The town of Boston appointed a commission to explore the country along Charles River, to learn what prospects there were for settlers. The commissioners attended to their duty faithfully, and reported to the town that they had explored ten miles west, as far as settlers would ever penetrate the forest, and found the prospects as encouraging as could be expected.

It was to this Boston that Josiah Franklin emigrated in 1685, thinking to enjoy liberty of conscience, while he supported his growing family by his trade of dyer. There is no record to show that he was ever

sorry he came. On the other hand, there is much to prove that he always had occasion to rejoice in the change. Certainly his family, and their posterity, exerted great influence in building up the nation. Next to Washington Josiah's son Benjamin ranked in his efforts to secure American Independence, and all the blessings that followed.

II.

THE FIFTEENTH GIFT.

"The fifteenth!" remarked Josiah Franklin to a relative, as he took the fifteenth child into his arms. "And a son, too; he must bear the name of his Uncle Benjamin."

"Then, we are to understand that his name is Benjamin?" answered the relative, inquiringly.

"Yes, that is his name; his mother and I settled that some time ago, that the next son should bear the name of my most beloved brother, who, I hope, will remove to this country before long."

"Well, a baby is no curiosity in your family," remarked the relative, laughing. "Some men would think that fifteen was too much of a good thing."

"A child is God's gift to man, as I view it, for which parents should be thankful, whether it is the first or fifteenth. Each child imposes an additional obligation upon parents to be true to the Giver as well as to the gift. I am poor enough, but no man is poorer for a large family of children. He may have to labor harder when they are young and helpless, but in age they are props on which he can lean."

Mr. Franklin spoke out of the depths of his soul. He was a true Christian man, and took the Christian view of a child, as he did of any thing else. While some men are annoyed by the multiplicity of children, he found a source of comfort and contentment in the possession. The seventeenth child, which number he had, he hailed with the same grateful recognition of God's providence that he did when the first was born. Yet he was poor, and found himself face to face with poverty most of the time. Each child born was born to an inheritance of want. But to him children were God's gift as really as sunshine or showers, day or night, the seventeenth just as much so as the first. This fact alone marks Josiah Franklin as an uncommon man for his day or ours.

"If more men and women were of your opinion," continued the relative, "there would be much more enjoyment and peace in all communities. The most favorable view that a multitude of parents indulge is, that children are troublesome comforts."

"What do you think of the idea of taking this baby into the house of God to-day, and consecrating him to the Lord?" Mr. Franklin asked, as if the thought just then flashed upon his mind. "It is only a few steps to carry him."

It was Sunday morning, Jan. 6, 1706, old style; and the "Old South Meeting House," in which Dr. Samuel Willard preached, was on the other side of the street, scarcely fifty feet distant.

"I should think it would harmonize very well with your opinion about children as the gift of God, and the Lord may understand the matter so well as to look approvingly upon it, but I think your neighbors will say that you are rushing things somewhat. It might be well to let the little fellow get used to this world before he begins to attend meeting."

The relative spoke thus in a vein of humor, though she really did not approve of the proposed episode in the new comer's life. Indeed it seemed rather ridiculous to her, to carry a babe, a few hours old, to the house of God.

"I shall not consult my neighbors," Mr. Franklin replied. "I shall consult my wife in this matter, as I do in others, and defer to her opinion. I have always found that her judgment is sound on reducing it to practice."

"That is so; your wife is a woman of sound judgment as well as of strong character, and you are wise enough to recognize the fact, and act accordingly. But that is not true of many men. If your wife approves of taking her baby into the meeting-house for consecration to-day, then do it, though the whole town shall denounce the act."

There is no doubt his relative thought that Mrs. Franklin would veto the proposition at once, and that would end it. But in less than a half hour he reported that she approved of the proposition.

"Benjamin will be consecrated to the Lord in the afternoon; my wife approves of it as proper and expressive of our earnest desire that he should be the Lord's. I shall see Mr. Willard at once, and nothing but his disapproval will hinder the act."

"And I would not hinder it if I could," replied his relative, "if your wife and Pastor Willard approve. I shall really be in favor of it if they are, because their judgment is better than mine."

"All the difference between you and me," continued Mr. Franklin, with a smile playing over his face, "appears to be that you think a child may be given to the Lord too soon, and I do not; the sooner the better, is my belief. With the consecration come additional obligations, which I am willing to assume, and not only willing, but anxious to assume."

"You are right, no doubt; but you are one of a thousand in that view, and you will have your reward."

"Yes; and so will that contemptible class of fathers, who can endure *five* children, but not *fifteen*,—too irresponsible to see that one of the most inconsistent men on earth is the father who will not accept the situation he has created for himself. The Franklins are not made of that sort of stuff; neither are the Folgers [referring to his wife's family], whose fervent piety sanctifies their good sense, so that they would rather please the Lord than all mankind."

Mr. Willard was seen, and he endorsed the act as perfectly proper, and in complete harmony with a felt sense of parental obligation. Therefore, Benjamin was wrapped closely in flannel blankets, and carried into the meeting-house in the afternoon, where he was consecrated to the Lord by the pastor.

On the "Old Boston Town Records of Births," under the heading, "Boston Births Entered 1708," is this: "Benjamin, son of Josiah Franklin, and Abiah, his wife, born 6 Jan. 1706."

From some mistake or oversight the birth was not recorded until two years after Benjamin was born; but it shows that he was born on Jan. 6, 1706.

Then, the records of the "Old South Church," among the baptism of infants, have this: "1706, Jan. 6, Benjamin, son of Josiah and Abiah Franklin."

Putting these two records together, they establish beyond doubt the fact that Benjamin Franklin was born and baptized on the same day. The Old South Church had two pastors then, and it is supposed that Dr. Samuel Willard officiated instead of Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton, because the record is in the handwriting of Doctor Willard.

We are able to furnish a picture of the house in which he was born. It measured twenty feet in width, and was about thirty feet long, including the L. It was three stories high in appearance, the third being the attic. On the lower floor of the main house there was only one room, which was about twenty feet square, and served the family the triple purpose of parlor, sitting-room, and dining-hall. It contained an old-fashioned fire-place, so large that an ox might have been roasted before it. The second and third stories originally contained but one chamber each, of ample dimensions, and furnished in the plainest manner. The attic was an unplastered room, which might have been used for lodgings or storing trumpery. The house stood about one hundred years after Josiah Franklin left it, and was finally destroyed by fire, on Saturday, Dec. 29, 1810. The spot on which it stood is now occupied by a granite warehouse bearing the inscription, "BIRTHPLACE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN."

Mr. Franklin had three children when he left Banbury, and four more were given to him during the first four years of his residence in Boston, one of whom died. Soon after the birth of the seventh child Mrs. Franklin died.

So young and large a family needed a mother's watch and care, as Josiah Franklin found to his sorrow. The additional burden laid upon him by the death of his wife interfered much with his business, and he saw fresh reasons each day for finding another help-mate as soon as possible. To run his business successfully, and take the whole charge of his family, was more than he could do. In these circumstances he felt justified in marrying again as soon as possible, and, with the aid of interested friends, he made a fortunate choice of Abiah Folger, of Nantucket, a worthy successor of the first Mrs. Franklin. He married her a few months after the death of his first wife. The second Mrs. Franklin became the mother of ten children, which, added to those of the first Mrs. Franklin, constituted a very respectable family of seventeen children, among whom was Benjamin, the fifteenth child. His "Autobiography" says: "Of the seventeen children I remember to have seen thirteen sitting together at

the table, who all grew up to years of maturity and were married." Of the second wife it says: "My mother, the second wife of my father, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather in his ecclesiastical history of that country, 'as a godly and learned Englishman.'"

Josiah Franklin was an admirer not only of his wife, Abiah, but of the whole Folger family, because they were devoutly pious, and as "reliable as the sun, or the earth on its axis." They were unpolished and unceremonial, and he liked them all the more for that. He wrote to his sister in a vein of pleasantry, "They are wonderfully shy. But I admire their honest plainness of speech. About a year ago I invited two of them to dine with me; their answer was that they would if they could not do better. I suppose they did better, for I never saw them afterwards, and so had no opportunity of showing my miff if I had any."

We have said that Benjamin was named for his uncle in England, and, possibly some of the other children were named for other relatives in the mother country. Certainly there were enough of them to go round any usual circle of relatives, taking them all in. Uncle Benjamin was very much pleased with the honor conferred upon him, and he always manifested great interest in his namesake, though he did not dream that he would one day represent the country at the court of St. James. It is claimed that the uncle's interest in his namesake brought him to this country, a few years later, where he lived and died. Be that as it may, he ever manifested a lively interest in a protege, and evidently regarded him as an uncommonly bright boy, who would some day score a creditable mark for the family.

Benjamin was more than a comely child; he was handsome. From babyhood to manhood he was so fine-looking as to attract the attention of strangers. His eye beamed with so much intelligence as to almost compel the thought, "There are great talents behind them." Mr. Parton says: "It is probable that Benjamin Franklin derived from his mother the fashion of his body and the cast of his countenance. There are lineal descendants of Peter Folger who strikingly resemble Franklin in these particulars; one of whom, a banker in New Orleans, looks like a portrait of Franklin stepped out of its frame."

Josiah Franklin did not enter upon the trade of a dyer when he settled in Boston, as he expected. The new country was very different from the old in its fashions and wants. There was no special demand for a dyer. If people could earn money enough to cover their nakedness, they cared little about the color of their covering. One color was just as good as another to keep them warm, or to preserve their decency. There was no room for Josiah Franklin as a dyer. There was room for him, however, as a "tallow-chandler," and he lost no time in taking up this new but greasy business. He must work or starve; and, of the two, he preferred work, though the occupation might not be neat and congenial.

The word "chandler" is supposed to have been derived from the French *chandelier*, so that a tallow candle-maker was a sort of chandelier in society at that early day. He furnished light, which was more necessary than color to almost every one. The prevailing method of lighting dwellings and stores was with tallow candles. Candles and whale oil were the two known articles for light, and the latter was expensive, so that the former was generally adopted. Hence, Josiah Franklin's business was honorable because it was necessary; and by it, with great industry and economy, he was able to keep the wolf of hunger from his door.

The place where he manufactured candles was at the corner of Hanover and Union streets. The original sign that he selected to mark his place of business was a blue ball, half as large as a man's head, hanging over the door, bearing the name "Josiah Franklin" and the date "1698." The same ball hangs there still. Time has stolen its blue, but not the name and date. Into this building, also, he removed his family from Milk street, soon after the birth of Benjamin.

In his "Autobiography," Franklin says: "My elder brothers were all put apprentices to different trades." Several of them were apprenticed when Benjamin was born. John worked with his father, and learned the "tallow-chandler's" trade well, setting up the business for himself afterwards in Providence. This was the only method that could be adopted successfully in so large a family, except where wealth was considerable.

We must not omit the fact that the father of Benjamin was a good singer and a good player of the violin. After the labors of the day were over, and the frugal supper eaten, and the table cleared, and the room put in order for the evening, he was wont to sing and play for the entertainment of his family. He was sure of a good audience every night, if his performance opened before the younger children retired. There is no doubt that this custom exerted a molding influence upon the household, although the music might have been like Uncle Benjamin's poetry, as compared with the music of our day.

For the reader, now familiar with the manners, customs, rush of business, inventions, wealth, and fashion of our day, it is difficult to understand the state of society at the time of Franklin's birth. Parton says of it: "1706, the year of Benjamin Franklin's birth, was the fourth of the reign of Queen Anne, and the year of Marlborough's victory at Ramillies. Pope was then a sickly dwarf, four feet high and

nineteen years of age, writing, at his father's cottage in Windsor Forest the 'Pastorals' which, in 1709, gave him his first celebrity. Voltaire was a boy of ten, in his native village near Paris. Bolingbroke was a rising young member of the House of Commons, noted, like Fox at a later day, for his dissipation and his oratory. Addison, aged thirty-four, had written his Italian travels, but not the 'Spectator' and was a thriving politician. Newton, at sixty-four, his great work all done, was master of the mint, had been knighted the year before, and elected president of the Royal Society in 1703 Louis XIV was king of France, and the first king of Prussia was reigning. The father of George Washington was a Virginia boy of ten; the father of John Adams was just entering Harvard College; and the father of Thomas Jefferson was not yet born."

III.

PAYING TOO DEAR FOR THE WHISTLE.

When Benjamin was seven years old he had not been to school a day. Yet he was a good reader and speller. In manhood he said: "I do not remember when I could not read, so it must have been very early." He was one of those irrepressible little fellows, whose intuition and observation are better than school. He learned more out of school than he could or would have done in it. His precocity put him in advance of most boys at seven, even without schooling. It was not necessary for him to have school-teachers to testify that he possessed ten talents,—his parents knew that, and every one else who was familiar with him.

The first money he ever had to spend as he wished was on a holiday when he was seven years old. It was not the Fourth of July, when torpedoes and firecrackers scare horses and annoy men and women, for Benjamin's holiday was more than sixty years before the Declaration of Independence was declared, and that is what we celebrate now on the Fourth of July. Indeed, his holiday was a hundred years before torpedoes and fire-crackers were invented. It was a gala-day, however, in which the whole community was interested, including the youngest boy in the Franklin family.

"See that you spend your money well," remarked his mother, who presented him with several coppers; "and keep out of mischief."

"And here is some more," added his father, giving him several coppers to add to his spending money; "make wise investments, Ben, for your reputation depends upon it"; and the latter facetious remark was made in a way that indicated his love for the boy.

"What are you going to buy, Ben?" inquired an older brother, who wanted to draw out some bright answer from the child; "sugar-plums, of course," he added.

Benjamin made no reply, though his head was crammed with thoughts about his first holiday.

"I shall want to know how well you spend your money, Ben," said his mother; "remember that 'all is not gold that glitters'; you've got all the money you can have to-day."

All the older members of the family were interested in the boy's pastime, and while they were indulging in various remarks, he bounded out of the house, with his head filled with bewitching fancies, evidently expecting such a day of joy as he never knew before. Perhaps the toy-shop was first in his mind, into which he had looked wistfully many times as he passed, and perhaps it was not. We say toy-shop, though it was not such a toy-shop as Boston has to-day, where thousands of toys of every description and price are offered for sale. But it was a store in which, with other articles, toys were kept for sale, very few in number and variety compared with the toys offered for sale at the present day. Benjamin had seen these in the window often, and, no doubt, had wished to possess some of them. But there were no toys in the Franklin family; there were children instead of toys, so many of them that money to pay for playthings was out of the question.

Benjamin had not proceeded far on the street when he met a boy blowing a whistle that he had just purchased. The sound of the whistle, and the boy's evident delight in blowing it, captivated Benjamin at once. He stopped to listen and measure the possessor of that musical wonder. He said nothing, but just listened, not only with his ears, but with his whole self. He was delighted with the concert that one small boy could make, and, then and there, he resolved to go into that concert business himself. So he pushed on, without having said a word to the owner of the whistle, fully persuaded to invest his money in the same sort of a musical instrument. Supposing that the whistle was bought at the store where he

had seen toys in the window, he took a bee line for it.

"Any whistles?" he inquired, almost out of breath.

"Plenty of them, my little man," the proprietor answered with a smile, at the same time proceeding to lay before the small customer quite a number.

"I will give you all the money I have for one," said Benjamin, without inquiring the price. He was so zealous to possess a whistle that the price was of no account, provided he had enough money to pay for it.

"Ah! all you have?" responded the merchant; "perhaps you have not as much as I ask for them. They are very nice whistles."

"Yes, I know they are, and I will give you all the money I have for one of them," was Benjamin's frank response. The fact was, he began to think that he had not sufficient money to purchase one, so valuable did a whistle appear to him at that juncture.

"How much money have you?" inquired the merchant.

Benjamin told him honestly how many coppers he had, which was more than the actual price of the whistles. The merchant replied:

"Yes, you may have a whistle for that. Take your pick."

Never was a child more delighted than he when the bargain was closed. He tried every whistle, that he might select the loudest one of all, and when his choice was settled, he exchanged his entire wealth for the prize. He was as well satisfied as the merchant when he left the store. "Ignorance is bliss," it is said, and it was to Benjamin for a brief space.

He began his concert as soon as he left the store. He wanted nothing more. He had seen all he wanted to see. He had bought all he wanted to buy. The whole holiday was crowded into that whistle. To him, that was all there was of it. Sweetmeats and knick-knacks had no attractions for him. Military parade had no charm for him, for he could parade himself now. A band of music had lost its charm, now that he had turned himself into a band.

At once he started for home, instead of looking after other sights and scenes. He had been absent scarcely half an hour when he reappeared, blowing his whistle lustily as he entered the house, as if he expected to astonish the whole race of Franklins by the shrillness, if not by the sweetness, of his music.

"Back so quick!" exclaimed his mother.

"Yes! seen all I want to see." That was a truth well spoken, for the whistle just commanded his whole being, and there was room for nothing more. A whistle was all the holiday he wanted.

"What have you there, Ben?" continued his mother; "Something to make us crazy?"

"A whistle, mother," stopping its noise just long enough for a decent reply, and then continuing the concert as before.

"How much did you give for the whistle?" asked his older brother, John.

"All the money I had." Benjamin was too much elated with his bargain to conceal any thing.

"What!" exclaimed John with surprise, "did you give all your money for that little concern?"

"Yes, every cent of it."

"You are not half so bright as I thought you were. It is four times as much as the whistle is worth."

"Did you ask the price of it?" inquired his mother.

"No, I told the man I would give him all the money I had for one, and he took it."

"Of course he did," interjected John, "and if you had had four times as much he would have taken it for the whistle. You are a poor trader, Ben."

"You should have asked the price of it in the first place," remarked his mother to him, "and then, if there was not enough, you could have offered all the money you had for the whistle. That would have been proper."

"If you had paid a reasonable price for it," continued John, "you might had enough money left to have bought a pocket full of good things."

"Yes, peppermints, candy, cakes, nuts, and perhaps more," added a cousin who was present, desiring most of all to hear what the bright boy would say for himself.

"I must say that you are a smart fellow, Ben, to be taken in like that," continued John, who really wanted to make his seven-year-old brother feel bad, and he spoke in a tone of derision. "All your money for that worthless thing, that is enough to make us crazy! You ought to have known better. If you had five dollars I suppose that you would have given it just as quick for the whistle."

Of course he would. The whistle was worth that to him, and he bought it for himself, not for any one else.

By this time Benjamin, who had said nothing in reply to their taunts and reproofs, was running over with feeling, and he could hold in no longer. Evidently he saw his mistake, and he burst into tears, and made more noise by crying than he did with his whistle. Their ridicule, and the thought of having paid more than he should for the whistle, overcame him, and he found relief in tears. His father came to his rescue.

"Never mind, Ben, you will understand how to trade the next time. We have to live and learn; I have paid too much for a whistle more than once in my life. You did as well as other boys do the first time."

"I think so too, Ben," joined in his mother, to comfort him. "John is only teasing you, and trying to get some sport out of his holiday. Better wipe up, and go out in the street to see the sights."

Benjamin learned a good lesson from this episode of his early life. He only did what many grown-up boys have done, over and over again; pay too much for a whistle. Men of forty, fifty, and sixty years of age do this same thing, and suffer the consequences. It is one of the common mistakes of life, and becomes a benefit when the lesson it teaches is improved as Franklin improved it.

In the year 1779, November 10th, Franklin wrote from Passy, France, to a friend, as follows:

"I am charmed with your description of Paradise, and with your plan of living there; and I approve much of your conclusion, that, in the mean time, we should draw all the good we can from this world. In my opinion, we might all draw more good from it than we do, and suffer less evil, if we would take care not to give too much for *whistles*. For to me it seems that most of the unhappy people we meet with are become so by neglect of that caution. You ask what I mean? You love stories, and will excuse my telling one of myself.

"When I was a child of seven years old my friends, on a holiday, filled my pocket with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and, being charmed with the sound of a *whistle*, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my *whistle*, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money, and laughed at me so much for my folly that I cried with vexation, and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the *whistle* gave me pleasure.

"This, however, was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *Don't give too much for the whistle*; and I saved my money.

"As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many, *who gave too much for the whistle*.

"When I saw one too ambitious of court favor, sacrificing his time in attendance on levees, his repose, his liberty, his virtue, and perhaps his friends, to attain it, I have said to myself, *This man gives too much for his whistle*.

"When I saw another fond of popularity, constantly employing himself in political bustles, neglecting his own affairs, and ruining them by that neglect, *He pays, indeed*, said I, *too much for his whistle*.

"If I knew a miser, who gave up every kind of comfortable living, all the pleasure of doing good to others, all the esteem of his fellow-citizens, and the joys of benevolent friendship, for the sake of accumulating wealth, *Poor man*, said I, *you pay too much for your whistle*.

"When I met with a man of pleasure, sacrificing every laudable improvement of the mind, or his fortune, to mere corporeal sensations, and ruining his health in their pursuit, *Mistaken man*, said I, *you*

are providing pain for yourself, instead of pleasure; you give too much for your whistle.

"If I see one fond of appearance, or fine clothes, fine houses, fine furniture, fine equipages, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, and ends his career in a prison, *Alas!* say I, *he has paid dear, very dear, for his whistle*.

"When I see a beautiful, sweet-tempered girl, married to an ill-natured brute of a husband, *What a pity*, say I, *that she should pay so much for a whistle*.

"In short, I conceive that great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by the false estimates they have made of the value of things, and by their *giving too much for their whistles*.

"Yet I ought to have charity for these unhappy people, when I consider that, with all this wisdom of which I am boasting, there are certain things in the world so tempting,—for example, the apples of King John, which happily are not to be bought; for, if they were put to sale by auction, I might very easily be led to ruin myself in the purchase, and find that I had once more given too much for the *whistle*."

Thus Benjamin made good use of one of the foolish acts of his boyhood, which tells well both for his head and heart. Many boys are far less wise, and do the same foolish thing over and over again. They never learn wisdom from the past.

When a boy equivocates, or deceives, to conceal some act of disobedience from his parents or teachers, and thereby lays the foundation of habitual untruthfulness, he pays too dear for the whistle, and he will learn the truth of it when he becomes older, and can not command the confidence of his friends and neighbors, but is branded by them as an unreliable, dishonest man.

In like manner the boy who thinks it is manly to smoke and drink beer, will find that he has a very expensive whistle, when he becomes "a hale fellow well met" among a miserable class of young men, and is discarded by the virtuous and good.

So, in general, the young person who is fascinated by mere pleasure, and supposes that wealth and honor are real apples of gold to the possessor, thinking less of a good character than he does of show and glitter, will find that he has been blowing a costly whistle when it is too late to recall his mistake.

IV.

IN SCHOOL.

Uncle Benjamin was so deeply interested in his namesake that he wrote many letters about him. Nearly every ship that sailed for Boston brought a letter from him to the Franklin family, and almost every letter contained a piece of poetry from his pen. One of his letters about that time contained the following acrostic on Benjamin's name:

"Be to thy parents an obedient son;
Each day let duty constantly be done;
Never give way to sloth, or lust, or pride,
If free you'd be from thousand ills beside.
Above all ills be sure avoid the shelf,
Man's danger lies in Satan, sin and self.
In virtue, learning, wisdom, progress make;
Ne'er shrink at suffering for thy Savior's sake.

"Fraud and all falsehood in thy dealings flee;
Religious always in thy station be;
Adore the maker of thy inward part;
Now's the accepted time; give him thine heart;
Keep a good conscience, 'tis a constant friend,
Like judge and witness this thy acts attend,
In heart, with bended knee, alone, adore
None but the Three in One for evermore."

The sentiment is better than the poetry, and it shows that the hero of our tale had a treasure in the uncle for whom he was named. Doubtless "Uncle Benjamin's" interest was largely increased by the loss

of his own children. He had quite a number of sons and daughters, and one after another of them sickened and died, until only one son remained, and he removed to Boston. It was for these reasons, probably, that "Uncle Benjamin" came to this country in 1715.

Among his letters was one to his brother Josiah, our Benjamin's father, when the son was seven years old, from which we extract the following:

"A father with so large a family as yours ought to give one son, at least, to the service of the Church. That is your tithe. From what you write about Benjamin I should say that he is the son you ought to consecrate specially to the work of the ministry. He must possess talents of a high order, and his love of learning must develop them rapidly. If he has made himself a good reader and speller, as you say, without teachers, there is no telling what he will do with them. By all means, if possible, I should devote him to the Church. It will be a heavy tax upon you, of course, with so large a family on your hands, but your reward will come when you are old and gray-headed. Would that I were in circumstances to assist you in educating him."

"He does not know how much thought and planning we have given to this subject," remarked Mr. Franklin to his wife, when he read this part of the letter. "I would do any thing possible to educate Benjamin for the Church, and I think he would make the most of any opportunities we can give him."

"There is no doubt of that," responded Mrs. Franklin. "Few parents ever had more encouragement to educate a son for the ministry than we have to educate him."

"Doctor Willard said as much as that to me," added Mr. Franklin, "and I think it is true. I do not despair of giving Benjamin an education yet, though I scarcely see how it ever can be done."

"That is the way I feel about it," responded Mrs. Franklin. "Perhaps God will provide a way; somehow I trust in Providence, and wait, hoping for the best."

"It is well to trust in Providence, if it is not done blindly," remarked Mr. Franklin. "Providence sometimes does wonders for people who trust. It is quite certain that He who parted the waters of the Red Sea for the children of Israel to pass, and fed them with manna from the skies, can provide a way for our Benjamin to be educated. But it looks to me as if some of his bread would have to drop down from heaven."

"Well, if it drops that is enough," replied Mrs. Franklin. "I shall be satisfied. If God does any thing for him he will do it in his own time and way, and I shall be content with that. To see him in the service of the Church is the most I want."

"Uncle Benjamin's" letter did not introduce a new subject of conversation into the Franklin family; it was already an old theme that had been much canvassed. Outside of the family there was an interest in Benjamin's education. He was the kind of a boy to put through Harvard College. This was the opinion of neighbors who knew him. Nothing but poverty hindered the adoption and execution of that plan.

"Uncle Benjamin's" letter did this, however: it hastened a favorable decision, though Benjamin was eight years old when his parents decided that he might enter upon a course of education.

They had said very little to their son about it, because they would not awaken his expectations to disappoint them. And finally the decision was reached with several ifs added.

"I do not know how I shall come out," added Mr. Franklin, "he may begin to study. It won't hurt him to begin, if I should not be able to put him through a course."

The decision to send him to school was arrived at in this doubtful way, and it was not laid more strongly than this before Benjamin for fear of awakening too high hopes in his heart.

"I have decided to send you to school," said his father to him, "but whether I shall be able to send you as long as I would like is not certain yet. I would like to educate you for the ministry if I could; how would you like that?"

"I should like to go to school; I should like nothing better," answered Benjamin. "About the rest of it I do not know whether I should like it or not."

"Well, it may not be best to discuss that," continued his father, "as I may not be able to carry out my plan to the end. It will cost a good deal to keep you in school and educate you, perhaps more than I can possibly raise with so large a family to support. I have to be very industrious now to pay all my bills. But if you are diligent to improve your time, and lend a helping hand at home, out of school hours, I may be able to do it."

"I will work all I can out of school, if I can only go," was Benjamin's cheerful pledge in the outset. "When shall I begin?"

"Begin the next term. It is a long process to become educated for the ministry, and the sooner you begin the better. But you must understand that it is not certain I can continue you in school for a long time. Make the most of the advantages you have, and we will trust in Providence for the future."

Josiah Franklin's caution was proverbial. He was never rash or thoughtless. He weighed all questions carefully. He was very conscientious, and would not assume an obligation that he could not see his way clear to meet. He used the same careful judgment and circumspection about the education of his son that he employed in all business matters. For this reason he was regarded as a man of sound judgment and practical wisdom, and his influence was strong and wide. When his son reached the height of his fame, he wrote as follows of his father:

"I suppose you may like to know what kind of a man my father was. He had an excellent constitution, was of a middle stature, well set, and very strong. He could draw prettily and was skilled a little in music. His voice was sonorous and agreeable, so that when he played on his violin, and sung withal, as he was accustomed to do after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear. He had some knowledge of mechanics, and on occasion was handy with other tradesmen's tools. But his great excellence was his sound understanding, and his solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and public affairs. It is true he was never employed in the latter, the numerous family he had to educate, and the straitness of his circumstances, keeping him close to his trade; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading men, who consulted him for his opinion in public affairs, and those of the church he belonged to; and who showed a great respect for his judgment and advice. He was also consulted much by private persons about their affairs, when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties."

Of his mother he wrote, at the same time:

"My mother had likewise an excellent constitution; she suckled all her ten children. I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness, but that of which they died—he at eighty-nine, and she at eighty-five years of age. They lie buried together at Boston, where I some years since placed a marble over their grave, with this inscription:

JOSIAH FRANKLIN AND ABIAH, HIS WIFE, LIE HERE INTERRED.

THEY LIVED LOVINGLY TOGETHER, IN WEDLOCK, FIFTY-FIVE YEARS, AND WITHOUT AN ESTATE, OR ANY GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT, BY CONSTANT LABOR AND HONEST INDUSTRY (WITH GOD'S BLESSING), MAINTAINED A LARGE FAMILY COMFORTABLY; AND BROUGHT UP THIRTEEN CHILDREN AND SEVEN GRANDCHILDREN REPUTABLY.

FROM THIS INSTANCE, READER, BE ENCOURAGED TO DILIGENCE IN THY CALLING, AND DISTRUST NOT PROVIDENCE. HE WAS A PIOUS AND PRUDENT MAN, SHE A DISCREET AND VIRTUOUS WOMAN. THEIR YOUNGEST SON, IN FILIAL REGARD TO THEIR MEMORY, PLACES THIS STONE.

J.F., BORN 1655, DIED 1744, AET. 89. A.F., BORN 1667, DIED 1752, AET. 85."

We may say here that the stone which Doctor Franklin erected, as above, became so dilapidated that in 1827, the citizens of Boston replaced it by a granite obelisk. The bodies repose in the old Granary cemetery, beside Park-street church.

* * * * *

It was arranged that Benjamin should begin his school-days, and enjoy the best literary advantages which the poverty of his father could provide. He acceded to the plan with hearty good-will, and commenced his studies with such zeal and enthusiasm as few scholars exhibit.

The school was taught by Mr. Nathaniel Williams, successor of the famous Boston teacher, Mr. Ezekiel Cheever, who was instructor thirty-five years, and who discontinued teaching, as Cotton Mather said, "only when mortality took him off." The homely old wooden school-house, one story and a half high, stood near by the spot on which the bronze statue of Franklin is now seen, and there was the "school-house green" where "Ben" and his companions played together. Probably it was the only free grammar school that Boston afforded at that time; for the town could not have numbered a population of over eight thousand.

From his first day's attendance at school Benjamin gave promise of high scholarship. He went to work with a will, improving every moment, surmounting every difficulty, and enjoying every opportunity with a keen relish. Mr. Williams was both gratified and surprised. That a lad so young should take hold of school lessons with so much intelligence and tact, and master them so easily, was a

surprise to him, and he so expressed himself to Mr. Franklin.

"Your son is a remarkable scholar for one so young. I am more than gratified with his industry and progress. His love of knowledge is almost passionate."

"Yes, he was always so," responded Mr. Franklin. "He surprised us by reading well before we ever dreamed of such a thing. He taught himself, and a book has always been of more value to him than any thing else."

"You will give him an education, I suppose?" said Mr. Williams, inquiringly. "Such a boy ought to have the chance."

"My desire to do it is strong, much stronger than my ability to pay the bills. It is not certain that I shall be able to continue him long at school, though I shall do it if possible."

"Such love of knowledge as he possesses ought to be gratified," continued Mr. Williams. "He excels by far any scholar of his age in school. He will lead the whole school within a short time. His enthusiasm is really remarkable."

Within a few months, as the teacher predicts, Benjamin led the school. He was at the head of his class in every study except arithmetic. Nor did he remain at the head of his class long, for he was rapidly promoted to higher classes. He so far outstripped his companions that the teacher was obliged to advance him thus, that his mental progress might not be retarded. Of course, teachers and others were constantly forecasting his future and prophesying that he would fill a high position in manhood. It is generally the case that such early attention to studies, in connection with the advancement that follows, awakens high hopes of the young in the hearts of all observers. These things foreshadow the future character, so that people think they can tell what the man will be from what the boy is. So it was with Franklin, and so it was with Daniel Webster. Webster's mother inferred from his close attention to reading, and his remarkable progress in learning, that he would become a distinguished man, and so expressed herself to others. She lived to see him rise in his profession, until he became a member of Congress, though she died before he reached the zenith of his renown. The same was true of David Rittenhouse, the famous mathematician. When he was but eight years old, he constructed various articles, such as a miniature water-wheel, and at seventeen years of age he made a complete clock. His younger brother declared that he was accustomed to stop, when he was plowing in the field, and solve problems on the fence, and sometimes cover the plow handles with figures. The highest expectations of his friends were more than realized in his manhood. The peculiar genius which he exhibited in his boyhood gave him his world-wide fame at last.

Also George Stephenson, the great engineer, the son of a very poor man, who fired the engine at Wylam colliery, began his life-labor when a mere boy. Besides watching the cows, and barring the gates after the coal-wagons had passed, at four cents a day, he amused himself during his leisure moments, in making clay engines, in imitation of that which his father tended. Although he lived in circumstances so humble that ordinarily he would have been entirely unnoticed, his intense interest in, and taste for, mechanical work, attracted the attention of people and led them to predict his future success and fame.

In like manner, the first months of Benjamin Franklin's school days foreshadowed the remarkable career of his manhood. Relatives and friends believed that he would one day fill a high place in the land; and in that, their anticipations were fully realized.

V.

OUT OF SCHOOL.

Mr. Franklin's finances did not improve. It was clearer every day to him that he would not be able to keep Benjamin in school. Besides, in a few months, John, who had learned the tallow-chandler's business of his father, was going to be married, and establish himself in that trade in Providence. Some body must take his place. It was quite impossible for his father to prosecute his business alone.

"I see no other way," remarked Mr. Franklin to his wife; "I shall be obliged to take Benjamin out of school to help me. My expenses increase from month to month, and must continue to increase for some years, so far as I can see. They will increase heavily if I am obliged to hire a man in John's place."

"I am not surprised at all that you have come to that conclusion," replied Mrs. Franklin. "I expected it, as I have intimated to you. Parents must be better off than we are to be able to send a son to college."

"If they have as many children to support as we have, you might add. I could easily accomplish it with no larger family than most of my neighbors have. Yet I find no fault with the number. I accept all the Lord sends."

"I am sorry for Benjamin," continued Mrs. Franklin. "He will be dreadfully disappointed. I am afraid that he will think little of work because he thinks so much of his school. What a pity that boys who want an education, as he does, could not have it, and boys who do not want it should do the work."

"That is the way we should fix it, no doubt, if the ordering were left to us," said Mr. Franklin; "but I never did have my own way, and I never expect to have it, and it is fortunate, I suppose, that I never did have it. If I could have it now, I should send Benjamin to college."

"It has been my prayer that he might give his life and his services to the Church," added Mrs. Franklin; "but Providence appears to indicate now that he should make candles for a livelihood, and it is not in me to rebel against the ordering. If frustrated in this plan, I mean to believe that Providence has some thing better in store for him and us."

"I was never so reluctant to adopt a conclusion as I have been to take Benjamin out of school," continued Mr. Franklin. "Yet, there has been one thought that reconciled me in part to the necessity, and that is, that there is less encouragement to a young man in the Church now than formerly. It is more difficult to suit the people, and, consequently, there are more trials and hardships for ministers; and many of them appear to be peculiar."

"If ministers have a harder time than you do I pity them," rejoined Mrs. Franklin. "I suppose as that is concerned, we are all in the same boat. If we meet them with Christian fortitude, as we should, so much the better for us."

"True, very true, and my uppermost desire is to put Benjamin where duty points. But it is clear to me now that Providence has blocked his way to the ministry."

"You will not take him out of school until John leaves, will you?" inquired Mrs. Franklin.

"I shall have him leave the public school at the close of this term, and that will give him a full year's schooling. And then I shall put him into Mr. Brownwell's school for a while to improve him in penmanship and arithmetic. By that time I must have him in the factory."

Mr. Brownwell had a private school, in which he taught penmanship and arithmetic. It was quite a famous school, made so by his success as a teacher in these departments.

Benjamin had received no intimation, at this time, that he would be taken out of school. His father shrunk from disclosing his final plan to him because he knew it would be so disappointing. But as the close of the school year drew near, he was obliged to open the subject to him. It was an unpleasant revelation to Benjamin, although it was not altogether unexpected. For, in the outset, his father had said that such might be the necessity.

"You are a poor penman and deficient in your knowledge of numbers," said his father; "and improvement in these branches will be of great service to you in my business. You will attend Mr. Brownwell's school for a while in order to perfect yourself in these studies."

"I shall like that," answered Benjamin; "but why can I not attend school until I am old enough to help you?"

"You are old enough to help me. There are many things you can do as well as a man."

"I should like to know what?" said Benjamin, rather surprised that he could be of any service in the candle business at nine years of age. "John had to learn the trade before he could help you much."

"You can cut the wicks, fill the moulds for cast-candles, keep the shop in order, run hither and thither with errands, and do other things that will save my time, and thus assist me just as much as a man could in doing the same things."

"I am sure that is inducement enough for any boy, but a lazy one, to work," remarked his mother, who had listened to the conversation. "Your father would have to pay high wages to a man to do what you can do as well, if I understand it."

"In doing errands you will aid as much, even perhaps more, than in doing any thing else," added Mr. Franklin. "I have a good deal of such running to do, and if you do it I can be employed in the more important part of my business, which no one else can attend to. Besides, your nimble feet can get over the ground much quicker than my older and clumsier ones, so that you can perform that part of the business better than I can myself."

This was a new view of the case to Benjamin, and he was more favorably impressed with candle-making by these remarks. He desired to be of good service to his father, and here was an opportunity—a consideration that partially reconciled him to the inevitable change.

At that time—about one hundred and seventy-five years ago—boys were put to hard work much earlier than they are now. They had very small opportunities for acquiring knowledge, and the boys who did not go to school after they were ten years old were more in number than those who did. Besides, the schools were very poor in comparison with those of our day. They offered very slim advantages to the young. It was not unusual, therefore, for lads as young as Benjamin to be made to work.

Benjamin was somewhat deficient in arithmetic, as his father said, and he had given little attention to penmanship. He did not take to the science of numbers as he did to other studies. He allowed his dislike to interpose and hinder his progress.

"I do not like arithmetic very well," he said to his father.

"Perhaps not; but boys must study some things they do not like," his father replied. "It is the only way of preparing them for usefulness. You will not accomplish much in any business without a good knowledge of arithmetic. It is of use almost everywhere."

"I know that," said Benjamin, "and I shall master it if I can, whether
I like it or not. I am willing to do what you think is best."

"I hope you will always be as willing to yield to my judgment. It is a good sign for any boy to accept cheerfully the plans of his father, who has had more experience."

Benjamin was usually very prompt to obey his parents, even when he did not exactly see the necessity of their commands. He understood full well that obedience was a law of the household, which could not be violated with impunity; therefore, he wisely obeyed. His father was quite rigid in his requirements, a Puritan of the olden stamp, who ruled his own house. Among other things, he required his children to observe the Sabbath by abstaining from labor and amusements, reading the Scriptures, and attending public worship. A walk in the streets, a call upon a youthful friend, or the reading of books not strictly religious, on Sunday, were acts not tolerated in his family. A child might wish to stay away from the house of God on the Sabbath, but it was not permitted. "Going to meeting" was a rule in the family as irrevocable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

It was fortunate for Benjamin that he belonged to such a family; for he possessed an imperious will, that needed to be brought into constant subjection. Though of a pleasant and happy disposition, the sequel will show that, but for his strict obedience, his great talents would have been lost to the world. Nor did he grow restless and impatient under these rigid parental rules, nor cherish less affection for his parents in consequence. He accepted them as a matter of course. We have no reason to believe that he sought to evade them; and there can be no doubt that the influence of such discipline was good in forming his character. He certainly honored his father and mother as long as he lived. In ripe manhood, when his parents were old and infirm, and he lived in Philadelphia, he was wont to perform frequent journeys from that city to Boston, to visit them. It was on one of these journeys that the following incident is related of him:

Landlords, and other people, were very inquisitive at that time. They often pressed their inquiries beyond the bounds of propriety. At a certain hotel the landlord had done this to Franklin, and he resolved, on his next visit, to administer a sharp rebuke to the innkeeper. So, on his next visit, Franklin requested the landlord to call the members of his family together, as he had something important to communicate. The landlord hastened to fulfill his request, and very soon the family were together in one room, when Franklin addressed them as follows:

"My name is Benjamin Franklin; I am a printer by trade; I live, when at home, in Philadelphia; in Boston I have a father, a good old man, who taught me, when I was a boy, to read my Bible and say my prayers; I have ever since thought it my duty to visit and pay my respects to such a father, and I am on that errand to Boston now. This is all I can recollect at present of myself that I think worth telling you. But if you can think of any thing else that you wish to know about me, I beg you to out with it at once, that I may answer, and so give you an opportunity to get me something to eat, for I long to be on my

journey that I may return as soon as possible to my family and business, where I most of all delight to be."

A more cutting rebuke was never administered. The landlord took in the full significance of the act, and learned a good lesson therefrom. It is doubtful if his inquisitiveness ever ran away with him again. But the narrative is given here to show that the strict rules of his father's house did not diminish filial affection, but rather solidified and perpetuated it.

It is good for boys, who are likely to want their own way, to be brought under exact rules. Franklin would have gone to ruin if he had had his way. The evil tendencies of boyhood need constant restraint. Obedience at home leads to obedience in the school and State.

Sir Robert Peel ascribed his success in life to such a home; and he related the following interesting incident to illustrate the sort of obedience that was required and practised in it: A neighbor's son called one day to solicit his company and that of his brothers upon an excursion. He was a young man of fine address, intelligent, smart, and promising, though fond of fun and frolic. He was a fashionable young man, too; we should call him a *dude* now. He wore "dark brown hair, tied behind with blue ribbon; had clear, mirthful eyes; wore boots that reached above his knees, and a broad-skirted scarlet coat, with gold lace on the cuffs, the collar, and the skirts; with a long waistcoat of blue silk. His breeches were buckskin; his hat was three-cornered, set jauntily higher on the right than on the left side." His name was Harry Garland. To his request that William, Henry, and Robert might go with him, their father replied:

"No, they can not go out. I have work for them to do, and they must never let pleasure usurp the place of labor."

The boys wanted to go badly, but there was no use in teasing for the privilege; it would only make a bad matter worse. "Our father's yea was yea, and his nay, nay; and that was the end of it."

The three brothers of the Peel family became renowned in their country's brilliant progress. But Harry Garland, the idle, foppish youth, who had his own way, and lived for pleasure, became a ruined spendthrift. The fact verifies the divine promise, "Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." True filial love appears to conciliate the whole world by its consistent and beautiful expression. Such an act as that of the great engineer, George Stephenson, who took the first one hundred and sixty dollars he earned, saved from a year's wages, and paid his blind old father's debts, and then removed both father and mother to a comfortable tenement at Killingworth, where he supported them by the labor of his hands, awakens our admiration, and leads us to expect that the author will achieve success.

When the statue of Franklin was unveiled in Boston, in 1856, a barouche appeared in the procession which carried eight brothers, all of whom received Franklin medals at the Mayhew school in their boyhood, sons of Mr. John Hall. All of them were known to fame by their worth of character and wide influence. As the barouche in which they rode came into State street, from Merchants' row, these brothers rose up in the carriage, and stood with uncovered heads while passing a window at which their aged and revered mother was sitting—an act of filial regard so impressive and beautiful as to fill the hearts of all beholders with profound respect for the obedient and loving sons. They never performed a more noble deed, in the public estimation, than this one of reverence for a worthy parent.

We have made this digression to show that Franklin's home, with its rigid discipline, was the representative home of his country, in which the great and good of every generation laid the foundation of their useful careers.

* * * * *

Benjamin was taken out of school, as his father decided, and was put under Mr. Brownwell's tuition in arithmetic and penmanship. As he had endeared himself to Mr. Williams, teacher of the public school, so he endeared himself to Mr. Brownwell by his obedience, studious habits, and rapid progress. He did not become an expert in arithmetic, though, by dint of persistent effort, he made creditable progress in the study. In penmanship he excelled, and acquired an easy, attractive style that was of great service to him through life.

VI.

FROM SCHOOL TO CANDLE-SHOP.

While Benjamin was attending Mr. Brownwell's school, his "Uncle Benjamin," for whom he was named, came over from England. His wife and children were dead, except his son Samuel, who had immigrated to this country. He had been unfortunate in business also, and lost what little property he possessed. With all the rest, the infirmities of age were creeping over him, so that nearly all the ties that bound him to his native land were sundered; and so he decided to spend the remnant of his days in Boston, where Samuel lived.

Samuel Franklin was an unmarried young man, intelligent and enterprising, willing and anxious to support his father in this country. But having no family and home to which to introduce his aged parent, "Uncle Benjamin" became a member of his brother Josiah's family, and continued a member of it about four years, or until Samuel was married, when he went to live with him.

"Uncle Benjamin" was very much pained to find that his namesake had relinquished the purpose of becoming a minister. His heart was set on his giving his life-service to the Church.

"Any body can make candles," he said, "but talents are required for the ministry, and, from all I learn, Benjamin has the talents."

"Partly right and partly wrong," rejoined Josiah, who seemed to think that his brother's remark was not altogether complimentary. "Talents are required for the ministry, as you say, but judgment, tact, and industry are required to manufacture candles successfully. A fool would not make much headway in the business."

"I meant no reflection upon Boston's tallow-chandler," and a smile played over his face as "Uncle Benjamin" said it; "but I really think that Benjamin is too talented for the business. Five talents can make candles well enough; let ten talents serve the Church."

"Well, that is sound doctrine; I shall not object to that," replied Josiah; "but if poverty makes it impossible for ten talents to serve the Church, it is better that they make candles than to do nothing. Candle-making is indispensable; it is a necessary business, and therefore it is honorable and useful."

"The business is well enough; a man can be a man and make candles. This way of lighting dwellings is really a great invention; and it will be a long time, I think, when any thing better will supersede it. This new country is fortunate in having such a light, so cheap and convenient, so that the business is to be respected and valued. But Benjamin is greater than the business."

The last remark set forth "Uncle Benjamin's" views exactly. He really supposed that no improvement could be made in the method of lighting houses and shops by candles. That was the opinion of all the Franklins. To them a tallow-candle was the climax of advancement on that line. If a prophet had arisen, and foretold the coming of gas and electricity for the lighting of both houses and streets, in the next century, he would have been regarded as insane—too crazy even to make candles. Progress was not a prevailing idea of that day. It did not enter into any questions of the times as a factor. If succeeding generations should maintain the standard of theirs, enjoying as many privileges, it would be all that could be reasonably expected. Candles would be needed until the "new heaven and new earth" of Revelation appeared. Possibly they would have believed that their method of lighting would be popular in "that great city, the Holy Jerusalem," had it not been declared in the Bible that they will "need no candle," because "there shall be no night there."

"Uncle Benjamin" added, what really comforted Josiah: "Of course, if you are not able to send Benjamin to college, he can't go, and that ends it. If I were able to pay the bills, I should be only too glad to do it. Benjamin is a remarkable boy, and his talents will manifest themselves whatever his pursuit may be. He will not always make candles for a living; you may depend on that."

"Perhaps not," responded Josiah; "if Providence introduces him into a better calling, I shall not object; but I want he should be satisfied with this until the better one comes."

As the time drew near for Benjamin to exchange school for the candle-factory, his disappointment increased. To exchange school, which he liked so well, for a dirty business that he did not like at all, was almost too much for his flesh and blood. His feelings revolted against the uncongenial trade.

"You do not know how I dread to go into the candle-factory to make it my business for life," he said to his mother. "I feel worse and worse about it."

"We are all sorry that you are obliged to do it," replied Mrs. Franklin. "I am sure that your father would have made any sacrifice possible to send you to college, but it was simply impossible. You will have to make the best of it. God may open the way to employment that will be more congenial to you

some time. For the present he means that you should help your father, I have no doubt of that; and you must do the best for him that you can."

"That is what I intend to do, however much I dislike the business. I want to help father all I can; he has a hard time enough to provide for us."

Benjamin expressed himself as frankly to his father, adding, "I really wish you would engage in some other business."

"And starve, too?" rejoined his father. "In such times as these we must be willing to do what will insure us a livelihood. I know of no other business that would give me a living at present—certainly none that I am qualified to pursue."

"Well, I should rather make soap and candles than starve, on the whole," Benjamin remarked in reply; "but nothing short of starvation could make me willing to follow the business."

"One other thing ought to make you willing to do such work," added his father; "a determination to be industrious. Idleness is the parent of vice. Boys like you should be industrious even if they do not earn their salt. It is better for them to work for nothing than to be idle."

"I think they better save their strength till they can earn something," said Benjamin. "People must like to work better than I do, to work for nothing."

"You do not understand me; I mean to say that it is so important for the young to form industrious habits, that they better work for nothing than to be idle. If they are idle when they are young, they will be so when they become men, and idleness will finally be their ruin. 'The devil tempts all other men, but idle men tempt the devil'; and I hope that you will never consent to verify the proverb."

Mr. Franklin had been a close observer all his life, and he had noticed that industry was characteristic of those who accomplished any thing commendable Consequently he insisted that his children should have employment. He allowed no drones in his family hive. All must be busy as bees. All had some thing to do as soon as they were old enough to toil. Under such influences Benjamin was reared, and he grew up to be as much in love with industry as his father was. Some of his best counsels and most interesting sayings, when he became a man, related to this subject. There is no doubt that his early discipline on this line gave to the world his best sayings on this and other subjects. The following are some of his counsels referred to:

"Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright."

"But dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of."

"If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest prodigality."

"Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy; and he that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him."

"At the working-man's house hunger looks in but dares not enter."

"Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry."

"One to-day is worth two to-morrows."

"Drive thy business! let not thy business drive thee."

"God helps those that help themselves."

He wrote to a young tradesman as follows:

"Remember that time is money. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labor, and goes abroad or sits idle one-half that day, though he spend but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon *that* the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides.

"The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but, if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day; demands it before he can receive it in a lump."

Benjamin became a better teacher than his father; and, no doubt, was indebted to his father for the progress. Had he gone to college instead of the candle-shop, the world might not have received his legacy of proverbial wisdom. For these were the outcome of secular discipline, when he was brought

into direct contact with the realities of business and hardship. Colleges do not teach proverbs; they do not make practical men, but learned men. Practical men are made by observation and experience in the daily work of life. In that way Franklin was made the remarkable practical man that he was.

Had "Uncle Benjamin" lived to read such words of wisdom from the pen of his namesake, when his reputation had spread over two hemispheres, he would have said, "I told you so. Did I not say that Benjamin would not always make candles? Did I not prophesy that he would make his mark in manhood?"

Benjamin became a tallow-chandler when he was ten years old; and he meant to make a good one, though the business was repulsive to his feelings. At first his industry and tact were all that his father could desire. He devoted the hours of each workday closely to the trade, though his love for it did not increase at all. If any thing, he disliked it more and more as the weeks and months dragged on. Perhaps he became neglectful and somewhat inefficient, for he said, in his manhood, that his father often repeated to him this passage from the Bible:

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

When Benjamin became the famous Dr. Franklin, and was in the habit of standing before kings, he often recalled this maxim of Solomon, which his father dinged rebukingly in his ear. It was one of the pleasantest recollections of his life.

Mr. Franklin watched his boy in the candle-trade closely, to see whether his dislike for it increased or diminished. His anxiety for him was great. He did not wish to compel him to make candles against an increasing desire to escape from the hardship. He had great sympathy for him, too, in his disappointment at leaving school. And it was a hard lot for such a lover of school and study to give them up forever at ten years of age. No more school after that! Small opportunity, indeed, in comparison with those enjoyed by nearly every boy at the present day! Now they are just beginning to learn at this early age. From ten they can look forward to six, eight, or ten years in school and college.

Mr. Franklin saw from month to month that his son more and more disliked his business, though little was said by either of them. "Actions speak louder than words," as Mr. Franklin saw to his regret; for it was as clear as noonday that Benjamin would never be contented in the candle-factory. He did his best, however, to make the boy's situation attractive; allowed him frequent opportunities for play, and praised his habit of reading in the evening and at all other times possible. Still, a tallow-candle did not attract him. It shed light, but it was not the sort of light that Benjamin wanted to radiate. One day, nearly two years after he engaged in the candle-business, he said to his father:

"I wish I could do something else; I can never like this work."

"What else would you like to do?" inquired his father.

"I would like to go to sea," was the prompt and straight reply; and it startled Mr. Franklin. It was just what he feared all along. He was afraid that compulsion to make him a tallow-chandler might cause him to run away and go to sea, as his eldest son, Josiah, did. Emphatically his father said:

"Go to sea, Benjamin! Never, never, with my consent. Never say another word about it, and never think about it, for that is out of the question. I shall never give my consent, and I know your mother never will. It was too much for me when your brother broke away from us and went to sea. I can not pass through another such trial. So you must not persist in your wish, if you would not send me down to the grave."

Josiah, the eldest son, named for his father, became dissatisfied with his home when Benjamin was an infant, ran away, and shipped as a sailor. The parents knew not where he had gone. Month after month they waited, in deep sorrow, for tidings from their wayward boy, but no tidings came. Years rolled on, and still the wanderer was away somewhere—they knew not where. Morning, noon, and night the memory of him lay heavy upon their hearts, turning their cup of earthly joy to bitterness, and furrowing their faces with anxiety and grief. He might be dead. He might be alive and in want in a strange land. The uncertainty and suspense hanging over his fate magnified their sorrow. The outlook was unpleasant; there was no comfort in it. They appealed to God. Before Him they pleaded for their prodigal son—for his safety, his return, his salvation.

Not long after Benjamin had expressed his longing for the sea, when almost the last hope of seeing the lost son again had vanished, Josiah returned and startled his parents by his sudden and unexpected presence. They could scarcely believe their eyes. Twelve years, and hard service before the mast, had wrought a great change in his appearance. He was a youth when he ran away,—he was a man now, toughened by exposure, dark as an Indian, stalwart and rough; but still the eldest son and brother,

Josiah Franklin, Jr. They were glad to see him. They rejoiced more over this one returning prodigal than they did over the sixteen that went not astray. "The father said: Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry."

It was the first time in twelve years that family had been "merry." Past sorrows were forgotten in the joy of their meeting. On that day a new life began around that hearthstone. Father and mother began to live again. As if they had never shed a tear or felt a pang, they looked into the future with cheerful hope and expectation.

To return to Benjamin. His father's quick and sharp reply left no room for doubt. If he went to sea it must be against his father's will. He turned to his mother, but was repulsed with equal decision.

"You surprise me, Benjamin. Want to go to sea! You must not harbor such a thought. Is it not enough that we have lost one son in that way? You might have known that I should never give my consent. I should almost as lief bury you. How can you want to leave your good home, and all your friends, to live in a ship, exposed to storms and death all the time?"

"It is not because I do not love my home and friends; but I have a desire to sail on a voyage to some other country. I like the water, and nothing would suit me better than to be a cabin-boy."

"You surprise and pain me, Benjamin. I never dreamed of such a thing. If you do not like work in the candle-factory, then choose some other occupation, but never think of going to sea."

"I would choose any other occupation under the sun than candle-making," replied Benjamin. "I have tried to like it for two years, but dislike it more and more. If I could have my own way, I would not go to the factory another day."

Perhaps the opposition of his parents would have prevented his going to sea, but the return of Josiah, with no words of praise for the calling, might have exerted a decided influence in leading him to abandon the idea altogether.

"Uncle Benjamin," of course, could not tolerate the idea of his nephew becoming a sailor. With his poor opinion of the candle-trade, he would have him pursue the business all his life rather than become a sailor.

"Do any thing rather than follow the seas," he said. "If you want to throw yourself away, body and soul, go before the mast. But if you want to be somebody, and do something that will make you respectable and honored among men, never ship for a voyage, long or short. A boy of one talent can be a cabin-boy, but a boy of ten talents ought to be above that business, and find his place on a higher plane of life."

VII.

CHOOSING A TRADE AND STEALING SPORT.

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin canvassed the subject thoroughly, and wisely decided that Benjamin might engage in some other pursuit.

"To be successful a man must love his calling," remarked Mr. Franklin, "and Benjamin hates his. He appears to go to each day's work with a dread, and as long as he feels so he will not accomplish any thing."

"You have come to a wise decision, I think," responded "Uncle Benjamin." "Ordinarily a boy should choose his own occupation. He may be instructed and assisted by his parents, but if he makes his own selection he is likely to choose what he has tact and taste for. Certainly, I would not compel a son to follow a business that he hates as Benjamin does candle-making."

"That is true on the whole, but circumstances alter cases," remarked Mr. Franklin. "I believe I shall take him around to examine different trades in town, and he can see for himself and choose what he likes best."

"He has seemed to be interested in my son's business," added "Uncle Benjamin."

His son Samuel was a cutler, and he had established the cutlery business in Boston, in which he was quite successful.

"Well, he can look into that; I have no objections to it; it is a good business. I will let him examine others, however, and take his choice. I want he should settle the matter of occupation now for life. I do not want to go through another experience with him, such as I have been through two years in the candle-factory."

Mr. Franklin had evidently acquired new views about boys, judging from his last remarks. He saw but one way out of the difficulty. Choice of an occupation was a more important matter than he had dreamed of. However, he had acted in accordance with the custom of that day, to choose occupations for sons without the least regard to fitness or their preferences. Boys must not have their own way in that matter any more than they should in other things, was the opinion of that age. But progress has been made on this line. It is thought now that the more nearly the aptitudes of the person fit the occupation, the more congenial and successful is the career. To follow the "natural bent," whenever it is possible, appears to be eminently wise. For square men should be put into square holes and round men into round holes. Failing to regard the drift of one's being in the choice of an occupation, is almost sure to put square men into round holes, and round men into square holes. In this way good mechanics have been spoiled to make poor clergymen or merchants, and a good minister spoiled to make a commonplace artisan.

The celebrated English engineer, Smeaton, displayed a marvellous ability for mechanical pursuits even in his childhood. Before he had donned jacket and pants in the place of short dress, his father discovered him on the top of the barn, putting up a windmill that he had made. But he paid no regard to the boy's aptitude for this or that position. He was determined to make a lawyer of him, and sent him to school with that end in view. But the boy thought more of windmills and engines than he did of Euclid or Homer, and the result was unfavorable. His father was trying to crowd a square boy into a round hole, and it was repugnant to the born engineer.

Josiah Franklin tried to do with Benjamin just what Smeaton tried to do with his son, squeeze a square boy into a round hole. That was a mistake. The son did not like the operation, and rebelled against the squeezing. This created trouble for both, until, with the aid of "Uncle Benjamin," Josiah discovered the way out of the difficulty.

Benjamin was delighted when his father disclosed to him his new plan.

"Anything is preferable to making candles," he said. "It will not take me long to choose something in place of a soap-factory."

"You have considerable mechanical ingenuity," his father said; "you like to work with tools, and you can see how tools are handled in different trades. How would you like your Cousin Samuel's business?"

"I should like it vastly better than making candles, though I have not examined it much. I can tell better when have looked in upon other trades When shall we go?"

"Begin to-morrow, and first call upon your Cousin Samuel. His cutlery trade is good, and it must increase as the population grows. Then we will examine other kinds of business. It will take some time to go the rounds."

On the morrow, as agreed upon, they went forth upon the memorable errand. Benjamin felt like an uncaged bird, and was highly elated by his prospects. Their first call was at Samuel's shop, where they could see a line of cutlery that was quite ample for that day. Samuel explained his methods, use of tools, etc., and Benjamin listened. He was well pleased with the trade, as Samuel saw at once, who encouraged him to choose it.

"I was never sorry that I learned the business," he said. "There is no easier way of getting a living, and the work is interesting, because it requires some ingenuity and skill. Benjamin has both, and will succeed."

"But I want he should examine other trades," replied his father. "When he has taken in several he will know more what he wants."

"Perhaps he will not know as well what he wants," rejoined Samuel. "If he is like some boys he will be less settled in his mind what to choose than he is now."

"My mind is partly settled now," said Benjamin. "I should choose any trade on earth in preference to making candles and boiling soap. I should be content with your business."

Next they called on a brazier, who manufactured many articles in brass. This was entirely new to Benjamin; he had never seen any thing of the kind before, and he examined the methods of work with much interest. The brazier was communicative, and explained matters fully and clearly, at the same time assuring Benjamin that he would like to teach a boy like him.

In like manner they visited a joiner, or carpenter, as he is called in New England now; also, a turner, who formed various things with a lathe; also, a silversmith, bricklayer, and stone-mason. A part of several days was occupied in this examination; and it was time well spent, for it put much information into Benjamin's head, and enlarged his ideas. Referring to the matter when he had become an old man, he said: "It has ever since been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools. And it has often been useful to me to have learned so much by it as to be able to do some trifling jobs in the house when a workman was not at hand, and to construct little machines for my experiments at the moment when the intention of making these was warm in my mind."

"I like Samuel's trade as well as any," Benjamin remarked, after the trips of examination were concluded; and his father rejoiced to hear it. From the start Mr. Franklin showed that none of the trades suited him so well as his nephew's; so that he was particularly gratified to hear the above remark.

"Do you like it well enough to choose it, Benjamin?"

"Yes, father; on the whole, I think I shall like it best of any; and cutlery will always be needed."

"We will understand, then, that you choose that trade, and I will see Samuel at once. It may be best for you to go into the shop for a short time before I make a bargain with him. Then he will know what you can do, and you will know how you like it."

At that time it was customary to bind boys to their employers, in different pursuits, until twenty-one years of age. Benjamin was twelve, and, if he should be bound to his cousin, as was the custom, it would be for nine years. For this reason it was a step not to be hastily taken. If a short service in the shop should prove favorable for both sides, the long apprenticeship could be entered upon more intelligently and cheerfully.

Mr. Franklin lost no time in securing a place in Samuel's shop. Both parties agreed that it would be best for Benjamin to spend a brief period in the business before settling the terms of apprenticeship. Accordingly he entered upon his new trade immediately, and was much pleased with it. It was so different from the work of candle-making, and required so much more thought and ingenuity, that he enjoyed it. He went to each day's work with a light and cheerful heart. He was soon another boy in appearance, contented, happy, and hopeful. Samuel recognized his ingenuity and willingness to work, and prophesied that he would become an expert cutler. He was ready to receive him as an apprentice, and Benjamin was willing to be bound to him until he was twenty-one years of age.

But when Mr. Franklin conferred with Samuel as to the terms of the apprenticeship, they could not agree. The latter demanded an exorbitant fee for his apprenticeship, which the former did not feel able to pay. With good nature they discussed the subject, with reference to an agreement on the terms; but Samuel was immovable. He had but one price. Benjamin might stay or go. Very much to the disappointment of both father and son, the plan failed and was abandoned.

Benjamin was afloat again. He had no disposition to return to candle-making, nor did his father desire that he should. He must choose an occupation again. As it turned out, it would have been better to settle the terms of apprenticeship in the first place.

It has been said that "there is no loss without some gain." So there was some gain to Benjamin. He was sadly disappointed; and he had given some time to a trade that amounted to nothing, but it was not all loss. He had learned much about the trades: the importance of a trade to every boy, and its necessity as a means of livelihood, and he never lost the lesson which he learned at that time. In his ripe manhood he wrote,—

"He that hath a trade hath an estate.
He that hath a calling hath an office of honor."

He believed that a trade was as good as a farm for a livelihood, and that a necessary calling was as honorable as a public office of distinction. How much his early discipline about trades had to do with these noble sentiments of his mature life, we may not say, but very much, without doubt.

While Benjamin was waiting for something to turn up, an incident occurred which may be rehearsed in this place. He was already an expert in swimming and rowing, and he loved the water and a boat passionately. He was fond of fishing, also; and there was a marsh, flooded at high tides, where the boys caught minnows. Here they repaired for a fine time one day, Benjamin and several companions.

"All aboard!" exclaimed Benjamin, as he bounded into the boat lying at the water's edge. "Now for a ride; only hurry up, and make the oars fly"; and several boys leaped in after him from the shaky, trampled quagmire on which they stood.

"We shall be heels over head in mud yet," said one of the number, "unless we try to improve this marsh. There is certainly danger that we shall go through that shaky place, and we do not know where we shall stop when we begin to go down."

"Let us build a wharf; that will get rid of the quagmire," suggested
Benjamin. "It won't be a long job, if all take hold."

"Where will you get your lumber?" inquired John.

"Nowhere. We do not want any lumber; stones are better."

"That is worse yet, to bring stones so far, and enough of them," said John. "You must like to lift better than I do, and strain your gizzard in tugging stones here."

"Look there," continued Benjamin, pointing to a heap of stones only a few rods distant, "there are stones enough for our purpose, and one or two hours is all the time we want to build a wharf with them."

"Those stones belong to the man who is preparing to build a house there," said Fred. "The workmen are busy there now."

"That may all be, but they can afford to lend them to us for a little while; they will be just as good for their use after we have done with them." There was the rogue's sly look in Benjamin's eye when he made the last remark.

"Then you expect they will loan them to you; but I guess you will be mistaken," responded Fred.

"I will borrow them in this way: We will go this evening, after the workmen have gone home, and tug them over here, and make the wharf before bedtime." Benjamin made this proposition for the purpose of adding to their sport.

"And get ourselves into trouble thereby," answered a third boy. "I will agree to do it if you will bear all the blame of stealing them."

"Stealing!" exclaimed Benjamin, who was so bent on sport that he had no thought of stealing. "It is not stealing to take stones. A man could not sell a million tons of them for a copper."

"Well, anyhow, the man who has borne the expense of drawing them there won't thank you for taking them."

"I do not ask them to thank me. I do not think the act deserves any thanks." And a roguish twinkle of the eye showed that Benjamin knew he was doing wrong for the sake of getting a little sport. "Wouldn't it be a joke on those fellows if they should find their pile of stones missing in the morning?"

"Let us do it," said John, who was taken with the idea of playing off a joke. "I will do my part to put it through."

"And I will do mine."

"And so will I."

"And I, too."

By this time all were willing to follow Benjamin, their leader. Perhaps some of them were afraid to say "No," as their consciences suggested, now that the enterprise was endorsed by one or two of their number. Both boys and men are quite disposed to "go with the multitude to do evil." They are too cowardly to do what they know is right.

The salt marsh bounding a part of the mill-pond where their boat lay was tramped into a quagmire. The boys were wont to fish there at high water, and so many feet treading on the spot reduced it to a very soft condition. It was over this miry marsh that they proposed to build a wharf. The evening was

soon there, and the boys, too, upon their rogues' errand. They surveyed the pile of stones, and found it ample for their purpose, though it appeared to be a formidable piece of work to remove them.

"Two of us can't lift and carry some of them," said Fred.

"Then three of us will hitch on and carry them," replied Benjamin. "They must all be worked into a wharf this evening. Let us begin—there is no time to lose."

"The largest must go first," suggested John. "They are capital stones for the foundation. Come, boys, let us make quick work of it."

So they went to work with a will and "where there's a will there's a way," in evil as well as good. It was unfortunate for Benjamin that he did not hate such an enterprise as much as he did candle-making. If he had, he would have given a wide berth to the salt marsh and the wharf project. But neither he nor his companions disliked the evil work in which there was sport. We say that they worked with a will; and their perseverance was the only commendable thing about the affair. Sometimes three or four of them worked away at a stone, rolling it along or lifting, as necessity required. Then one alone would catch up a smaller one, and convey it to the wharf at double-quick. Half their zeal, tact, and industry, in doing this wrong, would have made the candle-trade, or any other business, a success.

The evening was not quite spent when the last stone was carried away, and the wharf finished,—a work of art that answered their purpose very well, though it was not quite as imposing as Commercial Wharf is now, and was not calculated to receive the cargo of a very large Liverpool packet.

"A capital place now for fishing!" exclaimed Fred. "It is worth all it cost for that."

"It may cost more than you think for before we get through with it," suggested John. "We sha'n't know the real cost of it until the owner finds his stones among the missing."

"I should like to hear his remarks to-morrow morning, when he discovers his loss," remarked Benjamin; "they will not be very complimentary, I think."

"I am more anxious to know what he will do about it," responded John.

"We shall find out before long, no doubt," said Benjamin. "But I must hurry home, or I shall have more trouble there than anywhere else. Come, boys, let us go."

They hastened to their homes, not designing to divulge the labors of the evening, if they could possibly avoid interrogation. They knew that their parents would disapprove of the deed, and that no excuse could shield them from merited censure. Not one of their consciences was at ease. Their love of sport had got the better of their love of right-doing. And yet they were both afraid and ashamed to tell of what they had done. They were at home and in bed and asleep about as early as usual.

Twenty-four hours passed away, during which Benjamin's fears had increased rather than diminished. He was all the while thinking about the stones—what the owner would say and do—whether he would learn who took his stones away. His conscience was on duty.

It was evening, and Mr. Franklin took his seat at the fireside. Benjamin was reading, the unattractive tallow candle furnishing him light.

"Benjamin," said Mr. Franklin, after a little, "where were you last evening?"

If his father had fired off a pistol he could not have been more disturbed. His heart leaped into his throat. He thought of the stones. He knew something was up about them—that trouble was ahead.

"I was down to the water," Benjamin replied, with as much coolness as he could muster.

"What were you doing there?"

"Fixing up a place for the boat." He suspected, from his father's appearance, that he would have to tell the whole story.

"Benjamin, see that you tell me the truth, and withhold nothing. I wish to know exactly what you did there."

"We built a wharf."

"What did you build it with?"

"We built it of stones."

"Where did you get your stones?"

"There was a pile of them close by."

"Did they belong to you?"

"No, sir."

"Then you stole them, did you?"

"It isn't stealing to take stones."

"Why, then, did you take them in the evening, after the workmen had gone home? Why did you not go after them when the workmen were all there? It looks very much as if you thought taking them was stealing them."

Benjamin saw that he was fairly cornered. Such a catechetical exercise was somewhat new to him. The Westminster Assembly's Catechism never put him into so tight a place as that. Bright as he was, he could not discover the smallest hole out of which to crawl. It was a bad scrape, and he could see no way out of it except by telling the truth. We dislike very much to say it, but, judging from all the circumstances, he would have told a lie, could he have seen a place to put one in. But there was no chance for a falsehood. He was completely shut up to the truth. He saw that the wharf cost more than he estimated—that stealing stones violated a principle as really as stealing dollars. He was so completely cornered that he made no reply. His father continued:

"I see plainly how it is. It is the consequence of going out in the evening with the boys, which I must hereafter forbid. I have been willing that you should go out occasionally in the evening, because I thought it might be better for you than so much reading. But you have now betrayed my confidence, and I am more than ever satisfied that boys should spend their evenings at home, trying to improve their minds. You are guilty of an act that is quite flagrant, although it may have been done thoughtlessly. You should have known better after having received so much instruction at home."

"I did know better," was Benjamin's frank confession, determined to make a clean breast of it.

"And that makes your guilt so much the greater. Will you learn a lesson from this, and never do the like again?"

"I promise that I never will."

Thus frankly Benjamin confessed his wrong-doing; and, in mature life, he often referred to it as his "*first wrong act*" from which he learned a lesson for life. It was another way of *paying too dear for a whistle*. What the whistle was to him at seven, the wharf of stones was to him at twelve years of age—sport. The first was innocent sport, however; the last was guilty.

It appears that the workmen missed their stones when they first reached the spot in the morning, and soon discovered them nicely laid into a wharf. The proprietor was indignant, and set about learning who were the authors of the deed. In the course of the day he gained the information he sought, and very properly went to the parents of each boy with his complaint. In this way the boys were exposed, and received just rebuke for their misdemeanor. Benjamin was convinced, as he said of it many years thereafter, "that that which is not honest could not be truly useful."

VIII.

BECOMING PRINTER-BOY.

At the time Benjamin was in the candle-factory his brother James was in England learning the printer's trade. He spent several years there, until he had mastered the business, intending to return to Boston and establish that trade. He returned about the time that Benjamin was concluding his disgust with candle-making, and was well under way at the time he abandoned the cutler's trade. James brought press, type, and all the *et ceteras* of a complete outfit with him from England.

"How would you like to learn the printer's trade with your brother James?" inquired his father, a short time after Benjamin left the cutler's shop. "I have been thinking it over, and I really believe that

you have more qualifications for it than you have for any other trade. Your love of learning will have a better chance there, too."

"How is that?" answered Benjamin. "I do not quite see in what respect I am better qualified to be a printer than a cutler."

"Well, you are a good reader, and have an intellectual turn, being fond of books; and a printing office must have more opportunities for mental improvement than the shop of a cutler. A type-setter can be acquiring new and valuable ideas when he is setting up written articles."

"If that is so I should like it well; and I should think it might be as you say," Benjamin answered. "I might have a better chance to read."

"Of course you would. You may have matter to put in type that is as interesting and profitable as any thing you find in books. Indeed, James will no doubt have pamphlets and books to publish before long. All that you read in books went through the printer's hand first."

"I had not thought of that," said Benjamin, quite taken with his father's ideas about the printing business. "I think I should like it better than almost any thing else. How long will it take to learn the trade?"

"I suppose that it will take some time, though I know very little about it. You are twelve years of age now, and you can certainly acquire the best knowledge of the trade by the time you are twenty-one."

"That is a long time," suggested Benjamin; "nine years ought to make the best printer there is. But that is no objection to me; I shall do as you think best."

"I want *you* should think it best, too," rejoined his father. "If you have no inclination to be a printer, I do not want you should undertake it. You will not succeed in any business you dislike."

"I do think it best to try this," replied Benjamin. "If James thinks well of it, I shall, for he knows all about the trade."

"I will speak with him about it and learn his opinion," said his father. "If he thinks well of it, I will see what arrangements can be made with him. The prospects of the business are not flattering now, but I think the day is coming when it will prosper."

Mr. Franklin lost no time in conferring with James, who favored the plan without any reserve. He proposed to take Benjamin as an apprentice, to serve until he was twenty-one years old, according to the custom of the times, receiving twenty pounds for the same, and giving him board and clothes until the last year, when he would be paid journeyman's wages. This was a good opportunity on the whole, for printing was in its infancy in our country at that time. Not more than six or eight persons had been in the business in Boston before James Franklin commenced, in the year 1717. The demand for printing must have been very small indeed.

The first printing press in the United States was set up in Cambridge in 1639 by Rev. Jesse Glover, who gave it to Harvard University. The first thing printed was the "Freeman's oath"; the next, the almanac for New England, calculated by William Pierce, a mariner; the next, a metrical version of the Psalms.

It is claimed that ten years later than Benjamin's entering his brother's printing office, there were but three or four printers in our country. Whether that was so or not, it is certain that then, and for many years afterwards, printers were very scarce. In 1692, Old Style, the council of New York adopted the following resolution:

"It is resolved in council, that if a printer will come and settle in the city of New York, for the printing of our acts of assembly and public papers, he shall be allowed the sum of forty pounds, current money of New York, per annum, for his salary, and have the benefit of his printing, besides what serves to the public."

It is said, also, that when Benjamin Franklin wanted to marry the daughter of Mr. Reed, of Philadelphia, her mother said, "I do not know about giving my daughter to a printer; for there are already four in the United States, and it is doubtful if more could get a living."

It is worthy of note here, also, as showing how slowly the printing business advanced in the infancy of our country, that Great Britain did not allow the American Colonies to print the English Bible. Hence, the first Bible printed in this country was published in 1782, a little more than a hundred years ago. For this reason most of the pulpit Bibles in the Congregational and other churches of New England, before

that time, were the Oxford editions, in which the Book of Common Prayer and the Psalms were included, and the Articles of Faith of the English Church. Some of these are still preserved as relics.

"It will be necessary for you to be bound to your brother, according to law," remarked Mr. Franklin. "These things must be done legally, and such is the law and custom, too."

"And I am to board with him, also, if I understand you, father?" Benjamin was thinking of leaving his home, and that would be a trial. True, he would not be far from his father's house; he could step into it every night if he wished; but it was leaving home, nevertheless. "It does not seem quite right for one brother to be bound to another for nine years," added Benjamin, thoughtfully, and after some hesitation.

"But such is the custom, however it may appear, and it must be done so to have every thing right and legal. We do not know what may happen in the nine years. It is better to have things in black and white, whether the bargain is with a brother or any one else."

Mr. Franklin added more to the last remarks, in order to remove an objection which Benjamin seemed to have to being bound to his brother; and he was successful. The last objection was removed, and cheerfully and gladly Benjamin consented to become a printer-boy.

The following was the form of the indenture of apprenticeship that bound Benjamin to his brother for nine years:

"This indenture witnesseth that Benjamin Franklin, son of Josiah Franklin, and of Abiah, his wife, of Boston, in the colony of Massachusetts Bay, with the consent of his parents, doth put himself apprentice to his brother, James Franklin, printer, to learn his art, and with him after the manner of an apprentice from the —— day of ——, in the year of our Lord, 1718, until he shall have fully completed the twenty-first year of his age. During which term the said apprentice his master faithfully shall or will serve, his secrets keep, his lawful commands everywhere gladly do. He shall do no damage to his said master, nor see it to be done of others, but to his power shall let, or forthwith give notice to his said master of the same. The goods of his said master he shall not waste, nor the same without license of him to any give or lend. Hurt to his said master he shall not do, cause, nor procure to be done. He shall neither buy nor sell without his master's license. Taverns, inns, and ale houses he shall not haunt. At cards, dice, tables, or any other unlawful game he shall not play. Matrimony he shall not contract; nor from the service of his said master day nor night absent himself; but in all things as an honest and faithful apprentice shall and will demean and behave himself towards his said master and all his during the said term. And the said James Franklin, the master, for and in consideration of the sum of ten pounds of lawful British money to him in hand paid by the said Josiah Franklin, the father, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the said apprentice in the art of a printer, which he now useth, shall teach and instruct, or cause to be taught and instructed, the best way and manner that he can, finding and allowing unto the said apprentice meat, drink, washing, lodging, and all other necessaries during the said term. And for the true performance of all and every the covenants and agreements aforesaid, either of the said parties bindeth himself unto the other finally by these presents. In witness whereof, the parties aforesaid to these indentures interchangeably have set their hands and seals this —— day of ——, in the fifth year of our Sovereign Lord, George the First, by the grace of God of Great Britain, France, and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, and in the year of our Lord, 1718."

To this document Benjamin signed his name, with his father and brother, thereby having his liberty considerably abridged.

A boy by the name of William Tinsley took the place of Benjamin in Mr. Franklin's candle-shop. He was bound to Mr. Franklin as Benjamin was bound to his brother. But he liked the business no better than Benjamin did, and, finally, to escape from his thraldom, he ran away; whereupon his master inserted the following advertisement in the *New England Courant* of July, 1722, which reads very much like advertisements for runaway slaves, in that and later days; and, probably, young Tinsley thought he was escaping from a sort of white slavery:

"Ran away from his Master, Mr. Josiah Franklin, of Boston, Tallow-chandler, on the first of this instant July, an Irish Man-servant, named William Tinsley, about 20 years of age, of a middle Stature, black Hair, lately cut off, somewhat fresh-colored Countenance, a large lower Lip, of a mean Aspect, large Legs, and heavy in his Going. He had on, when he went away, a felt Hat, a white knit Cap, striped with red and blue, white Shirt, and neck-cloth, a brown-coloured Jacket, almost new, a frieze Coat, of a dark colour, grey yarn Stockings, leather Breeches, trimmed with black, and round to'd Shoes. Whoever shall apprehend the said runaway Servant, and him safely convey to his above said Master, at the Blue Ball in Union street, Boston, shall have Forty Shillings Reward, and all necessary Charges paid."

There is no evidence that Tinsley was ever found. He hated the candle-trade so lustily that he put the longest possible distance between himself and it. Had Benjamin been compelled to continue the unpleasant business, he might have escaped from the hardship in a similar way.

These facts, together with the foregoing documents, show that, in some respects, many white youth of that day were subjected to an experience not wholly unlike that of the colored youth. Often the indentured parties became the victims of cruelty. Sometimes they were half clothed and fed. Sometimes they were beaten unmercifully. They were completely in the hands of the "master," and whether their experience was pleasant or sad depended upon his temper.

Add another fact to the foregoing about the indenture of apprenticeship, and the similarity of white to Negro slavery, in that day, is quite remarkable. No longer than seventy-five years ago, a poor child, left to the town by the death of the father, was put up at auction, and the man who bid the lowest sum was entitled to him. The town paid the amount to get rid of the incumbrance, without much regard to the future treatment of the orphan.

A near neighbor of the author, eighty-three years of age, was sold in this manner three times in his early life, suffering more and more with each change, until he was old enough to defend himself and run away. His first buyer, for some reason, wanted to dispose of him, and he sold him at auction to another. The second buyer was heartless and cruel, against which the boy rebelled, and, for this reason, he was sold to a third "master," who proved to be the worst tyrant of the three, subjecting the youth to all sorts of ill-treatment, to escape which he took to his heels. He was not given a day's schooling by either master, nor one holiday, nor the privilege of going to meeting on the Sabbath, nor was he half fed and clothed. At twenty-one he could neither read nor write.

We have turned aside from our narrative to record a somewhat barbaric custom of our forefathers, that the reader may appreciate all the more the higher civilization and more congenial experiences of this age.

Benjamin had become a printer-boy as fully equipped for duty as documents, pledges, and promises could make him. His *heart* entered into this new work, and his *head* also. The business set him to thinking. He liked it. Indeed, he could find no fault with it. The business liked him, too; that is, he had a tact for it—he was adapted to it. The boy and the trade were suited to each other. Hence, he became even fascinated with it.

"I like it better than I thought I should," he said to his mother. "I have to use my brains more in putting a single paragraph into type than I did in filling a whole regiment of candle-moulds. I like it better and better."

"I am glad to hear that, though I rather expected as much. If you like it as well as James does, you will like it well enough. He is thoroughly satisfied with his trade, and I think he will find it to be a profitable one by and by. In a new country it takes time to build up almost any trade."

Mrs. Franklin spoke from a full heart, for she had great interest in Benjamin's chosen pursuit, because she believed that he possessed remarkable talents. She still expected that he would make his mark, though prevented from entering the ministry.

"I get some time to read," continued Benjamin, "and I mean to get more, though there is much confusion at my boarding-place."

"You must not gain time for reading at the expense of neglecting your work," suggested his mother. "Your time is your brother's, and, first of all, you must fulfill your obligations to him. Fidelity is a cardinal virtue, remember."

"Of course," replied Benjamin. "I know what I am in duty bound to do, and I shall do it. James has not found me a minute behind time yet, nor lazy in the printing office; and I mean that he never shall."

"That is a good resolution, very good, indeed; and I hope you will keep it. At the same time, do not neglect your Bible, nor cease to attend public worship on the Sabbath. A boy can't get along without these any more than his parents can. As soon as you begin to neglect these you are exposed to danger, and the very worst sort of danger."

To those who are determined to succeed, time can be found for reading without interfering with business. Budgett, the rich English merchant, was a great reader. He would not allow his time for reading to interfere with his business, nor his time for business to interfere with his reading. He prepared a time-table by which his work was regulated each day. From an examination of it we learn the number of hours and pages he read the first two weeks of January, 1849. He spent fifty-nine hours in his library, and read *seven hundred* pages of Josephus' History, *six hundred and sixty* pages of

Milner's Church History, *three hundred and eighty* pages of Baxter's Saints' Rest, and spent a fair proportion of the time in studying Townsend's Old and New Testaments. Such is what the busiest man can do when he regulates his time for it.

James Franklin's printing office, where Benjamin worked, was at the corner of Franklin avenue and Court street. As his brother was unmarried he boarded at a place near by, which James secured. Probably the large family and want of room were the reason he did not continue to board at his father's. The family were always in a strait for room. A vacancy only left room which the remaining members sorely needed, and they occupied it so readily and naturally that the former occupant was scarcely missed.

The printer's trade embraced some kinds of work at that time which it does not embrace now, as we judge from the advertisement of James Franklin in the *Boston Gazette*, when he commenced business, as follows: "The printer hereof prints linens, calicoes, silks, etc., in good figures, very lively and durable colors, and without the offensive smell which commonly attends the linens printed here."

Such printing was done for ladies who were in need of what there was no manufactory to supply, at that time.

When Benjamin had served two years at his trade, he had become indispensable to his brother. He had devoted himself to his work with all his heart, and had made rapid improvement. He had acquired a good understanding of the trade. He was a superior compositor. His judgment was excellent. He was industrious—there was not a lazy bone in him. And he was punctual.

The habit of reading that Benjamin had formed tended to make him punctual. In order to command the more time he was promptly at his work, and efficiently discharged every duty. It was this well-formed habit of punctuality that made him so reliable in the printing office. His brother knew that he would be there at such a time, and that he would remain just so many hours. This habit won his confidence, as it does the confidence of every one. There is no quality that does more to gain a good name for an individual, and inspire the confidence of his fellow-men, than this one of being on time. It is so generally found in company with other excellent traits of character, that it seems to be taken for granted, usually, that the punctual person is worthy in other respects.

A ripe scholar was the neighbor of Dr. Adam Clarke, the commentator, when the latter had become quite renowned. On the same evening both saw a copy of the Greek Testament by Erasmus advertised. As soon as the ripe scholar had swallowed his breakfast, on the next morning, he hastened to the book-store to purchase the volume. "You are too late; the book is sold," replied the book-seller to the inquiry of the gentleman. "Too late!" exclaimed the scholar; "why, I came as soon as I had eaten my breakfast;" "Yes, but Adam Clarke came *before breakfast*," responded the merchant. The incident shows that the man who is on time has the inside track; and the inside track is nearest the goal. It is the wide-awake man who is prompt, not the dull, sleepy procrastinator. The best qualities of manhood must be on the alert to secure promptness; the poorest qualities will secure the opposite. The prize is taken by the worker who is *on time*. It is lost by him who is *behind time*, as the aforesaid scholar was. He planned to make sure of his breakfast before he did of the book; but Adam Clarke made sure of the book before he did of his breakfast, and he won.

In 1788, Washington visited Boston, and he decided to leave for Salem on the morning of a certain day, at eight o'clock, precisely. A company of cavalry volunteered to escort him to Salem. While the clock of the Old South Church was striking eight, Washington mounted his horse and started, though his escort had not put in an appearance. A few minutes later, however, they arrived, and were greatly mortified to find that Washington had gone. Putting spurs to their horses, they galloped forward, and overtook him at Charles river bridge. When they came up, Washington said: "Major, I thought you had been in my family too long not to know when it was eight o'clock."

The habit of punctuality which Franklin formed in his youth, distinguished him in his manhood as much as the same habit did Washington. There is no doubt that it exerted a large influence in placing him next to Washington among the founders of our republic. One of the maxims that he wrote in mature life was: "He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night."

IX.

TABLE-TALK EDUCATION.

We delay the narrative, at this point, to introduce a subject that Franklin often referred to as influencing his early life. In his "Autobiography," he said:

"At his table he [his father] liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbor to converse with; and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just, and prudent, in the conduct of life; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table; whether it was well or ill dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavor, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind; so that I was brought up in such a perfect inattention to those matters, as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me. Indeed, I am so unobservant of it, that to this day I can scarce tell, a few hours after dinner, of what dishes it consisted. This has been a great convenience to me in travelling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed, tastes and appetites."

This was different from much of the table-talk that is heard in many families now.

"I do not want any of that, I do not love it," exclaims one child. "I should think you might have a better dinner than this."

"What would you have if you could get it; roast chicken and plum pudding?" his mother replies, in a facetious way, instead of reproving him.

"I would have something I could eat. You know I do not love that, and never did."

"Well, it does boys good, sometimes, to eat what they do not love, especially such particular ones as you are," adds his father.

"I sha'n't eat what I do not like, anyhow; I shall go hungry first."

"There, now, let me hear no more complaint about your food," adds his father, more sharply. "You are scarcely ever suited with your victuals."

"May I have some?" calling for something that is not on the table.

"If you will hold your tongue, and get it yourself, you can have it."

"And let me have some, too," shouts another child. "I do not love this, neither. May I have some, pa?"

"And I, too," exclaims still another. "I must have some if Henry and James do."

In this way the table-talk proceeds, until fretting, scolding, crying, make up the sum total of the conversation, and family joy are embittered for the remainder of the day. In contrast with the discipline of instructive conversation, such schooling at the fireside is pitiable indeed.

Franklin claimed that this feature of family government exerted a moulding influence upon his life and character. It caused him to value profitable conversation in boyhood and youth. In manhood he frequently found himself posted upon subjects made familiar to him by conversation at the table and hearthstone of his boyhood, especially topics relating to the mother country. He was more particularly edified by conversation at home during the four years that "Uncle Benjamin" was a member of his father's family. For this favorite "Uncle" was a very instructive talker, having been educated by the conversation of his father at home in England, as his nephew Benjamin was by his father in Boston. When "Uncle Benjamin" was very old, he could even recall the expressions which his father used in prayer at the family altar, and he wrote some of them in one of his books of poetry, as follows:

"Holy Father, into thy hand we commit our spirits, for thou hast redeemed them, O Lord God of Truth."

"Command thine angel to encamp round about our habitation."

"Give thine angels charge over us, that no evil may come nigh our dwelling."

"Thou knowest our down-lying and rising-up, thou art acquainted with all our ways, and knowest our tho'ts afar off."

"We know that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing."

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name all those that are thine, that none of them be lost."

"We thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth. Tho' thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, yet thou hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Holy Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

We have copied the language just as it was written by "Uncle Benjamin," and it is chiefly Bible language, showing marked familiarity with the Scriptures.

We infer, from the foregoing, that useful conversation was characteristic of the Franklins of each generation, indicating a good degree of intelligence and talents of high order. Ignorance does not indulge in improving conversation; it could not if it would. Nor do small mental powers show themselves in excellence of conversation. So that it is quite evident that talents in the Josiah Franklin family were not limited to Benjamin. They reached back to former generations.

Mr. Parton says: "Thomas Franklin, the elder, had four sons: Thomas, John, Benjamin, and Josiah. There lived at Ecton, during the boyhood of these four sons, a Mr. John Palmer, the squire of the parish and lord of an adjacent manor, who, attracted by their intelligence and spirit, lent them books, assisted them to lessons in drawing and music, and, in various ways, encouraged them to improve their minds. All the boys appear to have been greatly profited by Squire Palmer's friendly aid; but none of them so much as Thomas, the eldest, inheritor of the family forge and farm."

It was this Thomas who became grandfather of our Benjamin, and whose expressions in prayer we have quoted. Mr. Parton discovers such talents there as make profitable conversation at the table and elsewhere, and are transmitted to posterity. For he says, still further:

"In families destined at length to give birth to an illustrious individual, Nature seems sometimes to make an essay of her powers with that material, before producing the consummate specimen. There was a remarkable Mr. Pitt before Lord Chatham; there was an extraordinary Mr. Fox before the day of the ablest debater in Europe; there was a witty Sheridan before Richard Brinsley; there was a Mirabeau before the Mirabeau of the French Revolution. And, to cite a higher instance, Shakespeare's father was, at least, extraordinarily fond of dramatic entertainments, if we may infer any thing certain from the brief records of his mayoralty of Stratford, for he appears to have given the players the kind of welcome that Hamlet admonished Polonius to bestow upon them. Thomas Franklin, the eldest uncle of our Benjamin, learned the blacksmith's trade in his father's shop, but, aided by Squire Palmer and his own natural aptitude for affairs, became, as his nephew tells us, 'a conveyancer, something of a lawyer, clerk of the county court, and clerk to the archdeacon; a very leading man in all county affairs, and much employed in public business.'"

The quotation Mr. Parton makes, in his closing lines, is from a letter of Benjamin Franklin, addressed to Mrs. Deborah Franklin, dated London, 6 September, 1758. We quote still further from it, as it is interesting matter relating to the prominence and intelligence of the Franklin ancestors:

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

the same month."

Such kind of men are not given to foolish conversation. They are too sensible to indulge in mere twaddle about the weather. Their talents raise them to a higher plane of thought and remark. Josiah Franklin only observed the custom of his ancestors, no doubt unwittingly, when he sought to improve the minds and hearts of his children by instructive conversation at the table and fireside. Benjamin had a right to claim for it a decided educational influence in the family.

Pythagoras set so great value upon useful conversation that he commanded his disciples to maintain silence during the first two years of their instruction. He would have their minds thoroughly furnished, that their conversation might be worthy of the pupils of so illustrious a teacher. He was wont to say: "Be silent, or say something better than silence." No men ever put this wise counsel into practice more thoroughly than Josiah Franklin and his son Benjamin.

Cicero said of the mother of the Gracchi: "We have read the letters of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, from which it appears that the sons were educated not so much in the lap of the mother as by her *conversation*." Josiah Franklin had as poor an opinion of the *lap* as an educator of his sons, in comparison with *conversation*, as Cornelia had.

The poet Cowper wrote:

"Though conversation in its better part
May be esteemed a gift, and not an art;
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture and the sowing of the soil."

Josiah Franklin was enough of a poet to understand this and reduce it to practice. As his son said, he delighted to have some intelligent man or woman for a guest at his table, for the improvement of his children. But when there was no guest at the table, he led the way alone by calling the attention of his sons and daughters to some subject of interest and profit. He thought it would divert their attention from the quality of their food, so that they would not be so apt to complain of it, and, at the same time, impart information and set them thinking. He did not allow one of his children to complain of the food on the table, and he would have prevented it by severe measures, if necessary. Before he found the method cited a wise one, and therefore persevered in it. He often made this remark:

"You must give heed to little things, although nothing can be considered small that is important. It is of far more consequence how you behave than what you eat and wear."

Another remark he would make when the meal was unusually plain was this:

"Many people are too particular about their victuals. They destroy their health by eating too much and too rich food. Plain, simple, wholesome fare is all that Nature requires, and young persons who are brought up in this way will be best off in the end."

Here is found the origin of Benjamin's rigid temperance principles in eating and drinking, for which he was distinguished through life. In his manhood he wrote and talked upon the subject, and reduced his principles to practice. There scarcely ever lived a man who was so indifferent as to what he ate and drank as he was. When he worked in a printing-office in England, his fellow-printers were hard drinkers of strong beer, really believing that it was necessary to give them strength to endure. They were astonished to see a youth like Benjamin able to excel the smartest of them in the printing office, while he drank only cold water, and they sneeringly called him "The Water American."

The temperate habits which Benjamin formed in his youth were the more remarkable because there were no temperance societies at that time, and it was generally supposed to be necessary to use intoxicating drinks. The evils of intemperance were not viewed with so much abhorrence as they are now, and the project of removing them from society was not entertained for a moment. Reformatory movements of this kind did not begin until nearly a century after the time referred to. Yet Benjamin was fully persuaded in his youth that he ought to be temperate in all things. It was a theme of conversation at his father's table and fireside. That conversation instructed him then, as temperance lectures, books, and societies instruct the young now; and it accomplished its purpose. In the sequel we shall learn still more of the moulding power of home lessons, in conversation, to make him the man he became.

It is related of the Washburne family, so well known in the public affairs of our country, four or five brothers having occupied posts of political distinction, that, in their early life, their father's house was open to ministers, and was sometimes called "the ministers' hotel." Mr. Washburne was a great friend of this class, and enjoyed their society much. Nearly all the time some one of the ministerial fraternity would be stopping there. His sons were thus brought into their society, and they listened to long discussions upon subjects of a scientific, political, and religious character, though public measures

received a large share of attention. The boys acquired valuable information by listening to their remarks, and this created a desire to read and learn more; and so they were started off in a career that "led them on to fame." Their early advantages were few, but the conversation of educated gentlemen, upon important subjects, laid the foundation of their eminence in public life.

Benjamin was young, and his heart easily impressed, when he listened to profitable conversation in the home of his boyhood. The way the twig is bent the tree is inclined. His father gave the twig the right bent, and the tree was comely and fruitful. It was a very easy and cheap mode of instruction, always at hand, needing neither text-book nor blackboard, yet pleasant and uplifting.

X.

LEADER OF SPORTS AND THOUGHT.

It is unusual that the same boy should be a leader in nearly all innocent sports, and, at the same time, the most thoughtful and studious boy of all. Generally, the fun-loving youth is an indifferent scholar,—having little taste for reading and study. But it was otherwise with Benjamin. He was as much of an expert in sport as he was in reading,—the best jumper, runner, swimmer, and rower of his age in Boston. And he enjoyed it, too. Perhaps he enjoyed being the best more than any part of the sport. Certainly, when he was in school, he enjoyed being the *best* scholar more than any part of a pupil's experience; and he so managed to continue the best to the end, though the end came much too soon for him.

Swimming was his favorite sport. It was claimed for him that, any time between twelve and sixteen years of age, he could have swam across the Hellespont. Here, as well as elsewhere, his inventive genius was devising ways to promote more rapid swimming.

"I believe that I can double my speed in swimming by an invention I have in mind," he said to John Collins, one day.

"What sort of an invention? You are always up to something of that sort. I think that arms and legs are all the invention that will ever promote swimming, slow or fast."

"Well, you see, John, if I do not invent something to greatly increase speed in swimming," continued Benjamin. "I have been studying on it for some time, and I think I have it."

"You do not need anything to increase your speed, Ben; you can beat everybody now, and you ought to be satisfied with that."

"I am not satisfied. I want to do better yet. I never did so well in anything yet that I did not want to do better."

Right here was really the secret of Benjamin's success,—trying to do better to-morrow than to-day, not satisfied with present attainments, pressing forward to something more desirable, going up higher. Such boys and girls succeed. Difficulties do not alarm or discourage them—they serve to draw them out and make them more invincible. But youth who are satisfied to be just what they are to-day, no larger, broader, or better, live and die mere ciphers. They are destitute of ambition and the spirit of enterprise. They have no just conception of their mission in this world. They do not understand themselves,—what they are for and what they can be if they choose. What is worse, they have no desire to know these things; the effort to know them is too much for their easy, indifferent natures.

"I guess that is so," replied John, to Benjamin's last remark. "I never saw a boy just like you; and I think you are right. I want to know more than I do about many things, and I mean to. But what sort of a swimming apparatus have you in mind?"

"Well, a sort of palette for the hands and sandals for the feet, fastened tightly so as to be used readily. I have an idea that I can throw myself forward with far greater speed."

"I will wait to see it before I pass judgment on it," answered John. "It is risking more than I want to risk to say you can't do it; for there is no telling what you can do."

"You will see it in a few days; it will not take long to make it. I will notify you when it is ready, and we will try it. In the mean time keep it a secret, and we will astonish the boys."

Within a few days John Collins was notified that the swimming apparatus was ready, and would be tried at a certain time appointed. Other boys were invited to meet at the pond at the same time.

Benjamin appeared on the scene with two oval palettes of wood, resembling those used by painters, ten inches long and six broad. A hole was cut in each for the thumb, so that they could be bound to the palms of the hands. A kind of sandal, shaped somewhat like the palettes, was fastened tightly to each foot. When rigged for a swim, Benjamin presented a very singular appearance, and the boys looked on astonished.

"That is *you*, all over, Ben," exclaimed Fred; "no one in creation except you would ever have thought of such an apparatus. But I wouldn't wish myself in the water with such a rig. You are a sort of skipper on legs, now."

"I do not expect to skip much on the water, but I expect to swim much faster with this device than would be possible without it," replied Benjamin.

"It is different from what I thought it was from your description," said John Collins, who had been looking on with particular interest. "It looks as if you might do something with it. Go ahead, Ben, sink or swim, spread your sails and prove that your ingenuity is genuine."

Benjamin plunged into the water, and a more interested and excited company did not watch Robert Fulton when he started up Hudson river with his new steamer, eighty years later, than watched him with his new mode of swimming. He struck right out into deep water easily, and moved forward much more rapidly than he ever did before, the cheers and shouts of the boys making the welkin ring. Taking a circuit around the pond for a fair trial, the boys had a good opportunity to watch every movement and to judge of the practicability of such an invention.

"That is wonderful," exclaimed one, as he came around to the shore where they stood.

"You are a genius, Ben," shouted another.

"Capital," added John Collins. "King George ought to make a duke of you. But does it work easy?"

"Not so easily as I expected," answered Benjamin. "The apparatus is hard on the wrists, and makes them ache. The sandals on the feet do not help much. I think I could swim just as well without them."

"Then you do not consider it a complete success?" said John, inquiringly.

"Not entirely so. I can swim very much faster with it, but it is harder work, and the wrists will not hold out long. I do not think I shall apply to King George for a patent."

The swimming invention was pretty thoroughly discussed by the boys, one and another suggesting improvements, Benjamin evidently satisfied that swimming at less speed in the usual way was preferable to these artificial paddles and increased rapidity. But their interest was awakened anew when Benjamin informed them that he had another invention that he proposed to try at a future day.

"What is it?" inquired two or three at the same time.

"You shall see; it is more simple than this apparatus," replied
Benjamin. "It will not be so tiresome to use."

"When will you let us see it on trial?" asked John Collins, who, perhaps, appreciated Benjamin's spirit and talents more than any of the boys.

"Any time you will all agree to be here. You will not know what it is until you see it."

The time was appointed for the trial of the unknown device, and the boys separated with their curiosity on tiptoe as to the nature of the other improved method of swimming. They had no idea that it was a humbug, for "Ben" never practised sham. He was so much of a genius that, no doubt, he had something that would surprise them.

John Collins was more like Benjamin than other boys in Boston, and he was his most intimate companion. John was talented, and a great reader. He had a craving thirst for knowledge, and used his leisure moments to improve his mind. He frequently discussed profitable subjects with Benjamin, who enjoyed his company very much for this reason. In their tastes, love of books, and high aims, they were suited to each other. Benjamin thought as highly of John as John did of Benjamin.

When the time for trying the other device arrived, Benjamin appeared on the scene with a new kite.

"A kite!" exclaimed John Collins, in surprise. "I see it now. That *is* simple." He saw at once that Benjamin was going to make a sail of his kite, and cross the pond.

"'T will hinder more than it will help, I think," remarked one of the boys.

"We shall know whether it will or not, very soon," responded another.
"Ben isn't hindered very often."

While this parleying was going on, Benjamin was disrobing and getting ready for the trial.

"Fred, you carry my clothes around to the other side of the pond, and I will swim across," said Benjamin, as he sent his kite up into the air.

"All right," answered Fred; "I will do it to the best of my ability; and I will be there to see you land." So saying he caught up the clothes and started off upon the run.

The kite was high up in the air, when, holding the string with both hands, Benjamin dropped into the water upon his back, and at once began to skim the surface. Without an effort on his part, not so much as the moving of a muscle, the sailing kite pulled him along faster than his arms and feet could have done in the old way of swimming.

"That is better than the paddles and sandals," shouted John Collins, who was intensely interested in the simplicity of the method. "Ben is only a ship, now, and the kite is his sail. Nobody but him would ever thought of such a thing."

"Not much skill in that way of swimming," suggested another youth; "nor much fatigue, either. Nothing to do but to keep on breathing and swim."

"And hold on to the kite," added another. "He must not let go of his sail; he and his kite must be close friends."

The boys kept up their watch and conversation while Benjamin crossed the pond, which he accomplished in a few minutes. Dressing himself, while Fred drew in his kite, he hastened to join his companions and receive their congratulations. The boys were extravagant in their expressions of delight, and some of them predicted that so "cute" a mode of swimming would become universal, while others thought that the lack of skill in the method would lead many to discard it. Benjamin said:

"The motion is very pleasant indeed, and I could swim all day without becoming fatigued. But there is no skill in it, as you say."

Benjamin expressed no opinion as to the adoption of the method by others, and the boys separated to tell the story of Benjamin's exploits on the water over town. Many years afterwards, when Benjamin was a public man, famous in his own country and Europe, he wrote to a Frenchman by the name of Dubourg, of both of these experiments as follows:

"When I was a boy, I made two oval palettes, each about ten inches long and six broad, with a hole for the thumb, in order to retain it fast in the palm of my hand. They much resembled a painter's palettes. In swimming, I pushed the edges of these forward, and I struck the water with their flat surfaces as I drew them back. I remember I swam faster by means of these palettes, but they fatigued my wrists. I also fitted to the soles of my feet a kind of sandals; but I was not satisfied with them, because I observed that the stroke is partly given by the inside of the feet and the ankles, and not entirely with the soles of the feet.

* * * * *

"You will not be displeased if I conclude these hasty remarks by informing you that, as the ordinary method of swimming is reduced to the act of rowing with the arms and legs, and is consequently a laborious and fatiguing operation when the space of water to be crossed is considerable, there is a method in which a swimmer may pass to great distances with, much facility, by means of a sail. This discovery I fortunately made by accident, and in the following manner.

"When I was a boy I amused myself one day with flying a paper kite; and, approaching the bank of a pond, which was nearly a mile broad, I tied the string to a stake, and the kite ascended to a very considerable height above the pond, while I was swimming. In a little time, being desirous of amusing myself with my kite, and enjoying at the same time the pleasure of swimming, I returned; and, loosing from the stake the string with the little stick which was fastened to it, went again into the water, where I found that, lying on my back and holding the stick in my hands, I was drawn along the surface of the water in a very agreeable manner. Having then engaged another boy to carry my clothes around the pond, to a place which I pointed out to him on the other side, I began to cross the pond with my kite, which carried me quite over without the least fatigue, and with the greatest pleasure imaginable. I was only obliged occasionally to halt a little in my course, and resist its progress, when it appeared that, by following too quick, I lowered the kite too much; by doing which occasionally, I made it rise again. I have never since that time practised this singular mode of swimming, though I think it not impossible

to cross in this manner from Dover to Calais. The packet-boat, however, is still preferable."

Doctor Franklin wrote another long letter to a man in mature life, advising him to learn to swim. The man was not inclined to do it on account of his age, whereupon Doctor Franklin wrote:

"I can not be of opinion with you, that it is too late in life for you to learn to swim. The river near the bottom of your garden affords a most convenient place for the purpose. And, as your new employment requires your being often on the water, of which you have such a dread, I think you would do well to make the trial; nothing being so likely to remove those apprehensions as the consciousness of an ability to swim to the shore in case of an accident, or of supporting yourself in the water till a boat could come to take you up."

It is probable that Benjamin's experiment with his kite in swimming was the seed-thought of his experiment in drawing lightning from the clouds with a kite, thirty years thereafter,—an experiment that startled and electrified the scientific world. The story is a familiar one, and should be repeated here.

He believed that lightning and electricity were identical. Experiments for six years had led him to this conclusion. But how could he prove it? He conceived the idea of an electrical kite by which he could settle the truth or falsity of his theory. Having prepared the kite, he waited for a thunder-shower; nor did he wait long. Observing one rising, he took the kite, and with his son, twenty-one years of age, stole away into a field near by, where there was an old cow-shed. He had not informed any one but his son of his purpose, because he wished to avoid ridicule in case the experiment proved a failure.

The kite was sent up in season for the coming storm to catch, and, with intense anxiety, Franklin held the string, which was hempen, except the part in the hand, which was silk. He was so confident of success that he brought along with him a Leyden bottle, in which to collect electric fluid from the clouds for a shock. It was a moment of great suspense. His heart beat like a trip-hammer. At first a cloud seemed to pass directly over the kite, and the thunder rattled, and the lightnings played around it, and yet there was no indication of electricity. His heart almost failed him. But in silence he continued the experiment as the storm increased and drew nearer, and the artillery of heaven grew louder and more vivid. Another moment, and he beheld the fibers of the hempen cord rise as the hair of a person does on the insulated stool. What a moment it was! The electric fluid was there! His experiment was successful! Electricity and lightning are identical! Pen nor poesy can describe his emotion. Eagerly he applied his knuckles to the key, attached to the extremity of the hempen cord, and drew a spark therefrom. His joy was immeasurable! Another spark, and then another, and still another, until further confirmation was unnecessary! The Leyden bottle was charged with the precious fluid, from which both father and son received a shock as unmistakable as that from his electric battery at home. Franklin's fame was secured throughout the world. He went home with feelings of indescribable satisfaction.

Doctor Franklin was a very modest man, and he wrote a letter to Peter Collinson, member of the Royal Society of London, dated Philadelphia, Oct. 16, 1752, describing the experiment without even hinting that he was the experimenter. As that letter described his electrical kite, and his method of using it, we insert it here:

"As frequent mention is made in public papers from Europe of the success of the Philadelphia experiment for drawing the electric fire from clouds by means of pointed rods of iron erected on high buildings, etc., it may be agreeable to the curious to be informed that the same experiment has succeeded in Philadelphia, though made in a different and more easy manner, which is as follows:

"Make a small cross of two light strips of cedar, the arms so long as to reach the four corners of a large thin silk handkerchief when extended; tie the corners of the handkerchief to the extremities of the cross, so you have the body of a kite; which being properly accommodated with a tail, loop, and string, will rise in the air like those made of paper; but this, being of silk, is fitter to bear the wet and wind of a thunder-gust without tearing. To the top of the upright stick of the cross is to be fixed a very sharp-pointed wire, rising a foot or more above the wood. To the end of the twine next the hand is to be tied a silk ribbon, and where the silk and twine join a key may be fastened.

"This kite is to be raised when a thunder-gust appears to be coming on, and the person who holds the string must stand within a door or window, or under some cover, so that the silk ribbon may not be wet; and care must be taken that the twine does not touch the frame of the door or window. As soon as any of the thunder-clouds come over the kite, the pointed wire will draw the electric fire from them, and the kite, with all the twine, will be electrified, and the loose filaments of the twine will stand out every way, and be attracted by an approaching finger. And when the rain has wetted the kite and twine, so that it can conduct the electric fire freely, you will find it stream out plentifully from the key on the approach of your knuckle. At this key the vial may be charged; and from the electric fire thus obtained spirits may be kindled, and all other electric experiments be performed which are usually done by the help of

a rubbed glass globe or tube, and thereby the sameness of the electric matter with that of lightning completely demonstrated."

We have spoken of the discussions between Benjamin and John Collins upon important subjects. When other boys were accustomed to spend their time in foolish talking and jesting, they were warmly discussing some question in advance of their years, and well suited to improve their minds. One of the subjects was a singular one for that day—female education. Legislators, statesmen, ministers, and teachers did not believe that girls should be educated as thoroughly as boys. Fewer advantages should be accorded to them. John Collins accepted the general view; but Benjamin struck out boldly in favor of liberal female education, being about a hundred years in advance of his times.

"It would be a waste of money to attempt to educate girls as thoroughly as boys are educated," said John; "for the female sex are inferior to the male in intellectual endowment."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Benjamin; "you know better than that. The girls are not as simple as you think they are. I believe that females are not a whit inferior to males in their mental qualities."

"I would like to know where you discover evidence of it?" replied
John. "There is no proof of it in the works they have written."

"That may be true, and still they stand upon an equality in respect to intellect. For not half as much is done to educate them as there is to educate the male sex. How can you tell whether they are mentally inferior or not, until they are permitted to enjoy equal advantages?"

"As we tell other things," answered John. "Females do not need so high mental endowments as males, since they are not required to lead off in the different branches of business, or to prosecute the sciences. I can see no wisdom in bestowing talents upon them which they never use, and it is often said that 'nothing is made in vain.'"

"Well, I must go," said Benjamin; "but I think you have a weak cause to defend. If I had the time I could make out a case."

"A poor one, I guess," quickly added John. "We will see, the next time we meet, who can make out a case."

"It will be some time before we meet again," replied Benjamin, "and our ardor will be cooled before that time, I am thinking. But it will do us no harm to discuss the subject."

"If we keep our temper," said John, tacking his sentence to the last word of Benjamin's reply. And so saying, they parted.

After Benjamin had revolved the subject still more in his mind, he became anxious to commit his argument to writing. Accordingly, with pen and paper in hand, he sat down to frame the best argument he could in favor of educating the female sex. He wrote it in the form of a letter, addressed to his friend Collins, and, after having completed, he copied it in a fair hand, and sent it to him. This brought back a long reply, which made it necessary for Benjamin to pen an answer. In this way the correspondence continued, until several letters had passed between them, and each one had gained the victory in his own estimation.

Benjamin was anxious that his father should read this correspondence, as he would be a good judge of its quality; and, after a little, he took it to him, saying: "John and I have had some correspondence, and I want you should read our letters."

There is little question that Benjamin was so well satisfied with his own argument that he expected his father would give him much credit. Perhaps his father believed, with most men of that day, that the education of females was an unnecessary expense, and Benjamin expected to convert him to his belief. Whether it was so or not, his father replied:

"I should like to read it; what is it about?"

"You will find out when you read the letters."

Mr. Franklin improved the first opportunity to read the correspondence, and report to Benjamin.

"I have been very much pleased and profited by this correspondence. It is able for two boys like you and John; but I think John has the advantage of you."

"John the advantage!" exclaimed Benjamin, with considerable surprise and anxiety. "How so?"

"In some respects, not in all, I mean," added his father.

"Tell me of one thing in which he has advantage," and Benjamin manifested disappointment when he made the request.

"Well, John's style of composition seems to me more finished, and he expresses himself with more clearness."

"I rather think you are prejudiced, father" Benjamin said this for the want of something better to say.

"*I* rather think not," answered his father. "You have the advantage of John in correct spelling, and in punctuation, which is the consequence of working in the printing office. But I can convince you that less method and clearness characterize your letters than his."

"I am ready to be convinced," answered Benjamin. "I hardly think I have attained perfection in writing yet."

His father proceeded to read from the letters of each, with the design of showing that John's composition was more perspicuous, and that there was more method in his argument. Nor was it a very difficult task.

"I am convinced," acknowledged Benjamin, before his father had read all he intended to read. "I can make improvement in those things without much trouble. There is certainly a good chance for it."

"That is what I want you should see. I am very much pleased with your letters, for they show that you have talents to improve, and that you are an original, independent thinker. My only reason in calling your attention to these defects is to assist you in mental improvement."

Benjamin was just the boy to be benefited by such friendly criticism. It would discourage some boys, and they would despair of any future excellence. The rank and file of boys would not be aroused by it to overcome the difficulty and go up higher. But Benjamin was aroused, and he resolved that his composition should yet be characterized by elegance and perspicuity. He set about that improvement at once. We shall see, in another chapter, how he purchased an old copy of the *Spectator* for a model, and set about improving his style.

It is quite evident that Mr. Franklin thought well of Benjamin's argument on female education, for he did not criticise it. Perhaps it was here that he found proof that his son was "an original and independent thinker." It is somewhat remarkable that a boy at that time should hold and advocate views of female education that have not been advanced generally until within forty years. Looking about now, we see that females stand side by side with males, in schools and colleges, in ability and scholarship; that they constitute a large proportion of teachers in our land now, when, before the American Revolution, it was not thought proper to employ them at all; that many of them are now classed with the most distinguished authors, editors, and lecturers; and that not a few occupy places of distinction in the learned professions, while many others are trusty clerks, book-keepers, saleswomen, and telegraph-operators. Young Franklin's views, the Boston printer-boy, a hundred and seventy years ago, are illustrated and confirmed to-day by the prominence and value of educated females.

That a printer-boy of fifteen years could accomplish so much when he was obliged to work from twelve to fifteen hours each day at his trade, seems almost incredible. But he allowed no moments to run to waste. He always kept a book by him in the office, and every spare moment was employed over its pages. In the morning, before he went to work, he found some time for reading and study. He was an early riser, not, perhaps, because he had no inclination to lie in bed, but he had more time to improve his mind. He gained time enough in the morning, by this early rising, to acquire more knowledge than some youth and young men do by going constantly to school. In the evening he found still more time for mental improvement, extending his studies often far into the night. It was his opinion that people generally consume more time than is necessary in sleep, and one of his maxims, penned in ripe manhood, was founded on that opinion: "The sleeping fox catches no poultry."

It is not surprising that a boy who subjected himself to such discipline for a series of years should write some of the best maxims upon this subject when he became a man. The following are some of them:

"There are no gains without pains; then help, hands, for I have no lands."

"Industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them."

"Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day."

"Leisure is time for doing something useful."

"A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things."

"Be ashamed to catch yourself idle."

"Handle your tools without mittens; remember, a cat in gloves catches no mice."

"There is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects, for constant dropping wears away stones, and by diligence and patience the mouse ate into the cable."

We have spoken of what the printer-boy accomplished as remarkable. And yet it is not remarkable when we consider the work some men have done in leisure hours alone. Just here is one of the most important lessons to be learned from the example and life of Benjamin Franklin. A similar example is before us here in New England; that of Charles G. Frost, of Brattleboro', Vermont, who was a shoemaker by trade. He died a few years since. He wrote of his own life:

"When I went to my trade, at fourteen years of age, I formed a resolution, which I have kept till now—extraordinary preventives only excepted—that I would faithfully devote *one hour each day* to study, in some useful branch of knowledge."

Here was the secret of his success—one hour a day. Almost any boy can have that. He was forty-five when he wrote the above, a married man, with three children, still devoting one hour a day, at least, to study, and still at work at his trade. He had made such attainments in mathematical science, at forty-five, it was claimed for him that not more than ten mathematicians could be found in the United States in advance of him. He wrote further of himself:

"The first book which fell into my hands was Hutton's Mathematics, an English work of great celebrity, a complete mathematical course, which I then commenced, namely, at fourteen. I finished it at nineteen without an instructor. I then took up those studies to which I could apply my knowledge of mathematics, as mechanics and mathematical astronomy. I think I can say that I possess, and have successfully studied, *all* the most approved English and American works on these subjects."

After this he commenced natural philosophy and physical astronomy; then chemistry, geology, and mineralogy, collecting and arranging a cabinet. Mr. Frost continues:

"Next, natural philosophy engaged my attention, which I followed up with close observation, gleaning my information from a great many sources. The works that treat of them at large are rare and expensive. But I have a considerable knowledge of geology, ornithology, entomology, and conchology."

Not only this; he added to his store of knowledge the science of botany, and made himself master of it. He made extensive surveys in his own state, of the trees, shrubs, herbs, ferns, mosses, lichens, and fungi. He had the *third* best collection of ferns in the United States. He, also, directed his attention to meteorology, and devoted much of his time to acquire a knowledge of the law of storms, and the movements of the erratic and extraordinary bodies in the air and heavens. He took up the study of Latin, and pursued it until he could read it fluently. He read all the standard poets, and had copies of their works in his library. Also, he became proficient in history, while his miscellaneous reading was very extensive. Of his books he wrote:

"I have a library which I divide into three departments—scientific, religious, literary—comprising the standard works published in this country, containing five or six hundred volumes. I have purchased these books from time to time with money saved for the purpose by some small self-denials."

Benjamin Franklin's record, on the whole, may surpass this. Both of them show, however, what the persistent and systematic improvement of spare moments will accomplish. If a girl or boy can command one hour a day for reading, twenty pages could be read thoughtfully in that time, or one hundred and forty pages in a week. In a single year more than seven thousand pages, which is equal to eighteen large duodecimo volumes! In twenty years, one hundred and fifty thousand pages, or three hundred and sixty-five volumes of the size named above! Divide this amount of reading among history, philosophy, chemistry, biography, and general literature, and the reader will be well versed in these several departments of knowledge.

The old adage is, "Time is money," but the leisure time of Franklin was worth vastly more than money, as it is to every youth; for it was culture, usefulness, and character.

XI.

STARTING A NEWSPAPER.

Benjamin had been in the printing office about three years when his brother decided to publish a newspaper. It was a doubtful enterprise from the outset, and friends tried to dissuade him from it. But he viewed the matter from his own standpoint, as the Franklins were wont to do, and the paper was started. It was called "THE NEW ENGLAND COURANT," and the first number was issued Aug. 21, 1721. Only three papers in the whole country were published before this. The first one was *The Boston News-letter*, established April 24, 1704, two years before the birth of Benjamin. It was only a half-sheet of paper, about the size of an eight by twelve inch pane of glass, "in two pages folio, with two columns on each page." It could not have contained more printed matter than is now compressed into one-third or one-half page of one of our Boston dailies. The other papers were *The Boston Gazette*, established Dec. 21, 1719; and *The American Weekly Mercury*, of Philadelphia, Dec. 22, 1719.

There was not a little commotion when James Franklin launched *The New England Courant*. It was regarded generally as a wild project. It was not thought that three newspapers could live in America. The field was not large enough. This fact, considered in contrast with the supply of papers and journals now, daily, weekly, and monthly, shows the wonderful growth of the country. At that time, there was not a daily paper in the land; now, there are over one thousand,—eight of them in the city of Boston, having a daily circulation of from three to four hundred thousand. The papers and magazines of the United States, of all descriptions, reach the surprising aggregate of nearly twenty thousand, and their circulation is almost fabulous. One hundred thousand, and even two hundred thousand, daily, is claimed for some journals. Some weekly issues reach three hundred thousand, and even four and five hundred thousand. Bind the daily issues of Boston into volumes, containing one hundred sheets each, and we have an enormous library of daily newspapers, numbering about ONE MILLION VOLUMES, the annual production of the Boston daily press now! And this is the aggregate of only the eight dailies, while Boston has nearly two hundred papers and periodicals of all sorts, and the State of Massachusetts nearly four hundred!

If the eight Boston dailies measure one yard each in width, when opened, on the average, and they are laid end to end, we have more than three hundred thousand yards of newspapers laid each day, which is equal to *one hundred and seventy miles* daily, over *one thousand miles* in a week, and FIFTY-ONE THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIX in a year! More than enough papers to reach twice around the earth!

Or, suppose we weigh these papers: If ten of them weigh a single pound, then each day's issue weighs *thirty thousand pounds*, each week's issue *one hundred and eighty thousand*, the aggregate of the year amounting to NINE MILLION POUNDS! Load this yearly production upon wagons, one ton on each, and we have a procession of FOUR THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED wagons, that reaches, allowing one rod to a team, over FOURTEEN MILES!

And the *New England Courant* third in the procession! Benjamin was much given to prophesying, but no prophecy from his lips ever covered such a growth as this. He was in favor of starting the paper, but he could not have had the faintest conception of what was going to follow.

"I want to set up the paper," he said to James; "I think I can make the best looking paper."

"I think you can; and it is going to require much attention and planning to make it a success. I may fail in the attempt, but I'll have the satisfaction of trying."

"I will do all I can to make it succeed, if I have to sit up nights," Benjamin continued. "It will give your office notoriety to publish a paper. But how will you dispose of it?"

"Sell it on the street; and you will be a good hand to do that. No doubt there will be some regular subscribers, and you can deliver copies to them from week to week."

"And be collector, too, I suppose," added Benjamin, who had no objection to any part of the work named.

"As you please about that. Doubtless it will be convenient to have you attend to that, at times at least."

"You won't make me editor yet, I conclude," remarked Benjamin, facetiously, thinking that about all the work on the paper, except the editorship, had been assigned to him.

"Not yet, I think," responded James; "printer, news-dealer, news-carrier, and collector will be as much honor as any one of the Franklins can withstand at once"; and he had as little idea of the part Benjamin would play in the enterprise as the boy himself.

There is no doubt that Benjamin had an idea that the paper might have in its columns some of his fugitive pieces, sooner or later. He had been cultivating his talents in this direction, and never was enjoying it more than he was at the time the *New England Courant* was established.

"How many copies shall you publish in the first issue?" inquired
Benjamin.

"I am not quite decided about that; anywhere from two to three hundred. We will see how it goes first."

"How about articles for it? Will you have any trouble about getting articles?"

"None at all. I am to have several articles at once for the first number, from parties who can write well; and when the paper is well under way there will be a plenty of volunteer contributors. I have no fears about that."

Benjamin might have responded, "Here is one," for there is no doubt that he was already flattering himself with the idea that he would be a contributor to its columns, known or unknown. Here was the real secret of his enthusiastic interest in the enterprise.

On the day mentioned the new paper was issued, as had been announced, and great was the anxiety of the publisher. Many citizens awaited its coming with lively anticipations; and, on the whole, it was a memorable occasion. No one's interest surpassed that of the printer-boy, Benjamin, who had no hesitation in selling the paper on the street, and rather liked that part of the business. In his view, it was an honorable and enterprising venture, that challenged the respect and support of every citizen.

The reception of the *Courant* was all that James anticipated. It sold as well as he expected, and the comments upon its ability and character were as favorable as the times and circumstances would warrant. There were criticisms, of course, and severe ones, too, for, in that day, all sorts of projects were subjected to a crucial test. The *Courant* was no exception to the rule.

Now that the newspaper is launched, and there is new interest and activity in consequence in the printing office, we will recur to an episode in Benjamin's career, that occurred two years before; for it sustains a very close relation to the newspaper enterprise and what followed:

Benjamin had been in the printing office about a year when he surprised his brother by the inquiry:

"How much will you allow me a week if I will board myself?"

"Do you think I pay more for your board than it is worth?" replied James, Yankee-like, by asking another question, instead of answering the one propounded.

"No more than you will be obliged to pay in any other family, but more than I shall ask you. It costs you now more than you need to pay." James was still boarding Benjamin in a family near by.

"Then you think of opening a boarding-house for the special accommodation of Benjamin Franklin, I see," which was treating the subject rather lightly.

"I propose to board myself," answered Benjamin, distinctly and emphatically. "I do not eat meat of any kind, as you know, so that I can board myself easily, and I will agree to do it if you will give me weekly one-half the money you pay for my board."

"Of course I will agree to it," answered James. "It will be so much in my pocket, and the bargain is made. When will you begin to keep your boarder?"

"To-morrow," was Benjamin's quick reply. "A vegetarian can open a boarding-house for himself without much preparation."

"To-morrow it is, then; but it will not take you long to become sick of that arrangement. Keeping boarders is not a taking business, even if you have no boarder but yourself."

"That is my lookout," continued Benjamin. "I have my own ideas about diet and work, play and study, and some other things; and I am going to reduce them to practice."

Benjamin had been reading a work on "vegetable diet," by one Tryon, and it was this which induced him to discard meats as an article of food. He was made to believe that better health and a clearer head

would be the result, though from all we can learn he was not lacking in either. Mr. Tryon, in his work, gave directions for cooking vegetables, such dishes as a vegetarian might use, so that the matter of boarding himself was made quite simple.

The great object which Benjamin had in view was to save money for buying books. It seemed to be the only way open to get money for that purpose. At the same time, he would have more hours to read. He had been trying the "vegetable diet" at his boarding place for some time, and he liked it. He was really one of Tryon's converts. Other boarders ridiculed his diet, and had considerable sport over his "oddity"; but he cared nothing for that. They could eat what they pleased, and so could he. He was as independent on the subject of diet as he was on any other. He did not pin his faith in any thing upon the sleeve of another; he fastened it to his own sleeve, and let it fly.

The incident illustrates the difference between the two brothers. If James had been as unselfish and generous as Benjamin was, he would have paid the latter the full amount of his board weekly. He would have said:

"You have a passion for reading and study. You do this for self-improvement. You want to know more, and make the most of yourself that you can. In these circumstances I will not make any money out of you. If I give you the whole amount I pay for board I shall lose nothing, and you will gain considerable. It will help you, and I shall be kept whole in my finances. You shall have it all."

But the fact was, James was avaricious, and was bent on making money, though he made it out of his younger brother. On the other hand, Benjamin was large-hearted and generous, or he never would have offered, in the outset, to take half James paid for his board. Had he been as niggardly as James, he could have made a better bargain than that for himself. But it was not a good bargain that he was after; he was after the books.

James was curious to see how Benjamin would succeed with his new method of living. So he watched him closely, without saying any thing in particular about it; perhaps expecting that his brother would soon tire of boarding himself. Weeks passed by, and still Benjamin was hale, strong, and wide-awake as ever. His actions indicated that he was well satisfied both with his bargain and his board. Finally, however, James' curiosity grew to such proportions that he inquired one day,—

"Ben, how much do you make by boarding yourself?"

"I save just half the money you pay me, so that it costs me just one-quarter as much as you paid for my board."

"You understand economy, I must confess," remarked James. "However, I ought to be satisfied if you are." Perhaps his conscience might have troubled him somewhat, and caused him to think how much better off his young brother would have been, if he had given him the full amount of the board, as he should have done. If Benjamin had been a common boy, without high aspirations and noble endeavors, or a spendthrift, or idler, there might have been some excuse for driving a close bargain with him; but, in the circumstances, the act was unbrotherly and ungenerous.

"The money I save is not the best part of it," added Benjamin after a little. "I save a half-hour and more usually every noon for reading. After I have eaten my meal, I usually read as long as that before you return from dinner."

"Not a very sumptuous dinner, I reckon; sawdust pudding, perhaps, with cold water sauce! When I work I want something to work on. Living on nothing would be hard on me." James indicated by this remark that he had no confidence in that sort of diet.

"I live well enough for me. A biscuit or a slice of bread, with a tart or a few raisins, and a glass of water, make a good dinner for me; and then my head is all the lighter for study."

"Yes, I should think you might have a light head with such living," retorted James, "and your body will be as light before many weeks, I prophesy."

"I will risk it. I am on a study now that requires a clear head, and I am determined to master it."

"What is that?"

"Cocker's Arithmetic."

"Begin to wish that you knew something of arithmetic by this time! Making up for misspent time, I see. Paying old debts is not interesting business."

James meant this last remark for a fling at Benjamin's dislike for arithmetic when he attended school.

Not devoting himself to it with the enthusiasm he gave to more congenial studies, he was more deficient in that branch of knowledge than in any other. He regretted his neglect of the study now, and was determined to make up his loss. This was very honorable, and showed a noble aim, which merited praise, instead of a fling, from his brother.

"I think it must be a sort of luxury to pay old debts, if one has any thing to pay them with," remarked Benjamin. "If I can make up any loss of former years now, I enjoy doing it, even by the closest economy of time."

"Well, you estimate time as closely as a miser counts his money, Ben."

"And I have a right to do it. As little time as I have to myself requires that I should calculate closely. Time is money to you, or else you would allow me a little more to myself; and it is more than money to me."

"How so?"

"It enables me to acquire knowledge, which I can not buy with money. Unless I were saving of my time, I should not be able to read or study at all, having to work so constantly."

Perhaps, at this time, Benjamin laid the foundation for that economy which distinguished him in later life, and about which he often wrote. Among his wise sayings, in the height of his influence and fame, were the following:

"If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as of getting."

"What maintains one vice would bring up two children."

"Many a little makes a mickle."

"A small leak will sink a ship."

"At a great penny worth pause awhile."

"Silks and satins, scarlets and velvets, put out the kitchen fire."

"Always taking out of the meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom."

"It is easier to build two chimneys than to keep one in fuel."

"A penny saved is a penny earned."

"A penny saved is two-pence clear."

"A pin a day is a groat a year."

"He that wastes idly a groat's worth of his time per day, one day with another, wastes the privilege of using one hundred pounds each day."

"In short, the way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, *industry* and *frugality*; that is, waste neither *time* nor *money*, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality nothing will do, and with them every thing. He that gets all he can honestly, and saves all he gets (necessary expenses excepted), will certainly become *rich*—if that Being who governs the world, to whom all should look for a blessing on their honest endeavors, doth not, in his wise providence, otherwise determine."

The reader may desire to know just how Franklin himself speaks of the "vegetable diet" experiment in his "Autobiography"; so we quote it here:

"I happened to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusing to eat flesh occasioned an inconvenience, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty-pudding, and a few others, and then proposed to my brother, that if he would give me weekly half the money he paid for my board, I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying of books; but I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast (which was often no more than a biscuit, or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins, or a tart from the pastry cook's, and a glass of water), had the rest of the time, till their return, for study; in which I

made the greater progress from that greater clearness of head, and quicker apprehension, which generally attend temperance in eating and drinking. Now it was, that, being on some occasion made ashamed of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed learning when at school, I took Cocker's book on arithmetic, and went through the whole by myself with the greatest ease."

XII.

THE RUSE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

Mr. Parton says of the *Courant*, "It was a most extraordinary sheet. Of all the colonial newspapers, it was the most spirited, witty, and daring. The Bostonians, accustomed to the monotonous dullness of the *News-letter*, received, some with delight, more with horror, all with amazement, this weekly budget of impudence and fun. A knot of liberals gathered around James Franklin, physicians most of them, able, audacious men, who kept him well supplied with squibs, essays, and every variety of sense and nonsense known in that age. The *Courant* was, indeed, to borrow the slang of the present day, a 'sensational paper.' Such a tempest did it stir up in Boston that the noise thereof was heard in the remote colony of Pennsylvania."

The "knot of liberals" who wrote articles for it, met often at the office to discuss their contributions, and the state of public sentiment more or less affected by this venture. The *News-letter* came in for a large share of the opposition, and they declared war against many of the existing customs,—governmental, political, and social. The scope and circulation of the paper was a frequent topic of remark.

Benjamin's ears were always open to their conversation. He heard the merits of different articles set forth, and learned that certain ones were quite popular and elicited favorable remarks from readers generally. This excited his ambition, and he strongly desired to try his own ability in writing for the paper. He feared, however, that his composition would not be regarded favorably, if it were known who was the author; so he resorted to the following expedient:

"I will write an anonymous article," he said within himself, "in the best style I can, and get it into James' hand in some way that will not arouse his suspicions. I will disguise my handwriting, and give it some fictitious name, so that he will not dream that it was written in the office."

Accordingly the article was prepared, describing his ideal of character, and that was the character he himself formed, and was forming then; and he signed it SILENCE DOGOOD. This article he slipped under the printing office door at night, where James found it in the morning, and read it with evident satisfaction, as Benjamin thought, who narrowly watched him. In a little while some of the "knot of liberals" came in, and the article was read to them.

"It is a good article, and it was slipped under the door last night," said James. "It is signed 'Silence Dogood.'"

"You have no idea who wrote it, then?" inquired one.

"Not the least whatever."

"It is capital, whoever the author may be," remarked one of the critics.

"Somebody wrote it who knows how to wield his pen," said another.

"Ordinarily I shall not publish articles without knowing who the author is," remarked James; "but this is so good that I shall not stop to inquire. I shall put it into the next issue."

"By all means, of course," replied one. "No doubt we shall soon learn who the author is; it is a difficult matter to keep such things secret for a long time."

"The author is evidently a person of ability," added another; "every sentence in the article is charged with thought. I should judge that he needed only practice to make him a writer of the first class."

"Publishing the article will be as likely as any thing to bring out the author," suggested James.

"That is so; and the sooner it is published the better," remarked one of the company approvingly.

Much more was said in praise of the article. The names of several prominent citizens of Boston were mentioned as the possible author. James himself named one or two, who were Boston's most intelligent and influential citizens, as the possible author.

All approved the insertion of the article in the next issue of the paper, much to the satisfaction of Benjamin, who was the most deeply interested party in the office. He scarcely knew how to act in regard to the article, whether to father it at once, or still conceal its parentage. On the whole, however, he decided to withhold its authorship for the present, and try his hand again in the same way.

The reader may judge of Benjamin's emotions when he came to put his own article in type for the paper. It was almost too good to be real. Fact was even stranger than fiction to him. In the outset he dreamed that somehow and sometime the columns of the *Courant* might contain a contribution of his own; and here he was setting up his first article with the approval of James and the whole "knot of liberals." This was more than he bargained for; and his heart never came so near beating through his jacket as then. Never was a printer-boy so happy before. He was happy all over and all through—a lump of happiness. Not one boy in a hundred could have managed to keep the secret as he did, in the circumstances. Their countenances would have exposed it on the spot. But Benjamin possessed his soul in patience, and carried out his ruse admirably.

The issue containing Benjamin's article appeared on time, and was greatly praised. "Who is 'Silence Dogood'?" was the most common inquiry. "I wonder who 'Silence Dogood' can be," was a frequent remark, showing that the article attracted much attention. Benjamin wondered as much as any of them. "A queer signature to put to an article," he said. "What in the world could suggest such a *nom de plume* to a writer?" He enjoyed his ruse more and more: it became the choicest fun of his life. It was so crammed with felicity that he resolved to continue it by writing more articles as well-chosen and good.

He was able to prepare a better article for the second one, because he brought to its preparation the enthusiasm and encouragement awakened by the favorable reception of the first. Besides, the many remarks he had heard about it gave him points for another communication, so as to make it sharper, better adapted to the times, and hence more timely. Within a short time, the second article was slipped under the door at night for James to pick up in the morning.

"Another article from 'Silence Dogood,'" exclaimed James, as he opened it and read the signature.

"I thought we should hear from that writer again," was all the remark that Benjamin vouchsafed.

"A good subject!" added James, as he read the caption. "I will read it," and he proceeded to read the article to Benjamin.

The latter listened with attention that was somewhat divided between the excellent reception the article was having and the grand success of his ruse.

"Better even than the first article," remarked James after having read it. "We must not rest until we find out who the author is. It is somebody of note."

The second article was submitted to the "knot of liberals," the same as the first one, and all approved it highly.

"It is sharper than the first one, and hits the nail on the head every time," said one of the number. "Dogood is a good name for such a writer."

"And we shall have more of them, no doubt," suggested James; "it is quite evident that the writer means to keep on."

"I hope he will; such articles will call attention to the paper, and that is what we want," added another.

"In the mean time, let us find out if possible who the writer is," suggested still another. "It will be a help to the paper to have it known who is the author, if it is one of the scholars."

Charles Dickens was a poorer boy than Benjamin ever was, knowing what it was to go to bed hungry and cold; but his young heart aspired after a nobler life, and, while yet a boy, he wrote an article for the press, disclosing the fact not even to his mother, and then, on a dark night, he dropped it "into a dark letter box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet street." His joy was too great for utterance when he saw it in print. It was the beginning of a career as a writer unparalleled in English or American history. And he told the secret of it when he wrote, "While other boys played, I read Roderick Random, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Bias, and other books. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time."

Benjamin heard all that was said, and still kept his secret. It would not have been strange if his vanity had been inflated by these complimentary remarks. Ordinary humanity could scarcely be exposed to so high praise without taking on a new sense of its importance. But Benjamin kept down his pride, and his heart continued to abide under his jacket though it beat mightily. Was it any wonder?

Without stopping to narrate details, it is sufficient to say that Benjamin wrote several articles, and sent them forward to James under the door; and they were all pronounced good by James and his friends. He began to think that it was almost time to let out the secret. James was fairly committed to the excellence of all the articles, and so were the other critics. This was important to the success of Benjamin's plan. He had feared, as he had continued industriously to set up type, that a disclosure would knock all his plans into "pi"; but he had no fears now. But how should he disclose? That was the question. It was not long, however, before the question was settled. His brother made some remark about the last article slipped under the door, and wondered that the author had not become known.

"I know who the author is," said Benjamin under such a degree of excitement as even an older person would experience on the eve of an important revelation.

"You know!" exclaimed James in great surprise. "If you know, why have you not disclosed it before?"

"Because I thought it was not wise. It is not best to tell all we know always."

"But you have heard us discuss this matter over and over, and take measures to discover the author, and yet you have never intimated that you knew any thing about it."

"Well, the author did not wish to be known until the right time came, and that is a good reason for keeping the matter secret, I think."

"Will you tell who the author is now?" asked James, impatient to obtain the long-sought information.

"Perhaps I will if you are very anxious to know."

"Of course I am, and every one else who is interested in the paper."

That was the crisis to James. We can scarcely conceive of its interest to the boy-writer. His time of triumph had come. James had not treated him very well, and we think he enjoyed that moment of victory a little more for that reason. That would have been human, and Benjamin was human. His ruse had proved successful, and his talents, too. Now he could startle his brother as much as would a thunder-bolt out of a clear sky. So he answered his inquiry by saying,—

"Benjamin Franklin "; and he said it with emphasis and an air of triumph.

If James' countenance could have been photographed at that moment, it would have shown a mixture of amazement, incredulity, and wonder. It was several moments before he so far recovered from the shock as to be able to speak.

"What! Do you mean to say that you wrote those articles?" Benjamin might have discovered some doubt in James' tone and appearance when he spoke.

"Certainly I do."

"But it is not your handwriting."

"It is my handwriting disguised. I wa' n't fool enough to let you have the articles in my own handwriting without disguise, when I wished to conceal the authorship."

"What could possibly be your object in doing so?"

"That the articles might be fairly examined. If I had proposed to write an article for your paper, you would have said that I, a printer-boy, could write nothing worthy of print."

"But if I had seen and read the articles, knowing them to be yours, I should have judged them fairly," James insisted, evidently feeling somewhat hurt by his brother's last remark. Nevertheless, Benjamin was right. It is probable that his articles would have been rejected, had he offered them in his own name to the critics.

"Well, that was my plan, and the articles have had a fair show, and I am satisfied, whether you are or not," was Benjamin's reply in an independent spirit.

Here the conversation dropped. James bestowed no words of commendation upon his brother's ability. Perhaps he thought that he had praised the articles enough when he did not know who the

author was. But he appeared to be abstracted in thought until some of the "knot of liberals" came in.

"I have discovered who 'Silence Dogood' is," he said.

"You have? Who can it be?" and the speaker was very much surprised.

"No one that you have dreamed of."

"Is that so? I am all the more anxious to learn who it is," he continued.

"There he is," replied James, pointing to Benjamin, who was setting type a little more briskly than usual, as if he was oblivious to what was going on.

"What! Benjamin? You are joking, surely," replied one.

"Your brother out there!" exclaimed another, pointing to Benjamin; "you do not mean it!"

"Yes, I do mean it. He is the author, and he has satisfied me that he is. You can see for yourselves."

The "knot of liberals" was never so amazed, and now they all turned to Benjamin, and he had to speak for himself. They were not entirely satisfied that there was not some mistake or deception about the matter. But he found little difficulty in convincing them that he was the real author of the communications, whereupon they lavished their commendations upon him to such an extent as to make it perilous to one having much vanity in his heart.

From that time Benjamin was a favorite with the literary visitors at the office. They showed him much more attention than they did James, and said so much in his praise, as a youth of unusual promise, that James became jealous and irritable. He was naturally passionate and tyrannical, and this sudden and unexpected exaltation of Benjamin developed his overbearing spirit. He found more fault with him, and became very unreasonable in his treatment. Probably he had never dreamed that Benjamin possessed more talents than other boys of his age. Nor did he care, so long as his brother was an apprentice, and he could rule over him as a master. He did not appear to regard the blood-relationship between them, but only that of master and apprentice. In other words, he was a poor specimen of a brother, and we shall learn more about him in the sequel.

In his "Autobiography," Franklin tells the story of his ruse as follows:

"James had some ingenious men among his friends, who amused themselves by writing little pieces for this paper, which gained it credit, and made it more in demand, and these gentlemen often visited us. Hearing their conversations, and their accounts of the approbation their papers were received with, I was excited to try my hand among them. But, being still a boy, and suspecting that my brother would object to printing any thing of mine in his paper, if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and, writing an anonymous paper, I put it at night under the door of the printing house. It was found in the morning, and communicated to his writing friends, when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity. I suppose that I was rather lucky in my judges, and that they were not really so very good as I then believed them to be. Encouraged, however, by this attempt, I wrote and sent in the same way to the press several other pieces, that were equally approved; and I kept my secret till all my fund of sense for such performances was exhausted, and then discovered it, when I began to be considered a little more by my brother's acquaintance.

"However, that did not quite please him, as he thought it tended to make me too vain. This might be one occasion of the differences we began to have about this time. Though a brother he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice, and accordingly expected the same services from me as he would from another, while I thought he degraded me too much in some he required of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence."

The foregoing was one of the incidents of Benjamin's boyhood that decided his future eminent career. It was a good thing to bring out his talents as a writer thus early, and it introduced him to an exercise that was of the first importance in the improvement of his mind. From the time he wrote the first article for the *Courant*, he did not cease to write for the public. Probably no other American boy began his public career so early—sixteen. He had written much before, but it was not for the press. It was done for self-improvement, and not for the public eye. The newspaper opened a new and unexpected channel of communication with the public that was well suited to awaken his deepest interest and inspire his noblest efforts.

The incident reminds us of Canning's *Microcosm*. He, the great English statesman, was scarcely as

old as Benjamin when he established a boy's periodical in the school at Eton, whither he was sent. It was christened *Microcosm*, which means, literally, "the little world." It was a weekly publication issued from Windsor. It was conducted "after the plan of the *Spectator*"—a work that was of immense value to Benjamin, as we shall see,—"the design being to treat the characteristics of the boys at Eton as Addison and his friends had done those of general society." In this paper several members of the school figured with credit to themselves, though no one was more prominent and capable than Canning.

It became one of the prominent influences that decided his future course, as he always affirmed, developing his talents, and stimulating his mind to labor in this honorable way. It also exerted a decided influence upon the character of another boy, named Frere, who afterwards shone as a writer on the pages of the *Anti-Jacobin*.

Examples of industry, enterprise, despatch, promptness, punctuality, and circumspection are inspiring to both old and young; and nowhere do these noble qualities appear to better advantage than they do where busy brains and hands make the newspaper in the printing office. It is a remarkably useful school. It was so when Benjamin was a boy. It was a far better school for him than that of Williams or Brownwell. Here he laid the foundation of his learning and fame. The same was true of Horace Greeley, who founded the *New York Tribune*, and of Henry J. Raymond, who made the *Times* what it is. The late Vice-President Schuyler Colfax was schooled in a printing office for his honorable public career; and the same was true of other distinguished statesmen. But none of these examples are so remarkable as the following, that was made possible by Benjamin Franklin's example.

A waif two years of age was taken from a benevolent institution in Boston, and given to a childless sailor, on his way from a voyage to his home in Maine on the Penobscot River. The sailor knew not from what institution the child was taken, nor whence he came. He carried it home, without a name, or the least clue to his ancestry. The sailor's wife was a Christian woman, and had prayed for just such a gift as that. She resolved to train him for the Lord. At twelve years of age he became a Christian, and, from that time, longed to be a minister. But poverty stood in his way, and there was little prospect of his hopes being realized.

At length, however, he read the life of Benjamin Franklin; and he learned how the printing office introduced him into a noble life-work. "I will go through the printing office into the ministry," he said to his adopted mother. So, at fifteen, he became a printer in Boston. After a while, his health broke down, and the way to regain it seemed to be through service to a wealthy man on his farm in the country. There his health was restored, and his benevolent employer got him into Andover Academy, where he led the whole class. Near the close of his preparatory course, on a Saturday night, the author met him under the following circumstances:

He was then nineteen years of age. On that day he had learned from what institution he was taken, and, going thither, he ascertained that he had a sister three years older than himself, living thirty miles north of Boston. It was the first knowledge he had received about any of his relatives. He was ten years old when his adopted parents informed him that he was taken, a waif, from an institution in Boston. From that time he was curious to find the institution and learn something of his ancestry. He was too young, when he was taken away, to remember that he had a sister. But on that day he learned the fact; and he took the first train to meet her. The author took the train, also, to spend the Sabbath with the minister who reared the sister. We met in the same family. What a meeting of brother and sister! The latter had mourned, through all these years, that she knew not what had become of her baby-brother, whom she well remembered and loved; but here he was, nineteen years of age, a manly, noble, Christian young man! Could she believe her eyes? Could we, who were lookers on, think it real? We received the story of his life from his own lips.

He was the best scholar in his class through academy, college, and theological seminary, and is now an able and useful minister of the Gospel, indebted TO THE EXAMPLE AND EXPERIENCE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN IN THE PRINTING OFFICE FOR WHAT HE IS!

XIII.

BOOKS OF HIS BOYHOOD.

Coleridge divided readers into four classes, thus: "The first may be compared to an hour-glass, their

reading being as the sand; it runs in, and it runs out, and leaves not a vestige behind. A second class resembles a sponge, which imbibes every thing, and returns it merely in the same state, only a little dirtier. A third class is like a jelly-bag, which allows all that is pure to pass away, and retains only the refuse and the dregs. The fourth class may be compared to the slave in the diamond mines of Golconda, who, casting aside all that is worthless, preserves only the pure gem."

Benjamin belonged to the fourth class, which is the smallest class of all. The "hour-glass" class, who simply let what they read "run in and run out," is very large. It is not entitled to much respect, however, for it will bring no more to pass than the class who do not read at all.

Benjamin sought the "pure gem." If he had any thing, he wanted diamonds. Nor did he accept "a stone for bread." He knew what bread was, which is not true of many readers; and so he had bread or nothing. His mind was a voracious eater, much more of an eater than his body. It demanded substantial food, too, the bread, meat, and potato of literature and science. It did not crave cake and confectionery. There was no mincing and nibbling when it went to a meal. It just laid in as if to shame starvation; it almost gobbled up what was on the table. It devoured naturally and largely. It was fortunate for him that his mind was so hungry all the time; otherwise, his desire to go to sea, his love of sport, and his unusual social qualities might have led him astray. Thousands of boys have been ruined in this way, whom passionate fondness of reading might have made useful and eminent. Thomas Hood said: "A natural turn for reading and intellectual pursuits probably preserved me from the moral shipwrecks so apt to befall those who are deprived in early life of their parental pilotage. My books kept me from the ring, the dog-pit, the tavern, and saloon. The closet associate of Pope and Addison, the mind accustomed to the noble though silent discourse of Shakespeare and Milton, will hardly seek or put up with that sort of company."

It was probably as true of Benjamin Franklin as it was of Thomas Hood, that reading saved him from a career of worldliness and worthlessness. In his manhood he regarded the habit in this light, and said: "From my infancy I was passionately fond of reading, and all the money that came into my hands was laid out in the purchasing of books." If he had laid out his money in billiards, boating, theatre-going, and kindred pleasures, as so many do, he might have been known in manhood as Ben, the Bruiser, instead of "Ben, the Statesman and Philosopher."

The first book Benjamin read was "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress." He was fascinated with it, and read it over and over, much to the gratification of his parents.

"What is there about it that interests you so much?" inquired his father, hoping that it might be the subject alone.

"The dialogues that are carried on in it," replied Benjamin.

"Then you think more of the style than you do of the matter?" remarked his father, evidently somewhat disappointed that he was not specially taken with Christian's journey.

"It is all interesting. I should never get tired of reading such a book." This reply reassured his father, and he got considerable comfort out of it, after having set before the boy the true idea of Christian's flight from the City of Destruction.

"It was written in Bedford jail, England," continued his father. "There was much persecution in his day, and he was thrust into prison to keep him from preaching the Gospel; but the plan did not succeed very well, for he has been preaching it ever since through that book, that he never would have written had he not been imprisoned."

"Then he was a minister, was he?" said Benjamin.

"No, he was not a minister; he was a tinker, and a very wicked man, so profane that he was a terror to good people. But he was converted and became a Christian, and went about doing good, as Christ did, preaching the Gospel in his way, in houses, by the way side, anywhere that he could, until he was sent to prison for doing good."

"A strange reason for sending a man to jail," remarked Benjamin.

"They thought that he was doing evil, no doubt. I mean the enemies of the Gospel. They did not believe in the Christian religion which Bunyan had embraced; they thought it would stir up the people to strife and contention, and prove a curse instead of a blessing." Mr. Franklin knew that such information would increase the interest of his son in the book; and it did. The impression wrought upon him by reading this book lasted through his life, and led him to adopt its style in much of his writing when he became a man. He said in manhood:

"Narrative mingled with dialogue is very engaging, not only to the young, but to adults, also. It introduces the reader directly into the company, and he listens to the conversation, and seems to see the parties. Bunyan originated this colloquial style, and Defoe and Richardson were his imitators. It is a style so attractive, conveying instruction so naturally and pleasantly, that it should never be superseded."

Mr. Franklin owned all of Bunyan's works, his "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," and his "Holy War," and "Pilgrim's Progress" just spoken of. Benjamin read them all, but "Pilgrim's Progress" was the one that charmed his soul and more or less influenced his life.

"Defoe's Essay upon Projects" was another volume of his father's, written in the same style as "Pilgrim's Progress," and, for that reason, very interesting to him. He devoured its contents. Its subject-matter was much above the capacity of most boys of his age; but the dialogue method of imparting instruction made it clear and attractive to him. One subject which it advocated was the liberal education of girls; and it was here, without doubt, that Benjamin obtained his views upon advanced female education, which he advocated in his discussion with John Collins.

"Plutarch's Lives" was still another volume his father owned, one of the most inspiring books for the young ever published. He read this so much and carefully that he was made very familiar with the characters therein—information that was of great service to him, later on, in his literary labors and public services.

"There was another book in my father's little library, by Doctor Mather, called, 'An Essay to do Good,'" said Doctor Franklin, in his "Autobiography," "which, perhaps, gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life." He wrote to a son of Doctor Mather about it, late in life, as follows:

"When I was a boy, I met with a book, entitled 'Essays to do Good,' which I think was written by your father (Cotton Mather). It had been so little regarded by a former possessor that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owe the advantage of it to that book."

The "Essays to do Good" consisted of twenty-two short essays of a practical character, inculcating benevolence as a duty and privilege, and giving directions to particular classes. It had lessons for ministers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, magistrates, teachers, mechanics, husbands, wives, gentlemen, deacons, sea-captains, and others. The style was quaint, earnest, and direct, exactly suited to appeal to such a boy as Benjamin; and withal it was so practical that it won his heart.

Mr. Parton records a singular incident about this Doctor Mather, as follows: "How exceedingly strange that such a work as this should have been written by the man who, in 1692, at Salem, when nineteen people were hanged and one was pressed to death for witchcraft, appeared among the crowd, openly exulting in the spectacle! Probably his zeal against the witches was as much the offspring of his benevolence as his 'Essays to do Good.' Concede his theory of witches, and it had been cruelty to man not to hang them. Were they not in league with Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man? Had they not bound themselves by solemn covenant to aid the devil in destroying human souls and afflicting the elect? Cotton Mather had not the slightest doubt of it."

When Benjamin had exhausted the home stock of reading, he showed his sound judgment by saying to his father:

"I wish I could have 'Burton's Historical Collections'; it would be a great treat to read those books."

"It would, indeed; they are very popular, and I should like to have you read them. But how to get them is more than I can tell."

"Would you be willing that I should exchange Bunyan's works for them?"

"I did not suppose that you would part with 'Pilgrim's Progress' for Burton's books or any others," was Mr. Franklin's reply.

"I should rather keep both; but I have read 'Pilgrim's Progress' until I know it by heart, so that I would be willing to part with it for Burton's books, if I can get them in no other way."

"Well, you can see what you can do. I am willing to do 'most any thing to keep you in good books, for they are good companions. I know of no better ones, from all I have heard and read about them, than

'Burton's Collections.'"

"Perhaps I can sell Bunyan's books for enough to buy Burton's," suggested Benjamin. Doubtless he had canvassed the matter, and knew of some opportunity for a trade like that.

"Well, you may do that, if you can; I have no objection. I hope you will succeed."

The result was that Benjamin sold the works of Bunyan, and bought Burton's books in forty small volumes, quite a little library for that day. He was never happier than when he became the owner of "Burton's Historical Collections," famous in England and America, and extensively sold, not only by book-sellers, but also by pedlars. They contained fact, fiction, history, biography, travels, adventures, natural history, and an account of many marvels, curiosities, and wonders, in a series of "twelve-penny books."

Doctor Johnson referred to these books in one of his letters: "There is in the world a set of books which used to be sold by the book-sellers on the bridge, and which I must entreat you to procure me. They are called Burton's books. The title of one is, 'Admirable Curiosities, Rarities, and Wonders in England.' They seem very proper to allure backward readers."

He might have added, also, *forward* readers; for they lured Benjamin, who was, perhaps, the most thoughtful and ready reader of his age in Boston In them he discovered a rich mine of thought and information, and he delved there. He found even nuggets of gold to make his mind richer and his heart gladder.

His father's books were chiefly theological; yet Benjamin's love of reading caused him to read them. He possessed, also, a collection of religious tracts, called the "Boyle Lectures," because Robert Boyle, the youngest son of an Irish earl, a very pious man, originated them, "designed to prove the truth of the Christian religion among infidels." Benjamin read all of these, and his father was delighted to have him read them at the time, thinking that the moral results would be good. But the sequel will show that the effect of reading them was bad. In order to refute the arguments of deists, it was necessary to print them in the tracks. So Benjamin read both sides, and he thought, in some respects, that the deists had the best argument.

Not long after Benjamin became a printer, a prominent citizen of Boston, Matthew Adams, who had heard of his talents and love of reading, met him in the printing office, and entered into conversation with him.

"You are a great reader, I learn," he said.

"Yes, sir, I read considerable every day."

"Do you find all the books you want to read?"

"Not all. I should like to read some books I can't get."

"Perhaps you can find them in my library; you can come and take out of it any book you would like."

"Thank you very much," answered Benjamin, exceedingly gratified by this unexpected offer. "I shall take the first opportunity to call."

"Boys who like to read as well as you do, ought to have books enough," continued Mr. Adams. "I think you will find quite a number of entertaining and useful ones. You will know when you examine for yourself."

"That I shall do very soon, and be very grateful for the privilege," answered Benjamin.

Within a few days, the printer-boy paid Mr. Adams a visit. The latter gave him a cordial welcome, causing him to feel at ease and enjoy his call. He examined the library to his heart's content, and found many books therein he desired to read.

"Come any time: take out any and all the books you please, and keep them till you have done with them," was Mr. Adams' generous offer. He had great interest in the boy, and wanted to assist him; and Benjamin fully appreciated his interest and kindness, and paid the library many visits. As long as he lived he never forgot the generous aid of this man, of whom he wrote in his "Autobiography":

"After some time, a merchant, an ingenious, sensible man, Mr. Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, frequented our printing office, took notice of me, and invited me to see his library, and very kindly proposed to lend me such books as I chose to read."

The printing office was frequented by book-sellers' apprentices, whose employers wanted jobs of

printing done. Benjamin made their acquaintance, and they invited him to call at their stores to examine the books. There were several book-stores in Boston at that time, although the number of books was very limited as compared with the present time.

"I will lend you that book to-night," said one of these apprentices to Benjamin, who was manifesting a deep interest in a certain volume. "You can return it in the morning before customers come in."

"Very much obliged. I shall be glad to read it. I think I can read it through before I go to bed, and I can leave it when I go to the office in the morning."

"You won't have much time for sleep if you read that book through before going to bed. But you are used to short naps, I expect."

"I can afford to have a short nap whenever I have the reading of such a book as this," answered Benjamin. "I shall return it in just as good a condition as it is now."

"The book is for sale, and we might have a customer for it to-morrow, or I would let you have it longer. If you do not read it through to-night, and we do not sell it to-morrow, you can take it again to-morrow night. I frequently read a volume through, a little at a time, before we have a chance to sell it."

This offer of the apprentice was very generous, and Benjamin suitably expressed his appreciation of it.

"Your favor is so great that I shall feel myself under special obligation to return the book in season for any customer to-morrow who may want it. If I were in a book-store, as you are, I fear that my love of reading would overcome my love of work. It would just suit me to be in the company of so many books all the time."

"You could not have your evenings here for reading, as you do now. Our busiest time is in the evening; so that I catch only fragments of time to read—pretty small fragments, some days," said the apprentice.

"Well, it might be only an aggravation to live among so many books, without time to read them," responded Benjamin. "I am content where I am,—a printing office has some advantages over all other places for me."

Benjamin made the most of this new opportunity. Borrowing the first book was followed by borrowing many of the apprentices at the book-stores. All the stores were patronized by him, and many a night was shortened at both ends, that he might devour a book. He fairly gorged himself with book-knowledge.

The reader must not forget that books were very few in number at that time, and it was long before a public library was known in the land. In Boston there were many literary people, who had come hither from England, and they had a limited supply of books. So that Boston was then better supplied with books than any other part of the country, though its supply was as nothing compared with the supply now. Book-stores, instead of being supplied with thousands of volumes to suit every taste in the reading world, offered only a meagre collection of volumes, such as would be scarcely noticed now. There were no large publishing houses, issuing a new book each week-day of the year, as there are at the present time, manufacturing hundreds of cords of them every year, and sending them all over the land. Neither were there any libraries then, as we have before said. Now the Public Library of Boston offers three or four hundred thousand volumes, free to all the citizens, and that number is constantly increasing. With the Athenaeum, and other large libraries for public use, Boston offers a MILLION volumes, from which the poor printer-boy, and all other boys, can make their choice. In almost every town, too, of two thousand inhabitants, a public library is opened, where several hundred or thousand volumes are found from which to select, while private libraries of from one to thirty thousand volumes are counted by the score. The trouble with boys now is, not how to get books to read, but what they shall select from the vast number that load the shelves of libraries and book-stores. Benjamin had no trouble about selecting books; he took all he could get, and was not overburdened at that.

Another book that was of great benefit to Benjamin was an old English grammar which he bought at a book-store. He said of it, in manhood:

"While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's), having at the end of it two little sketches on the Arts of Rhetoric and Logic, the latter finishing with a dispute on the Socratic method."

"What do you want of such a book as that?" inquired John Collins, when he saw it in the printing

office.

"To study, of course; I did not study grammar at school, and I want to know something about it," was Benjamin's answer.

"I expect that some knowledge of it will not come amiss," said John.
"You mean to make the most of these things you can."

"I wanted the volume, too, for the chapters on Rhetoric and Logic at the end," added Benjamin.

"Of what use are Rhetoric and Logic? Perhaps they may be of service to you; they would not be to me." John spoke thus because he knew nothing about them; he had never studied them.

"Every body ought to know something about them, even a printer," added Benjamin. "They have already helped me to form a better opinion of the style and value of some things I have read."

"Well, I can't get time to learn every thing. You seem to learn 'most all there is to learn, with very little time. I wish I could, but I can't, and so I won't try." John was always thus complimentary to Benjamin. He gave him full credit for all his achievements.

"I mean to learn to speak and write the English language with propriety," continued Benjamin, "and I do not know how it can be done without a knowledge of grammar; do you?"

"I know nothing about it, any way whatever. I shall not begin now; am too old. Can't teach old dogs new tricks." John's remark expressed his real views of these things. Although he was a bookish fellow, he was not inclined to go deep into literature or science.

Other books that Benjamin read were Locke's "Essay on the Understanding"; "The Art of Thinking," by Messrs. de Port-Royal; Sellers & Stumey's book on "Navigation," with many others of equal merit.

Benjamin cultivated the habit of taking notes when he read, jotting down notable facts and striking thoughts for future use. It is a capital practice, and one that has been followed by nearly all learners who have distinguished themselves in scholarship. He realized the advantages of the method to such a degree that, in manhood, he addressed the following letter from London to a bright girl in whose education he was very much interested:

"CRAVEN STREET, May 16, 1760.

> "I send my good girl the books I mentioned to her last night. I beg her to accept of them as a small mark of my esteem and friendship. They are written in the familiar, easy manner for which the French are so remarkable, and afford a good deal of philosophic and practical knowledge, unembarrassed with the dry mathematics used by more exact reasoners, but which is apt to discourage young beginners.
>
> "I would advise you to read with a pen in your hand, and enter in a little book short hints of what you find that is curious, or that may be useful; for this will be the best method of imprinting such particulars in your memory, where they will be ready, either for practice on some future occasion, if they are matters of utility, or, at least, to adorn and improve your conversation, if they are rather points of curiosity; and, as many of the terms of science are such as you can not have met with in your common reading, and may therefore be unacquainted with, I think it would be well for you to have a good dictionary at hand, to consult immediately when you meet with a word you do not comprehend the precise meaning of.
>
> "This may, at first, seem troublesome and interrupting; but it is a trouble that will daily diminish, as you will daily find less and less occasion for your dictionary, as you become more acquainted with the terms; and, in the mean time, you will read with more satisfaction, because with more understanding. When any point occurs in which you would be glad to have further information than your book affords you, I beg you would not in the least apprehend that I should think it a trouble to receive and answer your questions. It will be a pleasure, and no trouble. For though I may not be able, out of my own little stock of knowledge, to afford you what you require, I can easily direct you to the books where it may most readily be found.

"Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend,

"B. FRANKLIN."

Reading with pen or pencil in hand fixes the attention, assists method, strengthens purpose, and

charges memory with its sacred trust. A note-book for this purpose is the most convenient method of preserving these treasures. Professor Atkinson, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, advises students thus:

"Gather up the scraps and fragments of thought on whatever subject you may be studying—for, of course, by a note-book I do not mean a mere receptacle for odds and ends, a literary dust-bin—but acquire the habit of gathering every thing, whenever and wherever you find it, that belongs in your lines of study, and you will be surprised to see how such fragments will arrange themselves into an orderly whole by the very organizing power of your own thinking, acting in a definite direction. This is a true process of self-education; but you see it is no mechanical process of mere aggregation. It requires activity of thought—but without that what is any reading but mere passive amusement? And it requires method. I have myself a sort of literary bookkeeping. I keep a day-book, and, at my leisure, I post my literary accounts, bringing together in proper groups the fruits of much casual reading."

The late President Garfield began this method when he began to study, with a view to a liberal education, at about seventeen years of age. He continued it as long as he lived. His notes and references, including scrap-books, filled several volumes before his Congressional career closed, on a great variety of subjects. A large number of books, in addition to those in his own library, were made available in this way. It was said that his notes were of great service to him in Congress, in the discussion of almost any public question.

XIV.

LEARNING THE ART OF COMPOSITION.

Having delayed the narrative to learn of the books that helped to make him the man he became, it is necessary to delay further to see how he practised writing composition, both prose and poetry, in his early life, thus laying the foundation for the excellence of his writings in manhood.

Benjamin was not more than seven years old when he began to write poetry. His "Uncle Benjamin's" frequent poetic addresses to him inspired him to try his hand at the art, and he wrote something and forwarded to his uncle in England. Whatever it was, it has not been preserved. But we know that he wrote a piece, doggerel of course, and sent to him, from the fact that his uncle returned the following reply:

"'T is time for me to throw aside my pen,
When hanging sleeves read, write, and rhyme like men.
This forward spring foretells a plenteous crop;
For, if the bud bear grain, what will the top?
If plenty in the verdant blade appear,
What may we not soon hope for in the ear!
When flowers are beautiful before they're blown,
What rarities will afterwards be shown!

"If trees good fruit uninoculated bear,
You may be sure 't will afterwards be rare.
If fruits are sweet before they've time to yellow,
How luscious will they be when they are mellow!
If first-year's shoots such noble clusters send,
What laden boughs, Engedi-like, may we expect in end!"

There was no time, from the above date, when Benjamin did not indulge, to some extent, his inclination to write. It was done for his own amusement and profit, so that he was not in the habit of showing or speaking of his productions. None of them were preserved.

But his talent for composition developed rapidly from the time he was fairly settled in the printing business. He practised putting original thoughts, and thoughts culled from books, into sentences and paragraphs, a very sensible method of self-improvement. He often tried his hand at poetry, if it was only a couplet at a time. Longer compositions he wrote, for no one to see and read but himself. One day his brother James, curious to see what Benjamin was writing so much about, looked over his shoulder.

"What have you there, Ben?" he said. "Writing a sermon or your will? Ay! poetry is it?" catching a

glimpse of it. "Then you are a poet are you?"

"Seeing what I can do," Benjamin replied. "We do not know what we can do till we try. It is not much any way."

"Let me read it, and I will tell you whether it is much or not. Authors are not good judges of their own productions. They are like parents, who think their own children handsomest and most promising; they think their articles are better than they are."

James was in a happy mood for him when he thus spoke. He knew nothing about Benjamin's ability in writing composition; for this was quite a while before the newspaper was started for which he wrote.

"I have been reading much poetry of late," added Benjamin, "and I am anxious to know if I can write it. I like to read it, and I have read several of the poets since I had access to Mr. Adams' library," This was after Mr. Adams invited him take books from his library, of which we have already given an account.

"So much the more reason that I should read what you have written," added James. "I do not expect it will be quite equal to Shakespeare."

"Well, read it, I do not care." And Benjamin passed it over to his brother without further hesitation.

James read it over carefully, and then he re-read it before making a remark, as if to be sure that he was not mistaken in the quality of the composition.

"That is good, Ben. It is really good, much better than I supposed you could write. Indeed, I did not know that you could write poetry at all. It is not quite equal to Virgil or Homer, but good for a printer-boy to write. Have you any other pieces?"

James was honest in these last remarks, and felt more kindly at the time than he often did towards his brother.

"Yes, I have two or three pieces more which I am going to improve somewhat. You had better wait till I have rewritten them before you read them." Benjamin was greatly encouraged by his brother's favorable opinion of his literary venture, when he made this reply.

"No need of that. Let me see them now, and I can tell you whether they are worth making better. Some things are not worth making better; and I think this must be particularly true of poetry. Poor poetry is poor stuff; better write new than to try to improve it."

James' last plea prevailed, and Benjamin produced the articles for his examination. They were read with as much interest as the first one, and they were re-read too, that there might be no mistake in his judgment. Then his enthusiasm broke out.

"I tell you what it is, Ben, these are good, and I believe that you can write something worthy of print if you try hard; and if you will undertake it, you may print and sell a sheet on the street. I have no doubt that it will sell well."

"I will see what I can do," Benjamin replied, very much elated over his success. "I hardly think my poetry will read well in print, though. I have not been writing for the press."

"We can tell best when we read it in print. Get up something as soon as you can, and let us see," said James.

"I will go right about it, and I will not be long in getting up something, good, bad, or indifferent."

Within a few days Benjamin produced two street ballads, after the style of that day. They were better than any thing he had written, but still susceptible of great improvement. One was entitled "The Light-house Tragedy," and was founded on the shipwreck of Captain Worthilake and his two daughters. The other was a sailor's song on the capture of the famous *Teach*, or "Blackbeard, the Pirate." James read them critically, to see if it would do to put them in print and offer them to the public.

"These are really better than what I read the other day," he remarked, when he had examined them all he desired. "Now, you may put them into type, and sell them about the town, if you are willing. I think a good number of them may be disposed of."

"How many copies will you print?"

"We can print a few to begin with, and let the type remain standing until we see how they go Then we shall run no risk."

"Shall I do it immediately?"

"Just as soon as you can. The quicker the better. I am anxious to see how they take with the public."

Benjamin was not long in printing the two ballads, and having them ready for sale. Under the direction of his brother, he went forth, in due time, to offer them about the town. Whether he cried them on the streets as the newsboys do the daily papers now, we have no means of knowing. But he was successful in selling his wares, whatever his method was. "The Light-house Tragedy" sold the most readily. That commemorated an event of recent occurrence, and which excited much public feeling and sympathy at the time, so that people were quite prepared to purchase it. It sold even beyond his expectations, and seemed to develop what little vanity there was in his soul. He began to think that he was a genuine born poet, and that distinction and a fortune were before him. If he had not been confronted by his father on the subject, it is possible that the speculation might have proved a serious injury to him. But Mr. Franklin learned of his enterprise, and called him to an account. Perhaps he stepped into his shop, as he was selling them about town, and gave him a copy. Whether so or not, his father learned of the fact, and the following interview will show what he thought of it:

"I am ashamed to see you engaged in such a business, Benjamin. It is unworthy of a son of Josiah Franklin."

"Why so, father? I can't understand you."

"Because it is not an honorable business. You are not a poet, and can write nothing of that sort worth printing."

"James approved of the pieces, and proposed that I should print and sell them," Benjamin pleaded.

"James is not a good judge of poetry, nor of the propriety of hawking them about town. It is wretched stuff, and I am ashamed that you are known as the author. Look here; let me show you wherein it is defective."

Benjamin was so dumbfounded that he could not say much in reply; and his father proceeded to expose the faults of the poetical effusion. He did not spare the young author at all; nor was he cautious and lenient in his criticisms. On the other hand, he was severe. And he went on until Benjamin began to feel sorry that he had ever written a scrap of poetry.

"There, I want you should promise me," continued his father, "that you will never deal in such wares again, and that you will stick to your business of setting up type."

"Perhaps I may improve by practice," suggested Benjamin, whose estimation of his literary venture was modified considerably by this time. "Perhaps I may yet write something worthy of being read. You could not expect me to write like Pope to begin with."

"No; nor to end with," retorted his father. "You are not a poet, and there is no use in your trying to be. Perhaps you can learn to write prose well; but poetry is another thing. Even if you were a poet I should advise you to let the business alone, for poets are usually beggars—poor, shiftless members of society."

"That is news to me," responded Benjamin. "How does it happen, then, that some of their works are so popular?"

"Because a true poet can write something worthy of being read, while a mere verse-maker, like yourself, writes only doggerel, that is not worth the paper on which it was printed. Now I advise you to let verse-making alone, and attend closely to your business, both for your own sake and your brother's."

Mr. Franklin was rather severe upon his son, although what he said of his verses was substantially true, as his son freely admitted in manhood. He overlooked the important fact that it was a commendable effort of the boy to try to improve his mind. Some of the best poets who have lived wrote mere doggerel when they began. Also, many of our best prose writers were exceedingly faulty at first. It is a noble effort for a boy to put his thoughts into language, and Mr. Franklin ought to have recognized it as such. If he does not succeed in the first instance, by patience, industry, and perseverance, he may triumph at last. Benjamin might not have acted wisely in selling his verses about town; but his brother, so much older and more experienced than himself, should have borne the censure of that, since it was done by his direction. Doubtless, his brother regarded the propriety of the act less, because he had an eye on the pecuniary profits of the scheme.

The decided opposition that Mr. Franklin showed to verse-making put a damper upon Benjamin's poetic aspirations. The air-castle that his youthful imagination had built, in consequence of the rapid

sale of his wares, tumbled in ruins. He went back to the office and his work quite crestfallen.

The reader must bear in mind that this incident occurred before the discussion of Benjamin with John Collins upon female education, related in a former chapter. We shall see that his father's criticisms on his arguments in that discussion proved of great value to him.

"What has happened now, Ben?" inquired James, observing that his brother looked despondent and anxious. "Are you bringing forth more poetry?"

"Father doesn't think much of my printing and selling verses of my own," answered Benjamin. "He has given me such a lecture that I am almost ashamed of myself."

"How is that? Don't he think they are worthy of print?"

"No. He do not see any merit in them at all. He read them over in his way, and counted faults enough to show that there is precious little poetry in me. A beggar and a poet mean about the same thing to him."

"He ought to remember that you are not as old as you will be, if you live; and you will make improvement from year to year. You can't expect to write either prose or verse well without beginning and trying."

"All the trial in the world can do nothing for me, I should judge from father's talk. You ought to have heard him; and he did not spare you for suggesting the printing and sale of the pieces on the street." Benjamin said this in a tone of bitter disappointment.

"Well, I suppose that he has heard of two men disagreeing on a matter," remarked James. "All is, he and I do not agree. I consider the whole thing wise and proper, and he does not. That is all there is to it."

Perhaps it was a good thing for Benjamin to meet with this obstacle in his path to success. Rather discouraging, it is true, nevertheless suited to keep him humble. Benjamin confessed in manhood, that his vanity was inflated by the sale of his ballads, and he might have been puffed up to his future injury, had not his father thus unceremoniously taken the wind out of his sails. That removed the danger. After such a severe handling he was not inclined to over-rate his poetical talents. It had the effect, also, to turn his attention almost wholly to prose writing, in which he became distinguished, as we shall see hereafter.

A single verse of these ballads only has descended to our times. It is from the second mentioned—the capture of the pirate, as follows:

"Come, all you jolly sailors,
You all so stout and brave;
Come, hearken, and I'll tell you
What happened on the wave.
Oh! 't is of that bloody Blackbeard
I'm going now to tell;
How as to gallant Maynard
He soon was sent to hell—
With a down, down, down, derry down."

Franklin said of this ballad episode:

"I now took a strong inclination for poetry, and wrote some little pieces. My brother, supposing it might turn to account, encouraged me, and induced me to compose two occasional ballads. One was called 'The Light-house Tragedy,' and contained an account of the shipwreck of Captain Worthilake with his two daughters; the other was a sailor's song, on taking the famous *Teach*, or 'Blackbeard, the Pirate.' They were wretched stuff, in street-ballad style; and when they were printed, my brother sent me about the town selling them. The first sold prodigiously, the event being recent, and having made a great noise. This success flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by criticising my performances and telling me that verse-makers were generally beggars. Thus I escaped being a poet, and probably a very bad one."

From the time that Mr. Franklin criticised his son's argument with John Collins on female education, Benjamin made special efforts to improve his style. He knew that Addison's style was regarded as a model, so he purchased an old volume of his 'Spectator,' and set himself to work with a determination to make his own style Addisonian. He subjected himself to the severest test in order to improve, and counted nothing too hard if he could advance toward that standard. His own account of his

perseverance and industry in studying his model, as it appears in his "Autobiography," will best present the facts.

"About this time I met with an odd volume of the 'Spectator.' I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished if possible to imitate it. With that view I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should occur to me. Then I compared my Spectator with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found that I wanted a stock of words, or readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time, if I had gone on making verses; since the continual search for words of the same import, but of different length to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore, I took some of the tales in the 'Spectator,' and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again.

"I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order before I began to form the full sentences and complete the subject. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of the thoughts. By comparing my work with the original, I discovered many faults, and corrected them; but I sometimes had the pleasure to fancy that, in certain particulars of small consequence, I had been fortunate enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think that I might in time come to be a tolerable English writer; of which I was extremely ambitious. The time I allotted for writing exercises, and for reading, was at night, or before work began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing house, avoiding as much as I could the constant attendance at public worship, which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which I still continued to consider a duty, though I could not afford time to practise it."

Let any boy of even moderate abilities subject himself to such rigid discipline for intellectual improvement as Benjamin did, and his progress will be rapid, and his attainments remarkable. Such application and persistent effort win always.

In a similar manner Benjamin acquired the Socratic method of reasoning, which he found at the end of the English grammar that he studied. Subsequently he purchased "Xenophon's Memorabilia" because it would afford him assistance in acquiring the Socratic style. He committed to memory, wrote, practised doing the same thing over and over, persevering, overcoming, conquering. He acquired the method so thoroughly as to be expert therein, and practised it with great satisfaction to himself. Many years thereafter he spoke of the fact as follows:

"While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's), having at the end of it two little sketches on the Arts of Rhetoric and Logic, the latter finishing with a dispute in the Socratic method. And, soon after, I procured Xenophon's 'Memorable Things of Socrates,' wherein there are many examples of the same method. I was charmed with it, adopted it, dropped my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer. And being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, made a doubter, as I already was in many points of our religious doctrines, I found this method the safest for myself, and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took delight in it, practised it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved.

"I continued this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence, never using, when I advanced any thing that may possibly be disputed, the words *certainly, undoubtedly*, or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather saying, *I conceive*, or *apprehend*, a thing to be so and so; *It appears to me*, or *I should not think it, so or so, for such and such reasons*; or, *I imagine it to be so*; or, *It is so, if I am not mistaken*. This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me, when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engaged in promoting."

This and the preceding chapter show that a book may decide the future character and destiny of a man, by inspiring thought, kindling ambition and a lofty aim, stimulating the mental powers, inspiring practical and, perhaps, elegant composition, and consecrating the whole being to a definite purpose. All this was true of Benjamin Franklin.

Rev. John Sharp said, "Shakespeare and the Bible have made me bishop of York." Wesley claimed that the "Imitation of Christ" and "Taylor's Holy Living and Dying" determined his calling and character.

Henry Martyn was made a missionary by reading the lives of Brainard and Carey. Pope was indebted to Homer for his poetical inspiration, and it was the origin of his English "Iliad." Bentham read "Telemachus" in his youth, and, many years afterwards, he said, "That romance may be regarded as the foundation-stone of my whole character." Goethe became a poet in consequence of reading the "Vicar of Wakefield." Carey was fired to go on a mission to the heathen by reading "Voyages of Captain Cook." Samuel Drew credited his eminent career to reading Locke's "Essay on the Understanding." The lives of Washington and Henry Clay awakened aspirations in Lincoln's soul, that impelled him forward and gave direction to his life. The national system of education in Great Britain grew out of a book. Joseph Lancastar read "Clarkson on the Slave Trade," when he was fourteen years of age, and it awakened his enthusiasm to teach the blacks in the West Indies. Without the knowledge of his parents he went thither, and commenced labors for their mental and moral improvement. His parents learned where he was and sent for him; but his heart was thoroughly in sympathy with benevolent work, and he opened a school for the poor at home. So great was his success that the town, after a few years, erected a commodious building for his school; and here was the foundation of the present system of education in the mother-country.

The author once advised a youth of fourteen to read certain books, accustoming himself to write down in a note-book striking facts and thoughts for preservation. At the same time he was advised to procure a blank book and write therein a sentence or short paragraph each day, without omission, the sentence or paragraph to contain the development of some thought that was waiting utterance. At that time there was no prospect that the youth would ever receive a liberal education. He was a farmer's son, and his father was unable to educate him. The most the author had in view was to provide him,—a bright, active, promising boy, fond of reading,—with a source of improving entertainment and profit. But he caught the idea with so much enthusiasm, and reduced it to practice so thoroughly, that an unquenchable desire for an education was nursed into controlling power; and he went through college, studied theology, became pastor of one of the largest Congregational churches in the country, stood among the most eloquent preachers in the land at thirty, received the degree of Doctor of Divinity at forty, and now, at a little more than fifty, is the beloved and able pastor of a large church in a New England city. This result was brought about by the discipline of reading and writing in his youth, very similar to that which made Benjamin a statesman and philosopher.

XV.

THE "COURANT" IN TROUBLE.

"The Legislature is calling you to an account," said a customer to James Franklin, as he entered the office. "The officials can't put up with your cutting criticisms."

"I am aware of that. I heard that they were going to haul the *Courant* over the coals; but I do not see what they can do about it."

"They can stop your printing it, I suppose. It would be an intolerant act, of course; but governments have never been tolerant towards the press, you know."

"The day is coming when they will be," responded James. "A free press is indispensable to human progress. So long as I run the *Courant* it shall speak plainly of intolerance and hypocrisy of every form. I shall hit the corruption of the times in high places or low."

"That is sound doctrine," replied the customer. "I endorse it, but government officials do not. They feel very sore, and will make trouble for you if they can."

At that moment Benjamin came rushing into the office under considerable excitement.

"The Assembly are having a hot debate over the *Courant*," he said. "I heard a gentleman say that they would stop the publication of the paper, if possible."

"Perhaps they will, but I doubt it," replied James. "The *Courant* will not be muzzled so long as I own it."

"It ought not to be," responded the customer. "We need an outspoken paper that will rebuke corruption and shams everywhere."

"And that is all the trouble," said Benjamin. "That is what the Assembly and the ministers denounce. They are better friends of the British government than they are of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay."

"True, very true," rejoined the customer. "The tyrannical control of the English press is a shame; and yet these officials who truckle to the English government want to try it on here. But such intolerance ought not to be borne."

The *Courant* was exceedingly sarcastic, and no writer was more so than Benjamin, young as he was. This was the real cause of the action of the Assembly. A letter appeared in the *Courant*, justly rebuking the government for dilatoriness in looking after a piratical craft off Block Island. The letter purported to come from Newport, and represented that the Colony were fitting out two vessels to capture her. It concluded thus:

"We are advised from Boston that the government of the Massachusetts are fitting out a ship (the *Flying Horse*) to go after the pirates, to be commanded by Capt. Peter Papillon, and it is thought he will sail sometime this month, wind and weather permitting."

This thrust at the government for tardiness would be regarded as a good joke now, but it was a crime then, and the aristocracy of the Province, always working in harmony with the King and Parliament, was stirred up by it to intolerance.

James was summoned before the Council, and his apprentice also, both of whom stood upon their dignity, refusing to answer some of the questions put. Benjamin was dismissed, because it was found that he was only an apprentice. But James was put on trial and pelted with questions. The legislators were determined to find out who wrote the "scurrilous article aforesaid," as they called it, but James refused to tell. He placed himself squarely upon his personal rights as a citizen, and heroically stood by his guns. Come what might, he resolved to defend his course before this august tribunal.

The Council became more exasperated by his defiant spirit, and threatened him with incarceration. But James stood his ground like a martyr, without thinking he would soon become one. Benjamin was equally defiant, and refused to answer some questions, but was excused on the ground that "an apprentice was bound not to betray his master's secrets." James was convicted of "a high affront to the government," and the sheriff was directed to commit him to the Boston jail. These new quarters were unexpected to him, but he went thither with the consciousness that he was suffering for a brave effort to correct public wrongs.

We have called attention to a single paragraph reflecting upon the government in the *Courant*. It should be told that such criticisms were frequent in its columns. The Governor, Council, and nearly all the ruling class of the Province were in full sympathy with Great Britain, while others were restive under what they regarded as oppressive rule. Most of the ministers belonged to the first class, and so came in for a share of the *Courant's* sarcastic utterances. The *Courant* represented the second class—the common people—who read its columns gladly.

Dr. Cotton Mather attacked the paper in a paragraph that shows what the paper contained:

"We find a notorious, scandalous paper called *The Courant*, full freighted with nonsense, unmanliness, raillery, profaneness, immorality, arrogance, calumnies, lies, contradictions, and what not, all tending to quarrels and divisions, and to debauch and corrupt the mind and manners of New England."

Increase Mather, also, assailed the *Courant* over his own signature, denouncing it as a "wicked libel," because it represented him as one of its supporters, using language uncommonly expressive.

"I do hereby declare," he said, "that, although I had paid for two or three of them, I sent him word I was extremely offended with it. In special, because in one of his *vile Courants*, he insinuates, that if a *minister of God approve of a thing, it is a sign it is of the Devil*; which is a horrid thing to be related! And he doth frequently abuse the Ministers of Religion, and many other worthy persons, in a manner which is intolerable. For these and such like reasons I signified to the Printer that I would have no more of their *Wicked Courants*. I, that have known what New England was from the Beginning, cannot but be troubled to see the Degeneracy of this Place. I can well remember when the Civil Government would have taken an effectual Course to suppress such a *Cursed Libel*! which if it be not done I am afraid that some *Awful Judgment* will come upon this Land, and the *Wrath of God will arise, and there will be no Remedy*. I cannot but pity poor *Franklin*, who, though but a Young Man, it may be *Speedily* he must appear before the Judgment Seat of God, and what answer will he give for printing things so vile and abominable?"

It is quite evident that neither James nor Benjamin had that respect for the "Judgment Seat," which

became Christians; but James replied in the *Courant* to this onslaught, maintaining that Mather had garbled his quotations from the paper, or based his opinion on parts of paragraphs which did not convey the full and correct meaning. He turned the tables upon him, also, by declaring that, while Mather ceased to be a subscriber to his paper, "he sent his grandson every week to buy it; and, paying in this way a higher price, he was more of a supporter of the paper than ever." In the same issue, too, James said:

"I would likewise advise the enemies of the *Courant* not to publish any thing more against me unless they are willing to have the paper continued. What they have already done has been resented by the Town so much to my advantage, that above forty persons have subscribed for the *Courant* since the first of January, many of whom were before subscribers to the other papers. And by one Advertisement more, the Anti-Couranters will be in great danger of adding forty more to my list before the first of March."

James showed that he did not say "if the Ministers of God approve of a thing, it is a Sign it is of the Devil"; but that he did say, "Most of the Ministers are for it, and that induces me to think it is from the Devil; for he often makes use of good men as instruments to obtrude his delusions on the world." There would be decided objection to the first utterance, at that time or since; but the second one, what the *Courant* did say, was as near the truth as either side was found in most matters.

To return to James in prison. He was confined in a cell, and was very uncomfortable. It was a dirty, dismal place, meant to be a place of punishment, indeed. James found it so, and he soon was ready to do almost any thing for freedom of the yard. He sat down and addressed a very humble petition to the Council, confessing his wrong, and imploring forgiveness and release from his cell.

"I am truly sensible of and heartily sorry for the offense I have given to the Court in the late *Courant*, relating to the fitting out of a ship by the government, and I truly acknowledge my inadvertency and folly therein in affronting the government, as also my indiscretion and indecency when before the Court; for all of which I intreat the Court's forgiveness, and pray for a discharge from the stone prison, where I am confined by order of the Court, and that I may have the liberty of the yard, being much indisposed, and suffering in my health by the said confinement."

While the Council are considering this petition, we will see what has become of the *Courant*. The whole charge of it devolved on Benjamin from the time his brother was imprisoned, and he fearlessly and ably met the emergency. It was truly wonderful that a boy of sixteen should shoulder the responsibility of such an enterprise, in such circumstances, and carry it with so much courage and ease.

"I can look after it; there's no trouble in that," said Benjamin to the "liberal club," who assembled as soon as possible after James was incarcerated. "The action of the Court will increase our subscribers; and I propose to make the paper more spicy than ever."

"Glad to hear that," responded one of the club. "Let us defy such intolerance, though all the magistrates and ministers in Boston support it; the mass of the people are with us."

"That is so," remarked another; "and more are coming over to our side every day. Intimidation does not become us now. We must continue to be outspoken; and if Benjamin can look after the paper, we are all right."

"That I can do, and I want no better sport," replied the plucky printer-boy. "You may be sure that such persecution will not be sustained by a great majority of New England people. We are living in *New* England, and not in *Old* England, and the people know it."

"I think Benjamin understands it," added a third member of the club; "and his courage and ability will meet the occasion. For one I want the *Courant* to continue to be what it has been, the General Court to the contrary notwithstanding."

Benjamin did understand it, and edited the paper on the same line. He forgot all his disagreements with his brother in his sympathy with him under persecution, and in his utter contempt for the action of the Court. In these circumstances, his attacks upon the administration were rather more severe than ever. "The proceedings of the Council were assailed by argument, eloquence, and satire, in prose and verse, in squib and essay. One number, issued just after James Franklin's release, was nearly filled with passages from 'Magna Charta,' and comments upon the same, showing the unconstitutionality of the treatment to which he had been subjected. It is evident that a considerable number of the people of Boston most heartily sympathized with the *Courant* in its gallant contest for the liberty of the press, and that the issue of the number was, to these and to others, the most interesting event of the week." [1]

The authorities considered James' petition, and granted it, but they kept him four weeks in prison before they let him out. He returned to his printing office, resolved to make the *Courant* more outspoken still for the freedom of the press. The club met him with warm congratulations.

"A great many printers have suffered more than you have," said one of the number; "for you have not lost your head, not even an ear. In Old England persecution of printers has been in order for a long time. Less than two years ago, one John Matthews, a youth nineteen years of age, was executed at Tyburn for writing and publishing a tract in favor of the expelled Stuarts."

"But such things do not fit our country," answered James. "My father came here to escape that spirit of caste and intolerance that abounds in England, and so did those who came long before he did. To repeat them here is a greater abomination than to act them there."

"Let me read to you," interrupted Benjamin, "an account of a printer's execution in England, about twenty years before my father emigrated to this country. I came across it in this book, a few days ago. It is horrible." Benjamin read as follows:

"The scene is in a court-room in the Old Bailey, Chief Justice Hyde presiding. The prisoner at the bar was a printer, named John Gwyn, a poor man, with a wife and three children. Gwyn was accused of printing a piece which criticised the conduct of the government, and which contained these words and others similar: 'If the magistrates pervert judgment, the people are bound, by the law of God, to execute judgment without them, *and upon them*.' This was all his offense; but it was construed as a justification of the execution of Charles I, as well as a threat against Charles II, then king of England. The poor man protested he had never read the offensive matter; it was brought to him by a maid-servant; he had earned forty shillings by printing it.

"When he was pronounced guilty, he humbly begged for mercy, pleading poverty, his young children, and his ignorance of the contents of the paper. 'I'll tell you what you shall do,' roared the brutal wretch who sat on the bench, 'ask mercy of them that can give it—that is, of God and the king.' The prisoner said, 'I humbly beseech you to intercede with his majesty for mercy.' 'Tie him up, executioner,' cried the judge; 'I speak it from my soul: I think we have the greatest happiness in the world in enjoying what we do under so good and gracious a king; yet you, Gwyn, in the rancor of your heart, thus to abuse him, deserve no mercy.' In a similar strain he continued for several minutes, and then passed upon the prisoner the following sentence: He was to be drawn to the place of execution upon a hurdle, and there hanged by the neck. While still alive he was to be cut down, castrated, and disemboweled. 'And you still living,' added the judge, 'your entrails are to be burnt before your eyes, your head to be cut off, and your head and quarters to be disposed of at the pleasure of the king's majesty.' The printer was overwhelmed with terror, and in his great agony he cried to the judge again to intercede for him. The heartless magistrate replied, 'I would not intercede for my own father in this case.' The prisoner was removed and executed. His head and limbs were set up over the gates of the city."

"That was in 1663," said Benjamin as he closed the account; "and, though we have no record of another so fiendish affair, it is a fact that within a few years some printers and editors in England have had their ears cropped, others have been flogged publicly, and others still put into the stocks and pillory. We have not come to that yet."

"Not quite," answered one of the club; "but the authorities who would please the king and suppress liberty of the press will go as far as they dare to go in that direction; depend on that. It becomes us to vindicate our rights fearlessly, or we shall yet share the fate of Gwyn."

"I do not propose to spike one of my guns," said James, who listened to the last remarks with profound emotion. "We are right, and Americans will support us. The *Courant* was started for a purpose, and we must not lose sight of it."

"Benjamin has run the paper to suit while you were in jail, so that I think both of you together will satisfy us perfectly in the future," added another of the club. "I fully believe, with the rest of you, that it is no time now to cringe before the authorities. A stand for the right is more necessary now than ever before."

We should have stated before that, in the infancy of the *Courant*, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu returned from Turkey with the remedy for the small-pox—inoculation. This disease had prevailed fearfully in Boston. When the town had but five or six thousand inhabitants, seven hundred of them died of small-pox in six months. In 1721, when Benjamin was in the printing office, and the population of the town was twelve thousand, the number of deaths by small-pox was eight hundred and fifty. Many persons attacked with it died within two or three days, so that it was a terror to the people. Of course inoculation was received with delight by many. Cotton Mather examined its claims, and so did his father, Increase Mather; and both endorsed it. But the *Courant*, for some reason, opposed it, and

brought all its resources of ridicule and sarcasm to make it appear ridiculous. A writer in its columns called it the "minister's remedy," because the clergy favored it. Week after week it denounced the method, and warned the people. Finally, Increase Mather publicly called attention to the scandalous sheet, and besought the people to crush it, lest the judgments of God be brought down upon the land for its highhanded wickedness.

That the treatment of James Franklin by the authorities was not justified by thoughtful citizens in other parts of the country is evident from the following extract from the *Philadelphia Mercury*:

"The injustice of imprisoning a man without a hearing must be apparent to all. An indifferent person would judge from this conduct, that the Assembly of Massachusetts are oppressors and bigots, who make religion only an engine of destruction to the people. We pity the people who are compelled to submit to the tyranny of priestcraft and hypocrisy." Then followed a sarcastic postscript, over which the reader may smile: "P.S. By private letter from Boston, we are informed, that the bakers are under great apprehensions of being forbid baking any more bread, unless they will submit to the Secretary as supervisor general and weigher of the dough, before it is baked into bread and offered to sale."

The closing sentence referred to the action of the Legislature in enacting that Franklin should publish nothing more without first submitting it to the Secretary of the Province and receiving his endorsement —legislation that will be quoted in the next chapter.

Franklin continued to issue the *Courant* after his imprisonment with more plainness and exposure of public wrongs than he did before. For several months he handled the governor and public officers severely, never forgetting those ministers who supported the cause of the king instead of the cause of New England. He little thought that he was fighting a battle for the ages to come. From his day the press in our country began to enjoy liberty. He began a conflict which did not end until liberty of speech and press was proclaimed throughout the land.

Men have often contended for right, and started enterprises, the results of which the divinest prophet could never have foretold. When John Pounds, the poor Portsmouth shoemaker, with a passion for doing good to those who needed it most, gathered a few street-arabs into his shanty to teach them something good, while he hammered his leather and mended shoes, he did not dream that he was inaugurating a benevolent enterprise that would spread throughout the Christian world. But he did, and to-day the fifteen millions of old and young in the Sabbath schools of our Republic are but the growth and development he began in his shop. In like manner, the Franklin brothers inaugurated a measure that culminated in the complete freedom of the press.

[1] Parton's Life of Franklin, vol. i, p. 88.

XVI.

THE BOY EDITOR.

For six months the *Courant* continued its attacks upon the government, after the editor came out of prison. It took up also, the inconsistencies of church members, and discussed them with great plainness. But the number of the paper for Jan. 14, 1723, was too much for aristocratic flesh and blood, and almost too much for blood that was not aristocratic. The Council was incensed, and adopted the following order:

"IN COUNCIL, Jan. 14, 1723.

"WHEREAS, The paper, called *The New England Courant* of this day's date, contains many passages in which the Holy Scriptures are perverted, and the Civil Government, Ministers, and People of the Province highly reflected on,

"*Ordered*, That William Tailer, Samuel Sewell, and Penn Townsend, Esqrs., with such as the Honorable House of Representatives shall join, be a committee to consider and report what is proper for the Court to do thereon."

The House of Representatives concurred in the measure, and it was rushed through, as measures are likely to be when the dander of legislators is up, and the committee reported as follows:

"That James Franklin, the printer and publisher thereof, be strictly forbidden by the Court to print or

publish *The New England Courant*, or any other pamphlet or paper of the like nature, except that it is first supervised by the Secretary of the Province; and the Justices of His Majesty's Sessions of the Peace for the County of Suffolk, at their next adjournment, be directed to take sufficient bonds of the said Franklin for twelve months' time."

As soon as the Council took this action, the *Courant* club was called together, and the whole matter canvassed.

"The next thing will be an order that no one of us shall have a pair of breeches without permission from the Secretary of the Province," remarked one, sarcastically. "The Secretary has not brains enough to pass judgment upon some of our articles, and he is too English to judge rightly of New England necessities."

"We should appear smart, tugging our articles over to the Secretary each week for his permission to print them," suggested James. "I shall never do it as long as my name is James Franklin."

"Nor I," added one of the club.

"Nor I," another.

"Nor I," another still.

There was but one mind in the company; and all were disposed to fight it out on the line of freedom of the press.

"But, do you notice," added one of the club, "that no one but James Franklin is forbidden to publish the *Courant*? Some other person can publish it."

"Sure enough, that is so," responded James, "and here is our way out of the difficulty."

"Of course you can not publish it yourself," addressing James, "in defiance of this order of the Council."

"Of course not; but Benjamin Franklin can do it, as he is not forbidden. How would that do?"

"That can not be done, because he is only an apprentice," suggested a former speaker. "They can prove that he is your apprentice readily."

"Well, I can meet that difficulty without any trouble," said James, who was intent upon evading the order of the Court.

"Pray, tell us how? By changing the name of the paper?"

"Not by any means. Now is not the time to part with a name that the magistrates and ministers are so much in love with."

"How, then, can you meet the difficulty?"

"Well, I can return his indenture, with his discharge upon the back of it, and he can show it in case of necessity. At the same time he can sign a new indenture that will be kept a secret."

"Capital!" exclaimed one; "I never thought of that. The measure is a practical one, and I move that we reduce it to practice at once."

"I support it with all my heart, not only as practical, but ingenious," added another. "It is honorable to meet the tyranny of the Council with an innocent subterfuge like that."

All agreed to the plan, and adopted it enthusiastically.

"Benjamin Franklin, Editor of the *Courant*," exclaimed a member of the club, rising from his seat and patting Benjamin on the shoulder. "Don't that sound well, my boy? Rather a young fellow to have in charge such an enterprise, but a match, I guess, for the General Court of the Province."

"The youngest editor, proprietor, and publisher of a paper in the whole land, no doubt," suggested another. "But it is as true here as it is in other things, 'Old men for counsel, young men for war.' We are at war now, and we do not want an editor who will cry peace, when there is no peace."

"A free man, too," suggested another facetiously, "an apprentice no longer, to be knocked about and treated as an underling. At the top, with the laurels of manhood on the brow of sixteen!"

Benjamin had not spoken, but he had listened. Affairs had taken an unexpected turn. In the morning

he had no idea of becoming editor-in-chief of the paper that made more stir in Boston than the other two combined. The promotion rather startled him. Not that he shrank from the responsibility; for he had no hesitation in assuming that; but the promotion was wholly unexpected. The honors came upon him suddenly, in a way he never dreamed of. It is not strange that he was somewhat dumbfounded, though not confounded. He maintained silence, because, in the circumstances, he could say nothing better than silence.

The plan of James having been adopted, all hastened to carry out the details. Benjamin received his indenture, with the endorsement that constituted him a free man, and he was announced as the publisher of the *Courant*, and as such his name appeared upon the paper, also as editor.

In the next issue James inserted the following in the *Courant*:

"The late publisher of this paper, finding so many inconveniences would arise, by his carrying the manuscripts and the public news to be supervised by the Secretary, as to render his carrying it on unprofitable, has entirely dropped the undertaking."

Benjamin inserted an amusing salutatory, as if the *Courant* was appearing before the public for the first time. It was as follows:

"Long has the press groaned in bringing forth a hateful brood of pamphlets, malicious scribbles, and billingsgate ribaldry. No generous and impartial person then can blame the present undertaking, which is designed purely for the diversion and merriment of the reader. Pieces of pleasantry and mirth have a secret charm in them to allay the heats and tumults of our spirits, and to make a man forget his restless resentment. The main design of this weekly paper will be to entertain the town with the most comical and diverting incidents of human life, which, in so large a place as Boston, will not fail of a universal exemplification. Nor shall we be wanting to fill up these papers with a grateful interspersion of more serious words, which may be drawn from the most ludicrous and odd parts of life."

Pretty good for a boy of sixteen! Good sense, tact, humor, and rhetoric combined in one brief paragraph! Not only the youngest editor in 1723, but the youngest editor of a city paper from that day to this, so far as we know. On the fact hangs a tale of the wonderful powers of a boy who can occupy such a place, and fill it.

We have said that the *Courant* of Jan. 14, 1723, was filled with matter that exasperated officials of the Province. The reader will want to know what some of those utterances were. We will copy a few:

"Religion is indeed the principal thing, but too much of it is worse than none at all. The world abounds with knaves and villains; but, of all knaves, the religious knave is the worst, and villainies acted under the cloak of religion the most execrable. Moral honesty, though it will not itself carry a man to heaven, yet I am sure there is no going thither without it."

"But are there such men as these in thee, O New England? Heaven forbid there should be any; but, alas, it is to be feared the number is not small. '*Give me an honest man*,' say some, '*for all a religious man*'; a distinction which I confess I never heard of before. The whole country suffers for the villainies of a few such wolves in sheep's clothing, and we are all represented as a pack of knaves and hypocrites for their sakes."

"In old Time it was no disrespect for Men and Women to be called by their own Names. *Adam* was never called *Master* Adam; we never heard of Noah, *Esquire*, Lot, *Knight* and *Baronet*, nor the *Right Honorable* Abraham, *Viscount* Mesopotamia, *Baron* of Canaan. No, no; they were plain Men, honest Country Graziers, that took care of their Families and their Flocks. *Moses* was a great Prophet, and *Aaron* a priest of the Lord; but we never read of the *Reverend* Moses, nor the *Right Reverend Father in God*, Aaron, by Divine Providence, *Lord Arch-Bishop* of Israel. Thou never sawest *Madam* Rebecca in the Bible, *My Lady* Rachel, nor *Mary*, tho' a Princess of the Blood after the death of *Joseph*, called the *Princess Dowager* of Nazareth. No; plain *Rebecca, Rachel, Mary*, or the *Widow* Mary, or the like. It was no Incivility then to mention their naked Names as they were expressed.

"Yet, one of our Club will undertake to prove, that tho' *Abraham* was not styled *Right Honorable*, yet he had the Title of *Lord* given him by his Wife *Sarah*, which he thinks entitles her to the Honour of *My Lady* Sarah; and *Rachel*, being married into the same Family, he concludes that she may deserve the Title of *My Lady* Rachel. But this is but the Opinion of one Man; it was never put to vote in the Society."

"On the whole, Friend James, we may conclude, that the *Anti-Couranteers* [opponents of the *Courant*] are a sort of *Precisians*, who, mistaking Religion for the peculiar Whims of their own distemp'rd Brain, are for cutting or stretching all Men to their own Standard of Thinking. I wish Mr. Symmes' Character may secure him from the Woes and Curses they are so free of dispensing among their dissenting neighbours, who are so unfortunate as to discover a Cheerfulness becoming Christianity."

It is not questioned that Benjamin wrote these paragraphs, among others; and for keen satire they are very remarkable as the composition of a boy of sixteen. At the present day they would be regarded as quaint, able and truthful, without awakening opposition. But, in 1723, no doubt there were tender consciences among the official sycophants of the English Government, that made a just application of these cutting words, so as to become exasperated and bitter. Hence, their tyrannical and unjustifiable legislation.

Mr. Parton mentions a fact that should be noted here: "Until the Revolution, the business of publishing newspapers in America was carried on almost exclusively by postmasters. Newspapers went free of postage in the colonies as late as 1758. Until that time, the postmasters had not only the privilege of sending papers through the mail free, but the still more valuable right of excluding from the mail papers published by others. Accordingly, we find that nearly all the pioneers of the press, in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, were postmasters. When a postmaster lost his office he generally sold out his newspaper, and a new postmaster soon bought or established one. John Campbell, however, feeling himself aggrieved by his removal, did not dispose of the *News-letter* [first paper in this country]; which induced his successor, William Brocker, to set up a paper of his own, the *Boston Gazette*, which appeared in December, 1719. Mr. Brocker expressly says, in his prospectus, that he started the new paper at the request of several merchants, and others, who 'have been *prevented* from having their newspaper sent them by the post, ever since Mr. Campbell was removed from being postmaster.'"[2]

It is a significant fact that, in 1758, newspapers ceased to be carried free in the mails, and a charge of ninepence a year for each fifty miles of carriage was assessed; and our Benjamin brought about the change. He was then known as Deputy Postmaster General, and made the change in the interest of the public welfare. We think that, at the time, he must have recalled his tussle with the General Court, when, at sixteen, he edited the *Courant*.

Benjamin continued in his brother's printing office eight months after the occurrence just narrated, editor and publisher of the *Courant*. His brother never run the paper again in his own name, and, subsequently, he removed to Newport, R.I., where he established the *Rhode Island Gazette* in 1732.

Benjamin kept up his running fire against the truckling representatives of the British government, including ministers who were not outspoken against oppression and the censorship of the press. The blade of his satire became brighter and keener, and the circulation of the paper increased largely, showing that the portion of the population having the true American spirit, were in sympathy with the purpose of the paper. Mr. Sparks says of it:

"It touched with great freedom the vices and follies of the time. The weapon of satire was used with an unsparing hand. Neither the government nor the clergy escaped. Much caution was practised, however, in regard to individuals, and names were seldom introduced. There are some severe and humorous criticisms on the poets of the day, which may be classed with the best specimens of this kind of composition in the modern reviews. The humor sometimes degenerates into coarseness, and the phraseology is often harsh; but, bating these faults, the paper contains nothing, which in later times would have been deemed reprehensible."

Of the action of the General Court, imprisoning James Franklin, Mr. Sparks says: "He was sentenced by a vote of the Assembly, without any specification of offensive passages, or any trial before a court of justice. This was probably the first transaction, in the American Colonies, relating to the freedom of the press; and it is not less remarkable for the assumption of power on the part of the legislature, than for their disregard of the first principles and established forms of law."

This is a fair and just estimate of the affair. Probably officials saw their mistake, and concluded not to repeat it; for Benjamin was not molested in his business, though he continued to be as saucy and sarcastic as ever. From that day freedom of the press was assured in this country.

This narrative of Benjamin's connection with the printing office, at the time a new paper was to be established, shows that the circumstances called out a certain kind of talent he possessed, and thus helped to make him what he became. Success depends in a great measure on early directing the young in the path to which their natural endowments point. Square men should be put into square holes, and round men into round holes. Many careers are spoiled by reversing this law of nature, getting square men into round holes, and round men into square holes. A good mechanic has often been spoiled to make an indifferent clergyman or merchant, and a good minister has been spoiled to make a commonplace artisan. Overlooking the "natural bent," the youth has selected an occupation (or his father for him) for which he has no special aptitude, and he brings little to pass.

Benjamin was a square youth, and he got into a square hole, which he just fitted. He was not there by his own election; he was there by the lead of Providence, and he cheerfully acquiesced. Becoming the

right boy in the right place, he grew into stalwart manhood and a useful life, as naturally as the sapling on congenial soil grows into the thrifty, fruit-bearing tree.

In the second chapter we spoke of Boston, in the infancy of Benjamin, as a place where bears were plenty, and other wild animals roamed. The *Courant* contained the following paragraph, about the time of its contest with the Court, and we copy it as a fitting close to this chapter:

"It is thought that not less than twenty Bears have been killed in about a week's time within two miles of Boston. Two have been killed below the Castle, as they were swimming from one island to another, and one attempted to board a boat out in the bay, but the men defended themselves so well with the boat-hook and oars, that they put out her eyes, and then killed her. On Tuesday last two were killed at Dorchester, one of which weighed sixty pounds a quarter. We hear from Providence that the bears appear to be very thick in those parts."

[2] Vol. i, p. 78.

XVII.

THE YOUNG SKEPTIC.

"What book have you there, Ben?" inquired John Collins, some time before the newspaper enterprise was started.

"Lord Shaftesbury's work. I have been looking into it for some time; and Anthony Collins' work, too," answered Benjamin. "I suppose that my father would say they are not quite Orthodox; but they are very interesting, and I think their views are reasonable."

"I have been questioning your Orthodoxy for some time, Ben, but I thought you would come out all right in the end, and so I have said nothing. I do not know about your coming out right if you become a disciple of Shaftesbury." John made this reply more in jest than in earnest, for he cared little whether Benjamin was a skeptic or not. Perhaps he was skeptical himself at that time; some things indicate as much.

"I think it is rather difficult to tell how I shall come out, John; but I do not propose to believe any thing in religion, science, or any thing else, just because my father does," responded Benjamin. "I know that I have accepted some religious dogmas because I was taught them, and for no other reason."

"Then you do not now believe all that you have been taught about religion, if I understand you?"

"No, I am free to say that I do not. There is neither reason nor wisdom in portions of the creed of the Church."

"Why, Ben, you surprise me. You are getting to be quite an infidel for a boy. It won't do for you to read Shaftesbury and Collins any more, if you are so easily upset by them. I do not know any thing about them, only from what I hear. I never read a paragraph of either."

"One thing is sure," continued Benjamin. "I mean to be classed among the few people who think for themselves. It is a small company I shall be found in, but it is an independent one. Most people are religious because they are so instructed. They embrace the religion of their fathers and mothers, without asking what is true or false. I will not be of that class. I will not be Orthodox or Heterodox because my ancestors were."

"There is not much danger that you will do that, Ben. Present appearances rather indicate that the religious opinions of your father will be blown sky-high." John did not mean quite as much as his language in this reply denoted.

"You do not understand me. I respect my parents and their religious opinions, though I doubt some of the doctrines they have taught me. I never examined them until I began to read Shaftesbury and Collins, but accepted them as correct because my father and grandfather believed them. I shall do that no more, that is all I meant."

"Well, I can not say that you are wrong, Ben. If you make half as good a man as your father is, by believing half the truths he believes and advocates, you will stand pretty well in the world. I expect that

we ought to avoid religious cant, bigotry, and intolerance."

"I expect so, too; and there is much of all three existing to-day," Benjamin answered. "A bigot may be a well-meaning man, but so much the worse for him. There is so much bigotry in Boston to-day, that the minister of each denomination thinks his denomination has all the truth and all the religion there is. I think that idea is a falsehood, to begin with."

"I shall agree with you there, Ben. I have no question that a man may be a Christian without believing half that most denominations profess to believe. And I suppose that the main thing is to be Christians, and not theologians."

"You are drifting to my side as fast as is necessary," remarked Benjamin, laughing. "You will come clear over in due time. I am sure you will, if you read Shaftesbury."

"Well, I must drift home in a hurry," responded John. "Whether I shall drift to you, the future will reveal. You are now in too deep water for me. I should drown if I got in where you are."

John left, and Benjamin went on thinking, as he was wont. He put more thinking into every twenty-four hours than any three boys together in Boston. At this time he was quite a doubter,—really a young skeptic. In the printing office he drifted in that direction faster and faster. He was a kind of speculator from childhood. He loved to argue. He enjoyed being on the opposite side, to indulge his propensity to argue. After he learned the Socratic method of reasoning, he was more inclined to discuss religion with different parties. Perhaps he did it to practise the method, rather than to show his aversion to religion. But, judging from what followed, in the next three or four years, he grew decidedly unbelieving. We can discover his lack of reverence for the Christian religion, and want of confidence in it, in articles he wrote for the *Courant*. Nothing very marked, it is true, but some of his articles lean in that direction.

Besides, Benjamin was one of those talented, independent boys, who think it is manly to break away from ancestral creeds. When he was eleven years old he was assisting his father to pack a barrel of pork for winter use. When the work was done he said to his father:

"Father, it would save time if you would say grace over the whole barrel now, instead of saying it over a piece at a time."

Whether his father flogged him for such irreverence, we are not told; nevertheless, the fact is suggestive of an element in the boy's make-up to which the ingenious skeptic may appeal with success. Possibly it was only the native humor of the boy, which, with his love of fun, cropped out on that occasion. It was irreverence, however, whatever may have been his motive.

Many were the conversations that Benjamin had with his friend, John Collins, upon religion, after becoming thoroughly poisoned by reading Shaftesbury and Collins.

"By the way, John, I should like to read to you what your namesake says on the subject. Perhaps you descended straight from this illustrious infidel."

"Perhaps so; but I shall not spend time in tracing my pedigree," John replied. "I never dared to trace my ancestors far back, for fear I should run into some disreputable family."

"It is probably an accident that you are a Collins, so that we can't lay it up against you, John; but I should really like to read two or three paragraphs from Collins' work, that you may judge of him."

"Go ahead, and I will give you respectful attention. If it is above my capacity to understand, I will not hold you responsible."

Benjamin proceeded to read from Collins' work as follows:

"Opinions, how erroneous soever, when the Effect of an impartial Examination, will never hurt Men in the sight of God, but will recommend Men to his Favour. For impartial Examination in the Matter of Opinion is the best that a Man can do towards obtaining Truth, and God, who is a wise, good, and just Being, can require no more of Men than to do their best, and will reward them when they do their best; and he would be the most unjust Being imaginable, if he punished Men, who had done their best endeavor to please him. Besides, if men were to be punished by God for mistaken Opinions, all men must be damned; for all Men abound in mistaken Opinions."

"While Rome was in the Height of its glory for Arms, Learning, and Politeness, there were *six hundred different Religions* professed and allowed therein. And this groat Variety does not appear to have had the least Effect on the Peace of the State, or on the Temper of Men; but, on the contrary, a very good Effect, for there is an entire Silence of History, about the Actions of those ancient Professors,

who, it seems, lived so quietly together as to furnish no Materials for an *Ecclesiastical History*, such as Christians have given an Occasion for, which a Reverend Divine thus describes: '*Ecclesiastical History*' says he, 'is chiefly spent in reciting the wild Opinions of Hereticks (that is, in belying Hereticks); the Contentions between Emperors and Popes; the idle and superstitious Canons, and ridiculous Decrees and Constitutions of packed Councils; their Debates about frivolous Matters, and playing the Fool with Religion; the Consultations of Synods about augmenting the Revenues of the Clergy, and establishing their Pride and Grandure; the impostures of Monks and Fryars; the Schisms and Factions of the Church; the Tyranny, Cruelty, and Impiety of the Clergy; insomuch that the excellent *Grotius* says, '*He that reads Ecclesiastical history* reads nothing but the *Roguery and Folly of Bishops and Churchmen*.'"

"Matthew says, Jesus *came and dwelt at* Nazareth *that it might* be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophet saying, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.' Which Citation does not expressly occur in any Place of the Old Testament, and therefore cannot be literally fulfilled."

"In fine, the Prophecies, cited from the Old Testament by the Authors of the New, do plainly relate, in their obvious and primary Sense, to other Matters than those which they are produced to prove."

"Well," said John, interrupting, "I think that will do for my namesake. There is nothing very wonderful to me about that. True enough, I guess, but nothing remarkable. But how about Shaftesbury? What has he written?"

"He disproves the miracles of the New Testament. His 'Inquiry Concerning Virtue' and his 'Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour' are interesting as novels to me."

"I prefer the novels," interrupted John.

"Perhaps you do; but Shaftesbury is one of the most ingenious and pleasant writers known. He does not discard religion; he assails spurious religion only."

"And spurious religion is all religion that he do not believe in, I suppose," suggested John, "come from above or below? When a man does not believe the Bible he tries to show it up; and so when a man do not believe any religion but his own, he tries to explode all others."

"Read Shaftesbury, and judge for yourself," added Benjamin. "You will fall in love with him, as I have. He is one of the most graceful and fascinating writers I know of."

"Perhaps I will read him sometime," replied John. "I must go now; and when I am ready for it I will call for the book."

We have not time to follow the companionship of these two youth. It was intimate, and Benjamin succeeded in making a Shaftesbury disciple of John, so that one was about as much of an unbeliever as the other. In his "Autobiography," Benjamin confesses that he "*was made a doubter by reading Shaftesbury and Collins*," although he began to dissent from his father, as we have already seen, in his boyhood, when he read the religious tracts of Boyle.

We know that Benjamin was charged with being an atheist by his brother. True, it was when his brother was angry because he left him; still, he would not have been likely to make such a statement to others without some foundation for it. Franklin himself gives one reason for his leaving Boston (in his "Autobiography"): "My indiscreet disputations about religion began to make me pointed at with horror by good people as an infidel and atheist."

Another admission in his "Autobiography" reflects upon this subject:

"The time I allotted for writing exercises and for reading, was at night, or before work began in the morning, *or on Sundays*, when I contrived to be in the printing house, avoiding as much as I could the constant attendance upon public worship, which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which I still continued to consider a duty, though I could not afford time to practise it."

There is an intimate connection between loose religious views and the non-observance of the Sabbath. Skeptics are not friendly to the Sabbath as a class. It is an institution they inveigh against with much spirit. No doubt the change going on in Benjamin's opinions had much to do with his ceasing to attend public worship.

Fifteen years afterwards, when Benjamin was fully established in business in Philadelphia, his parents became very anxious about his skeptical ideas, and wrote to him about it. Their letter is not preserved, but we have his in reply, which, while it confirms the fact, shows him to be more reverent and thoughtful than they feared. It is, also, evidence of a filial regard for his father and mother that is always as beautiful as it is honorable. We furnish the letter below:

"PHILADELPHIA, April 13, 1738.

"*Honored Father,*—I have your favors of the 21st of March, in which you both seem concerned lest I have imbibed some erroneous opinions. Doubtless I have my share, and when the natural weakness and imperfection of human understanding is considered, the unavoidable influence of education, custom, books, and company, upon our ways of thinking, I imagine a man must have a good deal of vanity who believes, and a good deal of boldness who affirms, that all the doctrines he holds are true, and all he rejects are false. And, perhaps, the same may be justly said of every sect, church, and society of men, when they assume to themselves that infallibility which they deny to the pope and councils.

"I think opinions should be judged of by their influences and effects; and if man holds none that tend to make him less virtuous or more vicious, it may be concluded he holds none that are dangerous,—which, I hope, is the case with me.

"I am sorry you should have any uneasiness on my account, and, if it were a thing possible for one to alter his opinions in order to please another's, I know none whom I ought more willingly to oblige in that respect than yourselves. But, since it is no more in a man's power to *think* than to *look* like another, methinks all that should be expected from me is to keep my mind open to conviction; to hear patiently, and examine attentively, whatever is offered me for that end; and, if after all I continue in the same errors, I believe your usual charity will induce you rather to pity and excuse than blame me; in the mean time your care and concern for me is what I am very thankful for.

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

"As to the free masons, I know no way of giving my mother a better account of them than she seems to have at present (since it is not allowed that women should be admitted into that secret society). She has, I must confess, on that account, some reason to be displeased with it; but, for any thing else, I must entreat her to suspend her judgment till she is better informed, unless she will believe me when I assure her that they are in general a very harmless sort of people, and have no principles or practices that are inconsistent with religion and good manners.

"B. FRANKLIN."

His sister also, later on, in her great anxiety for his spiritual welfare, wrote to him, and he replied as follows:

"PHILADELPHIA, July 28, 1743.

"*Dearest Sister Jenny,*—I took your admonition very kindly, and was far from being offended at you for it. If I say any thing about it to you, 't is only to rectify some wrong opinions you seem to have entertained of me; and this I do only because they give you some uneasiness, which I am unwilling to be the occasion of. You express yourself as if you thought I was against worshipping of God, and doubt that good works would merit heaven; which are both fancies of your own, I think, without foundation. I am so far from thinking that God is not to be worshipped, that I have composed and wrote a whole book of devotions for my own use; and I imagine there are few if any in the world so weak as to imagine that the little good we can do here can merit so vast a reward hereafter.

"There are some things in your New England doctrine and worship which I do not agree with; but I do not therefore condemn them, or desire to shake your belief or practice of them. We may dislike things that are nevertheless right in themselves; I would only have you make me the same allowance, and have a better opinion both of morality and your brother. Read the pages of Mr. Edwards' late book, entitled, 'Some Thoughts concerning the present Revival of Religion in New England,' from 367 to 375, and, when you judge of others, if you can perceive the fruit to be good, do not terrify yourself that the tree may be evil; be assured it is not so, for you know who has said, 'Men do not gather grapes off thorns, and figs off thistles.'

"I have not time to add, but that I shall always be your affectionate brother,

"B. FRANKLIN.

"P.S. It was not kind in you, when your sister commended good works, to suppose she intended it a reproach to you. 'T was very far from her thoughts."

The sequel will show much more concerning the skepticism of Franklin; and that the time came when he saw the folly of such unbelief, and gave his adherence to the Christian religion. At the same time, he learned from experience the danger of reading infidel publications, and warned the young against following his example. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that, as early as 1728, when he was but twenty-two years of age, he was not so much of an infidel as some of his friends supposed; for then he prepared a code of morals and belief for his own use, entitled "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion." In this document he avows his belief in "One Supreme, most perfect Being," and prays to "be preserved from atheism, impiety, and profaneness." Under the head of "Thanks" occur the following:

"For peace and liberty, for food and raiment, for corn, and wine, and milk, and every kind of healthful nourishment,—Good God, I thank Thee!

"For the common benefits of air and light, for useful fire and delicious water,—Good God, I thank Thee!

"For knowledge, and literature, and every useful art, for my friends and their prosperity, and for the fewness of my enemies,—Good God, I thank Thee!

"For all my innumerable benefits, for life, and reason, and the use of speech; for health, and joy, and every pleasant hour,—Good God, I thank Thee!"

It is true, there is not much religion in these things; and though they may have been adopted to satisfy the demands of conscience only, they prove that he was not an atheist, as many supposed.

Benjamin's experience with skeptical and infidel books recalls the experience of two young men, when about the same age, with publications of kindred character, which came very near depriving the United States of two good Presidents.

Before Abraham Lincoln began the study of law, he was connected with a clique or club of young men, who made light of religion, and read books that treated it as a delusion. It was at this time that he read Paine's "Age of Reason" and Volney's "Ruins," through which he was influenced to array himself against the Bible for a time,—as much of a skeptic, almost, as any one of his boon companions. But his early religious training soon asserted itself, and we hear no more of hostility to religion as long as he lived. On the other hand, when he was elected President, he spoke as follows to his friends and neighbors, who had assembled at the station to bid him adieu on leaving for Washington, on the eve of the late bloody Civil war:

"My Friends: No one not in my position can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. To this people I owe all that I am. Here I have lived more than a quarter of a century. Here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you again. A duty devolves on me, which is greater, perhaps, than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He never would have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I can not succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him, and on the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support; and I hope you, my friends, will pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I can not succeed, but with which success is certain. Again I bid you all an affectionate farewell."

When James A. Garfield became a member of the "Black Salter's" family, he found "Marryatt's Novels," "Sinbad the Sailor," "The Pirates' Own Book," "Jack Halyard," "Lives of Eminent Criminals," "The Buccaneers of the Caribbean Seas"; and being a great reader, he sat up nights to read these works. Their effect upon him was to weaken the ties of home and filial affection, diminish his regard for religious things, and create within him an intense desire for a seafaring life. Nothing but a long and painful sickness, together with the wise counsels of his mother and a popular teacher, saved him from a wild and reckless life upon the sea, by leading him to Christ and a nobler life, in consequence of which his public career was one of honor, and closed in the highest office of the land.

Neither Lincoln nor Garfield would have been President of the United States if the spell, with which the influence of corrupt books bound them for the time, had not been broken by juster views of real life and nobler aims.

XVIII.

HOW HE QUIT BOSTON.

"I tell you how it is, John," exclaimed Benjamin, under great excitement; "I have withstood my brother's ill treatment as long as I am going to. I shall leave him."

"How is that, Ben? I thought your brother would treat you with more consideration after you immortalized yourself as an editor. I knew you had a hard time with him before the *Courant* was started." John Collins knew somewhat of Benjamin's troubles, the first two years of his apprenticeship.

"He has been worse since my prominence on the *Courant*; that is, at times. I think my success aroused his jealousy, so that it fretted him to see me, his apprentice, occupy a higher position than himself. Once in a while he has seemed to be pleased with my prominence on the paper, and then again it annoyed him."

"I should think you had helped him out of trouble enough to stir up his gratitude a little, even if he had no pride in possessing so bright a brother."

"Brother! brother!" exclaimed Benjamin. "He never thought of that relation. I was his apprentice, to be lorded over until twenty-one years of age. I do not think he would have treated the greatest stranger as an apprentice more unkindly than he has me. He seemed to think that the relation of master to an apprentice obliterates all blood relationship."

"That is unfortunate for both of you," remarked John, "but most unfortunate for him, whom public opinion will judge as a brother, and not as a master. But how will you get along with your indenture if you leave him?"

"I am justified by the circumstances in using the indenture, on the back of which is his own endorsement of my freedom. He released me from all obligations to him, that I might run the paper when he could not."

"But the understanding between you was, if I remember, that it was only a formality to evade the action of the General Court. He did not mean that you should take advantage of it and refuse to serve him."

"That is true; but I say the circumstances justify me in using it as if he really meant to give me my freedom. He has another indenture which I signed, designed to be kept private, but he won't dare to bring that out to the light of day, because it may get him into further trouble with the General Court."

"You have the advantage of him there, I see, if you see fit to avail yourself of it. Does James know how you feel about it?"

"He ought to know, for I have told him that I should leave him if he continued to treat me as he has done. Probably he does not believe that I shall quit, but I am not responsible for that. He ought to see that such treatment would cause any apprentice to leave his master."

"What does he do that is so bad?" inquired John.

"He undertook to flog me, the other day. He did strike me, but I showed him that I believed in self-defense, and he desisted. He has beaten me often. I did not like the looks of an elder brother licking a younger one, and so I put myself in a position to make such a scene impossible."

"Well, I do not think that such a scene is particularly attractive," responded John in his droll way. "Such a scene in the theatre would be tragedy, I think; it could not be comedy in a civilized land."

"That is no worse than other things he does. If he would get mad and beat me, and then be kind and considerate for a while, I should be quite well satisfied. But he is constantly domineering over me, as if he meant I should realize all the while that he is my legal master."

"Does your father know about it?"

"Yes, and he has been decidedly in my favor until now. We have often laid our differences before him, and in nearly every instance, he has supported me. But for some reason, since the last trouble he has upheld James. Perhaps it was because I did not allow James to beat me as masters often do their apprentices."

"What do you propose to do if you leave your brother?" continued John.

"Go to New York. I can find work there. If there is nothing there for an extra printer to do, I will turn my hand to something else. I shall leave Boston."

"Why not get into one of the other printing offices in town? I do not want you should quit Boston until I do."

"For two good reasons. The first is that my connection with the *Courant* stirred up the officials of the government, so that I am obnoxious to them; and the second is, that my religious opinions have become so well known, and have been so misrepresented, that ministers and other good people consider me no better than an atheist. I prefer to go among strangers, where I can have a chance to make a record for myself."

"Better make a record here,—the best chance in the world. Here people know who you are, or they ought to know by this time. Take my advice, and secure a place in another printing office in Boston."

The result of this interview with John was, that Benjamin resolved to secure a position in Boston if he could. But when he applied, subsequently, for a situation, each printer declined to employ him. James had been to them, anticipating that he might take this step, and warned them against making any bargain with him. He assured them that he should take legal steps, under the indenture of apprenticeship, to maintain his rights if they employed him. Besides, he told them that Benjamin did not believe the Christian religion, and he had no respect for those who did; that, in short, he was "no better than an atheist."

James meant to compel Benjamin to continue to work for him; and he thought if no other printer would hire him, that would end the trouble. But the opposite effect was produced. It determined Benjamin to quit Boston as soon as he could arrange for the change, though he did not make known his decision to his brother. Probably his brother did not dream of his leaving Boston for New York, or any other place. However, Benjamin embraced the first opportunity to announce to him that he should quit.

"I am my own man from this time," he cried, holding up his indenture which his brother had returned to him. "This paper makes me free, and I shall take advantage of it to leave you," and he shook the document in James' face.

"You know that I never gave up the indenture because I relinquished the bargain we had made. If you use it to assert and establish your freedom, you will be guilty of a mean, contemptible act."

"I shall so use it!" and Benjamin was very defiant when he said it. "I have borne your abuse long enough, and I will bear it no longer."

"We shall see about that. Father will have a word to say about it, you will find. You are not of age yet." James spoke with remarkable coolness for him, in the circumstances. He probably realized that Benjamin had the advantage of him.

"Neither father nor any other man can force me to work for you any longer. You have even been around to other printers, to influence them not to employ me; and you have lied about me, telling them that I am an atheist, and other things as bad."

"I told them nothing but the truth," replied James. "You know as well as I do, that you believe Shaftesbury instead of the Bible."

"Well, no matter what I believe. I shall not work for you another day. I will resort to the most menial employment for my bread and butter before I will serve a man who will treat his own brother like a slave." And again Benjamin flourished his indenture before the eyes of James, defiantly.

It was not fair in Benjamin to take this advantage of his brother, and he knew it; but his resentment triumphed over his regard for right at the time. James returned his indenture only that he might be able to publish the *Courant* unmolested. It was a deceitful arrangement in the first place, and Benjamin's use of the indenture to assert his liberty was no more unfair and sinful than was James' device to make him the proprietor of the paper, and thus evade the law. James was paid in his own coin. He laid a plan to cheat the government, and he got cheated himself. He was snared in the work of his own hands. This, however, did not justify Benjamin in his course, as he afterwards saw and frankly confessed. In his "Autobiography" he said:

"At length, a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first *errata* of my life; but the unfairness of it weighed little with me when under the impressions of resentment for the blows his passion too often urged him to bestow upon me, though he was otherwise not an ill-natured man. Perhaps I was too

saucy and provoking."

There is no doubt that Benjamin erred in the matter. He was by nature headstrong and independent; and, perhaps, he was more self-willed on account of his success in the business. But, after all allowances are made, James must be regarded as the chief offender in the troubles, and on him the responsibility for it rests in a large measure.

Benjamin lost no time in reporting his decision to John.

"I am going to New York as soon as I can get away," he said. "What do you suppose that fellow has done? He has been around to the other printers and threatened to enforce his claim to my services if they hire me; and he lied about me, also. It is settled that I shall go to New York. I am not going to be banged about any more."

"Well, it seems rather necessary for you to go somewhere if you can't get work here," answered John. "But how am I going to get along without you, Ben? Couldn't you turn your hand to something else?"

"I could, but I won't. I am fully resolved to quit Boston soon, and I am satisfied that I must leave clandestinely, or I shall not get away."

"How is that? Expect that your brother will lay violent hands upon you to prevent?"

"I expect that he and father together will prevent my leaving, if possible."

"Have you spoken with your father about it?"

"No, I have not; nor do I intend to. He sides with James now, and that is enough for me. I shall say nothing to him about the matter."

"Perhaps he thinks you will leave Boston if you leave James," suggested John. "He may think that you will clear out and go to sea. He has not forgotten your old hankering for a life on the wave."

"Possibly; but I have no desire now to go to sea. I have a trade that
I like, and I shall stick to it until I am forced out of it."

"How do you propose to get to New York? Got any plans ahead?"

"Yes, a plan is all that I have got. It remains to be seen how I can carry it out. I do not think I can accomplish my purpose without your help."

"I am at your service now, Ben, as ever before; only I would like to understand just what I can do."

"That is what I want to talk with you about. I am not yet clear as to my best way of escape. If I go by land, on foot, they may send officers after me, and overtake me before I get half way there."

"Of course it would be poor policy for you to go by land, if you can possibly go by water. There is a New York sloop in the harbor, and no doubt it will return soon."

"But how can I get aboard? The captain will want to know who I am, and if he knows that I am a runaway apprentice, he will refuse me a passage."

"I can manage that," said John. "I know the captain, and I think I can arrange with him to take you."

"Yes, but he will want large pay for it. Of course he will not take me to New York without some money arrangement, and I have precious little money to give him."

"You can sell some of your books," suggested John. "You will not take them to New York with you, and you can sell them readily."

"That is a good idea, John; I will reduce it to practice at once. I shall not want much money anyway. But suppose the captain is very inquisitive about me, how will you get along with the case? He must be somewhat suspicious when a Boston boy wants to be taken to New York on the sly."

"You leave that to me; I have no doubt that I can smuggle you through.
He shall not know even that your name is Franklin."

"Well, then, I will commit myself to your care. See that you manage adroitly, even if you have to make a package of me for transportation. I am going to New York if I am obliged to walk there."

"I will go to see the captain at once, Ben; and I will be back with my report in two hours. Be on hand, and see if I do not make a good bargain for your passage. You always have succeeded, and I think you

will succeed now."

"Be off, then, in a jiffy, and I will run out to see where I can dispose of my books. I will be back in two hours, and meet you here."

They parted, and John hurried away to see the captain. He found him on board his sloop.

"Can you take a friend of mine to New York?" he asked.

"That depends on circumstances," replied the captain. "Who is your friend? Can't take a pauper or a criminal, you know."

"He is neither one nor the other. He is a young man about my age, a printer by trade, and he is going to New York to find work."

"Why doesn't he find work in Boston? There are more printers in Boston than there are in New York."

"That may be; but he prefers to work in New York. He's tired of
Boston."

"Perhaps Boston is tired of him—is that so? I want to accommodate, but I don't want to get anybody into trouble, nor get there myself."

John saw that there was no evading the captain's questions, and so he resolved to tell the false story he had thought of on his way to the sloop.

"Well," said John, "if I must tell you the whole story, the case is this: He is a young fellow who has been flirting with a girl, who wants to marry him, and now her parents are determined that he shall marry her, and he is as determined that he will not; and he proposes to remove secretly to New York. He would have come to see you himself, but his coming might awaken suspicion on the part of some one acquainted with the affair, who might see him and know him. So I came to do the business for him."

"He is in a fix, sure," answered the captain; "if there is any man in the world I would help, it is the man who is trying to escape from the girl he don't want to marry. How much will he pay for his passage?"

"He will pay your price if it is reasonable. He is not a pauper, though he has not much of a money surplus. He will satisfy you as to that."

"Send him along, then; this sloop will sail on Saturday at two o'clock, P.M. He better not come aboard until just before we sail, or somebody may upset his plans, and the girl get him, after all."

"All right; he will be here on the mark, and I shall be with him to see him off," answered John, as he turned upon his heels to report his success to Benjamin.

A youth who can fabricate a falsehood so unblushingly as John did the foregoing is already on the road to ruin. The reader will not be surprised to learn, before the whole story is told, that he became a miserable, reckless sort of a man. This lie proved that he was destitute of moral principle and would do almost any thing to carry his point.

That the captain should have been taken in by such a ruse is inexplicable. But, no doubt, the thought of receiving good pay for his passage led him to receive the passenger. It was so much gain to receive a few dollars from an unexpected source.

"The bargain is made, and your passage to New York is assured," exclaimed John to Benjamin, when they met, at the end of two hours.

"Have any trouble to accomplish it? You did not awaken his suspicion, did you?" replied Benjamin, evidently relieved of considerable anxiety by the announcement.

"No trouble, of course; I did not mean to have any, if lying would prevent it."

"Then you had to resort to falsehood to carry your point, did you? How was that, John?"

"Well, you see, he questioned me pretty closely, and seemed to be suspicious that you might be a pauper or criminal. He wouldn't want to carry you if you were a pauper, for he would get no pay for it; and he would not carry a criminal, for fear of getting into trouble with the authorities. So I had to originate a little love story, in which you are represented as fleeing from a girl and her parents, who are determined that you shall marry her."

"You are more original than I thought you were, John. You might write a novel out of the affair."

"Yes; and it would be no worse than half the novels that are written," rejoined John. "I had a plot to get you to New York, and the novel writer often has a plot that is not half so important, nor half so much truth in it."

"How soon will the sloop sail?"

"Next Saturday, at two o'clock in the afternoon, so you will not have to wait long. You must not go aboard until just before the sloop sails; for the girl might get wind of it, and be after you. The captain will be on the lookout for her; he evidently don't want you to fall into her hands."

Benjamin laughed at this way of putting the matter; and, in the circumstances, was not disposed to criticise John's method. But he inquired:

"How about the price to be paid for the passage?"

"That is left for you and him to adjust," replied John. "I told him that you was not over-burdened with money, but had enough to pay him for your passage. How about your books—can you sell them?"

"Yes, and quite as favorably as I had supposed. I see nothing why I shall not be all ready for the sloop on Saturday. I will send my chest of clothes down just before I go myself."

"I will be on hand to go to the sloop with you," said John, as they parted, each with a clear understanding as to the future.

The plan was carried out to the letter, and Benjamin and John were on their way to the sloop in due time.

"Tell no tales out of school," remarked Benjamin. "I prefer that no one should know my whereabouts at present."

"They will find out nothing from me; I shall be profoundly ignorant of your movements," answered John. "Perhaps I shall be the most astonished person in Boston over your sudden departure; there's no telling. But I shall want to hear from you, Ben,—can't you write?"

"Sha'n't make any pledges. I shall want to hear from you as much as you will from me, and a little more, I guess. For I shall want to hear what is said and done about my unauthorized departure. I suppose that a *runaway* can not expect many favorable remarks."

"Perhaps the *Gazette* will say that the editor of the *Courant* has run away," suggested John, in a vein of pleasantry. "There will be considerable more truth in that than I told the captain. It is rather of a singular occurrence, however, Ben, that so popular an editor as you have been should be running away from the editorial chair."

By this time the sloop was boarded, and the captain was almost ready to sail.

"My friend," said John to the captain, presenting Benjamin. "You will find him good company; he is no fool or knave."

"He might be a goner if that girl should be after him before we get under way," suggested the captain. "However, we'll soon be off."

"Good luck to you, old friend," said John, as he shook hands with Benjamin. "We shall be nigh each other, though three hundred miles apart."

"Good-bye, John; a thousand thanks for what you have done for me," replied Benjamin, with a heavy heart, just beginning to feel that he was going away from home. "Good-bye."

Thus they parted, and the sloop sailed for New York. Benjamin avoided conversation with the captain as much as was possible, lest he might ask questions it would be embarrassing to answer. The captain, too, refrained from too much freedom with his youthful passenger, lest he might make it painful for him, now that he was running away from a girl.

The sloop was becalmed off Block Island for several hours, when the sailors resorted to catching cod for a pastime, and slapping them down one after another on the deck.

"Cruel! Inhumanity!" cried Benjamin, who entertained the singular idea that it was murder to take the life of any harmless creature; and for this reason he would not touch animal food.

"What is cruel?" inquired one of the crew.

"Taking the life of codfish that never did you any harm."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the captain; "how you goin' to eat 'em before you catch 'em?"

"Don't eat them, and then there will be no need of catching them," responded Benjamin. "They are in their native element now; let them stay there, and you keep in yours. They are in as great misery on this deck as you would be down there in the water."

"What put such a queer notion as that into your head?" said the captain, who was surprised that a sane man should hold such an opinion. "Don't *you* eat fish?"

"No, nor any other kind of meat; I have not touched a particle for more than two years."

"Because you think it is wicked to kill harmless animals of any kind?" remarked another sailor, who had been listening in utter astonishment.

"Yes, that is the principal reason, though I do not think that man needs flesh for a diet."

"You think that God made beasts, birds, and fish to look at, and not to eat," suggested the captain. "In my opinion, the world would be overrun with dumb animals in time if none were killed for food."

"And I think the human family would perish for want of food, if flesh were denied them," added one of the crew.

While this conversation was going on, the cook was frying fresh cod, and the sailors were enjoying the odor therefrom.

"Don't they smell good?" said one, addressing Benjamin; "I shouldn't want to risk you with one of those fellows if there was no more than I wanted."

"I once ate fish, and had a special liking for them, and they smell well enough now in the frying-pan," replied Benjamin. "But I have my own opinions about killing such animals."

"I should think you had," responded one of the sailors, laughing; "no one else would ever think of such a thing."

Soon the whole crew were eating cod, and in the jolliest manner making remarks at Benjamin's expense.

"Look here, my friend," said the cook; "when these fish were opened, I found smaller ones in their stomachs; now, if they can eat one another, I don't see why we can't eat them; do you?"

"You must be joking, young man," continued the captain; "better send all such notions adrift and sit down with us to dine on fish; they are splendid."

One and another remarked, keeping up a continual fire at Benjamin, with jokes and arguments and ridicule, until he sat down and went to devouring a cod with the rest of them. That was the end of his queer notion about killing fish; it was buried there in the sea; and Benjamin never again resurrected it, but ate what other people did. But the episode furnished sport for the sailors all the way from Block Island to New York, where they arrived in about three days from the time the sloop left Boston.

Benjamin did not know a person in the city of New York, nor had he a single letter of recommendation to any one, and the money in his pocket but a trifle. It was in October, 1723, that he arrived in New York, a youth of seventeen years, a runaway in a city, without a solitary acquaintance, and scarcely money enough to pay a week's board! Perhaps, with all the rest, he carried an upbraiding conscience under his jacket, more discomforting than to be a stranger in a strange land.

At this crisis of Benjamin's life, he appeared to be on the highway to ruin. There is scarcely one similar case in ten, where the runaway escapes the vortex of degradation. Benjamin would have been no exception, but for his early religious training and his love of books.

The case of William Hutton, who was the son of very poor parents, is very similar to that of Benjamin Franklin. He was bound to his uncle for a series of years, but he was treated so harshly that he ran away, at seventeen years of age. The record is, that "on the 12th day of July, 1741, the ill-treatment he received from his uncle in the shape of a brutal flogging, with a birch-broom handle of white hazel, which almost killed him, caused him to run away." A dark prospect was before him, since "he had only twopence in his pocket, a spacious world before him, and no plan of operation." Yet he became an author of much celebrity, and a most exemplary and influential man. He lived to the age of ninety, his

last days being gladdened by the reflection of having lived a useful life, and the consciousness of sharing the confidence of his fellow-men.

This description of Hutton would apply almost equally well to Franklin.

XIX.

TRIALS OF A RUNAWAY.

On arriving at New York, Benjamin's first thought was of work. His pocket was too near empty to remain idle long; so he called upon Mr. William Bradford, an old printer, who removed from Philadelphia to New York some months before.

"Can I find employment in your printing office?" he inquired.

"I am not in need of extra help, I am sorry to say," answered Mr. Bradford. "My business is light, and will continue to be so for the present, I think. Are you a printer?"

"Yes, sir. I have worked at the business over three years."

"Where?"

"In Boston."

"You ought to understand it well by this time. I wish I had work for you, or for any other young man who is enterprising enough to go from Boston to New York for work."

"Do you think I should be likely to find work at some other printing office in town?"

"I am sorry to say that I hardly think you can. Very dull times, indeed, my son. But I think you can get work in Philadelphia. My son runs a printing house in that city, and one of his men on whom he relied much recently died. I think he would be glad to employ you."

"How far is it to Philadelphia?"

"About a hundred miles."

"A long distance," was Benjamin's reply, evidently disappointed to find that he was still a hundred miles from work.

"It is only one-third as far as you have already traveled for work. If you can find employment by traveling a hundred miles further, in these dull times, you will be fortunate."

"Well, I suppose that is so," replied Benjamin, musing on his situation. "What is the conveyance there?"

"You can take a boat to Amboy, and there you will find another boat to Philadelphia. A pleasant trip, on the whole." And Mr. Bradford added, for Benjamin's encouragement, "Philadelphia is a better place for a printer than New York, in some respects."

Benjamin thanked him for his kindness, expressing much pleasure in making his acquaintance, and bade him good-bye. He took the first boat to Amboy, sending his chest by sea around to Philadelphia. The more he reflected upon his situation, in connection with Mr. Bradford's encouraging words, the more cheerful and hopeful he grew. If he could get work "by going a hundred miles further" he ought to be well satisfied, he said to himself. So he cheered up his almost desponding heart, in Franklin fashion, as he proceeded upon the next hundred miles.

But more trials awaited him, however, somewhat different from those already experienced. The boat had been under way but a short time before it was struck by a sudden squall, tearing the rotten sails to pieces, and driving the craft pell-mell upon Long Island. It was the first squall of that sort Benjamin had ever experienced. Other squalls had struck him, and he was fleeing from one at that time, but this squall of wind and rain was altogether a new experience, and he wilted under it. The condition was

made more tragic by a drunken Dutchman falling overboard.

"Seize him! seize him!" cried the captain; and that was what Benjamin was waiting to do when the miserable fellow should rise to the surface. As soon as he came up from the depths into which he had sunk, Benjamin seized him by the hair of his head and pulled him on board.

"There, you fool," exclaimed Benjamin. "I hope that ducking will sober you. You came within sight of eternity that time."

"He may thank you for saving his life," remarked one of the boatmen.

"He is too drunk for that," replied Benjamin. "He will never know how near he came to his own place. Strange that any man will be so foolish as to drink stuff that will steal away his brains."

"Don't you ever drink it?" asked the captain in reply.

"Not one drop," his young passenger replied with emphasis, as he rolled over the Dutchman to get the water out of him. "There, are you all right now?"

The Dutchman mumbled over something, no one could tell what. It was probably about a book in his jacket; for he took one therefrom, and signified to Benjamin that he wanted it dried; and then he dropped into a sound sleep.

"I declare, if it is not my old friend, The Pilgrim's Progress," exclaimed Benjamin; "in Dutch, too! A queer companion for a drunken man to have, though a good one."

"Knows more about the bottle than he does about that, I bet," said the captain. "I don't suppose that it makes much difference to him whether he is under the water or on top."

"Not just now," replied Benjamin; "but what chance is there for landing on such a rocky shore?"

"Not much; we'll drop anchor, and swing out the cable towards the shore," said the captain.

"I see men on the shore, and there are boats there; perhaps they can come to our rescue, though the wind is blowing a little too hard for them."

The captain hallooed to them, and they returned an answer, but the wind howled so that they could not be understood.

"A boat! A boat!" shouted the captain. Others of the crew joined in the call for aid, and made various signs indicating their need of assistance. But neither party could understand the other.

"What now?" inquired Benjamin, when he saw the men on shore turning their steps homeward. "A pretty dark night before us."

"Yes, dark and perilous, though I have seen a worse one," answered the captain. "When we find ourselves in such a predicament, there is only one thing to be done."

"What is that?" asked Benjamin, who was quite nervous and anxious.

"Do nothing but wait patiently for the wind to abate." The captain was cool and self-reliant when he spoke.

"Then let us turn in with the Dutchman," said one of the boatmen. "I don't want he should have all the sleep there is. He is not in condition to appreciate it as I am."

"As you please," said the captain; "might as well improve the time by getting a little rest. We shall be all right in the morning."

So all crowded into the hatches, including Benjamin. But the spray broke over the head of the boat so much that the water leaked through upon them.

"A wet berth for you, friend," said one of the boatmen to Benjamin. "You are not accustomed to sleeping in such wet blankets. You may get as wet as the Dutchman before morning."

"There is only one thing to do in these circumstances," said Benjamin in reply, "take things as they come, and make the best of it."

"If you can," added the boatman in a suggestive way. "If *you* can, I oughter. I've been in this business longer than you have lived."

The crew slept soundly; but Benjamin found no rest in such an unusual plight. Sleep was out of the question, and he had all the more time to *think*, and his active mind improved the opportunity, so that Boston, home, the printing office, and his parents were dwelt upon until he began to think he was *paying too dear for the whistle* again. It is not strange that runaways feel thus, sooner or later, since few of them ever realize their anticipations.

The cold, dreary night wore away slowly, and the wind continued to howl, and the breakers to dash and rear, until after the dawn of morning. Benjamin was never more rejoiced to see daylight than he was after that dismal and perilous night. It was the more pleasant to him, because the wind began to abate, and there was a fairer prospect of reaching their destination. As soon as the tumult of the winds and waves had subsided, they weighed anchor, and steered for Amboy, where they arrived just before night, "having been thirty hours on the water without victuals, or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum."

In the evening Benjamin found himself feverish, having taken a severe cold by the exposure of the previous night. With a hot head and a heavy heart he retired to rest, first, however, drinking largely of cold water, because he had somewhere read that cold water was good for fever. This was one of the advantages he derived from his early habit of reading. But for his taste for reading, which led him to spend his leisure moments in poring over books, he might never have known this important fact, that, perhaps, saved him a fit of sickness. Availing himself of this knowledge, he drank freely of water before he retired, and the result was a thorough sweating; and he arose in the morning fully restored, so as to continue his journey.

A few years ago, a young man was traveling in the state of Maine, soliciting subscribers for a newspaper. On passing a certain farm, he observed some bricks of a peculiar color, and he traced them to their clay-bed, and satisfied himself that the material could be applied to a more valuable purpose than that of making bricks. He at once purchased the farm for fifteen hundred dollars, and, on his return to Boston, sold one-half of it for four thousand dollars. The secret of his success lay in a bit of knowledge he acquired at school. He had given some attention to geology and chemistry, and the little knowledge he had gained therefrom enabled him to discover the nature of the clay on the said farm. Thus even a little knowledge that may be gleaned from a book in a simple leisure half-hour, will sometimes prove the way to a valuable treasure; much more valuable than the farm which the young man purchased. This pecuniary benefit is, after all, the least important advantage derived from reading. The discipline of the mind and heart, and the refined and elevated pleasure which it secures, are far more desirable than any pecuniary advantage gained. A little reading, also, as we have seen, sometimes gives an impulse to the mind in the direction of learning and renown. It was the reading of Echard's Roman History, which Gibbon met with while on a visit to Miltshire, that opened before him the historic path to distinction.

Sir Walter Scott warned the young against under valuing the knowledge to be acquired at odd moments by reading and study. He wrote:

"If it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages, let such readers remember that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect, in my manhood, the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and I would this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by so doing I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science."

But we have lost sight of Benjamin. We left him at the "tavern" in Amboy, after having spent the night in a cold-water sweat, about ready to start on his journey. Burlington was fifty miles from Amboy, and there was no public conveyance, so that he was obliged to go on foot, expecting to find a boat there bound for Philadelphia.

"Rather a tough day for walking," remarked the landlord, as Benjamin was leaving his house. "Better stay unless your business is driving."

"Rain or shine, I must push on," responded Benjamin cheerfully. "I want to be in Philadelphia as soon as possible. Can't melt, as I am neither sugar nor salt."

"Well, that is a very encouraging view to take of the situation, and it is a sensible one, too," said the landlord. "There's nothing like taking things as they come."

"I have lived long enough to find that out, young as I am," replied Benjamin; "and I expect to find constant use of that spirit in future. Good-bye, sir."

"Good luck to you, wherever you go," added the landlord in a friendly tone.

Benjamin was wet through before he had traveled a mile, and he began to wish that he had never left

Boston; still he hastened on until he reached a "poor inn" about noon. His own description of that day is as follows:

"It rained very hard all the day; I was thoroughly soaked, and by noon a good deal tired; so I stopped at a poor inn, where I staid all night, *beginning now to wish I had never left home*. I made so miserable a figure, too, that I found, by the questions asked me, I was suspected to be some runaway indentured servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion."

"Where are you from, young man?"

"From Boston, sir."

"Ah! you are a long way from home for such a youngster. What is your name?"

"My name is Benjamin Franklin, and I am going to Philadelphia after work."

"No work in Boston, I s'pose, hey? How long since you left?"

"About a week. I did not expect to come further this way than New York, but I could find no work there."

"No work in New York, hey? What sort of work do you do, that you find it so scarce?"

"I am a printer by trade, and I hope to get into a printing office in Philadelphia."

"Wall, you are a pretty young one to take such a trip; I should hardly be willing my son should go so far from home, printer or no printer."

"I can afford to make such a trip, and even a longer one, if I can find steady work," suggested Benjamin.

"Your father and mother living?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did they feel about your going so far from home?"

"A father who loves to work as well as my father does always wants his sons to have enough to do," Benjamin replied, shrewdly evading the close question. "Nothing my father hates so much as idleness."

"We all ought to hate it; but many men do not. In these times, can't keep above water without work." The landlord's last words indicated that his suspicions were somewhat allayed.

Benjamin managed to answer all the questions of the innkeeper without increasing his suspicions. He ate and slept there, and on the following morning proceeded on his journey, and by night was within eight or ten miles of Burlington. Here he stopped at an inn kept by one Doctor Brown, "an ambulating quack-doctor" and a very social man.

"How much further you going?" he inquired of Benjamin.

"I am going to Philadelphia."

"Where are you from?"

"Boston."

"Ah! I would like to see Boston; I never did. I have been in South America, England, and some other countries, but I was never in Boston."

"It is a good town, and has many educated, intelligent citizens; it is a thriving place," said Benjamin. "I should like to see as much of the world as you have."

"I enjoyed it, though my knocking about subjected me to many hardships," replied the doctor. "You would like to see London, and Paris, and Rome; I have seen them all. They are marvellous cities."

"I suppose so. My father came from England to Boston less than forty years ago," continued Benjamin. "He enjoys this country more than he did his own."

Benjamin had a good time at Doctor Brown's. The latter soon discovered that his youthful guest was

very intelligent, so he entered into an account of his travels abroad somewhat in detail to interest him. Benjamin enjoyed the interview very much, and forgot, for the time being, that he was a runaway encountering many hardships. He was sorry to leave him on the next day.

"I have enjoyed every minute of my stay here," he said, "and I shall not forget it soon. Perhaps we shall meet again sometime."

"I hope we shall. I am glad to make your acquaintance, and I wish you great success. I hope you will become the most successful printer in America. Good-bye."

They parted the best of friends, and Benjamin pushed on to Burlington, where he expected to find a boat. In the suburbs of the town he bought some gingerbread of an old woman who kept a shop, and walked on, eating it as he went. To his great disappointment, on reaching the wharf, he found the boat had gone, and there would not be another until Tuesday. It was Saturday, and his money would not hold out if he should get boarded at a hotel till then. What should he do? He was in great trouble about it for a short time, but finally concluded that he would return to the old lady of whom he bought the gingerbread, as he liked her appearance very well, and ask her advice. So back he went.

"Ah! back again?" she said, as he entered her shop. "Want more gingerbread?"

"No. I was going to take the boat to Philadelphia, but it has gone, and there is not another to go until Tuesday."

"Lor', me!" exclaimed the kind-hearted woman; "if that ain't too bad!
What kin ye du?"

"That is what I want to ask you. Is there any other conveyance to
Philadelphia?"

"Lor', no; and all ye has to du is to make the best on 't."

"And what is that? That is just what I want to know. How can I make the best on 't?"

"What ye goin' to Philadelphy for?" she replied, instead of answering his question.

"I am going after work. I am a printer, and want to find work in a printing office."

"A printer, lor'! Dear me, yer fortin is made to set up business in this 'ere town. There's nothin' of the like here."

"I have nothing to set up the business with," said Benjamin. "I would as lief work here as in Philadelphia, if the way was open."

The woman did not know what was necessary in establishing a printing house. That types and a press were indispensable articles in such business she did not dream. She thought, doubtless, that he carried all necessary fixtures with him in his pockets.

"Lor', then, I'll lodge ye till Tuesday for ——," naming the sum.

"I will stay with you, then, and make the best of it," he replied.

He found himself in very good quarters, and his hostess proved herself to be very kind and hospitable. He took dinner with her, and remained about the shop until towards night, when he walked forth to view the place. In his walk he came around to the river, and, as he approached it, he discovered a boat with several people in it, and he hailed them:

"Whither bound?"

"To Philadelphia."

"Can you take me in? I was too late for the boat to-day."

"Just as well as not," and the boat was turned at once to receive the additional passenger.

There was no wind, so that they had to depend upon their oars for progress. Benjamin now had an opportunity to show his skill in rowing which he acquired in his boyhood, in Boston. He was so elated with proceeding on his journey to Philadelphia that he thought neither of the fatigue of rowing nor of the wonder of the old lady in the shop at the unexpected disappearance of her boarder. He did not mean to treat her disrespectfully, for he considered her a very clever woman; but the boat could not wait for him to return and pay the old lady his compliments. Whether she ever learned what became of

him, or that he grew up to be Doctor Franklin, the philosopher and statesman, we have no means of knowing. Doubtless she concluded that she had not "entertained an angel unawares," but rather had aided an undeserving fellow in pursuing a vicious course, which was not true.

The boat moved on. Benjamin rowed with strong resolution, taking his turn with others, and impressing them by his tact and skill, until midnight, when one of the company said:

"We must have passed the city. It can't be that we have been so long getting to it."

"That is impossible," answered one of the men; "we must have seen it if we had passed it."

"Well, I shall row no more," said the first speaker. "I know that Philadelphia is not so far off as this."

"Then, let us put for the shore," said a third, "and find out where we are, if possible."

All agreed to the last proposition, and at once rowed towards the shore, entering a small creek, where they landed near an old fence, the rails of which furnished them fuel for a fire. They were very chilly, it being a frosty night of October, and they found the fire very grateful. They remained there till daylight, when one of the company knew that the place was "Cooper's Creek," a few miles above Philadelphia. Immediately they made preparations to continue their journey, which had not been altogether unpleasant, and they were soon in full view of the city, where they arrived between eight and nine o'clock on Sunday morning. They landed at Market-street Wharf. Taking out his money, which consisted of one unbroken dollar and a shilling in copper coin, he offered the latter to the boatman for his passage.

"Not a cent, my good fellow! You worked your passage, and did it well, too. You row as if you were an old hand at it. Put your money back in your pocket."

"But you *must* take it," insisted Benjamin. "You are quite welcome to all the rowing I have done. I am glad enough to get here by rowing and paying my passage, too. But for your coming along to take me in, I should have been obliged to stay in Burlington until next Tuesday," and he fairly forced the money upon the boatman.

Bidding them good morning, he walked up Market Street.

XX.

THE WALKING COMEDY.

Benjamin was very hungry, and he was considering how he could appease his hunger, when he met a boy who was eating a piece of bread.

"That is what I want," he said to the boy; "where did you get that?"

"Over there, at the bake-shop," the boy replied, pointing to it.

"Thank you," and Benjamin hurried on.

He had eaten nothing since he dined with the shop-woman in Burlington, on the day before. Besides, bread was a staple article with him. He had made many a meal of plain bread in his brother's printing office in Boston. Although he knew well which side his bread was buttered, his appetite for unbuttered bread never failed him. Entering the bake-shop, he inquired:

"Have you biscuit?" He was thinking of what he had in Boston.

"We make nothing of the kind."

"Give me a three-penny loaf, then."

"We have none."

Benjamin began to think he should have to go hungry still, for, evidently, he did not know the names used to designate the different sorts of bread in Philadelphia. But, soon recovering himself, he said:

"Then give me three-penny worth of any kind." To his surprise, the baker passed three great puffy rolls to him, enough for three men to eat at one meal. At first, he was puzzled to know what to do with them, whether to take all three or not.

"What! All that?" he said, scarcely knowing what he did say.

"Yes, there's three-penny worth; that is what you said, was it not?"

"It was," and Benjamin paid the money and took the loaves, trying to conceal his surprise, without exposing his ignorance of methods in the Quaker City. He was a boy of remarkable tact, as we have seen, so that he was never put to his wits long without finding a way out. It was so in this case. He put a roll under each arm, and taking the third one in his hand, he proceeded up the street, eating as he went.

Recollect that it was Sunday morning, and people were already swarming in the streets, arrayed in their best clothes. Benjamin was clad in his poorest clothes, and they were very shabby. His best suit was in his chest, and that was sent from New York by water. He was a sight to behold as he trudged up Market Street with his three loaves of bread, and his large pockets stuffed with shirts and stockings. He preferred pockets to the usual "bandanna bundle"; they were more convenient for storing away his wardrobe, but contributed largely to his comical appearance. He was a walking comedy. People gazed at him inquiringly and smiled. No doubt, many of them wondered where he came from and where he was going. He was seedy enough, but no one saw the seed of a philosopher or statesman about him. There was no promise in that direction. He was an embryo "Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of France"; but his appearance was that of a shack, or modern tramp, to whom Sunday is like all other days, and whose self-respect is at a large discount.

On he went, however, regardless of opinions concerning the figure he cut, stowing away in his stomach the baker's loaf in his hand. He passed by the residence of one Mr. Read, whose daughter, in her teens, Miss Deborah Read, was standing at the door. She gazed in wonder at the singular specimen of humanity passing before her; thought he was the most awkward and comical creature in the form of a man she had ever seen; and turned away with a laugh to tell her people in the house of the queer spectacle. She little thought that she was taking a bird's eye view of her future husband, as the young man with the rolls under his arms turned out to be. But just then he cared more for bread than he did for her; some years thereafter, the case was reversed, and he cared more for her than he did for bread.

He turned down Chestnut Street, and walked on until he came round to the wharf where he landed. Being thirsty, he went to the boat for water, where he found the woman and child, who came down the river with them on the previous night, waiting to go further.

"Are you hungry?" he said to the little one, who looked wistfully at the bread.

"We are both very hungry," replied the mother quickly for herself and child.

"Well, I have satisfied my hunger with one loaf, and you may have the other two if you want them"; and Benjamin passed the two rolls under his arms to her. "It appears that, in Philadelphia, three-penny worth of bread is three times as much as a man can eat. If other things can be had in the same proportion, the last dollar I have left will go a great way."

"I thank you a thousand times; you are very kind indeed," responded the woman, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, which was as good pay for the bread as Benjamin wanted. "May you never want for bread."

"No one would want for bread if they who have it will divide with those who have none, as they should."

In the last reply was incorporated a leading virtue of Benjamin's character—a trait that manifested itself, as we shall see, all through his life. His generosity was equal to his wisdom. An American statesman said of him, in a eulogy delivered in Boston:

"No form of personal suffering or social evil escaped his attention, or appealed in vain for such relief or remedy as his prudence could suggest, or his purse supply. From that day of his early youth, when, a wanderer from his home and friends in a strange place, he was seen sharing the rolls with a poor woman and child, to the last act of his public life, when he signed that well-known memorial to Congress, a spirit of earnest and practical benevolence runs like a golden thread along his whole career."

"I must be after finding a boarding place," said Benjamin to the owner of the boat, as he was about leaving. "I do not know where to go any more than the man in the moon. Are you acquainted here?"

"Scarcely at all; could not be of any service to you any way on that line," the owner answered. "Goin' to stop some time in Philadelphy?"

"I am going to live here if I can find work, as I expect to, and become a citizen of this town."

"Wall, you'll make a good one, I know. May you never have reason to repent of your choice. Goodbye."

"Good-bye"; and Benjamin walked up the street again. The people were on their way to meeting, so that he was reminded of divine worship, which he had partially forsaken in Boston. Being very tired, in consequence of a hard time on the boat and a wakeful night, he concluded to follow the people to church. They entered a large old-fashioned meeting-house, and he followed them and took a seat near the door. His appearance attracted much attention, as his dress was not exactly that of a Quaker, and otherwise he was not quite of the Quaker type; and it was a Quaker church in which he was. But he wasted no thoughts upon his apparel, and did not stop to think or care whether he was arrayed in shoddy or fine linen.

Whether he did not know that he was in a Quaker congregation, or knowing that fact, was ignorant of the Quaker worship, does not appear; but he waited for something to be said. While waiting for this, he dropped into a sound sleep, and slept through the entire service, and would have slept on, and been fastened into the meeting-house, had not the sexton discovered him.

"Hulloo, stranger! Meeting's over; going to shut up the house," shouted the sexton, shaking the sleeper thoroughly.

"I was very tired," responded Benjamin, trying to get his eyes open.
"I was on the boat last night and got no sleep."

"Where did you come from?"

"Boston; I came here for work."

"Well, Philadelphy is a great place for work; what sort of work do you want?"

"I am a printer by trade, and hope to find work in a printing office."

"And I hope you will. Sorry to disturb your nap, but I have to lock up the house."

Benjamin thanked the sexton for waking him instead of locking him in, and went out into the street. He had not proceeded far before he met a Quaker whose face indicated a man of amiable and generous heart, and Benjamin ventured to speak to him.

"I am a stranger in this town; arrived here this morning; can you tell me where I can get a night's lodging?"

"Certainly I can; I suppose thee wants a respectable place." The gentleman spoke so kindly as to draw Benjamin to him at once.

"Yes, sir; but not an expensive one; my purse will not permit of any extra expense."

"Thee going to remain here some time?"

"Permanently, if I can get work; I am a printer by trade."

"I wish thee success," added the Quaker. "But here we are close by the 'Three Mariners'; but it is not exactly a reputable house, and thee wants a better one."

"Yes; I want one that has a good reputation if there is such a one," said Benjamin.

"Well, if thee will follow me, I will show thee a better one; it is not far away."

Benjamin followed him into Water Street, where he pointed out a public house.

"There's the 'Crooked Billet,'" said the Quaker, "a tavern that is reputable, where thee can find board and lodgings for a day or a year."

"Thank you, sir, for your kindness," said Benjamin; "I shall not forget you. May every body be as friendly to you as you have been to me."

At the same time, Benjamin thought it was a very queer name for a public house. He did not like either part of it, and he said to himself, "'Crooked Billet'!—crookedness and a cudgel to strike down the

turbulent with, are suggested." The name did not suggest any thing pleasant to him. But he went in, and engaged lodging and board until Monday.

"Where are you from?" asked the landlord, scanning him from head to foot.

"I am from Boston."

"Boston, hey? How long have you been on the way?"

"Two weeks."

"Got friends in Philadelphia?"

"Not one; all strangers to me."

"What did you come here for?"

"I came to secure work in a printing office. I am a printer by trade."

"How old are you?"

"Seventeen."

"And came all the way from Boston alone?"

"Yes, sir."

Benjamin saw by this time that the landlord suspected him of being a runaway apprentice. This class of characters was large at that day, for apprentices were often subjected to cruelty that made them runaways. So he closed the conversation as soon as possible and went to his room, where he slept until six o'clock, when he was called to supper. Not long after supper he went to bed and slept soundly until morning.

He arose early, took special pains to make himself as presentable as possible, paid his bill without waiting for breakfast, perhaps because he was reducing his cash so nearly to the last cent, and sallied forth in search of Mr. Bradford. He experienced no trouble in finding the printing office; but was very much surprised to find Mr. Bradford of New York there, father of the young printer Bradford of Philadelphia, to whom the father sent him.

"Glad to see you, my young friend. I got here first, after all, as you see," remarked Mr. Bradford, the father, as he welcomed Benjamin with a hearty shake of the hand. "Had any ill-luck on your way?"

"Not exactly bad luck, for I considered myself quite lucky to get here at all; but a slow, tedious trip, with delays and storms and disappointments most of the time," was Benjamin's answer, and he entered somewhat into details.

"Well, you are here, and I am glad to meet you; and, now, you want work." Then, turning to his son, Mr. Bradford continued: "My son, let me introduce this young man to you. He is a printer by trade, from Boston, in search of work: Benjamin Franklin. He called upon me in New York, and I advised him to come to you, knowing that your leading printer had died."

The young printer and the runaway were soon acquainted,—young Bradford being as genial and friendly as the senior.

"I regret that I have no work for you now. I have filled the place made vacant by the death of Bolder."

"There is another printer here, is there not?" asked the senior Bradford.

"Yes, Keimer; it is possible he may want a man. But it is breakfast time now; let us all go to breakfast, and then we'll see what can be done."

Benjamin was invited to breakfast with them, and there learned that Mr. Bradford of New York came all the way on horseback, starting very unexpectedly the next day after Benjamin left New York. He was somewhat surprised, also, to learn that Philadelphia had only seven thousand inhabitants at that time—five thousand less than Boston.

"I will go with you to see Mr. Keimer," said the senior Bradford, after breakfast. "Perhaps I may be of service to you."

"I shall feel myself under great obligations to you if you will," answered Benjamin. "It is quite

necessary that I should get work, as my money is nearly gone."

"We can fix that, I think," said young Bradford. "I may be able to give you a little something to do, if Keimer don't want you, so that you won't starve. You can lodge at my house."

"Thanks," replied Benjamin. "I appreciate your kindness, and hope to be able to make some return for it in the future. I am sorry not to appear before you in more respectable apparel, but my chest of clothes comes by water from New York, and I have not received it yet."

"Clothes don't make the man," responded the elder Bradford, who had discovered a remarkably bright and intelligent youth in Benjamin. "Brains take the precedence of clothes in New York and Philadelphia."

Benjamin found himself among good friends, so he cheerfully accepted their counsel. The senior Bradford accompanied him to Keimer's.

"Neighbor," said Bradford, "I have brought to you a young man from Boston, a printer by trade; he is after work. Perhaps you can employ him."

"That depends on his qualifications," answered Mr. Keimer. "I want some one who is acquainted with the business."

"You will find him all right, I think; he appears to know what he is about."

"How long have you worked at the business?" inquired Keimer, turning to Benjamin.

"Over three years."

"Do you understand all parts of it so that you can go on with it?"

"Yes, I think I do; you can ascertain by trying me."

"Take this composing-stick and try your hand; let me see what you can do."

Benjamin proceeded to give an exhibition of his skill at type-setting, which he did so rapidly and easily that Keimer was delighted.

"Very well done, indeed. I think you told the truth; you must have had considerable experience. I will employ you as soon as I have sufficient work. At present, I have nothing for you to do."

"It is not often, Mr. Keimer, that you have the opportunity to employ a skilled hand like this young man," suggested Bradford. "If you could give him enough to do to pay his board, until you are full of work, it may be for your interest and his, too."

"That is true. I am at work now upon this Elegy on Aquila Rose, who was clerk of the Pennsylvania Legislature; and I may want him to print it. I shall have it ready in three or four days. I am expecting other work soon, also."

"You can return to my son's house to eat and sleep," said Mr. Bradford to Benjamin. "I think Mr. Keimer will want you before long. He expects to have business."

"What do you think of my prospects here, sir?" inquired Keimer of Mr. Bradford, supposing him to be a citizen of Philadelphia. "I have hardly got under way yet; it is only a few weeks since I began."

"That will depend upon your own exertions and business talents. Philadelphia is a growing town, where industry and perseverance will do wonders."

"I shall do all in my power to draw the business of the town; and I think I can do it by industry and giving first-class work."

"How can you expect to get all the business when there is another printer here, who has been established some time?"

Keimer answered the last inquiry by disclosing his plans, as Bradford artfully drew him out on every point, until he learned how he was calculating to command all the business, and run his son out of it. Nor did Keimer dream that he was conversing with the father of the other printer, whom he designed to deprive of his livelihood. All the while Benjamin stood and listened to their conversation, perceiving that Bradford was shrewdly learning Keimer's plans for the benefit of his son.

"You did not know that man, did you?" inquired Benjamin, after
Bradford left.

"No; but I concluded he was some business man of the town, who would be interested to see a printing office successful, and so took pains to introduce you to me."

"Then you will be surprised to learn who he is, when I tell you. That was the father of Andrew Bradford, your neighbor, the printer. He carries on printing in New York."

"Can that be?" exclaimed Keimer, astonished over the bit of news, and startled at the thought of having made known his plans to a competitor.

"Yes, it is even so. That was Mr. Bradford, the New York printer, father of Andrew Bradford, the printer of your town; and not his apparition."

"How in the world did he happen to come here with you?"

"I can tell you in a few words," replied Benjamin. "I called on him for work in New York, and he directed me to his son here, who had just lost a good hand by death. Very unexpectedly, on the next day, he started for Philadelphia on horseback, and, when I called upon his son, this morning, I found him there. His son had just hired a man; and so he directed me to you, and his father offered to come and introduce me."

"Well, all that is natural enough, but it is pretty hard on me," answered Keimer. "If I had known that was Bradford's father, I should have kept my mouth shut, of course."

"You opened it pretty wide to him, and he took advantage of it, as most men will do. But I guess no harm is done. He and his son both appear to be friendly to you; they would not have proposed that I should come here for work, if they had not been."

"That looks so, I must confess," said Keimer; "but I have learned one good lesson from it: never to divulge secrets to a stranger. When I do that again I shall not be in my right mind. But I wanted to ask you about your Boston experience in a printing office; what office was you in?"

"My brother's, James Franklin. He published a paper, the *New England Courant*. He did a large business."

"Yes, our paper here gave some account of it. The editor had some trouble with the Government, did he not?"

"Yes, and a serious trouble it was. He believed in the freedom of the press, and the officials did not; so there was a collision. He determined to fight the censorship of the press, and he was imprisoned for it. Then I edited and published the paper in my own name."

"You run it!" exclaimed Keimer in a tone of wonder and unbelief.

"Yes, I run it,—without letting up one jot in attacking the intolerant Government. It was a hot contest, but the common people, true Americans, rallied to our support, and left the aristocratic officials to toady to the English Government."

"A new order of things when a boy edits and publishes a paper in a straight fight with Great Britain," was all that Keimer said, in reply, evidently not believing a word of Benjamin's story about the *Courant*. However, the more he talked with the new comer, the more he was impressed with his intelligence and manly character. He found that his clothes were the poorest part of him, that underneath his shabby garments there dwelt a soul of large possessions and aspirations.

Benjamin learned at Keimer's office what a blessing it was to him to have practised *doing things well*. Thoroughness in learning the printer's art, as well as in studying the use of language and composition, characterized him in Boston, as we have seen. Now he was reaping the benefits of it. He handled the composing-stick so dexterously, and answered every question so intelligently and promptly, that Keimer saw at once he was really an expert. Many boys are satisfied if they can only "pass muster." Their ambition rises no higher than that. But not so with Benjamin. He sought to understand the business to which he attended, and to do as well as possible the work he undertook. The consequence was that he was a thorough workman, and, in five minutes, he was able to satisfy Keimer of the fact. This was greatly in his favor; and such a young man is never long out of business. Doctor Johnson said, "What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well."

Samuel Budgett said, "In whatever calling a man is found, he ought to strive to be the best in that calling; if only a shoe-black, he should try to be the best shoe-black in the neighborhood." Budgett conducted his immense business, in which he employed six hundred men, on this principle. When a boy was introduced into his warehouse he was set to straightening old nails. If he straightened nails well, he was promoted to bag-mending; if he did not do it well, he was dismissed. The thorough nail-

straightener and bag-mender moved upwards into larger and higher fields of work; and so the great English merchant could boast of having the most efficient and faithful class of employes in the British realm. Training them to do their best did it.

James Parton said to David Maydole, inventor of the modern hammer and manufacturer of the best hammers in the world, "By this time you ought to be able to make a pretty good hammer." Maydole replied, "No, I can't. I can't make a pretty good hammer, I make the best that's made." Once a party applied for several hammers, to whom Maydole was indebted for some favor, and the party said to him, "You ought to make my hammer a little better than the others." Maydole responded, "I can't make any better ones. When I make a thing, I make it as well as I can, no matter whom it is for." Doing his best every time led him on to fortune. He never pushed his business. He never advertised. Making the best hammer in the market created all the business he wanted.

XXI.

GETTING ON.

"Your press is rather dilapidated, I see," remarked Benjamin to Mr. Keimer, after he had looked it over. "Second-hand, I conclude?"

"Yes, I had to buy what I could get cheap, as I had little money to begin with. I guess it can be fixed up to answer my purpose."

"That is so; it can be improved very much with little expense," replied Benjamin.

"Do you understand a printing press well enough to repair it?"

"I can repair that one well enough; I see what is wanted. You can't do good work with it as it is," Benjamin answered.

"Then I can employ you at once, and you may go right about putting it in order if you please."

"I will do it," Benjamin replied in his emphatic way. "It is not a long job, by any means."

"Perhaps you will have it done by the time I get the Elegy set up, and then you may print it." Keimer's interest was deepening since he found that the Boston printer-boy could repair a printing press. He was getting more than he bargained for.

Benjamin went to work upon the old press, saying "I may as well go about it at once, and work till dinner time. Mr. Bradford will expect me back then; but I will keep at it until it is done."

"Well, I hope you will not expose any secrets as I did," remarked Mr. Keimer, humorously. "Old Bradford will be on the lookout for capital, no doubt. See that he don't make as much out of you as he did out of me."

Benjamin met the Bradfords, senior and junior, at the dinner table, where they gave him a cordial welcome.

"How does Philadelphia compare with Boston?" inquired the senior Bradford of him.

"It is smaller, and I can't tell yet whether it is duller or not. When I have been here a week I can tell more about it."

"And what are your prospects at Keimer's?" inquired the junior Bradford.

"Well, I have begun to repair his old press. It is a dilapidated affair, and I told him that I could improve it very much."

"Do you understand that part of the business?"

"I understand it sufficiently to make what repairs that machine requires just now."

"Then you can probably do some repairs for me," said the junior Bradford "My press needs some tutoring."

"I shall be happy to be its tutor," replied Benjamin, with a smile. "I shall finish Keimer's to-morrow, and then I will take yours in hand. I shall be glad to do something to repay you for your kindness."

"You must have had good school advantages in Boston," remarked the elder Bradford to him. "Your conversation indicates that you are well-read and well-informed."

"But I am not indebted to the schools for it; I never went to school but two years in my life. But I have studied and read as much as any body of my age, in leisure hours and nights; and I have written more for the press, probably, than any one of my age in Boston."

This last remark caused the Bradfords to look at each other with wonder for a moment. But the senior broke the silence by saying:

"You write for the press? How is that?" His astonishment charged his questions with peculiar emphasis.

"Yes, sir; I wrote much for nearly a year for the *New England Courant*, one of the newspapers in Boston."

"And only seventeen years old now?"

"I was only sixteen when I wrote the most."

That was as far as Benjamin dared to disclose his history, lest he might make trouble for himself. He had disclosed enough, however, to set his host to thinking. Neither of the Bradfords really believed his story about his writing for the press; and yet there was something about him, composed of intelligence, refinement, and manliness, that impressed them. The more they conversed with him, the more were they satisfied that he was an uncommon youth. While that conviction awakened their curiosity to know more of his history, it served, also, to cause them to respect his boy-manhood, and so not to ply him with too many or close questions. Thus Benjamin escaped the necessity of exposing the objectionable part of his career, and left his good friends wondering over the mysterious young printer they were befriending.

Benjamin repaired Keimer's press, and then attended to Bradford's, before the Elegy was ready to be printed. By that time, Keimer had engaged to print a pamphlet and do some other small jobs, so that he needed Benjamin's services all the time.

"I shall want you right along, now, I think; but you must change your boarding-place. I don't want you should board with a man who knows so much about my business." And Keimer laughed as he made this last remark.

"Of course, I shall change. I only intended to stay there until I got work. Mr. Bradford kindly invited me to stay there till I found a place, and I shall not take any advantage of his generosity. I shall always be grateful to him for it."

"He was a good friend to you, a stranger," continued Keimer, "and I would have you appreciate his friendship; but, in the circumstances, I think another boarding-place is best."

"And now I can make a more respectable appearance," responded Benjamin; "for my chest of clothes has come."

"The man who owns this building lives a short distance away, and I am thinking I can get you boarded there; it will be a good place," added Mr. Keimer.

"As you please; I can make myself at home any where. I am not used to much style and luxury."

"His name is Read, and he has an interesting daughter of eighteen, which may be some attraction to you." The last remark was intended more for pleasantry than any thing.

"Work will have to be the chief attraction for me, whose fortune is reduced to the last shilling," responded Benjamin. "It takes money to pay respectful attention to young ladies; and, besides, my *forte* does not lie in that direction."

The result was, that he went to board at Mr. Read's, the father of the young lady who stood in the door when he passed on Sunday morning with a roll of bread under each arm. His appearance was much improved by this time, so that even Miss Read saw that he was an intelligent, promising young man.

Benjamin received good wages, attended closely to his work, improved his leisure moments by reading and study, as he did in Boston, and spent his evenings in systematic mental culture.

"You appear to be fond of books," said Mr. Read to him. "I think you must have enjoyed good advantages at home. Where is your home?"

"Boston. I was born there seventeen years ago."

"Only seventeen! I supposed you were older. Your parents living?"

"Yes, both of them, as good people as there are in Boston."

"Got brothers and sisters?"

"Plenty of them. I am the fifteenth child, and have two sisters younger than I am; only one of the whole number is dead."

"You surprise me; yours must have been the largest family in Boston," continued Mr. Read. "I am sure we have no family as large as that in Philadelphia. Your father ought to be worth some money to provide for such a family."

"He is not, he is a poor man; so poor that he kept me in school less than two years. I went into the shop to work with him when I was ten years old, and have not been to school since. All my brothers were apprenticed at ten or twelve years of age. I was a printer's apprentice at twelve years of age."

"And what was your father's business, if I may be permitted to ask? Your story is a very interesting one, and I want to know more about it."

"My father is a tallow-chandler. He emigrated to Boston in 1685, from Banbury, England, where he worked at the trade of a dyer. There was no room for that business in Boston, so he took up the business of candle-making."

"But you did not work at the candle business long, if you became a printer at twelve?"

"No; I disliked the business so thoroughly that I was ready to engage in almost any thing if I could get out of that. The printer's trade has afforded me excellent opportunities for reading and study, and I like it."

"Well, printers are generally an intelligent class, and their pursuit is highly respected. One of our printers in Philadelphia is an ignorant man, and not very familiar with the business."

"I found that out some time ago," answered Benjamin; "and ignorance is a great drawback to a person in any business whatever. There is no need of a man being ignorant, so long as he can command fragments of time to read and study. What I call my leisure hours are my most profitable and enjoyable hours."

Mr. Read had already concluded that Benjamin was never so happy as when he had a book in his hand, or was with some intelligent companion conversing upon a useful topic. He had formed a high estimate of his talents and character in the few weeks he had been a boarder at his house. He saw in him a rising young man, and predicted for him a remarkable career. His daughter, too, was as favorably impressed by acquaintance with him. She learned that he was the youth, who cut such a comical figure on the street, eating his roll of bread, on a Sunday morning a short time before, and she could scarcely believe her eyes. The transformation in him was almost too great for belief. That such a shack in appearance should turn out to be the brightest and best-informed young man who ever boarded at her father's, was an impressive fact. She was gratified at his appearance, and enjoyed conversation with him.

Benjamin was well pleased with his boarding-place, and enjoyed himself with the family; especially with the daughter, who was rather a graceful, good-looking, bright girl. Several young men, also, boarded there, whom he made companions. These, with others, whose acquaintance he made within three or four months, became the source of so much pleasure to him that he fast became weaned from Boston.

As soon as Benjamin was fairly settled in business, he wrote to his old friend, John Collins, of Boston, giving him a full account of his trip to Philadelphia, his trials and successes, and closing by charging him with secrecy as to his whereabouts.

He had given such unjustifiable scope to his resentment of his brother's harsh treatment, and his father's final endorsement of that brother, that he did not stop to think of the sorrow he was bringing

upon his parents by his wayward course. For the time being, his filial affection appeared to be sacrificed to his revengeful spirit.

At that time, the printer's trade ranked higher, in public estimation, than any other mechanical business. All editors in the country were printers, and most of the printers were better educated than any other artisans; hence their social standing was higher. On this account, a talented and brilliant boy like Benjamin took a high rank at once, and readily found access to the respect and confidence of all who made his acquaintance.

In due time, Benjamin received a letter from Collins, detailing the excitement that followed his sudden disappearance from Boston, what was said, the sorrow among his friends over his disgraceful exit, how his brother was getting on, and many other matters about which he was glad to hear. The letter closed by assuring him that no person in Boston was apparently so ignorant of the runaway's whereabouts as himself, from which he inferred that Collins was keeping the secret well.

While Benjamin was flattering himself that his friends were entirely ignorant of his place of residence, except John Collins, his brother-in-law, Robert Homes, "master of a sloop that traded between Boston and Delaware," was at Newcastle, forty miles from Philadelphia. There he met a citizen of the latter place, of whom he made inquiries as to the business of the town. Among other things, he said:

"A young printer from Boston has settled there recently, who ranks high as a workman and as a talented young man."

"Do you know his name?" inquired Captain Homes, startled by the revelation.

"Benjamin Franklin."

With an effort to conceal his surprise and interest, he asked:

"For whom does he work?"

"For Mr. Keimer, our new printer."

"Are you acquainted with him?"

"Not particularly; I have met him."

"Is he a young man of standing and good habits?"

"He is. It is said that he is very talented, and that he wrote for the press in Boston before he came to Philadelphia."

"Is that so?" responded the captain, to conceal that he was any acquaintance of his.

"Yes; and, as a matter of course, such a young man is much thought of. He is not set up at all, but appears to be modest and unassuming. He is very much liked by all."

"Do you think he means to make Philadelphia his home in the future?"

"That is what he intends, as I understand it." In this way, Captain Homes gained whatever information he wanted, without disclosing that Benjamin Franklin was his brother-in-law. Then he embraced the first opportunity to write and forward to him the following letter from Newcastle:

> "DEAR BROTHER,—I have just learned from a citizen of Philadelphia that you reside in that town. It is the first knowledge that any of us have had of your whereabouts since you ran away from Boston. You can have no idea of the sorrow you caused the family by your unwise and thoughtless act. It well-nigh broke your mother's heart, and added several years to your father's appearance. But I write to advise and entreat you to return to Boston. I am confident that your parents, and all other friends, will receive you with open arms, forgetting the past in their joy over your presence. They do not know even that you are alive; and your return will be to them as one risen from the dead. I trust that this letter will find you well, and disposed to heed my advice, and go back to Boston. It will be the best thing for you and the whole family. Let me hear from you; direct your letter to this place; if sent at once it will reach me here.

"Yours affectionately,

"ROBERT HOMES."

The reader may very properly infer that Benjamin was taken by surprise by this letter. Now his friends would know where he was. How did Captain Homes discover his place of residence? This question kept uppermost in his mind. His letter did not tell. Benjamin pondered the matter through the day, and finally resolved to answer it squarely and promptly in the evening. That night he wrote the following:

"CAPTAIN ROBERT HOMES:

"*Dear Brother*,—I received your letter to-day, and it was a genuine surprise to me. How in the world you discovered my whereabouts is a mystery to me; but it is all well and will turn out for the best, no doubt. To answer your letter affords me an opportunity to state exactly the cause of my sudden departure from Boston, which I do not think you understand. The sole cause of my leaving was the unjust and harsh treatment of James. Instead of seeing in me a brother, he saw only an apprentice, indentured to him until I was twenty-one, over whom he held the iron rod of a master, and from whom he expected the most servile obedience. At times I may have been saucy and provoking, but it was when I was receiving more than flesh and blood could bear. For, in letting loose his violent temper, he not only lashed me unmercifully with his tongue, but he resorted to blows; and you ought to know enough of the Franklins by this time to understand that no one of them would submit to such oppression. Then, to cap the climax, father, who had always sided with me whenever our difficulties were laid before him, now gave his decision, for some reason, in favor of James. That was the last straw on the camel's back. Nothing but harsh treatment by a master, who asserted his rights under the law, awaited me. To remain was to be trod upon, and suffer, and become a slave instead of a man. To leave was impossible, unless I left clandestinely. For many days a mighty contest was waged in my soul between love of home and escape from a bondage as bad as Negro slavery.

"After all I had done for James, in his great trouble with the Government, that he should treat me, his own brother, as a menial to be abused, seemed hard indeed. Under such a burden of trial, scarcely knowing whither to look for a friend, I resolved to escape, and I do not now regret the step. I knew that I should be misjudged—that I should be called a runaway, and thought to be on the road to ruin. But I am not. I mean to make the most of myself possible. I am now among good friends, who kindly second all my efforts at self-improvement, and my business prospects were never so good. If industry, economy, temperance, honesty, and perseverance will win, then I shall win; you may be sure of that.

"Yours affectionately,

"BENJAMIN."

Captain Homes was a strong, good man, used to roughing it in a seafaring life; but when he read Benjamin's letter, tears stood in his eyes, and his lips quivered with emotion, as his great heart went out in sympathy for his wife's young brother.

"Read that letter," he said to Governor Keith, who was present, "and then I will tell you about the author of it."

Governor Keith read it, with moistened eyes, although he was a stranger to the writer and his romantic history.

"A touching letter," he remarked, returning it to the captain.

"The author of it is my wife's youngest brother, only a boy now."

"How old?" inquired the governor.

"Only seventeen."

"Indeed, he must be a remarkable boy."

"He is. The most gifted boy ever raised in Boston."

"Then he ran away from Boston?"

"Yes; his father's family is a prominent one in the city, and the eldest son is a printer, to whom this youngest son was apprenticed."

"I see now," responded the governor. "That explains the letter. And he is settled now in Philadelphia?"

"He is. I accidentally learned where he was, a few days ago, and wrote to him; and this letter is his answer. Let me tell you more about him." And the captain rehearsed his connection with the *Courant*, as correspondent and editor, dwelling upon his ability and power as an independent thinker, capable of canvassing and writing upon almost any public question.

"Remarkable, for one so young!" exclaimed the governor, after listening to the detailed account. "Such a young man should be encouraged in his business."

"So I think," responded the captain. "His letter has opened my eyes, and I see now that he had good reason to run away. I believe that he will make his mark, live where he may."

"Of course he will," replied the governor. "His success is certain, only give him a chance. I will assist him to establish a printing house of his own in Philadelphia, and he shall have the government printing to do."

"He is abundantly qualified to do it, and I think any aid of that sort you can give him will be for your interest as well as his. He is reliable and will do his best." The captain said this in the honesty of his heart, having a strong desire to see Benjamin rise.

"We have two printing houses in Philadelphia now; but they are poor affairs," continued the governor. "Neither proprietor understands his business, and one of them is very ignorant. I think that this young man would take the lead at once."

"I think that I can secure the government printing of Delaware for him," interrupted Colonel French, of Newcastle, who had listened to the conversation with the deepest interest.

"Captain Homes, I will see your brother-in-law as soon as I return to Philadelphia," added Governor Keith. "We must not let such a young man be buried up in a one-horse printing house."

"I am going to Philadelphia with the governor," interjected Colonel
French, "and I will accompany him to see the young man."

"I thank you both very much, and I think that neither of you will ever regret your decision." Captain Homes spoke so warmly and approvingly that both governor and colonel felt reassured as they separated.

The foregoing discloses two good traits of Benjamin's character, which the reader may consider with profit. First, he must have been very observing. He understood the construction of a printing-press so well, that he could put an old one into running order, young as he was, when its proprietor was unable to do it. This is more remarkable, because he was not obliged to study the mechanism of a printing-press in order to work it. Many persons operate machines without understanding their construction at all. But a class of minds are never satisfied until they understand whatever commands their attention. They are inquisitive, and wish to know the philosophy of things. It was so with Benjamin; and this quality proved a valuable element of his success. It was the secret of his discoveries and inventions in his manhood, as we shall see, just as it was with Stephenson. As soon as he was appointed plugman of an engine, at seventeen years of age, he began to study its construction. In his leisure hours, he took it to pieces, and put it together again several times, in order to understand it.

In the second place, Benjamin was not proud. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." He never came under this condemnation. A sight of him passing up Market Street, with a loaf of bread under each arm, while devouring the third one in his hand, in apparel that was less comely than that of many modern tramps, is proof that pride had no dominion over him. Many boys of seventeen, in such poverty and apparel, would have avoided a public street, and even a Quaker meetinghouse. But these were small matters to Benjamin. He was thinking of greater things—employment and a livelihood. He had a destiny to work out, and in working that he must do as he could, and not as he would. He cared not for the laughs and jeers of those who could dress better and live more sumptuously than himself, since it was absolutely necessary for him to dress as he did in order "to make his ends meet." He might have followed the example of some young men, and incurred a debt, in order "to cut a dash," but he believed then, as he wrote afterwards, that "lying rides on debt's back," and that it is "better to go to bed supperless than to rise in debt"; or, as he expressed himself in other maxims, "Those have a short Lent who owe money to be paid at Easter," and "It is easier to build two chimneys than to keep one in fuel."

XXII.

GOING UP HIGHER.

Not many days after Benjamin replied to the letter of Captain Homes, an unusual scene transpired at Keimer's office.

"There's Governor Keith on the other side of the street," said Keimer to Benjamin, as they stood looking out of the window. "That tall man with a gentleman walking with him."

"I see," replied Benjamin. "I should think they were coming here."

"Sure enough, they are crossing the street; they must be coming here; I wonder what for." And Keimer ran down stairs to meet them before the last words, as above, were off his lips. He supposed, of course, that they were coming to see him. He met them politely at the door, for it was not every day that he had the privilege of welcoming a governor to his printing office, but was somewhat taken aback when the governor inquired:

"Does Benjamin Franklin work here?"

"He does; do you wish to see him?" Keimer was almost bewildered when he answered. "What can the governor want of that boy?" he thought.

"Can I see him?"

"Certainly, walk in."

They walked in and took seats. Benjamin was called.

"This is the young man you wanted to see," said Keimer, introducing him. "Governor Keith, Benjamin."

"I am very happy to make your acquaintance," responded the governor." I met your brother-in-law, Captain Homes, at Newcastle, the other day, and I promised to call and see you. And this is Colonel French, of Newcastle, who, also, promised Captain Homes to call with me," introducing the colonel.

Benjamin was too much astonished to feel at ease. He would not have been so amazed if an officer from Boston had called to arrest him as a runaway. What the governor of Pennsylvania could want of him was beyond his wildest dreams.

"If Mr. Keimer can spare you a short time, we would like you to go with us for an interview, as we promised Captain Homes," added the governor.

"I am at your service," Benjamin replied, collecting his scattered and wondering thoughts. "Mr. Keimer can spare me, no doubt."

Within a few minutes, he was with the governor and Colonel French at a tavern on the corner of Third Street, in a room by themselves.

"I am very glad to meet a young man of your abilities," remarked the governor, "and I want to talk with you about setting up the printing business for yourself in this town. Captain Homes told me of your experience and ability, on this and other lines, and I am sure that you can start a printing house of your own, and make a success of it."

"But I have nothing to start such a business with. It requires capital."

"True, very true; but I think we can arrange that. Perhaps your father could give you a start, judging from what Captain Homes says."

"I suppose that he might if he was so disposed; but I doubt whether he would do it." Benjamin was querying, as he spoke, whether Captain Homes had disclosed the fact of his being a runaway.

"I can write a letter to him, setting before him the excellent opportunity for a printer here who understands the business as you do, and advise him to render you aid." The governor did not hint that he knew about his leaving home clandestinely.

"That is very kind on your part; but is it not true, that two printing houses are as many as this town can support well?"

"It would be if they were first-class; but they are not. The proprietors do not understand their business; they have poor equipments, too; and their outfit does not enable them to do first-class work."

"The governor will see that you have the government printing of Pennsylvania to do," suggested Colonel French; "and I have no question that I can secure the government printing of Delaware for you, also. This will give you patronage as well as business."

"I thank you both very much for your kindness and confidence; and I should like nothing better than to have a printing house of my own."

"How would this plan do?" continued the governor. "You return to Boston by the first vessel that goes, taking a letter from me to your father, in which I will lay the whole matter before him, so that he can understand it, recommending that he set you up in business here."

"Well," replied Benjamin, after some hesitation, "the plan is good enough; but I fear it will not work."

"It will do no hurt to try it," retorted the governor; "and you will have an opportunity to see your friends, and they will have an opportunity to see you."

"Yes, and I shall enjoy that; but I could not honorably leave Mr. Keimer at present."

"It will not be necessary to leave him at present. It may be three months before a vessel is billed for Boston. You can work for him at present, notifying him that you shall return to Boston on a visit by the first vessel that goes."

"Yes, I can do that," said Benjamin.

"You will not, of course, divulge your plan of establishing a printing house of your own," suggested the governor. "Keep that a secret. Your plan may not work, so that it will be wise to keep it a secret for the present."

"Well, I will defer to your judgment, and return to Boston by the first vessel that sails. If the plan works, and Benjamin Franklin should run a successful business house in this town, the credit of it will belong to you."

They separated, with the understanding that Benjamin would return to Boston by the first vessel sailing for that port. The governor and his friend retired, and Benjamin returned to his work at the printing office.

The reader will make special note of this unusual scene. Here was the governor of Pennsylvania and a leading public man of Delaware in conference with a boy of seventeen years, about establishing a printing house of his own in Philadelphia, with the promise of the government patronage! What sort of a boy must he be? Not one of common mould or capacity; but one, as the sequel will show, who shall rule in the councils of the nation!

Keimer's curiosity was on tiptoe; he wanted to know what business Governor Keith could have with his young employe.

"Why," replied Benjamin, "he met my brother-in-law, who is captain of a sloop, at Newcastle, and learned of him that I was working in this town, and so he called."

"All that may be; but governors are not in the habit of calling upon boys as a matter of courtesy." And Keimer looked very unbelieving when he said it.

"He told my brother-in-law that he should call, and my brother-in-law urged him to do so. Colonel French was a personal friend, who came with him; and he, too, promised Captain Homes that he would call."

"That is all right; but you are the first boy that ever lived in Philadelphia, who has attracted the governor's patronage to himself." Keimer was somewhat jocose, while, at the same time, he was evidently suspicious that Benjamin was withholding the real object of the governor's visit.

"My brother-in-law had written to me to take the first opportunity I could to make a trip to Boston to see my friends," continued Benjamin, "and he talked with the governor about it. The governor thinks as he does."

"Going?"

"Not at present. If I go, I must go by sea, and not by land. Can't afford to go by land; and I am told that vessels do not often sail from here to Boston. I shall have to wait to get more money than I have now before I go."

"Perhaps the governor will charter a vessel to take you there if you ask him," suggested Keimer, who was evidently chagrined that the governor called to see his employe instead of himself.

"Perhaps I shall ask him when I become more familiar with him," Benjamin replied, with a twinkle in his eye. "When I get to be a member of his staff I may be cheeky enough to suggest it."

Keimer found that he could not make out much by quizzing his young printer, so he dropped it and dismissed the subject for the time being.

Benjamin's thoughts were all the while concentrated on this unexpected turn of affairs. It would not be strange if such interest in his welfare by the highest officer in the state appealed to his vanity somewhat, although Keimer could discover nothing of the kind. The latter gentleman, however, concluded that he had a mysterious character in his employ, and he was greatly puzzled to know just what he was. He might be the son of some great man, for whose sake the governor interested himself in his welfare. Possibly he might have left Boston in some trouble, and his influential friends, together with Captain Homes, induced the governor to look after him. Many theories, by way of explanation, occupied his thoughts. At any rate, he was an enigma to his employer, who was becoming more and more interested in him. The governor's visit served to magnify his abilities and worth in Keimer's view. He thought more of him than he did before. He discovered more talent and efficiency in him. But he could get little satisfaction out of him. Once in a while he would indulge in a spasm of quizzing, and then he would subside into silent musing over the curious boy who was setting type for him.

Benjamin continued to work early and late, interesting himself in Keimer's business as if it were his own, thereby becoming an indispensable assistant to him. But he embraced the first opportunity to write to his boon companion in Boston, John Collins, and disclose the unexpected change in his affairs, as follows:

> "DEAR JOHN: You will be surprised to learn that I expect to make a visit to Boston by the first vessel that sails for that port. It may be three or four months before one sails, but look for me on board. I will tell you how this new order of things was brought about. My brother-in-law, Capt. Robert Homes, was at Newcastle, Delaware, and found out, in some way, that I was living in Philadelphia; and he wrote to me. I replied to his letter, and he showed it to Governor Keith of Pennsylvania, who lives in this town, and told him about me, and interested him in my welfare. So the governor came to see me, and urged me to establish a printing house of my own here, promising me the state printing, and offering to write a letter to my father that I shall take with me when I go to Boston, in which he will set forth the prospects of my success, and urge him to furnish me with money to start. This is the substance of the story, the details of which I will rehearse when I see you. In the mean time continue to keep the secret. I suppose that Captain Homes will disclose the place of my residence, so that it will be a mystery to them no longer; but do not let any thing get abroad from you. When we meet I shall have much to tell you. Until then, good-bye.
>
> "Your old friend,
>
> **"B. FRANKLIN."**

Governor Keith sent for Benjamin to dine with him.

"I wanted to talk with you a little more about your visit to Boston," he remarked at the dinner-table. "How long will you be gone?"

"That will depend upon the voyage. There and back will occupy from three to four weeks on the vessel. I do not care about spending over a week in Boston. I shall want to get back as soon as I can to start in business."

"Does Mr. Keimer suspect that any thing in particular is on the tapis? I did not know but my visit might awaken his curiosity to learn what it was for."

"It did, and he plied me with questions in order to find out for some time. Once in a while now, he is very inquisitive, evidently thinking that I am withholding something from him. He is quite an intelligent man, without any surplus of honesty."

"So I understand. Bradford is very ignorant, but honest; while Keimer is bright and well-informed, but unscrupulous."

"That is about as near the truth as one can get," continued Benjamin. "I have a pleasant time with Mr. Keimer, however, and have nothing to complain of on that line."

"Can you give me any idea of the time it will take, after you return, to get a printing house in running order?"

"Not exactly. If my plans succeed, and I bring back a printing-press and materials with me, I think a month will be ample time to put the whole thing in running order."

The enterprise was canvassed at the table, the governor conversing with his young guest in the most familiar manner, dropping many complimentary words. Whenever he wanted to see him thereafter, he invited him to dine, which was quite often; all of which Benjamin enjoyed very much. In his old age, referring to these interviews with Governor Keith, Franklin said: "The governor sent for me now and then to dine with him, which I considered a great honor; more particularly as he conversed with me in the most affable, familiar, and friendly manner."

A novelist would portray the advantages of running away from home when representing Benjamin, the runaway, at the governor's table. If he had remained in Boston, attacking the officials of the English Government with his pen, the governor might have put him in prison, as he did his brother. But Benjamin never justified the use he made of his legs at that time—that is, he never excused it in his years of maturity. He always spoke of it regretfully. Very few runaways possess as much talent and character as he did, and few ever had so much cause for running away; and here is found the only reason that the act was overruled to his advantage.

At length a small vessel was announced to sail for Boston.

"I am ready to go in her," he said to Governor Keith. "She sails in about a week."

"I am very glad," answered the governor; "you have waited long enough for it. I will have my letter to your father ready in time; and I hope your mission will be successful. Is there any thing more I can do for you?"

"Nothing; I have been getting myself in readiness all along, so that I have little to do now. As the time draws near I am very anxious to go. My father and mother will be very happy in looking into my face again."

"And I think you will be as happy in looking into their faces again," responded the governor. "Captain Homes spoke in the highest terms of your parents, and of your standing in Boston."

Benjamin wondered more than ever whether his brother, Homes, disclosed the fact of his leaving home clandestinely to the governor. No words were dropped to indicate that he did. But Governor Keith was a wise man, and thought it was not best to divulge his acquaintance with that part of the affair.

Benjamin improved the first opportunity to announce his departure to
Mr. Keimer.

"Going to see my parents," he said; "a vessel sails for Boston in about a week."

"You have not been away from home long yet. I should think that you might wait a year, at least."

"No, I can't wait longer, though I do not intend to stay long. I am attached to Philadelphia, and I shall want to return as soon as I can after letting my father and mother look me over a few days."

"Has the governor of the Massachusetts Province sent for you?" Keimer asked jocosely. The fact was he could not get over Governor Keith's interest in Benjamin, because he could not yet understand it. As the weeks rolled on, his employee grew to be more and more an object of curiosity.

"No; nor any body else," answered Benjamin. "I shall take the governor by surprise, so that he will have no time to get up a reception. I prefer the governor of Pennsylvania to the governor of Massachusetts."

If Keimer had known all the circumstances, he might have replied, "You have reason to feel so; for the governor of Massachusetts would rather see you in prison than running a printing house."

Benjamin purchased a nice suit of clothes, also a watch, before starting on his trip; and then had quite a sum of pocket money to take with him. He bade Mr. Keimer good-bye, took leave of the governor with many thanks for his kindness, receiving from him a long, complimentary letter to his father; nor did he forget to call upon the Bradford family, to make known his purpose and thank them again for their hospitality; and, of course, Mr. Read and family received a good share of his thankfulness, especially the daughter, in whom Benjamin had become quite interested.

Once on board the vessel, under way, Benjamin began to reflect upon his novel experiences. It

appeared to him somewhat like a dream. He could hardly realize that he was on his way back to his home, by the governor's patronage. He took out the governor's letter to his father and read it. He found that it was very complimentary to himself, fully as much so as he had expected; and the prospects of a new printing house, under his care, were set forth strongly. He had scarcely finished reading the letter, when the vessel struck on a shoal; for they were not out of the bay yet. She sprung a leak, and there was considerable excitement on board before the crew could remedy the accident.

"A hard storm is near by," said the captain. "You will have a rough passage this time, young man," addressing Benjamin.

"Well, I am used to it; I have encountered as many storms as any body of my age," replied Benjamin figuratively, which the captain did not quite understand.

"Then you have followed the sea, have you?"

"No; I have followed the land mostly; but there are hard storms on the land, are there not?"

"Of course"; and the captain thought only of rain storms and snow storms when he answered.

"All I meant was," added Benjamin by way of explanation, "that I have had rather of a rough life so far; have seen a good deal of trouble for one of my years; and have rather got accustomed to rough usage. A storm at sea will only vary the experience a little. I think I can withstand it."

"You will have to stand it any way. Not much chance to choose when a storm overtakes us out to sea. If I am any judge of weather, a terrible storm is brewing, and it will be on us in a hurry."

"Well, I like the water; I meant to have become a sailor once, but my father put his veto on it. If I had been allowed my own way, I should have been serving before the mast now." Benjamin never spoke truer words than these.

"Hard life," responded the captain; "if I could live my life over again I should chose any thing on land rather than the best on the sea. I would not command a vessel another day, if there was any thing else I could do; but this is all I know."

They had scarcely emerged from the bay when the storm burst upon them. It was the beginning of a long, violent, tempestuous spell of weather, such as mariners encounter on the sea; a new and exciting experience to Benjamin.

"I have heard a great deal about storms at sea, and——"

"And you will *see* one now," interrupted the captain. "What you have *heard* about it gives you a poor idea of the reality, compared with *seeing* it."

"I confess to a kind of desire to see a real hard one," answered Benjamin coolly. "If I should be frightened half out of my wits, I shall be as well off as the rest of you."

"The vessel is leaking badly," cried out one of the crew.

"Man the pumps," replied the captain. "Enough for all hands to do now."

"Including me," responded Benjamin. "I can do as much as any of you at the pump," and he went to work with the crew.

Suffice it to say, that the storm continued for days, tossing their small craft about like a shell, keeping all hands busy, night and day, sometimes the sea threatening to swallow the vessel and all it contained in its hungry maw. The vessel was two weeks on its way to Boston, encountering stormy weather nearly the whole time. Most of the voyage the leaky craft was kept from sinking by pumping, in which Benjamin took his turn, proving himself as efficient as any one of the crew; and he was as cool and self-possessed as any one of the number.

At the end of two weeks they sailed into Boston harbor; and Benjamin was at home.

XXIII.

THE SURPRISE, AND ITS RESULTS.

Benjamin hastened to the corner of Hanover and Union Streets, where the sign of the familiar blue ball hung, and entered with a fluttering heart.

"Benjamin!" exclaimed his father, "can that be you?" and he grasped one of his hands in both of his. "How glad I am to see you!"

"No more glad than I am to see you," responded the son, shaking his father's hand heartily. "I am glad to get home."

The words were scarcely off his tongue when his mother appeared upon the scene.

"Mother!"

"O, Benjamin!"

And his mother threw her arms about his neck, weeping tears of joy. Benjamin wept, too. He began to realize what months of agony his absence had caused the woman who bore him.

"Can it be you, my son? I have mourned for you as dead," she said, as soon as she could command her feelings. "Where have you been?"

"In Philadelphia. Has not Captain Homes told you where I was?"

"Not a word from him about it."

"He wrote to me from Newcastle three months ago, and I replied to his letter. I supposed that you had heard all about it before this time."

"We have not heard the least thing from you since you left," said his father; "and they have been seven very long and painful months."

"How painful, Benjamin, you can never know," added his mother. "Sometimes it has seemed as if my old heart would break with grief; but I have tried to cast my burden on the Lord. If you had staid at home and died, my sorrow could not have been so great."

"Let it end now," replied Benjamin, with a smile, "for I am here again."

"Yes, I thank my God, for 'this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'" And his mother came almost as near to death with joy, as she had been before with sorrow.

They sat down together, when Benjamin rehearsed his experience since leaving Boston, not omitting to state the cause of his sudden departure, and the reason of his return. And then he put the letter of Governor Keith into his father's hand.

"How is James? I suppose he is at the printing office? I must go to see him."

Benjamin's words and tone of speech indicated only good will towards his brother.

"I am glad to hear you say that, Benjamin. It has grieved me terribly that he should treat you so unbrotherly; I do hope that you will now be reconciled to each other." His mother spoke with much feeling.

"I trust we shall; I am ready to forgive and forget. I have learned a good lesson from experience since leaving Boston."

So saying, he started for the printing office, not knowing what sort of a reception awaited him there He hoped for the best, however.

"James!" He extended his hand as he spoke. James would not have been more astonished over one who rose from the dead, but he took his hand in a cold, reserved sort of a way, merely saying:

"Benjamin!"

After surveying him from head to foot a few moments, he turned back to his work again, without another word. The act pierced Benjamin's heart, it was so unkind and cruel. But soon he rose above the situation, and seemed to say, by actions, "I can stand it if you can."

The journeymen were delighted to see him. Leaving their work, they pressed around him with a whole catechism of questions.

"Where have you been, Ben?"

"In Philadelphia."

"What kind of a place is it?"

"It is a fine place; I like it better than Boston."

"Going back?"

"Yes; very soon, too. No place like that for the printing business."

"Good pay?"

"Yes, better pay than in Boston."

"How large is the place?"

"Seven thousand inhabitants; smaller than Boston, but smarter."

"What kind of money do you have there?"

There was no established currency in the country at that time, and paper money only was used in Boston. His interrogator wanted to know what they used in Philadelphia.

"They use that," replied Benjamin, taking from his pocket nearly five pounds sterling in silver and laying it on the table. "Rather heavier stuff to carry than your Boston paper money."

"It looks as if you had struck a silver mine, Ben," remarked one.

"Some lucky hit, Ben," said another. "The printing business bring you that?"

"No other did. I was a printer when I left, and I am now, and I expect to be in the future. And, what is more, I have no desire for another business."

"You sport a watch, I see," said one of the number.

"Yes, such as it is; a good companion, though."

"Let us see it," one suggested.

"You can." And Benjamin passed it to him, and all examined it.

"Can't afford such luxuries in Boston," one printer remarked.

"It is not a luxury by any means; it is a necessity," replied
Benjamin. "I should not know how to get along without a watch now."

"Well, Ben, you can afford to have a watch," added one; "for you can live on bread and water, and never want a day of pleasure, and never drink liquors."

"And he can afford to treat us all, since he has fared so well," suggested one of the men.

"I always did treat you well, and always intend to," was Benjamin's answer, as if he did not understand that treating with intoxicating liquors was meant.

"That is so, Ben; but now just treat us with something stronger than water, for old acquaintance' sake."

At that time the use of intoxicating liquors was almost universal. Benjamin did not use them, and, once in a while was found a person who did not. Most people were habitual drinkers, and there was little or no opposition to the custom; and the habit of treating was general.

"There is a dollar," replied Benjamin, throwing out a dollar in silver. "Take that and drink what you want for old acquaintance' sake."

Replacing his watch and money, he left the office with the promise to come around again. While this interview with the men was going on, James would occasionally look up from his work "grim and sullen," as Benjamin said, evidently as unreconciled to his brother as ever. The next day James said to his father and mother, at their house:

"It was an insult. He meant to insult me when he came to the office."

"No, James," replied his mother; "Benjamin meant no such thing. He told us that he was ready to forgive and forget."

"He has a poor way of showing it, then," retorted James, who was too revengeful to be reasonable.

"Well, you are brothers," interrupted his father, "and you should act as brothers toward each other. It has a bad look for one brother to be resentful toward another."

"And it not only has the *look*" added his mother, "but it is a most wicked state of heart to cherish. You will never prosper, James, so long as you treat your brother so; and you never ought to prosper."

Mrs. Franklin spoke with great plainness. She had never justified James at all in his treatment of Benjamin; and now that the former was adding injury to injury by falsely accusing the latter, she could not suppress her feelings. She magnified the severity of her words, by quoting:

"Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

"My advice to you, James, is to let the dead past bury the dead. It will do no good to revive old memories. Make the future as bright as you can—that is the only wise course. I am quite sure that Benjamin will meet you more than half way, in erasing old scores."

Mr. Franklin spoke this with much feeling as he turned away to his work. James continued to be resentful, and failed to reduce his father's counsel to practice.

Benjamin soon found his old friend, John Collins; and there was mutual satisfaction in their meeting. As soon, however, as the first pleasure of meeting was over, Benjamin discovered that his friend had become intemperate, and he was both surprised and grieved. However, he gratified John with a detailed account of his experience, from the time they separated, not omitting a glowing description of his prospects in Philadelphia.

"How soon will you return?" John inquired.

"I want to leave here within two weeks if I can. I ought not to stay but a week."

"How will it do for me to return with you?"

"I think it will do well if you stick closely to business. That is the only way we can succeed in any thing."

"I can do that. Work never hurt me, or any thing else." John did not take the hint in Benjamin's last remark.

"But strong drink has hurt a great many. I should never expect to succeed in any thing if I used it as many do."

"Nor I," answered John, who was blind to his own danger, as all intemperate men are.

"We have no need of any such beverage at all," continued Benjamin. "I discard it entirely now, as you know that I did when I lived here in Boston. Water is the best beverage for us both."

"You may be right, Ben; you are, generally. But are you not a little odd in discarding what nearly every one uses?" John was trying to find an excuse for himself.

"Better be odd than to be disqualified for business. You know, as well as I do, that rum disqualifies more men for business than all other evils put together. Once you were of my opinion, John; but your habits have been changing your opinion."

"Well, that is neither here nor there," replied John, who found that Benjamin was becoming rather personal. "What do you think of my going to Philadelphia with you?"

"If your habits now are what your personal appearance indicates, you will not succeed in Philadelphia any better than you can in Boston. An intemperate man is a failure anywhere."

"Then you don't think I am good enough to go back with you?" said
John, with a degree of warmth.

"I did not say so, John. To tell you the plain truth, I am shocked at the change drink has wrought in your appearance. You are fast becoming a wreck, I should say; and I don't want a wreck of a friend on my hands."

"Then you don't want I should go with you?"

"Not if you continue to drink as you do now. Sober John Collins I should delight to have accompany me, especially if he looks upon strong drink as the enemy of mankind. I am your friend now, as much as ever; but I am disappointed, and even shocked, by your appearance. You are fast becoming a wreck."

"You are complimentary, Ben, I must confess; but I can't say that you are wrong. You have been about right so far in life; perhaps your views are correct about drink."

"I don't ask you to accept my views; but I entreat you to let strong drink alone for your own sake, and my sake, too. If you can give a wide berth to all sorts of intoxicating liquors, as I do, I should be delighted to have you return to Philadelphia with me."

"That is, become a water-drinker, you mean, Ben?"

"I did not say so; become a reasonable being and not indulge to excess. I do not ask any body to live exactly as I do, though I believe that every person who discards liquors will be better off."

At that day, when the temperance cause was not born, and the use of intoxicants was universal, it was generally believed that moderate drinking could be followed without leading to excessive drinking. It is plain that Benjamin had that idea. For himself, he practised entire abstinence from intoxicants, because he thought it was better for him. Another person might drink moderately, in his view, and be just as well off. But intemperance he abhorred, and he thought that every body else ought to abhor it.

"I will tell you what it is, Ben," continued John. "There is some sense in what you say; you did not leave it all in Philadelphia when you came away, that is sure. I want to go back with you badly; and I will think it over."

"That is it, John. Sober John Collins is an old friend of mine, and I shall enjoy his society in Philadelphia, or any other part of the world. Think it over, and I will see you again."

Mr. Franklin read the letter of Governor Keith over and over. It was a good letter to cheer a father's heart, if it was genuine. Evidently he had some doubts whether the affair was all right. While he was querying about the genuineness of the letter from Governor Keith, Captain Homes arrived in Boston, and first of all called upon his father Franklin.

"Benjamin is here," said Mr. Franklin, "and according to his story, he has a good prospect before him in Philadelphia. And here is a letter from Sir William Keith, governor of Pennsylvania, that he brought with him"; and he passed the letter to the captain.

"I met Governor Keith at Newcastle, and showed him a letter I received from Benjamin," replied Captain Homes, "which satisfied me that he had more reason than I had supposed for running away. I interested the governor in his welfare. On his return to Philadelphia, after having met Benjamin, he wrote to me how much pleased he was with him, and what he had proposed."

Captain Homes read the governor's letter through and remarked, "That is substantially what he wrote to me; and it appears to me that there is a good opening for him in Philadelphia."

"You think that Sir William Keith is reliable, do you?"

"He ought to be. I can't think of any reason why a man in his position should be saying and doing what he don't mean."

"Nor I. And yet it seems almost strange that he should favor a boy of eighteen engaging in such an enterprise, without money and without experience."

"You are wrong, father," answered the captain; "very few young men twenty-two years of age have had the experience he has had. He has occupied positions and met emergencies every time with the promptness and ability of one ten years older."

"That may be so. I think it is so; and it gives me great pleasure that Sir William Keith can write as he does about him. But it can't be expected that a boy of eighteen can have the judgment and wisdom to conduct business for himself, as he will at twenty-two."

"I think it can be expected, and should be expected, if these qualities are as fully developed at eighteen as they are in other young men at twenty-two." The captain was emphatic in his endorsement of Benjamin.

This conversation was interrupted by Benjamin's appearance. He was delighted to meet Captain Homes, and this gentleman was delighted to meet him. The satisfaction was mutual. One of the first questions that Benjamin asked was:

"How did you learn that I was living in Philadelphia?"

"From a citizen of that town, of whom I was inquiring about the business of the place. Incidentally he spoke of a young printer from Boston, who had come there. I met him in Newcastle. He even knew your name."

"'Murder will out' is an old maxim that finds confirmation in my case," responded Benjamin. "But it is all for the best, I think. I am glad that the way was opened for me to return to Boston."

"I have just read Governor Keith's letter to your father, and I hope that he will be able to give you a start in Philadelphia." The captain said this in the presence of Mr. Franklin.

While Mr. Franklin was considering the proposition contained in Governor Keith's letter, Benjamin was busy in calling upon old friends and visiting old resorts. He had been absent seven months, and, in that time, had added two or three times that number of months to his personal appearance. He appeared like a young man twenty-one years of age, and his new apparel imparted to him a grace and comeliness that he lacked when he left Boston. He had developed into a handsome, gentlemanly, intelligent, and witty young man.

It was during this visit to Boston that he called upon Dr. Increase Mather, to whose preaching he listened when a resident of the town. The doctor received him cordially and invited him into his library, where they chatted for some time about books, Philadelphia, and other matters. When Benjamin arose to go, the doctor said:

"Come this way, and I will show you a nearer way out," pointing to a narrow passage with a beam crossing it overhead. They were still talking, the doctor following behind Benjamin, when the latter turned partly about to speak to the former.

"*Stoop! Stoop*!" shouted the doctor.

Benjamin did not understand what he meant until his head struck the beam overhead with considerable force.

"There," said the doctor, laughing, "you are young and have the world before you; stoop as you go through it, and you may miss many hard thumps."

Nearly seventy years afterwards the recipient of this counsel wrote as follows:

"This advice, thus beaten into my head, has frequently been of use to me; and I often think of it when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by carrying their heads too high."

John Collins was a clerk in the post-office. He revolved the matter of going to Philadelphia with Benjamin a sober youth, or remaining in Boston a drunken one. The more he pondered the more he was inclined to accept Benjamin's advice. The appeal from Collins drunk to Collins sober finally met his approval.

"I have decided to go with you," he said to Benjamin, the next time they met.

"Glad to hear it, John, if you take my advice and leave the drink-habit in Boston. I shall enjoy your company hugely."

"You shall have it. I have given up my position in the post-office, and am packing up now. I want to carry my books with the rest of my traps."

"And I shall take my books this time. I shall ship to New York, where
I have some business, and thence to Philadelphia."

"And I want to go by the way of Providence, Rhode Island, to visit friends, and will meet you in New York," responded John.

"Agreed; but remember, John, that you and I are going to steer clear of strong drink. Give it a wide berth, and the way is open before you to success."

"I see it, and mean to act accordingly." John really meant what he said, but the poor fellow did not understand how weak he was. Neither was Benjamin aware that the drink habit was fastened upon him so tightly.

Mr. Franklin had taken a plenty of time to consider the advice of
Governor Keith, and Benjamin was getting uneasy to return.

"I have considered the matter long and carefully," said Mr. Franklin to Benjamin, "having a desire to aid you if possible; but have come to the conclusion, finally, that I can not do it at present."

"I told Governor Keith that I doubted whether you would assist me now, so that your conclusion is not altogether unexpected." Benjamin's reply was cool—almost indifferent.

"When you become twenty-one years of age, and need assistance to start in business for yourself, I will gladly render it; but it is hardly safe for a boy of eighteen to engage in such an enterprise. Get more experience." These words were indicative of Mr. Franklin's caution.

"Well, I have no great desire to rule a printing house. I am content to serve," and these words expressed Benjamin's real feelings.

"At the same time," continued his father, "I am highly gratified that you have conducted yourself so well as to gain the good opinion of even the governor. I trust that you will continue to conduct yourself with propriety. At twenty-one you will save money enough to set up business for yourself, if your economy holds out."

"I think it will," responded Benjamin. "My wants are few, and so my expenses are small. And I like work as well as ever."

"There is one thing I hope you will avoid, Benjamin. You will, no doubt, be writing for the public press, as you did here. My advice is to avoid lampooning and libeling. You erred in that way here, and furnished occasion for just and severe criticism."

"We have not time to discuss that matter now," answered Benjamin; "but if I were to live my life over again, and edit the *Courant* in the same circumstances, I should repeat the same thing. But for that fight there would be a censorship over the press of Boston to-day."

"Possibly," rejoined his father; "but I think there is a wiser course.
You must live and learn."

"I regret exceedingly that James can not be reconciled to you," interrupted his mother. "He is indulging a very bad spirit, and my prayer is that he may see the folly of it, before you leave, and be at peace with you."

"I met him more than half way," replied Benjamin, "and he seemed to stand aloof all the more. Whenever he returns to reason he will find me ready and waiting to forget the past."

"It is so painful to see brothers disagree!" And a deep, doleful sigh escaped her heart as his mother said it.

Benjamin's separation from his parents was tender and affectionate. They scarcely expected to see his face again on this side of the River, and they presented him with several gifts as tokens of their undying love. With their sincere blessing upon him he turned away from the old home, where so many of his happiest hours had been spent, and, wiping unbidden tears from his eyes, found himself again out on the world's great highway alone, seeking his fortune.

XXIV.

HIS RETURN, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

John left Boston two or three days before Benjamin. The sloop in which Benjamin sailed stopped at Newport, where his brother John lived, affording him the opportunity to visit him. John was well-nigh overcome by the sight of Benjamin, for whom he ever had the most sincere affection. Their meeting was as glad to him as it was unexpected. There he met a Mr. Vernon, who said:

"I have a bill of thirty-five pounds currency in New York, which I have no doubt can be collected readily—could you collect it for me?"

"I will do it with pleasure," replied Benjamin.

"You can collect and keep it until I write what disposition to make of it. I am not quite certain just now."

"Very well; I will hold it subject to your direction."

"And I will give you an order for the money, which will be necessary."

"Yes, I suppose that is the business way."

His stay in Newport was very brief. On returning to the sloop in season to sail, he found that several passengers had been taken on board from that town. Among them was a motherly sort of a Quaker lady, and, also, two young women traveling together. Benjamin was a polite young man, and sought to be of service to them. The old Quaker lady was attended by two servants, yet Benjamin found an opportunity to be of some service to her, and she appreciated his kindness. Nor was he indifferent towards the two young women. He made their acquaintance, and showed them some attention; and they, in turn, showed him attention, with interest. The Quaker lady looked on, understanding the situation better than he did; and finally she called him aside, by some kind of a motion, and said:

"Young man, beware of those girls, or they will lead you astray."

"How so?" inquired Benjamin, considerably surprised.

"They are bad girls, and thee is not much acquainted with the ways of the world."

"You are right, madam; I am not much acquainted with the women world, and I dare say they might easily lead me astray." Benjamin did not exactly believe what the Quakeress said, but he was a little given to humor, and so he spoke as he did.

"It is a serious matter, young man; thee may depend on that. I know that they are bad girls by their actions. They mean to set a snare for thee."

"Well, I assure you that I will not fall into it. They have not caught me yet."

"And I hope they won't," added the good lady. "If I were in your place I would cut their acquaintance at once. And she stated some things she had observed of their acts, and a remark one of them made, all of which convinced Benjamin that she was right.

"I thank you for your interest," said Benjamin "I will not keep up an acquaintance with them, but will follow your advice."

The good lady kept her eye on Benjamin, and so did the girls. The latter plied their arts with considerable ingenuity to lure him on, but his eyes were opened now, and he avoided them as much as he could. Before reaching New York, however, the girls managed to inform him where they lived, and gave him a very pressing invitation to call. The outcome was as follows, given in his own language, as related in his "Autobiography":

"When we arrived at New York, they told me where they lived, and invited me to come and see them; but I avoided it, and it was well I did. For the next day the captain missed a silver spoon and some other things, that had been taken out of his cabin, and, knowing that these were a couple of strumpets, he got a warrant to search their lodgings, found the stolen goods, and had the thieves punished. So, though we had escaped a sunken rock, which we scraped upon in the passage, I thought this escape of rather more importance to me."

When Benjamin arrived in New York, John Collins was waiting there for him, but it was John Collins drunk.

"Waitin' for you, Ben, old fellow," said John, patting him on the back, too much under the power of drink to know exactly what the said or did. "Goin' to Philadelphy; come on."

Benjamin was taken by surprise, and scarcely knew what to say.
Rallying himself, however, he replied:

"You are not the John Collins I invited to accompany me to
Philadelphia. I don't wish for *your* company."

"You are joking, Ben, old fellow"; and another pat on his back.

"I invited John Collins *sober* to go to Philadelphia with me; you are
John Collins *drunk*."

"Complimentary again," answered John, with a show of temper.

"It is time," retorted Benjamin, "It is putting me into an embarrassing situation to be tied to a

drunken companion. I rather be excused."

"Don't see how I can 'scuse you, Ben. It is too late now." And the boozy fellow appeared not to imagine that he was making a fool of himself.

On reaching John's boarding place, the landlord said:

"He has been drunk ever since he reached New York; and he has gambled, too, I judge."

"What makes you think he has gambled?"

"Because he is out of money now; every cent he had is gone, I think."

"And he owes you for board and lodgings?"

"Yes; he has not paid me any thing. His appetite is complete master of him."

"Well, I scarcely know what to do," remarked Benjamin thoughtfully; and he rehearsed to the inn-keeper the circumstances of his connection with John, not omitting to repeat his fair promises.

"Promises!" retorted the landlord. "What does he care for promises! A fellow with no more control over his appetite than he has don't care for any thing. He's a goner, if I am any judge."

Benjamin embraced the first opportunity to canvass the matter with John; and, from his own account, he was satisfied that the case was full as bad as the landlord had represented. John had not a cent left, and he was in a maudlin state of mind, such as Benjamin did not observe in Boston. His self-respect was gone, and he appeared to glory in his shame.

While Benjamin was considering what to do, and attending to some matters of business, particularly collecting the thirty-five pounds for Mr. Vernon, the captain of the sloop came to him, saying:

"Governor Burnet wants to see you."

"Who is Governor Burnet, that he should want to see me?" responded Benjamin in surprise. One governor had been after him, and now that another was seeking his patronage was almost too much to believe.

"Governor of New York," answered the captain. "I had some business with him, and I happened to say that a passenger on board my sloop had a large quantity of books with him; and this interested him so much that he wanted I should bring you to his house."

"I will go," replied Benjamin; "and I must go at once if I go at all."

They posted off, Benjamin querying on the way whether the governor of New York would prove as friendly to him as the governor of Pennsylvania.

It was a pleasant call he had upon the governor. This dignitary gave him a cordial welcome, took him into his library, conversed with him about books and authors, complimented him for his love of learning and his evident high aims, and invited him to call whenever he should visit New York. Benjamin began to think that governors had a particular passion for him; and what little vanity he possessed became inflated. Many years thereafter, referring to the experience, he said: "This was the second governor who had done me the honor to take notice of me; and, for a poor boy like me, it was very pleasing." If he had been as foolish as some youth, and some men, too, he would have concluded that it pays to run away, since the only boy that two governors were known to patronize especially was a runaway. But we repeat what we have said before, that Benjamin, the wise son, never concluded that it pays to run away from home. He met with some pleasant experiences, but they came, not through his runaway qualities, but through his aspiring and noble aims.

Collins was not too drunk to understand that Benjamin went to see the governor by invitation, and he was on tiptoe to learn what it all meant.

"Been to see the governor, hey?" he said.

"Yes; and I should have taken you if you had not been drunk."

"Good on you, Ben; you'll be governor yourself yet." And John laughed at his own suggestion as only a silly drinker will.

"*You* will not, John, unless you change your course. I have a mind to leave you here in New York; then

I shall not be disgraced by you in Philadelphia. If you can't keep sober for your own sake nor mine, I want nothing more to do with you."

This was a revelation to John. He had not dreamed of being left penniless and friendless in New York. So he was ready to make promises of the most flattering kind, in order to proceed with Benjamin to Philadelphia.

"But you promised me as squarely as possible in Boston that you would not drink any more," continued Benjamin. "Your promise is not worth any thing to me, when it is worth nothing to you; and it is not worth as much to you as a glass of brandy. I am tempted to leave you and all your truck in the sloop here in New York."

John begged and entreated Benjamin not to desert him now, and promised by all that was great and good that he would stop drinking and lead a sober life. In the circumstances, Benjamin could scarcely do otherwise than to pay his bill at the inn and take him along with him, though he very reluctantly decided to do so. Having collected the thirty-five pounds for Mr. Vernon, paid John's bill, and transacted some other business, by the time the sloop was ready to sail, they proceeded to Philadelphia.

There is no record preserved of his experience on the sloop between New York and Philadelphia, except a paragraph in a letter written by Doctor Franklin to Doctor Priestley, in 1780, when the former was seventy-four years of age. He related the experience in order to illustrate the truth, "that all situations in life have their inconveniences." The paragraph is as follows:

"In my youth, I was passenger in a little sloop, descending the river Delaware. There being no wind, we were obliged, when the ebb was spent, to cast anchor and wait for the next. The heat of the sun on the vessel was excessive, the company strangers to me, and not very agreeable. Near the river-side I saw what I took to be a pleasant green meadow, in the middle of which was a large shady tree, where, it struck my fancy, I could sit and read (having a book in my pocket), and pass the time agreeably till the tide turned. I therefore prevailed with the captain to put me ashore. Being landed, I found the greatest part of my meadow was really a marsh, in crossing which, to come at my tree, I was up to my knees in mire; and I had not placed myself under its shade five minutes, before the mosquitoes in swarms found me out, attacked my legs, hands, and face, and made my reading and my rest impossible; so that I returned to the beach, and called for the boat to come and take me on board again, where I was obliged to bear the heat I had strove to quit, and also the laugh of the company. Similar cases in the affairs of life have since frequently fallen under my observation."

In these modern days, it would be said that, when Benjamin arrived in Philadelphia, he "had an elephant on his hands." The most unmanageable and dangerous sort of an elephant on one's hands is a dissolute friend. Benjamin scarcely knew what to do with John. It troubled him exceedingly. But he was wont to make the best of everything, and so he did in this case.

He took John with him to his boarding place, promising to pay his bills until he could find work in some counting-room. John was well qualified for such business, and Benjamin supposed that he could readily find a situation. His estimate of Collins, before and after he began to drink to excess, is given by his own pen, as follows:

"At New York I found my friend Collins, who had arrived there some time before me. We had been intimate from children, and had read the same books together; but he had the advantage of more time for reading and studying, and a wonderful genius for mathematical learning, in which he far outstripped me. While I lived in Boston, most of my hours of leisure for conversation were spent with him, and he continued a sober as well as industrious lad; was much respected for his learning by several of the clergy and other gentlemen, and seemed to promise making a good figure in life. But, during my absence, he had acquired a habit of drinking brandy and I found by his own account, as well as that of others, that he had been drunk every day since his arrival at New York, and behaved himself in a very extravagant manner. He had gamed, too, and lost his money, so that I was obliged to discharge his lodgings, and defray his expenses on the road and at Philadelphia; which proved a great burden to me."

Benjamin called upon Governor Keith as soon as possible, with a letter from his father, in which the governor was thanked and praised for his kindness to his son.

"Your father is too cautious," remarked the governor, after reading the letter. "Some young men are better qualified to do business for themselves at eighteen than others are at twenty-one."

"He said that he would assist me at twenty-one if I should need assistance," replied Benjamin.

"Yes; he says so in this letter. But I think you will be established in a good business three years from

now, and need no help. Some aid now will do more for you than at any future time."

"I dare say that is true; but, as father declines to do it, that ends the matter, I suppose."

"No; not by any means," replied the governor, earnestly. "If your father will not set you up in business, I'll see what I can do for you. I want a first-class printing house in this town; and a young man like you, capable of running it, should be encouraged."

"That is more than I expected, and I shall feel myself under great obligations to you for aid of that kind, if you deem it best." Benjamin spoke in a tone of grateful feeling, but without the least show of importunity.

"I do deem it best; and I will give you a start in business. You can keep the matter a secret; continue at work for Keimer, and use your first leisure moments to make out an inventory of what a first-class printing establishment requires. That will be the first thing."

"How soon will you want the inventory of articles?"

"As soon as you can make it out. I shall be obliged to send to England for them, and that will take considerable time."

It was a lengthy interview that Benjamin had with the governor, and he was very much elated by this turn of affairs. It looked now as if he would start the printing business in Philadelphia under the patronage of the governor himself! That seemed to promise more than to go into business by the aid of only a tallow-chandler.

He reported next to Keimer, who was glad to welcome him back, especially so because he had considerable work on hand, and no person could turn it off like Benjamin.

"Glad to see you, Ben. I suppose the governor will be round to see you when he hears of your arrival." Keimer spoke in a vein of pleasantry rather than as a fling.

"Possibly, unless he should send for me to call on him. The governor of New York sent for me—Governor Burnet—what do you think of that?"

"You are joking now, Ben; it can't be that all the governors are after you."

"Well, the governor of New York was, and I went to see him." And Benjamin went on to describe his interview with Governor Burnet in detail, and how it came about, to which Keimer listened with the greatest interest and wonder.

"Governor Burnet has the largest library in this country," continued Benjamin, "and judging from the number of books I had on the sloop, he concluded that I loved books, and so wanted to show me his."

"Well," answered Keimer, after being in a sort of reverie some minutes, "if this thing goes on, you will not be willing to associate long with us fellows in the printing business."

"I will give you due notice when I get to that. I will not cut your acquaintance suddenly." Benjamin could treat the matter jocosely as well as Keimer.

To return to John Collins. He sought a position as clerk or bookkeeper in several stores; but was unsuccessful. Then he tried other kinds of work; but no one appeared to want him. Benjamin went with him to several places, to introduce him and intercede for him; but there was no opening for him. Days passed away, and still he was without a position; and he kept on drinking, too, not so beast-like as he did in New York, but enough to be more or less disguised.

"It is your disgusting habit of intemperance; they smell your breath or study your face, and then don't want you around. I told you in Boston, that no one wants a drinking employee about." Benjamin's patience was nearly exhausted, and he spoke as he felt.

"That is your surmise; you are a fanatic on drink, and are not capable of exercising sound judgement when you come to that," John replied with considerable temper.

"And you would not be capable of keeping your soul and body together if it were not for my money. You have no regard at all for your word; a promise amounts to nothing with you, and never will until you stop drinking."

"I shall not stop drinking until I get ready," retorted John, becoming very angry. "You are an insulting dog, when you get to attacking brandy."

Brandy was John's favorite beverage in Philadelphia, as it was in Boston. He frequently borrowed money of Benjamin; the latter not having the heart to deny him, with which he continued to gratify his appetite. Benjamin often remonstrated with him, and threatened to complain of him; but the old friendship of former days always came in to favor John. Frequently they had serious difficulties, for John was very irritable, and daily grew more so. Yet, Benjamin continued to pay his board, and loan him a little money from time to time, though Collins continued unsuccessful in his search for a position.

Several young men were enjoying a pastime on the Delaware one day, boating, among them Benjamin and John. The latter was under the influence of drink sufficiently to be very irritable; and he refused to take his turn rowing.

"I will be rowed home," he said in anger.

"No, you won't, unless you do your part," replied Benjamin, who thought it was quite time to teach the boozy fellow a lesson.

"Then we will stay here all night on the water," snapped out John.

"Just as you please; I can stay as long as you can," said Benjamin, who had endured about as much of John's impudence as he could.

"Come, Ben, let us row him; he don't know what he is about," said one of the other boys; "what signifies it?"

"Not one stroke," replied Benjamin emphatically; "it is his turn to row, and he *shall* row, if he is full of brandy."

"I'll make you row, you insulting dog," exclaimed John, as he rose and made for Benjamin. "I'll throw you overboard if you don't row."

Approaching Benjamin with the vehemence of a mad bull, determined to throw him into the river, Benjamin clapped his head under his thighs, when he came up and struck at him, and, rising, pitched him head foremost into the river.

"He'll drown," shouted one.

"No, he won't," answered Benjamin, "he is a good swimmer, and he is not too drunk to swim."

"Will you row, John?" shouted another.

"No, you ——," he shouted back, with an oath.

"We'll take you in when you will promise to row," said Benjamin.

"I shall not promise to row; I'll drown first." He turned about to reach the boat, but just as he was ready to grasp it with his hand, the rowers pushed it forward out of his reach.

"Will you row now?" shouted Benjamin.

"No; but I will give you a thrashing when I can get at you." And he continued to swim after the boat, the rowers pushing it forward out of his reach, whenever he got near enough to seize it. Then Benjamin would cry out:

"Will you row now, John?" and back the defiant answer would come:

"Never; but I'll throw you into the river if I can get at you."

Then forward the rowers would push the boat beyond his reach. For twenty minutes this game was played with the miserable fellow in the water, when one of the number said:

"He is giving out, we must take him in, or he'll drown."

"Well, we don't want to drown him," replied Benjamin; "I guess we better take him in." Then, turning to John, he continued:

"Say, John, we'll take you in now; you are soaked outside as much as you were inside," and, stopping the boat, they hauled the poor fellow in, too much exhausted to throw Benjamin or any one else overboard.

"John!" shouted Benjamin, as they laid him down, dripping wet, on the bottom of the boat, "it don't pay to drink too much brandy. You are the only one in the crowd who can't take care of himself."

Benjamin was rather severe, but then he had endured insult and ingratitude so long from his old friend, that his patience was exhausted. The outcome of this scrape on the Delaware Benjamin shall tell in his own words:

"We hardly exchanged a civil word after this adventure. At length a West India captain, who had a commission to procure a preceptor for the sons of a gentleman at Barbadoes, met with him and proposed to carry him thither to fill the situation. He accepted, and promised to remit what he owed me out of the first money he should receive; but I never heard of him after."

Probably he died, a miserable sot, in Barbadoes, without a friend to mark his grave or write the story of his shame. Benjamin lost, of course, all the money he had loaned him. In later life he referred to the end of John Collins, and said that he (Benjamin) received retribution for his influence over Collins, when he made him as much of a skeptic as himself in Boston. It was there that he unsettled his mind as to the reality of religion. At that time he was industrious, temperate, and honest. But, losing his respect for religion, he was left without restraint and went rapidly to ruin. Benjamin was the greatest sufferer by his fall, and thus was terribly rebuked for influencing him to treat religion with contempt.

Governor Keith frequently sent for Benjamin to dine with him, that he might converse with him about the proposed printing house. At length Benjamin was able to take with him an inventory of all the articles necessary for establishing a printing house.

"It is not on a large scale," said Benjamin. "I think I better begin moderately. I can enlarge as business increases."

"That is wise," answered the governor; "but you want a suitable outfit for a first-class printing office."

"Yes; and my inventory contemplates that. The cost will be about one hundred pounds sterling, I judge."

"Not so expensive as I supposed," remarked Governor Keith. "I have been thinking whether you better not go to England to purchase these articles. You understand what is wanted."

"I had not thought of that," replied Benjamin, both surprised and pleased by the proposition to visit London. "I should defer to your judgment in that as in other things."

"If you go it will be necessary for you to sail with Captain Annis, who makes a trip once a year from here to London. It will be some months before he will sail, so that you have plenty of time to think and plan."

"I think favorably of the proposition now," continued Benjamin. "I could select the types and see that every thing ordered was good of the kind, and this would be of advantage."

"That is what I thought. And more than that; while there you can establish correspondences in the book-selling and stationery line."

"I think I could; and such acquaintance might prove of advantage to me in other respects."

"It certainly would; and I decide that you get yourself ready to sail with Captain Annis. You can continue to work for Keimer, still keeping the secret, but completing your plans."

This was the final agreement, and Benjamin never dreamed that Governor Keith was not honest. If he had divulged to Mr. Read, or Bradford, or even to Mr. Keimer, what the governor proposed, they would have exposed his deceitful, unreliable character, and the enterprise would have been abandoned.

XXV.

WORKING, READING, AND COURTING.

Benjamin continued to work for Keimer, who did not suspect that his employee was planning to set up business for himself. Keimer was a very singular, erratic man, believing little in the Christian religion, and yet given to a kind of fanaticism on certain lines.

"*Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard*," he quoted from the Mosaic law, as a reason for wearing a long beard, when Benjamin inquired of him:

"Then you think that passage means 'Thou shalt not shave,' if I understand you?" asked Benjamin.

"Yes, that is about it; and I feel religiously bound to observe it."

"Well, I prefer a religion that is seated in the heart instead of the beard." And there was a twinkle in Benjamin's eye when he said it.

He enjoyed arguing with Keimer, and frequently had a contest with him in argument. Keimer had come to respect his abilities. Indeed, he considered Benjamin the most remarkable young man he ever met.

"It is the religion of the heart that settles the length of the beard, my youthful Socrates." By this reference to Socrates, Keimer meant to slap Benjamin's Socratic method of argument, about which he talked much. "Can't you see it?"

"And it ought to settle the appetite, also; and the quantity and kind of food that goes into the stomach," rejoined Benjamin, quickly.

Keimer was a large eater—never more satisfied than when devouring a good dinner that was exactly to his taste. On the other hand, while Benjamin had abandoned his "vegetable diet," he cared very little about a good dinner, and seemed to eat one thing with about as good relish as another. He often discussed the subject with Keimer, and always maintained that most people ate too much meat. His last remark hit, and Keimer knew where.

"I shall not dispute you on that point," Keimer answered; "if we had religion enough in our hearts, I suppose it would regulate all our acts."

"It ought to; but there is not much prospect of its regulating you and me at present. Neither of us has much to boast of in that respect."

"Perhaps not. I don't propose to carry my religion so far as many people do, and be fanatical," replied Keimer.

"Not much danger of it, I think," retorted Benjamin. "You and I will never be charged with that."

Benjamin was as much of a skeptic as Keimer, only his skepticism took a different turn. Keimer believed two things thoroughly: first, to wear the beard long, and, second, to keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. Benjamin, on the other hand, regarded these and kindred dogmas as of little consequence, compared with morality and industry. He believed in work, self-improvement, and uprightness; and that was more than Keimer believed or practised. So their disputes were frequent and animated. Of the two, Benjamin's skepticism was the less dangerous.

"I am seriously thinking of establishing a new sect," continued Keimer; "if you will join me, I will. I can preach my doctrines, and you can confound all opponents by your Socratic method."

"I shall want some latitude if I join you. It is narrowing down a little too much when a creed contains but two articles, like yours, and both of those grave errors."

"In starting a sect I should not insist upon those two articles alone; minor doctrines will naturally gather about them. But I am really in earnest about a new sect, Ben; and I am only waiting to win you over."

"Well, perhaps I will join you after you adopt my creed, to use no animal food. Your head will be clearer for running your sect, and such respect for your stomach will show more religion than a long beard does."

"My constitution would not withstand that sort of a diet; it would undermine my health."

"Temperance in eating and drinking never undermined any body's constitution," retorted Benjamin. "You will live twenty years longer to practise it, and possess a much larger per cent, of self-respect."

"Perhaps I will try it, if you will; and also, if you will adopt my creed, and go for a new sect."

"I am ready to join you any time in discarding animal food; and, if you succeed well, then I will talk with you about the rest of it."

"Agreed," responded Keimer, thinking that Benjamin was really inclined to embrace his scheme, whereas he was only laying his plans for sport. He knew that a man, who liked a good meal as well as Keimer did, would have a hard time on the diet he proposed. Referring to it in his "Autobiography" he said:

"He was usually a great eater, and I wished to give myself some diversion in half-starving him. He consented to try the practice, if I would keep him company. I did so, and we held it for three months. Our provisions were purchased, cooked, and brought to us regularly by a woman in the neighborhood, who had from me a list of forty dishes, which she prepared for us at different times, in which there entered neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. This whim suited me the better at this time from the cheapness of it,—not costing us above eighteen pence sterling each per week. I have since kept several lents most strictly, leaving the common diet for that, and that for the common, abruptly, without the least inconvenience. So that, I think, there is little in the advice of making those changes by easy gradations. I went on pleasantly, but poor Keimer suffered grievously, grew tired of the project, longed for the flesh pots of Egypt, and ordered a roast pig. He invited me and two women friends to dine with him; but, it being brought too soon upon the table, he could not resist the temptation, and ate the whole before we came."

The trial resulted about as Benjamin anticipated, and he got out of it as much fun as he expected. Keimer proved himself a greater pig than the one he swallowed. At the same time, the result left Keimer without a claim on Benjamin to advocate the new sect. So the scheme was dropped.

Keimer was no match for Benjamin in disputation. With the use of the Socratic way of reasoning, Benjamin discomfited him every time; so that he grew shy and suspicious. In his ripe years, Benjamin wrote of those days, and said:

"Keimer and I lived on a pretty good familiar footing, and agreed tolerably well; for he suspected nothing of my setting up. He retained a great deal of his old enthusiasm, and loved argumentation. We therefore had many disputations. I used to work him so with my Socratic method, and had trepanned him so often by questions apparently so distant from any point we had in hand, yet by degrees leading to the point and bringing him into difficulties and contradictions, that at last he grew ridiculously cautious, and would hardly answer me the most common question, without asking first, 'What do you intend to infer from that?' However, it gave him so high an opinion of my abilities in the confuting way, that he seriously proposed my being his colleague in a project he had of setting up a new sect. He was to preach the doctrines, and I was to confound all opponents."

Benjamin found pleasant literary associates in Philadelphia. A gifted young man usually attracts to himself bright young men near his age. Such was the case with Benjamin. Three young men especially became his boon companions, all of them great readers. Their literary tendencies attracted Benjamin, though their characters were not deficient in high aims and integrity. Their names were Charles Osborne, Joseph Matson, and James Ralph. The first two were clerks of Charles Brockden, an eminent conveyancer of the town, and the other was a merchant's clerk. Matson was a pious young man of sterling integrity, while the others were more lax in their religious opinions and principles. All were sensible young men, much above the average of this class in intellectual endowments. Osborne and Ralph were imaginative and poetical, and frequently tried their talents at verse-making.

They formed a literary club, and spent their leisure time together, reading to each other, discussing questions, and, in other ways, seeking self-improvement. Sundays they devoted chiefly to intellectual pastime, strolling along the banks of the Schuylkill, except Matson, who was too much of a Christian to desecrate the Sabbath. He always went to the house of God on Sundays; nor was he esteemed any less highly by his skeptical associates for so doing.

"You estimate your talent for poetry too highly," said Osborne to Ralph, at one of their literary interviews. "Poets are born, not made; and I hardly think you was born one."

"Much obliged for your compliment," replied Ralph, not at all disconcerted by Osborne's rather personal remark; "but I may become poet enough for my own use. All poets are not first-best when they begin. It is practice that makes perfect, you know."

"Practice can't make a poet out of a man who is not born one; and you are not such," continued Osborne. "That piece that you just read is not particularly poetical. It is good rhyme, but it lacks the real spirit of poesy."

"I agree with you; I do not call it good poetry; but every poet must begin; and his first piece can not be his best. Poets improve as well as clerks."

"Real poets!" responded Osborne, with a peculiar smile at the corners of his mouth. And he continued:

"You seem to think that a fortune awaits a poet, too; but you are laboring under a great mistake. There is no money in poetry in our day, and there never was."

"Perhaps not; nevertheless I am confident that a poet may readily win popularity and a livelihood. At

any rate, I am determined to try it, in spite of your decidedly poor opinion of my abilities."

"Well, my advice is that you stick to the business for which you were bred, if you would keep out of the poor-house." Osborne said it more to hector Ralph than any thing. "A good clerk is better than a poor poet; you will agree to that."

Benjamin listened with a good deal of interest to the foregoing discussion, and he saw that, from jealousy or some other cause, Osborne was not according to Ralph the credit to which he was entitled; and so he interrupted, by saying:

"You set yourself up for a critic, Osborne; but I think more of Ralph as a poet than I do of you as a critic. You are unwilling to grant that his productions have any merit at all; but I think have. Moreover, it is a good practice for him, and for all of us, to write poetry, even if it does not come quite up to Milton. It will improve us in the use of language."

"Fiddlesticks! It is simply wasting time that might be spent in profitable reading; and good reading will improve the mind more than rhyming." Osborne spoke with much earnestness.

"Not half so much as your empty criticisms are wasting your breath," replied Benjamin, with a smile. "But, look here, I have just thought of a good exercise that we better adopt. At our next meeting each one of us shall bring in a piece of poetry of our own composition, and we'll compare notes and criticise each other."

"I should like that," responded Ralph; "it is a capital proposition.
Perhaps Osborne may think it will be a waste of time and breath."

"Not at all," answered Osborne; "I agree to the plan, provided the subject shall be selected now, so that all shall have fair play."

"We will do that, of course," said Benjamin. "Have you a subject to suggest?"

"None whatever, unless it is a paraphrase of the Eighteenth Psalm, which describes the descent of the Deity."

"That is a grand subject," responded Benjamin. "What do you say to taking that, Ralph?"

"I think it is an excellent subject, and I am in favor of adopting it."

Thus it was understood that each one should write a poetical paraphrase of the Eighteenth Psalm for their next meeting, and, with this understanding, they separated.

Just before the time of their next meeting Ralph called upon Benjamin with his paraphrase, and asked him to examine it.

"I have been so busy," remarked Benjamin, "that I have not been able to write any thing, and I shall be obliged to say 'unprepared' when my turn comes to read. But I should like to read yours."

Benjamin read Ralph's article over, and then reread it.

"It is excellent; better than any poetry you have ever written," remarked Benjamin, when he had finished reading. "Osborne will have to praise that."

"But he won't; you see if he does. Osborne never allows the least merit in any thing I write. His envy, or jealousy, or something else, hatches severe criticism, whether there is reason for it or not. He will do that with this article; see if he don't."

"If he does, it will be proof that he is prejudiced against you, or is no judge of poetry," replied Benjamin.

"Suppose we try a little game," continued Ralph. "I think we can put his judgment to a test. He is not so jealous of you as he is of me. Now you take this article, and produce it as your own, and I will make some excuse for not being prepared. We shall then get at his real opinion of the composition."

"A very ingenious test, Ralph," exclaimed Benjamin. "I will enter into the plan with all my heart. But I must transcribe the article, so that he will see that it is in my own handwriting."

"Certainly; and be careful that you do not let the secret out."

So they waited, almost impatiently, for the time of meeting, both feeling almost sure that Osborne would fall into their net. The appointed time came. Matson was the first to read his production.

Osborne came next; and his piece was much better than Matson's. Ralph noticed two or three blemishes, but pointed out many beauties in it.

Next it was Ralph's turn to read. "I am sorry to confess that I have nothing to read; but I promise to atone for this failure by doing my part faithfully in future."

"Poets ought to be ready at any time," remarked Osborne humorously, looking at Ralph.

"It is in order for them to fail sometimes, I think," replied Ralph; "especially if they are not *born* poets."

"Well, Ben, we must have yours, then. You will not disappoint us."

"I think you must excuse me this time," Benjamin answered, feigning an unwillingness to read.

"No, Ben, no excuse for you," said Osborne. "You have it written; I saw it in your hand."

"That is true; but after listening to such fine productions as we have heard, I am not ambitious to read mine. I think I must correct it, and dress it up a little before I submit it for criticism."

"That was not in the arrangement, Ben, when you suggested the exercise," remarked Ralph.

"You are prepared, and, of course, we shall not excuse you."

After much bantering and urging, Benjamin proceeded to read his, apparently with much diffidence; and all listened with profound attention.

"You must read that again," said Osborne, when he finished reading it. "Two readings of such a poem as that are none too much. Come, read it again."

Benjamin read the article again, apparently with more confidence than at first.

"You surprise me, Ben," exclaimed Osborne, when the second reading was finished. "You are a genuine poet. I had no idea that you could write like that."

"Nor I," added Matson. "It is better than half the poetry that is printed. If the subject had not been given out, I don't know but I should have charged you with stealing it."

"What do you say, Ralph?" inquired Osborne. "You are a poet, and poets ought to be good judges of such matters." Another fling at Ralph's claim to poetical ability.

"I don't think it is entirely faultless," remarked Ralph, after some hesitation. "I think you have commended it full as highly as it deserves. Not being a *born* poet, however, I may not be a good judge," glancing his eye at Osborne.

"Well done, Ralph!" exclaimed Osborne. "Your opinion of that production is proof positive that you are destitute of real poetical taste, as I have told you before."

Osborne was fairly caught. Ralph and Benjamin exchanged glances, as if to inquire if their time of avowed triumph had not come; but both appeared to conclude to keep the secret a little longer. They controlled their risibles successfully, and allowed Osborne to go on and express himself still more strongly in favor of the composition.

Ralph walked home with Osborne, in order to play the game a little more, and their conversation was very naturally about Benjamin's poetry.

"I had no idea," remarked Osborne, "that Ben could write poetry like that. I was ashamed of my own when I heard his. I knew him to be a talented fellow; but I had no idea that he was a poet. His production was certainly very fine. In common conversation he seems to have no choice of words; he hesitates and blunders; and yet, how he writes!"

"Possibly he might not have written it," suggested Ralph; a very natural suggestion in the circumstances, though Osborne thought it was an outrageous reflection.

"That is the unkindest cut of all," retorted Osborne; "to charge him with plagiarism. Ben would never descend to so mean a thing as that."

They separated for that night; but Ralph embraced the first opportunity to call on Benjamin, to exult over the success of their little scheme. They laughed to their hearts' content, and discussed the point of revealing the secret. They concluded finally, that the real author of the article should be known at their next meeting.

Accordingly, the affair was managed so as to bring the facts of the case before their companions at their next gathering. Osborne was utterly confounded when the revelation was made, and knew not what to say for himself. Matson shook his whole frame with convulsive laughter at poor Osborne's expense, and Benjamin joined him with a keen relish. Never was a fellow in a more mortifying predicament than this would-be critic, since it was now perfectly manifest that he was influenced by blind prejudice in his criticisms of Ralph's poetry. For now, disarmed of prejudice, he had given it his most emphatic endorsement.

A few years later, Matson died in Benjamin's arms, much lamented by all of his companions, who regarded him as "the best of their set." Osborne removed to the West Indies, where he became an eminent lawyer, but died just past middle life. Of the others we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

Benjamin always spoke well of that literary club. It was an excellent way of using leisure time. It contributed much to his self-advancement, as it did to that of his companions. Such an arrangement converts spare moments into great blessings.

The time was drawing near for Benjamin to leave for England; and there was one thing above all others, that he wished to do, viz.: to be betrothed to Deborah Read. They had fallen in love with each other, but were not engaged. He had not opened the subject to her parents; but he must, if he would win her hand before going to England. So he ventured.

"Both of you are too young," replied Deborah's mother. "You are only eighteen! You can not tell what changes may occur before you are old enough to be married."

"But that need not interfere with an engagement," suggested Benjamin. "We only pledge each to the other against the time we are ready to be married. Sometimes parties are engaged for years before they are married."

"It is not a good plan, however. And why, Benjamin, do you deem an engagement necessary in the circumstances?"

"Simply because a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," answered
Benjamin, laughing. Mrs. Read laughed, too.

"I have not quite satisfied myself that it is best to give up my daughter to a printer," she added.

"How so?" inquired Benjamin with some anxiety.

"Because there are already several printing houses in the country, and
I doubt whether another can be supported."

"If I can not support her by the printing business, then I will do it by some other," responded Benjamin, emphatically.

"I do not call in question your good intentions, by any means; but you may not realize the fulfillment of your hopes. I think you had better leave the matter as it is until you return from England, and see how you are prospered."

"Of course, I shall yield to your judgment in the matter," said
Benjamin, very politely, "though I shall be somewhat disappointed."

"You and Deborah can have such understanding with each other as you wish; but I object to a formal engagement. Leave that until you return." Mrs. Read was decided in her opinions. Her husband died five or six weeks before this interview.

So Benjamin had to leave his bird in the bush, instead of having it in hand. And the bird promised to stay there, and sing for him on his return.

XXVI.

A BOGUS SCHEME.

"I'm thinking of going to England with you," said Ralph to Benjamin, one day in October, 1724.

"You don't mean it."

"I do mean it. I am thinking seriously of going."

"I shall be delighted to have your company, but the news is almost too good to be true," continued Benjamin.

"I have been looking the matter over ever since you told me that you expected to go; and now it is settled in my own mind that I shall go."

"Going out for your employer?"

"No, going out to establish a correspondence, if possible, and arrange to obtain goods to sell on commission."

"That is a capital scheme, it seems to me, Ralph. I think you can establish a good business with your tact and experience. You'll have to hurry up; for I expect that Captain Annis will sail in three weeks." Benjamin's words showed his gladness that one of his intimate companions would accompany him.

"It won't take me long to get ready; I have been arranging matters for some time with reference to going, though I have spoken to no one about it." Ralph was careful not to divulge the real reason of his going, lest Benjamin should disapprove.

At length it was announced that the *London Hope*, Captain Annis, master, would sail about the 10th of November. And now, Benjamin was full of business. He made known his intentions to Keimer and other friends, without disclosing the real object of his trip, or that he was going under the patronage of Governor Keith. Considerable surprise and regret were expressed by several friends that he was going, and yet they were free to say that it would prove an excellent school for such a young man as Benjamin. Governor Keith was lavish in his attentions and interest.

"You will want letters of introduction from me; and I shall have some instructions, which I will write out carefully," he said.

"The letters will be indispensable; and the instructions I shall most surely need to relieve my lack of experience," Benjamin replied.

"I will have them all ready two or three days before Captain Annis sails," added the governor, "and you can call for them. I may want to see you again before I get them ready, and I will send for you."

Benjamin thanked Governor Keith for his great kindness, assuring him that he should always feel himself under a heavy debt of gratitude, never dreaming that the scheming politician was luring him into a snare. He put his whole heart and soul into preparation to leave. To him it was the great event of his life; and it would have been, if Sir William Keith had been an honest man instead of a rogue. For an American youth, eighteen years of age, to represent the governor of Pennsylvania in the city of London, to consummate a business enterprise of the greatest importance to a thriving American town, was an unusual occurrence. Any youth of considerable ability and ambition must have realized the value and dignity of the enterprise; but to such a youth as Benjamin was,—talented, aspiring, coveting success, striving for the best,—the opportunity of this business enterprise, proposed and patronized by the highest officer in the colony, must have appealed strongly to his manly and noble nature. We shall see, however, as it turned out, that all the honesty and high-minded purpose that invested it was in Benjamin's soul. Treachery, dishonesty, and perfidy blackened the soul of his patron, loading him down with infamy almost without a parallel.

Three days before Captain Annis set sail, Benjamin called for his letters.

"My time has been so thoroughly occupied by public business that I have not been able to prepare them, but I will attend to it."

"I can call again without any trouble," answered Benjamin, exceedingly grateful for the governor's patronage.

"I am sorry that I have not been able to prepare them; but I will not disappoint you again. Call day after to-morrow." The more the governor said and promised, the more thankful Benjamin felt that he had fallen into such generous hands.

"I will call in the afternoon, day after to-morrow," replied Benjamin; and thanking him again for his great kindness, took his leave.

He called as he promised for the letters and other papers. Instead of being ushered into the

governor's presence, as usual, his secretary, Colonel French, came out to announce:

"The governor regrets exceedingly that he has not the documents ready yet, and desires that you shall call again to-morrow, just before the vessel sails."

"Very well, I will call," replied Benjamin, without the least suspicion that any trouble was brewing for him.

On the next day, with all his baggage on board, and the "good-bye" said to all his friends, he hastened to the governor's head-quarters for his papers. Again Colonel French met him with the announcement:

"The governor desires me to say that he is really ashamed to disappoint you again; but a constant pressure of business has prevented. But the vessel will stop at Newcastle, and he will meet you and deliver yours with other letters he has to send; and he hopes that you will have a pleasant voyage and meet with great success."

"Please convey my thanks to him for his many kindnesses and present good wishes," answered Benjamin, "and say to him that I will execute his commands to the very best of my ability, and report at the earliest possible time."

So saying, Benjamin returned and boarded the vessel, which soon dropped down the Delaware, thinking all the while of his good fortune in having so great and good a man as Governor Keith for his friend.

At Newcastle, Benjamin landed and hastened to see the governor, whom he expected to be there, as Colonel French said; but he met only the secretary, who announced again:

"The governor is now writing the last dispatch, and will send your documents, with others, on board before the ship weighs anchor. He would be glad to see you again before you leave, but requires me to say that every moment of his time will be occupied to the very last minute, so he must content himself with sending to you, by me, his last words of confidence and his best wishes."

"Convey mine, also, to him," Benjamin replied, as he turned away to go to the vessel.

Just as the ship was about to sail, a bag of letters and other documents came on board from the governor. Benjamin supposed that it contained his indispensable letters, and, at a suitable time, he went to the captain and said:

"Governor Keith was to furnish me with letters of introduction to friends in London, and I suppose they are in the bag which he sent aboard. Can I look them over for my letters?"

"Just now I am too busy to give the matter any attention," Captain Annis said; "but I assure you that, long before we reach London, you shall have the opportunity to examine and take what belongs to you."

"That will do; I thank you," replied Benjamin, perfectly satisfied that all was right; and he settled down to enjoy the voyage.

When the vessel entered the English Channel, Captain Annis brought out the bag of documents from the governor for Benjamin to inspect. He was surprised beyond measure not to find any letters addressed to himself. He found several addressed to other parties with his name written upon them, as under his care, but not one addressed to himself. It was very singular, he thought, but he concluded that one of the number was devoted to his mission, as it was addressed to Baskett, the king's printer. He found seven or eight letters addressed to different parties, "Care of Benjamin Franklin," and he took them all from the bag. He still supposed that every thing about his mission was correct.

They arrived in London on the 24th of December, when Benjamin lacked about a month of being nineteen years old. With Ralph, he proceeded to find lodgings at once; and just as soon as that arrangement was made, he hastened to deliver the letters submitted to his care. The first party upon whom he called was a stationer.

"I have the honor of bringing a letter to you, sir, from Governor
Keith of Pennsylvania, America," he said, with considerable assurance.

"I have not the honor of his acquaintance," answered the stationer.
"Pray, tell me who Governor Keith may be."

"The letter will inform you, no doubt," replied Benjamin, giving him the letter.

The stationer opened it; but read scarcely three lines before he exclaimed, to Benjamin's consternation:

"Oh, this is from Riddlesden! I have lately found him to be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him," and he handed the letter back to Benjamin without reading all of it, turned upon his heel and went back to his work.

Benjamin's feelings can be imagined better than described. He was well-nigh dumbfounded to learn that the letter was not from Governor Keith. And then it was that the first flash of suspicion that he had been deceived entered his mind. He was still more surprised to learn, on examination, that not one of the letters he had taken from the bag was written by Governor Keith. There he was without one letter of introduction to any person in London, the scheme of establishing a printing house in Philadelphia discovered to be a myth, a mere boy, friendless and without work, in a great city, three thousand miles from home. If another American youth was ever lured into a baser trap, by a baser official, his name has never been recorded. Benjamin was at his wits' end—he knew not what to do. His feelings bordered upon despair. Had he not been a wonderful youth to rise superior to difficulties, he must have yielded to overwhelming discouragement.

To add to his troubles, when he disclosed his situation to Ralph, he learned that his old companion had abandoned his wife and child, never intending to return to America.

"You are a hard-hearted wretch; I never would have thought such a thing of you, Ralph," he exclaimed. "Such meanness ought to be left to baser men than you are."

"I suppose that you would never look with any favor upon such a plan as mine, and so I did not tell you," replied Ralph.

"It is lucky for you that you did not; for I never would have consented to be the companion of a young man running away from his wife and child."

"Well, I have never been treated well by one member of my wife's family from the day I was married, and before, too. I have borne it without complaining to any one, until I could bear it no longer. Now let them reflect."

"But that is no excuse for a man to abandon his family, no excuse whatever. Why, Ralph, I am almost as much deceived in you as I have been in Governor Keith. I did not think that you were capable of such meanness." Benjamin meant every word he uttered; and he was not disposed to spare his old friend at all. Another bit of information just here magnified his sorrows.

"I am out of funds entirely, Ben, so that I have begun to be cursed already, you see, without yours." Ralph spoke as if the remarks of Ben cut him to the quick.

"Out of money!" exclaimed Ben. "Come here dead broke? You must be crazy, Ralph. Abandon your family, and shove yourself upon me to support in London! I am shocked."

"I am afraid that both of us will be more shocked than that before we get through," answered Ralph with the utmost coolness. "You have been too good a friend to desert me now, Ben."

The last remark touched a tender spot in Benjamin's heart. He and Ralph had been true friends, and passed many happy hours together. He abhorred his inhumanity to his wife and child, and his deceitfulness in claiming to go to London to secure goods to sell on commission and establish correspondence; but he had no heart to abandon him in a strange city.

"Get work, Ralph, as soon as possible, or we shall be in a bad plight; for I have only fifteen pistoles in all, which will not keep up a connection between soul and body long." This remark of Benjamin's implied that he should divide what he had with Ralph as long as it lasted.

"I shall do that, Ben, you may rest assured; for I will not take advantage of your generosity any longer than I can help. I mean to continue a good friend of yours whether you continue to be a good friend of mine or not." This was a shrewd way of putting it. Ralph knew the young man he was talking with thoroughly.

Benjamin resolved to seek the advice of Mr. Denham. He was a Quaker merchant who sailed from Philadelphia with him. He was a stranger to him; but, when Colonel French came on board with letters from the governor at Newcastle, he introduced Benjamin to Denham. For this reason Denham became deeply interested in Benjamin, and showed him many favors. Now his advice would be specially useful to Benjamin; so he sought and found him.

"I find, Mr. Denham, that Governor Keith has been deceiving me. I came here under his auspices, and he promised me letters of introduction to parties, and the means to purchase an outfit for a first-class printing house in Philadelphia; and he has not fulfilled either promise. There are no letters for me

among the dispatches he sent on board at Newcastle. He has proved himself a fraud and a cheat."

"He always did that," Mr. Denham replied. "If I had known that you were depending on Keith for any thing, I could have opened your eyes to his rascality at once. Keith is an official scamp."

"Here is a letter from Riddlesden to a stationer here," and passing the letter to Denham, he rehearsed his interview with the stationer.

"Riddlesden!" exclaimed Denham; "so base an attorney-at-law never cursed Pennsylvania. He is matched in perfidy only by Keith. Two worse rogues never occupied important positions in any country."

Then, reading the letter through, he went on:

"And this very letter proves that he is an arrant knave. For here is proof of a conspiracy against Mr. Hamilton, who was booked to sail with Captain Annis, and Keith is in it." Denham read the letter to Benjamin, explaining its meaning as he went along, for he was well posted about Keith and the villainous attorney.

"You should keep this letter, Franklin, and show it to Mr. Hamilton when he comes," added Denham. "Hamilton will come just as soon as he can. He came aboard our ship with his son, intending to come; but a party appeared, offering him a very large fee to wait and conduct a case in court, and he consented. He is the greatest lawyer in Pennsylvania. Keep the letter and give it to him."

We may say here, once for all, that Benjamin did keep the letter until the arrival of Mr. Hamilton, several months later, when he presented it to him, for which favor Hamilton was very grateful, and became Benjamin's life-long friend.

"But what can I do, Mr. Denham?" asked Benjamin. "I am here a stranger in a strange city, with very little money. What would you advise me to do?"

"I do not see but one thing that you can do just now. You are a printer, and you can get work without doubt in some printing office until you see fit to return."

"I thought of that; but it occurred to me that an American printer would be at a discount here, where the printing business is so much better understood," suggested Benjamin.

"You can get over that difficulty quickly by showing them what you can do," answered Mr. Denham. "You have more intelligence and culture than most of the English printers; and that will help you."

"I will lose no time in making an application for a place," said
Benjamin. "I am under obligations to you for your interest in me."

"It may prove of great advantage to you to have this opportunity to become familiar with printing in London," continued Mr. Denham. "You can perfect yourself in the art against the time you return, and set up business in Philadelphia. So you may get some good out of your trials, after all. 'It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.'"

"It looks so, certainly," Benjamin answered. "I will accept your advice, and see what I can do."

Benjamin had *paid too dear for the whistle* again; but he made the best of it. First of all, he found a permanent boarding-place for himself and Ralph, where the charges were in proportion to his pecuniary ability. It was in Little Britain Street; and the weekly charge was only three shillings and sixpence. Then both started out in search of work. Benjamin went direct to Palmer's famous printing house in Bartholomew Close, where fifty hands were then employed, and applied for a situation.

"What experience have you had?" inquired the overseer.

"Several years. I learned the business of my brother, James Franklin, in Boston, America; and he came to your country and learned it, before setting up the business in his own country."

"You ought to understand it, then. But why do you seek work in this country?"

"I did not come to London for work, but for an outfit with which to establish the business in Philadelphia." And Benjamin rehearsed his arrangement with Governor Keith, and the treachery which had been practised upon him, which interested the manager very much, and, at the same time, won his sympathy.

"Though Governor Keith proved so treacherous to you, the facts show his confidence in your ability as a printer," he remarked; "and, surely, in these misfortunes, a friend in need is a friend indeed. I think I

can find something for you to do."

"You can try me, and I shall be very thankful for the chance," Benjamin answered. "I have no desire to work for any man unless I can suit him."

"That is an honorable view of the matter; and I have no doubt of your ability to satisfy me. You can come at once, and I will give you a position."

They agreed upon wages that were satisfactory to Benjamin, and the next day he went to work. The truth was, that the boss of Palmer's printing house was very much pleased with Benjamin's appearance. He saw at once that he was a young man of uncommon ability. He was surprised to learn that he was not quite nineteen years of age, since his appearance was that of a young man of twenty-two. Therefore, he was not only desirous of aiding him in his embarrassing situation, but he was glad to employ a young man of so much promise.

Ralph was not so successful. Here and there he applied for work, but no one appeared to want him. Benjamin rendered him all the assistance possible evenings; but his efforts met with no success. In advanced life, Benjamin spoke of Ralph's efforts as follows:

"He first endeavored to get into the playhouse, believing himself qualified for an actor; but Wilkes, to whom he applied, advised him candidly not to think of that employment, as it was impossible he should succeed in it. Then he proposed to Roberts, a publisher in Pater Noster Row, to write for him a weekly paper like the *Spectator*, on certain conditions; which Roberts did not approve. Then he endeavored to get employment as a hackney writer, to copy for the stationers and lawyers about the Temple; but could not find a vacancy."

Ralph possessed considerable ability as an amateur player of tragedy or comedy; and he was quite a racy writer, also; hence his application for a situation as above. Benjamin was familiar with his qualifications on the lines mentioned, and seconded his efforts as best he could; but all to no purpose.

As Ralph had no money or work, Benjamin was obliged to support him. He paid his board, and loaned him small sums from time to time, so that he could maintain the appearance of a respectable citizen. But he was another elephant on Benjamin's hands. The weeks multiplied, and still Ralph had no employment. He was a constant bill of expense. Willing to work, abhorring a life of idleness, his condition and prospects were a torment to himself. He was more troubled even than Benjamin over his misfortune. At length, however, he announced:

"I am going to put an end to this sort of a life, Ben. I have stood it as long as I can. I am going out into the country to find a school to teach. I am told that I can easily find one."

"Not a bad idea, in the circumstances," replied Benjamin. "Teaching is an honorable and useful business; and it will make you friends."

"I should much prefer to remain in this city and find a more congenial situation; but beggars can't be choosers, and so I have concluded to make the best of it. I am completely discouraged in trying for work in London." Ralph spoke as he felt, for he had become disheartened.

"It seems strange, almost," continued Benjamin "that you can find no situation of any sort in this great city, where——"

"I was not born under a lucky star, as you were, Ben," interrupted
Ralph.

"My experience with Governor Keith doesn't show much of a star any way," rejoined Benjamin. "Certainly, it is not a lucky one, nor a morning star; if it is a star at all, it must be an *evening* star, seen only when it is getting dark."

"I wish I could accept disappointment and defeat as philosophically as you can, Ben; but I can't. It is quite impossible for me to make the best out of the worst; but you can."

"It is the way I am made, no doubt," said Benjamin in reply. "I never could make any thing by fretting."

"Nor any body else," quickly answered Ralph, "and still I fret and worry as if thereby I could mend the matter. But I am going to strike out for a school, and leave London to suffer the consequences of not employing me."

"That is philosophical, sure," added Benjamin.

The school was secured within a short time, and Ralph became a schoolmaster a few miles out of London. Benjamin continued to serve in the Palmer printing house, where he gave satisfaction, and made his mark, as we shall see.

XXVII.

"OUR WATER-DRINKER."

A letter from Ralph to Benjamin informed the latter that the former was settled in a small village called Berkshire, where he was teaching about a dozen boys in reading and writing at a sixpence each per week, —not a very flattering position, but, in the circumstances, better than none.

What surprised Benjamin, however, was that Ralph had changed his name, and was known in that village as Franklin. He had assumed Franklin's name, thinking that such a position was not honorable for James Ralph to occupy. At first, Benjamin was somewhat displeased to find himself scattered about in such a way, printer and schoolmaster, and he knew not what next. But, on the whole, he concluded to let the matter rest; and, if his old friend could get success out of his name, allow him to do it. So he corresponded with him from time to time, directing his letters to "Mr. Franklin, schoolmaster," as Ralph desired.

It was not long before Benjamin began to receive instalments of an epic poem which Ralph was composing, with the request to examine and return remarks and corrections. Benjamin did examine and return it, with the advice to cease writing epic poems and attend to his legitimate business or get into some other. But it was of no use, the poem continued to come by instalments.

At this juncture, too, another trial was added to his singular experience. Ralph's English wife called upon him for help. The following is Franklin's account of the manner in which Ralph came into these new relations:

"In our house lodged a young woman, a milliner, who, I think, had a shop in the Cloisters. She had been genteelly bred, was sensible, lively, and of a most pleasing conversation. Ralph read plays to her in the evenings, they grew intimate, she took another lodging, and he followed her. They lived together some time, but he being still out of business, and her income not sufficient to maintain them with her child, he took a resolution of going from London to try for a country school."

"I need help, and know not where to go except to you," said Mrs.
Ralph; "indeed, James told me to apply to you."

"I recall," replied Benjamin, "that he asked me in one of his letters to see that you were not in want. I am not in circumstances to do much for you, but I will cheerfully do what I can."

"I shall be very much obliged for the smallest favor. My wants are few, and I can make a little assistance go a good way."

Benjamin relieved her wants, and from that time continued to call upon her, to see that she was made comfortable and to enjoy her company. These demands upon his purse kept it drained to the last cent all the time, so that he could lay nothing by for himself. He could see no way out of his trouble. He must continue penniless, or let Ralph and his family suffer. But just then an indiscreet act on his part offended Ralph, who, coming to London for a day or two, said to Benjamin:

"I consider myself under no obligations to you whatever from this time. I shall ask no more favors of you for myself or family, and will have nothing more to do with you."

"Very well," replied Benjamin, "I will so understand it."

In this way Benjamin was relieved of a great burden unexpectedly. Incumbrances thus removed, he devoted himself with remarkable energy and industry to his business and self-improvement.

About this time Benjamin was offered larger pay at Watts' printing house, near Lincoln's Inn Fields, and he removed thither. He changed his boarding-place, also, to Duke Street, opposite the Romish chapel.

Next door to Benjamin's lodgings was a bookstore kept by one Wilcox. He had an immense collection

of second-hand books, in which, of course, Benjamin became much interested, spending his leisure time here.

"I have not the money to make purchases," he said to Wilcox. "I wish I had. There are so many valuable books here, and they are so cheap, that I wish I was able to make many of them my own."

"Well, you are at liberty to spend all the time you can reading them here," answered Wilcox, who had already formed a high opinion of his abilities. "Perhaps some day you will be able to own some of them."

"You are very kind indeed, Mr. Wilcox, and I shall avail myself of your generosity to make the acquaintance of some of these authors."

Benjamin had already rehearsed the story of the fraud through which he became a London printer, so that Wilcox understood the reason that he was penniless.

"Glad to see you here any time; feel perfectly at home, and get all the good you can out of these books," Wilcox added with great kindness.

It was not long before an original idea about the use of those books took possession of Benjamin's mind, and he made it known to the bookseller.

"A new idea has struck me, Mr. Wilcox. I do not want to take so much advantage of your generosity, and it has occurred to me that I can pay you a sum we can agree upon to take out and read such books as I may select. I mean, pay you a given amount on each book I read."

"I had not thought of that; it is an excellent plan, I think. We will have no difficulty about the price," answered Wilcox.

"It will take me longer, of course, to read some books than it will others," continued Benjamin; "but I am a rapid reader, and shall be as expeditious as possible with each volume. And, also, I pledge myself that each volume shall be returned in as good a condition as when I take it out."

"That is fair; I accept the proposition."

The price per volume was agreed upon, and Benjamin reveled in books every night. He never advanced more rapidly in intellectual attainments than he did after this arrangement with Wilcox.

This is the first instance of loaning books for a price on record—a practice that has become well-nigh universal since that day.

He had not been at Palmer's long before he was employed in composing for the second edition of Wollaston's "Religion of Nature," which was just the kind of a treatise to arouse his intellect, and to set him to thinking and also to speculating.

"Poor reasoning!" he said to Mr. Watts; "very fallacious and superficial, too."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Watts, considerably surprised that his new employee, just over from a new and uncultivated country, should handle a treatise like that so gingerly; "how is that? Rather a popular work, that of Wollaston's."

"Popular enough it may be, but error is often popular. The work is illogical, and not altogether in harmony with facts." Benjamin's criticisms impressed Mr. Watts somewhat, though he thought he was laboring under a mistake.

"Perhaps the trouble is in your own mind, and not in Wollaston's," he suggested.

"That may be; but I am going to review it for my own satisfaction and benefit," answered Benjamin.

"Then I will suspend judgment until I can read your review," said Mr. Watts, at the same time being still more surprised that a youth of his age should be so familiar with such topics.

Within a short time Benjamin had his review of "Religion of Nature" prepared and printed, bearing the somewhat dignified title, "A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain," and it was inscribed to his friend, James Ralph. A copy was submitted to Mr. Watts for examination, and his opinion awaited with some anxiety.

"I confess that it is a remarkable production for a youth like you to father—remarkable in its plan, thought, and reasoning—but it is no credit to your principles," Mr. Watts said.

"How so?"

"It is really deistical in its position. You remember that I suggested the trouble might be in yourself, instead of Wollaston; and it is, in my judgment."

"Wherein is my reasoning illogical or incorrect?" Benjamin's use of the Socratic method of reasoning still adhered to him.

"Any reasoning is illogical and fallacious that takes it for granted that there is no God," answered Mr. Watts. "Without a God, we are nowhere; and that is where your pamphlet is. There is ingenuity in it, I grant; but it is false."

"From your standpoint, you mean, Mr. Watts?"

"Yes, if you please; but my standpoint is the Bible. Any reasoning that ignores the Bible is fallacious. To pretend to understand the things of this world without a God is abominable. 'The *fool* hath said in his heart, There is no God.'"

"Well, you are getting rather personal," Benjamin answered, roguishly. "I suspect that you are rather puritanical in your notions; but I am not."

"No, that is quite evident; nothing puritanical about your Dissertation, but a plenty that is fanatical," retorted Mr. Watts.

"Much obliged for your opinion, so frankly expressed," added Benjamin, as Mr. Watts turned to answer a call.

A short time after the publication of the foregoing Dissertation, a London surgeon, by the name of Lyons, called at Watts' office.

"Is there a man at work in your printing house by the name of Franklin—Benjamin Franklin?" he inquired of Mr. Watts.

"There is."

"Can I see him?"

"Yes, I will call him."

Benjamin was called and introduced to the gentleman, who said, holding a pamphlet in his hand:

"Are you the author of this 'Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain'?"

"I am, sir." Benjamin had received such a trimming from his employer, that he was almost sure the stranger had come to stigmatize him for writing that pamphlet. But he was soon relieved by the remark of Lyons:

"I have read it with great interest, and have been very much profited by it. I did not dream, however, that it was written by so young a person as you are."

Benjamin thanked him for his complimentary words, and the surgeon went on:

"I am the author of the book entitled, 'The Infallibility of Human Judgment,' and I think our views harmonize in the main. I should be pleased to loan you a copy if you care to read it."

"It will afford me real pleasure to read it, Doctor Lyons, and I shall appreciate your favor."

"And when you have read it, I shall be glad to meet you, and compare notes, and discuss the topics."

"Nothing will suit me better than that," added Benjamin.

Doctor Lyons frequently called on Benjamin to converse upon the subject-matter of his pamphlet, and, at one time, he says, "He carried me to the Horns, a pale-ale house in ——— Lane, Cheapside, and introduced me to Doctor Mandeville, author of the 'Fable of the Bees,' who had a club there, of which he was the soul, being a most facetious, entertaining companion."

The religion in Benjamin's pamphlet, and that in Lyons' book, was well suited to a "pale-ale house." It was so *pale* as scarcely to be discernible in either book or pamphlet—almost entirely faded out. That was why Benjamin's pamphlet pleased Lyons so much—the religion in it was not too much for a "pale-ale house."

Doctor Lyons introduced him, also, to one Doctor Pemberton, "at Batson's Coffee-house," a kindred spirit, whose coffee was stronger than his religion—a quick-witted, lively sort of a man. He was very familiar with Benjamin.

"Glad to know that your mind is interested in subjects of so grave importance," he said. "In a youth of your age it is evidence of a strong mind and expanding intellect."

"Most of my friends do not regard my views with the favor you express; they see evidence, rather, of mental weakness and distortion," said Benjamin in reply.

"It is because they do not investigate for themselves. They are content to receive opinions secondhand, labelled and fixed. How would you like to number Sir Isaac Newton among your friends?" Doctor Pemberton spoke as a man of authority.

"I should feel myself highly honored," answered Benjamin. "Do you know him?"

"I have the honor of his acquaintance; and I will give you an introduction at some future time."

"I shall accept your favor with thanks"; and Benjamin waited and waited for the opportunity, but it never came, probably because Newton could never be found in "an ale-house."

This was the outcome of Benjamin's literary venture; and the pleasantest part of the whole was that he lived to see the folly of his effort, especially its non-religious character. He became satisfied that Mr. Watts was right when he declared the principles of his Dissertation "abominable."

At another time, while Benjamin worked at Watts', Sir Hans Sloane called upon him,—another notable London character of that day. Benjamin was taken aback when he met him,—he could scarcely divine what this titled Englishman could want of him.

"I have heard of you, Mr. Franklin, as recently from America, and I have called to make your acquaintance," he said.

"Glad to meet you, Sir Hans," replied Benjamin, fully equal to the occasion. "I am at your service."

"You are the author of a pamphlet called," and he gave the title, "are you?"

"I am."

"I have not read it; but I have heard it discussed, and I concluded that a youth of your age must possess a strong mind to undertake such a treatise. And I understand that you brought many curiosities with you to this country." Now, Sir Hans was getting to the subject that was near to his heart; for he was a curiosity-hunter.

"A few only—very few," replied Benjamin.

"You have a purse, I understand, made of the *asbestos*, which purifies by fire?"

"Yes, sir, I have."

"I should be delighted to have you call upon me in Bloomsbury Square, and bring the purse; and I will show you *my* great collection of curiosities. I think you can spend a pleasant and profitable evening in that way."

"I will do it with the greatest pleasure, and be obliged for the opportunity," Benjamin answered.

And he did. The first opportunity he improved to take the asbestos purse to Bloomsbury Square, where he had a splendid time examining the best collection of curiosities he had ever dreamed of, and where he discussed various topics of interest with the entertaining Sir Hans.

"Now," said the host, as Benjamin was about to leave, "I should be glad to add the asbestos purse to my collection, and I will pay you well for it," naming the amount.

"I will accommodate you and leave it." Benjamin was happy to add to
Sir Hans' collection, in the circumstances.

Benjamin felt the need of more physical exercise, so that when he entered the printing house, he "took to working at press." He drank water only; all other employees, about fifty of them, drank strong beer. He was really a curiosity to them.

"Beer-guzzling is a detestable habit," he said to a fellow-workman, "and it is a very expensive one, too, for a poor fellow like you."

"I could not do a decent day's work without beer. I drink it for strength."

"So much the worse for you; beer strength is the worst sort of weakness," continued Benjamin. "Just stop a moment and think what a beer-barrel you make of yourself; a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon, a pint at six o'clock, and a pint when you have done work—almost a gallon each day! Why, I could not hold half as much as that; I should run over."

"Then you don't believe a man can do more work for drinking strong beer?"

"Of course I don't. I can do more work than any man in the establishment, and I can lift more than any other man here; and I drink nothing but water. If beer imparts the strength you imagine, any one of you ought to do more work and lift more than I can; isn't that so?"

The workmen had good reason to believe this; for Benjamin had kept his eyes and ears open from the time he entered the printing house, and he had learned just what the men thought about beer, why they drank it, how much work they did, and how much they could lift. Without saying a word about it, he took special pains to turn off a large amount of work, and to lift more than his fellow-workmen. For example, he would carry two forms of type, one in each hand, up and down stairs, while the other workmen carried but one with both hands. Therefore, Watts (the name of the workman) knew that every thing Benjamin claimed about strength was true.

"Are all Americans like you?" inquired the workman.

"No; too many of them are like you, I am sorry to say; they drink beer and other intoxicants, that disqualify them for business. If more of them would drink water, as I do, they would be far better off physically and pecuniarily."

"Some of our best doctors claim that there is much nutriment in beer," he suggested.

"And every one of them knows that there is more nutriment in a pennyworth of bread than there is in a whole gallon of beer. Therefore, if you eat the bread and drink the water, you get more strength."

The printer acknowledged that there was something in that.

"You see," continued Benjamin, "that all the nutriment there is in the barley is destroyed to convert it into beer. Your beer is very dirty water made bitter with malt, out of which nearly every particle of nutriment has been squeezed. There is as much nourishment in dishwater as there is in that stuff."

"Here, Jake, where are you?" called out another workman. "Bring on the beer."

Jake was the ale-boy, whose business it was to supply the men with beer from the ale-house.

"Another nuisance required by your beer business," exclaimed Benjamin. "Better by far pay a boy double price to bring water from the well, instead of bringing that stuff to absorb your money and sodden your brain."

"A *Water-American*, indeed!" said Mr. Watts, who heard much of the conversation. "But will you not allow some comfort to hard-working men?"

"Certainly; that is what I am after. There is more comfort in one glass of pure water than there is in a whole barrel of beer. Here is Watts, paying out four or five shillings every week for beer, when water would cost him nothing, and he would have that amount to spend for genuine comforts. Besides, beer unfits him to get real comfort out of any thing, even out of his home."

"You are about right on that," replied Watts; "beer does make a class of men most miserable. But must I discard it because some men use it to their injury?"

"Of course you must," Benjamin answered quickly and triumphantly. "There is where duty and right come in. The strong must bear the infirmities of the weak, or they won't amount to much in the world."

"Many of them won't amount to much any way, beer or no beer," responded Watts.

"Any of them will amount to more with water than they will with beer," retorted Benjamin, who felt competent to support his side of the question. He went on:

"Look here: I am supplied with a large porringer of hot-water gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for just the price of a pint of beer, three half-pence. Now, honestly, is not this much better for me, or for yourself, than the same amount of filthy beer?"

"Possibly; it is a new view of the case to me," was all that Mr. Watts could say, evidently conceding that Benjamin was about right.

Benjamin exchanged the press-room for the composing-room, after a few weeks.

"A treat now, Ben; that is the condition of admission here," said the men.

"I guess not; I fulfilled that condition in the press-room," answered Benjamin. "Once will do in this establishment."

"But you *will*," retorted a fellow-worker, enforced by a dozen voices. "The rule is irrevocable."

"We will see about that," replied Benjamin, with coolness, but determination.

"Yes, we *will* see," chimed in a resolute voice.

"And after all your seeing and blustering I shall not do it," added Benjamin, in a tone that indicated he meant what he said.

"Ben is right," interrupted Mr. Watts, who had listened to the colloquy; "he has met that condition once in the press-room, and he will not be required to repeat it. I forbid his doing it."

"It is a very foolish custom any way," said Benjamin, "and the sooner it is abandoned in England or anywhere else the better."

After all he did not carry his point. His own words about the affair were as follows:

"I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate, and had so many little pieces of private malice practised on me, by mixing my sorts, transposing and breaking my matter, etc., etc., if ever I stepped out of the room,—and all ascribed to the *chapel ghost*, which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted,—that, notwithstanding the master's protection, I found myself obliged to comply and pay the money; convinced of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually."

Benjamin kept up the fight against beer-drinking until he fairly conquered. One after another yielded to his example and arguments, and abandoned the old habit of swilling down beer, until a thorough reformation was wrought in the printing office. The strength, health, tact, and enterprise of the "*water-drinker*" convinced them that he was right. The title, "*Our Water-drinker*" bandied about the printing house, came to be really an appellation of esteem.

The printing press, on which Benjamin worked at Watts' printing house, is now in the Patent Office at Washington, where many visitors go to see it. Forty years after he worked on it, Franklin was in London, where his fame was greater than that of any other man, and he called at the old printing house, and going up to the familiar press, he said to the employees:

"It is just forty years since I worked at this press, as you are working now."

[Illustration: FRANKLIN'S LONDON PRINTING PRESS]

The announcement rather startled them. That a public man of so much fame should ever have even served in a printing office as they were serving, was almost too much for them to believe.

The publisher of this volume has in his possession *fac-simile* letters from different gentlemen in England, fully verifying the press the engraving of which appears above.

XXVIII.

AT HOME AGAIN.

We have seen that James Ralph and Benjamin parted company. Ralph had more brains than heart. His intellectual powers were greater than his principles. The reader may ask what became of him. After continuing poor and unsuccessful, engaging in several literary ventures that did little more than aggravate his poverty, and changing from one kind of work to another, good fortune seemed to become his portion. Mr. Parton says:

"As a political writer, pamphleteer, and compiler of booksellers' history, he flourished long. Four ministers thought his pen worth purchasing: Sir Robert Walpole, Mr. Pelham, Lord Bute, and the Duke of Bedford. The nobleman last named evidently held him in high esteem, and furnished the money for one of Ralph's political periodicals. Lord Bute, it is said, settled upon him an annuity of six hundred pounds. Fox praises the fairness, and Hallam the diligence, displayed in his two huge folios of the 'History of William III.' His works may be examined by the curious in the library of Harvard University and in the Philadelphia city library. In estimating the career of this erring man, we should not forget that many of the noblemen and statesmen with whom he associated, and for whose advancement he toiled, had less principle than he, and had not his excuse."[3]

"Swimming is one of the fine arts, I think," said Benjamin to Wygate, a printer with whom he was on the most intimate terms. "I feel about as much at home in the water as I do on the land."

"Well, I should go to the bottom pretty quick if I should venture where the water is over my head, for I can't swim any more than this printing-press can," answered Wygate.

"Why don't you learn? It might be of great use to you sometime."

"I should like to know how, but I never tried to learn."

"And that is a good reason for not knowing how to swim. You can't expect to know any thing without learning. I can teach you without any trouble."

"I accept your offer, and will try my best to learn; and Hall will try with me, I think. You can teach two as well as one, can't you?"

"Yes, a dozen, so far as that goes; the more the merrier."

"When will you go?"

"Just when you please. You and Hall fix the time, and I will be on hand."

The result was that Benjamin was in the water with his two pupils within a few days, and he taught both of them to swim well in two lessons. At the same time, he gave them an exhibition of what an expert swimmer can do in the water, performing different feats on and under the water, that filled his two companions with surprise.

"You are a water-American in more senses than one," remarked Wygate, in admiration of Benjamin's pranks in the water. "You could live in the water about as well as on the land."

"That is not strange," responded Hall; "he believes in water, inside and outside; he only practises what he preaches, and that is what he ought to do."

"Some people can't practise what they preach if they try ever so hard, in business or in morals," rejoined Wygate.

Wygate was the son of a wealthy man, who educated him quite thoroughly. He could read Latin and French about as well as he could English, and he could write very entertaining articles. He was fond of reading, too, and loved to discuss important questions. Such a young man was not often found in a printing office, and he just suited Benjamin in his literary tastes, so that they became boon companions. Their mutual attachment was strengthened by this experience in the art of swimming.

Not long after Wygate learned to swim, and while the feats that Benjamin performed in the water were still a subject of remark, some gentlemen proposed an excursion by water to Chelsea, several miles from London.

"Wouldn't you like to go, Ben?"

"Of course I would, if you are going."

"I will go if you go. I will call round with some of the party and introduce you to them."

This was done in due time, and Benjamin learned from them that they were going to Chelsea "to see the college and Don Saltero's curiosities," which object of the excursion more than doubled his interest.

On the trip Wygate talked much with some of the party about Benjamin's feats in the water as almost too wonderful to be believed. On returning, one of the gentlemen said:

"Franklin, why can you not give us an exhibition of your antics in the water?"

"Yes, Ben, do; let them see that what I have told them is literally true," entreated Wygate.

"Come, Ben, do it," added Hall; "it will put Saltero's curiosities into the shade. These gentlemen will be so interested in your performances that they will forget all other curiosities."

"Well, I am always ready to accommodate," replied Benjamin, "and it will not cross my disposition to have a little frolic in the water, so I will consent."

So saying, he took off his clothing and leaped into the river, and was soon as much at home there as a water-fowl. Sometimes he was under the water, and sometimes on it; it did not seem to make much difference to him which. He swam from Chelsea to Blackfriars, four miles, entertaining the company with many manoeuvres all the way. Then he got on board, arrayed himself in his apparel to hear such words of praise as these:

"Wonderful! I had no idea that any man could attain to such skill in the water."

"No one in London who can do that!"

"Nor in all England and Wales."

"Couldn't drown you, Franklin, if you were left in the middle of the Atlantic ocean."

"You could make a fortune, if you chose to exhibit your skill."

As this brief experience, together with his teaching Wygate and Hall to swim, won him quite a reputation on this line, we may state here, that after Benjamin had decided to return to Philadelphia and arranged therefor, he received a note from Sir William Wyndham, a noted public man, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Bolingbroke administration, inviting him to pay him a visit. Benjamin was again perplexed to know what this great man could want of him; but he went to see him.

"I am happy to see you, Mr. Franklin, and I hope it has been no inconvenience to you to call at this time."

"None at all," answered Benjamin. "On the other hand, I consider myself highly honored by your invitation to call; and I have gladly embraced the first opportunity to do so."

"I have heard of your great skill in the art of swimming," continued Sir Wyndham; "and how quickly you taught two young printers to swim."

"Yes," modestly answered Benjamin, "I have some skill in the water, and I did teach two of my companions the art of swimming, so that they are excellent swimmers now."

"That is what I heard; and I have two sons who are soon to start upon extensive travels, and I want they should learn to swim before they go. It may be of great service to them."

"I have no doubt it would prove a benefit to them," responded Benjamin. "I should not want to part with my skill for any consideration whatever."

"Can you teach my two sons the art at once?"

"I regret to say that I can not, for the reason that I am soon to leave London and return to America."

"Sorry for that, very sorry indeed. Allow me to suggest that, if you could prolong your stay here, you might make a real pecuniary success of establishing a swimming school. I should be willing to pay almost any price for the instruction of my two sons." Sir Wyndham was very earnest in his counsel, and made this suggestion sincerely.

"I really feel under great obligations for your interest and good opinions," Benjamin answered; "but I have already accepted an invitation to engage in business in Philadelphia, my home, and may leave within a few days."

"That settles the matter, of course; but I am sorry that it is so," added Sir Wyndham. "I trust that you may prosper wherever you are."

Benjamin thanked him heartily for his complimentary words and good wishes, and left him, almost wishing that he could cancel his engagement with Mr. Denham and open a swimming school. Wygate and Hall assured him that he could do well in that business.

Soon after the excursion to Chelsea, Wygate made known to Benjamin a scheme that was in his mind.

"I want to travel extensively over Europe," he said, "and I have decided to do it if you will become my traveling companion. We can stop as necessity requires, from time to time, and work at our business, so as to pay our way."

"I should like nothing better than to travel all over Europe," answered Benjamin. "I have a desire to see more than I have seen of this part of the world."

"Well, what do you think of the plan?"

"I should say that it is practicable, although the suggestion is entirely new to me. Could we get work at our business?"

"I took it for granted that we could," replied Wygate. "I have no more means of knowing than you have."

"I should take it for granted that we could, too," said Benjamin; "still I shall want to consider it; it is quite an enterprise to undertake."

"Somewhat of a scheme; but a very interesting and instructive one if successfully prosecuted."

"That is so, and I think favorably of it. I will consult my good friend, Denham, about it. He has seen more of the world than we have."

Benjamin was evidently favorably impressed with the proposition; for he embraced the first opportunity to lay the subject before Mr. Denham.

"It does not strike me favorably," said Mr. Denham.

"We could both see and learn a great deal," remarked Benjamin.

"That is true; but other things are to be considered, which are of equal importance. What might do for Wygate, whose home is here, might not do for you, whose home is in America."

"That may be." Benjamin's brief reply indicated that he was not quite certain on that point.

"It appears to me," continued Mr. Denham, "that your first thoughts should be concerned about returning to Philadelphia, that you may set up business for yourself there."

"I do not see much prospect of that at present. Of course I should be glad to return home; for there is no place I prefer to Philadelphia."

"So far as prospects of which you speak are concerned, we can not always judge; unexpected opportunities sometimes offer; and you do not want to put yourself where you can not accept and use them."

"Of course not," Benjamin answered, evidently disappointed that his friend did not endorse the scheme.

"I should recommend decidedly that you abandon the project entirely, and think no more about it. Then you can continue your work with the intention of returning to America whenever a favorable opportunity occurs."

Benjamin accepted the advice of Mr. Denham, and reported to Wygate, to the no small disappointment of the latter; and both discarded the scheme and devoted themselves to honest labor.

Benjamin heard of a place where he could get boarded at two shillings a week, when he was paying three shillings and sixpence a week in Duke Street.

"I think I shall be under the necessity of changing," he said to the widow with whom he was boarding. "I want to save all the money I can, so as to return to America."

"I shall be very sorry to have you leave, Mr. Franklin, if I can possibly arrange with you to remain."

"I have no desire to leave, except to save a little in my expenses, that I may return to America sooner: that is all."

"Rather than have you go, I will deduct two shillings a week from what you are paying me now."

"That is, you propose to board me for one shilling and sixpence a week?"

"Yes, that is it, and it is a bargain if you say so."

"It is a bargain, then." And Benjamin continued to board there as long as he remained in London.

Before this woman received him for a boarder in the first place, she sent to the printing house to inquire about his character. The report was so favorable that she took him to board. And now she had tried him, and was a greater admirer of his character than ever.

It is one of the things to be said in Benjamin's favor, that, with all his faults, he always pleased and satisfied his employers and boarding-house keepers.

Benjamin records the following interesting incident respecting his friend Denham, of whom we have spoken, and to whom we shall refer again:

"I must record one trait of this good man's character. He had formerly been in business at Bristol, but failed, in debt to a number of people, compounded, and went to America. There, by a close application to business as a merchant, he acquired a plentiful fortune in a few years. Returning to England in the ship with me, he invited his old creditors to an entertainment, at which he thanked them for the easy composition they had favored him with, and, when they expected nothing but the treat, every man at the first remove found under his plate an order on a banker for the full amount of the unpaid remainder, with interest."

It was this excellent man and friend, who finally approached Benjamin with a proposition.

"How would you like to return to Philadelphia?" he said to Benjamin.

"I should like nothing better, if the way was open for me to go."

"I will open a way for you if you will go."

"How?"

"I am going myself. I intend to open a store of goods in Philadelphia, and will employ you in the business, if you will go."

"I should like to go; but that will be a new business for me; perhaps
I shall not succeed in it."

"That is *my* lookout. I think you will succeed; at any rate, I am prepared to take the risk."

"And I am prepared to go if you will." Benjamin was really delighted with the proposition.

"I will pay you fifty pounds for one year, and increase your wages thereafter as you become familiar with the business."

"That offer is satisfactory, though it is not as much as I make at my trade now."

"It will be better if you succeed. When you become well acquainted with the business, I will send you with a cargo of bread and flour to the West Indies, and I will procure you commissions from others that will be profitable. In this way you can establish a good business for yourself."

"That is a very generous offer on your part, and I hope that I shall merit your kindness."

"It will be necessary for you to close up your business at the printing house at once, as I want you to assist me in purchasing, packing, and shipping goods. My purpose is to carry a large stock to Philadelphia."

"I shall accept your proposition, and resign my position at Watts' immediately, and be at your service early and late."

Benjamin, no doubt, was more interested to return to America on account of his relation to Miss Deborah Read. He had written to her but once, and that was directly after he began work at Palmer's printing house. He told her of Keith's fraud practised upon him, leaving him in London a stranger and nearly penniless, so that he could not return until he had earned money enough to pay his passage. He did not write to her again, and his conscience had condemned him, so that, at times, he dwelt sadly upon his unfaithfulness. He neglected to write for so long a time, that he became ashamed to write at all; and so the correspondence dropped. Yet, he did not forget Miss Read, nor cast her off; and he blamed himself every time his thoughts dwelt upon his sin of omission.

Benjamin's employer was very sorry to part with him.

"I am glad to have you as long as I have," he said, "but I wish you would stay. I feel safe to commit

work or business to your care. If ever I can do you a favor, let me know, and I will only be too glad to do it."

"I thank you for your confidence. I have done the best for you I could, as I always mean to do for every employer. I regret to leave you, and my companions with whom I have spent so many hours. But I have a strong desire to return home." Benjamin spoke with considerable feeling.

"That is an honorable desire," answered Mr. Watts, "and I have no doubt that you will be prospered in gratifying it. At any rate, I hope you will."

So Benjamin separated from his old friends on the best of terms, and commenced work for Mr. Denham. Nor was it light work. He accompanied his employer from warehouse to warehouse, packing goods that he bought, and forwarding them to the ship *Berkshire*, which would sail on July 21st. It was new business for him, but he liked it all the more for its novelty; and he performed the labors with his accustomed tact and industry.

Benjamin had been nineteen months in London when he sailed on the 21st of July, 1726. A few months before, he made the acquaintance of Peter Collinson, a young man of noble English birth, whose talents gave him nearly as much standing as his ancestry. Collinson heard of Benjamin and sought him out, forming a life-long friendship. Collinson accompanied Benjamin to the ship. Just before the vessel weighed anchor, he handed his walking-stick to Benjamin, saying, "Let us exchange."

Benjamin exchanged, replying, "And let it be a pledge of friendship forever."

"And a pledge, also, of faithful correspondence with each other," added Collinson, as they shook hands and parted.

The *Berkshire*, Henry Clark, master, was eighty-two days on its voyage to Philadelphia. Benjamin landed there on the 11th day of October, 1726: and he was at home again.

[3] "Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin," vol. i. p. 136.

XXIX.

UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE.

One of the first places that Benjamin visited was the printing house of Keimer, where he worked before leaving the country. Keimer had made up his mind that Benjamin would never return to America, so that when he entered the printing office he was startled.

"Why, Ben! can it be you?" he exclaimed in wonder. "I began to think that you would never be seen in Philadelphia again."

"Why did you think so?"

"Because you planned to be back here a long time ago; I concluded that you had forsaken us."

"Not yet; I have seen no place abroad quite equal to Philadelphia. I did not return as soon as I expected." And Benjamin rehearsed to Keimer substantially his experience with Governor Keith, that he might understand why his return was delayed.

"That is what you got for concealing your purpose," said Keimer. "I could have told you that Keith was wholly unreliable, and so could a good many other people. He has been turned out of office because of his rascality."

"I am glad to hear that. I am a little curious to see how he will act, and hear what he will say, when I meet him."

"He won't meet you if he can help it. I see him occasionally on the street, and he looks crestfallen."

"He will look more so, I imagine, when he meets me. I propose to talk matters over very plainly with him."

"That can do no good. The less breath you waste in that way, the better for you," replied Keimer. "But

I suppose you want to go to work at your old trade? Plenty of work here, and you are just the man to do it."

Keimer's business had increased largely, and he had added many facilities for doing work, so that the establishment presented a more attractive appearance.

"No; I am a printer no longer," answered Benjamin. "I am booked for the mercantile business in Philadelphia"

"How is that? Were you not a printer in London?"

"Yes, I followed my trade there, and learned more about it than I ever knew before. London is a great place for printing. Two printing houses there, with more than fifty hands in each."

"Think you can do better in trading than printing?" asked Keimer, who was really anxious for Benjamin's services.

"Not exactly so. But I should be in London now, had not Mr. Denham's offer to become his clerk brought me home." And Benjamin told the story of his acquaintance with Mr. Denham and the outcome, which was his offer to make him his business manager.

"A good opportunity, I should think, if you like that business," answered Keimer; "but I should like to put you in manager of my printing office. You have had the experience, and understand the business much better than any man I have."

"That is out of the question now, of course, as I am under obligations to Mr. Denham."

"Of course; I only meant to tell you what I would do if you were at liberty."

Benjamin was anxious to learn about Miss Read, whom he was quite ashamed to meet because of his neglect. Keimer was acquainted with the family, and first introduced him to them, as was stated in a former chapter. So that he had no doubt he would know all about Deborah. He ventured to inquire:

"What can you tell me about Mrs. Read and her daughter?"

"Mrs. Read lives where she did, and continues to take a few boarders. Her daughter was married to a miserable fellow, nearly a year ago, but lived with him only a few weeks, when she left him."

"Indeed! That was unfortunate for her," Benjamin answered. "She deserves a better experience than that."

"She would not have married, had she been left to her own choice, but her mother and other friends persuaded her. Rogers was her husband's name, and he was a potter by trade, a first-class workman; and they thought he was capable of getting a good living, I suppose."

"A good character would have been of more service to him," suggested
Benjamin; "a very unfortunate affair."

"I was going to sway," continued Keimer, "that she had been married but a few weeks before she found that Rogers had another wife. Of course her marriage was not legal, and she left him at once."

"Probably her mother made no inquiry about Rogers' character beforehand," remarked Benjamin. "Mothers ought to be wiser than that."

"We all have to live and learn, and experience is our best schoolmaster," added Keimer.

Keimer knew nothing of Benjamin's relation to Deborah Read, so that he spoke freely. The revelation was startling to Benjamin, and it set him to thinking. He concluded that Mrs. Read inferred from his first and only letter to Deborah that he would never return, or never be in a situation to support a wife and family; and, as time went on, and no other letters were received, she became fixed in her conclusion that he would not return. Benjamin took all the blame upon himself; and the honest sympathy of his heart asserted itself for the girl. He resolved to call upon her as soon as possible and confess his wrong-doing, ask her forgiveness, and renew his attentions.

"I should have said," Keimer added, "that Deborah has not changed her name. She refuses to be called Mrs. Rogers, and is still called Miss Read by her friends. This is all right, I suppose, because her marriage was illegal."

"Very wise for her, I think," responded Benjamin. "But she may consider herself fortunate to get released from such a bondage."

He improved the first opportunity to call at Mrs. Read's, to whom he appeared as one from the dead. She had not heard of his arrival, nor that he was expected. The *American Weekly Mercury*, the only newspaper of the town, announced, "Entered inwards, ship *Berkshire*, Henry Clark, from London." That was all; nothing was said about any passengers.

"Benjamin Franklin!" exclaimed Mrs. Read in great astonishment, throwing up her hands at first, as if fearing it was his ghost, and then giving him a most cordial welcome. "Can it be you?"

"It can be," Benjamin replied, with his old-time familiarity, being reassured by Mrs. Read's friendly appearance. "If I know myself, this is Benjamin Franklin."

Deborah made her appearance before the last words were fairly off the lips of the new comer, equally surprised and glad to see her old friend.

"I am really ashamed to meet you, Deborah, after my inexcusable neglect," he said, "and first of all I ask you to forgive me. It scarcely seems possible to myself that I should treat you so."

Before Deborah had time to reply her mother spoke:

"If there is any blame to be attached to any one, it is to me; for I opposed your engagement, and entreated Deborah to marry that apology for a man Rogers."

"But all that does not excuse me for not writing to Deborah," responded Benjamin "It was very wrong in me to treat her with such neglect. And I did not intend to do so; I meant to continue the correspondence, but one thing and another prevented for so long a time, that I really was ashamed to write."

"Well, it is all over now, and there is no help for what has been done, except to learn a good lesson from it for the future, if we are all bright enough to do that."

Mrs. Read swept the deck by these last remarks. There was no obstacle now to consummate an engagement with Deborah. She did not tell Benjamin to go ahead and make sure of his bird now, that she would not interpose the slightest objection; but she might as well have said so; and he so understood it, so that he felt perfectly at ease.

Deborah Read had never lost her first love, and never wholly abandoned the idea that her lover would return. She had no love for Rogers when she married him; she married him to please her mother. Now, her love for Benjamin was as fresh and strong as ever; and so was his love for her. Their intimacy was renewed, an engagement consummated.

Benjamin was twenty years old—a fine-appearing, handsome young man. Mr. Denham thought so, and so did Deborah Read. The first was fortunate in securing him for his clerk, and the second was equally fortunate in securing him for her future husband. And Benjamin himself was as fortunate as either of them in having such an employer as Denham, and such a betrothed as Deborah. It was a tidal wave of good fortune now.

"And I am prepared to go to work at once."

"I will pay you extra wages to take the whole charge of the printing office, so that I can give my attention to the stationer's shop."

"I can do that, or any thing else you desire; am not at all particular. I am now twenty-one years old, and ought to be a man any way, and do the best I can wherever I am put."

Keimer's offer was liberal, and Benjamin accepted it, and entered upon his work as superintendent of the printing house, a very responsible position. But, in a short time, he had good reason to believe that Keimer paid him so liberal wages because he wanted the poor printers to improve under his superintendence; and when that end was accomplished, he would cut down his wages, or hire another man for less money. However, he went to work with a will, as he always did, resolved to do the best he could for his employer.

As the workmen improved under Benjamin's supervision, Keimer evidently began to think of discharging him, or cutting down his wages. On paying his second quarter's wages, he told him that he could not continue to pay him so much. He became uncivil in his treatment, frequently found fault with him, and plainly tried to make his situation uncomfortable so that he would leave. At length a rare opportunity offered for him to make trouble. An unusual noise in the street one day caused Benjamin to put his head out of the window to learn what was the matter. Keimer happened to be in the street, and seeing him, cried out:

"Put your head in and attend to your business," adding some reproachful words which all the people around him heard. Then hastening up stairs into the office, he continued his insulting language.

"Men who work for me must give better heed to their business. If they care more for a noise in the street than they do for their work, it is high time they left."

"I am ready to leave any time you please," retorted Benjamin, nettled by such uncalled-for treatment. "I am not dependent on you for a living, and I shall not bear such treatment long, I assure you."

"That, indeed!" replied Keimer, derisively. "You would not stay another day were it not for our agreement, in accordance with which I now warn you that, at the end of this quarter, I shall cease to employ you."

"And I will notify you that I shall not work another minute for you. A man who is neither honest, nor a gentleman, does not deserve the service of decent men." Benjamin was aroused.

And, as he spoke these last cutting words, he took his hat and left.
As he passed down, he said to Meredith:

"Bring all my things to my lodgings."

In the evening, Meredith carried all the articles belonging to
Benjamin to his boarding-place, where he had a long interview.

"Keimer lost the last claim for respect that he had on his men to-day," said Meredith. "Not a man in his establishment, who does not condemn his course."

"Just what I expected. He does not want to pay me my price, now that the men have learned their business. This was the first occasion he has had to drive me off." Benjamin spoke with the utmost coolness.

"It is the worst act for himself that he has done," continued Meredith. "Every man he employs would leave him if work could be had elsewhere."

"I think I shall return to Boston, whether I remain there or not. It is a good time for me to visit my friends."

"I have something better than that to suggest. My thoughts have been busy on it all day, and I wanted to see you about it to-night before you laid any plans." Meredith's manner indicated something of importance.

"What have you to propose? I am ready for any practicable enterprise you can name."

"I want to set up the printing business for myself, and I am not sufficiently acquainted with it, and you are. Can we not arrange to go into business together?"

Meredith's proposition took Benjamin by surprise, and evidently seemed impracticable to him.

"And have poverty for our capital?" replied Benjamin with a laugh. "I am about as rich as you are."

"No; have money for our capital, all that is necessary to start us well in business," answered Meredith.

"That would be fine, I declare; but I would like to see the money first," added Benjamin, before Meredith could explain.

"Hold on a minute, let me explain, and you will see that my plan is not so impracticable as you seem to think. My father has money; and he has always said that he would start me in business whenever I got a good knowledge of it. He knows, of course, that I have not that knowledge yet; but he knows, too, that a man who can run Keimer's establishment has the requisite knowledge, and would be a good partner for me."

"But your father will never advance the necessary capital," interrupted Benjamin. "If I was ten years older he might do it."

"I am confident that he will; at any rate, I will consult him about the matter, and learn just what he will do. I have told him all about you, and he will think it is a good opportunity for me."

Meredith consulted his father, and received the prompt answer:

"Yes, I will do it gladly. I know of no young man I would select for your partner in preference to

Franklin."

In a subsequent interview with Benjamin, Mr. Meredith said:

"I am all the more ready to furnish the capital, because your influence over my son has been so good. You influenced him to stop drinking when he was fast becoming intemperate, and I shall always feel grateful for it. You are just the one to be intimately associated with him."

It was settled that they should enter into partnership, and start their business as soon as the necessary outfit could be obtained from England.

XXX.

THE LEATHERN-APRON CLUB.

Benjamin began to reflect much upon his religious opinions (or, rather, irreligious), on his return voyage from England, as related to the errors and mistakes of his life. He had much time, during those three long, wearisome months, to study himself, past and present. Evidently he came to possess a more correct knowledge of himself on that voyage than he ever had before. He was so sincere in the matter that he drew up a number of rules by which to regulate his future life. A year and more afterwards he enlarged and perfected this code of morals. The rules which he adopted on the *Berkshire* were prefaced with the following paragraph:

"Those who write of the art of poetry teach us that, if we would write what may be worth reading, we ought always, before we begin, to form a regular plan and design of our piece, otherwise we shall be in danger of incongruity. I am apt to think it is the same as to life. I have never fixed a regular design of life, by which means it has been a confused variety of different scenes. I am now entering upon a new one; let me, therefore, make some resolutions, and form some scheme of action, that thenceforth I may live like a rational creature."

The closing sentence shows that his conscience was making him considerable trouble, and that he concluded his life had been very irrational. Perhaps he thought of Collins, whom he made a free thinker, and of Ralph, whom he corrupted in the same way. One of them became a drunkard, and the other a polygamist; both of them cheating him out of a sum of money; might not their free thinking be related to their immoralities? He could not help thinking of these things, and so he wrote down the following rules:

"1. It is necessary for me to be extremely frugal for some time till I have paid what I owe.

"2. To endeavor to speak truth in every instance; to give nobody expectations that are not likely to be answered, but aim at sincerity in every word and action; the most amiable excellence in a rational being.

"3. To apply myself industriously to whatever business I take in hand, and not divert my mind from my business by any foolish project of growing suddenly rich; for industry and patience are the surest means of plenty.

"4. I resolve to speak ill of no man whatever, not even in a matter of truth; but rather by some means excuse the faults I hear charged upon others, and, upon proper occasions, speak all the good I know of every body."

This was not all he wrote to guide his future career; but we have cited enough to show the current of Benjamin's thoughts at the time of which we are speaking. We shall see hereafter that he did not cease to reflect upon his career, and resolve upon a nobler life.

Soon after his return from England, perhaps after the death of Mr. Denham, Benjamin organized a literary club, composed, at first, of eleven members, all of them more or less talented and desirous of self-improvement, and nearly all of them mechanics, which fact caused the institution to be christened "THE LEATHERN-APRON CLUB," although the real name of it, as suggested by Franklin, was "THE JUNTO."

The society was patterned after one formed by Cotton Mather in Boston. The first thing done at their meetings was to read the following questions, pausing after reading each for any remarks or

propositions members might desire to make. The principal questions were as follows:

"1. Is there any remarkable disorder in the place that requires our endeavor for the suppression of it? And in what fair, likely way may we endeavor it?

"2. Is there any particular person, whose disorderly behavior may be so scandalous and notorious that we may do well to send unto the said person our charitable admonitions? Or, are there any contending persons whom we should admonish to quench their contentions?

"3. Is there any special service to the interest of Religion which we may conveniently desire our ministers to take notice of?

"4. Is there any thing we may do well to mention unto the justices for the further promoting good order?

"5. Is there any sort of officers among us to such a degree unmindful of their duty that we may do well to mind them of it?

"6. Can any further methods be devised that ignorance and wickedness may be chased from our people in general, and that household piety in particular may flourish among them?

"7. Does there appear any instance of oppression or fraudulence in the dealings of any sort of people that may call for our essays to get it rectified?

"8. Is there any matter to be humbly moved unto the Legislative Power, to be enacted into a Law for the public benefit?

"9. Do we know of any person languishing under sore and sad affliction; and is there any thing we can do for the succor of such an afflicted neighbor?

"10. Has any person any proposal to make for our own further advantage and assistance, that we ourselves may be in a probable and regular capacity to pursue the intention before us?"

"I should pronounce that an ingenious society for doing good and getting good," said Coleman, after the questions were read.

"It was so, and Cotton Mather himself was a member of twenty of these societies," said Benjamin. "They became very popular, and I recall with what interest my father participated in the meetings. I often accompanied him, and, young as I was, they were very interesting to me. It was that fact which suggested the questions I have reported for our club."

When a person united with the Junto, he was required to stand up, lay his hand on his heart, and answer the following questions:

"1. Have you any particular disrespect to any present member?

"*Answer*. I have not.

"2. Do you sincerely declare that you love mankind in general, of what profession or religion soever?

"*Answer*. I do.

"3. Do you think any person ought to be harmed in his body, name, or goods, for mere speculative opinion, or his external way of worship?

"*Answer*. No.

"4. Do you love truth for truth's sake; and will you endeavor impartially to find and receive it yourself, and communicate it to others?

"*Answer*. Yes."

At one of their earliest meetings Benjamin proposed that each member (the number of members was limited to twelve) should bring his books to the club-room for reference during their discussions.

"A capital idea," said Coleman, "and I would suggest that each member have the privilege of reading the books belonging to other members."

"Another good idea," rejoined Benjamin; "I second that motion with all my heart."

"It will not take any one of us a great while to read all the books we can muster," suggested Potts.

At that time there was no bookstore in Philadelphia, nor was there one of considerable note anywhere in the Colonies, except in Boston. The people of Philadelphia sent to England for the books they wanted, which was expensive and inconvenient.

After this plan had been successfully used for several months, Benjamin made another proposition.

"I propose that we establish a library, interesting parties outside to join us in the enterprise."

"Raising money for the same by subscription, do you mean?" inquired Maugridge.

"Yes; unless there is a better way of doing it."

"I doubt if outsiders can be interested to join us in such a project," said Grace. "Few people care enough about books to put money into such an enterprise."

"Perhaps so; but we can try; if we fail we shall still be as well off as we are now," was Benjamin's answer. "Unless we make the effort we shall never know what we can do."

"And you are the one to solicit subscriptions, Ben," remarked Godfrey. "If anybody can succeed, you can. If I should undertake and fail, as I should, it would not prove that the scheme is impracticable."

"I am perfectly willing to solicit subscriptions, and I will begin at once and be able to report success or failure at the next meeting," was Benjamin's generous offer.

At the following meeting he was able to report success, so far as he had been able to work; and he continued until fifty young tradesmen had pledged forty shillings each as a subscription, and, in addition, ten shillings per annum. This was unexpected success, and the members of the Junto were highly elated. Thus was established the first circulating library in this country. Benjamin Franklin was the author of it; and that library numbers now one hundred thousand volumes. Since that day the library scheme has proved so beneficial to individuals and the public, that there are thousands of circulating libraries in the land. Almost every town of two or three thousand inhabitants has one. It must not be forgotten, however, that Benjamin Franklin conceived and reduced the idea to practice.

The following are some of the questions discussed by members of the Junto:

"Is sound an entity or body?

"How may the phenomenon of vapors be explained?

"Is self-interest the rudder that steers mankind, the universal monarch to whom all are tributaries?

"Which is the best form of government, and what was that form which first prevailed among mankind?

"Can any one particular form of government suit all mankind?

"What is the reason that the tides rise higher in the Bay of Fundy than the Bay of Delaware?

"Is the emission of paper money safe?

"What is the reason that men of the greatest knowledge are not the most happy?

"How may the possession of the lakes be improved to our advantage?

"Why are tumultuous, uneasy sensations united with our desires?

"Whether it ought to be the aim of philosophy to eradicate the passions?

"How may smoky chimneys be best cured?

"Why does the flame of a candle tend upwards in a spire?

"Which is the least criminal, a *bad* action joined with a *good* intention, or a *good* action with a *bad* intention?

"Is it inconsistent with the principles of liberty in a free government, to punish a man as a libeller when he speaks the truth?"

The foregoing Rules and Questions show that it could not have been an ordinary class of young men to meet and discuss such subjects. Benjamin's talent is manifest both in the organization and the themes considered.

Improvements have been the order of the day since the Junto was organized; but we doubt if there has been much improvement upon the Junto in literary organizations for the young. It is not surprising, that, of the original twelve members, two became surveyors-general; one the inventor of a quadrant; one a distinguished mechanic and influential man; one a merchant of great note and a provincial judge, and all but one respected and honored men. At the same time, Benjamin, the founder, became "Minister to the Court of St. James," "Minister Plenipotentiary to France," and the greatest Statesman and Philosopher of America, in the eighteenth century.

In old age Doctor Franklin said of the Junto: "It was the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics that then existed in the Province; for our queries, which were read the week preceding their discussion, put us upon reading with attention on the several subjects, that we might speak more to the purpose; and here, too, we acquired better habits of conversation, every thing being studied in our rules which might prevent our disgusting each other."

The Junto was copied in England fifty years after Benjamin organized it in Philadelphia, by Cleming Jenkinson (who became Earl of Liverpool) and others; and, within it, they began careers that became illustrious. It has been copied in different parts of our own land down to the present day, blessing the people and the country in more ways than one.

"I can tell you how to get over the difficulty," said Benjamin: "let each member get up a club of twelve, and that will give a chance for one hundred and forty-four members."

"And when that number is attained, I suppose you will have each one of the one hundred and forty-four organize a Junto, and that will make the membership seventeen hundred and twenty-eight, enough to constitute a good township," suggested Coleman, who did not endorse Benjamin's plan.

"One Junto will be of more service to members, as well as to the public, than a dozen can be, only abolish the limit to twelve members, and allow all who desire to join," was Coleman's view.

"More interesting, also, to have a larger number of members," suggested Parsons. "Numbers create enthusiasm."

"And numbers often create friction, too," retorted Benjamin; "we want to avoid both shoals and rocks."

"Another thing that I object to very much is this: if each one of us organizes another Junto, we no longer associate with each other—the very thing for which this Junto was organized." This was the strongest objection that Coleman urged.

"That is the selfish side of the question," suggested Benjamin. "On the other hand, there will be twelve times as many persons to be benefited. If we twelve are benefited, how much better and grander to have one hundred and forty-four benefited!"

"Ben is right; and I am of the opinion that the sooner we adopt this plan the better. It will be unpleasant to sacrifice our social connections to form new ones, but the new ones may become equally pleasant." Scull thus supported Benjamin's proposition; and so did Meredith, Maugridge, and others.

This discussion arose from the popularity of the Junto. It became so popular that large numbers of persons wanted to join it, and besought the members to abolish the rule limiting the membership to twelve. Hence, Benjamin's proposition to meet the exigency, which was carried, with this amendment:

"The new clubs shall be auxiliary to this, the original one, each reporting its proceedings to the parent society, that one harmonious purpose and plan may characterize all."

All the members did not organize a club, but five or six did, and these clubs flourished for many years, blessing the town and the whole colony.

The Junto was not many months old, when Benjamin made another proposition.

"The books we read have words and phrases in other languages, and I do not know their meaning. I studied Latin some in Boston, before I was ten years old, and Latin words I can guess at, but French I can't. Suppose we study French."

"You can study it if you want to," replied Scull, "but I have not the time for another study."

"And I have not the taste for it," said Meredith. "One language is all that I can handle, and I can't handle that as I want to."

"I like the suggestion," responded Coleman "and can give a little time to French, though not a great deal. If Ben becomes an expert linguist he can translate the foreign words and phrases for us."

"That last suggestion is best of all," remarked Parsons. "Ben can go ahead and become a linguist for our benefit. That is the benevolent side of this question," punning on his argument for the benevolent side of the club question.

Whether other members of the Junto studied the languages we have no means of knowing, but Benjamin did, with remarkable success. First he studied French, and when he could read it quite well, he took up Italian and Spanish. By this time he became so interested in foreign languages that he revived his acquaintance with Latin, becoming quite a good scholar therein. It was a mystery to his companions how he found time to accomplish so much; but he did it by method and industry, improving the smallest fragments of time, working early and late. He was very fond of playing chess; but he denied himself the pleasure wholly in order that he might have the more time for study. While at Keimer's he found more time for reading and hard study, because his employer observed Saturday as his Sabbath, giving only five days in the week to work.

XXXI.

BRIGHTER DAYS.

It would require several months for the printing outfit ordered from England to reach Philadelphia. In the mean time, Benjamin was considering what to do; and, while canvassing the field, he received the following note from Keimer:

"PHILADELPHIA, 10 Dec., 1727.

"MR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN:

> "*Dear Sir*,—It is not wise for old friends like you and I to separate for a few words spoken in passion. I was very hasty, and am sorry for it. I want my old foreman back again at the old price. I have plenty of work, and if you think well of my proposition, come and see me.

"Yours truly,

"SAMUEL KEIMER."

Benjamin's first impulse was to destroy the letter and take no further notice of it. But the second, sober thought led him to consult Meredith, who continued to work for Keimer. Meredith read the letter, and said:

"I should advise you to accept his proposition, as you have nothing to do."

"But can you tell me what selfish end he has in view, for Keimer would never come down like that unless he had an axe to grind?" Benjamin said.

"Most certainly I can. He can have a government job if he can do the work. The Province of New Jersey is going to make a new issue of paper money, and he can get the job; but you are the only printer in Philadelphia who can do that work, so he wants you."

"I knew there must be something of that sort, or he never would have asked for my work again. He is too contemptible a man to work for." Benjamin spoke with much feeling; and he was right, too.

"But here is the point," continued Meredith. "I am poorly equipped to set up business for myself, and you can teach me. It will be anywhere from six to eight months before our outfit arrives from England, so here is a good opportunity for me to improve."

"I suppose that is the best way of looking at it; but Keimer has so little manhood about him that I have no respect for him. I dislike to work for a man whom I despise, and can't help it." Benjamin's language showed that it was almost too much to ask him to return to Keimer's printing office; but

Meredith persevered.

"For my sake, I want you should decide to accept the proposition. Keimer has made an apology, so that you can return without compromising your manhood at all. It looks to me as if it were wiser to accept his proposal than to decline it."

"I will sleep over it to-night before I decide, and let you know in the morning," replied Benjamin, as he took his leave.

In the morning Benjamin put in his appearance at Keimer's office, ready for work. He received a hearty welcome, and was at once apprized of the paper-money job of New Jersey.

Benjamin succeeded in contriving and completing a copper-plate press; and when cuts and ornaments were all ready, Keimer and he proceeded to Burlington, N.J., where they remained three months to fulfill the contract. It proved a rare school for Benjamin. It brought him in contact with many prominent men, who were of much assistance to him afterwards. He was so much more intelligent than Keimer, that the latter was of little consequence, as very little notice was taken of him. One day Isaac Decon, the surveyor-general, said to him:

"You are complete master of your business, and success is before you."

"I have improved my opportunities," modestly answered Benjamin, "and done the best I could to learn my trade. I don't like the half-way method of doing business."

"I commenced business in a very humble way," continued Decon, "without dreaming that I should ever possess such an estate as I do now."

"What was your business?"

"I wheeled clay for the brickmakers, and had no opportunity of going to school in my boyhood. I did not learn to write until I became of age. I acquired my knowledge of surveying when I carried a chain for surveyors, who were pleased with my desire to learn the business, and assisted me. By constant industry, and close application, and not a little perseverance, I have succeeded in reaching the place where you now see me."

"That is the only way any person ever reached an honorable position," remarked Benjamin, after listening to the interesting story of success.

"You are right in that view, and one-half of the battle is fought when correct views of life are fixed. When an employer like Keimer is inferior to his employee in ability, tact, and enterprise, there is a very poor show for him. If you set up for yourself in Philadelphia, you will work him completely out of his business."

Late in the spring of 1728 the printing outfit arrived from England. Benjamin and Meredith had settled with Keimer, who was unusually happy because his profits on his paper-money job in New Jersey had tided him over very discouraging embarrassments. Keimer knew nothing of their plans, however, when a settlement was consummated, as both had kept the secret. The first intimation that he, or the public, had of such an enterprise, was the opening of their printing house in the lower part of Market Street—"FRANKLIN & MEREDITH."

"Here's a man looking for a printer," said George House, an old friend of Benjamin. "He inquired of me where he could get a job done, and I told him that here was the place above all others."

"Thank you for the advertisement, George. Yes, sir, we can serve you here at short notice. What will you have done?" Benjamin won the customer over at once by his genial, familiar way.

The man made known his wants; and it proved to be a five-shilling job, all the more acceptable because it was the first.

With the members of the Junto all interested in his success, and the public men of New Jersey, who made his acquaintance at Burlington, Benjamin's business was soon well advertised. Many people were taken by surprise, and most of them predicted a failure, since there were two printers in town already. One day Samuel Nickle, an old citizen of the town, known somewhat as a croaker, was passing by, and, looking up, he read the sign.

"Another printing house!" he said to himself. "And two in town already! Who can be so thoughtless?" He stopped and mused a few moments, and then entered.

"Are you the young man who has opened this printing house?" he inquired of Benjamin.

"I am, sir."

"I am very sorry for you. You are throwing away your money; you can't succeed with two old printing houses here. You will fail."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because Philadelphia is degenerating, and half the people are now bankrupt, or nearly so, and how can they support so many printers?"

"But the appearance of Philadelphia indicates thrift," answered Benjamin. "See how many buildings are going up, and how rents are rising every month. This does not look like going backward, it seems to me."

"These are the very things that will ruin us," responded Nickle. "They are no evidence of prosperity, but of extravagance, that will bring disaster sooner or later."

"That sort of disaster is what we want," suggested Benjamin; "the more of it the better. If Philadelphia ever becomes much of a town, it will be in just that way." Benjamin saw at once that he was talking with a croaker and treated him accordingly.

There was an organization of business men in Philadelphia at that time, known as the "Merchants' Every-Night Club," answering, perhaps, to a "Board of Trade" of our day. Its purpose was to advance the business interests of the town. A member raised the question, "Can another printing house prosper in town?"

"Not with the present population," was the view of one member.

"It will be a long time before three printing houses will be required," remarked another.

"They could not have had very discreet advisers, it seems to me," still another remarked.

In this manner the subject was canvassed, every member but one predicting the failure of the enterprise. That one was Doctor Baird, a prominent physician, and he said:

"It will prove a success. For the industry of that Franklin is superior to any thing I ever saw of the kind. I see him still at work when I go home from club, and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed."

"Doctor, I guess you are right, I did not think of that when I spoke," remarked one who had predicted failure. This member was so much impressed by Doctor Baird's remark that he subsequently went to Benjamin and made this proposition:

"I think you can add a stationer's department to your business, and thus increase your profits; and if you think so, I will furnish you with stock on credit."

"Your offer is a very generous one, and I thank you for it," answered Benjamin; "but I think we had better stick to our trade at present and not put too many irons in the fire at once."

"That is a wise caution, I think, and I am all the more impressed that you are a young man of sound judgment, and you will succeed."

He had no doubt now that the printing house would succeed.

"Your good opinion encourages me very much, and I shall do my best to have it realized," replied Benjamin. "I thank you very much for your generous offer, and, perhaps, at some future day, I shall wish to accept it."

"Let me know whenever you are ready for it," said the gentleman as he took his departure.

"We will start a weekly paper as soon as we are able," said Benjamin to Meredith one day; "the *Mercury* is as near nothing as it can be. I believe that an able paper here, abreast with the times, will succeed."

"You can make it succeed if any one can," replied Meredith, to whom his partner had given a full account of his connection with the *New England Courant* in Boston.

They canvassed the subject until it was decided to start a weekly paper as soon as their pecuniary condition would permit. Just then the Oxford student, whose time Keimer had bought, called upon Benjamin.

"Will you employ me as journeyman printer?" he asked.

"Employ you?" responded Benjamin with much surprise. "I thought your time was Keimer's for four years."

"It was; but it is not now; I have bought it back."

"I am glad to hear that; you will be more of a man for it; and, before long, I think we should like your work; just now we are not in want of more help."

"Your work is increasing, I suppose?" said Webb; "hope I shall not have to wait long."

"If you can keep a secret, Webb, I will let you into it," continued Benjamin. "I expect to start a weekly paper before many weeks have passed; and then I shall have plenty of work."

"How long shall I have to wait?"

"I can't say. It is possible I may want you before I start the newspaper; work is coming in very well. But you must not let Keimer know about the paper. When it starts I want it should be a surprise to him and the public."

"I will not divulge your secret," was Webb's ready promise.

Nevertheless, Webb did disclose the secret to Keimer himself, who proceeded to start a paper of his own, called the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and he hired Webb, at good wages, to work on it. It proved to be a miserable affair, without ability or intelligent enterprise, so that a sharp, witty young man like Benjamin could readily make it a "laughing-stock."

"I will show up his ignorance and conceit in the *Mercury*" (name of the paper already published by Bradford), he said to Meredith. "See if I don't."

"A good idea, Ben; go ahead; it will create a sensation. Bradford will be glad to publish any thing you may write."

"I will see him at once." And Benjamin hastened to the office of the *Mercury*, made known his purpose to Bradford, who caught at it at once."

"Just the thing I want," responded Bradford. "Let me have something for the next issue."

"Certainly; you shall have the first article to-morrow morning."

Benjamin hurried away with his mind completely absorbed upon the subjects he should take up. The result was a series of amusing articles, in which he burlesqued Keimer's proposals, and ridiculed his editorials, which really deserved nothing better. He continued to write in this way several months, signing all his articles "*Busy Body*." The public were greatly interested in the communications, because of their real merit. They were bright, even sparkling, full of humor, logical to sharpness, and charged with ability. They drew public attention to Bradford's paper, and public ridicule to Keimer's; so that the subscription list of the former increased, while that of the latter never had over ninety subscribers. People on every hand inquired, "Who is *Busy Body*?" And, finally, the public learned that it was "that young Franklin, the printer." Keimer learned who his critic was; and, after the lapse of six or eight months from the time the first number was issued, who should appear before Benjamin at his office but him, saying:

"I understand that you think of starting a weekly newspaper; and I have come to sell you mine."

"How is that? Can't you make it go?" Benjamin replied in a familiar way.

"No, not as I want to. I don't think I am exactly qualified to run a newspaper."

"How many subscribers have you?"

"Ninety."

"Only ninety?" exclaimed Benjamin. "That number will be of no aid in starting a paper; might as well start new; new paper, new title, new editor, new every thing."

The conclusion of the interview was, however, that Benjamin purchased the paper, took possession immediately, advertised his literary enterprise, and "it proved," as he said, "in a few years extremely profitable to me."

His economy was equal to his industry. He arrayed himself in the plainest manner, although he aimed

to look neat and tidy. His board was simple and cheap, and every thing about his business was conducted on the most economical principles. He wheeled home the paper which he bought, boarded himself some of the time, sleeping in the office, and never stopped to consider whether it was compromising the dignity of a printer to do such things.

Keimer left no stone unturned to secure business and cripple Franklin and Meredith. He was never half so active and enterprising as he became after these two young men set up for themselves. One day Keimer was in Benjamin's printing office to transact some business, when the latter said to him:

"Look here, Keimer; come with me into the back room."

"What you got there?" Keimer answered, following.

"See that!" Benjamin said, pointing to a half-devoured loaf and pitcher of water, that he had just made a meal off.

"What of that?" said Keimer, not comprehending the drift of Benjamin's remark.

"Unless you can live cheaper than I can, it is no use for you to attempt to run me out of business."

Both laughed, and Keimer departed.

The *Gazette* flourished finely from the time it came under Benjamin's management. He was able to discuss public questions of importance with manifest ability, and his articles created interest and discussion among public men, who became subscribers in consequence. A dispute was going on between Governor Burnett and the Massachusetts Assembly, and Benjamin commented upon it with so much wisdom and originality that his intimate acquaintance was sought by the most distinguished men.

Benjamin's work as a printer excelled that of either Keimer or Bradford. The latter did the government printing, and often it was done in a very bungling manner. This was notably so when he printed an address of the House to the Governor. It was a very inferior job; whereupon Benjamin printed it elegantly and correctly and sent a copy to each member of the House. The House voted to give him the government printing thereafter. By his method of doing the *best* he could every time, he built up a business rapidly, and won a reputation for industry, integrity, and ability that was worth more than money.

To return to Meredith. He had become more intemperate than ever. His father, too, did not find relief from pecuniary embarrassment as he expected. He was to pay two hundred pounds currency for the printing house, and had paid one-half of it. But the other half was not paid when due, for which all three were sued.

"Perhaps your father is not pleased with your partner," said Benjamin to Meredith. "If that is the reason he does not advance the money, I will retire, and you shall run the whole thing."

"No; my father is well satisfied with my partner, and so am I; so that you need not think he is withholding money for the purpose of getting rid of you. He is really embarrassed."

"Then he could not take the concern into his own hands for you to run?"

"No, indeed; that would be quite impossible. Besides, I do not want it on my hands."

"Why?" inquired Benjamin.

"Because I am satisfied that I am not adapted to this business. I was bred a farmer, and ought not to have left that occupation."

"Drink water, as I do, and you may succeed as well at printing as farming. A farmer who drinks to excess never succeeds."

"Drink or no drink," retorted Meredith, "I am sick of this business and shall quit. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap, and I am going with them, and shall follow my old employment."

"Then you will sell out your interest to me, if I understand you?"
That was what Benjamin wanted.

"Certainly; you can get enough friends to help you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you, return to my father the hundred pounds he has advanced, pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership and leave the whole in your hands."

"I will accept your proposition, and we will draw up the papers at once," said Benjamin.

The bargain was consummated; and the proper papers were prepared, signed, and sealed. Benjamin accepted the generous aid of Coleman and Grace, and became sole proprietor of the printing house and *Pennsylvania Gazette*. This was near the close of the year 1729, a few months after the *Gazette* came into his hands.

A few months more elapsed, when he concluded to accept the offer of the gentleman, spoken of on a previous page, to provide a stock of stationery, and opened a stationer's shop in his building. This proved a good investment, and led to his marriage, September 1, 1730, to Miss Deborah Read.

While Benjamin was thus prospering, Keimer was going to the wall; and finally his printing office, with all its furniture, was sold under the hammer to pay his creditors; and he went to Barbadoes, where he lived in poverty.

Thus changes brought Benjamin to the front, and his printing house was the best, doing the most business, of any one in the whole country, except Boston. True, Bradford continued his business and paper; but in a very small way, in no sense a rival to our hero. He stood at the head.

XXXII.

NO LONGER A SKEPTIC.

"Time is money," Doctor Franklin wrote in age. It was what he practised when he conducted his printing business in Philadelphia. One day a lounger stepped into his shop, and, after looking over the articles, asked:

"What is the price of that book?" holding it up in his hand. Benjamin had commenced to keep a few books on sale.

"One dollar," answered the apprentice in attendance.

"One dollar," repeated the lounger; "can't you take less than that?"

"No less; one dollar is the price."

Waiting a few moments, and still looking over the book, he said, at length:

"Is Mr. Franklin at home?"

"He is in the printing office."

"I want to see him; will you call him?"

Franklin was called.

"Mr. Franklin, what is the lowest price you will take for this book?" at the same time holding up the book.

"One dollar and a quarter," answered Franklin, who had heard the lounger's parleying with his apprentice.

"One dollar and a quarter! Your young man asked but a dollar."

"True," answered Franklin, "and I could have better afforded to take a dollar then, than to have been called from my business."

The Customer seemed puzzled for a few moments, but, finally, concluded that the proprietor was joking. He had not been wont to place so great value upon time.

"Come, now, tell me just the lowest you will take for it," he said.

"One dollar and a half."

"A dollar and a half! Why you offered it yourself for a dollar and a quarter."

"True, and I had better taken the price then, than a dollar and a half now," retorted Benjamin with a good deal of spirit.

The buyer got the truth into his head at last, paid the price of the book, and sneaked away, with the rebuke lying heavily on his heart.

Benjamin wrote of his industry at that time, as follows:

"My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having, among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, "*Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men*." I thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encouraged me; though I did not think that I should ever literally *stand before kings*,—which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before *five*, and even had the honor of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner."

It is not strange that such a young man should write such maxims as the following, in his riper years:

"Pride breakfasts with plenty, dines with poverty, and sups with infamy."

"It is as truly folly for the poor to ape the rich, as for the frog to swell in order to equal the ox."

"It is easier to suppress the first desire, than to satisfy all that follow it."

His integrity was no less marked. Strict honesty characterized all his dealings with men. An exalted idea of justice pervaded his soul. His word of honor was as good as his note of hand. Even his disposition to castigate and censure in his writings, so manifest in Boston, at sixteen years of age, and which his father rebuked, was overcome. After he had set up a paper in Philadelphia, a gentleman handed him an article for its columns.

"I am very busy now," said Benjamin, "and you will confer a favor by leaving it for perusal at my leisure."

"That I will do, and call again to-morrow."

The following day the author put in his appearance quite early.

"What is your opinion of my article?" he asked.

"Why, sir, I am sorry to say that I can not publish it."

"Why not? What is the matter with it?"

"It is highly scurrilous and defamatory," replied Benjamin; "but being at a loss, on account of my poverty, whether to reject it or not, I thought I would put it to this issue. At night when my work was done, I bought a twopenny loaf, on which I supped heartily, and then, wrapping myself in my great coat, slept very soundly on the floor until morning, when another loaf and mug of water afforded a pleasant breakfast. Now, sir, since I can live very comfortably in this manner, why should I prostitute my press to personal hatred or party passion for a more luxurious living?"

We have seen that Benjamin began to revise his religious opinions on his return voyage from England. He continued to reflect much upon his loose ways; and there is no doubt that his integrity, industry, economy, and desire to succeed in business had something to do with his moral improvement. He confessed that, along from 1725 to 1730 he was immoral, and was sometimes led astray; but his conscience made him much trouble, and, finally, it asserted its supremacy, and he came off conqueror over his evil propensities. A change from skepticism or deism to a decided belief in the Christian Religion, no doubt exerted the strongest influence in making him a better man.

In 1728 he prepared "*Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*" for his own use every day. This was his ritual, beginning and closing with an humble prayer.

Three or four years later, he appears to have taken up this thought of a religious life anew; and he prepared a code of morals, perhaps a revision of his former Articles of Faith, wrote them out carefully in a blank book for use, as follows:

"1. TEMPERANCE.—Eat not to dulness; drink not to elevation.

"2. SILENCE.—Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

"3. ORDER.—Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

"4. RESOLUTION.—Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

"5. FRUGALITY.—Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; that is, waste nothing.

"6. INDUSTRY.—Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

"7. SINCERITY.—Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

"8. JUSTICE.—Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

"9. MODERATION.—Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

"10. CLEANLINESS.—Tolerate no uncleanliness in body, clothes, or habitation.

"11. TRANQUILITY.—Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

"12. CHASTITY....

"13. HUMILITY.—Imitate Jesus and Socrates."

At one time he seriously thought of organizing a "United Party for Virtue," in connection with which he prepared this religious creed:

"That there is one God, who made all things.

"That he governs the world by his providence.

"That he ought to be worshipped by adoration, prayer and thanksgiving.

"But that the most acceptable service to God is doing good to man.

"That the soul is immortal.

"And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."

His letters to relatives and friends, from this time, contained strong words for the Christian Religion, and for the imitation of the virtues practised by its Author. Through his long and useful life, he continued to observe the doctrines and precepts that he named in the foregoing extracts. He was a delegate to the convention for forming a Constitution of the United States, which met at Philadelphia, May, 1787, and he introduced the motion for daily prayers, with remarks thus:

"In the beginning of the contest with Britain, 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 can not fall to the ground without his notice, is it probably 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 future ages."

We will only add here an epitaph that he wrote for his own monument at twenty-three years of age, supposed to have been a paper for the Junto:

"THE BODY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, PRINTER (LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK, ITS CONTENTS TORN OUT, AND STRIPT OF ITS LETTERING AND GILDING), LIES HERE, FOOD FOR WORMS. BUT THE WORK ITSELF SHALL NOT BE LOST, FOR IT WILL, AS HE BELIEVED, APPEAR ONCE MORE, IN A NEW AND MORE ELEGANT

XXXIII.

POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC.

"I shall have to publish an almanac to be in fashion," remarked Franklin to his old friend Coleman. "Every printer in this country issues one, so far as I know."

From this point, we shall drop the Christian name, Benjamin, and use the surname, Franklin.

"A good theme to discuss in the Junto," replied Coleman. "You would publish a better one than the country ever had, if you should undertake it."

"I shall make one that differs from all issued hitherto, in some respects. I have devoted considerable thought to the subject, and have formed a plan, although it has not taken an exact shape yet in my own mind. I think I will bring it up in the Junto."

"By all means do it," added Coleman; "two or more heads may be better than one alone, even if the one contains more than all the rest."

"Much obliged," answered Franklin. "It will aid me essentially to mature my plans, to exchange views with the members of the Junto. I will introduce it at the very next meeting."

The subject was introduced into the Junto, as proposed, and every member hailed the project with delight. Franklin's paper had become the most popular one in the country, in consequence of the ability with which it discussed public questions, and the sharp, crisp wisdom and wit that made every issue entertaining; and the members believed that he could make an almanac that would take the lead. The discussion in the Junto settled the question of issuing the almanac. Its appearance in 1732 proved a remarkable event in Franklin's life, much more so than his most sanguine friends anticipated.

The Almanac appeared, with the title-page bearing the imprint: "By
Richard Saunders, Philomat. Printed and sold by B. Franklin."

From the opening to the close of it proverbial sayings, charged with wisdom and wit, were inserted wherever there was space enough to insert one. The following is a sample:

"Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright."

"Lost time is never found again; and what we call time enough always proves little enough."

"Drive thy business, let not that drive thee."

"Industry need not hope, and he that lives upon hope will die fasting."

"He that hath a trade hath an estate; and he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor."

"At the working-man's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter."

"Never leave that till to-morrow, which you can do to-day."

"A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things."

"If you would have your business done, go—if not, send."

"What maintains one vice would bring up two children."

"When the well is dry they know the worth of water."

"Pride is as loud a beggar as want, and a great deal more saucy."

"Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other."

"The good paymaster is lord of another man's purse."

These jets of wisdom made the Almanac sparkle. The mechanical execution of the work excelled that

of any of its predecessors; but this literary feature marked the Almanac as marvellous. It became popular at once. Every body who saw it, admired and bought it. The Philadelphians were proud that such a document originated in their town. Copies were sent to friends in other parts of the country, until "Poor Richard's Almanac" was known throughout the land. Three editions were exhausted in about a month. For twenty-five years Franklin continued to publish a similar Almanac, the average annual circulation of which was ten thousand copies.

The large stock of wisdom and wit which the Almanac contained added wonderfully to Franklin's fame. From the first issue his mental powers were widely praised. He was only twenty-six years of age, but now his intellectual ability was considered superior to that of any other living man under fifty years of age. The members of the Junto were greatly elated over his success.

"You have beaten yourself," remarked Coleman to him, "exceeded by far what I expected, high as my expectations were. Nothing has been published yet, that has created so profound interest as the Almanac."

"That is all true," said Grace. "Franklin is the theme of remark now everywhere. People seem to be surprised that he could produce a document of so much value. Both his business and newspaper will be advanced by this stroke of wisdom."

"And the Junto, too," suggested Parsons; "the father of the Junto can not receive so much applause without benefiting his child. Every body will want to join now, to meet him here."

Each member present was too much elated to remain silent. No words were too extravagant to express their admiration of Franklin's ability. To their decided friendship and respect was now added an honorable pride in being able to point to such a friend and associate.

The success of his newspaper and Almanac provided Franklin with a supply of money, which he wisely invested. His own words about it were:

"My business was now constantly augmenting, and my circumstances growing daily easier; my newspaper having become very profitable, as being, for a time, almost the only one in this and the neighboring provinces. I experienced, too, the truth of the observation, '*that after getting the first hundred pounds, it is more easy to get the second*'; money itself being of a prolific nature."

Franklin was aided very much, in the conduct of his paper, by the Junto, where different features of journalism were often discussed.

"In Boston I made a mistake," he said. "I was but a boy then, without experience or discretion, and found great delight in personalities. I mean to steer clear of libelling and personal abuse."

"You have so far," replied Coleman; "and thereby you have added to the dignity and influence of your paper. There is a kind of sharpness and critical remark that ought to characterize a good paper; and the *Gazette* is not deficient in that."

"That is what makes it sparkle, in my judgment," remarked Scull. "It is not best to be too cautious; some things ought to be hit hard; and that is true of some men, not to say women."

"That is one thing a newspaper is for," interjected Parsons, "to expose and remove social and public evils, and, in doing that, some men will get hit."

"You do not quite understand me," answered Franklin; "I accept all that Scull and Parsons say, which is not what I mean by libelling and personal abuse. Here is a case. A few days ago a gentleman called with an article for the *Gazette*, I looked it over, and found it very objectionable.

"'I can not publish that,' I said to him.

"'Why not?' he asked.

"'Because it deals in personal abuse, if not in downright libelling.'

"'I will pay for its insertion,' he said.

"'So much the worse for me, to insert a libelous article for money,' I said. 'On the face of it it appears a personal pique against the party.'

"'But we have a free press in this country,' he insisted.

"'Free to do right, and be just and honorable toward all men, and not free to injure or abuse them,' I retorted.

"'I supposed that a newspaper was like a stage coach, in which any one, who pays for a place, has it,' he continued.

"'That is true of some newspapers, but not of mine,' I answered. 'But I will do this: I will print your article separately, and furnish you with as many copies as you want, and you can distribute them where you please, but I will not lumber my columns with detraction, and insult patrons to whom I am pledged to furnish a good paper for their families.' The party did not accept my proposition, but left in high temper."

Every member acquiesced in Franklin's views, and encouraged him to continue the conduct of his paper on that line. It was an age of vituperation and libelling. Probably there never has been a time since when so many editors, in proportion to the number of papers, believed that the newspaper was for that purpose. The gentleman of whom Franklin spoke wanted to abuse another; but would have complained bitterly, no doubt, to have been the object of abuse himself.

Franklin's stationer's shop proved a success; and very soon he added a small collection of books. From 1733 he imported books from London, and aimed to keep the market supplied with all that were popular there. His trade in books grew to considerable proportions.

With all his business, and the improvement of odd moments in reading and study, he found time to attend to music, and became quite an accomplished player on the harp, guitar, and violin. His family and company were often entertained by his musical performances.

In 1733 Franklin resolved to visit Boston. He had not visited there for ten years.

"I must go now," he said to his foreman, "because my brother at Newport is so feeble that he is not expected to live long. I shall stop at Newport on my way back."

"And when will you return?"

"As soon as possible. It is only a flying visit I propose to make. I have some business in Boston, and wish to spend a little time with my parents, who are getting old and infirm."

He put every thing into a good condition for his foreman to handle in his absence, and then left for Boston, where his parents embraced him with tears of joy. There was no trace of the boy left on him now,—he was a man in the noblest sense of the word.

Necessity compelled Franklin to cut short his visit and return, stopping at Newport to see his brother. This was his brother James, the printer to whom he was apprenticed in Boston. He had a prosperous printing business in that town.

"I am very glad to see you," said James, giving his brother a cordial and tender welcome. "You find me very feeble; and I was afraid that I should never see you again."

"I hear of your sickness, and felt that I must come to see you at once," Franklin replied. "I hope that your prospects are more favorable than you appear to think they are."

"It is only a question of time; and short time, too. My disease is incurable, and I am waiting for the end. We will let by-gones be by-gones; I have only love for you now, my dear brother."

"You can hardly conceive how glad I am to hear you say that; for I cherish only the sincerest affection for you. I am truly sorry for any wrong I did you in Boston."

"That is all blotted out now," continued James, "I have one request to make, and, if you can grant it, I shall be very happy."

"What is it?"

"My son is now ten years old, and the loss of his father will, indeed, be a great loss to him. I had intended to instruct him in my trade; and, after my death, I want you should take him to your home in Philadelphia, where he can learn the printer's trade, and, when he understands the business well, return him to his mother and sisters, who will continue the printing house here."

"With all my heart I will do it; and I am glad to grant this favor, not only for your sake, but for my own," responded Benjamin. "He shall be one of my family, and I will be to him as a father, and he shall be to me as a son."

Thus, at the grave's side, the two brothers were thoroughly reconciled to each other, and it was not long before Franklin had James' son in his own family.

In 1736 Franklin buried a son, four years old, a child so bright and beautiful that strangers would stop on the street to behold him. It was a terrible blow to the parents. He was laid in Christ Church burying ground, where the defaced and much-broken headstone still bears this inscription:

"FRANCIS F., SON OF BENJAMIN AND DEBORAH FRANKLIN, DECEASED NOV. 21, 1736, AGED 4 YEARS, 1 MONTH, AND 1 DAY. THE DELIGHT OF ALL THAT KNEW HIM."

Franklin proved a staunch friend of the celebrated George Whitefield when he visited Philadelphia in 1739. There was great opposition to his work. At first, one or two pastors admitted him to their pulpits; but the opposition grew so intense, that all the churches were closed against him, and he was obliged to preach in the fields. Franklin denounced this treatment in his paper and by his voice, in the Junto and on the street.

"You talk about being called to the work of the ministry," he said to one of the Philadelphia clergy; "if ability and great power in the pulpit are evidence of being called of God, then Whitefield must have had a louder call than any of you."

"But he is very peculiar in his methods, and harsh in his treatment of sinners," suggested the minister.

"But if we sinners do not object, why should you saints? We have heard him say nothing but the truth yet."

"All that may be true," continued the preacher, "but so much excitement is not healthy for the spiritual growth of the people."

"When did you, or any one else, ever see so great moral and spiritual improvement of the people," said Franklin, "as we have seen since Whitefield has been preaching here? The whole population appears to be thinking about religion."

"Excitement! excitement!" exclaimed the minister; "and when Whitefield is gone, there will be a reaction, and the last state of the people will be worse than the first."

So Franklin supported Whitefield, was a constant attendant upon his ministrations, and a lasting friendship grew up between them.

"Let us put up a building for him to preach in, now that he is excluded from the churches," proposed Franklin to a number of Whitefield's friends, who were discussing the situation. "A preacher of so much power and self-denial should be sustained."

"A capital suggestion!" answered one of the number, "and you are the man to carry the measure into effect."

"A rough building is all that is necessary for our purpose; the finish will be in the preaching," added Franklin. "A preacher of any denomination whatever, who comes here to instruct the people, without money and without price, should be provided with a place for worship."

"Yes, even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary here, I would provide a place for him to hold forth and not turn him into the street," responded Coleman.

"I will announce in the *Gazette* at once what our purpose is, and call a meeting," continued Franklin. "The announcement will test the feelings of the people on the subject."

"Let it be done in a hurry, too," said Coleman. "Public sentiment is ripe for something now, and I think the citizens will endorse the scheme."

The project was announced, a meeting called, and subscriptions obtained with little effort, to erect a building one hundred feet long and seventy wide. In an almost incredibly short time the house of worship was completed, and Whitefield occupied it.

XXXIV.

MORE HONORS AND MORE WORK.

Franklin, in 1736, was chosen Clerk of the General Assembly, and in 1737 appointed Postmaster of Philadelphia. The first position assured him all the Government printing, and introduced him to influential men, who would very naturally become the patrons of his printing house. The second position was of great value to his newspaper, as it "facilitated the correspondence that improved it, and increased its circulation" quite largely, thus making it a source of considerable income. Members of the Junto were as much pleased with his promotion as Franklin himself.

"We are not at all surprised," said Coleman to Colonel Spotswood; "we are familiar with Franklin; I mean, we members of the Junto, as no other persons are. He will fill ably any position you can give him."

"That was my estimate of the man," answered Spotswood, who was Postmaster-General; "and so I appointed him my deputy here. From all I could learn of him, I thought he would be exact in his way of doing business and reporting to the Government. His predecessor was careless, and even neglectful, so that it was difficult to get any sort of a report from him."

"You will find no trouble with Franklin on that score," rejoined Coleman. "He is one of the most exact men I ever knew, and his judgment is remarkable for one of his years. He appears to succeed in whatever he undertakes because of his sound judgment, and great capacity for work. His appointment as Postmaster of Philadelphia gives great satisfaction."

"I thought it would," continued Spotswood. "The position should be occupied by a wise man, who challenges public confidence and respect."

"And Franklin is the wisest man I ever knew," interjected Coleman. "We see him in this role, in the Junto, as men outside do not. For he lays before us his plans, and reads important articles that he writes, on various subjects, for criticism, before they are published. He has just read a paper on the 'Night-watch,' exposing the worthlessness of the present system, and proposing a remedy; also, another paper on establishing a fire-department for the town. When made public, both of these measures will commend themselves to the people."

The discussion over the night-watch and fire-department in the Junto was both animated and instructive. Both projects were entirely new, and were born of Franklin's fertile brain.

"The most cumbersome and awkward arrangement I ever heard of," said Franklin, in the Junto; "to have the constable of each ward, in turn, summon to his aid several housekeepers for the night, and such ragamuffins as most of them summon to their assistance!"

"A glass of grog will enlist some of them for a whole night," remarked Parsons. "I think the town is safer without any watchmen, unless more responsible men can be employed."

"Of course it is," responded Coleman; "the six shillings paid annually to the constable by each man who does not wish to serve is a corruption fund. The constable can pocket three-fourths of it, and, with the other fourth, he can employ the irresponsible characters he does. I wonder the people don't rebel."

"That is not all, nor the worst," remarked Breintnal. "A poor widow, with less than fifty pounds to her name, must pay the six shillings just as the wealthiest citizen, with thousands of pounds in his own right, does. It is very unjust."

"And my plan removes all of these difficulties and burdens," added Franklin. "I propose to hire suitable men, whose business shall be to watch at night, levying a tax to pay for the same in proportion to property. A man who makes it his business to watch is worth much more than one who occasionally serves under the present system."

Franklin ventilated the subject in the *Gazette*, eliciting remarks pro and con, gradually educating the people; and finally, after several years, he had the satisfaction of seeing his plan adopted. Franklin was the author of the "Night-watch" system of our land.

His paper on the frequency of fires, from carelessness and accidents, with suggestions as to preventing them and, also, extinguishing them, elicited equal interest in the Junto.

"Your suggestion to organize a company to extinguish fires is a capital one," remarked Potts, after listening to Franklin's paper. "It is not only practical, but it can be done very easily; every citizen must appreciate the measure."

"If I understand the plan," remarked Maugridge, "each member will be obliged to keep several leathern buckets, in order for instant use, and strong bags, for receiving goods to be conveyed to a place of safety, will be provided."

"Yes; and the members must be so well organized and drilled, that when a fire breaks out, each will know just what to do," added Franklin. "It will be necessary for the members of the company to meet monthly, or oftener, to exchange views and make suggestions as to the best way of conducting the organization. Experience will teach us very much."

"How many members should the organization embrace?" inquired Scull.

"That is immaterial," replied Coleman; "a large or small number can be used to advantage, I should say."

"The company must not be too large," responded Franklin. "I should think that thirty members would be as many as could work to advantage. If double that number desire to become members it would be better to organize two companies, to work in different wards."

"And how about money? Can't maintain such an organization without money," suggested Potts.

"We can raise money for the outfit of leathern buckets and bags by subscription," replied Franklin; "and we can impose a fine upon members for being absent from meetings."

"Then, why is not the whole subject fairly before us?" remarked Coleman. "I move that we proceed to organize a fire-company of thirty members at once."

Coleman's proposition was adopted unanimously. Franklin discussed the plan in the *Gazette*, and all the members of the Junto worked hard for it outside. Within a short time the first company was organized, then another, and another, the good work continuing until a large part of the property-owners in town belonged to fire-companies. And this method continued until the invention of fire-engines, fire-hooks, and ladders, with other modern implements to assist in extinguishing fires. Franklin was the originator of fire-companies.

"It is high time that our people were thinking of paving the streets," said Franklin, at a meeting of the Junto. "It will facilitate cleaning them wonderfully."

"You must give us a paper on the subject, and write it up in the *Gazette*," replied Parsons. "People must be enlightened before they will adopt the measure. The mass of them know nothing about it now."

"You are right," responded Franklin; "and it will take a good while to enlighten them. The expense of the measure will frighten them."

"How expensive will such a measure be? What does paving cost a square yard?"

"I am not able to say now; I have not examined that part of it yet; but I shall. I will prepare a paper for the Junto at the earliest possible date."

Franklin had canvassed the subject considerably before he introduced it to the members of the Junto. In wet weather the mud in the streets was trodden into a quagmire, and quantities of it carried on the feet into stores and houses. In dry weather the wind blew the abundance of dust into the faces and eyes of pedestrians, and into the doors and windows of dwellings and shops. In his paper, read at the Junto, Franklin set forth these discomforts, with others, and showed how the evil would be remedied by pavement. The members of the Junto were unanimous in supporting his views.

From week to week he discussed the subject in the *Gazette*, literally giving line upon line and precept upon precept. Nor did he seem to make much of an impression for many months. But, finally, a strip of brick pavement having been laid down the middle of Jersey Market, he succeeded in getting the street leading thereto paved.

"Now I have a project to enlist citizens in paving all the streets," he said at the Junto. "I have hired a poor man to sweep the pavement now laid, and keep it as clean and neat as a pin, that citizens may see for themselves the great benefit of paving the streets."

"That is practical," exclaimed Coleman. "You are always practical,
Franklin; and you will make a success of that."

"I expect to succeed. After two or three weeks I shall address a circular to all housekeepers enjoying the advantages of the pavement, asking them to join with me in paying a sixpence each per month to keep the pavement clean."

"A *sixpence* a month only!" responded Potts, who had listened to
Franklin's plan; "is that all it will cost?"

"Yes, that is all; and I think that all will be surprised that the work can be done for that price; and, for

that reason, they will readily join in the measure."

Franklin went forward with his enterprise, and every citizen appealed to accepted his proposition; and out of it grew a general interest to pave the streets of the city. Franklin drafted a bill to be presented to the General Assembly, authorizing the work to be done; and, through the influence of another party, the bill was amended by a provision for lighting the streets at the same time, all of which was agreeable to Franklin. Here, again, we see that Franklin was the originator of another method of adding to the comfort and beauty of cities and large towns.

"I will read you a paper to-night upon smoky chimneys," remarked Franklin at the Junto, as he drew from his pocket a written document.

"Smoky chimneys!" ejaculated Grace. "I wonder what will command your attention next. A fruitful theme, though I never expected we should discuss it here."

"It is, indeed, a fruitful theme," responded Franklin; "for more chimneys carry some of the smoke into the room than carry the whole out of the top; and nobody can tell why."

"I had supposed it was because masons do not understand the philosophy of chimney-building," remarked Coleman.

"That is it exactly. The subject is not understood at all, because it has not been examined. Men build chimneys as they do, not because they know it is the best way, but because they do not know any thing about it. For instance, nearly every one thinks that smoke is lighter than air, when the reverse is true."

"I always had that idea," remarked Potts; "not because I knew that it was, but somehow I got that impression. But let us have your paper, and then we will discuss it."

Franklin read his paper, which was more elaborate and exhaustive than any thing of the kind ever published at that time. It named several definite causes of smoky chimneys, and furnished a remedy for each. What is still more remarkable, it suggested a plan of a fire-place or stove, that might remedy the smoking evil of some chimneys, and save much fuel in all. Subsequently, he invented what is known as the Franklin stove, or fire-place, though it was sometimes called the "Pennsylvania stove." It was regarded as a very useful invention, and, for many years, was in general use.

"Apply for a patent on your stove," suggested Coleman; "there is much money in it; and you ought to have it if any one."

"Not I," responded Franklin. "I am not a believer in patents. If the invention is a real public benefit, the people should have the advantage of it."

"Nonsense," retorted Coleman; "no one but you harbors such an idea. I do not see why a man should not receive pay for his invention as much as another does for a day's work."

"And there is no reason why the inventor should not give the public the benefit of it, if he chooses," answered Franklin. "Governor Thomas offered to give me a patent on it, but I told him this: As we enjoy great advantages from the invention of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously."

"And nobody will ever thank you for it," added Coleman.

"I don't ask them to thank me for it; I give it to them without asking one thank-you for it," replied Franklin, who was in a very happy mood.

"Well," added Coleman, "the more I see of you, the more I am satisfied that there is but one Ben Franklin in these parts."

In brief, we may add here, that Franklin presented the model to a member of the Junto, Robert Grace, who run a furnace, and, for many years, "he found the casting of the plates for these stoves a profitable thing."

Still another enterprise which Franklin brought to the attention of the Junto was the founding of an Academy or University for the higher education of youth. He wrote often and much for the *Gazette* upon doing more for the education of the young. At last, he prepared and printed a pamphlet, entitled "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania." It was published at his own expense and gratuitously distributed, after it had been read in the Junto, where he disclosed his purpose.

"It is the greatest enterprise you have conceived yet," remarked Parsons, after listening to the paper, "and it will be the most difficult one to push forward to success, I think."

"Five thousand pounds is a great amount of money to raise," said Breintnal. "I should not want to be the one to raise it."

"I should, if I could," retorted Franklin. "To be the author of so great a blessing to the young is pay enough without any salary. At any rate, that is all the pay any man will get for such service."

"Do you propose to raise the money yourself?" inquired Coleman.

"Chiefly. I expect that interested parties may assist on that line. The fact that the enterprise is to bless their own children, gives me access to them at once. First of all, however, I propose to send this pamphlet, printed, to a long list of persons upon whom I shall call for aid, after ample time for them to read and digest it has elapsed."

It is sufficient to say that Franklin successfully prosecuted his purpose, raised all the money necessary, and the academy was founded. Scholars multiplied so rapidly that larger quarters were soon demanded; and now came into use the building which Franklin caused to be erected for the use of Rev. Mr. Whitefield. With some alterations, it was just the building necessary to meet the wants of the popular institution. Franklin was glad when he secured the building for Whitefield; but he was more glad now because it could be used for the "University of Philadelphia," as his school was named afterwards.

Perhaps the Junto did not give attention to a more important measure in its whole history than that of establishing militia for public security. Franklin read a paper, having the caption, "Plain Truth," in which he expatiated upon the defenseless condition of Pennsylvania; that, while New England was all aglow with enthusiasm for armed defense against foreign invasion, and some of the southern colonies as well, Pennsylvania was utterly defenseless.

"There is not a battery, fort, or gun, on the banks of the Delaware," he said; "not a volunteer company in the whole Province; and what is still more alarming, not guns enough to arm one."

"Our people don't believe in resistance, you know," responded Coleman. "Quaker influence is decidedly against shot-guns and batteries."

"And that is the trouble," retorted Franklin. "The Legislatures of other Provinces have established public defenses; but the Quaker influence in the Assembly of Pennsylvania has defeated every measure of the kind."

"And will continue to do so until a French privateer seizes and sacks this town, as one could very easily," added Parsons.

"Or a tribe of savages, so easily set on by French politicians, shall plunder and burn us," added Franklin.

"But John Penn and Thomas Penn are not Quakers, like their father, I have been told," remarked Potts; "and certainly the Province has not had Quaker governors."

"That is very true; but so many of the people are Quakers that the Assembly is under their control," answered Franklin. "But I think the appearance of a privateer in the river, or an attack by a band of blood-thirsty savages, would knock the non-resistance out of many of them."

"Nothing short of that will," responded Coleman; "but Franklin's plan of raising a volunteer militia, and all necessary funds by subscription, will not call out any opposition from them. I believe that many of them will be glad to have such defense if they are not expected to engage in it."

"It is not true, even now, that all the Quakers oppose defensive war: for some of them do not; they have told me so," continued Franklin. "They oppose aggressive warfare; but let a privateer come up the river, or savages attack our town, and they will fight for their homes as hard as any of us."

"But how do you propose to reach the public, and interest them in your plan?" inquired Maugridge.

"I shall publish the paper I have read, with some additions, suggested by our discussion, and distribute it freely throughout the town. At the same time, I shall discuss it in the *Gazette*, and appeal to Quakers themselves, on Bible grounds, to co-operate for the public defense. And when they have had time to read the pamphlet and weigh the proposition, I shall call a public meeting."

"Wise again, Franklin," answered Coleman, who was delighted with the plan. "Your scheme will work to a charm; I have no doubt of it. But just what will you do at your public meeting?"

"Organize an 'Association for Defense,' after I have harangued the audience upon the perils of the

hour. I shall urge every man present, as he values his home and life, to join the league, of whatever sect or party."

"Each man to arm himself at his own expense, I suppose?" inquired Grace.

"As far as possible," answered Franklin; "and to raise money for a battery, I have thought of a lottery." Lotteries were generally resorted to, at that day, for raising money.

"That scheme for raising a battery will succeed, too," said Coleman with a smile. "I can not see why the whole thing will not carry the public by storm."

The plan of Franklin succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations. His pamphlet and articles in the *Gazette* moved the public to great enthusiasm. When the public meeting was called, there was a general rush to it. It was held in the large building erected for Rev. Mr. Whitefield, and it was filled to overflowing. Twelve hundred men joined the "Association for Public Defense" on that night, and the number was increased to ten thousand within a few days. Within a few weeks, eighty companies were organized in the Province, armed, and drilled, ready to march to any point of danger at a moment's warning. The companies in Philadelphia united to form a regiment, and Franklin was elected Colonel—an honor which he declined because he "considered himself unfit," and recommended a Mr. Lawrence, who was a prominent and influential citizen.

The lottery scheme succeeded, also, and eighteen cannon were borrowed of the Governor of New York until the authorities could import the requisite number from England. Not a few Quakers approved of these measures for the public defense.

In the midst of the excitement Franklin intensified the feeling, by inducing the Governor to appoint a day of fasting and prayer. Such a day had never been observed in Pennsylvania, and so the Governor and his associates were too ignorant of the measure to undertake it alone. Hence, Franklin, who was familiar with Fast Days in Massachusetts, wrote the proclamation for the Governor, and secured the co-operation of ministers in the observance of the day.

It is claimed that Quakers often lent their influence to defensive warfare in an indirect manner. As, for example, when the Assembly made appropriations for the army, "for the purchase of bread, flour, wheat and *other grain*," the latter phrase covered *gunpowder*. Perhaps this suggested to Franklin, when trying to get an appropriation through the Assembly, the following remark: "If we fail, let us move the purchase of a fire-engine with the money; the Quakers can have no objection to that; and then, if you nominate me, and I you, as a committee for that purpose, we will buy a great gun, which is certainly a *fire-engine*."

The fears of the colonists were allayed, and these warlike preparations discontinued, when the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was declared, and signed by the British Commissioners, Oct. 7, 1748.

XXXV.

PHILOSOPHER AND STATESMAN.

"I have a proposition to make to you, an important one," remarked Franklin to David Hall, who had worked for him four years. "Come into the office, and I will tell you what it is."

Hall followed him into the office, wondering what the proposition could be. When they were seated, Franklin continued:

"I must have a partner in this business; and I think you are just the man I want, if we can agree upon the terms. I desire to be released from the care of the printing office, that I may pursue my scientific studies more thoroughly and satisfactorily."

"Your proposition is very unexpected to me, and I feel very much flattered by it," answered Hall; "but I hardly know what to say, for I have no capital to put into the business."

"And you need none," interrupted Franklin. "My plan is that you take the office just as it is, pay me one thousand pounds a year, for eighteen years, releasing me from all care of the business, and, at the close of eighteen years, the whole business shall be yours, without further consideration."

"Well, I ought to be satisfied with that offer, if you are; it is certainly a generous one, and I shall accept it."

"And you will get out of it three or four times the amount of your present salary every year," suggested Franklin. "I mean it shall be a profitable enterprise for you; for your long service here has satisfied me that you are the partner I want."

This plan was carried into effect, and Franklin was no longer obliged to visit the printing office daily, whither he had been for over twenty years. His printing and newspaper business had been very profitable, so that he was comparatively wealthy for that day. His investments had proved fortunate; and these, with the thousand pounds annually from Hall, and five hundred pounds from two public offices he held, gave him an annual income of about fifteen thousand dollars, which was large for those times—one hundred and forty years ago.

"Now I can pursue my studies to my heart's content," Franklin said to his wife. "I have only had fragments of time to devote to electricity and other studies hitherto; but now I can command time enough to make research an object."

"I am very glad that you are able to make so favorable arrangements," Mrs. Franklin replied. "You have had altogether too much on your hands for ten years and more. You ought to have less care."

"And I have an intense desire to investigate science, especially electricity," Franklin continued. "I see a wide field for research and usefulness before me. But I have time enough to prosecute my plans."

Franklin was forty-two years old at this time; and it is a singular fact that his career as a philosopher did not begin really until he had passed his fortieth birthday. But from the time he was released from the care of the printing office, his advancement in science was rapid. His fame spread abroad, both in this country and Europe, so that, in a few years, he became one of the most renowned philosophers in the world. In a former chapter we described his experiment with a kite, to prove that lightning and the electric fluid are identical; and this discovery established his fame as the greatest electrician of the world.

The Royal Society of London elected him a member by a unanimous vote, and the next year bestowed upon him the Copley medal. Yale College conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts; and Harvard University did the same. Suddenly Franklin found himself the most conspicuous character in American history—a philosopher of the most honored type.

Mignet said of him, "Thus all at once distinguished, the Philadelphia sage became the object of universal regard, and was abundantly loaded with academic honors. The Academy of Sciences of Paris made him an associate member, as it had Newton and Leibnitz. All the learned bodies of Europe eagerly admitted him into their ranks. Kant, the celebrated German philosopher, called him 'the Prometheus of modern times.' To this scientific glory, which he might have extended if he had consecrated to his favorite pursuits his thoughts and his time, he added high political distinction. To this man, happy because he was intelligent, great because he had an active genius and a devoted heart, was accorded the rare felicity of serving his country, skilfully and usefully, for a period of fifty years; and after having taken rank among the immortal founders of the positive sciences, of enrolling himself among the generous liberators of the nations."

A few years later, the three Universities of St. Andrew's, Oxford, and Edinburgh, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. Europe vied with America in tributes of honor and praise.

His electrical experiments made him the author of several useful inventions, among which the LIGHTNING ROD was the foremost. It came into general use, not only in our country, but also in Europe. The celebrated Kinnersley wrote to him, "May this method of security from the destructive violence of one of the most awful powers of Nature meet with such further success as to induce every good and grateful heart to bless God for the important discovery! May the benefit thereof be diffused over the whole globe! May it extend to the latest posterity of mankind, and make the name of Franklin, like that of Newton, IMMORTAL!"

Franklin did not intend to continue in political life, when he entered into partnership with Mr. Hall; and he so announced to his friends. At that time he had served as Councilman in the city, been a member of the General Assembly, acted as Commissioner on several important occasions, and served the public in various other ways; but now he designed to stop and devote himself entirely to scientific pursuits.

Within five years, however, he found himself more deeply involved in political plans and labors than ever before. He was as wise in statesmanship as he was in philosophy; and the services of such a man were in constant demand. The following list of public offices he filled shows that he stood second to no

statesman in the land in public confidence and ability in public service:

A LEGISLATOR OF PENNSYLVANIA AT TWENTY-SIX YEARS OF AGE, CONTINUED FOR TWENTY YEARS.

FOUNDER AND LEADING TRUSTEE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

COLONEL OF MILITIA, WHICH HE ORIGINATED.

LEADER OF COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY FOR YEARS, IN TIME OF WAR.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

AGENT OF PENNSYLVANIA, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW JERSEY, AND GEORGIA TO THE KING OF ENGLAND.

MINISTER TO THE COURT OF ENGLAND IN 1764.

ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS IN 1775, AND A MEMBER OF IT.

MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO FRANCE IN 1776.

AUTHOR OF FIRST TREATY FOR AMERICA IN 1778.

MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO FRANCE IN 1778.

ONE OF FIVE TO DRAFT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

A LEADER IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

ONE OF THE FRAMERS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

LIKE WASHINGTON, "FIRST IN WAR, FIRST IN PEACE, AND FIRST IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN."

Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston were associated with Franklin in drafting the Declaration of Independence, which Congress adopted, July 4, 1776. The original draft was by Jefferson, but it contained many interlineations in the hand-writing of Franklin. When they were signing the memorable document, after its passage by Congress, John Hancock remarked:

"We must be unanimous,—we must all hang together."

"Yes, if we would not hang separately," replied Franklin.

Jefferson was viewing, with evident disappointment, the mutilation of his draft of the Declaration in Franklin's hand-writing, when the latter remarked:

"I have made it a rule, whenever in my power, to avoid becoming the draftsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body. I took my lesson from an incident which I will relate to you. When I was a journeyman-printer, one of my companions, an apprentice-hatter, having served out his time, was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome sign-board, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words: *John Thompson, hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money*, with a figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to thought the word *hatter* tautologous, because followed by the words *makes hats*, which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word *makes* might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats; if good and to their mind, they would buy, by whomsoever made. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words *for ready money* were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. Every one who purchased expected to pay. They were parted with, and the inscription now stood: *John Thompson sells hats*. '*Sells* hats?' says his next friend; 'why, nobody will expect you to give them away. What, then, is the use of that word?' It was stricken out, and *hats* followed, the rather as there was one painted on the board. So his inscription was reduced, ultimately, to *John Thompson*, with the figure of a hat subjoined."

It is doubtful if American Independence would have been achieved when it was, but for the services of Franklin at the Court of England. His first appearance there was when his fame as a philosopher was at its zenith, and the greatest men of that country sought his acquaintance. William Strahan, a member of Parliament, wrote to Mrs. Franklin, "I never saw a man who was, in every respect, so perfectly agreeable to me. Some are able in one view, some in another, he in all."

The Tories, who meant to keep the Colonies in subjection and burden them with taxes, were the

leaders in governmental affairs and the majority in numbers. Of course, the Colonies could not expect many favors from them without the mediation of their strongest statesmen; and Franklin was the one above all others on whom they depended. His first diplomatic career in England, when he was the Agent of Pennsylvania and other Colonies, lasted from 1757 to 1762. He remained at home only a year and a half, when he was appointed "Minister to England," whither he went in 1764, remaining there ten years, a long, stormy period of political troubles, culminating in the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution.

We have only to mention the Boston Port Bill, the Stamp Act, quartering British troops in the public buildings of Boston, and other measures which the Colonies considered oppressive, and even tyrannical, to show the line of Franklin's intercession in behalf of his countrymen, and how they came to throw off the yoke of bondage.

The Tory hatred towards Franklin was something fearful at times, exceeded only by their hatred towards the people whom he represented. "I am willing to love all mankind except an American," exclaimed Dr. Johnson. And when rebuked for his unchristian disposition, "his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire," says Boswell, "he breathed out threatenings and slaughter, calling them rascals, robbers, pirates, and exclaiming that he would burn and destroy them." When Mr. Barclay hinted to Franklin that he might have almost any place of honor if he would consent to a certain line of action, our loyal hero spurned the bribe, saying, "The ministry, I am sure, would rather give me a place in a cart to Tyburn [prison] than any other place whatever." He could neither be coaxed nor frightened into submission to the British crown.

In February, 1766, he was summoned before the House of Commons, where he met the enemies of his country face to face, and stood firm through the searching examination.

"Will the Americans consent to pay the stamp duty if it is lessened?" he was asked.

"No, never; unless compelled by force of arms," he answered.

"May not a military force carry the Stamp Act into execution?"

"Suppose a military force sent into America; they will find nobody in arms; what are they, then, to do? Then can not force a man to take stamps who chooses to do without them. They will not *find* a rebellion; they may, indeed, *make* one."

"If the Stamp Act is enforced, will ill-humor induce the Americans to give as much for the worse manufactures of their own, and use them in preference to our better ones?"

"*Yes. People will pay as freely to gratify one passion as another,—their resentment as their pride*."

"Would the people of Boston discontinue their trade?"

"The merchants of Boston are a very small number, and must discontinue their trade, if nobody will buy their goods."

"What are the body of the people in the Colonies?"

"They are farmers, husbandmen, or planters."

"Would they suffer the produce of their lands to rot?"

"No; but they would not raise so much. They would manufacture more and plow less. I do not know a single article imported into the Northern Colonies that they can not do without, or make themselves."

To Lord Kames he said, "America must become a great country, populous and mighty; and will, *in a less time than is generally conceived*, be able to shake off any shackles that may be imposed upon her, and perhaps place them on the imposers."

But his labors availed nothing, although Chatham, Pitt, Burke, Fox, and others, espoused the cause of the Colonies. Affairs hastened to the crisis of 1775, and Franklin returned to Philadelphia, reaching that city soon after the battles of Lexington and Concord were fought, in 1776.

A few months before he left England for America, his wife died. Her death occurred on Dec. 17, 1774, though the sad tidings did not reach Franklin until a short time before he took passage for home.

It was at this time that his famous letter to his old English friend, William Strahan, was written, of which we are able to furnish a *fac-simile*.

The scenes of the Revolution followed. Through the agency of Franklin, as Minister Plenipotentiary to

France, the French Government formed an alliance with the Colonies, and the eight years' war was waged to the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown; and Freedom was achieved.

No American exerted greater influence in securing the independence of the Colonies than Franklin. He was one of the originators of the Continental Congress, and was the author of the plan for a Union of the States. On his way to the Albany Conference in 1754 he drew up a plan of Union, which he presented to said Conference, composed of delegates from seven Northern Colonies. Other members presented plans, but his was preferred and adopted, with some amendments, and commended to the favorable consideration of the King and Parliament of England. Franklin's plan of Union was substantially that which, subsequently, united the thirteen States into one nation.

No name is more conspicuous in history than that of Franklin. At one time in France, "prints, medallion portraits, and busts of him were multiplied throughout that country." In England, the most renowned statesmen and scholars acknowledged his abilities and praised his remarkable career. In America, his statue was set up in halls of learning and legislation, literary societies and institutions were founded in his name, and numerous towns were called after him. Perhaps the author's native town —Franklin, Mass.—was the first to appropriate his name. A few years thereafter, a nephew called his attention to this fact, suggesting that the present of a bell from him would be very acceptable, as the people were erecting a house of worship. Franklin was in Passy, France, at the time, and he immediately addressed the following letter to his old friend, Dr. Price, asking him to select and forward a library:

"PASSY, 18 March, 1785.

> "DEAR FRIEND,—My nephew, Mr. Williams, will have the honor of delivering you this line. It is to request from you a list of a few books, to the value of about twenty-five pounds, such as are most proper to inculcate principles of sound religion and just government. A new town in the State of Massachusetts having done me the honor of naming itself after me, and proposing to build a steeple to their meeting-house if I would give them a bell, I have advised the sparing themselves the expense of a steeple for the present, and that they would accept of books instead of a bell, sense being preferable to sound. These are, therefore, intended as the commencement of a little parochial library for the use of a society of intelligent, respectable farmers, such as our country people generally consist of. Besides your own works, I would only mention, on the recommendation of my sister, Stennett's 'Discourses on Personal Religion,' which may be one book of the number, if you know and approve it.
>
> "With the highest esteem and respect, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

"B. FRANKLIN."

The inhabitants of Franklin got *sense* instead of *sound*, and were never sorry.

Doctor Price, in the course of a letter dated at Newington Green, June 3, 1785, in which he speaks of Mr. Williams' visit, says: "I have, according to your desire, furnished him with a list of such books on religion and government as I think some of the best, and added a present to the parish that is to bear your name, of such of my own publications as I think may not be unsuitable. Should this be the commencement of parochial libraries in the States, it will do great good."

The books were duly forwarded to the town of Franklin. The Rev. Nathaniel Emmons, clergyman of the parish for which the library was designed, preached a sermon in commemoration of this bounty, entitled "The Dignity of Man: a Discourse Addressed to the Congregation in Franklin upon the Occasion of their Receiving from Doctor Franklin the Mark of his Respect in a Rich Donation of Books, Appropriated to the Use of a Parish Library." This sermon was printed in the year 1787, with the following dedication: "To his Excellency Benjamin Franklin, President of the State of Pennsylvania, the Ornament of Genius, the Patron of Science, and the Boast of Man, this Discourse is Inscribed, with the Greatest Deference, Humility, and Gratitude, by his Obliged and Most Humble Servant, the Author."

The library contained one hundred and sixteen volumes, chiefly relating to Government, Science, and Religion, of which about ninety volumes are still in a good state of preservation.

On the 17th of April, 1790, Franklin expired, mourned by a grateful nation and honored by the world. For two years he had lived in anticipation of this event. One day he rose from his bed, saying to his daughter, "Make up my bed, that I may die in a decent manner."

"I hope, father, that you will yet recover, and live many years," replied his daughter.

"I hope not," was his answer.

When told to change his position in bed, that he might breathe more easily, he replied:

"A dying man can do nothing easy."

His sufferings were so great as to extort a groan from him at one time, whereupon he said:

"I fear that I do not bear pain as I ought. It is designed, no doubt, to wean me from the world, in which I am no longer competent to act my part."

To a clerical friend, who witnessed one of his paroxysms as he was about to retire, he said:

"Oh, no; don't go away. These pains will soon be over. They are for my good; and, besides, what are the pains of a moment in comparison with the pleasures of eternity?"

He had a picture of Christ on the cross placed so that he could look at it as he lay on his bed. "That is the picture of one who came into the world to teach men to love one another," he remarked. His last look, as he passed away, was cast upon that painting of Christ.

In a codicil to his will was this bequest.

"My fine crab-tree walking-stick, with a gold head, curiously wrought in the form of a cap of liberty, I give to my friend, and the friend of mankind, *George Washington*. If it were a sceptre, he has merited it, and would become it."

Philanthropist, Scholar, Philosopher, Statesman, were the titles won by the Boston Printer Boy!

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