

A portrait of Benjamin Franklin, an elderly man with long, wavy hair, wearing a white coat and a white cravat. He is looking slightly to the right of the viewer. The background is dark and indistinct.

**THE WORKS OF
BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN**

VOLUME 12: 1788 - 1790

The Works of Benjamin
Franklin

Volume 12

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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**CORRESPONDENCE AND MISCELLANEOUS
WRITINGS
1788 - 1790**

EDITOR'S NOTE

When the Editor undertook this publication he had good reasons for believing that he was in possession of all the important correspondence and writings of Franklin which had survived him; but, as the work progressed, he has realized more fully than ever before that the task of the Danaïdes was scarcely more difficult or discouraging than that of making a complete collection of the correspondence and writings of a man who stood in so many different and important relations to his contemporaries as Franklin did. The harvest, instead of diminishing with the lapse of time, seems to increase by cultivation. Over two hundred documents upon which the stamp of Franklin's genius had been impressed, and which are entitled to a place in any collection of his works, have been placed in the Editor's hands since the publication of the first two volumes. The larger number of these, unfortunately, reached him after the documents of corresponding date had gone to press. It thus became necessary to provide for them in a supplement, which will be found at the end of this volume. For the opportunity of enriching his work with these papers he desires to recognize his special obligations to Mr. B. F. Stevens, who kindly placed the whole of his important collection of Frankliniana at the Editor's disposal; to Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin, to whom he is indebted for most of the

letters from Franklin to Strahan that appear in this work, and which constitute a very important contribution to our knowledge of Franklin as a man of business. He has also to confess his great obligations to Mr. Worthington C. Ford, of the State Department, Washington, of whose precise and extensive acquaintance with the resources of the government archives he has been permitted freely to avail himself; and to his brother, Mr. Paul L. Ford, and their father, whose collections of autographs and other memorials of our early history no student of our early annals can afford to neglect.

The Editor is unwilling to take final leave of a work which has been to him almost a daily joy for several years, without again acknowledging his special obligations to the Hon. Thomas F. Bayard, Secretary of State, and of his predecessor, the Hon. F. T. Frelinghuysen, for an unrestricted access to the priceless collections of the State Department at Washington.

21 Gramercy Park,
New York, November 1, 1888..

MDXV. TO JOHN INGENHOUSZ

Philadelphia, 24 October, 1788.

— You have always been kind enough to interest yourself in what relates to my health. I ought therefore to acquaint you with what appears to me something curious respecting it. You may remember the cutaneous malady I formerly complained of, and for which you and Dr. Pringle favored me with prescriptions and advice. It vexed me near fourteen years, and was at the beginning of this year as bad as ever, covering almost my whole body, except my face and hands; when a fit of the gout came on, without very much

pain, but a swelling in both feet, which at last appeared also in both knees, and then in my hands. As these swellings increased and extended, the other malady diminished, and at length disappeared entirely. Those swellings have some time since begun to fall, and are now almost gone; perhaps the cutaneous disease may return, or perhaps it is worn out. I may hereafter let you know what happens. I am on the whole much weaker than when it began to leave me. But possibly that may be the effect of age, for I am now near eighty-three, the age of commencing decrepitude.

I grieve at the wars Europe is engaged in, and wish they were ended; for I fear even the victors will be losers. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—Our public affairs are drawing towards a settlement. I have served out the three years' term of my presidency limited by the Constitution; and being determined to engage no more in public business, I hope, if health permits, to be a better correspondent. We have no philosophical news here at present, except that a boat moved by a steam-engine rows itself against tide in our river, and it is apprehended the construction may be so simplified and improved as to become generally useful. ^{Ref.}
002

MDXVI. TO M. LE VEILLARD ^{Ref. 003}

Philadelphia, 24 October, 1788.

My Dear Friend:—

I have lately received your two kind letters of June 18th and August 6th. I do not find that I ever received those you mention of the 15th September.

I have been much afflicted the last summer with a long-continued fit of the gout, which I am not quite clear of, though much better; my other malady is not augmented. I have lately made great progress in the work you so urgently demand, and have come as far as my fiftieth year. Being now free from public business, as my term in the presidentship is expired, and resolving to engage in no other public employment, I expect to have it finished in about two months, if illness or some unforeseen interruption does not prevent. I do not therefore send a part at this time, thinking it better to retain the whole till I can view it all together, and make the proper corrections.

I am much concerned to hear the broils in your country, but hope they will lead to its advantage. When this fermentation is over and the troubling parts subsided, the wine will be fine and good, and cheer the hearts of those who drink of it.

Our affairs mend daily and are getting into good order very fast. Never was any measure so thoroughly discussed as our proposed new Constitution. Many objections were made to it in the public papers, and answers to these objections. Much party heat there was, and some violent personal abuse. I kept out of the dispute, and wrote only one little paper on the occasion, which I enclose. You seem to me to be too apprehensive about our President's being perpetual. Neither he nor we have any such intention. What danger there may be of such an event we are all aware of, and shall take care effectually to prevent it. The choice is from four years to four years; the appointments will be small; thus we may change our President if we don't like his conduct, and he will have less inducement to struggle for a new election. As to the two chambers, I am of your opinion that one alone would be better; but, my dear friend, nothing in human affairs and schemes is perfect; and perhaps that is the case of our opinions.

It must have been a terrible tempest that devastated such an extent of country. I have sometimes thought that it might be well to establish an office of insurance for farms against the damage that may occur to them from storms, blight, insects, etc. A small sum paid by a number would repair such losses and prevent much poverty and distress.

Our adventurous merchants are hitherto successful in the East India trade. Perhaps it would be better for us if we used none of the commodities of those countries, but since we do use them, it is an advantage that we have them cheaper than when they came through Britain. As to the other merchandise she formerly supplied us with, our demand is daily diminishing. Our people are more and more sensible of the mischievous consequences of drinking rum; the leaders of several religious sects have warned their people against it, and the consumption has this last year been less by one third. This will affect her islands. And the restraints she has laid on our trade have contributed to raise a spirit of industry in families, who now manufacture more than ever for themselves; that must lessen greatly the importation.

Embrace for me *bien tendrement* your good dame and children. With sincere esteem and hearty attachment, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—The wine is arrived, but it was not well secured or bottled. One of the casks had leaked a great deal, and the case we have opened had two thirds of the bottles empty or broken. Temple is in the country; he has received your letters, but does not know of this opportunity.

MDXVII. TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN

Philadelphia, 24 October, 1788.

— Having now finished my term in the presidency, and resolving to engage no more in public affairs, I hope to be a better correspondent for the little time I have to live. I am recovering from a long-continued gout, and am diligently employed in writing the history of my life, to the doing of which the persuasions contained in your letter of January 31, 1783, have not a little contributed. I am now in the year 1756, just before I was sent to England. To shorten the work, as well as for other reasons, I omit all facts and transactions that may not have a tendency to benefit the young reader by showing him from my example, and my success in emerging from poverty, and acquiring some degree of wealth, power, and reputation, the advantages of certain modes of conduct which I observed, and of avoiding the errors which were prejudicial to me. If a writer can judge properly of his own work, I fancy on reading over what is already done that the book will be found entertaining, interesting, and useful, more so than I expected when I began it. If my present state of health continues, I hope to finish it this winter. When done, you shall have a manuscript copy of it, that I may obtain from your judgment and friendship such remarks as may contribute to its improvement.

The violence of our party debates about the new Constitution seems much abated, indeed, almost extinct, and we are getting fast into good order. I kept out of those disputes pretty well, having wrote only one little piece, which I send you enclosed.

I regret the immense quantity of misery brought upon mankind by this Turkish war; and I am afraid the King of Sweden may burn his fingers by attacking Russia. When will princes learn arithmetic enough to calculate if they want pieces of one another's territory how much cheaper it would be to buy them than to make war for them, even though they were to give a hundred years' purchase? But, if

glory cannot be valued, and therefore the wars for it cannot be subject to arithmetical calculation so as to show their advantage or disadvantage, at least wars for trade, which have gain for their object, may be proper subjects for such computation; and a trading nation, as well as a single trader, ought to calculate the probabilities of profit and loss before engaging in any considerable adventure. This, however, nations seldom do, and we have had frequent instances of their spending more money in wars for acquiring or securing branches of commerce than a hundred years' profit or the full enjoyment of them can compensate.

Remember me affectionately to good Dr. Price and to the honest heretic Dr. Priestley. I do not call him *honest* by way of distinction, for I think all the heretics I have known have been virtuous men. They have the virtue of fortitude, or they would not venture to own their heresy; and they cannot afford to be deficient in any of the other virtues, as that would give advantage to their enemies; and they have not, like orthodox sinners, such a number of friends to excuse or justify them. Do not, however, mistake me. It is not to my good friend's heresy that I impute his honesty. On the contrary, it is his honesty that has brought upon him the character of heretic. I am ever, my dear friend, yours sincerely,

B. Franklin.

MDXVIII. TO M. LE ROY

Philadelphia, 25 October, 1788.

My Dear Friend:—

Your kind letter of the 6th of May, after some delay by the way, is come safe to hand, with the memoirs, and elegant

prints of your projected hospital, which I shall dispose of as you direct. It may in time to come be useful here. I received, also, the volume of Academy memoirs, and thank you for your care in sending them.

I am now in possession of the repose I have so long wished for, having finished the third year of my presidentship, the term limited by our Constitution, and resolving to engage no more in public business; my employment of that repose can, however, be but short, as I am near eighty-three.

We have no philosophical news here at present, except that a large boat rowed by the force of steam is now exercised upon our river, stems the current, and seems to promise being useful when the machinery can be more simplified and the expense reduced.

I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,
B. Franklin.

**MDXIX. TO DON DIEGO GARDOQUI, MINISTER
FROM THE COURT OF SPAIN**

Philadelphia, 26 October, 1788.

Sir:—

Messrs. Henry Pawling and Greenberry Dawson, one of whom will have the honor of presenting this to the hand of your Excellency, are projecting a voyage from the Ohio settlement with the produce of that country, to be sold at New Orleans. I know not how far the laws existing there admit of such commerce, but if it is allowable, I would then beg leave to request that your Excellency would be so good as to give them your counsels with a line of protection. As they are here esteemed persons of honest principles, who have good characters, I am persuaded they

will not forfeit them and show themselves unworthy of your Excellency's favor by any contraband or illegal practices.

With great and sincere esteem and respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MDXX. TO MR. ELAM

Philadelphia, 10 November, 1788.

Sir:—

I received your note of the 8th instant, and being now, as you observe, retired to a private station, I hope to enjoy the repose appertaining to it. I cannot think, therefore, of calling, as you propose, you and your accusers before me, to discuss differences which I have no authority to judge of or to determine. I can only give you my friendly advice, which is to behave peaceably and respectfully to the religious society you profess to be connected with, especially in their public assemblies; in which case I am persuaded you may quietly enjoy "that liberty of a freeholder and citizen" which you desire, without receiving from them the smallest interruption. By giving me no further trouble with your quarrels, you will oblige your well-wisher,

B. Franklin.

MDXXI. WM. T. FRANKLIN TO M. LE VEILLARD Ref.

004

Philadelphie, 17 Novre, 1788.

La dernière lettre que j'ai reçue, de vous, mon cher ami, est dattée le 6 Aôut. Vous ne m'accusez pas la réception de la mienne du mois de Fevrier, ^{Ref. 005} et je crains qu'elle ne soit restée à N. York avec plusieurs autres que j'ai écrites en même tems. Vous savez sans doute que les Pacquetbots sont interrompus depuis quelque tems, ce qui est cause j'imagine que je n'ai pas encore reçu la glace pour ma machine electrique que vous m'anonçates au mois de Fevrier dernier. Voulez vous bien mon ami, vous informer si elle est encore partie du Havre, et si elle y reste encore, donnez des ordres pour qu'on me l'envoie par le premier bâtiment marchand ou outre qui part pour Philadelphie ou N. York; et qu'on m'écris une lettre d'avis en même tems. Actuellement que nous sommes sur les commissions, permettez que je vous donnent encore quelques unes; mais à cette condition que si elle vous cause trop d'embarras vous ne les executerez pas. Vous savez que j'ai une partie de la petite Bibliotheque des Theatres; cette ouvrage me plait, et je voudrai l'avoir complet. J'ai les treize volumes du 1r année, 1784, et les No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, du 2de année, 1785. Il me manque en consequence le No. 8 du 2de année, et tous les Nos. qui on parru depuis le No. 10. Tachez je vous prie de mes les procurer; je dois les avoir aux prix des souscripteurs. Je ne sais si je n'ai pas souscrit pour la 2de année? Voici encore ce que je desirerai avoir. 1r. Memoire sur les moyens de construire des planchers en bois avec plus de solidité et d'economie que l'on n'a fait jusqu' à present pour le Sieur Panseron; chez l'auteur, Rue des Maçons 1r. 4e. 2de. Histoire japonoise de Tangai et de Neardané, pr. Crebillon fils. 3me. Une pinte des plus beaux marrons de Lyons—pour planter. Tout cela peut être mise dans une petite boiette, et si elle est bien distinctement adressée, elle me parviendra sans difficulté; mais il sera toujours prudent que je rèveive une lettre d'avis par la même occasion. Mon ayeul n'a reçu que les 5 premiers

volumes du Dicte. d'Agrice. de l'Abbé Rozier, il desireroit avoir la suite; ainsi que la Bibliotheque Physyco Economique, depuis l'an 1785—et ce qui à paru depuis la dernière envoye que vous ou M. Grand lui a fait des Mémoires des Chinois. Pour ce qui regarde mes commissions les 69's que vous avez à moi seront, peutêtre assez, si non vous vous adresserez à M. Grand, ainsi que pour se que vous debourserez pour mon ayeul. Nous avons reçu la vin de Cahusac qui est fort bon; mais il faut que celle dans les caisses ait été mis en bouteille dans un tems défavorable attendu que, un tiers des bouteilles etait cassés ou vides, les bouchons etant partis. Celui en futaille à un peu perdu en quantité mais rien en comparaison de celui en bouteille. Le vin est en general bien goûté ici, mais il faut du tems pour changer le gout de nos buveurs de Madère, et de Bordeaux. Je me suis informé de plusieurs personnes au sujêt de M. Bourgoin, dont vous desirez avoir des nouvelles; mais jusqu'à présent je n'ai pu savoir s'il est arrivé en Amérique. Nous avons à Philadelphie plusieurs François, entre autres un M. de Ferriere qui connait tout le monde à Passy, et je me rapelle de l'avoir vu chez M. Filleul, mais je crois qu'il portait alors un autre nom. Il à la croix de St. Louis, et on dit qu'il à été Prévôt de Marechaux de France. C'est un homme d'environ 40 à 45 ans, d'une figure agréable, et il me parait ce qu'on appelle en France bonne enfant. Donnez moi un peu son Histoire—il parle de s'établir aux environs de Philadelphie et d'y faire venir sa femme de Paris. Il est arrivé en Amerique avec M. de St. Try et M. Brissot de Warville. Notre nouveau Gouvernement va toujours son train—plusieurs États ont élu leurs Senateurs, le peuple doivent elir leur Representatives dans peu; c'est au mois de Mars prochain qu'ils doivent s'assembler. Il n'y à qu'une voix pour le President General, l'ilustre Washington! à l'égard du Vice President les avis son partagés entre les General Knox, Messieurs Hancock, Adams, etc. Mon ayeul ayant servi ses

trois ans, comme President de cet État, ou à élu à sa place le General Mifflin. Mon ayeul s'appelle actuellement un *free man*, et je crois qu'il serait difficile de l'engager à changer cet etat. Il parait on ne peut pas plus content de jouir de la liberté et du repos. Il est maintenant occupé à écrire la suite de sa vie que vous avez desirez avec tant d'empressement. Sa santé se retablit tous les jours. Adieu, mon ami. Rappelez moi au souvenir de tous nos amis communs, et dites mille choses tendre pour moi à toute votre famille. J'écris à M. votre fils.

W. T. Franklin.

MDXXII. TO MR. FRANCIS CHILDS

Philadelphia, 19 November, 1788.

Sir:—

When you were here in April last you promised me the payment of one hundred dollars in June following, which has not been sent to me, and therefore I have now drawn upon you for the same, and having present occasion for money, I depend on your honoring my draft. I am, sir, your humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MDXXIII TO MRS. PARTRIDGE Ref. 006

Philadelphia, 25 November, 1788.

My Dear Child:—

I received your kind letter of the 12th inst. enclosing one for Mr. Philip Vanhorn, physician in Philadelphia, which you desire me to deliver, and to solicit the forgiveness of his

daughter. I immediately made enquiry for him, as to be instrumental in so charitable a work, and in concurrence with you, would have given me great pleasure, but I am assured by our oldest inhabitants, who have had most acquaintance and best opportunities of knowing their fellow-citizens, particularly some of our physicians, that no physician or other person of that name has ever been a resident here; so that there must have been some mistake in the information that has been given you, if, indeed, the whole story is not an imposition.

You kindly enquire after my health. I have not, of late, much reason to boast of it. People that will live a long life and drink to the bottom of the cup must expect to meet with some of the dregs. However, when I consider how many more terrible maladies the human body is liable to, I think myself well off that I have only three incurable ones: the gout, the stone, and old age; and, those notwithstanding, I enjoy many comfortable intervals, in which I forget all my ills, and amuse myself in reading or writing, or in conversation with friends, joking, laughing, and telling merry stories, as when you first knew me, a young man about fifty.

My children and grandchildren, the Baches, are all well, and pleased with your remembrance of them. They are my family, living in my house. And we have lately the addition of a little good-natured girl, whom I begin to love as well as the rest.

You tell me our poor friend Ben Kent is gone; I hope to the regions of the blessed, or at [*mutilated*] to some place where souls are prepared for those [*mutilated*] gions. I found my hope on this, that though not so orthodox as you and I, he was an honest man, and had his virtues. If he had any hypocrisy it was of that inverted kind, with which a man is not so bad [*mutilated*] seems to be. And with regard to future bliss I cannot help imagining, that multitudes of the zealously orthodox of different sects, who at the last

day may flock together, in hopes of seeing [*mutilated*] damned, will be disappointed, and obliged to rest content with their own salvation. You have no occasion to apologise for your former letter. It was, as all yours are, very well written. That which it enclosed for your cousin came too late, he being sailed.

By one of the accidents which war occasions, all my books containing copies of my letters were lost. There were eight volumes of them, and I have been able to recover only two. Those are of later date than the transaction you mention, and therefore can contain nothing relating to it. If the letter you want a copy of was one in which I aimed at consoling my brother's friends, by a comparison drawn from a party of pleasure intended into the country, where we were all to meet, though the chair of one being soonest ready he set out before the rest; I say if this was the letter, I fancy you may possibly find it in Boston, as I remember Dr. Biles once wrote me that many copies had been taken of it. I, too, should have been glad to have seen that again, among others I had written to him and you. But you inform me they [*mutilated*] by the mice. Poor little innocent creatures, I am sorry they had no better food. But since they like my letters, here is another treat for them.

Adieu, ma chere enfant, and believe me [*mutilated*] your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

MDXXIV. TO MRS. JANE MECOM

Philadelphia, 26 November, 1788.

My Dear Sister:—

I received your kind letter of the 11th instant. The two former ones you mention, I had answered, though it seems

the answer had not reached you. If it has finally miscarried, I will look for the letters, and answer them again.

I am sorry you should suffer so much uneasiness with tears and apprehensions about my health. There are in life real evils enough, and it is folly to afflict ourselves with imaginary ones; and it is time enough when the real ones arrive. I see by the papers that to-morrow is your thanksgiving day. The flour will arrive too late for your plum-puddings, for I find it went from hence but a few days since. I hope, however, it will be with you before the winter shuts up your harbor.

I never see any Boston newspapers. You mention there being often something in them to do me honor. I am obliged to them. On the other hand, some of our papers here are endeavoring to disgrace me. I take no notice. My friends defend me. I have long been accustomed to receive more blame, as well as more praise, than I have deserved. It is the lot of every public man, and I leave one account to balance the other.

As you observe, there was no swearing in the story of the poker, when I told it. The late new dresser of it was, probably, the same, or perhaps akin to him, who, in relating a dispute that happened between Queen Anne and the Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning a vacant mitre, which the Queen was for bestowing on a person the Archbishop thought unworthy, made both the Queen and the Archbishop swear three or four thumping oaths in every sentence of the discussion, and the Archbishop at last gained his point. One present at this tale, being surprised, said: "But did the Queen and the Archbishop swear so at one another?" "Oh no, no," says the relator; "that is only *my way* of telling the story."

This family is all well at present, and join in love to you and yours, with your affectionate brother,

B. Franklin.

MDXXV. TO CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY OF CONGRESS

Philadelphia, 29 November, 1788.

Dear Old Friend:—

Enclosed I send a letter to the President of Congress for the time being, which, if you find nothing improper in it, or that in regard to me you could wish changed or amended, I would request you to present. I rely much on your friendly counsel, as you must be better acquainted with persons and circumstances than I am; and I suppose there will be time enough before the new Congress is formed to make any alterations you may advise, though, if presented at all, it should be to the old one.

In the copy of my letter to Mr. Barclay you may observe that mention is made of some “considerable articles which I have not charged in my accounts with Congress, but on which I should expect from their equity some consideration.” That you may have some information what those articles are, I enclose also a *Sketch of My Services to the United States*, wherein you will find mention of the *extra services* I performed, that do not appertain to the office of plenipotentiary, viz.: as judge of admiralty, as consul before the arrival of Mr. Barclay, as banker in examining and accepting the multitude of bills of exchange, and as secretary for several years, none being sent to me, though other ministers were allowed such assistance.

I must own, I did hope that, as it is customary in Europe, to make some liberal provision for ministers when they return home from foreign service, the Congress would at least have been kind enough to have shown their approbation of my conduct by a grant of a small tract of land in their western country, which might have been of use and some honor to my posterity. And I cannot but still think

they will do something of the kind for me, whenever they shall be pleased to take my services into consideration, as I see by their minutes that they have allowed Mr. Lee handsomely for his services in England, before his appointment to France, in which services I and Mr. Bollan coöperated with him, and have had no such allowance; and, since his return, he has been very properly rewarded with a good place, as well as my friend Mr. Jay; though these are trifling compensations in comparison with what was granted by the king to M. Gérard on his return from America.

But how different is what has happened to me. On my return from England, in 1775, the Congress bestowed on me the office of postmaster-general, for which I was very thankful. It was indeed an office I had some kind of right to, as having previously greatly enlarged the revenue of the post by the regulations I had contrived and established, while I possessed it under the crown. When I was sent to France, I left it in the hands of my son-in-law, who was to act as my deputy. But soon after my departure it was taken from me and given to Mr. Hazard. When the English ministry formerly thought fit to deprive me of the office, they left me, however, the privilege of receiving and sending my letters free of postage, which is the usage when a postmaster is not displaced for misconduct in the office; but, in America, I have ever since had the postage demanded of me, which, since my return from France, has amounted to above fifty pounds, much of it occasioned by my having acted as minister there.

When I took my grandson, William Temple Franklin, with me to France, I proposed, after giving him the French language, to educate him in the study and practice of the law. But, by the repeated expectations given me of a secretary, and constant disappointments, I was induced, and indeed obliged, to retain him with me, to assist in the secretary's office, which disappointments continued till my

return, by which time, so many years of the opportunity of his studying the law were lost, and his habits of life become so different, that it appeared no longer advisable; and I then, considering him as brought up in the diplomatic line, and well qualified by his knowledge in that branch for the employ of a secretary at least (in which opinion I was not alone, for three of my colleagues, without the smallest solicitation from me, chose him secretary of the negotiation for treaties, which they had been empowered to do), took the liberty of recommending him to the Congress for their protection. This was the only favor I ever asked of them; and the only answer I received was a resolution superseding him, and appointing Colonel Humphreys in his place, a gentleman who, though he might have indeed a good deal of military merit, certainly had none in the diplomatic line, and had neither the French language, nor the experience, nor the address proper to qualify him for such an employment.

This is all to yourself only as a private friend; for I have not, nor ever shall, make any public complaint; and even if I could have foreseen such unkind treatment from Congress, their refusing me thanks would not in the least have abated my zeal for the cause and ardor in support of it. I know something of the nature of such changeable assemblies, and how little successors know of the services that have been rendered to the corps before their admission, or feel themselves obliged by such services; and what effect in obliterating a sense of them during the absence of the servant in a distant country, the artful and reiterated malevolent insinuations of one or two envious and malicious persons may have on the minds of members, even of the most equitable, candid, and honorable dispositions; and therefore I will pass these reflections into oblivion.

My good friend, excuse, if you can, the trouble of this letter; and if the reproach thrown on republics, that *they*

are apt to be ungrateful, should ever unfortunately be verified with respect to *your* services, remember that you have a right to unbosom yourself in communicating your griefs to your ancient friend and most obedient humble servant,

B. Franklin.

Sketch of the Services of B. Franklin to the United States of America

In England he combated the Stamp Act, and his writings in the papers against it, with his examination in Parliament, were thought to have contributed much to its repeal.

He opposed the Duty Act; and though he could not prevent its passing, he obtained of Mr. Townshend an omission of several articles, particularly salt.

In the subsequent difference he wrote and published many papers, refuting the claim of Parliament to tax the colonies.

He opposed all oppressive acts.

He had two secret negotiations with the ministers for their repeal, of which he has written a narrative. In this he offered payment for the destroyed tea, at his own risk, in case they were repealed.

He was joined with Messrs. Bollan and Lee in all the applications to government for that purpose. Printed several pamphlets at his own considerable expense against the then measures of government, whereby he rendered himself obnoxious, was disgraced before the privy council, deprived of a place in the post-office of £300 sterling a year, and obliged to resign his agencies, viz.:

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Of | |
| Pennsylvania | £500 |
| Of | 400 |

| | | |
|---------------|-----|-------|
| Massachusetts | | |
| Of New Jersey | 100 | |
| Of Georgia | 200 | |
| | | £1200 |

In the whole £1500 sterling per annum.

Orders were sent to the king's governors not to sign any warrants on the treasury for orders of his salaries; and though he was not actually dismissed by the colonies that employed him, yet, thinking the known malice of the court against him rendered him less likely than others to manage their affairs to their advantage, he judged it to be his duty to withdraw from their service, and leave it open for less exceptionable persons, which saved them the necessity of removing him.

Returning to America, he encouraged the Revolution. Was appointed chairman of the Committee of Safety, where he projected the *chevaux de frise* for securing Philadelphia, then the residence of Congress.

Was sent by Congress to head-quarters near Boston with Messrs. Harrison and Lynch, in 1775, to settle some affairs with the northern governments and General Washington.

In the spring of 1776 was sent to Canada with Messrs. Chase and Carroll, passing the Lakes while they were not yet free from ice. In Canada, was, with his colleagues, instrumental in redressing sundry grievances, and thereby reconciling the people more to our cause. He there advanced to General Arnold and other servants of Congress, then in extreme necessity, £353 in gold, out of his own pocket, on the credit of Congress, which was of great service at that juncture, in procuring provisions for our army.

Being at the time he was ordered on this service upwards of seventy years of age, he suffered in his health by the

hardships of this journey, lodging in the woods, etc., in so inclement a season; but being recovered, the Congress in the same year ordered him to France. Before his departure he put all the money he could raise, between three and four thousand pounds, into their hands; which, demonstrating his confidence, encouraged others to lend their money in support of the cause.

He made no bargain for appointments, but was promised by a vote the *net* salary of £5000 sterling per annum, his expenses paid, and to be assisted by a secretary, who was to have £1,000 per annum, to include all contingencies.

When the Pennsylvania Assembly sent him to England in 1764, on the same salary, they allowed him one year's advance for his passage, and in consideration of the prejudice to his private affairs that must be occasioned by his sudden departure and absence. He has had no such allowance from Congress, was badly accommodated in a miserable vessel, improper for those northern seas (and which actually foundered in her return), was badly fed, so that on his arrival he had scarce strength to stand.

His services to the States as commissioner, and afterwards as minister plenipotentiary, are known to Congress, as may appear in his correspondence. His *extra services* may not be so well known, and therefore may be here mentioned. No secretary ever arriving, the business was in part before, and entirely when the other commissioners left him, executed by himself, with the help of his grandson, who at first was only allowed clothes, board, and lodging, and afterwards a salary, never exceeding £300 a year (except while he served as secretary to the commissioners for peace), by which difference in salary, continued many years, the Congress saved, *if they accept it*, £700 sterling a year.

He served as *consul* entirely several years, till the arrival of Mr. Barclay, and even after, as that gentleman was obliged to be much and long absent in Holland, Flanders,

and England, during which absence, what business of the kind occurred still came to Mr. Franklin.

He served, though without any special commission for the purpose, as a *judge of admiralty*; for, the Congress having sent him a quantity of blank commissions for privateers, he granted them to cruisers fitted out in the ports of France, some of them manned by old smugglers, who knew every creek on the coast of England, and running all round the island distressed the British coasting trade exceedingly, and raised their general insurance. One of those privateers alone, the *Black Prince*, took in the course of a year seventy-five sail! All the papers taken in each prize brought in, were in virtue of an order of council sent up to Mr. Franklin, who was to examine them, judge of the legality of the capture, and write to the admiralty of the port that he found the prize good, and that the sale might be permitted. These papers, which are very voluminous, he has to produce.

He served also as *merchant*, to make purchases and direct the shipping of stores to a very great value, for which he has charged no commission.

But the part of his service which was the most fatiguing and confining, was that of receiving and accepting, after a due and necessary examination, the bills of exchange drawn by Congress for interest money, to the amount of *two millions and a half of livres annually*; multitudes of the bills very small, each of which, the smallest, gave as much trouble in examining, as the largest. And this careful examination was found absolutely necessary, from the constant frauds attempted by presenting *seconds* and *thirds* for payment after the *firsts* have been discharged. As these bills were arriving, more or less, by every ship and every post, they required constant attendance. Mr. Franklin could make no journey for exercise, as had been annually his custom, and

the confinement brought on a malady that is likely to afflict him while he lives.

In short, though he has always been an active man, he never went through so much business during eight years, in any part of his life, as during those of his residence in France; which, however, he did not decline till he saw peace happily made, and found himself in the eightieth year of his age; when, if ever, a man has some right to expect repose.

MDXXVI. TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Philadelphia, 29 November, 1788.

Sir:—

When I had the honor of being the Minister of the United States at the Court of France, Mr. Barclay, arriving there, brought me the following resolution of Congress:

“Resolved, that a commissioner be appointed by Congress, with full power and authority to liquidate, and *finally to settle*, the accounts of all the servants of the United States, who have been intrusted with the expenditure of public money in Europe, and to commence and prosecute such suits, causes, and actions as may be necessary for the purpose, or for the recovery of any property of the said United States in the hands of any person, or persons, whatsoever.

That the said commissioner be authorized to appoint one or more clerks, with such allowance as he may think reasonable.

That the said commissioner and clerks, respectively, take an oath before some person duly authorized to administer an oath, faithfully to execute the trust reposed in them respectively.

Congress proceeded to the election of a commissioner, and, ballots being taken, Mr. Thomas Barclay was elected."

In pursuance of this resolution, and as soon as Mr. Barclay was at leisure from more pressing business, I rendered to him all my accounts, which he examined, and stated methodically. By this statement he found a balance due to me on the 4th of May, 1785, of 7,533 livres, 19 sols, 3 deniers, which I accordingly received of the Congress banker; the difference between my statement and his being only seven sols, which by mistake I had overcharged; about three pence half-penny sterling.

At my request, however, the accounts were left open for the consideration of Congress, and not finally settled, there being some articles on which I desired their judgment, and having some equitable demands, as I thought them, for extra services, which he had not conceived himself empowered to allow, and therefore I did not put them in my account. He transmitted the accounts to Congress, and had advice of their being received. On my arrival at Philadelphia, one of the first things I did was to despatch my grandson, William T. Franklin, to New York, to obtain a final settlement of those accounts; he, having long acted as my secretary, and being well acquainted with the transactions, was able to give an explanation of the articles that might seem to require explaining, if any such there were. He returned without effecting the settlement, being told that it could not be made till the arrival of some documents expected from France. What those documents were I have not been informed, nor can I readily conceive, as all the vouchers existing there had been examined by Mr. Barclay. And I, having been immediately after my arrival engaged in the public business of this State, waited in expectation of hearing from Congress, in case any part of my accounts had been objected to.

It is now more than three years that those accounts have been before that honorable body, and, to this day, no notice

of any such objection has been communicated to me. But reports have, for some time past, been circulated here, and propagated in the newspapers, that I am greatly indebted to the United States for large sums that had been put into my hands, and that I avoid a settlement. This, together with the little time one of my age may expect to live, makes it necessary for me to request earnestly, which I hereby do, that the Congress would be pleased, without further delay, to examine those accounts, and if they find therein any article or articles which they do not understand or approve, that they would cause me to be acquainted with the same, that I may have an opportunity of offering such explanations or reasons in support of them as may be in my power, and then that the accounts may be finally closed.

I hope the Congress will soon be able to attend to this business for the satisfaction of the public, as well as in condescension to my request. In the meantime, if there be no impropriety in it, I would desire that this letter, together with another ^{Ref. 007} relating to the same subject, the copy of which is hereto annexed, may be put upon their minutes. With every sentiment of respect and duty to Congress, I am, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin. ^{Ref. 008}

MDXXVII. TO WM. VAUGHAN

Philadelphia, 9 December, 1788.

Dear Sir:—

I received your kind letter of October 5th. I am glad the little papers I sent you were not unacceptable. Having done with public business, I am now employing myself in a work your good brother Benjamin once strongly recommended to me, which is writing the history of my

own life. This will contain a number of precepts of the kind you desire, and all exemplified by the effects of their practice in my own affairs. Please to inform Benjamin of this, and that I have got as far as my fiftieth year.

I thank you for the trouble you took in the enquiry of Mr. John Wright. I have written to him some time since that the types are come to hand, etc.

A friend of mine designing a present to her son, a young student, of the best English encyclopædia, has desired me to procure it for her. Since I left England several different works under that title have appeared, and I know not their characters or merits. I think I have seen mentioned in the advertisements one or two from Scotland. Will you be so good as to inform yourself, if you do not know already, which is the best and latest, and send it to me by one of the first spring ships. Enclosed is an order on a banking-house for payment. On looking at it, I see it was intended by the lady that your brother should be troubled with this order. But 't is the same thing, you can have his opinion.

Our public affairs are getting fast into order, and we hope that in a year or two more they may be perfectly settled. The bad habits introduced by the war are also wearing out, and sober industry and frugality are taking place of idleness and dissipation. It is pleasant to see the world growing better and happier, though one [*torn*] to quit it. Next month, if I live to the middle of it, will finish my eighty-third year. I have a good deal recovered from my last summer's illness, and am at present, thanks to God, pretty hearty, as well as all my family, who join in rejoicing that your good mother and sisters, those amiable girls, have also recovered their usual health. God bless and preserve you all, prays your affectionate friend and humble servant,

B. Franklin.