

of my life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with, and expecting the enjoyment of a week's uninterrupted leisure in my present country retirement, I sit down to write them for you. To which I have besides some other inducements. Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducting means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated. [1] After the words "agreeable to" the words "some of" were interlined and af-terward effaced.—B. That felicity, when I reflected on it, has induced me sometimes to say, that were it offered to my choice, I should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some faults of the first. So I might, besides correcting the faults, change some sinister accidents and events of it for others more favorable. But though this was denied, I should still accept the offer. Since such a repetition is not to be expected, the next thing most like living one's life over again seems to be a recollection of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible by putting it down in writing. Hereby, too, I shall indulge the inclination so natural in old men, to be talking of themselves and their own past actions; and I shall indulge it without being tiresome to others, who, through respect to age, might conceive themselves obliged to give me a hearing, since this may be read or not as any one pleases. And, lastly (I may as well confess it, since my denial of it will be believed by nobody), perhaps I shall a good deal gratify my own vanity. Indeed, I scarce ever heard or saw the introductory words, "Without vanity I may say," &c., but some vain thing immediately followed. Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor, and to others that are within his sphere of action; and therefore, in many cases, it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life. And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I owe the mentioned happiness of my past life to His kind providence, which lead me to the means I used and gave them success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not presume, that the same goodness will still be exercised toward me, in continuing that happiness, or enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done: the complexion of my future fortune being known to Him only in whose power it is to bless to us even our afflictions. The notes one of my uncles (who had the same kind of curiosity in collecting family anecdotes) once put into my hands, furnished me with several particulars relating to our ancestors. From these notes I learned that the family had lived in the same village, Ecton, in Northamptonshire, for three hundred years, and how much longer he knew not (perhaps from the time when the name of Franklin, that before was the name of an order of people, was assumed by them as a surname when others took surnames all over the kingdom), on a freehold of about thirty acres, aided by the smith's business, which had continued in the family till his time, the eldest son being always bred to that business; a custom which he and my father followed as to their eldest sons. When I ssearched the registers at Ecton, I found an account of their births, marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, there being no registers kept in that parish at any time preceding. By that register I perceived that I was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations back. My grandfather Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Ecton till he grew too old to follow bu-siness longer, when he went to live with his son John, a dyer at Banbury, in Oxfordshire, with whom my father Fisher, of Wellingborough, sold it to Mr. Isted, now Lord of the manor thence found many more particulars. Thomas was bred a smith under his father's domestic undertakings for the county or town of Northampton, and his father at Ecton, I remember, struck you as something extraordinary, from it being well known, for when I was a boy he came over to my father in Boston, and I remember, as a specimen [2] He had formed a short-hand of his own, which he used of them. He was also much of a politician; too much, perhaps, for his health, and in octavo. A dealer in old books met with them, and knowing m that the poetry is not given. Mr. Sparks informs us (Life of Franklin, p. 6) that the danger of trouble on account of their zeal against popery. They had got an En- glishman standing at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor coming, who was an Offi- cial, when some of the ministers that had been outed for nonconformity holding c the conventicles having been forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed, induced s cond wife ten years in all seventeen; of which I remember thirteen sitting at one time in England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather in his church histor- 1675, in the home-spun verse of that time and people, and addressed to those then co- m on many judgments of God to punish so heinous an offense, and exhorting a repeal of om good-will, and, therefore, he would be known to be the author. "Because to be a lib- elli-er (says he) I hate it with my hear- h. My early readiness in learning to a stock to set up with, if I would le-antime, from a view of the expen- y a then famous man, Mr. George B-usiness he was not bred to, but h- ng inclination for the sea, but my fa- sometimes led them into scrapes, build a wharff there fit for us to sta- ments, sometimes two or three to a usefulness of the work, mine convi- that when he played psalm tunes o- n prudential matters, both in private belonged to, and showed a good d- took care to start some ingenious- good or bad flavor, preferable or in- me in travelling, where my compan- he at 89, and she at 85 years of age- lessing. They maintained a large fa- is stone. J.F. born 1655, died 1744, till I was twelve years old; and my- e more agreeable, I should break a- o see good workmen handle their e- cutter's trade, and my uncle Ben- hands was ever laid out in books- ivity, most of which I read, and h- De Foe's, called an Essay on Projec- In 1717 my brother James returned as persuaded, and signed the inden- . An acquaintance with the apprenti- an ingenious tradesman, Mr. Math- d put me on composing occasional ha- were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being g had been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement, I sh- and very desirous of confuting one of the other, which disputatious turn, by the way, is apt to become a very- may have occasion for friends. I had caught it by reading my father's books of dispute about religion. P- er, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilit- ily more eloquent, had a ready perjury of words; and sometimes, as I thought, bore me down more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again- n for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied d the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which is time I met with an odd volume of the Spectator. It was the third. I ha- nd then, without looking at the book, try'd to complete the papers again- ous in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acqui- o fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I too- deavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form th- rtain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve t- s, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much- book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determi- f preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, makin- r buying books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the r- r return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that gra- etick, and went through the whole by myself with great ease. I also rea- n improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it wa- stances of the same method. I was charm'd with it, adopted it, dropt m- ng to those against whom I used it; therefore I took a delight in it, pract- at neither myself nor my cause always deserved. I continu'd this meth- n opinion; but rather say, I conceive or apprehend a thing to be so and- eat I have been from time to time engag'd in promoting; and, as the c- eat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to- others, and yet at the same time express yourself as firmly fix'd in your- de those whose concurrence you desire. Pope says, judiciously: "Men should be taught as if y- modesty is want of sense." If you ask, Why less properly? I must repeat the lines, "Immodest w- fense, That want of modesty is want of sense." This, however, I should submit to better judgm- rom the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being, in their judgment, enough- He had some ingenious men among his friends, who amus'd themselves by writing little piece- y a boy, and suspecting that my brother would object to printing anything of mine in his paper- y read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with- as I then esteem'd them. Encourag'd, however, by this, I wrote and con- tance, and in a manner that did not quite please him, as he thought, pr- s from me as he would from another, while I thought he demean'd m- ionate, and had often beaten me, which I took extremely amiss; and, th- that I had stuck to me through my whole life. One of the pieces in our n- il; but, tho' I did not give them any satisfaction, they content'd themself- and I made bold to give our rulers some rubs in it, which my brother to- er called the New England Courant." There was a consultation held in o- NJAMIN FRANKLIN; and to avoid the censure of the Assembly, that mig- m, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme it was; however- t fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of th- would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting employment in any- made myself a little obnoxious to the governing party, and, from the ar- but, my father now siding with my brother, I was sensible that, if I att- ild, whose friends would compel me to marry her, and therefore I could- of any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket. My i- , but removed from thence upon the quarrel of George Keith. He could- r, in a boat for Amboy, leaving my chest and things to follow me round- o his shock pate, and drew him up, so that we got him in again. His duc- to own language. I have since found that it has been translated into m- surf, as it were, brought into the company and present at the discourse- , but they either did not understand us, or thought it impracticable, so t- d thro' to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner- rum, and the water we sail'd on being salt. In the evening I found myself- t of the night, my fever left me, and in the morning, crossing the ferry, I pr-