

From Boyhood to Manhood

William M. Thayer

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Title: From Boyhood to Manhood

Author: William M. Thayer

Release Date: January, 2006 [EBook #9607]
[This file was first posted on October 9, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: US-ASCII

***** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK, FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD *****

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FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD

LIFE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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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 in, 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 thralldom, 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 Taler, 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 Bocker, to set up a paper of his own, the _Boston Gazette_, which appeared in December, 1719. Mr. Bocker 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."

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 great 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

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