MEDILL

BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN

Benjamin Franklin.

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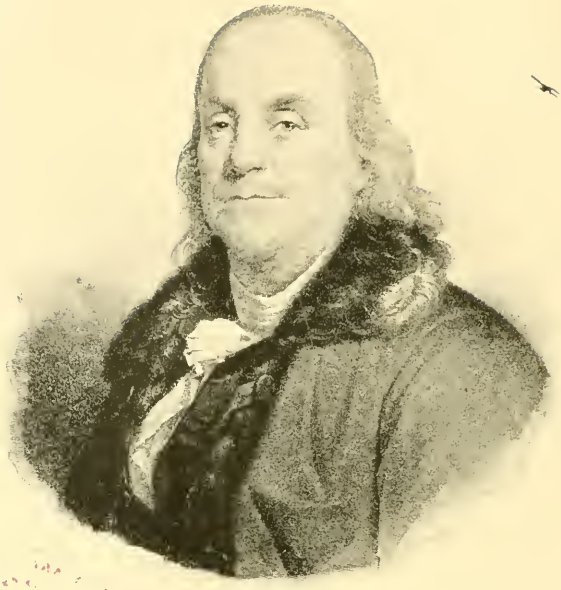


BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Peint d'apres Nature pour la Famille.

Exposé au Salon de 1779.

[Reproduction from an engraving after Duplessis' painting.]

A TYPICAL AMERICAN.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

An Address delivered before the Old-Time Printers' Association of Chicago, January 17, A. D. 1896,

By JOSEPH MEDILL,

Editor of the Chicago Tribune.

CHICAGO:
THE BEN FRANKLIN COMPANY.
1896.

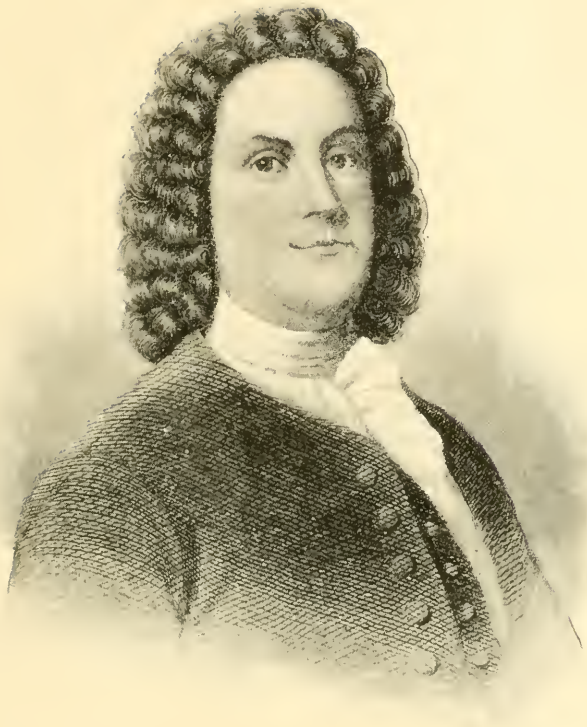
PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

The following address was delivered on a fitting occasion and before an appropriate audience — at the celebration of the one hundred and ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Franklin, by the Old-Time Printers' Association of Chicago, a body of veterans at the case and the press. The address has but one fault: it is too brief to do *full* justice to a life so useful and noble as Franklin's. But Mr. Medill himself says of it, in a note to the publisher: "I have tried to crowd into a small space enough to show what a wonderful man Franklin was; how many-sided or multifold his mind was; how nearly an universal genius he was; to show that his was a great mind in many directions. I wish to have the pamflet tell enough about him to arouse a curiosity on the part of young men which

will cause them to read more about this remarkable man."

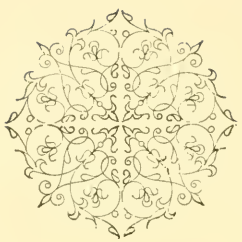
Heartily sympathizing with Mr. Medill's view of Franklin's life and character,—which he is commemorating in enduring bronze,—the publisher has put the address in permanent and attractive form, hoping by its circulation to stimulate young men to a more thorough study of the life and teachings of the great printer, diplomat, filosofer and patriot, and thereby aid in perpetuating his influence for good.

May, 1896.



FRANKLIN AT TWENTY.

[From Parton's Life of Franklin.]



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

My Old-Time Printer Friends:

We are assembled here this evening to celebrate the birthday of the printer's patron saint, the immortal Benjamin Franklin, who first saw the light of day in Boston January 17, 1706, being one hundred and ninety years ago. Queen Anne then reigned over the British empire, and her great general, Marlborough, was leading her soldiers to a series of victories over the armies of France.

It is impossible for me to make an address describing Franklin's life and career within the limits of the brief time that I can claim from your patience. He performed too many beneficial, worthy and remarkable actions, and gave the world too many useful, noble and wise thoughts to even catalog them in the time at my disposal. Since history has recorded human actions and ideas who has performed more beneficial work for mankind? Who has added more to the stock of human knowledge than Franklin? Who has done more for human liberty or for the sons of toil, in rendering the lives of the common people happier or their lot more endurable, than Benjamin

Franklin? He was born into the ranks of the hard-working masses, and he sympathized deeply with the lives of toil and deprivation which they must lead and endure. He devoted his own life to the amelioration and improvement of theirs. He was the great and beneficent schoolmaster of the poor and lowly, and never ceased to sympathize with them and to espouse their cause till death closed his wonderful career.

Benjamin Franklin was the tenth and youngest son of Josiah Franklin, who gave to him the name of the Jewish patriarch's youngest son, Benjamin. Dr. Franklin was able to trace his family in England back through a line of farmers and mechanics to the time of King Henry the Eighth, and beyond that period into France, where it was lost in the hoary depths of time.

Franklin discovered, while in England, that ten generations of his ancestors in the direct line were freeholders; that for three hundred years the Franklin family owned a farm of forty acres at Ecton; that the oldest son was heir and learned the blacksmith trade and usually took the youngest son as an apprentice. The other sons were taught to be carpenters, masons, shoemakers, tallow-chandlers, or to learn other village trades; but the blacksmiths led and controlled all the rest of the Franklins, probably because they could strike the hardest knockdown blows.

A remarkable coincidence may be stated in this connection on the authority of one of Franklin's biografers, viz., that the family from which George Washington descended and Franklin's family were for many

generations near neighbors in England. The Washington family was of the knights and nobility. A Franklin blacksmith may have often tightened a rivet in the armor or placed a shoe upon the horse of a Washington, or doffed his cap to a Washington riding past his ancestral forge. But, until Postmaster Ben Franklin of Pennsylvania met Col. George Washington of Virginia in the camp of Gen. Braddock in 1755, the two families had run their several ways without association.

But they became well acquainted in subsequent years. They served together in the first convention of the colonies, assembled in Philadelphia to consult on measures for mutual defense against British tyranny. Franklin remained with that body to help frame the Declaration of Independence, and Washington withdrew from it to take command in chief of the revolutionary forces. They met again twelve years later in the convention of 1787, held in the same city, to frame a national constitution, over which Washington presided and Franklin served on ten of its committees. It is the same constitution, with a few subsequent amendments, under which we live.

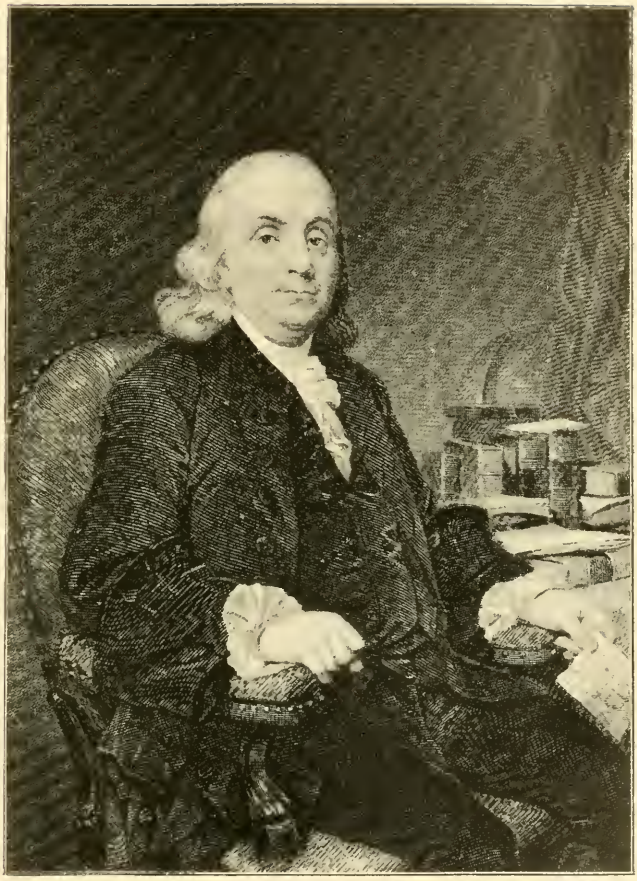
Without the courage and genius of the great Washington the Revolution would have collapsed on the battlefield. Without the persuasive, masterly diplomacy of the great Franklin in obtaining money, fleets and troops from France freedom's cause would have perished, in spite of the heroic efforts of the Father of His Country. The utmost talents of both were indispensable to the glorious victory achieved.

They were the complements of each other in establishing the new, free Nation.

The Franquelins of France claimed relationship with him when he was ambassador to that country. He exhibited several French traits of character, such as humor with gravity, in his writings; pleasantry with seriousness; fancy with good sense. He took an optimistic rather than a pessimistic view of human future progress and happiness. But from his maternal side he inherited his grave, solid, steadfast Anglo-Saxon characteristics. He never became discouraged; never surrendered to obstacles; never got rattled; but calmly fought on to victory.

I have said Franklin was the patron saint of the printers — he was a "past master" of all branches of the business. He was an inventor, and added improvements to every part of the printer's art.

You are all familiar with the story of his refusal to adopt his father's trade of a tallow-chandler, but he selected the more effective and congenial art of dispelling darkness by diffusing light into the minds of mankind through the medium of types, ink and paper. He served as an apprentice under his brother James in Boston, on the *New England Courant*, which he once edited while his brother served a month's sentence in jail for reflecting mildly on the local government's tardiness in fitting out a ship to go in pursuit of a pirate vessel which was preying on the commerce of Boston. The pig-headed council decided this was "a high affront to the government," and ordered the sheriff to commit James Franklin to the Boston jail!



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

From Chappel's Painting.

Benjamin was then a lad under seventeen years, but managed, in the few weeks he ran the *Courant*, to make it, as someone says, "the first sensation newspaper issued in New England." The *Courant* redoubled its attacks on the council while his brother James lay in prison, assailing the tyrants in argument, satire, verse and squib. Benny "roasted" the insolent, oppressive government for months after his brother James had emerged from jail. The boy was indignant and exasperated at its grossly tyrannical assault on the liberty of the press. He trebled the circulation of the *Courant* by attacking it, and he carried public sentiment with him by storm. During his long life afterward he was an invincible defender of the liberty of the press. This episode in Franklin's early career conspicuously showed he possessed the stuff in him which makes a successful journalist.

He remained in the Boston *Courant* office until there was nothing more of the printer's trade to be there learned, and, suffering personal abuse from his unappreciative brother, he tells us in his admirable autobiografy and in his humorous manner how he ran away — "skipped" — from his brother's office several years before his apprenticeship had expired, and "tramped" to the "City of Brotherly Love," stopping en route at New York long enough to learn it was then overstocked with printer journeymen — there being half a dozen or so, the place containing six thousand or seven thousand quaint inhabitants, living on crooked, narrow streets, with the gables of the dwellings facing them. The language spoken was

mostly Dutch, and the street signs were also in Dutch.

Arriving in Philadelphia with a few shillings in his pocket, weary, footsore and hungry, he bought some baker's rolls; walked along the middle of the street, gazing into windows and munching his bread, while his future wife looked and laughed at the rustic young fellow as he passed by. He wet the dry bread with a cup of river water, and followed a stream of Quakers going to their meeting-house to worship in silence. There he fell asleep from fatigue, and a friendly Quaker awakened him and showed the boy Franklin to a cheap lodging-house. He looked about for work at his trade; soon found employment; lived frugally; avoided intoxicants; saved his wages; read every useful book he could borrow; but books other than dogmatic were few and far between, in those days, in Philadelphia.

During this journeyman period of his life he made the personal acquaintance of the governor of the province, Sir William Keith, who professed to take a great fancy to the thoughtful, industrious, intelligent young fellow, and proposed to loan him sufficient capital to set him up in the printing business. He had Franklin make out a complete schedule of the things needed, and caused him to sail to London to select the outfit, promising to forward drafts for payment. There he perfidiously left the eighteen-year-old boy to shift for himself. Keith was a frothy, popularity-hunting demagog, rarely performing his promises. He soon played out.

Franklin, hearing nothing from Gov. Keith, discovered that he had been victimized and was a friendless stranger in a great city. But he was full of self-reliance and soon got employment at low wages. He remained in London nearly two years. He acquired skill in his trade and became a first-class printer. He read many useful books; made several valuable acquaintances and some bad ones, and at last concluded to return to America.

Suppose he had elected to remain in England, what a change it would have made in the future history of his country! For himself he would have become a leading publisher in London; perhaps a member of Parliament and of the learned societies, for he was of the kind of men who can not be kept down, but are born to rise. But a wise Providence which "shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will," sent him back to his native land, where his genius was afterward devoted to creating a free and independent republic among the nations of the earth.

Soon after his return from London to Philadelphia he organized a number of his fellow workingmen, selecting them carefully, into a secret society called the "Junto." Its purpose was the improvement of its members in virtue, knowledge and usefulness, and to exercise the united influence of the members on the city for its moral and material welfare. He remained a member of the celebrated Junto for forty years. It accomplished an immense amount of good in the city and was of great mutual benefit to its members in their business affairs.

Franklin's ambition was to own and edit a newspaper. He soon founded the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which was a success from the first issue, and in a few years became a leading journal in the Colonies and a very profitable investment to himself. He added a book and stationery store and established "Poor Richard's Almanac," which quickly became so popular that his presses could hardly fill the orders for it. It was a serio-comic almanac, inculcating political economy in humorous language and captivating epigrammatic maxims. Nothing gave him more reputation in these early days than his almanac, which quickly circulated over all the Colonies and was reprinted in Great Britain and was copiously quoted in France and Germany.

"Poor Richard" taught the necessity of frugality, industry and temperance, in a pleasing, captivating way. While he made all classes of readers smile or laugh at what seemed comical, he managed to plant moral maxims or valuable truths in their minds, which would grow and make them richer, better and happier people.

The echoes of Franklin's proverbial filosofy, taught in "Poor Richard," are still in our ears, one hundred and fifty years after they were first uttered. They were still fresh in my boyhood time. How often my father, who was a farmer, used to say to me, "My son, remember what 'Poor Richard' says," when he wanted me to go to bed early and get up before sunrise: "'Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.'" Some-

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Né a Boston, dans la nouvelle Angleterre, le 17 Janv. 1706.

Honneur du nouveau monde et l'humanité,
Ce sage amiable et vrais les guide et les éclaire:
Comme un autre Mentor, il cache á l'oeil vulgar,
Sous les traits d'un mortel, une divinité.

Par M. Feutry.

Duplessis pinxit Parisiis 1778. *Chevillet sculpsit.*

Tiré du Cabinet de M. Le Ray Chaumont & Cie.

[Reproduced from an old steel engraving.]

times I would reply that I had rather sleep longer in the morning, even if I lost some of the wisdom. Another maxim he was fond of quoting, showing the necessity of hard toil, was "An empty mealsack can not stand alone." Another, "A penny saved is worth more than a penny earned;" another, "Forewarned is forearmed, except to fools." He was fond of quoting one from Hudibras, which he credited to "Poor Richard," and which is often ascribed to Solomon's Proverbs, that "Sparing the rod spoils the child," but which I declined to accept, though he often impressed it upon me in a very striking manner.

Not long after his return from London Franklin married Miss Deborah Read, the girl who laughed at his singular appearance as he walked along the middle of Market street eating his roll of bread, carrying one under each arm and staring into the windows, on his first appearance in Philadelphia. They lived happily together as man and wife for more than forty years — working hard in the earlier period to get on in the world. She took care of the shop and accounts and housekeeping, while he toiled early and late — often burning the midnight oil at the case or press to get out a piece of work when promised. He was a great stickler for punctuality. He always tried to do a good job, and charged fair prices; he never overcharged anybody, never cheated anyone, in all his life. He carried a clean conscience with him under all circumstances.

Franklin prospered in "basket and store." He became popular with people; they patronized his

publications and his store; they heaped offices on him, both legislative and executive. They had him appointed postmaster-general, and quartermaster, and colonel during the French war. They consulted him upon every subject, and his advice prevailed; everything came his way. As postmaster-general he increased the number and speed of the trips; cheapened the postage greatly; evolved order out of confusion and made the department yield handsome profits where it had previously been conducted at a serious loss. He was successful in all things he undertook, because he applied reflection and methodical industry.

If ever there was a self-taught man Franklin was that man. Without aid from any seat of learning he received honorary degrees from Yale and Harvard for his filosofical eminence and discoveries in electricity. The British Royal Society, which at first ignored his remarkable electrical achievements, afterward elected him a member without charging him admission fees. Oxford and Edinburgh conferred upon him their academical degrees. The French were first to appreciate his filosofical efforts, the Germans next and then the Italians and the English.

Franklin could not be persuaded to extend his autobiografy beyond his fifty-first year. He only wrote out those portions of his life which he thought were unknown or had attracted little or no public attention. Hence, what he wrote is a mere fragment of his great life. But no autobiografy ever written in any language equals it in style and charm of composition.

This middle period, or active, pushing and business part, of Franklin's life comprised but twenty years. His education, obtained when a lad at a Boston primary school, was very scanty — embracing but little more than the "three R's." But he was always absorbing knowledge thereafter. During these twenty years devoted to active business Franklin managed to spare time to acquire what was then more than equivalent to a good classical education, though he never put his foot in a college except as a visitor. He learned to read and to speak French, to read Spanish and Italian, and obtained a fair elementary knowledge of Latin. He went as far in mathematics as he thought would be of any value to him. He read ancient and modern history, and every filosofical and scientific work he could lay hands upon; he made a study of political economy, and banking, and paper money, and wrote essays on them. He became the founder of the University of Pennsylvania and of the American Philosophical Society.

At the end of those twenty busy and useful years he had acquired what he deemed an ample competence, which yielded about $12,000 a year, and he resolved to retire from business and politics and devote the remainder of his life to filosofy and science. He had already made part of those electrical discoveries which filled Europe with his name and fame. This was in 1748, when Franklin was only forty-two years of age. He had already invented the Franklin hand-press and the Franklin stove, which latter comfortably heated houses and saved enormous

quantities of fuel. He discovered the cause of and a cure for smoky chimneys; he impressed on the people the sanitary value of ventilation of sleeping-rooms, and told them how to avoid colds and the diseases arising therefrom. He showed cities how to sewer, pave and clean their streets and furnish water through pipes, all in the most economical way. He was the first to suggest the idea of savings-banks, which have done so much to aid in the formation of frugal habits and to augment the nation's wealth. He invented a street-lamp with such ventilation as would prevent sooting up. He invented the lightning-rod, with sharp points, for the protection of property. He introduced a paid police and fire department into Philadelphia, which was copied by other cities. He founded the system of public circulating libraries, of which there are now thousands in Anglo-American cities and towns. He discovered and explained why oil spreads on water and calms and smooths the waves. He discovered that storms run backward from the place of beginning, instead of forward, as was supposed, the same as water in a mill-race when the gate is opened. He was the first to make observations on the Gulf Stream, and his chart of it, published one hundred and twelve years ago, still forms the basis of the charts now in use. He devised a system of reformed orthografy which if adopted would have greatly shortened and simplified the spellings of the English language, and thereby promoted immensely the diffusion of education and knowledge among the masses; but the inveteracy of habit defeated his beneficent purpose and millions

From the Original Painting, by Duplessis, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

have lived and died poor spellers, to be laughed at, ridiculed and jeered by the comparative few who have ever mastered the absurdities, intricacies and anomalies of our hotch-potch orthografy. His mind seemed capable of penetrating and unfolding every mystery.

Franklin was first brought into contact with the mysterious substance called electricity in 1746. He immediately began making experiments into its properties and nature, and soon discovered that it exists everywhere; that it moves from a positive to a negative pole, and has great affinity for iron and copper. By experiments he discovered electrical attraction and repulsion. He came to the conclusion, through profound reasoning, that the electricity that was produced in the Leyden jar was of the same substance and nature as lightning from a thunder-storm, and proceeded to prove it by his celebrated experiment with the kite. When the thunder-storm broke over Philadelphia he went out on the open common and sent up his kite into the heavens, with a bright pointed rod attached to it and a hempen cord with a metallic key at the other end; and then calmly faced death. The kite rose high into the down-pouring rain, amidst the crashing thunder and forked lightning. There he courageously stood, with his son beside him, watching the string till he saw the hempen fibers move; then he touched his knuckle to the key, knowing that he might be struck dead at the instant. The lightning sparks crackled and leaped to his fingers harmlessly. He charged his Leyden jars with the fluid and proved to the world the truth of his theory that lightning was

the same as electricity. In previous experiments with electricity he had received shocks which had stunned and almost killed him. With this personal knowledge of its power it required nerve to tamper with a flash of lightning which could rend a great tree or kill a thousand men at a single shock.

Franklin's leisure for scientific investigations was cut short by the political necessities of his country, and he was transferred to diplomatic fields, first for Pennsylvania, Maryland, Georgia and Massachusetts to London, and next for the thirteen revolted provinces to Paris. Had he not been diverted from his electrical studies and experiments where might he not have pushed his discoveries? He might have invented the telegraf or the telefone. It is difficult to set limits to the analyzing power of such a brain as he possessed with the start he had gained in the electrical field, as he was just reaching his greatest thinking powers of mind when he was put into the public service of his country.

Jefferson is credited with writing the most captivating sentences of the Declaration of Independence; but in Franklin's brain was born, twenty-two years previously, a conception of a union of all the colonies, though acknowledging allegiance to Great Britain at the outset. He says, in his autobiografy, that in June, 1754, when war with France was apprehended, a convention of commissioners from all the colonies was ordered to be held at Albany to there meet the Six Nations and to confer with those friendly Indian tribes concerning the best means of defending their

country and the colonies against the French and the hostile Indians. He was one of the four commissioners sent from Pennsylvania.

He goes on to relate that he "projected and drew a plan for the union of all the colonies under one government so far as might be necessary for defense and important general purposes." He placed his project, he says, before several gentlemen of the greatest knowledge in public affairs, and, having fortified his opinion by their approbation of his scheme, he ventured to lay it before the congress. The new plan was discussed for a number of days. It was then voted unanimously a union of the colonies should be established. A committee of one member from each colony was appointed to consider several plans of union which had been introduced as substitutes for or amendments to Franklin's. After full consideration the Franklin plan was reported back and adopted by the congress. By his plan the General Government was to be administered by a President-General appointed by the Crown, and a grand legislative council, or Senate, which was to be chosen by the legislatures of the several colonial states. The scheme of union was remarkably similar to that by which the states were afterward united into a Nation.

This bold idea, which was wrought out in detail by its author, was submitted by the convention to the legislatures of all the colonies and to the British Government for its sanction. Franklin says in England it was judged to have too much democracy in it, while many members of the colonial assemblies

thought it contained too much prerogative. The British Cabinet and Parliament saw this scheme would speedily create a republic, and hence "sat down on it." It was a remarkable advance toward an independent, self-governing nation, which was achieved after a long and bloody war twenty-nine years subsequently.

And it is a singular fact that the same Franklin twenty-two years later helped to draft and signed the Declaration of Independence. He aided in framing the government under which the war was fought, and finally was elected a delegate from Pennsylvania to the convention of 1787, which framed the constitution and which was presided over by George Washington. That constitution, with some amendments, is the one under which we live to-day. Franklin was then eighty-one years old, and when the great work was completed his health was better than when he began this last of his great labors. The excitement and importance of the business kept him up.

The project of a convention to frame a stronger government for this country originated in the fertile mind of Alexander Hamilton several years previously, and ripened slowly and was only adopted after much public discussion and six years' delay, during which time the aged Dr. Franklin was president of a Society for Political Inquiries, which met in a large room in his own house and listened to weekly papers and essays on the all-important question of a better and stronger government and constitution, which the grand old sage earnestly advocated.

FRANKLIN BEFORE THE LORDS IN COUNCIL, 1774.

Finally the delegates were chosen and met in Philadelphia. Washington at first declined to attend, and was reluctant by reason of his private affairs. There was great opposition in the country by the state-sovereignty men to making a national constitution. If Washington and Franklin had refused to attend, the scheme would undoubtedly have proven abortive. The vast influence of those two greatest men of the period saved it, and an indissoluble Nation was created. One writer says the awful dignity of Washington in the chair and the contagious good-temper of Franklin on the floor and the vast influence of both out of doors saved the constitution from rejection by the jealous states in the ratification.

I now approach the most important service that Franklin rendered to his country in his long and honorable career.

The Declaration of Independence had been sent forth and the last political tie connecting England to the colonies was severed, and the seven years' war began. Washington had lost the battle of Brooklyn, and his broken militia had retreated out of New York, up the Hudson River, and finally across it into New Jersey, with great loss of men and munitions of war. The scarcity of small arms, and ammunition, and artillery, and money stared Congress in the face. Silas Deane, of Connecticut, had been sent to France to feel of that nation as to what aid it might render the cause of the patriots. Arthur Lee was chosen to assist him. The French Government flatly refused to espouse the Revolutionary cause or give any aid, pub-

licly. It had no faith that the colonies possessed the unity, cohesion or resources to win their independence of Great Britain. An enthusiastic Frenchman named M. de Beaumarchais, who had some influence at court, managed to induce the government to furnish him secretly with a million dollars, which he, under the guise of a trader or merchant, invested in military munitions and supplies and shipped from French ports to America. But spies of Great Britain in France soon found out what was being done and made an uproar about it, and this small source of assistance was peremptorily cut off by the French Government, who disavowed his acts.

Previous negotiations of Benjamin Franklin and John Adams with Lord Howe, at New York, who offered pardon to the insurgents and certain trade concessions, had failed to effect a peace. Franklin insisted on Britain's acknowledgment of America's independence. No agreement could be made and the war continued; but the American cause was becoming more gloomy every day. It was at this time that Thomas Paine wrote his "American Crisis," beginning with the famous words, "These are the times that try men's souls." Strong help from France, however, was indispensable. The commissioners sent there had made no headway in obtaining it. The Congress in despair turned to Dr. Franklin and persuaded the old man, then turning into his seventy-first year, to undertake the all-important mission. If he failed in securing the help of France the cause of independence was lost beyond hope.

Franklin reached Paris late in the fall of 1776 and set himself at work to be agreeable to the king and his cabinet. He rapidly added to his knowledge of the French tongue. He joined the scientific and filosofical societies. The fame of his discoveries in electricity had preceded him there, and helped his mission greatly with the learned classes and the court. The maxims of "Poor Richard" were household words in French families. Franklin was looked upon as a sage and filosofer like those of Greece and Rome.

In his bland and benign manner he pressed his way into the confidence of the most influential men of France. He persuaded them that the contest in America was more than a rebellion; that it had become a revolution; that the revolted colonies were almost able to achieve their independence without any outside assistance, and that, with the aid of France, short work would be made of England. He pressed on the king and his ministers that now was France's golden opportunity to "get even" with her old foe; to cripple her power and to win back territory lost in the last war with England. If not now taken advantage of such a chance would never return. If the seceding colonies were conquered or coaxed back to Britain they might help mightily in any future wars against France. But if France helped them now to achieve their independence they would ever be grateful and show it in their commerce and other ways which would be of great benefit to France. Now was the time to strike the blow that would cripple this hereditary enemy, "perfidious Albion," and revenge

France for the loss of its Canadian possessions a few years before.

Franklin poured these ideas and arguments into the ears of the king, his court, his generals and admirals, and the merchants, manufacturers and bankers. He worked incessantly and persuasively, and gained ground continuously. The news of Washington's fine victory over the British at Trenton helped him greatly at the French court, and he made the most of it. His good humor, courteous manners, persuasive arguments won the day for the desperate, struggling American cause. He induced France at first to privately lend considerable money to America, and to run in shiploads of muskets, ammunition, and artillery. And soon afterward he persuaded the king to declare war against Great Britain. After that money and munitions of war reached Congress in large quantities and the tide began to turn against the British. These were followed by squadrons of warships, and finally by brigades of French soldiers. A strong French fleet bottled up the British army at Yorktown, and a division of French troops, joining with Washington's army, made an assault on the British force. It surrendered to Washington and the war was practically over, and independence was won. Without the powerful aid given by the French independence could not have been achieved; without the diplomatic genius of Franklin the French would not have declared war on England to help the Americans.

The next great work Franklin was employed by his country to perform was to negotiate a treaty of

peace with sore, sulky, stubborn Britain, and he acquitted himself with an ability and success that have been the admiration of statesmen and diplomats from that time to this. No other American could have accomplished as much as he did. He almost persuaded the British government to cede its Canadian possessions to the United States. If he had pressed the point just a little harder he would have succeeded. But he was not aware of how near he was to accomplishing his darling object.

He then returned home full of years and honors, standing head and shoulders higher than all other Americans, save Washington alone. As before stated, he finished and crowned his manifold works for his countrymen in helping to frame that wonderful constitution which Gladstone calls the greatest and most perfect piece of constructive statesmanship ever coined from the brain of man.

The birthdays of but few men are annually celebrated or commemorated after their contemporaries are dead. Whose in this country but Washington's and Franklin's? Even Hamilton and Jefferson, statesmen of the highest rank, seldom have their birthdays celebrated, while Franklin's is perennially commemorated by his admiring countrymen. His fame dims not under the corroding tooth of time. His thoughts are the common property of all civilized lands. His maxims and sayings are still household words. His numerous utilitarian inventions were given to his country without patent or fee, the reason being he was so much indebted, he said, to preceding

generations for their inventions he could only repay by bestowing his own inventions without patents on his generation and on posterity.

In conclusion, I believe I am warranted in declaring the printer craft of America has given to mankind one of the greatest men who ever lived, the immortal Dr. Benjamin Franklin. He had a brain which penetrated, comprehended and investigated all subjects which could be made to yield benefit to his countrymen and the human race. He spent his life in doing good, without a particle of selfishness in his motives. He was the greatest mental luminary of his age. All his uttered thoughts and public actions tended to instruct, enlighten and better the condition of his fellow man, especially the poor and the weak.

When we pass from time to eternity we may see the revered Washington sitting on high Olympus among the immortal gods, and benign Franklin may be found walking in the academic groves conversing with the shades of the sages and scientists, the filosofers and filanthropists of all ages.

SOME GOOD WORDS ABOUT THE PROOFSHEET.

It is a first-class assistant in every respect, and fills a long-felt want.—*T. W. Richardson, Foreman Times, Roanoke, Va.*

Besides the valuable reading-matter it contains, it commends itself to my eye as a thing of beauty in the typografical line; 't is a joy to look at its pages.—*Mrs. E. B. Burnz, New York.*

One of the most spicy little magazines that reaches this office is THE PROOFSHEET, a monthly publication, devoted to the interests of proofreaders. It is full of good reading-matter, news and literature, and should be read by every proofreader.—*The Union Printer and American Craftsman.*

THE PROOFSHEET is a valued publication that reaches this office monthly. It is printed for proofreaders and its menu is always rich and varied. This interesting little journal is issued for $1 per year, and gives for this outlay a generous supply of instruction and entertainment. To proofreaders it is invaluable.—*Missouri Editor.*

THE PROOFSHEET is a little monthly, published by the Ben Franklin Company, of Chicago, devoted to all matters appertaining to the duties of the proofreader. The typewriter operator should be as well informed as to correct methods of spelling, punctuation, syllabifying, paragrafing, capitalizing as is the most critical proofreader or compositor, and he will find the same kind and as large of measure of benefit in the careful study of such a publication as THE PROOFSHEET as will a member of the special class for which it is designed.—*Phonographic Magazine.*