

# THE WORKS OF



## JOHN ADAMS

VOL. 2: DIARY,  
NOTES OF DEBATES,  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

# The Works of John Adams

## Volume 2

JOHN ADAMS

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## **PREFACE.**

A Diary is the record in youth of a man's sentiments, in middle life, of his action, and of his recollections in age. To others, it can be interesting only if it have impressed upon it the stamp of strong individual character. But with this as a substratum, notices of striking scenes, of extraordinary events and noted contemporaries, may be superadded to form a memorial worth transmitting to posterity.

The fragments now published can scarcely be said to fill up this idea; yet, beginning as they do with the writer's

entrance into responsible life, and extending through a large part of a great career, they may be considered as in a measure superseding the necessity of an elaborate biography. Perhaps the propriety of the insertion of so large a portion of the early entries may be questioned. The answer is, that they go far to effect the main object of showing character. The moral and meditative cast of the author's mind is thus laid open at an age when that of most men is yet slowly gaining maturity. The leading principle of his life may thus be easily traced by those fond of psychological investigations, from his first theological investigations, through his legal studies, and still more strikingly, his early practice, into the mental habits which formed the politician and the statesman. Incidental to this, and accessory to it, are the pictures of domestic life in New England during a period which has been somewhat overshadowed by the superior interest attaching to earlier and to later times. Puritan Massachusetts, whilst dropping much of her early religious bigotry, was yet nursing in the French wars the stern qualities that carried her successfully through the fiery trial of the Revolution. She contained one, whilst Virginia furnished the other, of the two germs of public sentiment which have since spread extensively over this continent, and which bid fair yet to develop themselves indefinitely. To these two types of mind all classes of American opinion may be ultimately reduced. The state of society through which the first of these was evolved, until from a religious it took a political direction, and the influences through which the change was shaped, gain much illustration from the following pages.

The broken and partial nature of this Diary is the circumstance most to be regretted about it. As the time advances towards the most interesting events in the Revolution, the record becomes less and less satisfactory. It is a great disadvantage attending even the most regularly kept of such works, that just in proportion to the

engrossing interest of the action in which the writer finds himself engaged, is the physical inability to command the leisure necessary to describe it. Thus it happens in the present case, that the sketches sometimes stop just when the reader would have them begin, and at other times no notice whatever is taken of events which are the most prominent in the life of the writer. Yet, after making all suitable deductions from the value of these papers on this account, it is believed that much is left richly to reward perusal, particularly since some of the most marked instances of deficiency are compensated for by resorting to the reminiscences of a later period. The passages from an autobiography are not indeed entitled to claim quite so high ground on the score of authority in matters of fact as the contemporaneous record, but they merit attention as well on account of the superior animation of the style as of the circumstance that they do supply some of the details that are wanting in the other. Even on the score of accuracy, the papers of other persons treating of the same events, which have since found their way to the light, go a great way to establish the substantial truth of the narrative from memory. A good degree of credit may therefore be confidently assigned to it, even though we admit that it belongs to a different class of evidence. Whilst the editor has endeavored, so far as it may be done, to unite in the present volume, the substance of the Autobiography with the Diary, he has carefully tried to keep the two so distinct as to furnish to the critical reader every opportunity to distinguish the nature of the testimony. Twenty-five or thirty years can pass over the head of no man without affecting the exactness of his recollection of events. If we consider how small a share of the public documents now at the command of every one, was readily accessible, or was actually consulted in the year when the Autobiography was written, the wonder is rather at the tenacity than the failure of the writer's memory.

The editor has sought to avoid burdening the text with annotation. Yet so rapidly does time obliterate the traces of local names and history, and particularly after periods of civil convulsion, that occasional explanation seems required to smooth the way for the general reader. In performing this duty, it is always difficult to reach the golden mean, and particularly in American annals, where the extent to which an acquaintance with details can be presumed is so unsettled. Of late, the greatly increased attention paid to this subject tends to justify the inference that much may be taken for granted as now well understood. Yet the smallest examination of many of the popular works of the day will suffice to show that almost as much still remains to be elucidated. The omission to note the change wrought by the revolution in the classification of the social system has already done something to obscure the history of political opinion during the first stage of free government. Neither is the relative advance of the respective Colonies in the course of the struggle, or the nature of the difficulties peculiar to each, generally comprehended. To acquire right notions on these matters, it is necessary to ascend some distance for a starting point. Every thing that can illustrate the state of opinion, of manners, and of habits, prior to the year 1776, is of some value to the right conception of what has happened since. Guided by this idea, the editor has taken the liberty, either to supply such explanatory matter as he deemed likely to be of use to the curious, or, where he did not, to indicate as briefly as possible the sources in which fuller information may be readily obtained.

It is proper, in cases of publication like this, to define the extent to which it has been carried. The editor has suppressed or altered nothing in the Diary, which might be considered as bearing either against the author himself, or against any other person, for that reason alone. Wherever any omission has been made, it has been from other

motives than those of fear or favor. The main purpose has been to present to the public a fair and unbiased picture of the mind and heart of an individual, so far as this may be supposed to command any interest. To do this, it is as necessary to retain the favorable or unfavorable opinions expressed of men, including himself, as those of things or of events. No true, honestly written Diary can be regarded as in itself a correct general history. It is good always as biography, often as furnishing materials for history, and that just in proportion as it appears on its face never to have been written or prepared for publication. But if this be true, it is obviously perverting its character to attempt to make patchwork of it, by selecting to be seen only such passages as show a single side. Rather than this, it were wise not to publish at all. The effect is to make an opinion for the reader instead of allowing him to form one for himself, to control rather than to develop his judgment. In the present instance at least, the fact may be relied on, that no experiment of the kind has been tried. The reader is more likely to feel disposed to find fault with being supplied beyond his wants than with having less than he might get.

This volume embraces all of the Diary written prior to February, 1778, the period of the writer's first departure for Europe; but that portion of the Autobiography covering his Congressional life is barely commenced. It likewise includes all the notes taken of debates in the Continental Congress which the editor has been able to find. The meagre and unsatisfactory nature of these would forbid their publication, if it were not for the circumstance that they constitute almost the sole remaining memorial of the kind that has come down to us. Imperfect as they are, it is believed that they will serve to throw some light upon the civil history, or that portion which is least understood, of the great contest.

For the purpose of clearly distinguishing the passages of the Autobiography from the Diary, they are, in all cases,

marked with brackets at each end of the extract; and, when so brief as to be placed among the foot notes under the text, they are indicated by an asterisk, instead of the small numerals prefixed to the editor's explanations.



## DIARY: WITH PASSAGES FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

These are loose fragments of journal in the hand-writing of John Adams upon scraps of paper scarcely legible, from 18 November, 1755, to 20 November, 1761. They were effusions of mind, committed from time to time to paper, probably without the design of preserving them; self-examinations at once severe and stimulative; reflections upon others, sometimes, not less severe upon his friends; thoughts such as occur to all, some of which no other than an unsullied soul would commit to writing, mingled with conceptions at once comprehensive and profound.

j. q. a.

1755. November 18. We had a very severe shock of an earthquake. It continued near four minutes. I then was at my father's in Braintree, and awoke out of my sleep in the midst of it. The house seemed to rock and reel and crack, as if it would fall in ruins about us. Chimneys were shattered by it within one mile of my father's house *Endnote 002 Endnote 003*

1756. January 16. Reading Hutcheson's Introduction to Moral Philosophy. Dined with Major Chandler *Endnote 004*

18. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty *Endnote 005*

February 11. I am constantly forming, but never executing good resolutions. I take great pleasure in viewing and examining the magnificent prospects of Nature that lie before us in this town. If I cast my eyes one way, I am entertained with the savage, unsightly appearance of naked woods, and leafless forests. In another place a chain of broken and irregular mountains throws my mind into a pleasing kind of astonishment. But if I turn myself round, I perceive a wide, extensive tract before me made up of

woods and meadows, wandering streams and barren plains, covered in various places by herds of grazing cattle and terminated by the distant view of the town *Endnote 006*

12. Thursday. Heard Mr. Welman preach the lecture, and drank tea with him at home; where he made this observation, namely, that "Dr. Mayhew was a smart man, but he embraced some doctrines not generally approved." *Endnote 007*

13. Friday. Supped at Major Gardiner's, and engaged to keep school at Bristol, provided Worcester people at their ensuing March meeting should change this into a moving school, *Endnote 008* not otherwise. Major Greene this evening fell into some conversation with me about the Divinity and satisfaction of Jesus Christ. All the argument he advanced was, "that a mere creature or finite being could not make satisfaction to infinite justice for any crimes," and that "these things are very mysterious." Thus mystery is made a convenient cover for absurdity.

15. Sunday. Staid at home reading the Independent Whig *Endnote 009*

Very often shepherds that are hired to take care of their masters' sheep go about their own concerns and leave the flock to the care of their dog. So bishops, who are appointed to oversee the flock of Christ, take the fees themselves but leave the drudgery to their dogs, that is, curates and understrappers.

16. Monday. We have the most moderate winter that ever was known in this country. For a long time together we have had serene and temperate weather, and all the roads perfectly settled and smooth like summer.

The Church of Rome has made it an article of faith that no man can be saved out of their church, and all other religious sects approach to this dreadful opinion in proportion to their ignorance, and the influence of ignorant or wicked priests.

Still reading the Independent Whig.

Oh! that I could wear out of my mind every mean and base affectation; conquer my natural pride and self-conceit; expect no more deference from my fellows than I deserve; acquire that meekness and humility which are the sure mark and characters of a great and generous soul; subdue every unworthy passion, and treat all men as I wish to be treated by all. How happy should I then be in the favor and good will of all honest men and the sure prospect of a happy immortality!

18. Wednesday. Spent an hour in the beginning of the evening at Major Gardiner's, where it was thought that the design of Christianity was not to make men good riddle-solvers, or good mystery-mongers, but good men, good magistrates, and good subjects, good husbands and good wives, good parents and good children, good masters and good servants. The following questions may be answered some time or other, namely,—Where do we find a precept in the Gospel requiring Ecclesiastical Synods? Convocations? Councils? Decrees? Creeds? Confessions? Oaths? Subscriptions? and whole cart-loads of other trumpery that we find religion encumbered with in these days?

19. Thursday. No man is entirely free from weakness and imperfection in this life. Men of the most exalted genius and active minds are generally most perfect slaves to the love of fame. They sometimes descend to as mean tricks and artifices in pursuit of honor or reputation as the miser descends to in pursuit of gold. The greatest men have been the most envious, malicious, and revengeful. The miser toils by night and day, fasts and watches, till he emaciates his body to fatten his purse and increase his coffers. The ambitious man rolls and tumbles in his bed, a stranger to refreshing sleep and repose, through anxiety about a preferment he has in view. The philosopher sweats and labors at his book, and ruminates in his closet, till his bearded and grim countenance exhibits the effigies of pale want and care and death, in quest of hard words, solemn

nonsense, and ridiculous grimace. The gay gentleman rambles over half the globe, buys one thing and steals another, murders one man and disables another, and gets his own limbs and head broke for a few transitory flashes of happiness. Is this perfection, or downright madness and distraction?

20. Friday. Symptoms of snow. Writing Tillotson *Endnote 010*

21. Saturday. Snow about ankle deep. I find, by repeated experiment and observation in my school, that human nature is more easily wrought upon and governed by promises, and encouragement, and praise, than by punishment, and threatening, and blame. But we must be cautious and sparing of our praise, lest it become too familiar and cheap, and so, contemptible; corporal as well as disgraceful punishments depress the spirits, but commendation enlivens and stimulates them to a noble ardor and emulation.

22. Sunday. Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law-book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged, in conscience, to temperance and frugality and industry; to justice and kindness and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence, towards Almighty God. In this commonwealth, no man would impair his health by gluttony, drunkenness, or lust; no man would sacrifice his most precious time to cards or any other trifling and mean amusement; no man would steal, or lie, or in any way defraud his neighbor, but would live in peace and good will with all men; no man would blaspheme his Maker or profane his worship; but a rational and manly, a sincere and unaffected piety and devotion would reign in all hearts. What a Utopia; what a Paradise would this region be! Heard Thayer all day. He preached well. Spent the evening at Colonel Chandler's, with Putnam, Gardiner, Thayer, the

Doctor *Endnote 011* and his lady, in conversation upon the present situation of public affairs, with a few observations concerning heroes and great commanders,—Alexander, Charles XII., Cromwell.

24. Tuesday. We are told that Demosthenes transcribed the history of Thucydides eight times, in order to imbibe and familiarize himself with the elegance and strength of his style. Will it not be worth while for a candidate for the ministry to transcribe Dr. Tillotson's works?

27. Friday. All day in high health and spirits. Writing Tillotson. That comet which appeared in 1682 is expected again this year; and we have intelligence that it has been seen about ten days since, near midnight, in the east. I find myself very much inclined to an unreasonable absence of mind, and to a morose and unsociable disposition; let it therefore be my constant endeavor to reform these great faults.

28. Saturday. Attended Mrs. Brown's funeral. Let this and every other instance of human frailty and mortality prompt me to endeavor after a temper of mind fit to undergo this great change.

1756. March 1. Monday. Wrote out Bolingbroke's Reflections on Exile.

2. Tuesday. Began this afternoon my third quarter *Endnote 012* The great and Almighty author of nature, who at first established those rules which regulate the world, can as easily suspend those laws whenever his providence sees sufficient reason for such suspension. This can be no objection, then, to the miracles of Jesus Christ. Although some very thoughtful and contemplative men among the heathen attained a strong persuasion of the great principles of religion, yet the far greater number, having little time for speculation, gradually sunk into the grossest opinions and the grossest practices. These, therefore, could not be made to embrace the true religion till their attention

was roused by some astonishing and miraculous appearances. The reasoning of philosophers, having nothing surprising in them, could not overcome the force of prejudice, custom, passion, and bigotry. But when wise and virtuous men, commissioned from heaven, by miracles awakened men's attention to their reasonings, the force of truth made its way with ease to their minds.

3. Wednesday. Natural philosophy is the art of deducing the general laws and properties of material substances from a series of analogous observations. The manner of reasoning in this art is not strictly demonstrative, and, by consequence, the knowledge hence acquired is not absolutely scientific, because the facts that we reason upon are perceived by sense, and not by the internal action of the mind contemplating its ideas. But these facts being presumed true in the form of axioms, subsequent reasonings about them may be in the strictest sense scientific. This art informs us in what manner bodies will influence us and each other in given circumstances, and so teaches us to avoid the noxious, and embrace the beneficial qualities of matter. By this art, too, many curious engines have been constructed to facilitate business, to avert impending calamities, and to procure desired advantages.

6. Saturday. Rose at half after four. Wrote Bolingbroke's letter on retirement and study.

7. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty all day. Spent the evening and supped at Mr. Greene's with Thayer. Honesty, sincerity, and openness I esteem essential marks of a good mind. I am, therefore, of opinion that men ought, (after they have examined with unbiased judgments every system of religion, and chosen one system, on their own authority, for themselves,) to avow their opinions and defend them with boldness.

12. Friday. Laid a pair of gloves with Mrs. Willard *Endnote*  
<sup>013</sup> that she would not see me chew tobacco this month.

14. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty, all day, upon Abraham's faith in offering up Isaac. Spent the evening very sociably at Mr. Putnam's. Several observations concerning Mr. Franklin, *Endnote 014* of Philadelphia, a prodigious genius, cultivated with prodigious industry.

15. Monday. I sometimes in my sprightly moments consider myself, in my great chair at school, as some dictator at the head of a commonwealth. In this little state I can discover all the great geniuses, all the surprising actions and revolutions of the great world, in miniature. I have several renowned generals but three feet high, and several deep projecting politicians in petticoats. I have others catching and dissecting flies, accumulating remarkable pebbles, cockle shells, &c., with as ardent curiosity as any virtuoso in the Royal Society. Some rattle and thunder out A, B, C, with as much fire and impetuosity as Alexander fought, and very often sit down and cry as heartily upon being outspelt, as Cæsar did, when at Alexander's sepulchre he recollected that the Macedonian hero had conquered the world before his age. At one table sits Mr. Insipid, foppling *Endnote 015* and fluttering, spinning his whirligig, or playing with his fingers, as gaily and wittily as any Frenchified coxcomb brandishes his cane or rattles his snuff-box. At another, sits the polemical divine, plodding and wrangling in his mind about "Adam's fall, in which we sinned all," as his Primer has it. In short, my little school, like the great world, is made up of kings, politicians, divines, L. D.'s, fops, buffoons, fiddlers, sycophants, fools, coxcombs, chimney sweepers, and every other character drawn in history, or seen in the world. Is it not, then, the highest pleasure, my friend, to preside in this little world, to bestow the proper applause upon virtuous and generous actions, to blame and punish every vicious and contracted trick, to wear out of the tender mind every thing that is mean and little, and fire the new-born soul with a noble

ardor and emulation? The world affords no greater pleasure. Let others waste their bloom of life at the card or billiard table among rakes and fools, and when their minds are sufficiently fretted with losses, and inflamed by wine, ramble through the streets assaulting innocent people, breaking windows, or debauching young girls. I envy not their exalted happiness. I had rather sit in school and consider which of my pupils will turn out in his future life a hero, and which a rake, which a philosopher, and which a parasite, than change breasts with them, though possessed of twenty laced waistcoats and a thousand pounds a year. Methinks I hear you say, This is odd talk for John Adams! I'll tell you, then, the occasion of it. About four months since, a poor girl in this neighborhood, walking by the meeting-house upon some occasion in the evening, met a fine gentleman with laced hat and waistcoat, and a sword, who solicited her to turn aside with him into the horse stable. The girl relucted a little, upon which he gave her three guineas, and wished he might be damned if he did not have her in three months. Into the horse stable they went. The three guineas proved three farthings, and the girl proved with child, without a friend upon earth that will own her, or knowing the father of her three-farthing bastard.

17. Wednesday. A fine morning. Proceeded on my journey towards Braintree. Stopped to see Mr. Haven, *Endnote 016* of Dedham, who told me, very civilly, he supposed I took my faith on trust from Dr. Mayhew, and added, that he believed the doctrine of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ to be essential to Christianity, and that he would not believe this satisfaction unless he believed the Divinity of Christ. Mr. Balch was there too, and observed, that he would not be a Christian if he did not believe the mysteries of the gospel; that he could bear with an Arminian, but when, with Dr. Mayhew, they denied the Divinity and satisfaction of Jesus



Christ, he had no more to do with them; that he knew not what to make of Dr. Mayhew's two discourses upon the expected dissolution of all things. They gave him an idea of a cart whose wheels wanted greasing; it rumbled on in a hoarse, rough manner; there was a good deal of ingenious talk in them, but it was thrown together in a jumbled, confused order. He believed the Doctor wrote them in a great panic. He added further that Arminians, however stiffly they maintain their opinions in health, always, he takes notice, retract when they come to die, and choose to die Calvinists. Set out for Braintree, and arrived about sunset.

21. Sunday. Vernal equinox. Spent the evening at Mr. Wibird's *Endnote 017* with Messrs. Quincy, *Endnote 018* Cranch, *Endnote 019* Savil, in conversation upon the present situation of public affairs. Mr. Quincy exerted his talents in a most eloquent harangue. Mr. Cranch quoted the Bishop of Quebec's letter *Endnote 020* concerning the French Missionaries among the Indians. Some, he says, are very good men.

24. Wednesday. Set out for Worcester; dined at Dedham, and rode from thence in the rain to Mendon. Supped and lodged at Josiah Adams's.

25. Thursday. Rode to Uxbridge; tarried at my uncle Webb's, and lodged with Mr. Nathan *Endnote 021*

26. Friday. Rode to Grafton; dined at Josiah Rawson's. He exerted his Rawsonian talents concerning the felicity of Heaven. I sat and heard, for it is in vain to resist so impetuous a torrent. Proceeded to Worcester; drank tea at Mr. Maccarty's, and spent the evening at Major Gardiner's.

27. Saturday. The stream of life sometimes glides smoothly on through the flowery meadows and enamelled plains; at other times it drags a winding, reluctant course, through offensive bogs and dismal, gloomy swamps. The same road now leads us through a spacious country,

fraught with every delightful object; then plunges us at once into miry sloughs, or stops our passage with craggy and inaccessible mountains. The free roving songster of the forest now rambles unconfined, and hops from spray to spray, but the next hour, perhaps, he alights to pick the scattered grain, and is entangled in the snare. The ship which, wafted by a favorable gale, sails prosperously upon the peaceful surface, by a sudden change of weather may be tossed by the tempest, and driven by furious opposite winds upon rocks or quicksands *Endnote 022* In short, nothing in this world enjoys a constant series of joy and prosperity.

29. Monday. We find ourselves capable of comprehending many things, of acquiring considerable degrees of knowledge by our slender and contracted faculties. Now may we not suppose our minds strengthened and capacities dilated, so as fully to comprehend this globe of earth with its numerous appendages? May we not suppose them further enlarged to take in the solar system in all its relations? Nay, why may we not go further, and suppose them increased to comprehend the whole created universe, with all its inhabitants, their various relations, dependencies, duties, and necessities? If this is supposable, then a being of such great capacity, endowed with sufficient power, would be an accomplished judge of all rational beings—would be fit to dispense rewards to virtue and punishments to vice.

April 10. Saturday. The man to whom nature has given a great and surprising genius, will perform great and surprising achievements. But a soul originally narrow and confined will never be enlarged to a distinguishing capacity. Such a one must be content to grovel amidst pebbles and butterflies through the whole of his life. By diligence and attention indeed, he may possibly get the character of a man of sense; but never that of a great man.

15. Thursday. Drank tea and spent the evening at Mr. Putnam's, in conversation concerning Christianity. He is of opinion that the apostles were a company of enthusiasts. He says that we have only their word to prove that they spoke with different tongues, raised the dead, and healed the sick, &c *Endnote 023*

23. Friday. I can as easily still the fierce tempest or stop the rapid thunderbolt, as command the motions and operations of my own mind. I am dull and inactive, and all my resolutions, all the spirits I can muster are insufficient to rouse me from this senseless torpitude. My brains seem constantly in as great confusion and wild disorder as Milton's chaos; they are numb, dead. I have never any bright, refulgent ideas. Every thing appears in my mind dim and obscure, like objects seen through a dirty glass or roiled water.

24. Saturday. All my time seems to roll away unnoticed. I long to study sometimes, but have no opportunity. I long to be a master of Greek and Latin. I long to prosecute the mathematical and philosophical sciences. I long to know a little of ethics and moral philosophy. But I have no books, no time, no friends. I must therefore be contented to live and die an ignorant, obscure fellow.

25. Sunday. Astronomers tell us with good reason, that not only all the planets and satellites in our solar system, but all the unnumbered worlds that revolve round the fixed stars are inhabited, as well as this globe of earth. If this is the case, all mankind are no more in comparison of the whole rational creation of God, than a point to the orbit of Saturn. Perhaps all these different ranks of rational beings have in a greater or less degree committed moral wickedness. If so, I ask a Calvinist whether he will subscribe to this alternative, "Either God Almighty must assume the respective shapes of all these different species and suffer the penalties of their crimes in their stead, or

else all these beings must be consigned to everlasting perdition?"

26. Monday. The reflection that I penned yesterday appears upon the revision to be weak enough. For first, we know not that the inhabitants of other globes have sinned. Nothing can be argued in this manner till it is proved at least probable that all these species of rational beings have revolted from their rightful Sovereign. When I examine the little prospect that lies before me, and find an infinite variety of bodies in one horizon of, perhaps, two miles diameter, how many millions of such prospects there are upon the surface of this earth, how many millions of globes there are within our view, each of which has as many of these prospects upon its own surface as our planet; great and marvellous are thy works! &c.

28. Wednesday. Drank tea at Mr. Putnam's, walked with him to his farm, talked about all nature.

29. Thursday. Fast day; heard Mr. Maccarty, spent the evening at Mr. Putnam's. Our proper business in this life is not to accumulate large fortunes, not to gain high honors and important offices in the state, not to waste our health and spirits in pursuit of the sciences, but constantly to improve ourselves in habits of piety and virtue. Consequently the meanest mechanic who endeavors, in proportion to his ability, to promote the happiness of his fellow men, deserves better of society, and should be held in higher esteem than the greatest magistrate who uses his power for his own pleasures, or avarice, or ambition.

30. Friday. Reading Milton. That man's soul, it seems to me, was distended as wide as creation. His power over the human mind was absolute and unlimited. His genius was great beyond conception, and his learning without bounds. I can only gaze at him with astonishment, without comprehending the vast compass of his capacity.

May 1. Saturday. If we consider a little of this our globe, we find an endless variety of substances mutually

connected with and dependent on each other. In the wilderness we see an amazing profusion of vegetables, which afford sustenance and covering to the wild beasts. The cultivated plains and meadows produce grass for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man. The milk and the flesh of other animals afford a delicious provision for mankind. A great part of the human species are obliged to provide food and nourishment for other helpless and improvident animals. Vegetables sustain some animals; these animals are devoured by others, and these others are continually cultivating and improving the vegetable species. Thus, nature upon our earth is in a continual rotation. If we rise higher, we find the sun and moon, to a very great degree, influencing us. Tides are produced in the ocean; clouds in the atmosphere; all nature is made to flourish and look gay by these enlivening and invigorating luminaries. Yea, life and cheerfulness is diffused to all the other planets, as well as ours, upon the sprightly sunbeams. No doubt there is as great a multitude and variety of bodies upon each planet, in proportion to its magnitude, as there is upon ours. These bodies are connected with, and influenced by each other. Thus, we see the amazing harmony of our solar system. The minutest particle, in one of Saturn's satellites, may have some influence upon the most distant regions of the system. The stupendous plan of operation was projected by Him who rules the universe, and a part assigned to every particle of matter, to act in this great and complicated drama. The Creator looked into the remotest futurity, and saw his great designs accomplished by this inextricable, this mysterious complication of causes. But to rise still higher, this solar system is but one very small wheel in the great, the astonishing machine of the world. Those stars, that twinkle in the heavens, have each of them a choir of planets, comets, and satellites, dancing round them, playing mutually on each other, and all, together, playing on the

other systems that lie around them. Our system, considered as one body hanging on its centre of gravity, may affect and be affected by all the other systems within the compass of creation. Thus, it is highly probable every particle of matter influences and is influenced by every other particle in the whole collected universe.

2. Sunday. I think it necessary to call myself to a strict account how I spend my time, once a week, at least. Since the 14th of April, I have been studying the first part of Butler's Analogy.

3. Monday. Spent the evening and supped at Mr. Maccarty's. The love of fame naturally betrays a man into several weaknesses and fopperies that tend very much to diminish his reputation, and so defeat itself. Vanity, I am sensible, is my cardinal vice and cardinal folly; and I am in continual danger, when in company, of being led an ignis fatuus chase by it, without the strictest caution and watchfulness over myself.

4. Tuesday. Let any man, suppose of the most improved understanding, look upon a watch when the parts are separated. Let him examine every wheel and spring separately by itself. Yet, if the use and application of these springs and wheels is not explained to him, he will not be able to judge of the use and advantage of particular parts; much less will he be able if he has only one wheel. In like manner we, who see but a few cogs in one wheel of the great machine of the universe, can make no right judgment of particular phenomena in nature.

7. Friday. Spent the evening and supped at Mr. Maccarty's. A man's observing the flux of the tide to-day, renders it credible that the same phenomenon may be observed to-morrow. In the same manner, our experience that the Author of nature has annexed pain to vice, and pleasure to virtue, in general, I mean, renders it credible that the same, or a like disposition of things, may take place hereafter. Our observing that the state of minority

was designed to be an education for mature life, and that our good or ill success, in a mature life, depends upon our good or ill improvement of our advantages in minority, renders it credible that this life was designed to be an education for a future one; and that our happiness or misery, in a future life, will be allotted us according as our characters shall be virtuous or vicious. For God governs his great kingdom, the world, by very general laws. We cannot, indeed, observe many instances of these laws, but wherever we see any particular disposition of things, we may strongly presume that there are other dispositions of things, in other systems of nature, analogous and of a piece with this.

8. Saturday. Went a shooting with Mr. Putnam; drank tea with him and his lady.

9. Sunday. Since last Sunday I have wrote a few pages of the Spectator; read the last part of Butler's Analogy; wrote out the tract upon Personal Identity, and that upon the Nature of Virtue. A poor week's work!

11. Tuesday. The first day of Court. Nature and truth, or rather truth and right are invariably the same in all times and in all places; and reason, pure unbiased reason, perceives them alike in all times and in all places. But passion, prejudice, interest, custom, and fancy, are infinitely precarious; if, therefore, we suffer our understandings to be blinded or perverted by any of these, the chance is that of millions to one, that we shall embrace errors. And hence arises that endless variety of opinions entertained by mankind. The weather and the season are, beyond expression, delightful; the fields are covered with a bright and lively verdure; the trees are all in bloom, and the atmosphere is filled with a ravishing fragrance; the air is soft and yielding; and the setting sun sprinkled his departing rays over the face of nature, and enlivened all the landscapes around me; the trees put forth their leaves, and the birds fill the spray.

12. Wednesday. Rambled about all day, gaping and gazing.

14. Friday. Drank tea at the Colonel's. Not one new idea this week.

15. Saturday. A lovely day; soft vernal showers. Exercise invigorates and enlivens all the faculties of body and of mind; it arouses our animal spirits, it disperses melancholy; it spreads a gladness and satisfaction over our minds, and qualifies us for every sort of business, and every sort of pleasure.

16. Sunday. The week past was court week. I was interrupted by company, and the noisy bustle of the public occasion, so that I have neither read nor wrote any thing worth mentioning. Heard Mr. Thayer, and spent the evening at Mr. Putnam's very sociably.

17. Monday. The elephant and the lion, when their strength is directed and applied by man, can exert a prodigious force. But their strength, great and surprising as it is, can produce no great effects when applied by no higher ingenuity than their own. But man, although the powers of his body are but small and contemptible, by the exercise of his reason can invent engines and instruments, to take advantage of the powers in nature, and accomplish the most astonishing designs. He can rear the valley into a lofty mountain, and reduce the mountain to a humble vale. He can rend the rocks and level the proudest trees; at his pleasure the forest is cleared, and palaces rise; when he pleases the soaring eagle is precipitated to earth, and the light-footed roe is stopped in his career. He can cultivate and assist nature in her own productions, by pruning the trees and manuring the land. He makes the former produce larger and fairer fruit; and the latter to bring forth better and greater plenty of grain. He can form a communication between remotest regions for the benefit of trade and commerce, over the yielding and fluctuating element of water. The telescope has settled the regions of heaven, and



the microscope has brought up to view innumerable millions of animals that escape the observation of our naked sight.

23. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty. He is particularly fond of the following expressions: carnal, ungodly persons; sensuality and voluptuousness; walking with God, unregeneracy, rebellion against God; believers; all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; shut out of the presence of God; solid, substantial, and permanent joys; joys springing up in the soul; the shines of God's countenance.

When we consider the vast and incomprehensible extent of the material universe, those myriads of fixed stars that emerge out of the remote regions of space to our view by glasses,—and the finer our glasses the more of these systems we discover;—when we consider that space is absolutely infinite and boundless, that the power of the Deity is strictly omnipotent, and his goodness without limitation, who can come to a stop in his thoughts and say, hither does the universe extend and no further?

“Nothing can proceed from nothing.” But something can proceed from something, and thus the Deity produced this vast and beautiful frame of the universe out of nothing; that is, He had no preëxistent matter to work upon, or to change from a chaos into a world. But He produced a world into being by his Almighty fiat, perhaps, in a manner analogous to the production of resolutions in our minds. This week I have read one volume of Duncan Forbes's works, and one half of Bentley's Sermons at the Boylean Lectures.

24. Monday. Had the projectile force in the planets been greater than it is, they would not describe circles, but very eccentric ellipses round the sun; and then the inhabitants would be tormented, yea, destroyed, and the planets left barren and uninhabitable wastes, by extreme vicissitudes of heat and cold. It was many million times as likely that

some other degree of velocity would have been lighted on, as that the present would, if chance had the disposal of it; and any other degree would have absolutely destroyed all animal and sensitive, if not vegetable, inhabitants. Ergo, an intelligent and benevolent mind had the disposal and determination of these things.

28. Friday. If we examine critically the little prospect that lies around us, at one view we behold an almost infinite variety of substances over our heads. The sun blazes in divine effulgence; the clouds, tinged with various colors by the refracted sunbeams, exhibit most beautiful appearances in the atmosphere. The cultivated plains and meadows are attired in a delightful verdure, and variegated with the gay enamel of flowers and roses; on one hand we see an extensive forest, a whole kingdom of vegetables of the noblest kind; upon the hills we discern flocks of grazing cattle; and on the other hand a city rises up to view, with its spires among the clouds. All these, and many more objects encounter our eyes in the prospect of our horizon, perhaps two or three miles in diameter. Now every animal that we see in this prospect, men and beasts, is endued with a most curiously organized body. They consist of bones, and blood, and muscles, and nerves, and ligaments, and tendons, and chyle, and a million other things, all exactly fitted for the purposes of life, and motion, and action. Every plant has almost as complex and curious a structure as animals; and the minutest twig is supported and supplied with juices and life, by organs and filaments proper to draw this nutrition of the earth. It would be endless to consider, minutely, every substance or species of substances that falls under our eyes in this one prospect. Now let us for a minute consider how many million such prospects there are upon this single planet, all of which contain as great, and some a much greater variety of animals and vegetables. When we have been sufficiently astonished at this incomprehensible multitude of substances, let us rise in our thoughts, and

consider how many planets, and satellites, and comets, there are in this one solar system, each of which has as many such prospects upon its surface as our earth. Such a view as this may suffice to show us our ignorance; but if we rise still higher in our thoughts, and consider that stupendous army of fixed stars that is hung up in the immense space, as so many suns, each placed in the centre of his respective system, and diffusing his enlivening and invigorating influences to his whole choir of planets, comets, and satellites; and that each of this unnumbered multitude has as much superficies, and as many prospects, as our earth, we find ourselves lost and swallowed up in this incomprehensible, (I had almost said) infinite magnificence of nature. Our imaginations, after a few faint efforts, sink down into a profound admiration of what they cannot comprehend. God, whose almighty fiat first produced this amazing universe, had the whole plan in view from all eternity; intimately and perfectly knew the nature and all the properties of all these his creatures. He looked forward through all duration, and perfectly knew all the effects, all the events and revolutions that could possibly and would actually take place throughout eternity.

29. Saturday. Drank tea at Mr. Putnam's.

What is the proper business of mankind in this life? We come into the world naked, and destitute of all the conveniences and necessities of life; and if we were not provided for and nourished by our parents, or others, should inevitably perish as soon as born; we increase in strength of body and mind, by slow and insensible degrees; one third of our time is consumed in sleep, and three sevenths of the remainder is spent in procuring a mere animal sustenance; and if we live to the age of threescore and ten, and then sit down to make an estimate in our minds of the happiness we have enjoyed, and the misery we have suffered, we shall find, I am apt to think, that the overbalance of happiness is quite inconsiderable. We shall

find that we have been, through the greatest part of our lives, pursuing shadows, and empty but glittering phantoms, rather than substances. We shall find that we have applied our whole vigor, all our faculties, in the pursuit of honor, or wealth, or learning, or some other such delusive trifle, instead of the real and everlasting excellencies of piety and virtue. Habits of contemplating the Deity and his transcendent excellencies, and correspondent habits of complacency in, and dependence upon him; habits of reverence and gratitude to God, and habits of love and compassion to our fellow men; and habits of temperance, recollection, and self-government, will afford us a real and substantial pleasure. We may then exult in a consciousness of the favor of God, and the prospect of everlasting felicity.

30. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty. "You, who are sinners, are in continual danger of being swallowed up quick, and borne away by the mighty torrent of God's wrath and justice. It is now, as it were, restrained and banked up by his goodness. But he will, by and by, unless repentance prevent, let it out in full fury upon you." This week I have wrote the eighth Sermon of Bentley's Boylean Lectures. Read part of the first volume of Voltaire's Age of Louis XIV. I make poor weeks' works.

31. Monday. When we see or feel any body, we discern nothing but bulk and extension. We can change this extension into a great variety of shapes and figures, and, by applying our senses to it, can get ideas of those different figures; but can do nothing more than change the figure. If we pulverize glass or salt, the original constituent matter remains the same, only we have altered the contexture of its parts. Large loads and heaps of matter, as mountains and rocks, lie obstinate, inactive, and motionless, and eternally will remain so, unless moved by some force extrinsic to themselves. Dissolve the cohesion, and reduce these mountains to their primogenial atoms; these atoms

are as dull and senseless as they were when combined into the shape of a mountain. In short, matter has no consciousness of its own existence, has no power of its own, no active power I mean, but is wholly passive; nor can thought be ever produced by any modification of it. To say that God can superadd to matter a capacity of thought, is palpable nonsense and contradiction. Such a capacity is inconsistent with the most essential properties of matter.

June 1. Tuesday. The reasoning of mathematicians is founded on certain and infallible principles. Every word they use conveys a determinate idea, and by accurate definitions they excite the same ideas in the mind of the reader that were in the mind of the writer. When they have defined the terms they intend to make use of, they premise a few axioms, or self-evident principles, that every man must assent to as soon as proposed. They then take for granted certain postulates, that no one can deny them, such as, that a right line may be drawn from one given point to another; and from these plain simple principles they have raised most astonishing speculations, and proved the extent of the human mind to be more spacious and capable than any other science.

2. Wednesday. When we come into the world, our minds are destitute of all sorts of ideas. Our senses inform us of various qualities in the substances around us; as we grow up our acquaintance with things enlarges and spreads; colors are painted in our minds through our eyes; all the various modulations of sounds enter by our ears; fragrance and fœtor are perceived by the smell; extension and bulk by the touch. These ideas that enter, simple and uncompounded, through our senses, are called simple ideas, because they are absolutely one and indivisible. Thus, the whiteness of snow cannot be divided or separated into two or more whitenesses. The same may be said of all other colors. It is, indeed, in our power to mix or compound colors into new and more beautiful appearances than any

that are to be found in nature; so we can combine various sounds into one melodious tune; in short, we can modify and dispose the simple ideas of sensation into whatever shape we please. But these ideas can enter our minds no other way but through the senses. A man born blind will never gain one idea of light or color. One born deaf will never get an idea of sound.

5. Saturday. Dreamed away the afternoon.

14. Monday. He is not a wise man, and is unfit to fill any important station in society, that has left one passion in his soul unsubdued. The love of glory will make a General sacrifice the interest of his nation to his own fame. Avarice exposes some to corruption, and all to a thousand meannesses and villanies destructive to society. Love has deposed lawful kings, and aggrandized unlawful, ill deserving courtiers. Envy is more studious of eclipsing the lustre of other men by indirect stratagems, than of brightening its own lustre by great and meritorious actions. These passions should be bound fast, and brought under the yoke. Untamed, they are lawless bulls; they roar and bluster, defy all control, and sometimes murder their proper owner. But, properly inured to obedience, they take their places under the yoke without noise, and labor vigorously in their master's service. From a sense of the government of God, and a regard to the laws established by his providence, should all our actions for ourselves or for other men primarily originate; and this master passion in a good man's soul, like the larger fishes of prey, will swallow up and destroy all the rest.

15. Tuesday. Consider for one minute the changes produced in this country within the space of two hundred years. Then the whole continent was one continued dismal wilderness, the haunt of wolves and bears and more savage men. Now the forests are removed, the land covered with fields of corn, orchards bending with fruit, and the magnificent habitations of rational and civilized people.