

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

MEMOIRS OF BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN; WRITTEN BY
HIMSELF. [VOL. 2 OF 2]

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Memoirs of Benjamin Franklin; Written by Himself. [Vol. 2 of 2] / With his Most Interesting Essays, Letters, and Miscellaneous Writings; Familiar, Moral, Political, Economical, and Philosophical, Selected with Care from All His Published Productions, and Comprising Whatever Is Most Entertaining and Valuable to the General Reader:

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I have heard that nothing gives an author so great pleasure as to find his works respectfully quoted by others. Judge, then, how much I must have been gratified by an incident I am going to relate to you. I stopped my horse lately where a great number of people were collected at an auction of merchants' goods. The hour of the sale not being come, they were conversing on the badness of the times; and one of the company called to a plain, clean old man, with white locks, "Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the times? Will not these heavy taxes quite ruin the country? How shall we ever be able to pay them? What would you advise us to?" Father Abraham stood up and replied, "If you would have my advice, I will give it you in short; for *A word to the wise is enough*, as Poor Richard says." They joined in desiring him to speak his mind; and, gathering round him, he proceeded as follows:

"Friends," said he, "the taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly; and from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us, by allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice, and something may be done for us: *God helps them that help themselves*, as Poor Richard says.

"I. It would be thought a hard government that should tax its

people one tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service; but idleness taxes many of us much more; sloth, by bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. *Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labour wears; while the used key is always bright,* as Poor Richard says. *But dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of,* as Poor Richard says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep? forgetting that *The sleeping fox catches no poultry,* and that *There will be sleeping enough in the grave,* as Poor Richard says.

"If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be, as Poor Richard says, *the greatest prodigality;* since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost time is never found again; and what we call time enough, always proves little enough.* Let us, then, up and be doing, and doing to the purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. *Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy;* and *He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night;* while *Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him. Drive thy business, let not that drive thee;* and *Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise,* as Poor Richard says.

"So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We may make these times better if we bestir ourselves. *Industry need not wish, and he that lives upon hopes will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help, hands, for I have no lands;* or, if I have, they are smartly taxed. *He that hath a trade hath an estate; and he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and*

honour, as Poor Richard says; but then the trade must be worked at, and the calling followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious, we shall never starve; for, *At the workingman's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter*. Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter; for *Industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them*. What though you have found no treasure, nor has any rich relation left you a legacy? *Diligence is the mother of luck, and God gives all things to industry*. Then *plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep*. Work while it is called to-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered to-morrow. *One to-day is worth two to-morrows*, as Poor Richard says; and farther, *Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day*. If you were a servant, would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Are you, then, your own master? Be ashamed to catch yourself idle when there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, and your country. Handle your tools without mittens; remember that *The cat in gloves catches no mice*, as Poor Richard says. It is true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects; for *Constant dropping wears away stones*; and *By diligence and patience the mouse ate in two the cable*; and *Little strokes fell great oaks*.

"Methinks I hear some of you say, 'Must a man afford himself no leisure?' I will tell thee, my friend, what Poor Richard says: *Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure; and, since*

thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour. Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; for *A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things. Many, without labour, would live by their wits only, but they break for want of stock;* whereas industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect. *Fly pleasures, and they will follow you. The diligent spinner has a large shift; and now I have a sheep and a cow, everybody bids me good-morrow.*

"II. But with our industry we must likewise be steady, settled, and careful, and oversee our own affairs with our own eyes, and not trust too much to others; for, as Poor Richard says,

I never saw an oft-removed tree,
Nor yet an oft-removed family,
That throve so well as those that settled be.

And again, *Three removes are as bad as a fire;* and again, *Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee;* and again, *If you would have your business done, go; if not, send.* And again,

He that by the plough would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive.

And again, *The eye of a master will do more work than both his hands;* and again, *Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge;* and again, *Not to oversee workmen is to leave them your purse open.* Trusting too much to others' care is the

ruin of many; *for in the affairs of this world men are saved, not by faith, but by the want of it; but a man's own care is profitable; for, If you would have a faithful servant, and one that you like, serve yourself. A little neglect may breed great mischief; for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy; all for the want of a little care about a horseshoe nail.*

"III. So much for industry, my friends, and attention to one's own business; but to these we must add frugality, if we would make our industry more certainly successful. A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose all his life to the grindstone, and die not worth a groat at last. *A fat kitchen makes a lean will;* and

Many estates are spent in the getting,
Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting,
And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting.

If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as of getting. The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes.

"Away, then, with your expensive follies, and you will not then have so much cause to complain of hard times, heavy taxes, and chargeable families. And farther, *What maintains one vice would bring up two children.* You may think, perhaps, that a little tea, or a little punch now and then, diet a little more costly, clothes a little finer, and a little entertainment now and then, can be no

great matter; but remember, *Many a little makes a mickle*. Beware of little expenses; *A small leak will sink a great ship*, as Poor Richard says; and again, *Who dainties love, shall beggars prove*; and moreover, *Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them*.

"Here you are all got together at this sale of fineries and knickknacks. You call them *goods*; but, if you do not take care, they will prove *evils* to some of you. You expect they will be sold cheap, and perhaps they may for less than they cost; but, if you have no occasion for them, they must be dear to you. Remember what Poor Richard says: *Buy what thou hast no need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessaries*. And again, *At a great pennyworth pause a while*. He means, that perhaps the cheapness is apparent only, and not real; or the bargain, by straitening thee in thy business, may do thee more harm than good. For in another place he says, *Many have been ruined by buying good pennyworths*. Again, *It is foolish to lay out money in a purchase of repentance*; and yet this folly is practised every day at auctions, for want of minding the Almanac. Many a one, for the sake of finery on the back, have gone with a hungry belly, and half starved their families. *Silks and satins, scarlet and velvets, put out the kitchen fire*, as Poor Richard says.

"These are not the necessaries of life; they can scarcely be called the conveniences; and yet, only because they look pretty, how many want to have them! By these and other extravagances, the genteel are reduced to poverty, and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who, through industry and

frugality, have maintained their standing; in which case it appears plainly that *A ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees*, as Poor Richard says. Perhaps they have had a small estate left them, which they knew not the getting of; they think *It is day, and will never be night*; that a little to be spent out of so much is not worth minding; but *Always taking out of the meal tub and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom*, as Poor Richard says; and then, *When the well is dry, they know the worth of water*. But this they might have known before if they had taken his advice. *If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some; for he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing*, as Poor Richard says; and indeed so does he that lends to such people, when he goes to get it in again. Poor Dick farther advises, and says,

Fond pride of dress is sure a very curse;
Ere fancy you consult, consult your purse.

And again, *Pride is as loud a beggar as Want, and a great deal more saucy*. When you have bought one fine thing, you must buy ten more, that your appearance may be all of a piece; but Poor Dick says, *It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it*. And it is as truly folly for the poor to ape the rich, as for the frog to swell in order to equal the ox.

Vessels large may venture more,
But little boats should keep near shore.

It is, however, a folly soon punished; for, as Poor Richard says, *Pride that dines on vanity, sups on contempt. Pride breakfasted with Plenty, dined with Poverty, and supped with Infamy.* And, after all, of what use is this pride of appearance, for which so much is risked, so much is suffered? It cannot promote health nor ease pain; it makes no increase of merit in the person; it creates envy; it hastens misfortune.

"But what madness must it be to *run in debt* for these superfluities? We are offered, by the terms of this sale, six months' credit; and that, perhaps, has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spare the ready money, and hope now to be fine without it. But ah! think what you do when you run in debt; you give to another power over your liberty. If you cannot pay at the time, you will be ashamed to see your creditor; you will be in fear when you speak to him; you will make poor, pitiful, sneaking excuses, and, by degrees, come to lose your veracity, and sink into base, downright lying; for *The second vice is lying, the first is running in debt*, as Poor Richard says; and again, to the same purpose, *Lying rides upon Debt's back*, whereas a freeborn ought not to be ashamed nor afraid to see or speak to any man living. But poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue. *It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.*

"What would you think of that prince or of that government who should issue an edict forbidding you to dress like a gentleman or gentlewoman, on pain of imprisonment or

servitude? Would you not say that you were free, have a right to dress as you please, and that such an edict would be a breach of your privileges, and such a government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put your self under such tyranny, when you run in debt for such dress! Your creditor has authority, at his pleasure, to deprive you of your liberty, by confining you in jail till you shall be able to pay him. When you have got your bargain, you may, perhaps, think little of payment; but, as Poor Richard says, *Creditors have better memories than debtors; creditors are a superstitious sect, great observers of set days and times.* The day comes round before you are aware, and the demand is made before you are prepared to satisfy it; or, if you bear your debt in mind, the term, which at first seemed so long, will, as it lessens, appear extremely short. Time will seem to have added wings to his heels as well as his shoulders. *Those have a short Lent who owe money to be paid at Easter.* At present, perhaps, you may think yourselves in thriving circumstances, and that you can bear a little extravagance without injury; but

For age and want save while you may;
No morning sun lasts a whole day.

Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever, while you live, expense is constant and certain; and *It is easier to build two chimneys than to keep one in fuel,* as Poor Richard says; so, *Rather go to bed supperless than rise in debt.*

"IV. This doctrine, my friends, is reason and wisdom; but, after all, do not depend too much upon your own industry, and frugality, and prudence, though excellent things; for they may all be blasted, without the blessing of Heaven; and, therefore, ask that blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember, Job suffered, and was afterward prosperous.

"And now, to conclude, *Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other*, as Poor Richard says, and scarce in that; for it is true, *We may give advice, but we cannot give conduct*. However, remember this, *They that will not be counselled cannot be helped*; and farther, that, *If you will not hear Reason, she will surely rap your knuckles*, as Poor Richard says."

Thus the old gentleman ended his harangue. The people heard it, and approved the doctrine; and immediately practised the contrary, just as if it had been a common sermon; for the auction opened, and they began to buy extravagantly. I found the good man had thoroughly studied my Almanacs, and digested all I had dropped on these topics during the course of twenty-five years. The frequent mention he made of me must have tired any one else; but my vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious that not a tenth part of the wisdom was my own which he ascribed to me, but rather the gleanings that I had made of the sense of all ages and nations. However, I resolved to be the better for the echo of it; and, though I had at first determined to buy stuff for a new coat, I went away resolved to wear my old

one a little longer. Reader, if thou wilt do the same, thy profit will be as great as mine. I am, as ever, thine to serve thee,

Richard Saunders.

ON TRUE HAPPINESS

The desire of happiness in general is so natural to us, that all the world are in pursuit of it; all have this one end in view, though they take such different methods to attain it, and are so much divided in their notions of it.

Evil, as evil, can never be chosen; and, though evil is often the effect of our own choice, yet we never desire it, but under the appearance of an imaginary good.

Many things we indulge ourselves in may be considered by us as evils, and yet be desirable; but then they are only considered as evils in their effects and consequences, not as evils at present, and attended with immediate misery.

Reason represents things to us not only as they are at present, but as they are in their whole nature and tendency; passion only regards them in the former light. When this governs us, we are regardless of the future, and are only affected with the present. It is impossible ever to enjoy ourselves rightly, if our conduct be not such as to preserve the harmony and order of our faculties, and the original frame and constitution of our minds; all true happiness, as all that is truly beautiful, can only result from order.

While there is a conflict between the two principles of passion and reason, we must be miserable in proportion to the struggle; and when the victory is gained, and reason so far subdued as seldom to trouble us with its remonstrances, the happiness

we have then is not the happiness of our rational nature, but the happiness only of the inferior and sensual part of us, and, consequently, a very low and imperfect happiness to what the other would have afforded us.

If we reflect upon any one passion and disposition of mind, abstract from virtue, we shall soon see the disconnexion between that and true, solid happiness. It is of the very essence, for instance, of envy to be uneasy and disquieted. Pride meets with provocations and disturbances upon almost every occasion. Covetousness is ever attended with solicitude and anxiety. Ambition has its disappointments to sour us, but never the good fortune to satisfy us; its appetite grows the keener by indulgence, and all we can gratify it with at present serves but the more to inflame its insatiable desires.

The passions, by being too much conversant with earthly objects, can never fix in us a proper composure and acquiescence of mind. Nothing but an indifference to the things of this world, an entire submission to the will of Providence here, and a well-grounded expectation of happiness hereafter, can give us a true, satisfactory enjoyment of ourselves. Virtue is the best guard against the many unavoidable evils incident to us; nothing better alleviates the weight of the afflictions, or gives a truer relish of the blessings, of human life.

What is without us has not the least connexion with happiness, only so far as the preservation of our lives and health depends upon it. Health of body, though so far necessary that we cannot

be perfectly happy without it, is not sufficient to make us happy of itself. Happiness springs immediately from the mind; health is but to be considered as a condition or circumstance, without which this happiness cannot be tasted pure and unabated.

Virtue is the best preservation of health, as it prescribes temperance, and such a regulation of our passions as is most conducive to the well-being of the animal economy; so that it is, at the same time, the only true happiness of the mind, and the best means of preserving the health of the body.

If our desires are to the things of this world, they are never to be satisfied. If our great view is upon those of the next, the expectation of them is an infinitely higher satisfaction than the enjoyment of those of the present.

There is no happiness, then, but in a virtuous and self-approving conduct. Unless our actions will bear the test of our sober judgments and reflections upon them, they are not the actions, and, consequently, not the happiness, of a rational being.

PUBLIC MEN

The following is a dialogue between Socrates, the great Athenian philosopher, and one Glaucon, a private man, of mean abilities, but ambitious of being chosen a senator and of governing the republic; wherein Socrates in a pleasant manner convinces him of his incapacity for public affairs, by making him sensible of his ignorance of the interests of his country in their several branches, and entirely dissuades him from any attempt of that nature. There is also added, at the end, part of another dialogue the same Socrates had with one Charmidas, a worthy man, but too modest, wherein he endeavours to persuade him to put himself forward and undertake public business, as being very capable of it. The whole is taken from *Xenophon's Memorable Things of Socrates, Book Third*.

"A certain man, whose name was Glaucon, the son of Ariston, had so fixed it in his mind to govern the republic, that he frequently presented himself before the people to discourse of affairs of state, though all the world laughed at him for it; nor was it in the power of his relations or friends to dissuade him from that design. But Socrates had a kindness for him, on account of Plato, his brother, and he only it was who made him change his resolution. He met him, and accosted him in so winning a manner, that he first obliged him to hearken to his discourse. He began with him thus:

"You have a mind, then, to govern the republic?"

"I have so," answered Glaucon.

"You cannot," replied Socrates, "have a more noble design; for if you can accomplish it so as to become absolute, you will be able to serve your friends, you will raise your family, you will extend the bounds of your country, you will be known, not only in Athens, but through all Greece, and perhaps your renown will fly even to the barbarous nations, as did that of Themistocles. In short, wherever you come, you will have the respect and admiration of all the world."

"These words soothed Glaucon, and won him to give ear to Socrates, who went on in this manner: 'But it is certain, that if you desire to be honoured, you must be useful to the state.'

"Certainly," said Glaucon.

"And in the name of all the gods," replied Socrates, "tell me, what is the first service that you intend to render the state?"

"Glaucon was considering what to answer, when Socrates continued: 'If you design to make the fortune of one of your friends, you will endeavour to make him rich, and thus, perhaps, you will make it your business to enrich the republic?'

"I would," answered Glaucon.

"Socrates replied, 'Would not the way to enrich the republic be to increase its revenue?'

"It is very likely it would," answered Glaucon.

"Tell me, then, in what consists the revenue of the state, and to how much it may amount? I presume you have particularly

studied this matter, to the end that, if anything should be lost on one hand, you might know where to make it good on another; and that, if a fund should fail on a sudden, you might immediately be able to settle another in its place?'

"I protest,' answered Glaucon, 'I have never thought of this.'

"Tell me, at least, the expenses of the republic, for no doubt you intend to retrench the superfluous?'

"I never thought of this either,' said Glaucon.

"You were best, then, to put off to another time your design of enriching the republic, which you can never be able to do while you are ignorant both of its expenses and revenue.'

"There is another way to enrich a state,' said Glaucon, 'of which you take no notice; and that is, by the ruin [spoils] of its enemies.'

"You are in the right,' answered Socrates; 'but to this end it is necessary to be stronger than they, otherwise we shall run the hazard of losing what we have. He, therefore, who talks of undertaking a war, ought to know the strength on both sides, to the end that, if his party be the stronger, he may boldly advise for war, and that, if it be the weaker, he may dissuade the people from engaging themselves in so dangerous an enterprise.'

"All this is true.'

"Tell me, then,' continued Socrates, 'how strong our forces are by sea and land, and how strong are our enemies.'

"Indeed,' said Glaucon, 'I cannot tell you on a sudden.'

"If you have a list of them in writing, pray show it me; I should

be glad to hear it read.'

"'I have it not yet.'

"'I see, then,' said Socrates, 'that we shall not engage in war so soon; for the greatness of the undertaking will hinder you from maturely weighing all the consequences of it in the beginning of your government. But,' continued he, 'you have thought of the defence of the country; you know what garrisons are necessary, and what are not; you know what number of troops is sufficient in one, and not sufficient in another; you will cause the necessary garrisons to be re-enforced, and disband those that are useless?'

"'I should be of opinion,' said Glaucon, 'to leave none of them on foot, because they ruin a country on pretence of defending it.'

"'But,' Socrates objected, 'if all the garrisons were taken away, there would be nothing to hinder the first comer from carrying off what he pleased; but how come you to know that the garrisons behave themselves so ill? Have you been upon the place? Have you seen them?'

"'Not at all; but I suspect it to be so.'

"'When, therefore, we are certain of it,' said Socrates, 'and can speak upon better grounds than simple conjectures, we will propose this advice to the senate.'

"'It may be well to do so,' said Glaucon.

"'It comes into my mind, too,' continued Socrates, 'that you have never been at the mines of silver, to examine why they bring not in so much now as they did formerly.'

"'You say true; I have never been there.'

"Indeed, they say the place is very unhealthy, and that may excuse you.'

"You rally me now,' said Glaucon.

"Socrates added, 'But I believe you have at least observed how much corn our land produces, how long it will serve to supply our city, and how much more we shall want for the whole year; to the end you may not be surprised with a scarcity of bread, but may give timely orders for the necessary provisions.'

"There is a deal to do,' said Glaucon, 'if we must take care of all these things.'

"There is so,' replied Socrates; 'and it is even impossible to manage our own families well, unless we know all that is wanting, and take care to provide it. As you see, therefore, that our city is composed of above ten thousand families, and it being a difficult task to watch over them all at once, why did you not first try to retrieve your uncle's affairs, which are running to decay? and, after having given that proof of your industry, you might have taken a greater trust upon you. But now, when you find yourself incapable of aiding a private man, how can you think of behaving yourself so as to be useful to a whole people? Ought a man, who has not strength enough to carry a hundred pound weight, to undertake to carry a heavier burden?'

"I would have done good service to my uncle,' said Glaucon, 'if he would have taken my advice.'

"How,' replied Socrates, 'have you not hitherto been able to govern the mind of your uncle, and do you now believe yourself

able to govern the minds of all the Athenians, and his among the rest? Take heed, my dear Glaucon, take heed lest too great a desire of power should render you despised; consider how dangerous it is to speak and entertain ourselves concerning things we do not understand; what a figure do those forward and rash people make in the world who do so; and judge yourself whether they acquire more esteem than blame, whether they are more admired than contemned. Think, on the contrary, with how much more honour a man is regarded who understands perfectly what he says and what he does, and then you will confess that renown and applause have always been the recompense of true merit, and shame the reward of ignorance and temerity. If, therefore, you would be honoured, endeavour to be a man of true merit; and if you enter upon the government of the republic with a mind more sagacious than usual, I shall not wonder if you succeed in all your designs."

Thus Socrates put a stop to the disorderly ambition of this man; but, on an occasion quite contrary, he in the following manner exhorted Charmidas to take an employment.

"He was a man of sense, and more deserving than most others in the same post; but, as he was of a modest disposition, he constantly declined, and made great difficulties of engaging himself in public business. Socrates therefore addressed himself to him in this manner:

"If you knew any man that could gain the prizes in the public games, and by that means render himself illustrious, and acquire

glory to his country, what would you say of him if he refused to offer himself to the combat?'

"'I would say,' answered Charmidas, 'that he was a mean-spirited, effeminate fellow.'

"'And if a man were capable of governing a republic, of increasing its power by his advice, and of raising himself by this means to a high degree of honour, would you not brand him likewise with meanness of soul if he would not present himself to be employed?'

"'Perhaps I might,' said Charmidas; 'but why do you ask me this question?' Socrates replied, 'Because you are capable of managing the affairs of the republic, and nevertheless you avoid doing so, though, in quality of a citizen, you are *obliged* to take care of the commonwealth. Be no longer, then, thus negligent in this matter; consider your abilities and your duty with more attention, and let not slip the occasions of serving the republic, and of rendering it, if possible, more flourishing than it is. This will be a blessing whose influence will descend not only on the other citizens, but on your best friends and yourself.'"

THE WASTE OF LIFE

Anergus was a gentleman of a good estate; he was bred to no business, and could not contrive how to waste his hours agreeably; he had no relish for any of the proper works of life, nor any taste at all for the improvements of the mind; he spent, generally, ten hours of the four-and-twenty in his bed; he dozed away two or three more on his couch, and as many were dissolved in good liquor every evening, if he met with company of his own humour. Five or six of the rest he sauntered away with much indolence; the chief business of them was to contrive his meals, and to feed his fancy beforehand with the promise of a dinner and supper; not that he was so absolute a glutton or so entirely devoted to his appetite, but, chiefly because he knew not how to employ his thoughts better, he let them rove about the sustenance of his body. Thus he had made a shift to wear off ten years since the paternal estate fell into his hands; and yet, according to the abuse of words in our day, he was called a man of virtue, because he was scarce ever known to be quite drunken, nor was his nature much inclined to licentiousness.

One evening, as he was musing alone, his thoughts happened to take a most unusual turn, for they cast a glance backward, and began to reflect on his manner of life. He bethought himself what a number of living beings had been made a sacrifice to support his carcass, and how much corn and wine had been mingled with

those offerings. He had not quite lost all the arithmetic that he had learned when he was a boy, and he set himself to compute what he had devoured since he came to the age of man.

"About a dozen of feathered creatures, small and great, have, one week with another," said he, "given up their lives to prolong mine, which in ten years amounts to at least six thousand.

"Fifty sheep have been sacrificed in a year, with half a hecatomb of black cattle, that I might have the choicest part offered weekly upon my table. Thus a thousand beasts out of the flock and the herd have been slain in ten years' time to feed me, besides what the forest has supplied me with. Many hundreds of fishes have, in all their varieties, been robbed of life for my repast, and of the smaller fry as many thousands.

"A measure of corn would hardly afford me fine flour enough for a month's provision, and this arises to above six score bushels; and many hogsheads of ale and wine, and other liquors, have passed through this body of mine, this wretched strainer of meat and drink.

"And what have I done all this time for God or man? What a vast profusion of good things upon a useless life and a worthless liver! There is not the meanest creature among all these which I have devoured, but hath answered the end of its creation better than I. It was made to support human nature, and it hath done so. Every crab and oyster I have ate, and every grain of corn I have devoured, hath filled up its place in the rank of beings with more propriety and honour than I have done. Oh shameful waste

of life and time!"

In short, he carried on his moral reflections with so just and severe a force of reason, as constrained him to change his whole course of life, to break off his follies at once, and to apply himself to gain some useful knowledge, when he was more than thirty years of age. He lived many following years with the character of a worthy man and an excellent Christian; he performed the kind offices of a good neighbour at home, and made a shining figure as a patriot in the senate-house; he died with a peaceful conscience, and the tears of his country were dropped upon his tomb.

The world, that knew the whole series of his life, stood amazed at the mighty change. They beheld him as a wonder of reformation, while he himself confessed and adored the Divine power and mercy, which had transformed him from a brute to a man.

But this was a single instance; and we may almost venture to write MIRACLE upon it. Are there not numbers of both sexes among our young gentry, in this degenerate age, whose lives thus run to utter waste, without the least tendency to usefulness?

When I meet with persons of such a worthless character as this, it brings to my mind some scraps of Horace:

"Nos numerus sumus, et fruges consumere nati,

..... Alcinoique

..... juvenus,

Cui pulchrum fuit in medios dormire dies," &c.

PARAPHRASE

There are a number of us creep
Into this world, to eat and sleep;
And know no reason why they're born,
But merely to consume the corn,
Devour the cattle, fowl, and fish,
And leave behind an empty dish.
Though crows and ravens do the same,
Unlucky birds of hateful name,
Ravens or crows might fill their places,
And swallow corn and eat carcáses,
Then, if their tombstone, when they die,
Be n't taught to flatter and to lie.
There's nothing better will be said,
Than that *they've eat up all their bread,*
Drunk all their drink, and gone to bed.

SELF-DENIAL NOT THE ESSENCE OF VIRTUE

It is commonly asserted, that without self-denial there is no virtue, and that the greater the self-denial the greater the virtue.

If it were said that he who cannot deny himself anything he inclines to, though he knows it will be to his hurt, has not the virtue of resolution or fortitude, it would be intelligible enough; but, as it stands, it seems obscure or erroneous.

Let us consider some of the virtues singly.

If a man has no inclination to wrong people in his dealings, if he feels no temptation to it, and, therefore, never does it, can it be said that he is not a just man? If he is a just man, has he not the virtue of justice?

If to a certain man idle diversions have nothing in them that is tempting, and, therefore, he never relaxes his application to business for their sake, is he not an industrious man? Or has he not the virtue of industry?

I might in like manner instance in all the rest of the virtues; but, to make the thing short, as it is certain that the more we strive against the temptation to any vice, and practise the contrary virtue, the weaker will that temptation be, and the stronger will be that habit, till at length the temptation has no force or entirely vanishes; does it follow from thence that, in our endeavours to

overcome vice, we grow continually less and less virtuous, till at length we have no virtue at all?

If self-denial be the essence of virtue, then it follows that the man who is naturally temperate, just, &c., is not virtuous; but that, in order to be virtuous, he must, in spite of his natural inclination, wrong his neighbours, and eat, and drink, &c., to excess.

But perhaps it may be said, that by the word *virtue* in the above assertion is meant merit; and so it should stand thus: Without self-denial there is no merit, and the greater the self-denial the greater the merit.

The self-denial here meant must be when our inclinations are towards vice, or else it would still be nonsense.

By merit is understood desert; and when we say a man merits, we mean that he deserves praise or reward.

We do not pretend to merit anything of God, for he is above our services; and the benefits he confers on us are the effects of his goodness and bounty.

All our merit, then, is with regard to one another, and from one to another.

Taking, then, the assertion as it last stands,

If a man does me a service from a natural benevolent inclination, does he deserve less of me than another, who does me the like kindness against his inclination?

If I have two journeymen, one naturally industrious, the other idle, but both perform a day's work equally good, ought I to give

the latter the most wages?

Indeed, lazy workmen are commonly observed to be more extravagant in their demands than the industrious; for, if they have not more for their work, they cannot live as well. But though it be true to a proverb that lazy folks take the most pains, does it follow that they deserve the most money?

If you were to employ servants in affairs of trust, would you not bid more for one you knew was naturally honest than for one naturally roguish, but who has lately acted honestly? For currents, whose natural channel is dammed up till the new course is by time worn sufficiently deep and become natural, are apt to break their banks. If one servant is more valuable than another, has he not more merit than the other? and yet this is not on account of superior self-denial.

Is a patriot not praiseworthy if public spirit is natural to him?

Is a pacing-horse less valuable for being a natural pacer?

Nor, in my opinion, has any man less merit for having, in general, natural virtuous inclinations.

The truth is, that temperance, justice, charity, &c., are virtues, whether practised with or against our inclinations; and the man who practises them merits our love and esteem; and self-denial is neither good nor bad but as it is applied. He that denies a vicious inclination, is virtuous in proportion to his resolution; but the most perfect virtue is above all temptation; such as the virtue of the saints in heaven; and he who does a foolish, indecent, or wicked thing, merely because it is contrary to his inclination (like

some mad enthusiasts I have read of, who ran about naked, under the notion of taking up the cross), is not practising the reasonable science of virtue, but is a lunatic.

ON THE USEFULNESS OF THE MATHEMATICS

Mathematics originally signified any kind of discipline or learning, but now it is taken for that science which teaches or contemplates whatever is capable of being numbered or measured. That part of the mathematics which relates to numbers only, is called *arithmetic*; and that which is concerned about measure in general, whether length, breadth, motion, force, &c., is called *geometry*.

As to the usefulness of arithmetic, it is well known that no business, commerce, trade, or employment whatsoever, even from the merchant to the shopkeeper, &c., can be managed and carried on without the assistance of numbers; for by these the trader computes the value of all sorts of goods that he dealeth in, does his business with ease and certainty, and informs himself how matters stand at any time with respect to men, money, and merchandise, to profit and loss, whether he goes forward or backward, grows richer or poorer. Neither is this science only useful to the merchant, but is reckoned the *primum mobile* (or first mover) of all mundane affairs in general, and is useful for all sorts and degrees of men, from the highest to the lowest.

As to the usefulness of geometry, it is as certain that no curious art or mechanic work can either be invented, improved,

or performed without its assisting principles.

It is owing to this that astronomers are put into a way of making their observations, coming at the knowledge of the extent of the heavens, the duration of time, the motions, magnitudes, and distances of the heavenly bodies, their situations, positions, risings, settings, aspects, and eclipses; also the measure of seasons, of years, and of ages.

It is by the assistance of this science that geographers present to our view at once the magnitude and form of the whole earth, the vast extent of the seas, the divisions of empires, kingdoms, and provinces.

It is by the help of geometry the ingenious mariner is instructed how to guide a ship through the vast ocean, from one part of the earth to another, the nearest and safest way, and in the shortest time.

By help of this science the architects take their just measures for the structure of buildings, as private houses, churches, palaces, ships, fortifications, &c.

By its help engineers conduct all their works, take the situation and plan of towns, forts, and castles, measure their distances from one another, and carry their measures into places that are only accessible to the eye.

From hence also is deduced that admirable art of drawing sundials on any place, howsoever situate, and for any part of the world, to point out the exact time of the day, the sun's declination, altitude, amplitude, azimuth, and other astronomical matters.

By geometry the surveyor is directed how to draw a map of any country, to divide his lands, and to lay down and plot any piece of ground, and thereby discover the area in acres, rods, and perches; the gauger is instructed how to find the capacities or solid contents of all kinds of vessels, in barrels, gallons, bushels, &c.; and the measurer is furnished with rules for finding the areas and contents of superficies and solids, and casting up all manner of workmanship. All these, and many more useful arts, too many to be enumerated here, wholly depend upon the aforesaid sciences, namely, arithmetic and geometry.

This science is descended from the infancy of the world, the inventors of which were the first propagators of human kind, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and divers others.

There has not been any science so much esteemed and honoured as this of the mathematics, nor with so much industry and vigilance become the care of great men, and laboured in by the potentates of the world, namely, emperors, kings, princes, &c.

Mathematical demonstrations are a logic of as much or more use than that commonly learned at schools, serving to a just formation of the mind, enlarging its capacity, and strengthening it so as to render the same capable of exact reasoning, and discerning truth from falsehood in all occurrences, even subjects not mathematical. For which reason it is said the Egyptians, Persians, and Lacedæmonians seldom elected any new kings but such as had some knowledge in the mathematics; imagining those

who had not men of imperfect judgments, and unfit to rule and govern.

Though Plato's censure, that those who did not understand the 117th proposition of the 13th book of Euclid's Elements ought not to be ranked among rational creatures, was unreasonable and unjust, yet to give a man the character of universal learning, who is destitute of a competent knowledge in the mathematics, is no less so.

The usefulness of some particular parts of the mathematics, in the common affairs of human life, has rendered some knowledge of them very necessary to a great part of mankind, and very convenient to all the rest, that are any way conversant beyond the limits of their own particular callings.

Those whom necessity has obliged to get their bread by manual industry, where some degree of art is required to go along with it, and who have had some insight into these studies, have very often found advantages from them sufficient to reward the pains they were at in acquiring them. And whatever may have been imputed to some other studies, under the notion of insignificance and loss of time, yet these, I believe, never caused repentance in any, except it was for their remissness in the prosecution of them.

Philosophers do generally affirm that human knowledge to be most excellent which is conversant among the most excellent things. What science, then, can there be more noble, more excellent, more useful for men, more admirably high and

demonstrative, than this of the mathematics?

I shall conclude with what Plato says, in the seventh book of his *Republic*, with regard to the excellence and usefulness of geometry, being to this purpose:

"Dear friend – You see, then, that mathematics are necessary, because, by the exactness of the method, we get a habit of using our minds to the best advantage. And it is remarkable that, all men being capable by nature to reason and understand the sciences, the less acute, by studying this, though useless to them in every other respect, will gain this advantage, that their minds will be improved in reasoning aright; for no study employs it more, nor makes it susceptible of attention so much; and those who we find have a mind worth cultivating, ought to apply themselves to this study."

THE ART OF PROCURING PLEASANT DREAMS

*Inscribed to Miss * * * *, being written at her request*

As a great part of our life is spent in sleep, during which we have sometimes pleasant and some times painful dreams, it becomes of some consequence to obtain the one kind and avoid the other, for, whether real or imaginary, pain is pain and pleasure is pleasure. If we can sleep without dreaming, it is well that painful dreams are avoided. If, while we sleep, we can have any pleasing dreams, it is, as the French say, *autant de gagné*, so much added to the pleasure of life.

To this end it is, in the first place, necessary to be careful in preserving health, by due exercise and great temperance; for in sickness the imagination is disturbed, and disagreeable, sometimes terrible, ideas are apt to present themselves. Exercise should precede meals, not immediately follow them; the first promotes, the latter, unless moderate, obstructs digestion. If, after exercise, we feed sparingly, the digestion will be easy and good, the body lightsome, the temper cheerful, and all the animal functions performed agreeably. Sleep, when it follows, will be natural and undisturbed; while indolence, with full feeding, occasions nightmares and horrors inexpressible; we fall from precipices, are assaulted by wild beasts, murderers, and demons,

and experience every variety of distress. Observe, however, that the quantities of food and exercise are relative things; those who move much may, and, indeed, ought to, eat more; those who use little exercise should eat little. In general, mankind, since the improvement of cookery, eat about twice as much as nature requires. Suppers are not bad if we have not dined; but restless nights naturally follow hearty suppers after full dinners. Indeed, as there is a difference in constitutions, some rest well after these meals; it costs them only a frightful dream and an apoplexy, after which they sleep till doomsday. Nothing is more common in the newspapers than instances of people who, after eating a hearty supper, are found dead abed in the morning.

Another means of preserving health, to be attended to, is the having a constant supply of fresh air in your bedchamber. It has been a great mistake, the sleeping in rooms exactly closed, and in beds surrounded by curtains. No outward air that may come in to you is so unwholesome as the unchanged air, often breathed, of a close chamber. As boiling water does not grow hotter by longer boiling, if the particles that receive greater heat can escape, so living bodies do not putrefy if the particles, so fast as they become putrid, can be thrown off. Nature expels them by the pores of the skin and the lungs, and in a free, open air they are carried off; but in a close room we receive them again and again, though they become more and more corrupt. A number of persons crowded into a small room thus spoil the air in a few minutes and even render it mortal, as in the Black

Hole at Calcutta. A single person is said to spoil only a gallon of air per minute, and therefore requires a longer time to spoil a bedchamber-full; but it is done, however, in proportion, and many putrid disorders hence have their origin. It is recorded of Methusalem, who, being the longest liver, may be supposed to have best preserved his health, that he slept always in the open air; for, when he had lived five hundred years, an angel said to him, "Arise, Methusalem, and build thee a house, for thou shalt live yet five hundred years longer." But Methusalem answered and said, "If I am to live but five hundred years longer, it is not worth while to build me a house; I will sleep in the air, as I have been used to do." Physicians, after having for ages contended that the sick should not be indulged with fresh air, have at length discovered that it may do them good. It is therefore to be hoped that they may in time discover likewise that it is not hurtful to those who are in health, and that we may then be cured of the *aerophoba*, that at present distresses weak minds, and makes them choose to be stifled and poisoned rather than leave open the window of a bedchamber or put down the glass of a coach.

Confined air, when saturated with perspirable matter,¹ will not receive more; and that matter must remain in our bodies and occasion diseases; but it gives some previous notice of its being about to be hurtful, by producing certain uneasiness, slight

¹ What physicians call perspirable matter is that vapour which passes off from our bodies, from the lungs, and through the pores of the skin. The quantity of this is said to be five eighths of what we eat. – Author.

indeed at first, such as with regard to the lungs is a trifling sensation, and to the pores of the skin a kind of restlessness, which is difficult to describe, and few that feel it know the cause of it. But we may recollect that sometimes, on waking in the night, we have, if warmly covered, found it difficult to get asleep again. We turn often, without finding repose in any position. This fidgetiness (to use a vulgar expression for want of a better) is occasioned wholly by an uneasiness in the skin, owing to the retention of the perspirable matter, the bedclothes having received their quantity, and, being saturated, refusing to take any more. To become sensible of this by an experiment, let a person keep his position in the bed, but throw off the bedclothes, and suffer fresh air to approach the part uncovered of his body; he will then feel that part suddenly refreshed; for the air will immediately relieve the skin, by receiving, licking up, and carrying off, the load of perspirable matter that incommodes it. For every portion of cool air that approaches the warm skin, in receiving its portion of that vapour, receives therewith a degree of heat that rarefies and renders it lighter, when it will be pushed away, with its burden, by cooler and, therefore, heavier fresh air, which for a moment supplies its place, and then, being likewise changed and warmed, gives way to a succeeding quantity. This is the order of nature, to prevent animals being infected by their own perspiration. He will now be sensible of the difference between the part exposed to the air and that which, remaining sunk in the bed, denies the air access; for this part now manifests

its uneasiness more distinctly by the comparison, and the seat of the uneasiness is more plainly perceived than when the whole surface of the body was affected by it.

Here, then, is one great and general cause of displeasing dreams. For when the body is uneasy, the mind will be disturbed by it, and disagreeable ideas of various kinds will in sleep be the natural consequences. The remedies, preventive and curative, follow:

1. By eating moderately (as before advised for health's sake), less perspirable matter is produced in a given time; hence the bedclothes receive it longer before they are saturated, and we may therefore sleep longer before we are made uneasy by their refusing to receive any more.

2. By using thinner and more porous bedclothes, which will suffer the perspirable matter more easily to pass through them, we are less incommoded, such being longer tolerable.

3. When you are awakened by this uneasiness, and find you cannot easily sleep again, get out of bed, beat up and turn your pillow, shake the bedclothes well, with at least twenty shakes, then throw the bed open and leave it to cool; in the mean while, continuing undressed, walk about your chamber till your skin has had time to discharge its load, which it will do sooner as the air may be drier and colder. When you begin to feel the cold air unpleasant, then return to your bed, and you will soon fall asleep, and your sleep will be sweet and pleasant. All the scenes presented to your fancy will be, too, of the pleasing kind. I am

often as agreeably entertained with them as by the scenery of an opera. If you happen to be too indolent to get out of bed, you may, instead of it, lift up your bedclothes with one arm and leg, so as to draw in a good deal of fresh air, and, by letting them fall, force it out again. This, repeated twenty times, will so clear them of the perspirable matter they have imbibed, as to permit your sleeping well for some time afterward. But this latter method is not equal to the former.

Those who do not love trouble, and can afford to have two beds, will find great luxury in rising, when they wake in a hot bed, and going into the cool one. Such shifting of beds would also be of great service to persons ill of a fever, as it refreshes and frequently procures sleep. A very large bed, that will admit a removal so distant from the first situation as to be cool and sweet, may in a degree answer the same end.

One or two observations more will conclude this little piece. Care must be taken, when you lie down, to dispose your pillow so as to suit your manner of placing your head, and to be perfectly easy; then place your limbs so as not to bear inconveniently hard upon one another, as, for instance, the joints of your ancles; for, though a bad position may at first give but little pain and be hardly noticed, yet a continuance will render it less tolerable, and the uneasiness may come on while you are asleep, and disturb your imagination. These are the rules of the art. But, though they will generally prove effectual in producing the end intended, there is a case in which the most punctual observance of them

will be totally fruitless. I need not mention the case to you, my dear friend, but my account of the art would be imperfect without it. The case is, when the person who desires to have pleasant dreams has not taken care to preserve, what is necessary above all things,

A Good Conscience.

ADVICE TO A YOUNG TRADESMAN

To my Friend A. B.

As you have desired it of me, I write the following hints, which have been of service to me, and may, if observed, be so to you.

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

Remember that *credit* is money. If a man lets his money lie in my hands after it is due, he gives me the interest, or so much as I can make of it during that time. This amounts to a considerable sum where a man has good and large credit, and makes good use of it.

Remember that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again it is seven and threepence, and so on till it becomes a hundred pounds. The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding-sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even

scores of pounds.

Remember that six pounds a year is but a groat a day. For this little sum (which may be daily wasted either in time or expense unperceived) a man of credit may, on his own security, have the constant possession and use of a hundred pounds. So much in stock, briskly turned by an industrious man, produces great advantage.

Remember this saying, *The good paymaster is lord of another man's purse*. He that is known to pay punctually and exactly to the time he promises, may at any time, and on any occasion, raise all the money his friends can spare. This is sometimes of great use. After industry and frugality, nothing contributes more to the raising of a young man in the world than punctuality and justice in all his dealings; therefore never keep borrowed money an hour beyond the time you promised, lest a disappointment shut up your friend's purse for ever.

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

It shows, besides, that you are mindful of what you owe; it makes you appear a careful as well as an honest man, and that still increases your credit.

Beware of thinking all your own that you possess, and of living

accordingly. It is a mistake that many people who have credit fall into. To prevent this, keep an exact account for some time both of your expenses and your income. If you take the pains at first to mention particulars, it will have this good effect: you will discover how wonderfully small, trifling expenses mount up to large sums, and will discern what might have been, and may, for the future, be saved, without occasioning any great inconvenience.

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

An Old Tradesman.

RULES OF HEALTH

Eat and drink such an exact quantity as the constitution of thy body allows of, in reference to the services of the mind.

They that study much ought not to eat so much as those that work hard, their digestion being not so good.

The exact quantity and quality being found out, is to be kept to constantly.

Excess in all other things whatever, as well as in meat and drink, is also to be avoided.

Youth, age, and the sick require a different quantity.

And so do those of contrary complexions; for that which is too much for a phlegmatic man is not sufficient for a choleric.

The measure of food ought to be (as much as possibly may be) exactly proportionable to the quality and condition of the stomach, because the stomach digests it.

That quantity that is sufficient, the stomach can perfectly concoct and digest, and it sufficeth the due nourishment of the body.

A greater quantity of some things may be eaten than of others, some being of lighter digestion than others.

The difficulty lies in finding out an exact measure; but eat for necessity, not pleasure; for lust knows not where necessity ends.

Wouldst thou enjoy a long life, a healthy body, and a vigorous mind, and be acquainted also with the wonderful works of God,

labour in the first place to bring thy appetite to reason.

THE EPHEMERA; AN EMBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE

TO MADAME BRILLON, OF PASSY

Written in 1778

You may remember, my dear friend, that when we lately spent that happy day in the delightful garden and sweet society of the Moulin Joly, I stopped a little in one of our walks, and stayed some time behind the company. We had been shown numberless skeletons of a kind of little fly, called an ephemera, whose successive generations, we were told, were bred and expired within the day. I happened to see a living company of them on a leaf, who appeared to be engaged in conversation. You know I understand all the inferior animal tongues. My too great application to the study of them is the best excuse I can give for the little progress I have made in your charming language. I listened, through curiosity, to the discourse of these little creatures; but as they, in their national vivacity, spoke three or four together, I could make but little of their conversation. I found, however, by some broken expressions that I heard now

and then, they were disputing warmly on the merit of two foreign musicians, one a *cousin*, the other a *moscheto*; in which dispute they spent their time, seemingly as regardless of the shortness of life as if they had been sure of living a month. Happy people! thought I; you are certainly under a wise, just, and mild government, since you have no public grievances to complain of, nor any subject of contention but the perfections and imperfections of foreign music. I turned my head from them to an old gray-headed one, who was single on another leaf, and talking to himself. Being amused with his soliloquy, I put it down in writing, in hopes it will likewise amuse her to whom I am so much indebted for the most pleasing of all amusements, her delicious company and heavenly harmony.

"It was," said he, "the opinion of learned philosophers of our race, who lived and flourished long before my time, that this vast world, the Moulin Joy, could not itself subsist more than eighteen hours; and I think there was some foundation for that opinion, since, by the apparent motion of the great luminary that gives life to all nature, and which in my time has evidently declined considerably towards the ocean at the end of our earth, it must then finish its course, be extinguished in the waters that surround us, and leave the world in cold and darkness, necessarily producing universal death and destruction. I have lived seven of those hours, a great age, being no less than four hundred and twenty minutes of time. How very few of us continue so long! I have seen generations born, flourish, and expire! My present

friends are the children and grandchildren of the friends of my youth, who are now, alas, no more! And I must soon follow them; for, by the course of nature, though still in health, I cannot expect to live above seven or eight minutes longer. What now avails all my toil and labour in amassing honey-dew on this leaf, which I cannot live to enjoy? What the political struggles I have been engaged in for the good of my compatriot inhabitants of this bush, or my philosophical studies for the benefit of our race in general! for, in politics, what can laws do without morals? Our present race of ephemeræ will in a course of minutes become corrupt like those of other and older bushes, and, consequently, as wretched. And in philosophy how small our progress! Alas! art is long and life is short! My friends would comfort me with the idea of a name they say I shall leave behind me; and they tell me I have lived long enough to nature and to glory. But what will fame be to an ephemera who no longer exists? And what will become of all history in the eighteenth hour, when the world itself, even the whole Moulin Joly, shall come to its end and be buried in universal ruin?"

To me, after all my eager pursuits, no solid pleasures now remain but the reflection of a long life spent in meaning well, the sensible conversation of a few good lady ephemeræ, and now and then a kind smile and a tune from the ever amiable *Brillante*.

THE WHISTLE

TO MADAME BRILLON

Passy, November 10, 1779.

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

You ask what I mean? You love stories, and will excuse my telling one of myself.

When I was a child of seven years old, my friends, on a holyday, filled my pocket with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and, being charmed with the sound of a *whistle* that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my *whistle*, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told

me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind of what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the *whistle* gave me pleasure.

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

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

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

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

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

When I met with a man of pleasure, sacrificing every laudable

improvement of the mind or of his fortune to mere corporeal sensations, and ruining his health in their pursuit, *Mistaken man*, said I, *you are providing pain for yourself instead of pleasure; you give too much for your whistle.*

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

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

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

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

Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours very sincerely and with unalterable affection,

B. Franklin.

ON LUXURY, IDLENESS, AND INDUSTRY.²

It is wonderful how preposterously the affairs of this world are managed. Naturally one would imagine that the interest of a few individuals should give way to general interest; but individuals manage their affairs with so much more application, industry, and address than the public do theirs, that general interest most commonly gives way to particular. We assemble parliaments and councils to have the benefit of their collected wisdom; but we necessarily have, at the same time, the inconvenience of their collected passions, prejudices, and private interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower their wisdom and dupe its possessors: and if we may judge by the acts, *arrêts*, and edicts, all the world over, for regulating commerce, an assembly of great men is the greatest fool upon earth.

I have not yet, indeed, thought of a remedy for luxury. I am not sure that in a great state it is capable of a remedy, nor that the evil is in itself always so great as it is represented. Suppose we include in the definition of luxury all unnecessary expense, and then let us consider whether laws to prevent such expense are possible to be executed in a great country, and whether, if they could be executed, our people generally would

² From a letter to Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, dated at Passy, July 26th, 1784.

be happier, or even richer. Is not the hope of being one day able to purchase and enjoy luxuries a great spur to labour and industry! May not luxury, therefore, produce more than it consumes, if without such a spur people would be, as they are naturally enough inclined to be, lazy and indolent? To this purpose I remember a circumstance. The skipper of a shallop, employed between Cape May and Philadelphia, had done us some small service, for which he refused to be paid. My wife, understanding that he had a daughter, sent her a new-fashioned cap. Three years after, this skipper being at my house with an old farmer of Cape May, his passenger, he mentioned the cap, and how much his daughter had been pleased with it. "But," said he, "it proved a dear cap to our congregation." "How so?" "When my daughter appeared with it at meeting, it was so much admired that all the girls resolved to get such caps from Philadelphia; and my wife and I computed that the whole could not have cost less than a hundred pounds." "True," said the farmer, "but you do not tell all the story. I think the cap was, nevertheless, an advantage to us, for it was the first thing that put our girls upon knitting worsted mittens for sale at Philadelphia, that they might have wherewithal to buy caps and ribands there; and you know that that industry has continued, and is likely to continue, and increase to a much greater value, and answer better purposes." Upon the whole, I was more reconciled to this little piece of luxury, since not only the girls were made happier by having fine caps, but the Philadelphians by the supply of warm mittens.

In our commercial towns upon the seacoast fortunes will occasionally be made. Some of those who grow rich will be prudent, live within bounds, and preserve what they have gained for their posterity; others, fond of showing their wealth, will be extravagant and ruin themselves. Laws cannot prevent this; and perhaps it is not always an evil to the public. A shilling spent idly by a fool may be picked up by a wiser person, who knows better what to do with it. It is, therefore, not lost. A vain, silly fellow builds a fine house, furnishes it richly, lives in it expensively, and in a few years ruins himself; but the masons, carpenters, smiths, and other honest tradesmen have been by his employ assisted in maintaining and raising their families; the farmer has been paid for his labour, and encouraged, and the estate is now in better hands. In some cases, indeed, certain modes of luxury may be a public evil, in the same manner as it is a private one. If there be a nation, for instance, that exports its beef and linen to pay for the importation of claret and porter, while a great part of its people live upon potatoes and wear no shirts, wherein does it differ from the sot, who lets his family starve and sells his clothes to buy drink? Our American commerce is, I confess, a little in this way. We sell our victuals to the Islands for rum and sugar; the substantial necessaries of life for superfluities. But we have plenty, and live well, nevertheless, though, by being soberer, we might be richer.

The vast quantity of forest-land we have yet to clear and put in order for cultivation, will for a long time keep the body of our

nation laborious and frugal. Forming an opinion of our people and their manners by what is seen among the inhabitants of the seaports, is judging from an improper sample. The people of the trading towns may be rich and luxurious, while the country possesses all the virtues that tend to promote happiness and public prosperity. Those towns are not much regarded by the country; they are hardly considered as an essential part of the states; and the experience of the last war has shown, that their being in possession of the enemy did not necessarily draw on the subjection of the country, which bravely continued to maintain its freedom and independence notwithstanding.

It has been computed by some political arithmetician, that if every man and woman would work for four hours every day on something useful, that labour would produce sufficient to procure all the necessaries of life, want and misery would be banished out of the world, and the rest of the twenty-four hours might be leisure and pleasure.

What occasions, then, so much want and misery? It is the employment of men and women in works that produce neither the necessaries nor conveniences of life; who, with those who do nothing, consume necessaries raised by the laborious. To explain this.

The first elements of wealth are obtained by labour, from the earth and waters. I have land and raise corn. With this, if I feed a family that does nothing, my corn will be consumed, and at the end of the year I shall be no richer than I was at the

beginning. But if, while I feed them, I employ them, some in spinning, others in making bricks, &c., for building, the value of my corn will be arrested and remain with me, and at the end of the year we may all be better clothed and better lodged. And if, instead of employing a man I feed in making bricks, I employ him in fiddling for me, the corn he eats is gone, and no part of his manufacture remains to augment the wealth and convenience of the family; I shall, therefore, be the poorer for this fiddling man, unless the rest of my family work more or eat less, to make up the deficiency he occasions.

Look round the world and see the millions employed in doing nothing, or in something that amounts to nothing, when the necessaries and conveniences of life are in question. What is the bulk of commerce, for which we fight and destroy each other, but the toil of millions for superfluities, to the great hazard and loss of many lives by the constant dangers of the sea? How much labour is spent in building and fitting great ships to go to China and Arabia for tea and coffee, to the West Indies for sugar, to America for tobacco? These things can not be called the necessaries of life, for our ancestors lived very comfortably without them.

A question may be asked. Could all these people, now employed in raising, making, or carrying superfluities, be subsisted by raising necessaries? I think they might. The world is large, and a great part of it still uncultivated. Many hundred millions of acres in Asia, Africa, and America are still in a forest,

and a great deal even in Europe. On a hundred acres of this forest a man might become a substantial farmer; and a hundred thousand men, employed in clearing each his hundred acres, would hardly brighten a spot big enough to be visible from the moon, unless with Herschel's telescope; so vast are the regions still in wood.

It is, however, some comfort to reflect, that, upon the whole, the quantity of industry and prudence among mankind exceeds the quantity of idleness and folly. Hence the increase of good buildings, farms cultivated, and populous cities filled with wealth, all over Europe, which a few ages since were only to be found on the coast of the Mediterranean; and this, notwithstanding the mad wars continually raging, by which are often destroyed in one year the works of many years' peace. So that we may hope the luxury of a few merchants on the coast will not be the ruin of America.

One reflection more, and I will end this long, rambling letter. Almost all the parts of our bodies require some expense. The feet demand shoes; the legs stockings; and the rest of the body clothing; and the belly a good deal of victuals. Our eyes, though exceedingly useful, ask, when reasonable, only the cheap assistance of spectacles, which could not much impair our finances. But the eyes of other people are the eyes that ruin us. If all but myself were blind, I should want neither fine clothes, fine houses, nor fine furniture.

ON TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

Veritas luce clarior.³

A friend of mine was the other day cheapening some trifles at a shopkeeper's, and after a few words they agreed on a price. At the tying up of the parcels he had purchased, the mistress of the shop told him that people were growing very hard, for she actually lost by everything she sold. How, then, is it possible, said my friend, that you can keep on your business? Indeed, sir, answered she, I must of necessity shut my doors, had I not a very great trade. The reason, said my friend (with a sneer), is admirable.

There are a great many retailers who falsely imagine that being *historical* (the modern phrase for lying) is much for their advantage; and some of them have a saying, *that it is a pity lying is a sin, it is so useful in trade*; though if they would examine into the reason why a number of shopkeepers raise considerable estates, while others who have set out with better fortunes have become bankrupts, they would find that the former made up with truth, diligence, and probity, what they were deficient of in stock; while the latter have been found guilty of imposing on such customers

³ Truth is brighter than light.

as they found had no skill in the quality of their goods.

The former character raises a credit which supplies the want of fortune, and their fair dealing brings them customers; whereas none will return to buy of him by whom he has been once imposed upon. If people in trade would judge rightly, we might buy blindfolded, and they would save, both to themselves and customers, the unpleasantness of *haggling*.

Though there are numbers of shopkeepers who scorn the mean vice of lying, and whose word may very safely be relied on, yet there are too many who will endeavour, and backing their falsities with asseverations, pawn their salvation to raise their prices.

As example works more than precept, and my sole view being the good and interest of my countrymen, whom I could wish to see without any vice or folly, I shall offer an example of the veneration bestowed on truth and abhorrence of falsehood among the ancients.

Augustus, triumphing over Mark Antony and Cleopatra, among other captives who accompanied them, brought to Rome a priest of about sixty years old; the senate being informed that this man had never been detected in a falsehood, and was believed never to have told a lie, not only restored him to liberty, but made him a high priest, and caused a statue to be erected to his honour. The priest thus honoured was an Egyptian, and an enemy to Rome, but his virtue removed all obstacles.

Pamphilius was a Roman citizen, whose body upon his death

was forbidden sepulture, his estate was confiscated, his house razed, and his wife and children banished the Roman territories, wholly for his having been a notorious and inveterate liar.

Could there be greater demonstrations of respect for truth than these of the Romans, who elevated an enemy to the greatest honours, and exposed the family of a citizen to the greatest contumely?

There can be no excuse for lying, neither is there anything equally despicable and dangerous as a liar, no man being safe who associates with him; for *he who will lie will swear to it*, says the proverb; and such a one may endanger my life, turn my family out of doors, and ruin my reputation, whenever he shall find it his interest; and if a man will lie and swear to it in his shop to obtain a trifle, why should we doubt his doing so when he may hope to make a fortune by his perjury? The crime is in itself so mean, that to call a man a liar is esteemed everywhere an affront not to be forgiven.

If any have lenity enough to allow the dealers an excuse for this bad practice, I believe they will allow none for the gentleman who is addicted to this vice; and must look upon him with contempt. That the world does so, is visible by the derision with which his name is treated whenever it is mentioned.

The philosopher Epimenides gave the Rhodians this description of Truth. She is the companion of the gods, the joy of heaven, the light of the earth, the pedestal of justice, and the basis of good policy.

Eschines told the same people, that truth was a virtue without which force was enfeebled, justice corrupted; humility became dissimulation, patience intolerable, chastity a dissembler, liberty lost, and pity superfluous.

Pharmanes the philosopher told the Romans that truth was the centre on which all things rested: a chart to sail by, a remedy for all evils, and a light to the whole world.

Anaxarchus, speaking of truth, said it was health incapable of sickness, life not subject to death, an elixir that healeth all, a sun not to be obscured, a moon without eclipse, an herb which never withereth, a gate that is never closed, and a path which never fatigues the traveller.

But if we are blind to the beauties of truth, it is astonishing that we should not open our eyes to the inconvenience of falsity. A man given to romance must be always on his guard, for fear of contradicting and exposing himself to derision; for the most *historical* would avoid the odious character, though it is impossible, with the utmost circumspection, to travel long on this route without detection, and shame and confusion follow. Whereas he who is a votary of truth never hesitates for an answer, has never to rack his invention to make the sequel quadrate with the beginning of his story, nor obliged to burden his memory with minute circumstances, since truth speaks easily what it recollects, and repeats openly and frequently without varying facts, which liars cannot always do, even though gifted with a good memory.

NECESSARY HINTS TO THOSE THAT WOULD BE RICH

Written Anno 1736

The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money.

For six pounds a year you may have the use of one hundred pounds, provided you are a man of known prudence and honesty.

He that spends a groat a day idly, spends idly above six pounds a year, which is the price for the use of one hundred pounds.

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

He that idly loses five shillings' worth of time, loses five shillings, and might as prudently throw five shillings into the sea.

He that loses five shillings, not only loses that sum, but all the advantage that might be made by turning it in dealing, which, by the time that a young man becomes old, will amount to a considerable sum of money.

Again: he that sells upon credit, asks a price for what he sells equivalent to the principal and interest of his money for the time he is to be kept out of it; therefore, he that buys upon credit pays interest for what he buys, and he that pays ready money might

let that money out to use: so that he that possesses anything he bought, pays interest for the use of it.

Yet, in buying goods, it is best to pay ready money, because he that sells upon credit expects to lose five per cent. by bad debts; therefore he charges, on all he sells upon credit, an advance that shall make up that deficiency.

Those who pay for what they buy upon credit, pay their share of this advance.

He that pays ready money escapes, or may escape, that charge.

A penny saved is twopence clear,

A pin a day's a groat a year.

THE WAY TO MAKE MONEY PLENTY IN EVERY MAN'S POCKET

At this time, when the general complaint is that "money is scarce," it will be an act of kindness to inform the moneyless how they may re-enforce their pockets. I will acquaint them with the true secret of money-catching, the certain way to fill empty purses, and how to keep them always full. Two simple rules, well observed, will do the business.

First, let honesty and industry be thy constant companions; and,

Secondly, spend one penny less than thy clear gains.

Then shall thy hidebound pocket soon begin to thrive, and will never again cry with the empty bellyache: neither will creditors insult thee, nor want oppress, nor hunger bite, nor nakedness freeze thee. The whole hemisphere will shine brighter, and pleasure spring up in every corner of thy heart. Now, therefore, embrace these rules and be happy. Banish the bleak winds of sorrow from thy mind and live independent. Then shalt thou be a man and not hide thy face at the approach of the rich nor suffer the pain of feeling little when the sons of fortune walk at thy right hand: for independence, whether with little or much, is good fortune and placeth thee on even ground with the proudest

of the golden fleece. Oh, then, be wise, and let industry walk with thee in the morning, and attend thee until thou reachest the evening hour for rest. Let honesty be as the breath of thy soul, and never forget to have a penny when all thy expenses are enumerated and paid: then shalt thou reach the point of happiness, and independence shall be thy shield and buckler, thy helmet and crown; then shall thy soul walk upright, nor stoop to the silken wretch because he hath riches, nor pocket an abuse because the hand which offers it wears a ring set with diamonds.

THE HANDSOME AND DEFORMED LEG

There are two sorts of people in the world, who, with equal degrees of health and wealth, and the other comforts of life, become, the one happy and the other miserable. This arises very much from the different views in which they consider things, persons, and events, and the effect of those different views upon their own minds.

In whatever situation men can be placed, they may find conveniences and inconveniences; in whatever company, they may find persons and conversation more or less pleasing; at whatever table, they may meet with meats and drinks of better and worse taste, dishes better and worse dressed; in whatever climate, they will find good and bad weather; under whatever government, they may find good and bad laws, and good and bad administration of those laws; in whatever poem or work of genius, they may see faults and beauties; in almost every face and every person, they may discover fine features and defects, good and bad qualities.

Under these circumstances, the two sorts of people above mentioned fix their attention, those who are disposed to be happy on the conveniences of things, the pleasant parts of conversation, the well-dressed dishes, the goodness of the wines, the fine

weather, &c., and enjoy all with cheerfulness. Those who are to be unhappy, think and speak only of the contraries. Hence they are continually discontented themselves, and by their remarks sour the pleasures of society, offend personally many people, and make themselves everywhere disagreeable. If this turn of mind was founded in nature, such unhappy persons would be the more to be pitied. But as the disposition to criticise and to be disgusted is, perhaps, taken up originally by imitation, and is, unawares, grown into a habit, which, though at present strong, may nevertheless be cured; when those who have it are convinced of its bad effects on their felicity, I hope this little admonition may be of service to them, and put them on changing a habit which, though in the exercise it is chiefly an act of imagination, yet has serious consequences in life, as it brings on real griefs and misfortunes. For, as many are offended by, and nobody loves this sort of people, no one shows them more than the most common civility and respect, and scarcely that; and this frequently puts them out of humour, and draws them into disputes and contentions. If they aim at obtaining some advantage in rank or fortune, nobody wishes them success, or will stir a step or speak a word to favour their pretensions. If they incur public censure or disgrace, no one will defend or excuse, and many join to aggravate their misconduct, and render them completely odious. If these people will not change this bad habit, and condescend to be pleased with what is pleasing, without fretting themselves and others about the contraries, it is good

for others to avoid an acquaintance with them, which is always disagreeable, and sometimes very inconvenient, especially when one finds one's self entangled in their quarrels.

An old philosophical friend of mine was grown, from experience, very cautious in this particular, and carefully avoided any intimacy with such people. He had, like other philosophers, a thermometer to show him the heat of the weather, and a barometer to mark when it was likely to prove good or bad; but there being no instrument invented to discover, at first sight, this unpleasing disposition in a person, he for that purpose made use of his legs; one of which was remarkably handsome, the other, by some accident, crooked and deformed. If a stranger, at the first interview, regarded his ugly leg more than his handsome one, he doubted him. If he spoke of it, and took no notice of the handsome leg, that was sufficient to determine my philosopher to have no farther acquaintance with him. Everybody has not this two-legged instrument; but every one, with a little attention, may observe signs of that carping, fault-finding disposition, and take the same resolution of avoiding the acquaintance of those infected with it. I therefore advise those critical, querulous, discontented, unhappy people, that, if they wish to be respected and beloved by others and happy in themselves, they should *leave off looking at the ugly leg*.

ON HUMAN VANITY

Mr. Franklin, Meeting with the following curious little piece the other day, I send it to you to republish, as it is now in very few hands. There is something so elegant in the imagination, conveyed in so delicate a style, and accompanied with a moral so just and elevated, that it must yield great pleasure and instruction to every mind of real taste and virtue.

Cicero, in the first of his Tusculan questions, finely exposes the vain judgment we are apt to form of human life compared with eternity. In illustrating this argument, he quotes a passage of natural history from Aristotle, concerning a species of insects on the banks of the river Hypanis, that never outlive the day in which they are born.

To pursue the thought of this elegant writer, let us suppose one of the most robust of these *Hypanians*, so famed in history, was in a manner coeval with time itself; that he began to exist at break of day, and that, from the uncommon strength of his constitution, he has been able to show himself active in life, through the numberless minutes of ten or twelve hours. Through so long a series of seconds, he must have acquired vast wisdom in his way, from observation and experience.

He looks upon his fellow-creatures who died about noon to be happily delivered from the many inconveniences of old age; and can, perhaps, recount to his great grandson a surprising tradition

of actions before any records of their nation were extant. The young swarm of Hypanians, who may be advanced one hour in life, approach his person with respect, and listen to his improving discourse. Everything he says will seem wonderful to their short lived generation. The compass of a day will be esteemed the whole duration of time; and the first dawn of light will, in their chronology, be styled the great era of their creation.

Let us now suppose this venerable insect, this *Nestor* of *Hypania*, should, a little before his death, and about sunset, send for all his descendants, his friends and his acquaintances, out of the desire he may have to impart his last thoughts to them, and to admonish them with his departing breath. They meet, perhaps, under the spacious shelter of a mushroom, and the dying sage addresses himself to them after the following manner:

"Friends and fellow-citizens! I perceive the longest life must, however, end: the period of mine is now at hand; neither do I repine at my fate, since my great age has become a burden to me, and there is nothing new to me under the sun: the changes and revolutions I have seen in my country, the manifold private misfortunes to which we are all liable, the fatal diseases incident to our race, have abundantly taught me this lesson, that no happiness can be secure and lasting which is placed in things that are out of our power. Great is the uncertainty of life! A whole brood of our infants have perished in a moment by a keen blast! Shoals of our stragglers youth have been swept into the ocean by an unexpected breeze! What wasteful desolation have we not

suffered from the deluge of a sudden shower! Our strongest holds are not proof against a storm of hail, and even a dark cloud damps the very stoutest heart.

"I have lived in the first ages, and conversed with insects of a larger size and stronger make, and, I must add, of greater virtue than any can boast of in the present generation. I must conjure you to give yet further credit to my latest words, when I assure you that yonder sun, which now appears westward, beyond the water, and seems not to be far distant from the earth, in my remembrance stood in the middle of the sky, and shot his beams directly down upon us. The world was much more enlightened in those ages, and the air much warmer. Think it not dotage in me if I affirm that glorious being moves: I saw his first setting out in the east, and I began my race of life near the time when he began his immense career. He has for several ages advanced along the sky with vast heat and unparalleled brightness; but now, by his declination and a sensible decay, more especially of late, in his vigour, I foresee that all nature must fall in a little time, and that the creation will lie buried in darkness in less than a century of minutes.

"Alas! my friends, how did I once flatter myself with the hopes of abiding here forever! how magnificent are the cells which I hollowed out for myself! what confidence did I repose in the firmness and spring of my joints, and in the strength of my pinions! *But I have lived long enough to nature, and even to glory.* Neither will any of you, whom I leave behind, have equal

satisfaction in life, in the dark declining age which I see is already begun."

Thus far this agreeable unknown writer – too agreeable, we may hope, to remain always concealed. The fine allusion to the character of *Julius Cæsar*, whose words he has put into the mouth of this illustrious son of *Hypanis*, is perfectly just and beautiful, and aptly points out the moral of this inimitable piece, the design of which would have been quite perverted, had a virtuous character, a *Cato* or a *Cicero*, been made choice of to have been turned into ridicule. Had this *life of a day* been represented as employed in the exercise of virtue, it would have an equal dignity with a life of any limited duration, and, according to the exalted sentiments of Tully, would have been preferable to an immortality filled with all the pleasures of sense, if void of those of a higher kind: but as the views of this vainglorious insect were confined within the narrow circle of his own existence, as he only boasts the magnificent cells he has built and the length of happiness he has enjoyed, he is the proper emblem of all such insects of the human race, whose ambition does not extend beyond the like narrow limits; and notwithstanding the splendour they appear in at present, they will no more deserve the regard of posterity than the butterflies of the last spring. In vain has history been taken up in describing the numerous swarms of this mischievous species which has infested the earth in the successive ages: now it is worth the inquiry of the virtuous, whether the *Rhine* or the *Adige* may

not, perhaps, swarm with them at present, as much as the banks of the *Hypanis*; or whether that silver rivulet, the *Thames*, may not show a specious molehill, covered with inhabitants of the like dignity and importance. The busy race of beings attached to these fleeting enjoyments are indeed all of them engaged in the pursuit of happiness, and it is owing to their imperfect notions of it that they stop so far short in their pursuit. The present prospect of pleasure seems to bound their views, and the more distant scenes of happiness, when what they now propose shall be attained, do not strike their imagination. It is a great stupidity or thoughtlessness not to perceive that the happiness of rational creatures is inseparably connected with immortality. Creatures only endowed with sensation may in a low sense be reputed happy, so long as their sensations are pleasing; and if these pleasing sensations are commensurate with the time of their existence, this measure of happiness is complete. But such beings as are endowed with *thought* and *reflection* cannot be made happy by any limited term of happiness, how great soever its duration may be. The more exquisite and more valuable their enjoyments are, the more painful must be the thought that they are to have an end; and this pain of expectation must be continually increasing, the nearer the end approaches. And if these beings are themselves immortal, and yet insecure of the continuance of their happiness, the case is far worse, since an eternal void of delight, if not to say a state of misery, must succeed. It would be here of no moment, whether the time of their happiness were

measured by *days* or *hours*, by *months* or *years*, or by *periods* of the most immeasurable length: these swiftly-flowing streams bear no proportion to that ocean of infinity where they must finish their course. The longest duration of finite happiness avails nothing when it is past: nor can the memory of it have any other effect than to renew a perpetual pining after pleasures never to return; and since virtue is the only pledge and security of a happy immortality, the folly of sacrificing it to any temporal advantage, how important soever they may appear, must be infinitely great, and cannot but leave behind it an eternal regret.

ON SMUGGLING, AND ITS VARIOUS SPECIES

Sir, – There are many people that would be thought, and even think themselves, *honest* men, who fail nevertheless in particular points of honesty; deviating from that character sometimes by the prevalence of mode or custom, and sometimes through mere inattention, so that their *honesty* is partial only, and not *general* or universal. Thus one who would scorn to overreach you in a bargain, shall make no scruple of tricking you a little now and then at cards: another, that plays with the utmost fairness, shall with great freedom cheat you in the sale of a horse. But there is no kind of dishonesty into which otherwise good people more easily and frequently fall, than that of defrauding government of its revenues by smuggling when they have an opportunity, or encouraging smugglers by buying their goods.

I fell into these reflections the other day, on hearing two gentlemen of reputation discoursing about a small estate, which one of them was inclined to sell and the other to buy; when the seller, in recommending the place, remarked, that its situation was very advantageous on this account, that, being on the seacoast in a smuggling country, one had frequent opportunities of buying many of the expensive articles used in a family (such as tea, coffee, chocolate, brandy, wines, cambrics, Brussels laces,

French silks, and all kinds of India goods) 20, 30, and, in some articles, 50 *per cent.* cheaper than they could be had in the more interior parts, of traders that paid duty. The other *honest* gentleman allowed this to be an advantage, but insisted that the seller, in the advanced price he demanded on that account, rated the advantage much above its value. And neither of them seemed to think dealing with smugglers a practice that an *honest* man (provided he got his goods cheap) had the least reason to be ashamed of.

At a time when the load of our public debt, and the heavy expense of maintaining our fleets and armies to be ready for our defence on occasion, makes it necessary not only to continue old taxes, but often to look out for new ones, perhaps it may not be unuseful to state this matter in a light that few seem to have considered it in.

The people of Great Britain, under the happy constitution of this country, have a privilege few other countries enjoy, that of choosing the third branch of the legislature, which branch has alone the power of regulating their taxes. Now, whenever the government finds it necessary for the common benefit, advantage, and safety of the nation, for the security of our liberties, property, religion, and everything that is dear to us, that certain sums shall be yearly raised by taxes, duties, &c., and paid into the public treasury, thence to be dispensed by government for those purposes, ought not every *honest man* freely and willingly to pay his just proportion of this necessary

expense? Can he possibly preserve a right to that character, if by fraud, stratagem, or contrivance, he avoids that payment in whole or in part?

What should we think of a companion who, having supped with his friends at a tavern, and partaken equally of the joys of the evening with the rest of us, would nevertheless contrive by some artifice to shift his share of the reckoning upon others, in order to go off scot-free? If a man who practised this would, when detected, be deemed and called a scoundrel, what ought he to be called who can enjoy all the inestimable benefits of public society, and yet, by smuggling or dealing with smugglers, contrive to evade paying his just share of the expense, as settled by his own representatives in parliament, and wrongfully throw it upon his honest and, perhaps, much poorer neighbours? He will, perhaps, be ready to tell me that he does not wrong his neighbours; he scorns the imputation; he only cheats the king a little, who is very able to bear it. This, however, is a mistake. The public treasure is the treasure of the nation, to be applied to national purposes. And when a duty is laid for a particular public and necessary purpose, if, through smuggling, that duty falls short of raising the sum required, and other duties must therefore be laid to make up the deficiency, all the additional sum laid by the new duties and paid by other people, though it should amount to no more than a halfpenny or a farthing per head, is so much actually picked out of the pockets of those other people by the smugglers and their abettors and encouragers. Are

they, then, any better or other than pickpockets? and what mean, low, rascally pickpockets must those be that can pick pockets for halfpence and for farthings?

I would not, however, be supposed to allow, in what I have just said, that cheating the king is a less offence against honesty than cheating the public. The king and the public, in this case, are different names for the same thing; but if we consider the king distinctly it will not lessen the crime: it is no justification of a robbery, that the person robbed was rich and able to bear it. The king has as much right to justice as the meanest of his subjects; and as he is truly the common *father* of his people, those that rob him fall under the Scripture we pronounced against the son *that robbeth his father and saith it is no sin*.

Mean as this practice is, do we not daily see people of character and fortune engaged in it for trifling advantages to themselves? Is any lady ashamed to request of a gentleman of her acquaintance, that, when he returns from abroad, he would smuggle her home a piece of silk or lace from France or Flanders? Is any gentleman ashamed to undertake and execute the commission? Not in the least. They will talk of it freely, even before others whose pockets they are thus contriving to pick by this piece of knavery.

Among other branches of the revenue, that of the post office is, by a late law, appropriated to the discharge of our public debt, to defray the expenses of the state. None but members of parliament and a few public officers have now a right to avoid, by

a frank, the payment of postage. When any letter, not written by them or on their business, is franked by any of them, it is a hurt to the revenue, an injury which they must now take the pains to conceal by writing the whole superscription themselves. And yet such is our insensibility to justice in this particular, that nothing is more common than to see, even in a reputable company, a *very honest* gentleman or lady declare his or her intention to cheat the nation of threepence by a frank, and, without blushing, apply to one of the very legislators themselves, with a modest request that he would be pleased to become an accomplice in the crime and assist in the perpetration.

There are those who, by these practices, take a great deal in a year out of the public purse, and put the money into their own private pockets. If, passing through a room where public treasure is deposited, a man takes the opportunity of clandestinely pocketing and carrying off a guinea, is he not truly and properly a thief? And if another evades paying into the treasury a guinea he ought to pay in, and applies it to his own use, when he knows it belongs to the public as much as that which has been paid in, what difference is there in the nature of the crime or the baseness of committing it?

REMARKS CONCERNING THE SAVAGES OF NORTH AMERICA

Savages we call them, because their manners differ from ours, which we think the perfection of civility; they think the same of theirs.

Perhaps, if we could examine the manners of different nations with impartiality, we should find no people so rude as to be without any rules of politeness, nor any so polite as not to have some remains of rudeness.

The Indian men, when young, are hunters and warriors; when old, counsellors; for all their government is by the council or advice of the sages. There is no force, there are no prisons, no officers to compel obedience or inflict punishment. Hence they generally study oratory, the best speaker having the most influence. The Indian women till the ground, dress the food, nurse and bring up the children, and preserve and hand down to posterity the memory of public transactions. These employments of men and women are accounted natural and honourable. Having few artificial wants, they have abundance of leisure for improvement by conversation. Our laborious manner of life, compared with theirs, they esteem slavish and base; and the learning on which we value ourselves, they regard as frivolous and useless. An instance of this occurred at the treaty of

Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, anno 1744, between the government of Virginia and the Six Nations. After the principal business was settled, the commissioners from Virginia acquainted the Indians, by a speech, that there was at Williamsburgh a college, with a fund for educating Indian youth; and that, if the chiefs of the Six Nations would send down half a dozen of their sons to that college, the government would take care that they should be well provided for, and instructed in all the learning of the white people. It is one of the Indian rules of politeness not to answer a public proposition the same day that it is made; they think it would be treating it as a light matter, and that they show it respect by taking time to consider it, as of a matter important. They therefore deferred their answer till the day following, when their speaker began by expressing their deep sense of the kindness of the Virginia government in making them that offer; "for we know," says he, "that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those colleges, and that the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal; and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it: several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the northern provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but when they came

back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, nor kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make *men* of them."

Having frequent occasions to hold public councils, they have acquired great order and decency in conducting them. The old men sit in the foremost ranks, the warriors in the next, and the women and children in the hindmost. The business of the women is to take exact notice of what passes, imprint it in their memories, for they have no writing, and communicate it to their children. They are the records of the council, and they preserve the tradition of the stipulations in treaties a hundred years back; which, when we compare with our writings, we always find exact. He that would speak, rises. The rest observe a profound silence. When he has finished and sits down, they leave him five or six minutes to recollect, that, if he has omitted anything he intended to say, or has anything to add, he may rise again and deliver it. To interrupt another, even in common conversation, is reckoned highly indecent. How different this is from the conduct of a polite British House of Commons, where scarce a day passes

without some confusion that makes the speaker hoarse in calling *to order*; and how different from the mode of conversation in many polite companies of Europe, where, if you do not deliver your sentence with great rapidity, you are cut off in the middle of it by the impatient loquacity of those you converse with, and never suffered to finish it!

The politeness of these savages in conversation is indeed carried to excess, since it does not permit them to contradict or deny the truth of what is asserted in their presence. By this means they indeed avoid disputes, but then it becomes difficult to know their minds, or what impression you make upon them. The missionaries who have attempted to convert them to Christianity all complain of this as one of the great difficulties of their mission. The Indians hear with patience the truths of the gospel explained to them, and give their usual tokens of assent and approbation: you would think they were convinced. No such matter. It is mere civility.

A Swedish minister, having assembled the chiefs of the Susquehanna Indians, made a sermon to them, acquainting them with the principal historical facts on which our religion is founded; such as the fall of our first parents by eating an apple; the coming of Christ to repair the mischief; his miracles and sufferings, &c. When he had finished, an Indian orator stood up to thank him. "What you have told us," says he, "is all very good. We are much obliged by your kindness in coming so far to tell us those things which you have heard from your mothers. In return,

I will tell you some of those we have heard from ours.

"In the beginning, our fathers had only the flesh of animals to subsist on, and if their hunting was unsuccessful, they were starving. Two of our young hunters, having killed a deer, made a fire in the woods to broil some parts of it. When they were about to satisfy their hunger, they beheld a beautiful young woman descend from the clouds, and seat herself on that hill which you see yonder among the Blue Mountains. They said to each other, it is a spirit that perhaps has smelt our broiling venison, and wishes to eat of it: let us offer some to her. They presented her with the tongue: she was pleased with the taste of it, and said, Your kindness shall be rewarded; come to this place after thirteen moons, and you shall find something that will be of great benefit in nourishing you and your children to the latest generations. They did so, and, to their surprise, found plants they had never seen before, but which, from that ancient time, have been constantly cultivated among us, to our great advantage. Where her right hand had touched the ground, they found maize; where her left hand had touched it, they found kidney-beans; and where she had sat on it, they found tobacco." The good missionary, disgusted with this idle tale, said, "What I delivered to you were sacred truths, but what you tell me is mere fable, fiction, and falsehood." The Indian, offended, replied, "My brother, it seems your friends have not done you justice in your education; they have not well instructed you in the rules of common civility. You saw that we, who understand and practise

those rules, believed all your stories; why do you refuse to believe ours?"

When any of them come into our towns, our people are apt to crowd around them, gaze upon them, and incommode them where they desire to be private; this they esteem great rudeness, and the effect of the want of instruction in the rules of civility and good manners. "We have," say they "as much curiosity as you; and when you come into our towns, we wish for opportunities of looking at you; but for this purpose, we hide ourselves behind bushes, where you are to pass, and never intrude ourselves into your company."

Their manner of entering one another's villages has likewise its rules. It is reckoned uncivil in travelling strangers to enter a village abruptly, without giving notice of their approach. Therefore, as soon as they arrive within hearing, they stop and halloo, remaining there till invited to enter. Two old men usually come out to them and lead them in. There is in every village a vacant dwelling called the strangers' house. Here they are placed, while the old men go round from hut to hut, acquainting the inhabitants that strangers are arrived, who are probably hungry and weary; and every one sends them what he can spare of victuals, and skins to repose on. When the strangers are refreshed, pipes and tobacco are brought, and then, but not before, conversation begins, with inquiries who they are, whither bound, what news, &c., and it usually ends with offers of service if the strangers have occasion for guides, or any necessaries

for continuing their journey; and nothing is exacted for the entertainment.

ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE PRESS

Freedom of speech is a principal pillar of a free government: when this support is taken away, the constitution of a free society is dissolved, and tyranny is erected on its ruins. Republics and limited monarchies derive their strength and vigour from a popular examination into the actions of the magistrates; this privilege, in all ages, has been, and always will be, abused. The best of men could not escape the censure and envy of the times they lived in. Yet this evil is not so great as it may appear at first sight. A magistrate who sincerely aims at the good of society will always have the inclinations of a great majority on his side, and an impartial posterity will not fail to render him justice.

Those abuses of the freedom of speech are the exercises of liberty. They ought to be repressed; but to whom dare we commit the care of doing it? An evil magistrate, intrusted with power to *punish for words*, would be armed with a weapon the most destructive and terrible. Under pretence of pruning off the exuberant branches, he would be apt to destroy the tree.

It is certain that he who robs another of his moral reputation, more richly merits a gibbet than if he had plundered him of his purse on the highway. *Augustus Cæsar*, under the specious pretext of preserving the character of the Romans

from defamation, introduced the law whereby libelling was involved in the penalties of treason against the state. This law established his tyranny; and for one mischief which it prevented, ten thousand evils, horrible and afflicting, sprung up in its place. Thenceforward every person's life and fortune depended on the vile breath of informers. The construction of words being arbitrary, and left to the decision of the judges, no man could write or open his mouth without being in danger of forfeiting his head.

One was put to death for inserting in his history the praises of Brutus. Another for styling Cassius the last of the Romans. Caligula valued himself for being a notable dancer; and to deny that he excelled in that manly accomplishment was high treason. This emperor raised his horse, the name of which was *Incitatus*, to the dignity of consul; and though history is silent, I do not question but it was a capital crime to show the least contempt for that high officer of state! Suppose, then, any one had called the prime minister a *stupid animal*, the emperor's council might argue that the malice of the libel was the more aggravated by its being true, and, consequently, more likely to excite the *family of this illustrious magistrate* to a breach of the peace or to acts of revenge. Such a prosecution would to us appear ridiculous; yet, if we may rely upon tradition, there have been formerly proconsuls in America, though of more malicious dispositions, hardly superior in understanding to the consul *Incitatus*, and who would have thought themselves libelled to be called by their

proper names.

Nero piqued himself on his fine voice and skill in music: no doubt a laudable ambition! He performed in public, and carried the prize of excellence. It was afterward resolved by all the judges as good law, that whosoever would *insinuate* the least doubt of *Nero's* pre-eminence in the *noble art of fiddling* ought to be deemed a traitor to the state.

By the help of inferences and innuendoes, treasons multiplied in a prodigious manner. Grief was treason: a lady of noble birth was put to death for bewailing the death of her *murdered son*

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