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## DR. FRANKLIN.

[We are gratified in having it in our power to present our readers with a few Sketches on the life of Dr. FRANKLIN.]

### THE TABLET.—No. CIX.

“When an eminent man dies, it is worth while to enquire into the causes which conducted him to eminence.”

THERE is in the character of every distinguished person, something to admire, and something to imitate. The incidents, that have marked the life of a great man, always excite curiosity, and often afford improvement. If there are talents, we can never hope to equal; if there is a series of good fortune, we can never expect to enjoy, we still need not lose the labor of our biographical enquiries. We may probably become acquainted with habits, which it may be prudent to adopt, and discover virtues which we cannot fail to applaud. It will be easy for the reader to make a full application of these remarks in his contemplations upon the late celebrated Dr. FRANKLIN. By his death one of the best lights of the world may be said to be extinguished. I shall not attempt any historical details of the life of this illustrious patriot and philosopher, as I have nothing further in view than to make a few comments upon the most striking traits of his character.

Original genius was peculiarly his attribute. The native faculties of his mind qualified him to penetrate into every science; and his unremitting diligence left no field of knowledge unexplored. There were no limits to his curiosity. His enquiries were spread over the whole face of nature. But the study of man seemed to be his highest delight; and if his genius had any special bias, it lay in discovering those things that made men wiser and happier. As truth was the sole object of his researches, he was of course no sectary; and as reason was his guide, he embraced no system which that did not authorize. In short, he laid the whole volume of nature open before him, and diligently and faithfully perused it.

Nor were his political attainments less conspicuous than his philosophical. The ancients usually ranked good fortune among those circumstances of life which indicate merit. In this view Dr. Franklin is almost unrivalled, having seldom undertaken more than he accomplished. The world are too well acquainted with the events of his political career to require, at this time, a particular enumeration of them. It may be presumed the historians of the American revolution will exhibit them in proper colors.

If Dr. Franklin did not aspire after the splendor of eloquence, it was only because the demonstrative plainness of his manner was superior to it. Tho' he neither loved political debate, nor excelled in it, he still preserved much influence in public assemblies, and discovered an aptitude in his remarks, on all occasions. He was not fond of taking a leading part in such investigations as could never terminate in any degree of certainty. To come forward in questions which in their nature are indefinite, and in their issue problematical, does not comport with the caution of a man, who has taught himself to look for demonstration. He reserved his observations for those cases which science could enlighten, and common sense approve. The simplicity of his style was well adapted to the clearness of his understanding. His conceptions were so bright and perfect, that he did not choose to involve them in a cloud of expressions. If he used metaphors it was to illustrate, and not to embellish the truth. A man, possessing such a lively imagery of ideas, should never affect the arts of a vain rhetorician, whose excellence consists only in a beautiful arrangement of words. But whatever claims to eminence Dr. Franklin may have, as a politician or a scholar, there is no point of light in which his character shines with more lustre, than when we view him as a man or a citizen. He was eminently great in common things. Perhaps no man ever existed, whose life can with more justice be denominated useful.—Nothing ever passed through his hands without receiving improvement; and no person ever went into his company without gaining wisdom. His sagacity was so sharp, and his science so various, that whatever might be the profession or occupation of those with whom he conversed, he could meet every one upon their own ground. He could enliven every conversation with an anecdote, and conclude it with a moral.

The whole tenor of his life was a perpetual lecture against the idle, the extravagant, and the proud. It was his principal aim to inspire man-

kind with a love of industry, temperance and frugality; and to inculcate such duties as promote the important interests of humanity. He never wasted a moment of time, or lavished a farthing of money in folly and dissipation. Such expenses as the dignity of his station required he readily sustained, limiting them by the strictest rules of propriety. Many public institutions experienced his well-timed liberality, and he manifested a sensibility of heart by numerous acts of private charity.

By a judicious division of time Dr. Franklin acquired the art of doing every thing to advantage; and his amusements were of such a nature as could never militate with the main objects of his pursuit. In whatever situation he was placed by chance or design, he extracted something useful for himself or others. His life was remarkably full of incident. Every circumstance of it turned to some valuable account. The maxims, which his discerning mind has formed, apply to innumerable cases and characters. Those who move in the lowest, equally with those who move in the most elevated rank in society, may be guided by his instructions. In the private department of his life, he, in many respects, has furnished a most excellent model. His manners were easy and accommodating, and his address winning and respectful. All who knew him, speak of him as a most agreeable man; and all who have heard of him, applaud him as a very useful one. A man to wife, and so amiable could not but have many admirers, and many friends.

### SPEECH,

Of the King of Frenchmen, to the National Assembly, on the 4th of Feb. 1790.

[A Translation from an English paper, which has not before appeared in the American papers.]

GENTLEMEN,

THE weight of the present circumstances of the kingdom draws me to you. The gradual relaxation of all the ties of order and subordination, the suspension or the inactivity of justice, the discontents which arise from particular deprivation, the oppositions, the unhappy hatreds which are the inevitable consequence of long dissensions, the critical situation of the finances, and the uncertainty of the public funds; all these circumstances united, keep up a general agitation and anxiety in the minds of even the real friends to the prosperity of the kingdom.

A great and glorious end it is, which you have in view; but it must be attained without new convulsions. It was, I must profess, in a manner more mild and tranquil that I had hoped to conduct you, and uniting, for the public happiness, the knowledge and collected will of the Representatives of the nation; but my happiness and my glory are not the less intimately dependant on the success of your labors.

These labors I have hitherto guarded, by a continual vigilance, from the unhappy influence of those distressful circumstances, in the midst of which you have been placed. The horrors of famine which threatened us last year have been averted. The disorder which the state of the finances, the discredit, the excessive scarceness of specie, and the gradual decay of the revenue, ought naturally to produce; this disorder, or least its excess, has hitherto been avoided. I have, notwithstanding the feebleness of the means of authority, maintained the kingdom, not indeed in that perfect calm I could have wished, but in a state of sufficient tranquility to receive the blessings of a wife and well-regulated liberty; in fine, notwithstanding our interior situation, so well known, notwithstanding the storms which agitate other nations, I have preserved peace abroad, and have kept up with all the powers of Europe, such terms of respect and friendship, as ought to render this peace durable.

After having thus preserved you from those adverse circumstances, which might so easily have thwarted your labors, I now judge the moment is arrived, in which it imports the interest of the State, that I should associate myself in a still more manifest and express manner to the execution of all that you have concerted for the advantage of France. I cannot seize a better occasion of doing so than that in which you present for my acceptance the decrees designed to establish throughout the kingdom a new organization which is to have so important an influence on the prosperity of the Empire.

I will second, I will assist, by all the means in my power the success of this vast organization, on which depends, in my opinion, the safety of France; and I think it necessary to declare to you, that I too clearly see the dangers of all kinds that surround us, not to feel, that in the present dispositions of men's minds, and in the present state of public affairs, it is necessary that the new order of things should be established with calmness and tranquility, or that the kingdom must be exposed to all the calamities of anarchy.

Let it be thoroughly understood then, that the Monarch and the Representatives of the nation are united in the same interest, in the same will, to the end that this opinion, this firm belief may spread throughout the provinces a spirit of peace and good will, and that all honest and well-meaning citizens may take a zealous part in the different subdivisions of the general administration, and efficaciously concur in the re-establishment of the order and prosperity of the kingdom.

We ought not to dissemble, that much is to be done before we can arrive at the desired end.—An union of will, a connection of design are absolutely necessary to success. Continue then your labors, with minds unwearied by any other motives or passions than for the public good; let your first attention be fixed on the public liberty; but let it be also your care to soften, to calm all distrust, all dependency; put an end as soon as possible to those fears which banish so great a number of her citizens from France, an effect which at present exhibits a sad contrast with the laws of liberty and security you wish to establish.—Prosperity can only return with the general content.

A day will come—I love to dwell on the idea—when all Frenchmen will indistinctly acknowledge the advantage of the

entire suppression of the differences of order and rank; when every one will see without pain, that to be called to serve the State in any manner, it will be sufficient to render himself remarkable for his talents and his virtues.

Without doubt they who have abandoned their pecuniary privileges, they who will no longer, as heretofore, form a distinct order in the State, feel themselves subjected to sacrifices, the whole importance of which I well know; but I am also persuaded, that they will have the generosity of spirit to seek an indemnification in all those advantages which the establishment of National Assemblies presents to our view.

I will defend, I will maintain the constitutional liberty: I will do more and in concert with my Queen, who partakes of my sentiments, I will prepare betimes the mind of my son for the new order of things which circumstances have brought to pass. I will habituate him from his infancy, to be happy in the happiness of France, and to understand, in spite of the language of flatterers, that a wise constitution will preserve him from the dangers of inexperience, and that a just liberty will give a new value to the sentiments of love and attachment which this nation has for so many ages testified to its Kings.

I cannot doubt, but that in finishing your work, you will give strength to the executive power, without which no durable order within, nor consideration abroad, can be established.—No reasonable cause of distrust remains to withhold you: it is therefore your duty, as citizens and faithful Representatives of the nation, to secure to the State that stability which can only be derived from an active and tutelary authority.—You sure will call to mind, that without such an authority all the parts of your system of constitution would remain without correspondence, without the necessary key-stone; you will not lose sight of this great truth, that disorder in administration, by producing a confusion of powers, degenerates into the most dangerous and alarming of all tyrannies.

Not for myself then, Gentlemen, but for the happiness of our country, for its prosperity, for its power, I exhort you to cast off all those impressions of the moment that may prevent you from considering, in one great whole, the exigencies of such a kingdom as France is, as well in its vast extent and immense population, as in its inevitable relations with other States.

By what fatality is it, that at the moment of a returning calm, new troubles, new disturbances have arisen in the provinces? By what fatality is it, that my people give themselves up to new excesses? Ah! if they knew to what degree I am made miserable, when I hear the news of an unjust attack on the fortunes, or of an act of violence to the persons of my subjects, they would perhaps spare me this bitter grief.

I cannot speak to you of the great interests of the State, without pressing you to apply yourselves instantly, and in a definitive manner, to the re-establishing order in the finances, on which depends the tranquility of an unnumerable multitude of citizens, who are united by the strictest ties to the fortune of the State. It is time to appease all these anxieties; it is time to confer on this kingdom that force and credit which is its due.

May this day, in which your monarch comes to unite himself to you in the most unreserved manner, be a memorable epocha in the history of this Empire. It will be so, if my ardent vows, if my pressing exhortations can be the signal of peace and reconciliements among you. May those who yet hold back and withdraw themselves from a spirit of concord which is now become so necessary, make a sacrifice to me of all those recollections which afflict and torment them; I will repay them by my acknowledgments and my affection.—Let us all profess, reckoning from this day, let us all (and I will give the example) profess but one opinion, but one interest, but one will, attachment to the new constitution and an ardent desire of the peace, the happiness and the prosperity of France.”

## CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.  
TUESDAY, MARCH 30.

The proposition for assuming the state debts under consideration.

MR. STONE said he had mentioned on a former occasion that New-York and Pennsylvania were become accountable as States for large sums, the former on account of confiscated estates; the latter to the Penn family; the gentleman from Philadelphia had said that that State has no idea of burdening the union with that debt. He did not suppose that those States had it in contemplation to transfer them to the United States; but if the creditors prefer the funds of the United States to those of the individual governments, they can place their demands on a continental establishment, nor can the State prevent it. It had been said, that debts of this description were not considered by the Secretary in his estimate of the amount of the State debts; this affords additional strength to the argument against assuming, which arises from the uncertainty of the amount which we may have to provide funds for; it is evident in this way the State debts may be increased to an enormous amount.

Mr. LAWRENCE observed that it was doubted whether the accounts between the several States would ever be adjusted, and this formed a principal objection to the assumption of the State debts. He requested gentlemen, who had these doubts, to consider what had been done by the late and present government to effect this business; that a board of commissioners, with very extensive powers, had been erected; those commissioners had been recognized by the present government; provision had been made for their pay, and the pay of their clerks, and an addition to the pay of the latter had been agreed on by the house of representatives. The amendment to the present proposition, proposed by a gentleman from Virginia, and adopted by the committee, premised that effectual provision should be made for liquidating and settling these accounts: so that if those already adopted, and which were now in operation, were not sufficient, adequate and proper measures for the purpose would, it was highly probable, be agreed on. Really believing that these accounts would finally be adjusted, he could not discern that any injustice could be done by the assumption, because the sum assumed was to be charged to the State, and would be set off against claims of the State for the expenditures during the war, either for general or particular defence.

He further observed, that he considered the evidences of claims in possession of individuals were founded on such expenditures of monies and supplies furnished, as the States would eventually be credited for; and although there was an inequality in these debts at present, yet a final liquidation would do justice to all. In the intermediate time, he supposed it would be a measure founded in justice and sound policy to assume these demands, which were liquidated by the States, and which were possessed by individuals, because there was no solid distinction between them and those which they possessed as claims against the union; as the former