

第1卷

富兰克林自传

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

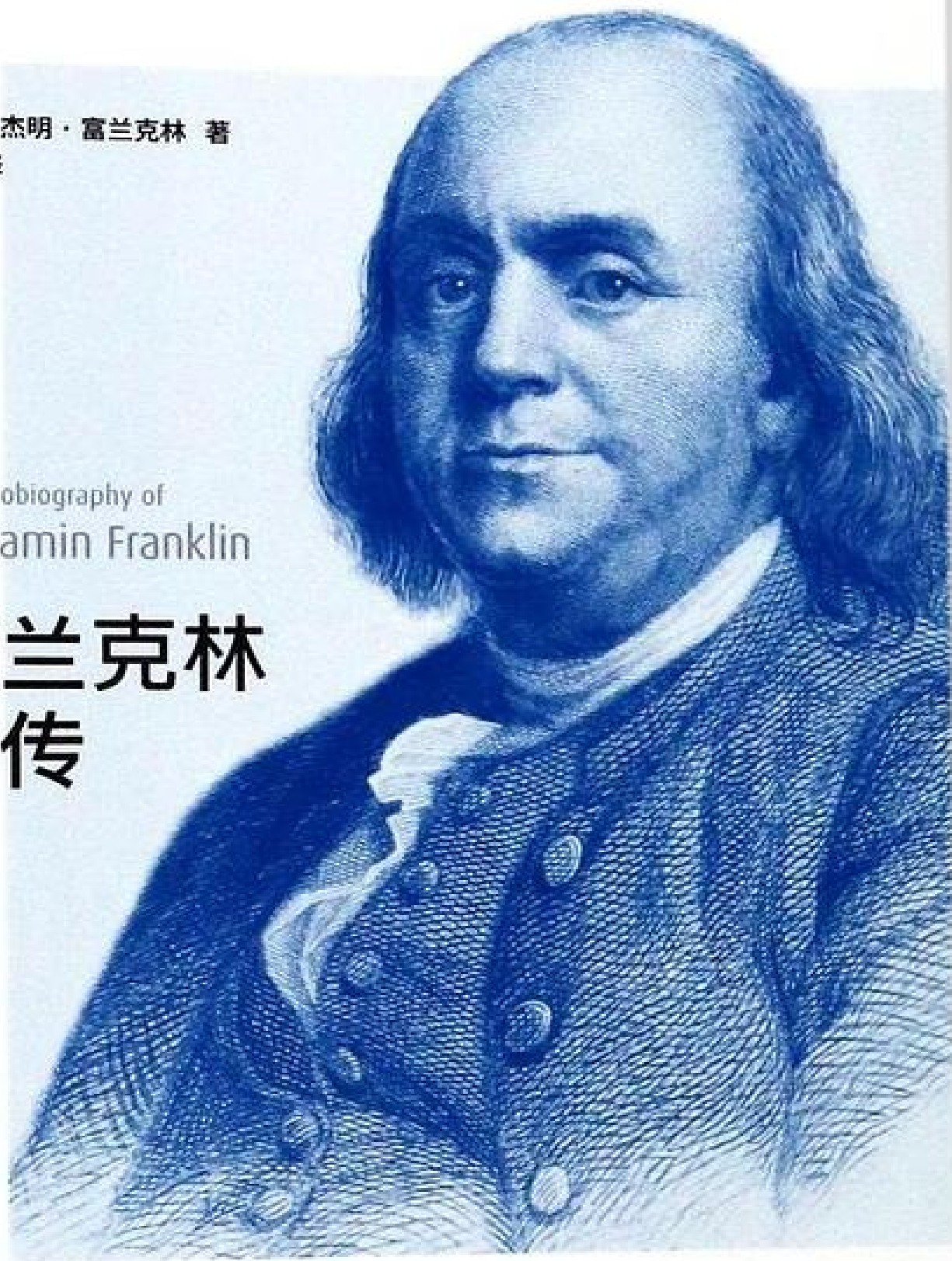
Benjamin Franklin

天津出版传媒集团

[美] 本杰明·富兰克林 著  
孙伊 译

The autobiography of  
Benjamin Franklin

# 富兰克林 自传



天津出版传媒集团  
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**封面**

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# 中文

## 卷一 正传

《正传》创作于1771年，是六十五岁的富兰克林写给时任新泽西总督的私生子威廉·富兰克林（William Franklin）的家信。写作时，富兰克林正在英国的特怀福德（Twyford）圣阿萨夫教堂（St. Asaph）主教家中度假，用了十四天完成。

### 第一章 家族与童年

亲爱的儿子：

你知道的，我一向喜欢搜集咱们祖辈的趣闻轶事。你可能还记得，咱们在英国的时候，我还曾为此到处走访尚在人世的亲戚。我想，或许同样的，你也愿意了解我的人生经历，尤其是其中你尚未了解的部分。目前我在乡间休假，可以安享一个星期的清闲，正好可以坐下来，为你写下我一生的故事。

促使我写自传的还有其他一些原因：我原本出身社会底层，过着贫苦卑微的生活；如今却扭转了命运，变得富裕幸福，在社会上也拥有处处受人尊敬的声望。我迄今走过的人生也算顺利，为人处事也得蒙上天福佑，取得了相当的成功。我的子孙后代也许愿意了解其中的成功之道，其中或许有与他们的境况相合的，可供他们借鉴仿效。

现在，回首一生的幸福之处，我不禁要说，如果重新来选择，倒十分愿意把这辈子照这样再活一遍，但只求能像作家那样，在“再版”时订正第一版的错误。除了订正错误外，我还想把一些不幸的境遇变得更顺利些。不过即使不能做出改变，我也愿意重演此生。可是人不可能再活一遍，那么最接近的或许就是回忆了，而让回忆留存长久的办法，就是提笔把它们写下来。

人老了，就喜欢谈论自己和自己过去的作为，我也不例外。但我的方法不会招人厌烦——如果说出来，人们出于尊老之心不得不听我唠叨；但写出来的话，读与不读则是尊重别人的选择。

最后（我还是自己承认为妙，因为否认也没人相信），我的虚荣心或许也能得到极大满足。事实上，我总是听到或读到人们先说了句“毫不自负地说”之类的开场白，接下来便是一派自负之言。世间的人们无论自己多么虚荣，却大都不喜欢别人的虚荣。可我对虚荣之心总是宽容以待，因为我相信这种心理往往能给本人和周围的人带来好处。因

此，在很多情况下，一个人如果感谢上帝赐给自己虚荣心作为人生的诸多慰藉之一，倒也不算荒谬。

说到感谢上帝，我要以最谦卑的心承认，我上文提到的一切人生幸福都有赖于他的仁慈眷顾，这眷顾引导我找到处事之道，并凭借它们取得成功。这种信仰使我希望，尽管不敢认定，上帝仍将仁慈待我，使我继续享有这种幸福，或是使我即使像他人一样遭遇厄运，也能安然承受。只有上帝知道我未来命运的样貌，他的力量使苦难也成为一种赐福。

我的一位伯父也和我一样喜爱搜集家族轶事，他交给我一些笔记，使我了解到关于我们祖先的一些事情。从这些笔记得知，我们富兰克林家族已经在北安普敦郡的埃克顿村生活了至少三百年，在这之前还有多少年，我这位伯父也不清楚（或许始于他们使用“富兰克林”为姓的时候，当时全英国人都在取姓，此前“富兰克林”是一个平民阶层的称号），他们保有一块约三十亩的自由土地，兼营铁匠生意。到我这位伯父为止，这门营生在家族中代代相传，总由长子继承，我伯父和父亲也遵循这个惯例，把他们的长子培养成了铁匠。

我在埃克顿村查看当地户籍册的时候，找到了自1555年以来人们出生、嫁娶和丧葬的记录，而这个教区再往前的户籍记录已经找不到

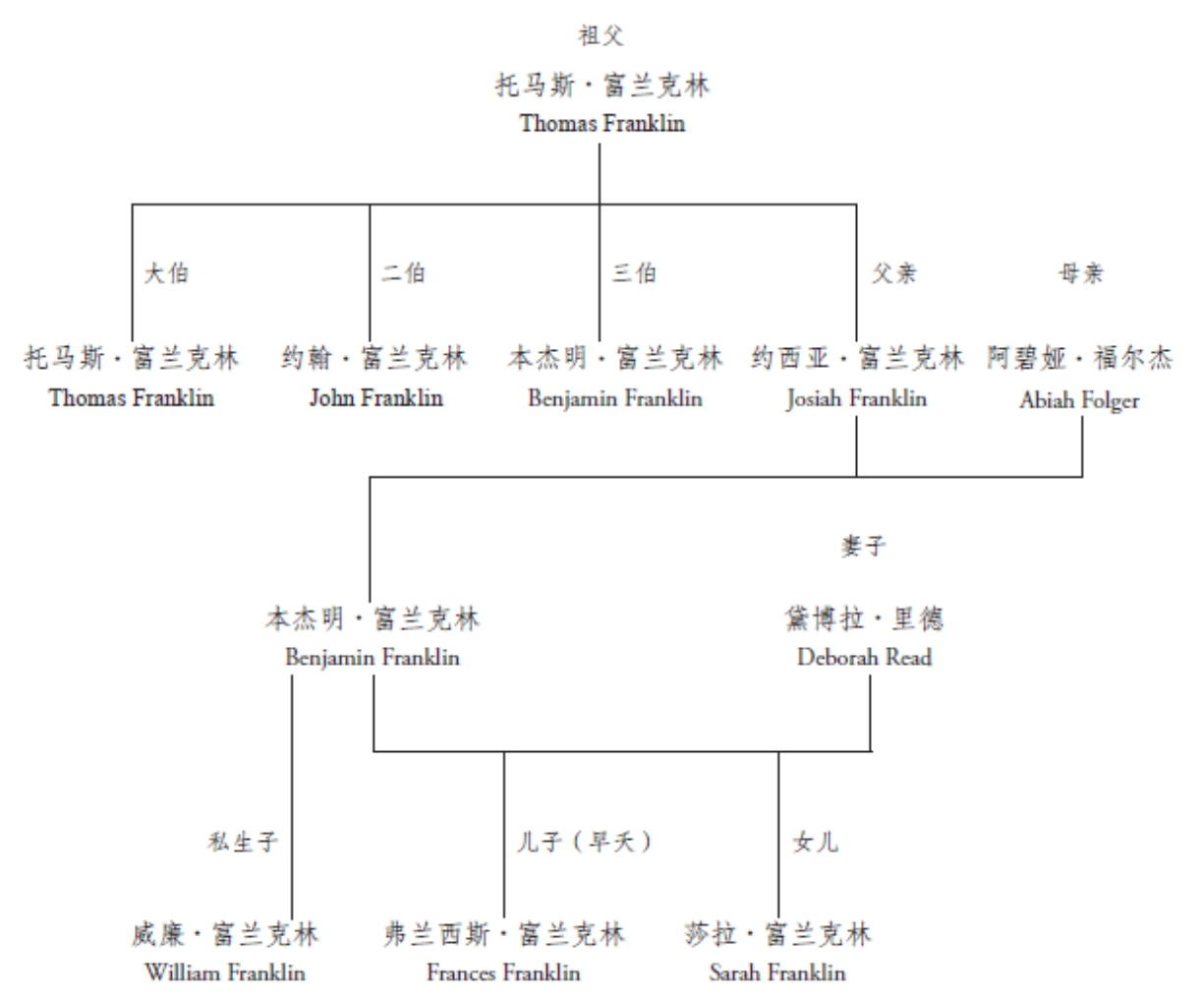


了。我从户籍册得知，我是家族五代以来幼子的幼子。

祖父托马斯出生于1598年，一直在埃克顿村生活，直到年迈无法照管生意，才搬去牛津郡的班伯里镇，和当染匠的儿子约翰住在一起——我父亲就在那个染坊里做学徒。最后，祖父就在染坊去世并安葬，我们曾在1758年见过他的墓碑。祖父的长子托马斯住在埃克顿村的老房子里，死后将房子和土地留给了他的独生女。独生女嫁给了一个姓费希尔的威灵堡人，夫妻俩把房子又卖给了一位伊斯特德先生，也就是那里现在的庄园领主。祖父有四个儿子长大成人，他们是托马斯、约翰、本杰明和约西亚。因为资料现在不在我手边，所以关于他们，我记得什么就写什么，如果这些资料在我离家的日子里没有遗失，你可以在其中找到更详细的记录。

祖父原本想把大儿子托马斯培养成铁匠。可托马斯天资聪颖，教区的大绅士帕尔默先生又鼓励他求学（他的兄弟们也都受到了同样的鼓励）。所以后来，托马斯取得了书记员的资格，成为地方上有头有脸的人物。在北安普敦镇和他自己的村子里，他也是各项公益事业的主要推动者。他在这方面流传的事迹颇多，也颇受当时的哈利法克斯勋爵的赏识和资助。托马斯于旧历1702年1月6日去世，而我在整整四年后的同一天出生。我记得埃克顿村的老人讲述托马斯的生平和性格时，你曾颇感惊奇，觉得托马斯与你所熟知的我的性格非常相似。你

说：“如果他恰好在你出生那天去世，人们或许会认为你是他的灵魂转世呢。”



富兰克林家谱

二儿子约翰学的是染匠手艺，我记得是染羊毛。三儿子本杰明在伦敦做学徒，成为了一名丝绸染匠，也是个很聪明的人。我很清楚地记得本杰明，因为在我小时候，他曾到波士顿来找我父亲，还在我家住了好几年，他的孙子塞缪尔·富兰克林现在还住在波士顿。他活了很大岁

数，身后留下了两本四开本的手稿，收录了为亲友创作的即兴短诗，下面抄录他寄给我的一首作为范例。他自己创造了一套速记法，还教给了我，可我因为从未练习过，已经忘了。

这位伯父和我父亲之间感情很好，我的名字就是他取的。他是个非常虔诚的教徒，总是积极聆听优秀教士的布道，并用他的速记法将布道文记录下来，身边还有很多本这样的笔记。他还是个非常活跃的政治家，或许以他的地位而言过分活跃了。最近我在伦敦得到了他搜集的一系列重要的小册子，内容涉及1641年至1717年的公共事务，根据编号推测，其中缺了很多册，不过现在还留下了对开本八册、四开本和八开本共二十四册。有个旧书商碰巧得到了这些册子，因为我有时从他那儿买书，就把这些册子拿给我看。看起来，我伯父在大约五十年前去美洲的时候把它们留在了伦敦，书页边上还有很多他的批注。

我们这个名不见经传的家族很早就加入了宗教改革，在玛丽女王统治期间一直信奉新教。由于激烈地反对旧教，有时也会惹上麻烦。他们有一部英文《圣经》（当时天主教的《圣经》是拉丁文的），为了安全地藏起来，他们把它打开，用带子绑在一个折凳的凳面底下。我的曾祖父向家人诵读经文时，就把折凳倒过来放在膝盖上，隔着绑带翻动下面的书页。一个孩子站在门口把风，看到宗教裁判所的官吏过来了就向屋里报信。这时祖父就会重新把折凳腿朝下放在地上，那本《圣经》就像原先那样藏起来了。这个故事是本杰明伯父告诉我的。

直到查理二世统治末期，全家人依然都信奉国教，然而那时候，有一些因不信奉国教而被逐出教会的牧师开始在北安普敦郡举行秘密宗教集会。本杰明和约西亚追随他们，终生不渝。家里其他人则继续信奉国教。

我父亲约西亚很早就结婚了，1682年，他带着妻子和三个孩子搬到了新英格兰。当时秘密宗教集会受到法律明令禁止，而且常常遭到干扰，因此与父亲相识的一些有地位的人打算移居美国，希望能在那里享有宗教信仰的自由，并说服了父亲一同前往。到了新英格兰，他和原配妻子又生了四个孩子，然后又和第二个老婆生了十个孩子，总共是十七个。

我还记得其中十三个孩子齐聚一桌的情形，现在他们都已长大成人并结了婚。我生在新英格兰地区的波士顿，是最小的儿子，下面还有两个妹妹。我母亲是继室，名叫阿碧娅·福尔杰，她的父亲彼得·福尔杰是新英格兰的第一批移民。如果我没记错，科顿·马瑟在他的美洲教会史《基督在美洲的辉煌》一书中曾赞扬我的外祖父为“一位虔诚博学的英国人”。听说他写过各种各样的即兴小诗，但只有1675年写的一首发表出来，我在很多年前读过。那首诗是写给当地政府人士的，使用的是当时流行的诗体，它倡导信仰自由，声援浸礼会、贵格会和其他受迫害教派的教徒，认为印第安人战争和国家发生的其他不幸都是宗教迫害引起的，是上帝对这些滔天罪行的惩罚，奉劝政府废除那些残暴

的法律。我读后觉得整首诗写得质朴无华、潇洒壮怀。虽然那一节诗的头两句已经记不清了，我还记得结尾的六句，大致是说他的责备乃出于善意，所以他愿意公开自己就是作者：

“我痛恨去做诽谤者

我现居舍伯恩镇

在此留名

不加恶意的你的朋友

我，彼得·福尔杰。”

我的哥哥们在各个行当学手艺。父亲想把我（十个儿子中的一个）像缴纳“什一税”那样奉献给教会，因此在我八岁时就把我送到文法学校读书。我自幼颖悟（我识字肯定很早，因为我不记得自己不识字的情形），父亲的朋友们一致认定我会成为一个优秀的学者，这更坚定了他的决心。本杰明伯父也赞成我读书，还说如果我肯学习他的速记法，就把他速记下来的布道文全送给我，如同给我开店的本钱。

我渐渐从班里的中等生变成尖子生，后来又跳到二年级，年底还要直接升到三年级。然而我在文法学校只待了一年，因为家里人口太多，父亲无法负担我读大学的费用，我还听到他对朋友们说，他看到很多受过高等教育的人也过得很拮据，所以就改变初衷，让我离开文法学

校，进入教写作和算术的学校。这所学校的开办者是乔治·布劳内尔先生，他擅用温和鼓励的教学方法，学校总的来说办得很成功，在当时颇有声望。在他的教导下，我很快练成一手好字，可是算术不行，毫无进步。

十岁那年，父亲让我回家帮他做事。他做的是制油烛和肥皂的生意。本来他学的不是这门手艺，来到新英格兰后，发现染坊生意冷清，无法养家糊口，于是就改了行。我要做的就是剪剪烛芯、浇注模具、看店跑腿之类的事。

我不喜欢这一行，渴望出海远航，但是父亲反对。不过，因为住在海边常常和水打交道，我很早就学会了游泳和驾船，和其他孩子一起在小船或独木舟上时，尤其是在遇到困难时，他们总是让我发号施令。在其他场合我也常是孩子王，有时候还会带着他们一起惹麻烦。在此，我很想讲一个故事，因为这个故事表现出我从小就有热心公益的精神，只是当时的做法欠妥而已。

故事是这样的：磨坊蓄水池的一侧连着一片盐沼地，涨潮的时候，我们会站在盐沼地的边上捉鱼，因为踩得太厉害，脚下变成了一个烂泥滩。我提议在那儿修筑一个码头，这样就可以站在码头上捉鱼了；我还带着伙伴们考察了一个大石堆，那些石块本来是给在盐沼地附近盖房子用的，却很符合我们的需要。于是等到傍晚工人们离开后，我就召集了几个玩伴，像蚂蚁一样奋力搬运起石块来，有时候两三个人合

力才能搬动一块。就这样，我们把石块都搬光了，筑起了一个小码头。第二天一早，工人们发现石块丢失后大吃一惊，后来在我们的码头找到了，就开始追查是谁搬走的。最后找到我们头上，向我们的家长告了状，有的小伙伴还遭到了父亲的训斥，我就是其中一个。

虽然我为自己辩护，辩解说修码头有种种好处，但父亲却告诫我：“来路不正即是无用功。”这话让我心服口服。

儿子，或许你还想了解一点有关你祖父的容貌和性格吧。他有一副好体格，个头中等，但是比例匀称，强壮有力。他天资聪颖，画一手好画，略通音乐，嗓音清亮悦耳。有时候忙完一天的事情，他会在傍晚时分用小提琴演奏圣歌，并随之吟唱——那可真是美妙动听。他在机械方面很有天分，使用其他行当的工具时也能驾轻就熟。他最大的长处在于遇到需要慎重处理的事情时，总能做到深刻理解、正确判断，无论公事私事都是如此。事实上，他要教育众多子女，家境又困难，所以一直在从事自己的行当，未曾担任公职。但是我记得很清楚，经常有一些大人物登门拜访，征求他对本镇或教区事务的意见，而且他们非常重视他的判断和建议；人们在私事上遇到困难的时候也常向他请教，双方争执不下的时候也愿意找他评理。

他经常邀请朋友和邻居中的有识之士来家中吃饭谈天，总是有意提出一些巧妙有益的话题，借此增进孩子们的见解和智慧。他引导我们去关注善良、公正和审慎等处世美德，而不是留意桌上的饭菜摆盘是否漂亮，菜品是否应季，味道好坏，品质优劣等等。我在这种氛围中长大，所以至今对饭菜也毫不留意，吃完饭几个小时后，你若问我吃了什么，我已茫然不知。不过这在旅途中倒不失为一件好事，同行的人们从小养成了精致挑剔的口味，饭菜不合胃口心情就不好，我却无此苦恼。

我母亲的体格也很好，十个孩子都吃她的奶长大。父亲享年八十九岁，母亲享年八十五岁，除了他们去世前患病外，我不记得他们得过什么病。他们合葬在波士顿，几年后我在墓前立了一块大理石墓碑，上面刻着如下碑文：

约西亚·富兰克林及其妻阿碧娅合葬于此。

结婚五十五载，始终相亲相爱，

既无田地房产，亦无丰厚收入，

但凭辛勤劳动得蒙上帝眷顾，养活一个大家庭安适度日。

十三个子女和七个孙子女，长大成人，颇有嘉名。

这个故事有所教益，劝诫世人兢兢业业，笃信上帝。



先父虔诚谨慎，先母持重贤能，

他们的幼子立此墓碑，以表孝心和怀念之情。

先父约西亚·富兰克林1655年生，1744年逝，享年89岁。

先母阿碧娅·福尔杰1667年生，1752年逝，享年85岁。

## 第二章 读书和发表

我絮絮叨叨地说了许多题外话，看来真是老了，从前我写东西可是条理很清楚的。不过人们私下相聚时，本不必穿得像参加舞会那样正式，所以也就随性些吧。

言归正传，我在父亲的店里继续干了两年，也就是干到我十二岁那年。我哥哥约翰本来学的是这门手艺，可他离开父亲成了家，到罗德岛开了自己的买卖，看来我是注定要填补他的位置当一个油烛匠了。可我就是不喜欢这一行，父亲担心如果不给我找个更称心的行当，我会像他的另一个儿子约西亚那样偷偷离家远航，伤透他的心。所以他有时会带我出门，去看木匠、瓦匠、车工、铜匠等工匠干活，借此观察我的意向，力求让我对某个固定在陆地上的行当产生兴趣。

从那时候起，我就喜欢观察能工巧匠使用工具。这种观察让我受益匪浅，家里需要小修小补却一时找不到工匠时，我就用在观察中学到的经验自己动手。后来对做实验产生新鲜浓厚的兴趣时，我又用所学为

自己的实验制作了一些小机器。父亲最后决定让我从事刀具制作业。本杰明伯父的儿子塞缪尔在伦敦学了制刀手艺，后来在波士顿开了业，父亲想把我送到他的店里实习一段时间。但是塞缪尔想收取学费，让父亲大为不悦，于是我又被带回了家里。

我自幼爱好读书，所有零花钱都用来买书。我很喜欢《天路历程》，买的第一套书就是单独成小册子发行的《约翰·班扬文集》。后来我卖掉了它们，用所得的钱买了一套伯顿的《历史选集》，是小书摊上卖的那种廉价的小开本，总共大概有四五十册。父亲的藏书主要是一些与神学论辩有关的书，大部分我都读过。我至今还常常感到遗憾——当时已经决定了我不会成为神职人员，所以我在求知欲最旺盛的年龄没有得到更合适的书籍。在父亲的藏书里，我颇为认真地阅读了普鲁塔克的《希腊罗马名人传》，直到现在我都认为这个时间花得十分值得。我还读过笛福的《计划论》和马瑟博士的《论行善》，这两本书大概使我的思想发生了转变，对我今后人生中的一些重要事件产生了影响。

我这股好学劲儿终于使父亲决定让我从事印刷行业，尽管他已经有了一个儿子詹姆斯在干这一行。1717年，我哥哥詹姆斯带着印刷机和铅字从英国回来，在波士顿开了业。我喜欢这一行远胜于父亲从事的制烛业，可是内心依然憧憬着大海。为了阻止这种渴望造成他所担心的后果，父亲迫不及待地想把我拴在哥哥身边。我反抗了一段时间，最

后还是同意了。就这样，我在年仅十二岁的时候签下了契约，要在哥哥店里做学徒到二十一岁，不过最后一年可以拿熟练工人的工资。我很快就熟悉了业务，成为哥哥的得力助手。现在我能得到更好的书了，因为我认识几个书店的学徒，能时不时借到一本小书，每次都注意保持整洁，看完迅速归还。有时候我在傍晚才借到书就要挑灯夜读，第二天一早还回去，以免店主发现书不见了或有人想买书。

过了一段时间，有一位精明的商人马修·亚当斯经常光顾我们的印刷所，并注意到了我。他家里有很多藏书，所以邀请我去他的藏书室，还热心地把我想读的书借给我。

此时，我开始对诗歌感兴趣并写了一些短诗，我哥哥认为这个本领以后可能会派上用场，就鼓励我写作，并鼓动我创作了一些即兴歌谣。其中一首题为《灯塔的悲剧》，讲的是沃斯莱克船长和他的两个女儿溺水的故事；还有一首水手歌，讲了捉拿海盗蒂奇（绰号“黑胡子”）的经过。这两首诗是我借鉴格拉布街穷酸文人的歌谣体写成的，十分拙劣。

诗集印好后，哥哥让我到镇上去四处推销。因为第一首诗讲述的是刚刚发生的轰动事件，所以卖得很好，我不禁有些沾沾自喜。但父亲却给我泼了一盆冷水，他嘲笑了我的作品，还说写诗的一般都穷困潦倒。因此，我得以幸免成为一名可能十分蹩脚的诗人。但是写作诗文

在我的一生中发挥了很大作用，而且是我主要的进取手段，接下来我就要告诉你，在当时那种情况下，我是如何培养这点写作能力的。

那时候镇上还有另一个爱读书的男孩，名叫约翰·柯林斯，我和他是好兄弟。当然，我们有时候会发生争论，两个人都很好辩，总想驳倒对方。顺便说一句，这种好辩的倾向很容易发展成一种非常糟糕的习惯。为了争辩，人们必须反驳别人，于是变得非常讨人嫌。争辩不仅会破坏谈话气氛，还会在本来能交到朋友的情形中招致反感，甚至结下仇恨。我这种好辩的毛病，是在阅读父亲关于宗教辩论书籍时染上的。据我日后观察，除了律师、大学生和在爱丁堡接受教育的各色人等之外，明智之士很少有这个坏习惯。

有一次，不知怎的，我和柯林斯争论起了一个问题：女性是否应该接受文化教育，以及她们是否具备学习能力。他认为女性不该受教育，因为她们天生不具备这方面的能力，我则持相反看法——或许有一点为争辩而争辩的心态。

柯林斯天生能言善辩，又娴于辞令，我觉得有时候他能赢我靠的不是道理过硬，而是口才出众。关于这个问题，我们还没争出结论就分开了，而且一段时间内无法见面，于是我就坐下来把我的观点写成文字，誊抄清楚后寄给他。他回信，我再答复，就这样你来我往各写了三四封信。父亲碰巧发现并阅读了我的这些信件，对于我们争论的问题他没有发表意见，却借着这个机会和我谈了谈文风问题。据他观

察，尽管我在拼写和使用标点方面要胜过对方（得益于我在印刷所的工作经验），但是在表达优美、条理清晰方面却远为逊色。为了说服我，他举了几个例子。我觉得他说得在理，因此开始留心自己的文风，决心努力改进。

大概在这个时期，我偶然看到一卷零散的第三期《旁观者》，之前我从没见过这个刊物。我买下了这册杂志，反复阅读，爱不释手。我觉得里面的文章写得很好，如果可能，我也想效仿这种文风。出于这种想法，我找了几篇文章，简短地记下了每篇文章的要旨，然后把文章放在一边。几天之后，不看原书，用我能够想到的最贴切的词汇来复述要旨并充分展开，使它尽可能接近原文。接下来我会对照原文查看，找出自己的错误之处并加以改正。但是我发现自己的词汇不够丰富，无法做到信手拈来、挥洒自如。如果我一直坚持写诗，应该已经练就了这种本领，因为诗歌要求协律押韵，你需要不断寻找含义相同但长度或音调不同的词，反复斟酌用词的变化，这些词留在脑海中，久而久之就能充分掌握。于是我挑选了几篇文章把它们改写成诗歌，等过上一段时间，原文差不多忘光了，再从诗歌改写回散文。有时候我还会把提炼出的要旨打乱，过上几个星期后再尽量按照最佳顺序还原它们，把它们扩写成完整的句子乃至文章。这种做法能帮我理顺文章的思路和章法。通过比较我的文章和原文，我会发现很多错误并加以改正。但有时我也会得意地认为，自己在某些无关宏旨的小细节上

侥幸对原文做出了一些改进，这鼓舞了我的信心，使我相信自己有朝一日能成为一名不赖的英语作家。对此我可谓雄心勃勃。

我做这些练习和读书的时间，要么是在晚上工作结束后，要么是在早晨上班前。此外就是星期天，我会逃避和大家一起去教堂做礼拜，设法独自留在印刷所里。过去在父亲的管教下，他总是逼着我去做礼拜，我也确实认为这是一项应尽的义务，只是眼下无暇顾及而已。

大约十六岁的时候，我偶然读了特赖恩先生写的一本宣传素食的书，决心身体力行。我哥哥当时还没结婚，又不理家务，所以自己和学徒都在别人家搭伙。我不吃荤的怪癖给人家带来了麻烦，几次因此受到责备。我自学掌握了特赖恩的一些食谱，比如煮土豆和米饭、制作速食布丁等等，就向哥哥提出能否把我每周的伙食费拿出一半来给我，让我自己开伙，他立刻答应下来。我很快就发现，从他给我的伙食费里，我还能再省下一半。这笔钱就成了我买书的额外经费。

自己开伙还给我带来了一个好处：哥哥和其他人离开印刷所去吃饭时会留下我一个人，我就随便吃点东西，常常只是一块饼干，或是一片面包、一把葡萄干、一个点心店买来的馅饼，再加上一杯水，然后抓紧剩下的时间学习。由于节制饮食能使人头脑更清晰，理解更敏锐，我在学习上取得了很大进步。

我算术不行，上学时两次考试不及格，有一次还因为这个丢过脸。于是我找到科克尔的算术书，颇为轻松地从头到尾自学了一遍。我还读了塞勒和舍米关于航海的书籍，掌握了书中的一些几何学知识。不过后来我再也没有深入研习过这门学科。大约在这个时期我读了洛克的《人类理解论》，还有波尔·罗亚尔修道院几位先生的大作《思维的艺术》。

正在我一心提高自己的语言能力时，我读到了一本英语语法书（我想是格林伍德写的）。书的最后有两篇是关于修辞法与逻辑学的简介，其中逻辑学的那篇末尾举了一个运用苏格拉底辩论术的实例。不久我又读到了色诺芬的《回忆苏格拉底》，里面有大量关于这种论辩术的例子。我对这种辩论术非常着迷便采用了它，摆出一种善于提问和怀疑的谦虚姿态，放弃了我那套生硬反驳、断然立论的方法。我当时读了沙夫茨伯里和柯林斯的书，对我们宗教的教义产生了很多真正的怀疑。我发现使用这种论辩术最为稳妥，既能让自己毫发无损，还能把论敌逼入困境，便以此为乐不断练习。最后我已经能巧妙娴熟地引导即使是学识渊博的人步步退让。他们对让步带来的后果始料不及，往往会陷入无法摆脱的困境，我则借此获得了我的观点往往不配拥有的胜利。

我把这种论辩术继续用了几年，后来渐渐放弃了它，只保留了谦虚谨慎地表达观点的习惯。在提出任何可能引起争议的看法时，我从不使

用不容置疑或断然肯定的说法，而是会说“按我理解是这样”，或“由于这样那样的原因我认为如此”，或“如果我没搞错的话，事情应该是这样”等说法。

我一直致力于推行种种举措，我相信，当我需要主张自己的观点说服人们采纳这些举措时，这种说话习惯给我带来了很大的好处。谈话的主要目的是传达或获得信息，并使人愉悦或信服，而专断倨傲的谈话态度往往会引起恶感、招来反对，使谈话的初衷——比如交流思想、传达信息、沟通感情——被破坏殆尽。所以我希望善良明智的人不要采取这种态度，让他们行善的能力遭到削弱。因为如果你想要说服别人，用专横武断的态度提出你的观点，可能会招来对方的反驳，使你的意见得不到坦诚的关注。如果你想从别人的知识中获得信息、提高自己，却又表现得固执己见，那么谦虚理智的人由于不爱争论，很可能就会听之任之，让你自己错个痛快。如果你在谈话中采取这种态度，就别指望能够取悦或者说服别人。蒲柏的一番话很有见地：

“教人的时候不要以教导者自居，遇到对方不懂的东西，就装作他只是忘记。”

他又进一步告诫我们：

“即使你胸有成竹，说话时也要显得虚怀若谷。”

蒲柏还写过一句话，我觉得接在这里比原来那句倒更合适：



“不谦虚就是不理智。”

" For want of modesty is want of sense. "

如果你问为什么这句放在原文里不太合适？我就只能引用一下原文了：

“夸夸其谈没法论证任何事，因为不谦虚就是不理智。”

" Immodest words admit of no defense, for want of modesty is want of sense. "

可是你看，此处不理智不正是不谦虚的托词吗？所以把这两句改成下面这样是不是更说得通——

“夸夸其谈只论证了一件事：不谦虚是（因为）不理智。”

" Immodest words admit but this defense, that want of modesty is want of sense. "

至于我的改动是否恰当，只能听凭诸君明断了。

1720年至1721年间，我哥哥开始发行一种报纸，名为《新英格兰新闻报》。这是在美国问世的第二种报纸，而此前仅有《波士顿新闻通

讯》一种。我记得哥哥的一些朋友曾劝阻过他，认为美国有一种报纸就已足够，再办一种很难成功。而到现在（1771年），美国已经有不下二十五种报纸。

话说回来，那时候我哥哥决定继续这番事业。当报纸排好字，印刷出来之后，我就穿街走巷去把报纸送到订户手中。

哥哥的朋友里有一些聪明人，他们喜欢给报纸写一些小文章作为消遣。这些文章获得了读者好评，使报纸的订阅量大增。这几位先生常常来拜访我们，他们谈话时常说起自己的文章受到了何等赞扬，我听到以后也跃跃欲试。

但我那时还是个孩子，而且怀疑哥哥如果知道文章是我写的，就会拒绝在他的报纸上发表。于是，我设法掩饰自己的笔迹，写了一篇匿名文章，趁天黑从印刷所的门下面塞了进去。第二天早晨哥哥发现了它，当朋友像往常一样来访时，他就把文章交给他们。他们读完后当着我的面做了评价，不仅对文章赞赏有加，而且在猜测作者身份时提到的都是我们这里的博学多才之士，听得我心花怒放。现在想来，是这几位先生品评我的文章，对我而言真是一件幸事，因为他们的眼光实际上并不像我当时认为的那么高明。不过那时候我确实受到很大鼓舞，于是又写了几篇文章，照老办法把它们投进印刷所，同样受到了认可。我又保密了一段时间，直到仅有的一点文思枯竭了才说出真相。

哥哥的朋友们自此高看我一眼，可他本人却挺不高兴，觉得这会让我得意忘形。或许他的想法不无道理。那时候我们开始出现一些分歧，这可能也是原因之一。他虽然是我哥哥，却把自己当作师傅，把我当作徒弟，希望我像其他学徒一样为他服务；而我想要的却是来自哥哥的优待，觉得他的一些要求太贬低我的身份。我们的矛盾常常会闹到父亲面前，我猜是我更占理，要不就是我更善辩，因为父亲的判决总是对我有利。但是哥哥脾气暴躁，经常打我，我气愤极了，觉得当学徒真是没劲，一心想找个机会提前结束学徒生涯。终于，机会以一种意想不到的方式来了。（注：我觉得他对我的这种专横、刻薄的态度正是我对独裁专制憎恨了一生的源头。）

我们报纸上发表的一篇政论触怒了当地议会。我已经忘了文章的具体内容。议长发布了逮捕令，哥哥被抓起来接受审讯，还坐了一个月的牢，我估计是因为他不肯说出文章的作者是谁。我也被抓了起来，接受了委员会的调查，尽管我没有给出让他们满意的供词，却只被训诫一番就放出来了。或许他们认为我作为学徒有义务为主人保密吧。

虽然我和哥哥有私人矛盾，他的遭遇还是让我感到非常愤慨。在他被拘禁的日子里我接手了办报事务，并在报上大胆地批评统治者。哥哥欣然赞同我的做法，但是其他人开始对我有了看法，认为我是个喜欢讥讽诽谤的轻狂少年。哥哥被释放的时候，带回来了议会的一纸传令，内容十分古怪：

“禁止詹姆斯·富兰克林继续出版《新英格兰新闻报》。”

哥哥的朋友们在我们的印刷所里开了个会，商量在这种情况下该怎么做。有人建议给报纸换个名字，这样就能绕过那条传令，但是哥哥觉得这会带来诸多不便，最后他们商定了一个更好的办法，即今后改用本杰明·富兰克林的名义印行报纸，而且为了避免议会指责我哥哥用自己学徒的名义继续办报，他们又想出一招，把我过去签订的师徒契约还给我，背面写上师徒关系完全解除，留着必要时拿出来给人看。但是为了保障我哥哥的权益，我还要和他重新签订一份师徒契约，承诺在未满的学徒期内继续为他服务，这份契约要私下保存。这番谋划实在经不起推敲，可我哥哥却立刻照办了，就这样，报纸以我的名义出版了几个月。终于，我和哥哥之间又爆发了新的矛盾。我料想他不敢把新的契约拿出来，就决定维护自己的自由。这样钻空子确实不地道——这是我人生最初犯下的错误之一，但是哥哥脾气暴躁，动辄饱以老拳，对于满腔怨恨的我来说，这点不地道似乎无需计较。其实哥哥在别的方面心地不坏，或许也怪我当时太莽撞、太气人了。

哥哥发现我要离开他，就设法使我在其他印刷所也找不到工作，他跑遍镇上的印刷所，跟每家老板打了招呼，搞得我到处碰壁。于是我想到了去纽约，因为那里是离得最近的有印刷所的地方，而且我此时倾向于离开波士顿，因为我发现自己已成为地方政府的眼中钉。从他们处理我哥哥一案时表现出的专横来看，如果我留在这里，大概很快就

会陷入困境之中。此外，因为我在宗教问题上发表了一些不谨慎的言论，被善男信女们痛心疾首地指责为异教徒或无神论者。我下定决心离开，但是父亲此时已经站在我哥哥的一边，如果我公然表示要走，他可能会设法阻止。我的朋友柯林斯答应帮我想想办法，他和纽约一艘小帆船的船长商量好允许我搭乘。他的说辞是，我是他的一个年轻朋友，因为让一个轻佻的女孩怀了孕，被女孩的朋友们逼着娶她为妻，所以不敢公开露面，也不敢明目张胆地离开。就这样，我卖掉了一部分书，筹了些钱，被偷偷地带上了船。因为赶上顺风，不出三天就到了纽约。一个年仅十七岁的男孩，没有一封介绍信，在此地举目无亲，口袋里也没几个钱，就这样来到了这个离家将近三百英里的地方。

### **第三章 孤身闯费城**

此时，我对大海的渴望已经淡了，否则倒可以实现夙愿。我有一门手艺，又自认是个出色的工人，便找到当地的印刷商老威廉·布拉德福德先生，请他雇佣我干活。他是宾夕法尼亚的第一位印刷商，后来和乔治·基斯闹翻了才离开那里，可是他无法雇佣我，因为他那儿本就人多活少，不过他对我说：“我儿子在费城，他的得力助手阿奎拉·罗斯最近死了，如果你去找他，我想他可以雇佣你。”

费城离纽约有一百英里路程，然而我还是动身了。我乘上一艘前往安博伊的小船，箱子和其他行李则通过海运送过去。横渡海湾的时候，

我们遇上了飓风，本就破烂的船帆被撕成了碎片，狂风使小船无法进入基尔海峡，反倒把我们吹向了长岛。途中同乘的一个荷兰人喝得烂醉，失足跌进了海里。就在他往下沉的时候，我把手伸进水里，抓住了他的一头乱发把他拽了回来，于是他又回到了船上。落水之后，他稍微清醒了一点，从口袋里拿出一本书请我帮他弄干，然后就去睡觉了。结果那本书是我过去最喜欢的作者约翰·班扬的《天路历程》，荷兰语版，纸质优良，印刷精美，还配有铜版插图，装帧之精美胜过我过去所见的任何原文版本。后来我发现，此书已经被欧洲大部分的语言翻译过，我猜除《圣经》之外它大概拥有最广泛的读者。据我所知，“诚实的约翰”是第一位融合叙述与对白的作家，这种写作手法非常引人入胜，读到最有趣的部分时，读者会发现自己似乎身临其境，亲自参与到谈话之中。笛福的《鲁宾逊漂流记》《摩尔·弗兰德斯》《宗教求爱》《家庭教师》等作品成功地模仿了这种手法，理查森的《帕梅拉》等也是如此。

靠近岸边时，我们才发现这里海浪汹涌，岸石嶙峋，根本无法登陆。于是我们抛下锚，调转船头朝向海岸。有一些人来到岸边朝我们大声呼喊，我们也朝他们喊话，但是风急浪啸，根本听不清对方在说什么。我们看到岸边有几条独木舟，于是一边打手势一边喊话，请他们坐独木舟来接我们，但是他们要么没听懂，要么是觉得做不到，就走开了。天黑了，我们一筹莫展，只能等待风势减弱。此时我和船夫决定尽量睡上一会儿，于是和那个依然湿淋淋的荷兰人一起挤在小小的

舱口。海浪不断拍打船头，漏进来泼在我们身上，我们很快就和荷兰人一样成了落汤鸡。我们就这样躺了一夜，几乎没怎么休息。第二天风势减弱，我们已经在海上过了三十个小时，没有吃的，除了一瓶不干净的朗姆酒和咸海水之外也没有喝的，所以必须设法在天黑前赶到安博伊。

晚上我感觉自己发起了高烧便上了床，但我记得在什么地方读过，发烧时应该多喝冷水，就按这个方法做了。夜里出了好多汗，退了烧。第二天一早过了渡口，我继续徒步前往五十英里外的伯灵顿，据说那里可以找到小船把我送到费城。

一整天大雨倾盆，我浑身都湿透了，到中午时已经筋疲力尽，只好在一家寒酸的旅店住了一夜。此时我开始后悔自己离家出走了。我的样子实在太狼狈，从人们对我的问话来看，我竟被怀疑是个逃跑的仆人，甚至可能因为这种怀疑而被抓起来。不过第二天我还是选择继续前进，傍晚投宿在距伯灵顿八九英里的一家旅店。旅店老板是一位姓布朗的大夫，他在我吃点心时与我攀谈，发现我读过一些书，态度变得十分亲切友好。此后直到他去世，我们一直保持着往来。我猜他以前是个行脚医生，因为无论是英国的城镇还是欧洲的国家，他都能说得头头是道。他有些学问也挺聪明，却不信教。几年后他促狭地将《圣经》改写成了打油诗，就像科顿改写《维吉尔》那样。经他一

改，圣经中的许多故事都显得十分荒谬可笑，如果这些诗作面世，一些头脑愚笨的人可能会受到伤害，幸好它们从未出版。

我在他的店里过了一夜，第二天早晨赶到伯灵顿，却发现有一班航船在我到达前刚刚开走。今天是星期六，下一班船要等到下星期二才有。这让我很泄气，只好回到城里。之前我曾在一个老妇人那里买过姜饼，本准备在船上吃，此时我又去找她，请她给我出主意。她邀请我去她家住，等待下一班船。因为徒步赶路很疲劳，我就接受了她的邀请。她听说我是个印刷工，就劝我留在这个镇上操持旧业，却并不知道开业是需要本钱的。她非常好客，好心请我吃了一顿牛颊肉，却只接受了一罐啤酒作为回报。我以为自己只能待在这里等待星期二到来，然而傍晚走在河边时遇到了一条过路的小船，发现它正好要去费城。船上还有几名乘客，他们让我上了船，因为无风，我们一路划桨，快到半夜依然不见费城的踪影。船上有人十分肯定我们已经驶过了，不肯再划；另一些乘客弄不清我们身在何方。最后，我们向岸边划去，进入一个小河湾，在一道旧篱笆附近停靠上岸。十月的夜晚很冷，我们用篱笆的木桩生起火，一直待到天明。此时我们中有人认出这个地方是库珀湾，离费城已经不远。果然我们一驶出河湾就看到了费城。星期日早上八九点钟的时候我们抵达费城，在市场街码头上了岸。



我对这段艰辛之旅的描述非常详细，那么接下来我要花同样多的笔墨来记录我刚到费城时的境遇。你可以在心里做一番比较——看看我初到此地的狼狈，和后来怎么也想不到的一番事业。

我所有像样点的衣服都走海路托运，所以身上穿的是工作服，又在路上弄得肮脏不堪，口袋里塞满了脏衬衣和臭袜子。我在此地举目无亲，也不知该去何处落脚，一路上又是步行又是划船，早已疲累不堪，饥肠辘辘，身上却只有一元荷兰盾和价值大约一先令的铜币。我把铜币给了船上的人作为船资。起初他们不肯收，因为我也划船出了力，但是我坚持要他们收下。有时候，一个人没钱时比有钱时更大方，或许是因为害怕被人看出寒酸吧。

我在街上溜达，东张西望地一路走一路看，走到市场附近时，遇到一个拿着面包的男孩。我过去有很多次拿面包当饭吃，就问他在哪里买的，然后立刻按他的指引直奔第二大街的面包房。我说要买小松饼，就是以前在波士顿吃的那种，但是费城似乎不做它。我又说要买一块三便士的面包，也被告知没有。我没有考虑两个地方货币的差异，不知此地的东西有多便宜，也不知这家店的面包都有什么名堂，就要求给我来上价值三便士的面包，随便哪种都行。老板给了我三个又大又松软的面包卷。我没想到居然有这么多，不过还是收下了。由于口袋里装不下，我就两条胳膊下面各夹一个，还有一个拿着吃，就这么沿着市场街一直走到第四大街，还经过了我未来的岳父里德先生的家

门，我未来的夫人就站在门口，看到我的样子，觉得实在滑稽可笑，事实上也正是如此。接着，我转了个弯儿，走上板栗街，又走了一段胡桃街，一路啃着我的面包卷。转来转去，我发现自己又回到了市场街码头，离我来时坐的那条船很近。我走过去喝了一口河水，因为已经吃饱，就把剩下的两个面包卷给了一路同船的一个带孩子的妇女，她正在等待开船继续下一段旅程。

我恢复了一些精神，再次回到街上。此时街上出现了很多衣冠楚楚的人，都在朝一个方向走。我也加入了他们，跟着来到市场附近一个贵格会的大礼拜堂。我在他们之中坐着，左顾右盼了一会儿，没听到有谁讲话。由于前一天晚上劳累少眠，我十分困倦，就这么熟睡过去，直到散会时有好心人把我叫醒。这就是我在费城进入的或者说睡过觉的第一栋房子。

我再次朝着河边走去，一路观察人们的脸，看到一个长相顺眼的年轻贵格会教徒，就上前和他搭话，请他告诉我外地人该到何处投宿。当时离我们不远处，有个房子挂着“三个水手”的招牌，他说：“这个地方倒是接待外地人，但是名声不太好，如果你愿意跟我走，我带你去一个更好的地方。”于是他带我到了清水街的柯鲁克德旅店，我在那里吃了饭。吃饭的时候有人问了我一些试探性的问题，似乎是在打量我小小年纪又这副模样，怀疑是不是偷跑出来的。吃完饭，我又犯困了，他们给了我一张床，我就合衣躺下，一觉睡到傍晚六点，被叫起来吃

了顿晚饭，又早早上床，酣睡到第二天早晨。我尽量打扮得整整齐齐，前往安德鲁·布拉德福德开的印刷所。谁料到我在店里竟见到了他的父亲，也就是我在纽约见过的那位老先生，他是骑马来费城的，比我先到。他把我介绍给了他儿子，后者很客气地接待了我，请我吃了顿早饭，但是他说不久前雇了一个人，目前不需要人手，不过镇上还有一家新开的印刷所，店主姓凯默，他或许会雇我。他还说如果不行，欢迎我先住在他家，他会在我找到正式工作前给我一些零活干。

老布拉德福德先生说他要和我一起去见那家新印刷所的老板。我们找到了凯默，布拉德福德说：“我领了一个干这行的小伙子来见你，或许你正需要这么个人手。”凯默先生问了我几个问题，给了我一个排字盘，看了看我怎么干活，然后说虽然眼下没什么活给我干，但他很快就能雇我了。他与老布拉德福德先生素未谋面，此时竟把他当作怀有善意的本地人士，谈起了自己目前的情况和未来的计划。布拉德福德也不透露自己是另一家印刷所老板的父亲，当凯默说他计划很快将镇上的大部分生意揽入自己囊中时，布拉德福德用一些巧妙的问题，诱使凯默毫不起疑地将自己的想法和盘托出，比如他依靠的是谁的势力，打算用什么方式开展计划等等。我站在一旁从头听到尾，立刻看出他俩一个老谋深算，另一个初出茅庐。最后，布拉德福德把我留下，自己离开了。我把老人的真实身份告诉凯默，他不禁大吃一惊。

凯默的印刷所里只有一台破旧的印刷机，还有一套已经磨损的小号英文铅字，他正在用这套铅字排一首悼念阿奎拉·罗斯的挽诗。阿奎拉·罗斯，我之前提到过这个年轻人，他天资聪颖、品德良好，在镇上很受重用，曾担任议会的秘书，还写的一手好诗。凯默也写诗，不过写得不怎么样——其实不能说他是“写”诗，因为他的做法是先在脑子里构思，然后直接用铅字排出来，所以他的诗没有底稿，店里又只有一个排字盘，而那首挽诗大概需要用到所有字母，所以没人能帮忙。他还没用过那台印刷机，而且完全不懂怎么用，我得先想办法把它收拾停当。我答应凯默，只要他一把挽诗排出来我就过来印刷。然后，我回到了布拉德福德的店里，布拉德福德暂时给了我一些零活，让我在他店里吃住。过了几天，凯默派人来找我回去印刷挽诗，我发现他又弄到了一个排字盘，另有一本小册子需要重印，他把这个活计交给了我。

可我发现，这两位印刷商在业务方面都不太合格。布拉德福德学的不是这行，又没受过什么教育，凯默虽然有点文化，可只会排字，对印刷一窍不通。凯默曾是法国先知派的成员，挺擅长他们那套狂热激动的表演。现在他不再信仰任何一种宗教，而是随遇而安，各种宗教都信上那么一点。他很不通人情世故，而且我后来发现，他的性格里还颇有些无赖气。他不喜欢我受雇于他却在布拉德福德店里吃住。他倒是有栋房子，只是没有家具，没法让我住进去。后来他给我找了个住处，让我搬到他的房东，也就是之前提到的里德先生家里。正好此时

我的箱子和衣服已经送到，使我在里德小姐的眼中变得体面了些，不再是初遇时在大街上啃面包卷的那副尊容。我开始在镇上结交一些爱读书的年轻人，晚上就和他们一起度过，十分愉快，而且靠着自己的勤劳和节俭攒了些钱，过得非常惬意。我尽量忘掉波士顿的一切，不希望那里的任何人得知我身在何处，只有我的朋友柯林斯除外，他知道我的秘密，收到我的信时也总是替我保密。最后发生了一件事，使我回到了波士顿，远远早于我原本的打算。

我有个叫罗伯特·霍姆斯的姐夫，他有一艘帆船，常在波士顿和特拉华之间往返行商。他在费城以南四十英里的纽卡斯尔听说了我的消息，就给我写了封信，说我的不辞而别让波士顿的亲友十分挂念，他向我保证大家对我满怀善意，十分恳切地劝我回波士顿，说如果我肯回去，一切都可以顺着我的意思来。我回了信，感谢他的劝告，但也原原本本地说明了我离开波士顿的原因，让他明白我并非如他想象的那般大错特错。

当时宾夕法尼亚的总督威廉·基思爵士就在纽卡斯尔，霍姆斯船长收到我的信时恰好和总督在一起，就向他谈起了我，还把我的信给他看。总督读了信，得知我的年龄时大吃一惊。他说我看起来是一个很有前途的年轻人，应该受到鼓励，费城的印刷所水平都很差，如果我在那里开业，相信一定能获得成功。至于他本人呢，很愿意帮我介绍一些

公家的生意，也会在其他方面助我一臂之力。这些都是我姐夫后来在波士顿告诉我的，当时我毫不知情。有一天凯默和我正在窗边干活，看到总督和另一位绅士（后来我得知他是纽卡斯尔的弗兰奇上校）穿着光鲜的衣服，穿过街道径直朝印刷所走来，然后我们就听到了敲门声。凯默以为他们是来找他的，立刻跑下楼，总督却提出要见我。他走上楼来对我赞不绝口，客气中带着一种屈尊俯就的意味，这让我很不自在。他表示想和我交朋友，亲切地责怪我到费城时没有主动去结识他，还邀请我同去酒馆，说他正打算和弗兰奇上校一起去品尝上好的马德拉白葡萄酒。我自是吃惊不小，凯默更是呆若木鸡。不过我还是跟着总督和上校一起去了第三大街拐角处的一家酒馆。总督一边喝着葡萄酒，一边劝我自立门户，说我很有可能成功，而且他和弗兰奇上校都向我保证会利用自己的权势为我招揽军政两方的公家生意。我解释说不知道我父亲是否愿意提供帮助，威廉爵士说他愿意替我修书一封，向我父亲细陈其中的种种好处，定能将他劝服。事情就这么定了下来，我将带着总督写给父亲的推荐信，乘下一班开往波士顿的航船回家去。在此期间我要隐瞒这个打算，照常凯默的印刷所里打工。总督不时派人请我去他那里吃饭，以我能想象的最平易亲切的态度和我聊天，我当时认为这是一种莫大的荣幸。

大约在1724年4月底，有一艘小船要开往波士顿。我借口外出访友向凯默请了个假。总督交给我一封写给我父亲的长信，不仅把我夸得天花乱坠还大力鼓动我在费城开业，说这桩事业一定能让我发财致富。

船在驶过海湾时撞上了沙洲，船身裂了一条缝。海上风浪大作，船不得不往外抽水，几乎一刻都没停过。我也加入进去和大家一起轮流抽水。船走了大约两星期，总算平安抵达了波士顿。此时我已经离家七个多月了，亲友们一直没有我的音信。霍姆斯姐夫还没回来，也未曾写信提到我的情况。对我突然的露面，家里人都十分惊讶。不过大家见到我都很高兴，热情地欢迎我，除了哥哥。我去他的印刷所见他——比起给他当学徒的时候，我现在穿得好多了，从头到脚一身讲究的新衣服，戴着手表，口袋里还装了差不多五磅银币。哥哥很不自然地接待了我，将我上下打量了一番，就扔下我继续去干活了。店里的工人们对我问东问西，问我去了哪里，那地方怎么样，我喜不喜欢，等等。我把费城使劲儿夸了一番，说我在那里过得很快活，还强烈表示想重新回去。有个工人问我那个地方用哪种钱，我就拿出一把银币摊在他们面前。这可是他们前所未见的新鲜玩意，因为波士顿用的是纸币。然后我又抓住机会让他们看我的手表，最后（哥哥依然阴沉着脸闷闷不乐）我给了他们一枚西班牙银币买酒喝，然后就离开了。

这次拜访彻底激怒了哥哥，后来有一次母亲劝他与我和解，说想让我们能言归于好，今后手足之间和睦相处。哥哥却回答说，我用那种方

式在他的工人面前羞辱他，他永远不会忘记，也不会原谅。不过在这件事上他可是大错特错了。

父亲对总督的来信显然感到惊讶，但是他好几天都没对我提起这件事。霍姆斯姐夫回来后，父亲把那封信拿给他看，问他认不认识威廉·基思，对方是个什么样的人，还说照他看来，让一个还差三岁才成年的男孩创业，这人肯定有点鲁莽。霍姆斯极力鼓吹这个计划的好处，可父亲显然认为此事不妥，最后断然拒绝。他给威廉爵士写了封措辞客气的回信，感谢他对我的好心栽培，但婉言谢绝了对方帮我开业的提议，说我还太年轻，不能将一项如此重要的生意托付管理，再说筹备开业所需的资金肯定不少。

我的朋友和伙伴柯林斯现在是一名邮局职员，我给他讲了我的新家园，他听了十分喜欢，决定也要过去。就在我等待父亲做决定的时候他先动身出发，经陆路前往罗德岛。他留下大量数学和自然哲学方面的藏书，让我稍后带着他和我自己的藏书一起去纽约，他会在那里等我。

父亲虽然不同意威廉爵士的建议，不过看到我能从居住地的这样一位大人物那里获得这么高的评价，而且在这么短的时间里依靠自己的勤劳谨慎，让自己如此体面，不禁大感欣慰。因此，当他看出我和哥哥和解无望时，便同意我返回费城。他叮嘱我在那边要恭敬待人，努力赢得大家的尊重，不要讽刺或诽谤别人（他认为我太喜欢这样）。他



告诉我，只要脚踏实地、勤俭节约，到我二十一岁时或许就能攒够开业的钱。如果不够，他也会帮我补足。这就是我能得到的一切了。此外还有一些表明父母之爱的小礼物。我就这样再次乘船前往纽约，只是这次带上了父母的认可与祝福。

## 第四章 懵懂入社会

航船在罗德岛的新港停泊，我就顺便去看望约翰哥哥。他已经结婚并在此地定居多年了。他一直很疼爱我，此时也非常亲切地招待了我。他有一个姓弗农的朋友，在宾夕法尼亚有一笔大约三十五镑的欠账要收回。约翰想拜托我替他拿回这笔钱。在他告诉我怎么汇款之前，收到的钱先自己保管起来，还给了我一张汇款委托书——这件事后来却给我带来了很多烦恼。

在新港，有几个前往纽约的乘客一同上了船，其中有两个结伴同行的年轻女人，还有一个庄重严肃，通情达理，像女总管一样的贵格会妇人和她的仆人。我热情主动地表示愿意为这位妇人做些小事，我想这让她对我颇有好感。看到我与两个年轻女人越来越熟，而且她们似乎挺主动，这位老妇人就把我叫到一边说：“年轻人，我很担心你，你身边没有朋友，而且似乎不谙世事，不清楚年轻人容易陷入一些圈套。我敢说那两个女人很坏，从她们的举动就看得出来，你要是不提防着，会被她们坑了的。你和她们素昧平生，我是为了你好才劝你几句，你还是不要理她们了。”

一开始我觉得她们没有她说得那么不堪，但是她提到了几件耳闻目睹而我没有留意到的事情，使我相信了她的判断。我感谢她好心相劝，答应听从她的劝告。船抵达纽约时，那两个女人告诉我她们住在哪里，还邀我前去看望。不过我没有去。我还真是做对了，因为第二天船长就发现丢了一个银勺子和其他一些东西，是从他的船舱被偷走的，他知道那两个女人是妓女，就弄了一张搜查令，果然在她们的住处搜出了失窃的物品，两个女小偷也受到了惩罚。所以，船在航行中擦上一座暗礁而终于躲过劫难固然是件幸事，然而对我来说，躲过这两个女人的意义更为重大。

到了纽约，我找到了比我早到一些的柯林斯。我们从童年起就亲密无间，经常一起读同一本书，但他比我有更多时间读书学习，而且在数学方面很有天分，因此数学水平远胜于我。住在波士顿的时候，我大部分闲暇时间都在和他聊天。他一直是是个节制勤奋的小伙子，当地的几位牧师和绅士颇为看重他的学识，认为他将来一定能出人头地。但是在我离开波士顿期间，他染上了狂饮白兰地的恶习。而且从他本人的说法和旁人的议论中，我知道他到了纽约后每天都喝得烂醉，行为也古怪无常。他还赌钱，输得精光，我不得不帮他付住宿费，以及赴费城的旅费和在费城的其他花销，后来我发现这给我带来了极大的麻烦。

当时的纽约总督伯内特（伯内特主教的儿子）从船长那里听说乘客中有一个叫富兰克林的年轻人随身带了很多书，就让船长带我去见他。我本打算带柯林斯同去，但他当时喝醉了。总督非常客气地招待了我，带我参观了他的大藏书室，我们谈论了很多关于书籍和作者的话题——这已经是我第二次有幸得到一位总督的赏识了，对我这样的穷小子来说，实在是件幸事。

我们继续行程，抵达了费城。在路上我收到了弗农的钱，如果没有这笔钱，我们大概很难完成旅程。在费城，柯林斯想找一份账房的工作，但人家从他的气息或举止中就猜出他是个酒鬼，所以他虽然有几封推荐信，却一直没找到工作，只好继续和我住在一起，吃住费用都由我来承担。他知道我拿到了弗农的钱，就不停地向我借，承诺一找到工作就还给我。最后，那笔钱被他借走了太多，如果弗农让我汇款真不知该如何是好，我一想到这件事就十分苦恼。

柯林斯还在酗酒，为这件事我俩吵过几次，因为只要喝了点酒，他就变得非常暴躁。有一次，我们几个年轻人在特拉华河上划船，轮到他时他却不肯划，说：“你们划船把我送回家。”我说：“我们才不会替你划船。”他说：“你们必须划，不然今晚就待在河上别回家了，看着办吧。”其他人都说，“咱们就划吧，有什么大不了的？”可是我正因为别的一些事生他的气，就是不肯划。于是他赌咒发誓说一定要让我划船，不然就把我扔进河里，还站到船板上朝我走了过来。当他走过来

对我动手时，我伸手在他胯下一拍，站起身，把他头朝下扔进了河里。我知道他水性很好，所以毫不担心，他绕过来想抓住船身，我们就猛划几下，把船划到他够不到的地方。每次他接近船身，我们就问他肯不肯划船，同时把船划开。他气得要命，却顽固地不肯答应划船。不过，最后看他有点累了，我们就把他拉回船上，傍晚时把他湿淋淋地送回了家。自此之后，我俩就没有好好说过一句话。后来有一位西印度的船长，受人之托要给巴巴多斯的一位绅士找家庭教师，偶然遇到了他，就答应把他带到那边去。就这样，他离开了我，答应拿到第一笔工资就给我汇过来还债，可从此之后就音信杳然。

动用弗农这笔钱是我人生早期犯下的一个大错。这件事表明，我父亲认为我太年轻不能经营大生意的判断是有道理的。但是威廉爵士读了父亲的信，却说他过分谨慎。他说人与人有很大不同，年长者未必谨慎，年轻人也不一定鲁莽。他说：“既然他不肯帮你开业，我自己来。你需要从英国采购什么，给我列个单子，我派人去买。等你有钱了再还我，我一定要在这里开一间像样的印刷所，我相信你能成功。”他说这番话的样子非常恳切，我一点都不怀疑他的诚意。之前我没有对费城的任何人说过我想自己开业，现在也依然守口如瓶。如果有人知道我在依靠总督，或许一些了解他的朋友会劝我不要这样做，因为后来我听说他是出了名的随口许诺、言而无信之人。可是我又没有求他帮我开业，怎么能想到他的慷慨许愿是一派虚言呢？我当时一心认为他是全世界最好的人。

我给了他一份清单，上面列出了开一间小印刷所必需的东西，据我估计总价在一百英镑左右。他显得挺高兴，但又问我，如果我亲自去英国挑选铅字，确保样样东西买得称心，岂不更好？他说：“而且你可以在那边认识一些人，还可以和书商、文具商建立联系。”我同意这样做可能是有好处。“那么，”他说，“你就准备好，等着乘安妮丝号去英国。”

“安妮丝号”是当时唯一定期往返于伦敦与费城之间的航船，每年一班，但是离开船还有好几个月。于是我继续在凯默那里工作，每天为柯林斯借走的那笔钱烦心，生怕弗农让我汇款。然而这件事要到几年后才发生。

有一件事我忘了讲，在我第一次离开波士顿的旅程中，船因为无风，在布洛克岛附近停留。大家于是动手捕捉鳕鱼，拖了许多上船。在此之前，我一直坚持自己不吃荤的决定，因此遇到这种事就想起了特赖恩老师的观点。他认为吃一条鱼就是一次无缘无故的谋杀，因为这些鱼过去未曾、将来也不会加害人类，人类没有理由屠杀它们。这种说法看似非常有理，可我以前特别爱吃鱼，而且刚出锅的、热腾腾的炸鱼的香味实在美妙。我在原则和喜好之间踌躇了一阵，直到想起以前看到剖开大鱼肚子露出的被吞食的小鱼，便想“既然你们互相吞食，我也没有理由不吃你们”。就这样，我大吃了一顿鳕鱼，之后也继续和别

人一起吃鱼，只偶尔吃顿素食。由此可见，做一个“理性的动物”能带来多少方便，你想干什么，都能为你的行为找出理由。

凯默和我之间交情不错，相处颇为融洽，因为他从未怀疑过我要自立门户。他依然保持着过去的宗教热情，喜欢争辩，我们常常争论不休。我用我的苏格拉底式辩论法对付他，提出一些看似与我们的讨论毫无关系的问题，然后逐渐引向正题，让他陷入困境和矛盾之中。最后他变得过分小心，即使我提出的问题再寻常不过，他也要先问一句“你想从中推论出什么”才肯回答。不过这使他对我的辩才评价过高，郑重邀请我与他合作，帮他建立一个新教派。他负责传道，我负责驳倒反对者。当他向我讲解教义时，我发现在一些难解的问题上，我对他的观点无法苟同，除非我也能参与意见，介绍一些我对宗教的看法。

凯默留长胡子，因为摩西律法有一条说：“你们不可损坏胡须的周围。”他还守每星期的第七日为安息日，这是他的两条基本准则。这两条我都不喜欢，但是如果他接受我不吃荤食的信条，我就同意将这两条放进我们的教义里面。他说：“我的身体恐怕吃不消。”我向他保证这对身体无碍，只会让他变得更健康。他一直是老饕，我很期待看他半饥半饱的样子取乐。他说如果我陪他一起斋戒，他就会试试看。我答应了，我们就这样吃了三个月的素食。我们请一位女邻居定期帮我们做饭送饭，我给了她一张单子，上面列了四十道菜，请她换着样

给我们做，其中没有任何鸡鸭鱼肉。这次心血来潮的做法对我倒是挺好，因为省钱，两个人一星期不超过十八便士。

自此之后，有几个四旬斋我守得格外严格，从普通饭菜换到斋饭，或从斋饭换回普通饭菜，都是说换就换，毫无困难。所以我认为，吃斋饭要从普通饭菜一点点过渡的说法是没什么道理的。我坚持得很愉快，但是可怜的凯默却遭了罪，他厌烦了这个计划，一心想吃荤，就点了一只烤猪，邀请我和两位女友同吃，可是因为烤猪太早被端上桌，他抵挡不住诱惑，在我们来之前就全吃光了。

此时我已经对里德小姐展开了追求。我敬重她，爱慕她，而且有理由认为她对我也是如此。但是由于我远行在即，而且我们都刚过十八岁，还太年轻，所以她母亲认为妥当的做法是目前不让我们交往太深。若要谈婚论嫁，最好是等我回来。那时候如果事情按我的期望进行，我将自行创业，她母亲可能是认为我的期望未必像我想象的那么容易实现。

在这段时间里，我经常来往的几个人是查尔斯·奥斯本、约瑟夫·沃森和詹姆斯·拉尔夫，他们都是爱读书之人。前两位是镇上有名的契约起草人查尔斯·布罗格登的书记员，后一位在一名商人处当店员。沃森是一个虔诚明理的年轻人，非常诚实正直；另外两人对宗教信条的遵守并

不严格，尤其是拉尔夫，他和柯林斯一样，在我的影响下信仰动摇，后来我反过来因此吃了他俩不少苦头。奥斯本这个人理智、直率、坦诚，对朋友真挚热情，但在文学方面太喜欢评头论足。拉尔夫聪明文雅，口才极好，我不认识比他更健谈的人。这两个人都非常喜爱诗歌，正试着写些小诗。

我们四个人常在周日一起漫步于斯库基尔河畔的林间，轮流朗读作品，赏鉴切磋，十分惬意。拉尔夫想追求诗艺，他毫不怀疑自己能成为大诗人，并且名利双收。他还说所有最杰出的诗人在开始写作时都像他一样有种种不足。奥斯本常泼他的冷水，想让他明白自己没有写诗的天分，应该做好自己的本行，不要好高骛远，虽然现在没有本钱，但他可以靠自己的勤勉和本分谋求一份代理商的工作，假以时日，就能获得开业所需的资本。我则赞成时不时写诗作为消遣，锤炼语言，但也仅此而已。

有人建议下次聚会时每人带来一首自己写的诗，互相观摩、批评和修改，以求进步。因为我们关注的主要是语言和表达，完全不用考虑原创性的问题，就说好了内容是去改写描写神之降临的《诗篇》第十八篇。聚会的日子快到了，拉尔夫找到我说他已经写完了。我说我最近一直很忙，也没什么兴致，所以还未动笔。他给我看了他的诗，征求我的意见，我十分欣赏，觉得是一篇佳作。他说：“奥斯本总是百般贬低我的作品，从不肯说一句好话，纯粹是出于嫉妒。他倒不那么嫉妒



你，所以我希望你拿出这首诗，就说是你写的，我假装忙得没顾上写，看他这次会说什么。”我答应下来，立刻誊写了一遍，装作出自我的手笔。

我们如期聚会，沃森先读了他的作品，有妙笔也有败笔。奥斯本也读了，他写得好得多，拉尔夫做出了公正的评价，既指出了不足，也称赞了其优美之处。他自己没拿出作品。轮到我时，我故意扭捏推辞，说时间太紧来不及修改，请大家原谅之类。可是大家不听我的借口，让我赶紧把作品拿出来。于是我读了那首诗，而且不止一遍。沃森和奥斯本赞不绝口，甘拜下风。拉尔夫只批评了几句，提了一些修改意见，我则坚持为该诗辩护。此时奥斯本又来驳斥拉尔夫，说他写诗不行，评诗也好不到哪儿去，于是拉尔夫放弃了争辩。他俩一起走回家时，奥斯本还在继续对这首诗击节称赏，他以为是我写的，说刚才有所保留是怕被我当成恭维话。他说：“可是谁能想到富兰克林竟有这般文采，如此有声有色、力透纸背、激情洋溢，甚至比原诗还要好！平时说话时，他好像总是词不达意、磕磕绊绊、颠三倒四，可是我的天！他写得多好啊！”当我们下一次聚会时，拉尔夫捅破了我们耍的花招，奥斯本被大家嘲笑了一番。

这件事坚定了拉尔夫成为诗人的决心。我尽力劝阻，可他依然写个不停，最后是蒲柏把他治好了。不过他后来成了一个相当不错的散文作家。我在后面还会说到他的事情，另外两位可能没机会再提了，所以

在这里交代一下。沃森几年后死在了我的怀里，使我十分悲痛，因为他是我们中最优秀的。奥斯本去西印度当了律师，名利双收，却英年早逝。他和我曾认真约定说如有可能，先死的那个要（在死前）探望另一个，向他讲述另一个国度的情形，可他从未履行这个诺言。

## 第五章 伦敦成长记

总督威廉·基斯爵士似乎很喜欢和我来往，常常叫我去他家，每次提到帮我开业的事情总是言之凿凿。他说我出发去英国时要带上他的信用证，使我能取得购买印刷机、铅字和纸张的钱款；另外他还会写几封推荐信，把我介绍给他的朋友们。我好几次在约定时间去取信，却被告知还要推迟。就这样一拖再拖，直到去伦敦的“安妮丝号”航船（同样延期了好几次）出发的日子就要到来。我去向总督辞行，顺便取我的信。他的秘书巴德博士出来见我，说总督正忙得不可开交，信还没写完。但是他会在开船前到纽卡斯尔，在那里把信交给我。

拉尔夫已经结婚，而且有了一个孩子，可他却决定与我同行。我以为他是去建立一些商务关系，获得可以代销的商品，后来才发现他由于对妻子的亲戚不满，打算把她丢给他们，自己一去不返。

我辞别了朋友们，又与里德小姐许下海誓山盟，就坐船离开了费城。船在纽卡斯尔停泊，总督也确实在那里。可当我去他住处拜访时，却只有那位秘书奉命出来见我，向我传达了全世界最谦恭有礼的口信。

他说总督正在处理重要公务，所以无法脱身见我，不过他会把信送到船上，衷心祝我一路平安，早日归来云云。我回到船上，感到有点迷惑不解，但是依然没有起疑。

费城著名的律师安德鲁·汉密尔顿先生和他的儿子也乘坐这艘船，此外还有贵格会的商人德纳姆先生，以及马里兰一家钢铁厂的老板奥尼恩和拉塞尔两位先生，他们占了大舱，所以拉尔夫和我只好在三等舱找了个铺位。船上没人认识我们，都把我们看成普通白丁。但是汉密尔顿先生突然临时受到重金委托，被邀请为一艘被扣押的船做辩护，就和他的儿子（即后来的詹姆斯总督）下船从纽卡斯尔赶回费城了。弗兰奇上校在起航前上了船，对我表现得很客气，于是那几位绅士也注意到了我和我的朋友拉尔夫，邀请我们入住大舱。由于大舱现在腾出了两个铺位，我们就搬了过去。

我听说弗兰奇上校把总督的文件带上了船，就请求船长把那些应该由我保管的信件交给我。他说所有信件都一起装进袋子里了，现在找不出来，但是在到达英国之前，他会给我机会让我找。于是我暂且放下心，继续航程。大舱里的同伴们很随和，我们坐拥汉密尔顿先生留下的大量物资，过得十分惬意。在这段旅程中，我和德纳姆先生成为了朋友，我们的友谊一直持续到他去世为止。不过旅程也有令人不快之处——我们遇到了很多坏天气。

驶入海峡后，船长履行了对我的承诺，给我机会在袋子里翻寻总督的信件。我没有找到一封写着我名字、表示由我保管的信，只凭字迹找出了六七封可能是总督给我的信，其中有一封是写给皇家印刷商巴斯克特的，还有一封是写给某位文具商的——这使我更加确信了自己的猜测。

我们于1724年12月24日到达伦敦。因为离得比较近，我先去拜访了那位文具商，递上了基斯总督的信件。“我不认识这个人，”文具商说，不过还是拆开了信，“噢！这是里德斯登写来的。我最近发现这个人是个彻头彻尾的无赖，我不想和他扯上任何关系，也不想收到他的信。”说完他把那封信塞回我手里，转身离开，招待他的顾客去了。我发现信不是总督写的，感到十分惊讶，在回忆并对比了种种情形后，开始怀疑总督的诚意。我找到我的朋友德纳姆，向他讲述了事情的原委。他告诉我基斯的为人和性格，说他根本不可能给我写推荐信。任何了解他的人都知道，这个人是一点也靠不住的。他还说总督说要给我银行信用证，也十分可笑，此人根本没有信用可言，又哪来什么信用证呢？我表示不知该如何是好，德纳姆建议我先努力找一份本行工作。他说：“先在伦敦的印刷所工作，你的能力将有所提高，回美洲后就会更有优势。”

正如这位文具商一样，我和德纳姆也知道里德斯登律师是个十足的无赖。里德小姐的父亲曾经受骗替他承担法律责任，差点破了产。从这

封信来看，似乎有人正在密谋陷害汉密尔顿先生（按照原计划，他应该和我们乘一艘船来），基斯和里德斯登都参与其中。德纳姆和汉密尔顿先生是朋友，觉得有义务告诉他。于是当汉密尔顿不久后抵达英国时，我上门拜访，把这封信交给了他。我这样做部分是出于对基斯和里德斯登律师的怨恨和敌意，部分是出于对汉密尔顿的善意。汉密尔顿对我表示衷心感谢，因为这个消息对他十分重要。从那时起我们就成了朋友，日后他在很多事上对我助益良多。

堂堂一位总督，竟然玩弄这么卑劣的伎俩，还无耻地用在一个无辜的穷小子身上！这件事该怎么看呢？我想这是他的一个坏毛病，他想取悦所有人，但又没什么可以给予，只能开空头支票。抛开这一点不谈，他是个聪明通达的人，文章写得漂亮，也是百姓的好总督（不过对他的选民，也就是领主们来说，他就没那么好了，因为他有时会置他们的指示于不顾）。本省一些最好的法令是他起草的，也是在他任职期间通过的。

拉尔夫和我是好哥们儿。我们在小不列颠街找了个地方同住，一星期的租金是三先令六便士——这是我们当时能出的最高的租金了。他找到了几位亲戚救济，可他们都是穷人，无力资助他。这时候他对我坦白了留在伦敦再也不回费城的想法。他身无分文，能凑到的所有钱都花在了路费上。我有十五块西班牙金币，于是他一边不断向我借钱维

持生计，一边出去找事情做。一开始他相信自己能当演员，努力想进剧院工作。可是当他向威尔克斯求职时，对方坦白地劝他打消这个念头。因为他干这行不可能成功。接着他又跑到佩特诺斯特街的一位出版商罗伯茨那里，说要为他办一份《旁观者》那样的周报，还提出了一些附加条件。罗伯茨没有同意。接着，他又想找一份打杂的文字工作，替圣殿区附近的文具商和律师抄写文件，可也没找到空缺。而我很快在位于巴塞洛缪广场的帕尔默印刷所找到了工作。这是当时一家有名的印刷所，我在那里干了将近一年。尽管我兢兢业业，但是和拉尔夫一起看戏等消遣花掉了许多收入。我们已经花光了那些西班牙金币，现在只能勉强维生。他似乎已把妻儿完全抛诸脑后，而我也渐渐淡忘了与里德小姐的约定，只给她写过一封信，内容也只是说我可能无法很快回去。这是我人生中犯下的又一个错误，如果能够重活一遍，我希望能够改正。不过事实上，按照我们的花销，我连回家的路费都付不出。

我在帕尔默印刷所做的是给沃拉斯顿的《自然宗教》第二版排字。我觉得作者的一些论证不够严密，就写了一篇关于形而上学的小文章加以评论，题目是《论自由与必然，快乐与痛苦》。我把这篇文章献给我的朋友拉尔夫，少量地出版了一些。这篇文章使帕尔默先生把我看成一个有些才华的年轻人。不过他认为我这本小册子里的一些观点很不可取，正言规劝了我一番。出版这本小册子是我犯下的又一个错误。

住在小不列颠的时候，我认识了一位威尔科克斯先生，他是个书商，店面就在隔壁，旧书数量十分可观。那时候还没有流动图书馆，不过我们之间有个约定，我付一笔合理的费用——具体是多少现在已经忘了——就可以借阅任何想看的书籍，看完归还。我把这看作一种极大的便利，尽量多加利用。

不知通过什么途径，我的小册子流传到一位外科医生莱昂斯手中，他曾写过《论人类判断的正确性》一书，我们就这样认识了。他很看重我，常来找我探讨问题，还带我去齐普赛小巷中一家叫“号角”的啤酒馆。在那里，他把我介绍给曼德维尔博士，他是《蜜蜂的寓言》这篇文章的作者，还在啤酒馆成立了一个俱乐部。他十分诙谐风趣，是俱乐部的灵魂人物。在巴特森咖啡馆，莱昂斯介绍我认识了彭博顿博士，他答应早晚找个机会带我见见牛顿，这是我梦寐以求的事情，可惜从未实现。

我从美洲带来了几件稀罕物品中，最特别的是一个火浣的石棉钱包。汉斯·斯隆爵士听说我有此物，特地登门来见，还邀请我前往他在布卢姆茨伯里广场的府邸，向我展示了他收藏的各种珍玩，并劝我割爱，成全他的收藏。我同意了，他慷慨地付了我一大笔钱。

我们寄宿的房子里还住着一个年轻妇女T夫人，她是个女帽商人，在修道院附近有一间店铺。她教养良好，通情达理，活泼风趣，和她聊天令人十分愉快。拉尔夫有时在晚上给她读剧本，两人渐渐亲密起来。

后来她另寻了一个住处，拉尔夫也跟了过去。他们同居了一段时间，可是拉尔夫此时依然没有工作，她的收入又不够养活他俩和她的孩子。于是拉尔夫决心离开伦敦，去一所乡下学校教书。他写得一手好字，又擅长算术和记账，觉得自己完全能够胜任。不过他认为这是大材小用，深信自己日后必能飞黄腾达，不愿人家知道他从事过如此卑微的工作，就使用了化名，而且竟赏光用了我的姓氏。我知道这件事是因为不久就收到一封他的来信，告诉我他已经在一个小村子安顿下来（我记得是在伯克郡，他在那里教十一二个男孩读写，每个孩子每星期的学费是六便士）。他请我照顾T夫人，还说希望我给他写信，就写某某学校的教师富兰克林先生收。他不断地给我写信，寄来他正在创作的一首史诗的片段，请我批评指正。我时不时给他反馈，主要是劝他放弃。当时恰逢杨的一首讽刺诗发表，诗作嘲笑了盲目追求诗神眷顾的愚蠢行为，我将一大部分内容抄下来寄给了他。然而这一切都是徒劳，一张张诗稿依然随着信件纷至沓来。另一方面，T夫人为了拉尔夫失去了朋友和生意，生活困窘，常常向我借一些富余的钱来摆脱困境。我开始渐渐喜欢和她来往，那时我没有宗教信仰的约束，利用她对我的依赖，竟企图对她做些轻薄之举（又一个错误），她义正辞严地拒绝了我，还把这件事告诉了拉尔夫。这使我和拉尔夫之间出现了裂痕。他回到伦敦后，宣布与我一刀两断，因为我的所作所为，旧日恩情一笔勾销。我知道自己再无指望收回以前借给他和帮他垫付的钱了。不过这也没什么，因为他本来也无力偿还，而且我发现失去他



的友谊对我反而是种解脱。此时我开始考虑攒钱，想找一份更好的工作，就离开帕尔默，去了沃茨的印刷所。这家印刷所在林肯因河广场附近，规模更大，我在这里一直干到离开伦敦。

刚进入这家印刷所时，我干的是印刷工，那是重体力活。在美洲，印刷和排字的工作是不分家的，这就使我的身体得到了很好的锻炼。那里有大约五十个工人，全都嗜酒如命，而我只喝白开水。有时候我两手各拿一大盘铅字上楼下楼，而其他工人两手并用才能搬动一盘。通过这件事和其他几件事，他们惊讶地发现我这个被他们称为“喝水的美洲人”的家伙，竟然比他们这些喝浓啤酒的人更有力气！有个啤酒馆的男孩经常来印刷所给工人们送啤酒。和我搭档的那个印刷工，每天早饭前喝一品脱啤酒，早饭是一品脱啤酒配面包和奶酪，早饭和午饭之间喝一品脱，傍晚六点左右喝一品脱，干完一天的活之后再再来一品脱。我觉得这是一个要不得的习惯，可他却认为喝有劲的啤酒才能有力气地干活。我试图让他明白，啤酒能提供多少体力，要看做啤酒时在水里溶解了多少谷物和麦粉，价值一便士的面包比一夸脱啤酒含有更多面粉，所以如果他喝一品脱水吃一便士面包，获得的力量要大于喝一夸脱啤酒。可他不听，没到星期六晚上，就要从工资里拿出四五个先令来买醉，我则可以省下这笔开销。这些可怜的家伙总是因为啤酒而把自己搞得很拮据。

过了几个星期，沃茨把我调到排字室，我就告别了印刷工。排字工们要求我付一笔五先令的欢迎费，其实就是给他们做酒钱。我在楼下已经付过，所以觉得这是敲诈，师傅也同意我的想法，让我不要付。我坚持了两三个星期，于是他们把我看成一个不合群的家伙，只要我稍稍离开房间就会动手脚，比如把我的铅字搞混、纸张换位、排版弄乱等等。他们说这些都是“礼拜堂的鬼魂”干的，还说鬼魂专门缠着不按规矩交入会费的人。就这样，虽然师傅护着我，我还是顺着他们交钱了事，因为我相信，跟自己必须朝夕相处的人交恶是一种愚蠢的行为。

我和他们友好相处，很快赢得了相当的威望。我提议对他们的“礼拜堂法令”做出一些合理的改变，并顶住一切反对，坚持推行。他们中很多人以我为榜样，改掉了早餐喝啤酒、吃面包和奶酪的习惯，像我一样用一品脱啤酒的价格，也就是一个半便士，从附近的饭馆买一大碗热粥，上面撒着胡椒、碎面包和一点黄油。这样吃早餐更可口、更省钱，还能保持头脑清醒。那些依然整日滥饮的人因为总是拖欠酒钱，在酒馆赊不到酒，用他们的话来说，他们的光熄灭了。于是就让我去弄酒。我守着周六晚上发薪的时候收回替他们垫付的钱，有时候一周有将近三十先令那么多。而且，他们觉得我风趣诙谐、会开玩笑。这两件事加在一起，使我在他们中间建立了威信。我总是按时出勤（我从不过什么“圣礼拜一”），所以师傅很器重我，加上我排字速度非常

快，所有急件都被交到我手上，这些活往往酬劳更高，所以我这段时间过得十分惬意。

我的住处在小不列颠，离印刷所太远，于是在杜克街天主堂对面另找了一个住处，在一间意大利货栈背后的三层楼上。房主是一个寡妇，她有一个女儿、一个女佣和一个看守货栈的工人，不过工人住在别处。她派人到我之前住的地方打听了我的人品，然后才同意我搬进来，租金与上一家相同，每星期三先令六便士。她说之所以租金不高，是因为她也希望有个男人住在这栋房子里，可以给她提供一些保护。

她是个上年纪的寡妇，从小受的是新教徒教育，父亲是牧师，后来随着丈夫改变信仰，皈依了天主教。她对亡夫非常尊敬。过去她曾与不少贵人来往，知道这些人的很多趣闻轶事，最早可以追溯到查理二世时期。因为膝部痛风，她走路一瘸一拐，所以很少踏出房门，有时候需要人陪伴解闷。我觉得和她聊天很有意思，只要她叫我，一定会来陪她聊一个晚上。我们吃的很简单，每人半条凤尾鱼、一小条面包和黄油，两个人一起喝半品脱啤酒，乐趣在于她的谈吐本身。我作息规律，不惹麻烦，所以她不希望我搬走。我听说有个房子离印刷所更近，每星期租金才两先令。我当时很想攒钱，所以挺在乎租金的多少。当我向她提起这个房子时，她说以后每星期少收我两先令，让我

不要搬走，于是我以一先令六便士的租金继续住在这里，直到我离开伦敦。

这栋房子的阁楼里住着一个老处女，已经七十岁了，过着完全与世隔绝的生活。房东太太给我讲了她故事：她信奉罗马天主教，年轻时曾被送到国外，住在女修道院中，立志成为一名修女。但是她在那个国家水土不服，只好返回英国。英国没有女修道院，她便发誓在这种情况下也要尽量过一种修女式的生活。她把所有财产捐给了慈善事业，每年只留十二镑作为生活费，就连这笔钱也大多被她捐了出去，自己只喝薄粥度日，而且除了煮粥从不生火。她已经在这个阁楼里住了很多年，楼下这栋房子的历代房东都信仰天主教，觉得有她住在这里是一种福分，所以一直许她免费居住。有一位神父每天都上门听她忏悔。房东太太说：“我曾经问过她，照您这样生活，哪来这么多需要忏悔的事情？”她说：“人不可能完全断绝俗念。”

有一次我征得允许去拜访她，发现她很开朗，待人彬彬有礼。我们的谈话非常愉快。她的房间一尘不染，没什么家具，只有一块垫子，一张桌子，桌上放着十字架和一本书，还有一把圆凳，她让我坐在上面。壁炉上方有一幅画，画着圣维罗妮卡展示她的头巾，头巾上奇迹般地显示出耶稣流血的面庞，她非常认真地向我解释了这幅画的内容。她面色苍白，但从从不生病，我认为这是另一个例子，说明多么微薄的收入就可以维持生命和健康。

在沃茨的印刷所，我结识了一位聪明的年轻人，他叫怀各特，因为有几位有钱的亲戚，所以比大部分印刷工受过更多教育。他的拉丁文还可以，会说法语，热爱读书。我教他和另一个朋友游泳，下了两次河，他们很快就游得不错了。他们介绍我认识了几位乡下来的绅士，我们一行人乘船前往切尔西参观了学院和堂·萨尔特罗收藏的珍玩。返回途中，几位同伴被怀各特激起了好奇心，要我一展泳技，于是我脱掉衣服跳进河里，从切尔西附近一直游到黑衣修士桥，一路表演了很多水上水下的技巧，都是他们未曾见过的新鲜花样，让他们惊喜不已。

我从童年起就喜欢这项运动，曾经钻研练习过泰弗诺介绍的所有动作和知识，还加上了一些我自己的创造。我追求的不仅是实用，还有优雅和自如。借这个机会，我向几位同伴大大显摆了一番，他们的赞美和钦佩使我飘飘然。怀各特渴望成为一名游泳高手，而且我们学习的东西很相似，因为这两个原因，他与我日益亲近起来。他提议我们一起游历欧洲，每到一个地方就靠当印刷工维持生计，我听了觉得很动心。我只要有空，就会和好朋友德纳姆先生待上一小时。我向他提起此事，他劝我打消这个念头，还是回宾夕法尼亚为好，而他也正打算这么做。

我要在此讲述这位好人性格中的一个特点。他曾在布里斯托经商，但生意失败，欠了一屁股债。他与债主达成和解，归还了一部分债务，

然后去了美洲。在那里他一心经商，没过几年就发了财。他和我一起坐船来到英国后，招待了昔日的债主们，对他们当初的宽宏大量表示感谢。债主们本以为只是请他们吃一顿饭而已，没想到第一道菜撤下，每个人的盘子下面都放着一张银行支票，将当初剩下的钱连本带息全部还清。

他此时告诉我，他打算返回费城，并把大量货物带到那边开一间店铺。他提出请我当店员，说他会教我怎么记账，我还可以帮他抄写信件，照料店铺。他补充说，一旦我熟悉了商品买卖的业务，他就会提拔我，让我送一船面粉或面包等货物去西印度，还会帮我从其他人那里赚取佣金，数额将会十分可观。如果我干得好就能牢牢站稳脚跟。我很喜欢这个提议，因为我已经在伦敦待腻了，每当回想起在宾夕法尼亚度过的快乐日子，就愉快地想回到那里，于是我立刻接受了这份工作，每年的薪水是五十镑宾夕法尼亚币，其实比我现在做印刷工挣得还少一点，但是更有前途。

我认为自己永远离开了印刷行业，每天都投入到新工作之中，跟着德纳姆先生四处会见商人，采买商品、监督包装、跑腿办事、招呼工人送货等等。当一切都装好船后，我有了几天空闲时间。有一天，一位我只闻其名的大人物威廉·温德姆爵士出乎意料地派人来找我。我便登门拜访了他。原来他不知通过什么途径听说了我从切尔西游到黑衣修士桥，还在几小时内教会了怀各特和另一个年轻人游泳。他说他的两

个儿子正准备外出旅行，他想让他们先学会游泳，如果我肯教，他愿意以重金酬谢。因为他的儿子们还没到伦敦，我又不知何时动身，所以无法接受这份请求。不过从这件事来看，如果我当时留在英国开一所游泳学校，或许能赚到大钱。我因此受到了很大触动，如果我早点得到这个邀请，或许就不会这么快回美洲了。很多年后，咱们俩曾与威廉·温德姆爵士这两位儿子中的一位打过交道，当时他已经是艾格蒙特伯爵，这件事我后面还会提到。

我在伦敦一共待了十八个月，其中大部分时间是在勤勤恳恳地从事印刷行业，除了看戏和读书没有什么花销。我的朋友拉尔夫把我搞穷了，他欠了我大约二十七镑，这笔钱我永远也别想要回来了。以我微薄的收入来说，这可是一笔巨款！尽管如此，我还是爱他，因为他有很多可亲可爱之处。虽然我没有挣到钱，却结交了一些非常聪明的朋友，与他们谈话使我受益匪浅，而且我也读了不少书。

## **第六章 创业的准备**

1726年6月23日，我们从格雷夫森德起航。关于这次旅程的种种，你可以去读我的日志，里面有非常详细的记录。你会找到这份日志中最重要的部分：我在航行中写下的、规范我未来行为的计划书。更值得一提的是，当我制定这份计划的时候还很年轻，可是直到晚年，我都一直相当忠实地遵守和执行。

我们于10月11日在费城上岸，发现那里已经发生了种种变化。基斯不再是总督，取而代之的是一位戈登少校。我遇见基斯在街上溜达，那样子完全就是个普通市民。他看到我显得有点难为情，但是一言不发地就走过去了。

当初里德小姐收到我的那封信之后，她的朋友们有充分理由认为我不再会回来了，就劝她嫁给了别人。就这样，她在我离开期间和一个叫罗杰斯的陶工结了婚。如果不是这样，我见到里德小姐就会像基斯见到我那么难为情。但是她婚后一点也不幸福，后来听说这个男人还有另一个妻子，她就很快离开了他，并拒绝和他住在一起或使用他的姓氏。罗杰斯手艺很好，里德小姐的朋友们正是看中了他这一点，可他人品不佳，欠了一身债，在1727年或1728年逃去了西印度，后来死在了那里。

凯默找了一处更好的房子。他开了一间货品丰富的文具店，添置了不少新铅字，还雇了几个人手，可惜都不是好手。不过他的生意似乎非常兴隆。

德纳姆先生在清水街开了店，我们就在那里拆开货物，摆好商品。我勤勤恳恳地照料生意，学习记账，很快就成了销售能手。我和德纳姆先生食宿都在一处，他像父亲般指导我，真心诚意地关心我，我对他



又敬又爱。我们本以为会一直这么愉快地相处下去，谁料在1726年至1727年间，我刚到二十一岁时，我们两个都病倒了。我患的是胸膜炎，差点丧了命。因为太过痛苦，我已经不想活了，当我发现自己开始好转时竟有些失望和遗憾，因为这样一来，我早晚又要经历一遍这些痛苦。我忘了德纳姆先生患的是什么病，他病了很久，最后还是去世了。他在口头遗嘱里留给我一小笔遗产，表示了对我的好意，就又把我也扔在这茫茫世间。他的店铺被遗嘱执行人接管，我不再是他的雇员了。

我姐夫霍姆斯这时候在费城，他建议我做回自己的老本行。凯默给我开出了很高的年薪，请我接手经营他的印刷所，这样他就可以专心照料文具店了。我在伦敦时，从凯默的妻子和她的朋友们那里听说他的人品不好，所以不愿意再和他打交道了。我想继续找一份商店店员的工作，可一时又找不到，最终只能再次和凯默签约。

他的印刷所里有这么几个人手：休·梅雷迪斯，威尔士裔宾夕法尼亚人，三十岁，从小干农活，诚实明理，阅历丰富，喜欢读一点书，但是嗜酒。斯蒂芬·波茨，一个农村来的年轻人，已经成年，也是干农活长大，天资非凡，机智幽默，但是有点懒惰。凯默以极低的周薪雇佣他们，但承诺如果他们业务进步，就每三个月给他们涨一先令，他们正是为了将来的高工资才进来的。梅雷迪斯想当印刷工，波茨想当装订工，按照合同，凯默应该教他们，可他在这两方面都一窍不通。还

有个叫约翰的，是个粗野的爱尔兰人，什么手艺也没有，凯默从一个船长手中买下了他四年的服务，他也要当印刷工。还有乔治·韦布，一名牛津大学的学生，凯默也买下了他四年的服务，想让他做排字工，接下来我还会更多地提到此人。凯默还收了一个叫戴维·哈利的乡下男孩做学徒。

凯默给我的薪水远远高于他过去开出的工资水平，我很快就明白了他的意图。他想让我培养这些廉价的生手，这些人都签了契约，只要我教会他们本领，凯默就可以摆脱我了。不过我还是愉快地干我的工作，把一个乱七八糟的印刷所安排得井井有条，让工人们专注于自己的业务，帮他们一点点取得进步。

一个牛津大学的学生，竟沦落到卖身为仆的地步，真是怪事一桩。这个不到十八岁的男孩向我讲述了他的经历，他出生于格洛斯特，在当地读了文法学校。由于在学校演戏时表现出明显的天赋，成为学生中的佼佼者，便进入了学校的才子俱乐部，写了一些诗歌和散文，刊登在了格洛斯特当地的报纸上。后来他被送到了牛津大学，在那里读了一年。但是他感到不满足，因为他最大的心愿是去伦敦见识一番，然后当一名演员。最后，当他领到十五个金币的季度补助金后，没有用这笔钱还债，而是离开了牛津镇，把他的学生长袍藏在金雀花丛里，步行来到了伦敦。因为没有朋友的规劝，他结识了坏人，很快就花光了金币，又找不到当演员的门路，穷困潦倒，典当了衣服却还是没钱

买面包。正当他饥肠辘辘走在街上，不知如何是好时，有人把一张招工广告塞进了他的手里，上面说只要愿意签约去美洲务工，就能有吃有喝，还有钱赚。他立刻跑去签下契约，被人带上船，漂洋过海来到了这里，从此再没有给朋友们写过一封信说明自己的情况。他活泼机智，心地善良，很好相处，但是游手好闲，做事不动脑子，为人极不谨慎。

不久，那个爱尔兰人约翰就逃跑了，我和剩下几个人相处得很好，他们发现凯默没有能力教他们，跟着我却可以学到本领，于是更加尊敬我了。星期六我们不干活，因为凯默要守安息日，这样我就有两天用来读书。我渐渐在费城结识了更多有识之士。凯默对我以礼相待，表面上十分尊重我。那段日子里，让我不安的只有欠的那笔钱，因为一直不擅长节约，所以我依然没钱偿还，好在他非常善良，一直没有提起此事。

我们的印刷所总是缺铅字，但美洲没有浇铸铅字的地方。我在伦敦时曾在詹姆斯的印刷所见过铸造铅字的场面，可是未曾留意做法。不过我自己发明了一套铸模：用现有的铅字做冲压模，在铅里压出字模来，总算能把缺少的铅字补上，而且效果还算不错。我有时候也会刻一些东西，还要制墨，兼当仓库保管员，总而言之，什么杂活都要干。

虽然我是个能干的多面手，可随着其他人的手艺慢慢进步，我的重要性也在一天天降低。在发给我第二个季度的工资时，凯默告诉我说他觉得我的工资太高了，应该减少一些。他的态度也越来越不客气，摆出一副老板的架子，动不动就吹毛求疵，似乎酝酿着一场大爆发。尽管如此，我想他也许是因为欠债才脾气暴躁，对他颇为忍让。

但最后，我们的关系因为一件小事而彻底破裂：有一天，法院附近闹哄哄的，我把头探出窗户想要一看究竟。凯默当时正好在街上，抬头看到了我，就冲我大喊大叫，气冲冲地让我不要多管闲事，还说了一些难听的话。当时所有邻居都在探头看热闹，目睹了他是怎么对待我的，这种当众丢脸的感觉更让我恼火。凯默回到印刷所继续和我争吵，双方都恶语相向。他按照合同规定，给了我三个月的解雇通知期，还说真希望通知期没有这么长。我告诉他不用遗憾，我现在就走，于是戴上帽子扬长而去。我在楼下遇到梅雷迪斯，请他帮了个忙，把我留在印刷所的东西带回到我的住处。

梅雷迪斯当晚主动来找我，聊了聊这件事。他一直很尊敬我，现在我离开了印刷所，他也不想继续留在那里了。我开始考虑返回家乡，他劝我不要走，提醒我说凯默已经资不抵债，债主们开始感到不安了。他的文具店也经营不善，为了获得现金，常常做赔本生意，而且他总是赊卖却不记账，这样下去早晚破产。到那时我乘机而动，就可从中

获利。我说这个办法行不通，因为我没有本钱。他告诉我他的父亲对我的评价很高，曾话里话外表示如果他和我合伙开业，肯定会给我们出资。他说：“明年春天我和凯默的合同就到期了，到时我们可以从伦敦购买印刷机和铅字。我知道自己的手艺不好，如果你愿意的话，你出技术，我出资本，赚到的钱我们平分。”

这番话正合我的心意，我便欣然同意了。他的父亲此时正在城里，也表示赞同。他看到他的儿子对我很信服，已经在我的劝说下戒酒一段时间，就更加赞同，觉得如果我们走得更近，他儿子或许能彻底摆脱贪杯之癖。我拿给他父亲一张清单，请他交给一个商人去订购，东西运到之前我们要对计划保密，在此期间我还要尽量找一份印刷所的工作。但是当时没有职位空缺，我便闲了数日。这时候凯默正好有望得到一份新泽西的印钞生意，但是需要刻好的版面和各种铅字，这些东西只有我能提供。另外他也担心布拉德福德会雇我，把这笔生意抢走，于是给我写了一封措辞极为客气的信，说老朋友不应该为了几句气头上的话就分道扬镳，还说希望我能回去。梅雷迪斯劝我答应，因为这样我就能每天指导他，让他有更多机会进步。于是我回去了，相比之前的那段日子，凯默与我总算相安无事。我们拿到了新泽西的那笔生意，我为此设计了一台铜版印刷机，当时在美洲还没人见过。我还刻了一些装饰图案和方格子，用来印在钞票上。我们一起前往伯灵顿，在那里，我把每件事都办得很漂亮，凯默收到了一大笔钱作为酬劳，足够他再撑上很长时间。

我在伯灵顿结识了很多新泽西的要人，其中有几位是省议会成立的一个印刷监督委员会的专员，负责保证印钞数量不超过法律规定的范围。他们经常轮流来监督我们，轮到谁来，常常还会带上一两位朋友陪同。因为读书多，我的头脑比凯默好得多，我猜是出于这个原因，他们似乎更愿意跟我交谈。他们邀请我去家中做客，把我介绍给朋友，对我礼遇有加，而凯默身为老板，却有点受冷落。老实说，凯默是个怪人，不通人情，喜欢粗暴地反对世人公认的看法，不修边幅到了邋遢的程度，在某些宗教问题上十分狂热，又有那么一点无赖气。

我们在新泽西待了近三个月，在此期间，我交上了下面几位朋友：法官艾伦、省政府秘书塞缪尔·布斯蒂尔、艾萨克·皮尔森、约瑟夫·库珀和几位姓史密斯的先生，这几位都是议员。我还认识了勘测局局长艾萨克·德科，他是一位精明睿智的老先生，给我讲了他的经历。他年轻时给砖匠运黏土，成年后才学会写字，后来给勘测员拎测量链，跟着学会了勘测。靠着勤劳，他现在已经置下了一份好家业。他对我说：“我预言你很快就会把这个人挤出印刷业，然后你会靠干这一行在费城发家致富。”对于我要在这里或其他任何地方开业的打算，他当时可是一点都不知道。这些朋友日后对我大有帮助，我偶尔也能给他们中的几位帮上忙。他们在世的时候一直都很看重我。

在开始讲述我在印刷业的正式登场前，我想先让你了解一下我当时对道德伦理的看法，你会从中看出它们对我未来的人生产生了多么深远的影响。我小时候在宗教上受到父母的影响，在他们的培养下，我以非国教徒的方式度过了童年。在不到十五岁的时候，我就对一些宗教观点产生了怀疑，因为我发现它们在不同的书中观点是有争议的，后来我又对《启示录》本身产生了怀疑。我读到了一些反对自然神论的书籍，据说它们是波义耳布道文的精髓。然而这些书对我的影响恰好与其本意相反，书中引用自然神论者的观点并加以反驳，可是在我看来，这些观点比其驳论要有力得多，简而言之，我很快就变成了一个彻底的自然神论者。我的观点又使其他一些人背弃了原来的信仰，特别是柯林斯和拉尔夫，可是这两个人后来都毫无愧疚地狠狠伤害了我，再想想基斯对我的所作所为（他也是个无宗教信仰的自由思想者），以及我自己对里德小姐的做法（我一度为此非常苦恼），我开始怀疑自己信仰的这种学说虽然没错，但并不是很有益处。我的伦敦小册子引用了德莱顿的几行诗作为题句：

“凡存在的即是正确的。

然而愚钝之人只能看到链条的一段，最近的一环，

他的眼睛看不到，

上面那根平衡一切的秤杆。”

接下来我从上帝的属性，他无限的智慧、善良与力量推导出结论：世上的一切都不可能是错的，善与恶只是无谓的划分，根本不存在什么善恶。现在看来，这篇文章并不像我当初认为的那样是一篇有思想的佳作，我还怀疑有一些谬误不知不觉地潜入了我的文章，影响了后面的一切观点，这是形而上学推论中常见的情况。

我渐渐确信，对人生幸福最重要的就是人际关系中的真实、诚恳和正直，于是决心在有生之年践行此道，并在日记里写下了我的决心。

《启示录》本身对我并不重要，《启示录》所禁止的行为不一定就是坏的，它所提倡的行为也不一定就是好的，但是我认为若考虑到事物的种种情形，或许可以得出这样的结论：正因为一些行为从本质上对我们有害，所以才被禁止；正因为另一些行为对我们有益，所以才被提倡。这种信念，加上上帝或某位守护天使的保佑，或是情势碰巧对我有利，要么就是几者兼而有之，使我安然度过了危险的青年时代，并且在没有父亲指引的情况下，化解了身处陌生人之中所可能遭遇的种种危险，也没有因为缺少宗教信仰而犯下任何故意的、严重的、不道德或不公正的错误。我说故意，是因为之前提过的一些错误，或是因为我年轻缺少经验，或是因为别人的诡诈欺骗，都包含了一些必然性。就这样，当我开始进入社会时，我的品格是不错的，我非常珍视这种品格，下决心要一直保持下去。

## **第七章 立业后成家**



回到费城不久后，新的铅字就从伦敦运来了。我们和凯默好说好散，在他还没听到风声前离开了。我们在市场附近找到了一间房子租了下来。为了减少租金（当时只要二十四镑一年，我听说后来涨到了七十镑），我们招了玻璃安装工托马斯·戈弗雷和他的家人合住，他们要负担很大一部分租金，我们则在他家搭伙吃饭。我们刚刚拆开铅字，把印刷机收拾停当，一个朋友乔治·豪斯就领来了一个他在街上遇到的乡下人。此人当时正在打听哪里有印刷所。我们的现金都用来购置各种必需之物了，这个乡下人付的五先令是我们的第一笔收入，它来得如此及时，带给我们的快乐胜过我日后挣到的任何一个克朗。而且因为对豪斯心怀感激，我总是愿意帮助那些刚起步的年轻人，如果没有这件事，我也不会这么热心。

任何地方都有悲观主义者，他们总是预言此地即将毁灭。费城当时也有这么一位，是位有名望的老者，看上去很聪明，讲起话来非常严肃，大名叫塞缪尔·米克尔。这位老先生与我素昧平生，有一天却在我门前驻足，问我是否就是那个最近开了间印刷所的年轻人。得到肯定的回答后，他说为我感到惋惜，因为开一间印刷所是要花很多钱的，可我会把这些钱都赔进去。他之所以这么说，是因为费城这个地方正日渐没落，人们都已接近或处于半破产状态。尽管从表面上看正好相反——新楼建成、地租上涨等等，但是依他看来这一切都是假象。事实上这些东西也正是毁灭我们的因素。接下来，他不厌其详地向我讲述了各种灾难，有眼下存在的，也有即将发生的。他走后，我

感到闷闷不乐，如果能早点认识他，我大概就不会开业了。后来这位先生继续住在这个没落的城市，不断重弹他的悲观论调：很多年都不肯在此购置房产，因为一切都将毁于一旦。最后我高兴地看到他终于买了房子，价格是他最初大谈悲观论时的五倍。

有件事情我应该放在前面讲：前一年秋天，我把自己认识的大部分有识之士组织起来成立了一个社团，旨在相互切磋，共同进步，我们给它起名叫“秘社”（Junto）。社团每星期五晚上聚会。我定了一套规矩，要求每个社员必须轮流提出至少一个关于道德、政治或自然哲学的问题供大家讨论；每三个月必须朗读一篇自己写的文章，题目自选。我们的辩论由一位社长主持，要怀抱求真之志，杜绝好辩之风和争胜之心。过了一段时间，为了防止与会者情绪过于激动，我们禁止了所有独断的表达或强硬的争辩，违者将予以一小笔罚款。“秘社”最开始的社员如下：

约瑟夫·布赖因特纳尔

公证人契约书的抄写员。一个温厚友善的中年人，非常热爱诗歌，逢诗必读，自己写的诗也还过得去；心灵手巧，会做很多小玩意；谈吐通达。

托马斯·戈弗雷

一个自学成才的数学家，对本行非常精通，后来的哈德列象限仪就是他发明的。但在本行之外所知甚少，而且不太好相处。他像我见过的大部分数学家一样，要求话一出口必须准确无误，总是在一些细节问题上斤斤计较，让所有谈话都无法顺利进行。不久他就离开了我们。

尼古拉斯·斯卡尔

勘测员，后来当了勘测局局长，热爱读书，偶尔写几句诗。

威廉·帕金森

学的是制鞋手艺，但热爱读书，颇通数学。他一开始是为了占星术而学数学，后来却对占星术大加嘲笑。他也当过勘测局局长。

威廉·莫格里奇

一个细木匠，手艺极为精湛，是个稳当可靠、通情达理的人。

罗伯特·格雷

一个家产殷实的年轻绅士。活泼机智，经常语出双关，很受朋友们的喜爱。

威廉·科尔曼

当时是一名商店店员，年龄与我相仿。他几乎是我见过的人里头最冷静、心地最善良、品行最端正的了。后来他成为了一名很有名的大商人，还是本省的法官之一。我们的友谊持续了近四十年，一直到他去世。

还有我前面已经讲过的休·梅雷迪斯、斯蒂芬·波茨和乔治·韦布。

我们的社团差不多持续了近四十年，它是当时本地区最好的科学、道德和政治学校。我们在讨论前一周会先提出问题，所以我们在读书时便将注意力放在几个主题上，在讨论时就更加有的放矢，而且我们在这个社团养成了良好的谈话习惯——为了防止冲突，我们订立了种种会规，一切研究都要遵循这些会规来进行，所以我们的社团才能长久存在，我在后面还会经常提到它。但是，在此提到这个社团，是为了说明一些跟我有利害关系的事：社团里的每个人都尽力为我的印刷所招揽生意。尤其是布赖因特纳尔，他给我们介绍了为贵格会印制会史的生意，共四十个印张，剩下的部分由凯默承接。这笔生意我们做得非常辛苦，因为收费很低。这是一本大尺寸的对开本书籍，正文用十二点活字，注释用十点活字。我每天排一个印张，然后梅雷迪斯把它印出来。因为时不时有其他朋友介绍的零活插进来，等我们印完将铅字归好位以备第二天使用时，往往已经是晚上十一点了，有时甚至更晚。但是我已经下定决心每天做完一个印张。有一天我装好版，以为

一天的工作已经结束时，却不小心弄乱了一张版，有两页的铅字混在了一起。我立刻拆版，重新排好后才上床睡觉。

我的勤奋在邻里间有目共睹，渐渐为我们带来了名声和信誉。我还听说了这样一件事：在商人的夜间俱乐部里，有人提到了新开的印刷所，大家都认为肯定开不下去，因为本地已经有凯默和布拉德福德两家了，但是贝尔德博士（多年后咱们曾经在他的故乡苏格兰的圣安德鲁地区见过他）却提出了相反的看法：“那个富兰克林的勤奋无人能及，我从俱乐部回家的时候看到他还在干活，第二天邻居们还没起床他就已经开工了。”这番话打动了其他人，很快就有人主动提出给我们供应文具，让我们代销。不过我当时并不想开商店。

尽管有自吹自擂之嫌，但我却毫不掩饰来强调自己的勤奋。我这样做是为了让我的子孙后代在读到这本书，看到勤奋给我带来的种种好处，能够明白这项美德的可贵之处。

乔治·韦布从一位女性朋友那里借了一笔钱，交给凯默，赎回了自由之身。他跑到我这里来谋求一个熟练工的位子，我当时没法雇他，却愚蠢地透露给他一个秘密：我打算办一份报纸，到时候可能会有工作给他做。我告诉他这份报纸很有希望成功，因为本地唯一的报纸是布拉德福德办的，他办得很不好，报纸毫无价值，枯燥乏味，却给他带来

了不少收益。所以我想一份好报纸肯定能受到欢迎和支持。我要求韦布替我保密，可他竟然告诉了凯默。为了抢夺先机，凯默立刻宣布自己打算办报，而且要雇佣韦布做这件事。我非常愤怒，想给他们捣乱，可我现在还没法办报，便给布拉德福德的报纸写了几篇有趣的文章，题目是《爱管闲事的人》，后来布赖因特纳尔又继续写了几个月。就这样，大家的注意力被我们吸引了过来，而凯默的计划被我们奚落了一番后，已经没人在意了。不过凯默还是办了报，在支撑了三个季度之后，最多也只有九十个订户。他想把报纸以低价卖给我，我也早已做好了接手的准备，于是立刻把它买了下来，几年后，这份报纸给我带来了巨大的收益。

我发现尽管我和梅雷迪斯的合伙关系还在继续，我却总是使用单数人称“我”（I），这可能是因为所有的经营工作其实都落在我一个人身上。梅雷迪斯不会排字，印刷也做不好，而且总是醉醺醺的。我的朋友们都对我和他合作感到惋惜，但是我决定做好自己的本分，随遇而安。

我们的第一份报纸发行了，与本省其他报纸的面貌迥然不同，铅字更清晰，印制也更精美。当时伯内特总督和马萨诸塞省议会之间正有一场争端，我发表了一些言辞激烈的评论，惊动了一些要人，这份报纸和办报人成了他们的话题，几个星期后他们都成了我们的订户。人们纷纷跟风，我们的订户数量与日俱增。这是我学会写小文章后的最初

的收获之一，再有就是，这些大人物看到报纸掌握在一个会摇笔杆子的人手里，觉得要给我一些恩惠和鼓励。布拉德福德依然在承印选票、法律文件和其他公家生意。但他把一份议会给总督的呈文印得质量粗劣、错误百出，我们把它重新印得精美准确，给每位议员人手一份，使他们意识到双方的差距，于是议会中我们友方的力量大大增强了。经过投票，我们被选为第二年的承印商。

在议会的朋友中间，我绝不会忘记的是之前提过的汉密尔顿先生，他此时已经从英国归来，当上了议员。在上面提到的这件事中，他给了我很大的支持——他终生在很多事情上都对我照顾有加。

大约在这个时候，先生提起了我欠他的那笔钱，但没有催我。我给他写了一封信，将情况坦言相告，请他再宽限一段时间，他答应了。后来我有能力偿还时，立刻连本带息全部还清，并且表达了我的感谢之情，总算在一定程度上弥补了错误。

但在此时，我遇到了一个完全意想不到的困难。按照约定，梅雷迪斯父亲本应为我们付清印刷所的开销，此时才知道他只能付一百镑。他付了这笔钱，但是我们还欠商人一百镑，对方失去了耐心，把我们几个都告上了法庭。我们缴了保释金，但看来如果我们不能及时筹到钱，案子很快就会判决执行，到时候我们就完了，大好前程将毁于一旦，因为印刷机和铅字将会被变卖抵债，而且很可能是半价出售。

在这危难之际，两位真正的朋友伸出了援手，我对他们的恩情感铭于心。在我没有张口求助的情况下，他们不约而同地分别找到了我。两个人都说如果我能独立开业，愿为我垫付所需的全部款项，他们不希望我继续和梅雷迪斯合作，说经常看到他在大街上喝得醉醺醺的，或在酒馆里玩些下流游戏，实在有损我们的声誉。这两位朋友是威廉·科尔曼和罗伯特·格雷斯。我告诉他们，只要梅雷迪斯父子还有可能履行我们的约定，我就不能主动提出散伙，因为他们已经做了很多，如果有能力将来也会做下去，我欠他们很大的人情；不过如果他们最后没能履行约定，我们的合伙关系被迫结束，那时我就能心安理得地接受朋友们的资助了。

这件事就这样搁置了一段时间，后来我对我的合伙人说：“也许你父亲对你在生意里承担的角色不满意，所以不愿意为咱俩垫资，只愿意为你一个人垫资。如果真是这样，请告诉我，我会把生意全都交给你，自己再去找事情做。”他说：“不是的，父亲真的很失望，他确实无能为力，我也不愿意再拖累他了。我现在明白了，我不适合干这行，本来是个农民，三十岁了还要跑到城里来当学徒，学新手艺，实在是太蠢了。我们很多威尔士人要去北卡罗来纳定居，那里的土地便宜，我想跟他们一起去，做回我的本行。你也可以找朋友来帮你。如果你愿意承担公司的债务，归还我父亲垫付的一百镑，帮我还一小笔私人欠款，再给我三十镑和一副新马鞍，我就放弃合伙关系，全部生意都归你。”我同意了，立刻写好一份协议，签字盖章，给了他想要的东西。



他很快就去了北卡罗来纳，第二年从那里给我写来了两封长信，讲述了该地的气候、土地、农业等等，在这些方面他非常懂行。这两封信是我所见过的对于那个地区最好的叙述，我把它们登在了报上，读者们感到非常满意。

梅雷迪斯走后，我立刻去找了那两位朋友。我不愿表现得倾向于任何一方，于是从两人那里各自接受了我所需要的半数，偿清了公司的债务，开始以我自己的名义经营。我在报上发表声明，宣布之前的合作关系已经解除，我记得这是在1729年前后。

大约就在这段时期，人们开始呼吁发行更多纸币。当时本省的纸币储备只有一万五千镑，而且很快会进一步减少。有钱人反对增加发行量，因为他们反对一切纸币，害怕一旦像在新英格兰那样发生纸币贬值，所有债权人的利益就会受到损害。我们的“秘社”也讨论了这个问题，我赞成发行更多纸币，因为我相信1723年第一次少量发行取得了很好的效果，增加了本省的贸易、就业和居民人数。现在所有的老房子里都住着人，还有很多新房子正在建设，可我还记得很清楚，当我第一次吃着面包卷在费城的街道上闲逛时，看到第二大街和前街中间的胡桃街上，家家户户门上都贴着出租的广告，板栗街和其他街巷也是如此。当时我觉得这座城市的居民正在纷纷弃城而去。

这番辩论使我特别关注这个题目，就写了一本小册子匿名出版，题目是《论纸币的性质和必要》。小册子在老百姓中间受到了普遍好评，却为富人们所憎恶，因为它使增加纸币发行量的呼声变得更高了，而富人中间又没有会写东西的人，无法予以回应。于是他们反对的声音渐渐弱下去了，提议在议会中以多数赞成获得通过。我在议会里的朋友认为我有些功劳，就让我来承印这些纸币作为对我的褒奖，这笔生意利润丰厚，对我大有助益。就这样，会写文章再次给我带来了好处。

随着时间的推移和人们的切身体验，纸币的益处变得越来越明显，后来就没有什么争议了。很快，本省纸币增加到了五万五千英镑，1739年增加到了八万英镑，到了战争期间已经达到了三十五万英镑，贸易、建筑和居民人数也一直在增长。不过现在我认为纸币数量也该有个限度，超过之后可能就会带来危害了。

不久后，我又通过我的朋友汉密尔顿接下了印刷纽卡斯尔纸币的生意，当时我觉得又能大赚一笔了——因为当时格局小，小生意也像大买卖。这几笔生意也确实使我获益匪浅，因为它们给了我很大的鼓励。汉密尔顿还帮我获得了该地政府法律文件和选票的印刷生意，在我从事印刷业的那些年，这些业务一直是我的。

这时候，我开了一间小文具店，出售各式各样的空白单据，多亏了我的朋友布赖因特纳尔的帮助，这些单据是市面上迄今为止最正规的。

店里还出售纸张、羊皮纸和书摊上卖的小书等等。我在伦敦时认识了一个叫怀特曼什的排字工，技艺十分出色，这时他来到我这里干活，一直勤勤恳恳。我还收了一名学徒，是阿奎拉·罗斯的儿子。

我开始一点点地偿还印刷所的债务。为了保护我作为一名生意人的信用和品格，我处处留意，不仅在本质上做到勤俭，而且尽量避免在表面上有相反的表现。我衣着朴素，从不在消遣娱乐场所露面，也不出去钓鱼打猎。我承认读书有时候会让我荒废工作，但我只是偶尔私下为之，不会惹来人们的闲话。为了表现自己不忘本分，我有时会用手推车推着在商店买的纸张，穿街过巷运回家中，人们都认为我是个勤奋有为的年轻人。我买东西按时付账，进口文具商欢迎我常常惠顾，还有人提出要给我供书代销，我的事业进展顺利，蒸蒸日上。与此同时，凯默的信誉和生意每况愈下，最后不得不变卖印刷所还债。后来他去了巴巴多斯，在那里过了几年非常凄惨落魄的日子。

一个叫大卫·哈利的人曾是凯默的学徒，过去曾受过我的指导，此时买下了凯默的设备在费城自立门户。我一开始担心哈利会是个劲敌，因为他有一些有钱有势的朋友，所以我就提出要和他合伙经营。他不屑一顾地拒绝了我。后来看这真是一件幸事。此人非常傲慢，打扮得像个绅士，生活奢侈，常常外出玩乐，债台高筑，不理正事。最后，他弄得再也没有生意上门，又找不到事情做，只得步凯默后尘去了巴巴多斯，把印刷所也迁了过去。有意思的是，这位学徒居然在那边雇佣

了从前的老板凯默当伙计，两人还不断吵架。后来，哈利一直债务缠身，最后不得不卖掉铅字回到宾夕法尼亚干起了务农的老本行。凯默被那个买下铅字的人雇佣当排字工，但是没过几年就去世了。

现在，除了我的老对手布拉德福德，费城已经无人与我竞争了。布拉德福德生活富足安逸，不时雇零工干一点印刷的散活，对生意并不十分上心。但是他开办邮局，人们以为他获得消息的机会比我多，刊登广告的传播效果比我好，所以找他登广告的人比我多得多——这让他赚了不少钱，对我很不利。尽管我也是通过邮局收发报纸，可是大家却不这么认为，因为布拉德福德很不厚道地禁止邮差给我送报。我只能贿赂邮差，让他们暗地里帮我送报。布拉德福德的做法让我非常愤怒，也让我瞧不起他，所以当我日后处于他的位置时，我很注意不要步他的后尘。

到目前为止，我一直在戈弗雷家搭伙吃饭，他带着妻儿租住房子的一部分，还租了我的一侧的店面做装玻璃的生意，不过他总是沉迷于数学，很少工作。戈弗雷太太想给我介绍一门亲事，对方是她亲戚的女儿。她总是找机会让我俩见面，后来我也动了真格，因为那个女孩真的很值得追求。她家的长辈们都很支持，经常邀请我去吃饭，还制造机会让我们单独相处。最后到了该挑明的时候，谈条件是通过戈弗雷太太进行的。我告诉她，希望对方的陪嫁能够偿清我印刷所的债务（我记得当时还剩下不到一百镑）。她带回话说对方拿不出那么多

钱，我说他们可以把房子抵押给典当行。过了几天，对方又回话说他们不赞成这桩婚事，他们向布拉德福德打听了，印刷生意根本不赚钱，铅字磨损很快，总需要添新的，还说凯默和哈利相继破产，我很快也会步他们的后尘。就这样，我被禁止再次登门，女孩也被关在了家里。

我不知道他们是真的改变了想法，还是只是耍手腕，认为我们俩用情深笃，难舍难分，一定会秘密结婚，那样就可以随意决定给多少陪嫁了。我怀疑是后者，便感到非常气愤，再不登门。后来戈弗雷太太又说对方的态度有所缓和，想劝我回心转意，但我非常坚定地告诉她，我不会再和那家人有任何往来了。这件事惹恼了戈弗雷一家，我们渐渐不合。最后他们搬走了，留下我住着一栋大房子，我决定再也不招人合住了。

但这件事让我开始考虑婚事了。我开始留意身边，也在其他地方主动结交了一些人，但很快发现人们普遍认为印刷生意不赚钱，所以除非是娶一个不如意的女子，我别指望娶妻能带来丰厚的陪嫁。与此同时，难以控制的年少激情驱使我与一些偶然相遇的下流女人胡混，既花费钱财，又招惹麻烦，还生怕染上什么病——好在我运气好逃过了这一劫。

作为邻里、老相识，我和里德小姐一家一直保持往来。从我在她家寄宿时起，他们就一直很器重我，常常请我去家里，和我商量他们的一

些事情，我有时候也能帮上一点忙。我很同情里德小姐的不幸遭遇，她总是闷闷不乐，很少展露欢颜，也不愿和人来往。我认为自己在伦敦时的轻率失信，在很大程度上导致了她的不幸。可是她母亲心地非常善良，认为更多错在自己而不在我，因为她阻止了我们在我去伦敦前结婚，又在我离开期间劝里德小姐另嫁他人。我和里德小姐之间渐渐旧情复燃，可此时我们的结合却遭到了很大的反对。她的婚姻确实应该被视为无效，因为据说那个男人之前已经娶过妻，现在生活在英国，但是距离遥远，此事并不容易证实；还有传闻说他已经死了，可是也并不确凿；就算属实，他生前负债累累，继任者可能会被债主要求替他偿还。尽管如此，我们依然决心去面对一切困难。

我在1730年9月1日娶里德小姐为妻，担心的事情一件都没发生。她是一个善良忠诚的贤内助，帮我打理店铺。我们的日子越过越好，两个人都努力让对方幸福快乐。就这样，我总算尽量弥补了之前的错误。

大约在这段时间，我们的社团不再在酒馆里见面，格雷斯先生在家中专门腾出了一间聚会的屋子。我提议说，既然大家研究问题时常需要引用书籍，那把这些书集中放在聚会的场所岂不方便？这样可以用这些书组成一个公共藏书室，我们需要时可以随时查阅，每人都可以使用其他成员的书，大家都能受益。这个提议得到了一致赞同，我们每人拿出一些富余的书放在房间的一头。不过书的数量没有预想的那么

多，而且虽然作用不小，由于缺少管理也引起了一些不便之处。大约一年后，这些书就又被分散，各归原主了。

这时候，我开始着手进行我的第一个公共事业——建立一个会员制图书馆。我草拟了方案，请我们的契约起草人布罗格登先生把它修改成正规格式。在“秘社”友人的帮助下，图书馆有了第一批五十名会员，每人先缴四十先令入会费，以后每年缴十先令会费，共缴五十年，也就是这个社团能够存续的年限。后来我们取得了特许执照，会员增加到了一百人，成为了北美会员图书馆的鼻祖。现在，这类图书馆已经蔚为大观，成为了一桩伟大的事业，而且还在不断发展。这些图书馆提高了美洲人的日常语言水平，使普通的商人和农民也变得像其他国家的绅士那样聪明，而且或许对殖民地人民为自己的权利奋斗做出了一定贡献。

## **卷二 续篇**

《续篇》写于1784年,当时,七十八岁的富兰克林居住在法国巴黎近郊的帕西（Passy），担任美国驻法公使。与《正传》不同,《续篇》不再是富兰克林对儿子的家事叙谈,而是为公众而写,希望能带给年轻一辈以人生启示。

### **第八章 创立图书馆**

（两封信内容略）

.....如果我能在家里看着我的笔记文章，或许更好，因为这样可以帮我回忆往事，确定日期。可是我归期未定，只有现在有空闲，所以只能尽量把想起来的事情写下来，倘若能生还故乡，再进行修正和完善。现在我身边没有一份完整文稿的复件，所以我不知道创立费城图书馆的一些方法是否已经写过（图书馆一开始很小，现在已经颇具规模）。不过我记得自己写到了这一时期，也就是1730年前后。那么我从这件事开始写起吧，如果日后发现重复了，再把这段删掉。

我在费城开业的这段时期，波士顿以南的殖民地没有一家像样的书店。在纽约和费城，印刷商说白了就是个卖文具的，出售的也只是些纸张、历书、歌谣本和一些普通课本。有人想读书，只能从英国邮购。“秘社”的成员手中都保留了几本书。我们最开始在一间啤酒屋见面，后来离开了那里，租了一间屋子作为聚会地点。我提议每个人把自己的书带过去，这样不仅可以在聚会时随时查阅，而且可以将自己想看的书借回家阅读，彼此互利互惠。我们就这样做了，大家在一段时间里非常满意。

这批藏书数量不多，却带来了不少好处。于是，我进一步提出想推广这种共享图书的做法，成立一个会员制的收费图书馆，让更多人从中



受益。我拟了一个草案，制定了必要的章程，然后请专业的契约起草人查尔斯·布罗格登先生改写成订阅协议条款的形式。协议规定每个订阅人要先支付一笔钱用于图书馆购书，每年再缴一笔会费，用于添购书籍。当时费城爱读书的人很少，而且几乎都很穷，所以我到处奔走也只找到了五十个同意缴款（先缴四十先令，以后每年十先令）的订阅人，其中大部分是年轻商人。我们就靠这笔小小的集资开始运作。书是从国外买的，图书馆每周向订阅人开放一天借书日，如果未能按时归还图书，需要按定价的双倍赔偿。这个机构很快就显示出了它的作用，其他城镇甚至其他省都纷纷效仿。各方捐资使这些图书馆的规模渐渐扩大，读书变成了一种风尚，因为没有其他公共娱乐来分散人们的学习兴趣，他们便将更多时间用来阅读。短短几年后，在外人看来，他们的教养和智力就超过了其他国家同等阶层的人民。

协议中这些条款的有效期为五十年，对我们和我们的后人都形成约束。在我们准备签字时，协议起草人布罗格登先生对我们说：“虽然你们都很年轻，不过大概没有人能活到这份协议期满的日子。”而如今，我们中有好几位依然健在。没过几年，我们得到了一份特许执照，图书馆变成了一家永久性的公司，这份协议也随之失效了。

我在征求订阅者的过程中遇到了许多反对和不情愿，这使我很快意识到，一个人提出任何一项有用的计划，如果需要周围人的帮助才能完成，而一旦完成，发起人的声望又将比周围人高出哪怕一星半点，那

么最好不要透露自己发起人的身份。因此我尽量低调，声称计划是几个朋友想出来的，他们选出了心目中的爱书人，我只是帮忙跑腿，提出邀请而已。这样一说，事情进展得顺利多了，于是此后遇到类似情况我都如此处理，每每收效甚佳，所以我现在衷心推荐这个方法。牺牲一点眼下的虚荣，日后将会获得丰厚的补偿。如果暂时不知道功劳该归谁，一定会有一个比你虚荣的人站出来，把功劳揽到自己头上，到时候就连嫉妒也愿意为你主持公道，拔掉他僭领的羽毛，把它们归还给真正的主人。

有了这个图书馆，我每天都拿出一两个小时学习，从不间断，我渐渐取得了进步，在一定程度上弥补了父亲当初想让我接受高等教育却未能做到的缺憾。

读书是我允许自己享受的唯一乐趣。我从不去酒馆、赌场或任何游乐场所消磨时光，而是在工作上兢兢业业，持之以恒，因为我开印刷所背了一身债务，年幼的孩子很快就需要接受教育，而且我必须与另外两家比我早在此地立足的印刷所竞争。我的境况一天比一天好转，但依然不改节俭本色。小时候父亲常用一句所罗门的箴言教导我：“你见过办事勤勉之人吗？他必立于君王面前，必不会立于低微之人面前。”从那时起，我就认为勤勉是发家致富、出人头地的良方，这种想法激励我奋进。我并没有想要“立于君王面前”，可是这种事情却真的

发生了一——我曾站在五位君王面前，甚至还荣幸地与丹麦国王坐下来共进晚餐。

还有一句英国谚语是这么说的：“要想发家致富，需有贤妻相助。”我很幸运地拥有一位像我一样克勤克俭的贤妻。她总是很高兴地帮我操持，比如折叠和装订小册子、照料店铺、为造纸商收购亚麻破布等等。我们没有雇佣一个闲人，饮食简单朴素，家具都是最便宜的。就拿早餐来说，很长一段时间我只吃面包和牛奶，没有茶，餐具就是一个两便士的粗陶粥碗和一个锡制勺子。但是请注意，我这样坚持朴素的原则，奢侈之风还是偷偷潜入家里，逐渐滋长起来。一天早上，我被叫去吃早饭时，发现盛粥的竟然是一个瓷碗，旁边还有一把银勺！妻子瞒着我花了二十三先令“巨款”买下了它们，没有别的理由，只因为她觉得自己的丈夫也该像其他邻居一样有资格使用银勺和瓷碗。这是银器和瓷器在我家第一次登场，此后若干年里，随着我们变得越来越富有，高级餐具也越来越多，最后总价值达到了数百镑。

## **第九章 宗教与美德**

我在宗教上一直接受的是长老会的洗礼。这个教派的一些教义，比如上帝的永恒谕旨、拣选与天罚等等，在我看来有些故弄玄虚，以及其他一些教义也值得怀疑。而且因为礼拜天是我的学习日，我很早就不再参加教派的集会了。但尽管如此，我一直还坚守着一些宗教原则，比如我从未怀疑上帝的存在，我相信上帝创造世界并按照他的旨意统

治世界，我相信侍奉上帝的最好方法就是善待他人，相信灵魂不朽，善有善报，恶有恶报，不在今生，就在来世。我认为这些是任何一种宗教的要素，其依据，就是在我国的所有宗教中都可以发现它们。我尊重这些宗教，只是程度不同，因为我发现它们或多或少都掺杂着一些“别的因素”，这些因素不是为了启发、提高或巩固德行，而主要是为了分裂我们，使我们彼此不再友好。我尊重所有宗教，认为即使是最坏的宗教也有一些好的效用，所以避免说出任何可能会让别人对自己的信仰产生负面看法的言论。本省随着人口增加，不断需要增加新的礼拜场所，这些场所往往是由人们自愿捐款修建的，无论是什么教派，只要有需要，我总会尽一份绵薄之力。

我很少参加公共礼拜，但我相信只要方法得当，礼拜不失为一桩正当有益的事情。我每年都会缴纳捐款，支持我们费城仅有的长老会教堂和牧师。牧师有时以友人的身份来拜访我，劝我参加他主持的礼拜，我推却不得，只得前往。有一次还连着参加了五个礼拜。礼拜日的闲暇本是我的学习时间，尽管如此，假若我认为他是个优秀的布道者，或许会坚持下去，可惜他的布道内容不是教派论战，就是解说这一教派独有的教义，在我看来统统枯燥乏味、毫无益处。这些布道文没有任何灌输或加强道德原则的作用，其主旨似乎只是让我们成为长老会教徒，而不是做一个好公民。终于有一次，他以《腓力比书》第四章的某一节作为布道题目，内容如下：

“最后，弟兄们，凡是真实的、诚实的、公正的、纯洁的、可爱的、有美名的，若有什么德行，若有什么赞誉，这些事你们都要思考。”

我想，讲到这样一篇经文，总该出现一些道德方面的内容了吧，可他却只局限于他认为是使徒本意的五点内容：

第一，虔诚恪守安息日；

第二，勤读圣经；

第三，按时参加公共礼拜；

第四，领受圣餐；

第五，尊敬作为上帝使者的牧师。

这些可能都是善行，但并不是我期待从这篇经文中学到的善行。我再也不指望他会从其他经文里引申出我想了解的内容，便彻底倒了胃口，不去听他布道了。几年前（1728年）我自己编写了一本小小的祈祷书，或者说发明了一种祷告方式，书名为《信条与宗教律令》，此时我重新开始使用它，不再去教堂参加公共礼拜了。我的这种行为或许有所不妥，但我也不想多做解释，因为我的目标是陈述事实，而不是为事实辩解。

大约在这段时间，我想出了一个大胆而艰巨的计划，那就是要修炼自己，达到道德上的完美境界。我希望在今后的人生中不做一件错事，无论天性、习惯或同伴引诱我犯什么错误，我都要全力克服。因为我知道或自认为知道何为正确、何为错误，没有什么理由不去扬善避恶。但我很快发现这个任务比我想象的要艰巨得多。当我集中注意力防止自己犯第一个错误时，另一个错误会猝不及防地到来；习惯会趁虚而入，天性的力量有时并非理性能够约束。最后我得出了一个结论：仅靠行善有益的信念，是不足以防止我们失足犯错的，我们必须破除陋习，树立新风，才能始终一贯地做到行为端正。为了这个目标，我设计了下面这套方法。

我在读书时看到人们列举过各种各样的美德，名目多少有些繁杂，而且不同的作者在同一个名目下涵盖的概念也有多有少，各不相同。就拿“节制”来说，有人认为它指的只是饮食节制，有人却把它引申为克制一切肉体或精神上的享受、欲望、兴趣和激情，甚至包括我们的贪念和野心。为了讲清楚，我要求自己多列一些名目，每条不要附加太多含义。我把当时认为必需或可取的美德总结成十三条，每条附上一句简短的规诫，以充分说明我想表达的意思。

这十三条美德和规诫如下：

## 1. 节制 (TEMPERANCE)

食不过饱，饮酒不醉。

## 2. 缄默 ( SILENCE )

凡出口之言必对他人或自己有所裨益，避免闲谈。

## 3. 有序 ( ORDER )

每件物品有其固定位置，每桩事务有其固定时间。

## 4. 决心 ( RESOLUTION )

该做的事就决心去做，决心去做就坚持到底。

## 5. 节俭 ( FRUGALITY )

不花于人于己无益之闲钱，换言之，不浪费。

## 6. 勤劳 ( INDUSTRY )

不浪费时间，只做有用之事，杜绝无益之举。

## 7. 真诚 ( SINCERITY )

不要做害人的欺骗，思想和语言都要纯洁公正。

## 8. 公正 ( JUSTICE )

不做使人蒙冤的伤人之事，不忘自己当行之义举。

## 9.温和 ( MODERATION )

避免走极端。即使对方罪有应得，也不要愤然伤害对方。

## 10.洁净 ( CLEANLINESS )

身体、衣着和住所都不容有任何污秽。

## 11.平静 ( TRANQUILITY )

不要为琐事、意外之事或不可避免之事而烦扰。

## 12.贞洁 ( CHASTITY )

除非为健康或生育后代起见，少行房事，

切忌因纵欲过度而头脑昏沉，身体虚弱，

或损害自己和他人的平静或名誉。

## 13.谦逊 ( HUMILITY )

效法耶稣和苏格拉底。



我的目的是把这些美德都化成自己的好习惯，所以为了避免注意力分散，最好不要追求一蹴而就，而应在一段时间内集中培养其中一项；运用自如后再进行下一项，逐个击破，直到把十三项全部掌握为止。而且，先掌握其中一些美德或许有助于培养另一些，所以我就按照这个思路，把它们按照上面的顺序排列起来。

首先是“节制”。积习容易复燃，诱惑永无休止，而节制能使人头脑冷静，思维清晰，时刻保持警惕，抵挡二者的侵蚀。培养起节制的习惯，缄默就容易多了。因为我的愿望是在完善德行的同时获得知识，考虑到在谈话时获取知识主要靠耳朵而不是靠嘴巴，我希望自己改掉正在养成的多嘴多舌、爱讲双关语和俏皮话的习惯，它只会让我结交一些轻浮无聊的朋友，因此我把“缄默”放在了第二位。我希望这一条和下一条“有序”能让我有更多时间进行我的计划和学习。而一旦有了“决心”这项美德，就能更坚定地努力培养接下来的所有美德。“节俭”和“勤劳”能帮我还清剩下的债务，从而富足独立，也使我更容易做到“真诚”和“公正”等等。当时我认为诚如毕达哥拉斯《金色诗句》中所言，每日自省是必要的，因此我设计了一种用来自省的方法。

我做了一个小本子，每一页记录一项美德，用红墨水笔画出竖线，形成七列，每一列代表一周里的一天，用一个字母标记。我又画出十三条与纵列交叉的横线，在每行的最前面用一个字母来代表一项美德。

当我反省自己时，发现在哪项美德方面犯了错误，就在对应日子的纵列里用一个小黑点标记。（如表所示）

	日	一	二	三	四	五	六
节制							
缄默	*	*		*		*	
有序	**	*	*		*	*	*
决心			*			*	
节俭		*			*		
勤劳			*				
真诚							
公正							
温和							
洁净							
平静							
贞洁							
谦逊							

十三周美德计划

我决心每周严密关注一项美德，一项一项依次进行。第一周我就提高警惕，尽量避免在“节制”方面犯下丝毫错误，对其他美德则采取顺其自然的态度，只在每天晚上标出当天犯下的过错。这样，如果第一周能保持标着“节”的第一行没有黑点，我就认为这项美德的习惯已经大

大加强，它对应的坏习惯已经削弱，就会大胆地将注意力延伸到下一条。在接下来的一周，努力保持这两行都没有黑点。当进行到最后一条的时候，我就用十三周的时间完成了一个流程，这样一年可以把这个流程完成四遍。这就像给花园锄草一样，不要试图一次根除所有杂草，因为根本做不到，应该每次只锄一块苗圃，锄完第一块，再锄第二块。我愉快地期待着看到鼓舞人心的变化：随着每一行的黑点依次被清除，每一页纸都代表着我在德行上的进步，直到走完几个流程后，我会发现在经过十三个星期的每日自省后，小本子上依然干干净净，那将是多么令人开心的事。

作为题句，我在我的小本子上抄写了艾狄生《卡托》里的如下句子：

“我愿意相信，如果有一个力量凌驾于我们之上（他确实存在，整个大自然通过他的造物高声歌唱），他一定会喜爱美德，受他喜爱之人一定快乐。”

还有一段来自西塞罗的名言：

“啊，哲学，生命的指引！啊，美德的追求者，罪恶的驱逐者！我宁愿遵照你的诫命生活一日，也不愿在错误中度过永生。”

我还摘抄了所罗门箴言中的一段关于智慧和美德的内容：（第三章第16、17节）

“她右手有长寿，左手有富贵。她的道全是安乐，她的路全是平安。”

上帝是智慧的源泉，因此我认为请他帮我获得智慧是正确而必要的，为此我写了一段小小的祈祷文，抄在我的自省表格之前，每天使用：“万能的上帝！慷慨的圣父！仁慈的向导！请赐给我更多智慧，让我发现自己真正的利益。请赐给我更多决心，让我遵从这智慧的指引。请允许我为您的子民真心效力，以此报答您的绵绵之恩。”有时候我也用汤姆逊的一段诗句作为祷文：

“光明与生命之父，您是至善！

请教我分辨好坏，请您亲自教我！

请带我远离愚蠢、虚荣与邪恶，远离一切低级的追求，

请用知识、宁馨和纯净的品德充满我的灵魂，

请给我神圣的、真实的、永不凋零的赐福！”

“有序”这条规诫要求每项事务各有其时，我在本子上画了张时间表，对一天二十四小时的作息做出安排：（如下页图所示）

早晨

问题：我今天该做好什么事？

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 5 \text{ 点} \\ 6 \text{ 点} \\ 7 \text{ 点} \end{array} \right\}$

起床，洗漱，向万能的上帝祷告！做好一天的规划，决定一天的事项，进行目前的学习，吃早餐。

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 8 \text{ 点} \\ 9 \text{ 点} \\ 10 \text{ 点} \\ 11 \text{ 点} \end{array} \right\}$

工作。

中午

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 12 \text{ 点} \\ 13 \text{ 点} \end{array} \right\}$

读书或查看账本，吃午饭。工作。

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 14 \text{ 点} \\ 15 \text{ 点} \\ 16 \text{ 点} \\ 17 \text{ 点} \end{array} \right\}$

工作。

晚上

问题：我今天做好了什么事？

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 18 \text{ 点} \\ 19 \text{ 点} \\ 20 \text{ 点} \\ 21 \text{ 点} \end{array} \right\}$

东西归放原位。吃晚餐。音乐，消遣或交谈。一口自省。

夜间

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 22 \text{ 点} \\ 23 \text{ 点} \\ 00 \text{ 点} \\ 1 \text{ 点} \\ 2 \text{ 点} \\ 3 \text{ 点} \\ 4 \text{ 点} \end{array} \right\}$

睡觉。

开始执行这个自省计划时我一直坚持，其间只中断了少数几次。我很惊讶地发现自己犯下的过错比想象中要多得多，但也满意于看着它们越变越少。每当新一轮流程开始，我会把旧的黑点擦掉，为新的记录腾出地方。擦着擦着，本子就变得破烂不堪了。为了避免需要不时做一个新本子的麻烦，我把表格和箴言誊写到了一本备忘录的象牙板上，用红墨水画下持久耐擦的线条，标记错误的时候就用黑色的铅笔，这样留下的记号可以很容易地用一块湿海绵擦掉。过了一段时间，我变成一年只走一遍这个流程，然后是几年走一遍流程，因为总要出国旅行或为公事出差，诸种事务缠身，最后我完全放弃了这个计划，不过我总是把我的小册子带在身边。

“有序”这一条给我带来了最多麻烦，我发现如果一个人的工作时间是固定的，比如印刷工人，他就有可能做到有序；可是当老板的就很难彻底做到，因为他必须和外界应酬，接洽业务也往往要迁就对方的时间。我还发现，有序地放置东西，比如纸张等，对我来说也极难遵守。我从小就没有养成这个习惯，而且因为记忆力特别好，所以没怎么感觉到缺少条理带来的不便。我花了很多心血在这上面，可是屡屡犯错，让我十分苦恼，而且进步甚微，动不动就故态复萌。最后，我几乎要放弃努力，任由自己在这方面有所缺陷了。这就像有人在我隔壁的铁匠家买了一把斧头，想把整个斧面都磨得像斧刃一样光亮。铁匠同意帮他磨亮，但要他转动磨刀的砂轮。这个人转动起砂轮，铁匠就把宽宽的斧面使劲贴在磨刀石上，于是转轮变得十分费劲。那个人

每过一小会儿，就从砂轮那里跑过来，看看磨到什么程度了，最后他决定把斧头就那么带回去，不再继续磨了。“不，”铁匠说，“继续转，继续转，我们早晚能把它磨亮，现在上面只磨出了一些斑点呀。”“没错，”那个人说，“但是我最喜欢的就是有斑点的斧头。”我相信很多人都是这样，因为缺少我的这套方法，他们发现自己在罪恶与美德的方面很难改掉坏习惯、养成好习惯，于是放弃了斗争，还自欺欺人说“有斑点的斧头是最好的”。有一种假扮成理性的东西时不时告诉我，我这样对自己吹毛求疵，可能是一种道德上的矫揉造作，在人们眼中未免显得荒唐可笑；它告诉我，人格太完美了可能会招致人们的嫉恨，给自己带来麻烦；它还告诉我，一个好心人应该允许自己有一些缺点，好给他的朋友们留点面子。

说实话，我发现自己在“有序”这一点上已经没救了。现在我老了，记忆力下降，就能很明显地感到在这方面的不足。但从整体上说，尽管我从未达到自己雄心勃勃追求的那种完美境界，而且还差得很远，但是依然在努力成为一个更好更快乐的人。如果我未曾尝试，就不会有这种变化。这就像那些想通过临摹字帖写出完美书法的人，尽管永远达不到他们所梦想的字帖水准，但是通过努力得到了提高，字写得漂亮清晰，也算相当不错了。

我希望我的子孙后代知道，他们的这个先辈直到写下这些文字的时候——也就是他已经七十九岁的时候，还一直生活幸福，靠的就是这些

小方法和上帝的福佑。即使天意让他在余生中遭遇挫折，身陷逆境，往日的幸福也能使他乐天知命，安然承受。因为“节制”，他一直身体健康，到现在还有一副好体格；多亏了“勤劳”和“节俭”，他早年境况安稳，获得了财富和知识，成为一个有用的公民，并在学者之间有了一点声望；因为“真诚”和“公正”，他的国家给予他信任，让他承担种种光荣的工作。这些美德共同影响着他。他虽然不能做到尽善尽美，却也性情平和，谈吐有趣。所以到了这个年纪，人们依然愿意和他做朋友，年轻人也喜欢和他来往。希望我的子孙后代中有人能效仿这些做法，并从中获益。

需要说明的是，尽管我的这项计划也有一些宗教因素，但并不包含任何特定教派的教义。我有意地避开它们，是因为我充分相信我的方法是好的、有效的，可以供各种宗教信仰的人使用。而且打算将来出版，因此不希望其中的内容会引发任何教派的人对它产生偏见。我想给每一条美德写几句简单的评论，说明具备这条美德的好处，以及与其相对的恶习的危害。我打算用“美德的艺术”作为书名，因为它说明了培养美德的方式和手段，不像有些书只是一味劝人行善，却既不给予指导也不说明方法。恰如《使徒行传》里那个空口行善的人，只劝赤身裸体者和食不果腹者要吃饱穿暖，却不告诉他们如何、以及在哪里能获得衣食（见《雅各书》第二章，第15、16节）。然而我写作和出版这些评论的打算却没有实现。我确实时不时会写下一些简短的句子，说明自己的感受和思考，准备将来在评论中使用，其中一些现在



还保留在我身边。但是因为我年轻时对私人事务，后来对公共事务保持了必要的密切关注，使得这项计划一再推迟。因为在我的想法中，它与一个伟大高远的计划相关，那个计划需要我全身心地投入，可是一桩桩突如其来的工作使我无暇顾及，所以至今仍未完成。

在这篇自传中，我就是要说明并巩固这样一个道理：单独就人性本身来思考，恶行并不是因为被禁止才有害，而是因为有害才被禁止。因此，如果你希望在今生也能获得幸福，那就要努力培养自己的美德。它们能给你带来益处。

这个世界上有很多富商显贵、皇亲国戚，他们需要诚实的人来为他们处理事务，可这种人很少。鉴于这种情况，我想努力让年轻人相信，诚实和正直的品德是穷人致富的不二法门。

一开始我只列了十二项美德，但是一位贵格会的朋友好心地告诉我，我在一般人眼中总显得傲慢自大，在谈话时常常流露出骄矜之色；无论讨论什么问题，总是得理不让人，表现得专横无礼。他还举了几个例子，说得我心服口服。于是我决定在克服其他缺点的同时，也要努力改掉这项恶行，或者说是愚行，所以我在列表里加了“谦逊”这一项，并赋予了它广泛的含义。

我不能夸口说已经成功掌握了这项美德的实质，不过表面上确实进步很大。我给自己立下规矩：不直接反驳别人的观点，不强硬表达自己

的观点。我甚至遵守着“秘社”的老规矩，禁止自己在话语中包含任何表示确定的词汇，比如“肯定”“毫无疑问”等等，而代之以“我想”“我理解”“我认为一件事是如何如何”，或“此刻在我看来”等等。当别人断然主张某个我认为错误的观点时，我不再图一时痛快立刻指出对方的荒谬之处。在回答时，我会先说在某些情况下他的观点可能是对的，但是眼下这件事情似乎有一点不同，云云。我很快发现这种态度改变所带来的好处，我所参与的谈话进行得更加令人愉快了。我用谦虚的方式提出自己的观点，人们便更乐意接受、更少提出反对意见；如果我后来发现自己错了，也不至于感到太羞愧，而当我的意见碰巧正确时，也更容易说服别人放弃他们的错误看法，接受我的意见。

最初采取这种方式的时候，我还觉得有些别扭，后来就运用自如、习以为常了，我想在过去的五十年里，没人听我脱口说出过一句武断的话。我认为自己早年在倡议实施新制度或改变旧制度的时候，能够对同胞们有那么强的感召力，成为议员后又能在议会里产生那么大的影响，除了因为我品格正直外，就多亏了这种习惯。因为我其实不善言辞，从来没有雄辩之才，讲话总是磕磕绊绊，还常有语病，却往往能说服大家接受我的观点。

在我们的天性中，最难克服的大概就是骄傲了。你尽可以掩饰它或与之斗争，打倒它，扼杀它，镇压它，可它依然活着，时不时就会冒出

来。在这本传记中，你常常会看到它的影子，因为即使我以为自己已经完全战胜了它，说不定我又在为自己的谦逊而骄傲了。

本书选取了原稿中故事性最强的前两卷。

第三卷起笔于1788年，八十二岁高龄的富兰克林居住在费城家中，回忆了自己中青年时期出版历书、结识教士、醉心政务与科学发明，并为英法殖民地战争筹措等事。具体可参考附录年表。

第四卷起笔于1789年，富兰克林意图讲述自己为捍卫人权与领主之间打起的一场官司。遗憾故事未完，因病停笔，自传只记述到1758年。次年4月，富兰克林于家中去世，享年84岁。

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# 英文

# Volume 1

## CHAPTER 01

Dear Son,

I have ever had a Pleasure in obtaining any little Anecdotes of my Ancestors. You may remember the Enquiries I made among the Remains of my Relations when you were with me in England; and the Journey I took for that purpose. Now imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the Circumstances of my Life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with; and expecting 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 emerg'd 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 thro' 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.

That Felicity, when I reflected on it, has induc'd me sometimes to say, that were it offer'd to my Choice, I should have no Objection to a Repetition of the same Life from its Beginning, only asking the Advantage Authors have in a second Edition to correct some Faults of the first. So would I if I might, besides correcting the Faults, change some sinister Accidents and Events of it for others more favourable, but tho' this were deny'd, I should still accept the Offer. However, 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, the 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 troublesome to others who thro' respect to Age might think themselves oblig'd 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 believ'd by no body) 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 follow'd. 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 quite 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 mention'd Happiness of my past Life to his kind Providence, which led me to the Means I us'd and gave them Success. My Belief of this, induces me to hope, tho' I must not presume, that the same Goodness will still be exercis'd towards me in continuing that Happiness, or in 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: and 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, furnish'd me with several Particulars relating to our Ancestors. From these Notes I learnt that the Family had liv'd in the same Village, Ecton in Northamptonshire, for 300 Years, and how much longer he knew not (perhaps from the Time when the Name Franklin that before was the Name of an Order of People, was assum'd by them for a Surname, when others took Surnames all over the Kingdom). (Here a Note) on a Freehold of about 30 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 both followed as to their eldest Sons. When I search'd the Register at Ecton, I found an Account of their Births, Marriages and Burials, from the Year 1555 only, there being no Register kept in that Parish at any time preceding. By that Register I perceiv'd that I was the youngest Son of the youngest Son for 5 Generations back. My Grandfather Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Ecton till he grew too old to follow Business longer, when he

went to live with his Son John, a Dyer at Banbury in Oxfordshire, with whom my Father serv'd an Apprenticeship. There my Grandfather died and lies buried. We saw his Gravestone in 1758. His eldest Son Thomas liv'd in the House at Ecton, and left it with the Land to his only Child, a Daughter, who with her Husband, one Fisher of Wellingborough sold it to Mr. Isted, now Lord of the Manor there. My Grandfather had 4 Sons that grew up, viz. Thomas, John, Benjamin and Josiah. I will give you what Account I can of them at this distance from my Papers, and if they are not lost in my Absence, you will among them find many more Particulars.

Thomas was bred a Smith under his Father, but being ingenious, and encourag'd in Learning (as all his Brothers likewise were) by an Esquire Palmer, then the principal Gentleman in that Parish, he qualify'd for the Business of Scrivener, became a considerable Man in the County Affairs, was a chief Mover of all publick Spirited Undertakings, for the County, or Town of Northampton and his own Village, of which many Instances were told us at Ecton and he was much taken Notice of and patroniz'd by the then Lord



Halifax. He died in 1702, Jan. 6, old Stile, just 4 Years to a Day before I was born. The Account we receiv'd of his Life and Character from some old People at Ecton, I remember struck you, as something extraordinary from its Similarity to what you knew of mine.

"Had he died on the same Day, "you said, "one might have suppos'd a Transmigration."

John was bred a Dyer, I believe of Woolens. Benjamin, was bred a Silk Dyer, serving an Apprenticeship at London. He was an ingenious Man, I remember him well, for when I was a Boy he came over to my Father in Boston, and lived in the House with us some Years. He lived to a great Age. His Grandson Samuel Franklin now lives in Boston. He left behind him two Quarto Volumes, M.S. of his own Poetry, consisting of little occasional Pieces address'd to his Friends and Relations, of which the following sent to me, is a Specimen. (Here insert it.) He had form'd a Shorthand of his own, which he taught me, but never practising it I have now forgot it. I was nam'd after this Uncle, there being a particular Affection between him and my Father. He was very pious, a great

Attender of Sermons of the best Preachers, which he took down in his Shorthand and had with him many Volumes of them. He was also much of a Politician, too much perhaps for his Station. There fell lately into my Hands in London a Collection he had made of all the principal Pamphlets relating to Publick Affairs from 1641 to 1717. Many of the Volumes are wanting, as appears by the Numbering, but there still remains 8 Vols. Folio, and 24 in 4to and 8vo. A Dealer in old Books met with them, and knowing me by my sometimes buying of him, he brought them to me. It seems my Uncle must have left them here when he went to America, which was above 50 Years since. There are many of his Notes in the Margins.

This obscure Family of ours was early in the Reformation, and continu'd Protestants thro' the Reign of Queen Mary, when they were sometimes in Danger of Trouble on Account of their Zeal against Popery. They had got an English Bible, and to conceal and secure it, it was fastned open with Tapes under and within the Frame of a Joint Stool. When my Great Great Grandfather read in it to his Family, he turn'd up the Joint Stool upon his Knees, turning over the Leaves then

under the Tapes. One of the Children stood at the Door to give Notice if he saw the Apparitor coming, who was an Officer of the Spiritual Court. In that Case the Stool was turn'd down again upon its feet, when the Bible remain'd conceal'd under it as before. This Anecdote I had from my Uncle Benjamin. The Family continu'd all of the Church of England till about the End of Charles the 2ds Reign, when some of the Ministers that had been outed for Nonconformity, holding Conventicles in Northamptonshire, Benjamin and Josiah adher'd to them, and so continu'd all their Lives. The rest of the Family remain'd with the Episcopal Church.

Josiah, my Father, married young, and carried his Wife with three Children unto New England, about 1682. The Conventicles having been forbidden by Law, and frequently disturbed, induced some considerable Men of his Acquaintance to remove to that Country, and he was prevail'd with to accompany them thither, where they expected to enjoy their Mode of Religion with Freedom. By

the same Wife he had 4 Children more born there, and by a second Wife ten more, in all 17, of which I remember 13 sitting at one time at his Table, who all grew up to be Men and Women, and married. I was the youngest Son and the youngest Child but two, and was born in Boston, N.

England. My Mother the 2d Wife was Abiah Folger, a Daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first Settlers of New England, of whom honourable mention is made by Cotton Mather, in his Church History of that Country, (entitled Magnalia Christi Americana) as a godly learned Englishman, if I remember the words rightly. I have heard that he wrote sundry small occasional Pieces, but only one of them was printed which I saw now many Years since. It was written in 1675, in the homespun Verse of that Time and People, and address'd to those then concern'd in the Government there. It was in favour of Liberty of Conscience, and in behalf of the Baptists, Quakers, and other Secretaries, that had been under Persecution; ascribing the Indian Wars and other Distresses, that had befallen the Country to that Persecution, as so many Judgments of God, to punish so heinous an Offence; and exhorting a Repeal of those uncharitable Laws. The

whole appear'd to me as written with a good deal of Decent Plainness and manly Freedom. The six last concluding Lines I remember, tho' I have forgotten the two first of the Stanza, but the Purport of them was that his Censures proceeded from Goodwill, and therefore he would be known as the Author.

"because to be a Libeller, (says he)

I hate it with my Heart.

From Sherburne Town where now I dwell,

My Name I do put here,

Without Offence, your real Friend,

It is Peter Folgier."

My elder Brothers were all put Apprentices to different Trades. I was put to the Grammar School at Eight Years of Age, my Father intending to devote me as the Tithe of his Sons to the Service of the Church. My early Readiness in

learning to read (which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read) and the Opinion of all his Friends that I should certainly make a good Scholar, encourag'd him in this Purpose of his. My Uncle Benjamin too approv'd of it, and propos'd to give me all his Shorthand Volumes of Sermons I suppose as a Stock to set up with, if I would learn his Character. I continu'd however at the Grammar School not quite one Year, tho' in that time I had risen gradually from the Middle of the Class of that Year to be the Head of it, and farther was remov'd into the next Class above it, in order to go with that into the third at the End of the Year. But my Father in the mean time, from a View of the Expence of a College Education which, having so large a Family, he could not well afford, and the mean Living many so educated were afterwards able to obtain, Reasons that he gave to his Friends in my Hearing, altered his first Intention, took me from the Grammar School, and sent me to a School for Writing and Arithmetic kept by a then famous Man, Mr. Geo. Brownell, very successful in his Profession generally, and that by mild encouraging Methods. Under him I acquired fair Writing pretty soon, but I fail'd in the Arithmetic, and

made no Progress in it. At Ten Years old, I was taken home to assist my Father in his Business, which was that of a Tallow Chandler and Sope-Boiler. A Business he was not bred to, but had assumed on his Arrival in New England and on finding his Dying Trade would not maintain his Family, being in little Request. Accordingly I was employed in cutting Wick for the Candles, filling the Dipping Mold, and the Molds for cast Candles, attending the Shop, going of Errands, &c.

I dislik'd the Trade and had a strong Inclination for the Sea; but my Father declar'd against it; however, living near the Water, I was much in and about it, learnt early to swim well, and to manage Boats, and when in a Boat or Canoe with other Boys I was commonly allow'd to govern, especially in any case of Difficulty; and upon other Occasions I was generally a Leader among the Boys, and sometimes led them into Scrapes, of which I will mention one Instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, tho' not then justly conducted.

There was a Salt Marsh that bounded part of the Mill Pond, on the Edge of which at High water, we us'd to stand to fish

for Minnows. By much Trampling, we had made it a mere Quagmire. My Proposal was to build a Wharf there fit for us to stand upon, and I show'd my Comrades a large Heap of Stones which were intended for a new House near the Marsh, and which would very well suit our Purpose. Accordingly in the Evening when the Workmen were gone, I assembled a Number of my Playfellows, and working with them diligently like so many Emmets, sometimes two or three to a Stone, we brought them all away and built our little Wharf. The next Morning the Workmen were surpriz'd at Missing the Stones; which were found in our Wharf; Enquiry was made after the Removers; we were discovered and complain'd of; several of us were corrected by our Fathers; and tho' I pleaded the Usefulness of the Work, mine convinc'd me that nothing was useful which was not honest.

I think you may like to know Something of his Person and Character. He had an excellent Constitution of Body, was of middle Stature, but well set and very strong. He was ingenious, could draw prettily, was skill'd a little in Music and



had a clear pleasing Voice, so that when he play'd Psalm Tunes on his Violin and sung withal as he sometimes did in an Evening after the Business of the Day was over, it was extreamly agreeable to hear. He had a mechanical Genius too, and on occasion was very handy in the Use of other Tradesmen's Tools. But his great Excellence lay in a sound Understanding, and solid Judgment in prudential Matters, both in private and publick Affairs. In the latter indeed he was never employed, the numerous Family he had to educate and the straitness of his Circumstances, keeping him close to his Trade, but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading People, who consulted him for his Opinion in Affairs of the Town or of the Church he belong'd to and show'd a good deal of Respect for his Judgment and Advice. He was also much consulted by private Persons about their Affairs when any Difficulty occur'd, and frequently chosen an Arbitrator between contending Parties.

At his Table he lik'd to have as often as he could, some sensible Friend or Neighbour, to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful Topic for

Discourse, which might tend to improve the Minds of his Children. By this means he turn'd our Attention to what was good, just, and prudent in the Conduct of Life; and little or not Notice was ever taken of what related to the Victuals on the Table, whether it was well or ill drest, in or out of season, of good or bad flavour, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind; so that I was bro't up in such a perfect Inattention to those Matters as to be quite Indifferent what kind of Food was set before me; and so unobservant of it, that to this Day, if I am ask'd I can scarce tell, a few Hours after Dinner, what I din'd upon. This has been a Convenience to me in travelling, where my Companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable Gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed, Tastes and Appetites.

My Mother had likewise an excellent Constitution. She suckled all her 10 Children. I never knew either my Father or Mother to have any Sickness but that of which they dy'd, he at 89 and she at 85 Years of age. They lie buried together at Boston, where I some Years since plac'd a Marble stone over their Grave with this Inscription :

Josiah Franklin

And Abiah his Wife

Lie here interred.

They lived lovingly together in Wedlock

Fifty-five Years.

Without an Estate or any gainful Employment,

By constant labour and Industry,

With God's Blessing,

They maintained a large Family

Comfortably;

And brought up thirteen Children,

And seven Grand Children

Reputably.

From this Instance, Reader,

Be encouraged to Diligence in thy Calling,

And distrust not Providence.

He was a pious & prudent Man,

She a discreet and virtuous Woman.

Their youngest Son,

In filial Regard to their Memory,

Places this Stone.

J.F. born 1655 — Died 1744. AEtat 89

A.F. born 1667— died 1752 — 85

## **CHAPTER 02**

By my rambling Digressions I perceive my self to be grown old. I us'd write more methodically. But one does not dress for private Company as for a publick Ball. 'Tis perhaps only Negligence.

To return: I continu'd thus employ'd in my Father's Business for two Years, that is till I was 12 Years old; and my Brother

John, who was bred to that Business having left my Father, married and set up for himself at Rhodeisland, there was all Appearance that I was destin'd to supply his Place and be a Tallow Chandler. But my Dislike to the Trade continuing, my Father was under Apprehensions that if he did not find one for me more agreable, I should break away and get to Sea, as his Son Josiah had done to his great Vexation. He therefore sometimes took me to walk with him, and see Joiners, Bricklayers, Turners, Braziers, &c. at their Work, that he might observe my Inclination, and endeavour to fix it on some Trade or other on Land. It has ever since been a Pleasure to me to see good Workmen handle their Tools; and it has been useful to me, having learnt so much by it, as to be able to do little Jobs my self in my House, when a Workman could not readily be got; and to construct little Machines for my Experiments while the Intention of making the Experiment was fresh and warm in my Mind. My Father at last fix'd upon the Cutler's Trade, and my Uncle Benjamin's Son Samuel who was bred to that Business in London being about that time establish'd in Boston, I was sent to be with

him some time on liking. But his Expectations of a Fee with me displeasing my Father, I was taken home again.

From a Child I was fond of Reading, and all the little Money that came into my Hands was ever laid out in Books. Pleas'd with the Pilgrim's Progress, my first Collection was of John Bunyan's Works, in separate little Volumes. I afterwards sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's Historical Collections; they were small Chapmen's Books and cheap, 40 or 50 in all. My Father's little Library consisted chiefly of Books in polemic Divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted, that at a time when I had such a Thirst for Knowledge, more proper Books had not fallen in my Way, since it was now resolv'd I should not be a Clergyman. Plutarch's Lives there was, in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great Advantage. There was also a Book of Defoe's, called An Essay on Projects, and another of Dr. Mather's, call'd Essays to do Good which perhaps gave me a Turn of Thinking that had an Influence on some of the principal future Events of my Life.

This Bookish Inclination at length determin'd my Father to make me a Printer, tho' he had already one Son, (James) of that Profession. In 1717 my Brother James return'd from England with a Press and Letters to set up his Business in Boston. I lik'd it much better than that of my Father, but still had a Hankering for the Sea. To prevent the apprehended Effect of such an Inclination, my Father was impatient to have me bound to my Brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded and signed the Indentures, when I was yet but 12 Years old. I was to serve as an Apprentice till I was 21 Years of Age, only I was to be allow'd Journeyman's Wages during the last Year. In a little time I made great Proficiency in the Business, and became a useful Hand to my Brother. I now had Access to better Books. An Acquaintance with the Apprentices of Booksellers, enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my Room reading the greatest Part of the Night, when the Book was borrow'd in the Evening and to be return'd early in the Morning lest it should be miss'd or wanted.

And after some time an ingenious Tradesman Mr. Matthew Adams who had a pretty Collection of Books, and who frequented our Printing House, took Notice of me, invited me to his Library, and very kindly lent me such Books as I chose to read. I now took a Fancy to Poetry, and made some little Pieces. My Brother, thinking it might turn to account encourag'd me, and put me on composing two occasional Ballads. One was called The Light House Tragedy, and contain'd an Account of the drowning of Capt. Worthilake with his Two Daughters; the other was a Sailor Song on the Taking of Teach or Blackbeard the Pirate. They were wretched Stuff, in the Grubstreet Ballad Stile, and when they were printed he sent me about the Town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the Event being recent, having made a great Noise. This flatter'd my Vanity. But my Father discourag'd me, by ridiculing my Performances, and telling me Verse-makers were generally Beggars; so I escap'd being a Poet, most probably a very bad one. But as Prose Writing has been of great Use to me in the Course of my Life, and was a principal Means of my Advancement, I shall tell you



how in such a Situation I acquir'd what little Ability I have in that Way.

There was another Bookish Lad in the Town, John Collins by Name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of Argument, and very desirous of confuting one another. Which disputatious Turn, by the way, is apt to become a very bad Habit, making People often extreamly disagreeable in Company, by the Contradiction that is necessary to bring it into Practice, and thence, besides souring and spoiling the Conversation, is productive of Disgusts and perhaps Enmities where you may have occasion for Friendship. I had caught it by reading my Father's Books of Dispute about Religion. Persons of good Sense, I have since observ'd, seldom fall into it, except Lawyers, University Men, and Men of all Sorts that have been bred at Edinborough.

A Question was once some how or other started between Collins and me, of the Propriety of educating the Female Sex in Learning, and their Abilities for Study. He was of Opinion that it was improper; and that they were naturally unequal to

it. I took the contrary Side, perhaps a little for Dispute sake. He was naturally more eloquent, had a ready Plenty 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 for some time, I sat down to put my Arguments in Writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answer'd and I reply'd. Three or four Letters of a Side had pass'd, when my Father happen'd to find my Papers, and read them. Without entring into the Discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the Manner of my Writing, observ'd that tho' I had the Advantage of my Antagonist in correct Spelling and pointing (which I ow'd to the Printing House) I fell far short in elegance of Expression, in Method and in Perspicuity, of which he convinc'd me by several Instances. I saw the Justice of his Remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the Manner in Writing, and determin'd to endeavour at Improvement.

About this time I met with an odd Volume of the Spectator. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I

thought the Writing excellent, and wish'd if possible to imitate it. With that View, I took some of the Papers, and making short Hints of the Sentiment in each Sentence, laid them by a few Days, and then without looking at the Book, try'd to compleat the Papers again, by expressing each hinted Sentiment at length and as fully as it had been express'd before, in any suitable Words, that should come to hand. Then I compar'd my Spectator with the Original, discover'd some of my Faults and corrected them. But I found I wanted a Stock of Words or a Readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquir'd before that time, if I had gone on making Verses, since the continual Occasion for Words of the same Import but of different Length, to suit the Measure, or of different Sound for the Rhyme, would have laid me under a constant Necessity of searching for Variety, and also have tended to fix that Variety in my Mind, and make me Master of it. Therefore I took some of the Tales and turn'd them into Verse: And after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the Prose, turn'd them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my Collections of Hints into Confusion, and after some Weeks,

endeavour'd to reduce them into the best Order, before I began to form the full Sentences, and compleat the Paper. This was to teach me Method in the Arrangement of Thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discover'd many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the Pleasure of Fancying that in certain Particulars of small Import, I had been lucky enough to improve the Method or the Language and this encourag'd me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English Writer, of which I was extreamly ambitious. My Time for these Exercises and for Reading, was at Night, after Work or before Work began in the Morning; or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the Printing House alone, evading as much as I could the common Attendance on publick Worship, which my Father used to exact of me when I was under his Care: And which indeed I still thought a Duty; tho' I could not, as it seemed to me, afford the Time to practise it.

When about 16 Years of Age, I happen'd to meet with a Book, written by one Tryon, recommending a Vegetable Diet. I

determined to go into it. My Brother being yet unmarried, did not keep House, but boarded himself and his Apprentices in another Family. My refusing to eat Flesh occasioned an Inconveniency, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made my self acquainted with Tryon's Manner of preparing some of his Dishes, such as Boiling Potatoes or Rice, making Hasty Pudding, and a few others, and then propos'd to my Brother, that if he would give me Weekly half the Money he paid for my Board I would board my self. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional Fund for buying Books: But I had another Advantage in it. My Brother and the rest going from the Printing House to their Meals, I remain'd there alone, and dispatching presently my light Repast, (which often was no more than a Bisket or a Slice of Bread, a Handful of Raisins or a Tart from the Pastry Cook's, and a Glass of Water) had the rest of the Time till their Return, for Study, in which I made the greater Progress from that greater Clearness of Head and quicker Apprehension which usually attend Temperance in Eating and Drinking.

And now it was that being on some Occasion made ashamed of my Ignorance in Figures, which I had twice failed in learning when at School, I took Cocker's Book of Arithmetick, and went thro' the whole by my self with great Ease. I also read Seller's and Sturmy's Books of Navigation, and became acquainted with the little Geometry they contain, but never proceeded far in that Science. And I read about this Time Locke on Human Understanding, and the Art of Thinking by Messrs. du Port Royal.

While I was intent on improving my Language, I met with an English Grammar (I think it was Greenwood's) at the End of which there were two little Sketches of the Arts of Rhetoric and Logic, the latter finishing with a Specimen of a Dispute in the Socratic Method. And soon after I procur'd Xenophon's Memorable Things of Socrates, wherein there are many Instances of the same Method. I was charm'd with it, adopted it, dropt my abrupt Contradiction, and positive Argumentation, and put on the humble Enquirer and Doubter. And being then, from reading Shaftsbury and Collins, become a real Doubter in many Points of our Religious Doctrine, I found this Method safest for my self and

very embarrassing to those against whom I used it, therefore I took a Delight in it, practis'd it continually and grew very artful and expert in drawing People even of superior Knowledge into Concessions the Consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in Difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining Victories that neither my self nor my Cause always deserved. I continu'd this Method some few Years, but gradually left it, retaining only the Habit of expressing my self in Terms of modest Diffidence, never using when I advance any thing that may possibly be disputed, the Words, Certainly, undoubtedly, or any others that give the Air of Positiveness to an Opinion; but rather say, I conceive, or I apprehend a Thing to be so or so, It appears to me, or I should think it so or so for such and such Reasons, or I imagine it to be so, or it is so if I am not mistaken. This Habit I believe has been of great Advantage to me, when I have had occasion to inculcate my Opinions and persuade Men into Measures that I have been from time to time engag'd in promoting. And as the chief Ends of Conversation are to inform, or to be informed, to please or to persuade, I wish wellmeaning

sensible Men would not lessen their Power of doing Good by a Positive assuming Manner that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create Opposition, and to defeat every one of those Purposes for which Speech was given us, to wit, giving or receiving Information, or Pleasure: For if you would inform, a positive dogmatical Manner in advancing your Sentiments, may provoke Contradiction and prevent a candid Attention. If you wish Information and Improvement from the Knowledge of others and yet at the same time express your self as firmly fix'd in your present Opinions, modest sensible Men, who do not love Disputation, will probably leave you undisturb'd in the Possession of your Error; and by such a Manner you can seldom hope to recommend your self in pleasing your Hearers, or to persuade those whose Concurrence you desire. Pope says, judiciously:

"Men should be taught as if you taught them not,

And things unknown propos'd as things forgot;"

father recommending it to us,

"To speak tho' sure, with seeming Diffidence."



And he might have coupled with this Line that which he has coupled with another, I think, less properly,

"For Want of Modesty is Want of Sense."

If you ask why less properly, I must repeat the Lines;

"Immodest Words admit of no Defense;

For Want of Modesty is Want of Sense."

Now, is not Want of Sense (where a Man is so unfortunate as to want it) some Apology for his Want of Modesty? and would not the Lines stand more justly thus?

"Immodest Words admit but this Defense,

That Want of Modesty is Want of Sense."

This, however, I should submit to better Judgments.

My Brother had in 1720 or 21, begun to print a Newspaper. It was the second that appear'd in America, and was called the New England Courant. The only one before it, was the Boston News Letter. I remember his being dissuaded by some of his Friends from the Undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one

Newspaper being in their Judgment enough for America. At this time 1771 there are not less than five and twenty. He went on however with the Undertaking, and after having work'd in composing the Types and printing off the Sheets I was employ'd to carry the Papers thro' the Streets to the Customers.

He had some ingenious Men among his Friends who amus'd themselves by writing little Pieces for this Paper, which gain'd it Credit, and made it more in Demand; and these Gentlemen often visited us. Hearing their Conversations, and their Accounts of the Approbation their Papers were receiv'd with, I was excited to try my Hand among them. But being still a Boy, and suspecting that my Brother would object to printing any Thing of mine in his Paper if he knew it to be mine, I contriv'd to disguise my Hand, and writing an anonymous Paper I put it in at Night under the Door of the Printing House. It was found in the Morning and communicated to his Writing Friends when they call'd in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my Hearing, and I had the exquisite Pleasure, of finding it met with their Approbation, and that in their different Guesses at the

Author none were named but Men of some Character among us for Learning and Ingenuity. I suppose now that I was rather lucky in my Judges: And that perhaps they were not really so very good ones as I then esteem'd them.

Encourag'd however by this, I wrote and convey'd in the same Way to the Press several more Papers, which were equally approv'd, and I kept my Secret till my small Fund of Sense for such Performances was pretty well exhausted, and then I discovered it; when I began to be considered a little more by my Brother's Acquaintance, and in a manner that did not quite please him, as he thought, probably with reason, that it tended to make me too vain. And perhaps this might be one Occasion of the Differences that we frequently had about this Time. Tho' a Brother, he considered himself as my Master, and me as his Apprentice; and accordingly expected the same Services from me as he would from another; while I thought he demean'd me too much in some he requir'd of me, who from a Brother expected more Indulgence. Our Disputes were often brought before our Father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right, or else a better Pleader, because the Judgment was generally in my

favour: But my Brother was passionate and had often beaten me, which I took extreamly amiss; and thinking my Apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for some Opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a manner unexpected. (Note: I fancy his harsh and tyrannical treatment of me might be a means of impressing me with that aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me through my whole life.)

One of the Pieces in our News-Paper, on some political Point which I have now forgotten, gave Offence to the Assembly. He was taken up, censur'd and imprison'd for a Month by the Speaker's Warrant, I suppose because he would not discover his Author. I too was taken up and examin'd before the Council; but tho' I did not give them any Satisfaction, they contented themselves with admonishing me, and dismiss'd me; considering me perhaps as an Apprentice who was bound to keep his Master's Secrets.

During my Brother's Confinement, which I resented a good deal, notwithstanding our private Differences, I had the Management of the Paper, and I made bold to give our

Rulers some Rubs in it, which my Brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavourable Light, as a young Genius that had a Turn for Libelling and Satyr. My Brother's Discharge was accompany'd with an Order of the House, (a very odd one) that James Franklin should no longer print the Paper called the New England Courant.

There was a Consultation held in our Printing House among his Friends what he should do in this Case. Some propos'd to evade the Order by changing the Name of the Paper; but my Brother seeing Inconveniencies in that, it was finally concluded on as a better Way, to let it be printed for the future under the Name of Benjamin Franklin. And to avoid the Censure of the Assembly that might fall on him, as still printing it by his Apprentice, the Contrivance was, that my old Indenture should be return'd to me with a full Discharge on the Back of it, to be shown on Occasion; but to secure to him the Benefit of my Service I was to sign new Indentures for the Remainder of the Term, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy Scheme it was, but however it was immediately executed, and the Paper went on accordingly under my Name for several Months.

At length, a fresh Difference arising between my Brother and me, I took upon me to assert my Freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new Indentures. It was not fair in me to take this Advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first Errata of my Life: But the Unfairness of it weigh'd little with me, when under the Impressions of Resentment, for the Blows his Passion too often urg'd him to bestow upon me. Tho' he was otherwise not an ill-natur'd Man: Perhaps I was too saucy and provoking.

When he found I would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting Employment in any other Printing-House of the Town, by going round and speaking to every Master, who accordingly refus'd to give me Work. I then thought of going to New York as the nearest Place where there was a Printer: and I was the rather inclin'd to leave Boston, when I reflected that I had already made myself a little obnoxious to the governing Party; and from the arbitrary Proceedings of the Assembly in my Brother's Case it was likely I might if I stay'd soon bring myself into Scrapes; and farther that my indiscrete Disputations about Religion began to make me pointed at with Horror by good People, as an Infidel or

Atheist. I determin'd on the Point: but my Father now siding with my Brother, I was sensible that if I attempted to go openly, Means would be used to prevent me. My Friend Collins therefore undertook to manage a little for me. He agreed with the Captain of a New York Sloop for my Passage, under the Notion of my being a young Acquaintance of his that had got a naughty Girl with Child, whose Friends would compel me to marry her, and therefore I could not appear or come away publickly. So I sold some of my Books to raise a little Money, Was taken on board privately, and as we had a fair Wind in three Days I found my self in New York near 300 Miles from home, a Boy of but 17, without the least Recommendation to or Knowledge of any Person in the Place, and with very little Money in my Pocket.

## **CHAPTER 03**

My Inclinations for the Sea, were by this time worne out, or I might now have gratify'd them. But having a Trade, and supposing my self a pretty good Workman, I offer'd my Service to the Printer of the Place, old Mr. Wm. Bradford, (who had been the first Printer in Pensilvania, but remov'd

from thence upon the Quarrel of Geo. Keith). He could give me no Employment, having little to do, and Help enough already: "But," says he, "my Son at Philadelphia has lately lost his principal Hand, Aquila Rose, by Death. If you go thither I believe he may employ you." Philadelphia was 100 Miles farther. I set out, however, in a Boat for Amboy, leaving my Chest and Things to follow me round by Sea.

In crossing the Bay we met with a Squall that tore our rotten Sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill, and drove us upon Long Island. In our Way a drunken Dutchman, who was a Passenger too, fell over board; when he was sinking I reach'd thro' the Water to his shock Pate and drew him up so that we got him in again. His Ducking sober'd him a little, and he went to sleep, taking first out of his Pocket a Book which he desir'd I would dry for him. It prov'd to be my old favourite Author Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress in Dutch, finely printed on good Paper with copper Cuts, a Dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own Language. I have since found that it has been translated into most of the Languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more generally read than any other Book except perhaps the Bible. Honest John was



the first that I know of who mix'd Narration and Dialogue, a Method of Writing very engaging to the Reader, who in the most interesting Parts finds himself as it were brought into the Company, and present at the Discourse. Defoe in his Cruso, his Moll Flanders, Religious Courtship, Family Instructor, and other Pieces, has imitated it with Success. And Richardson has done the same in his Pamela, &c.

When we drew near the Island we found it was at a Place where there could be no Landing, there being a great Surf on the stony Beach. So we dropt Anchor and swung round towards the Shore. Some People came down to the Water Edge and hallow'd to us, as we did to them. But the Wind was so high and the Surf so loud, that we could not hear so as to understand each other. There were Canoes on the Shore, and we made Signs and hallow'd that they should fetch us, but they either did not understand us, or thought it impracticable. So they went away, and Night coming on, we had no Remedy but to wait till the Wind should abate, and in the mean time the Boatman and I concluded to sleep if we could, and so crowded into the Scuttle with the Dutchman who was still wet, and the Spray beating over the Head of

our Boat, leak'd thro' to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this Manner we lay all Night with very little Rest. But the Wind abating the next Day, we made a Shift to reach Amboy before Night, having been 30 Hours on the Water without Victuals, or any Drink but a Bottle of filthy Rum: The Water we sail'd on being salt.

In the Evening I found my self very feverish, and went in to Bed. But having read somewhere that cold Water drank plentifully was good for a Fever, I follow'd the Prescription, sweat plentifully most of the Night, my Fever left me, and in the Morning crossing the Ferry, I proceeded on my Journey, on foot, having 50 Miles to Burlington, where I was told I should find Boats that would carry me the rest of the Way to Philadelphia.

It rain'd very hard all the Day, I was thoroughly soak'd and by Noon a good deal tir'd, so I stopt at a poor Inn, where I staid all Night, beginning now to wish I had never left home. I cut so miserable a Figure too, that I found by the Questions ask'd me I was suspected to be some runaway Servant, and in danger of being taken up on that Suspicion. However I

proceeded the next Day, and got in the Evening to an Inn within 8 or 10 Miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown. He entered into Conversation with me while I took some Refreshment, and finding I had read a little, became very sociable and friendly. Our Acquaintance continu'd as long as he liv'd. He had been, I imagine, an itinerant Doctor, for there was no Town in England, or Country in Europe, of which he could not give a very particular Account. He had some Letters, and was ingenious, but much of an Unbeliever, and wickedly undertook some Years after to travesty the Bible in doggrel Verse as Cotton had done Virgil. By this means he set many of the Facts in a very ridiculous Light, and might have hurt weak minds if his Work had been publish'd: but it never was.

At his House I lay that Night, and the next Morning reach'd Burlington. But had the Mortification to find that the regular Boats were gone, a little before my coming, and no other expected to go till Tuesday, this being Saturday. Wherefore I return'd to an old Woman in the Town of whom I had bought Gingerbread to eat on the Water, and ask'd her Advice; she invited me to lodge at her House till a Passage by Water

should offer: and being tired with my foot Travelling, I accepted the Invitation. She understanding I was a Printer, would have had me stay at that Town and follow my Business, being ignorant of the Stock necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a Dinner of Ox Cheek with great Goodwill, accepting only of a Pot of Ale in return. And I tho't my self fix'd till Tuesday should come. However walking in the Evening by the Side of the River a Boat came by, which I found was going towards Philadelphia, with several People in her. They took me in, and as there was no Wind, we row'd all the Way; and about Midnight not having yet seen the City, some of the Company were confident we must have pass'd it, and would row no farther, the others knew not where we were, so we put towards the Shore, got into a Creek, landed near an old Fence with the Rails of which we made a Fire, the Night being cold, in October, and there we remain'd till Daylight. Then one of the Company knew the Place to be Cooper's Creek a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the Creek, and arriv'd there about 8 or 9 a Clock, on the Sunday morning, and landed at the Market street Wharf.

I have been the more particular in this Description of my Journey, and shall be so of my first Entry into that City, that you may in your Mind compare such unlikely Beginnings with the Figure I have since made there. I was in my Working Dress, my best Cloaths being to come round by Sea. I was dirty from my Journey; my Pockets were stuff'd out with Shirts and Stockings; I knew no Soul, nor where to look for Lodging. I was fatigu'd with Travelling, Rowing and Want of Rest. I was very hungry, and my whole Stock of Cash consisted of a Dutch Dollar and about a Shilling in Copper. The latter I gave the People of the Boat for my Passage, who at first refus'd it on Account of my Rowing; but I insisted on their taking it, a Man being sometimes more generous when he has but a little Money than when he has plenty, perhaps thro' Fear of being thought to have but little.

Then I walk'd up the Street, gazing about, till near the Market House I met a Boy with Bread. I had made many a Meal on Bread, and inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the Baker's he directed me to in second Street; and ask'd for

Bisket, intending such as we had in Boston, but they it seems were not made in Philadelphia, then I ask'd for a threepenny Loaf, and was told they had none such: so not considering or knowing the Difference of Money and the greater Cheapness nor the Names of his Bread, I bad him give me three penny worth of any sort. He gave me accordingly three great Puffy Rolls. I was surpriz'd at the Quantity, but took it, and having no room in my Pockets, walk'd off, with a Roll under each Arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market Street as far as fourth Street, passing by the Door of Mr. Read, my future Wife's Father, when she standing at the Door saw me, and thought I made as I certainly did a most awkward ridiculous Appearance. Then I turn'd and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street, eating my Roll all the Way, and coming round found my self again at Market Street Wharf, near the Boat I came in, to which I went for a Draught of the River Water, and being fill'd with one of my Rolls, gave the other two to a Woman and her Child that came down the River in the Boat with us and were waiting to go farther.

Thus refresh'd I walk'd again up the Street, which by this time had many clean dress'd People in it who were all walking the same Way; I join'd them, and thereby was led into the great Meeting House of the Quakers near the Market. I sat down among them, and after looking round a while and hearing nothing said, being very drowzy thro' Labour and want of Rest the preceding Night, I fell fast asleep, and continu'd so till the Meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was therefore the first House I was in or slept in, in Philadelphia.

Walking again down towards the River, and looking in the Faces of People, I met a young Quaker Man whose Countenance I lik'd, and accosting him requested he would tell me where a Stranger could get Lodging. We were then near the Sign of the Three Mariners. "Here," says he, "is one Place that entertains Strangers, but it is not a reputable House; if thee wilt walk with me, I'll show thee a better." He brought me to the Crooked Billet in Water-Street. Here I got a Dinner. And while I was eating it, several sly Questions were ask'd me, as it seem'd to be suspected from my youth and Appearance, that I might be some Runaway.

After Dinner my Sleepiness return'd: and being shown to a Bed, I lay down without undressing, and slept till Six in the Evening; was call'd to Supper; went to Bed again very early and slept soundly till the next Morning. Then I made my self as tidy as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford the Printer's. I found in the Shop the old Man his Father, whom I had seen at New York, and who travelling on horse back had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduc'd me to his Son, who receiv'd me civilly, gave me a Breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a Hand, being lately supply'd with one. But there was another Printer in town lately set up, one Keimer, who perhaps might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his House, and he would give me a little Work to do now and then till fuller Business should offer.

The old Gentleman said, he would go with me to the new Printer: "And when we found him, Neighbour, "says Bradford, "I have brought to see you a young Man of your Business, perhaps you may want such a One." He ask'd me a few Questions, put a Composing Stick in my Hand to see how I work'd, and then said he would employ me soon, tho' he had just then nothing for me to do. And taking old Bradford



whom he had never seen before, to be one of the Towns People that had a Good Will for him, enter'd into a Conversation on his present Undertaking and Prospects; while Bradford not discovering that the was the other Printer's Father, on Keimer's saying he expected soon to get the greatest Part of the Business into his own Hands, drew him on by artful Questions and starting little Doubts, to explain all his Views, what Interest he rely'd on, and in what manner he intended to proceed. I who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old Sophister, and the other a mere Novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surpriz'd when I told him who the old Man was.

Keimer's Printing House, I found, consisted of an old shatter'd Press, and one small worn-out Fount of English, which he was then using himself, composing in it an Elegy on Aquila Rose before-mentioned, an ingenious young Man of excellent Character much respected in the Town, Clerk of the Assembly, and a pretty Poet. Keimer made Verses, too, but very indifferently. He could not be said to write them, for his Manner was to compose them in the Types directly out of his

Head; so there being no Copy, but one Pair of Cases, and the Elegy likely to require all the Letter, no one could help him. I endeavour'd to put his Press (which he had not yet us'd, and of which he understood nothing) into Order fit to be work'd with; and promising to come and print off his Elegy as soon as he should have got it ready, I return'd to Bradford's who gave me a little Job to do for the present, and there I lodged and dieted. A few Days after Keimer sent for me to print off the Elegy. And now he had got another Pair of Cases, and a Pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work.

These two Printers I found poorly qualified for their Business. Bradford had not been bred to it, and was very illiterate; and Keimer tho' something of a Scholar, was a mere Compositor, knowing nothing of Presswork. He had been one of the French Prophets and could act their enthusiastic Agitations. At this time he did not profess any particular Religion, but something of all on occasion; was very ignorant of the World, and had, as I afterwards found, a good deal of the Knave in his Composition. He did not like my Lodging at Bradford's while I work'd with him. He had a House indeed, but without Furniture, so he could not lodge me: But he got me a Lodging

at Mr. Read's before-mentioned, who was the Owner of his House. And my Chest and Clothes being come by this time, I made rather a more respectable Appearance in the Eyes of Miss Read, than I had done when she first happen'd to see me eating my Roll in the Street.

I began now to have some Acquaintance among the young People of the Town, that were Lovers of Reading with whom I spent my Evenings very pleasantly and gaining Money by my Industry and Frugality, I lived very agreeably, forgetting Boston as much as I could, and not desiring that any there should know where I resided, except my Friend Collins who was in my Secret, and kept it when I wrote to him. At length an Incident happened that sent me back again much sooner than I had intended.

I had a Brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, Master of a Sloop, that traded between Boston and Delaware. He being at New Castle 40 Miles below Philadelphia, heard there of me, and wrote me a Letter, mentioning the Concern of my Friends in Boston at my abrupt Departure, assuring me of their

Goodwill to me, and that every thing would be accommodated to my Mind if I would return, to which he exhorted me very earnestly. I wrote an Answer to his Letter, thank'd him for his Advice, but stated my Reasons for quitting Boston fully, and in such a Light as to convince him I was not so wrong as he had apprehended.

Sir William Keith, Governor of the Province, was then at New Castle, and Capt. Holmes happening to be in Company with him when my Letter came to hand, spoke to him of me, and show'd him the Letter. The Governor read it, and seem'd surpriz'd when he was told my Age. He said I appear'd a young Man of promising Parts, and therefore should be encouraged: The Printers at Philadelphia were wretched ones, and if I would set up there, he made no doubt I should succeed; for his Part, he would procure me the publick Business, and do me every other Service in his Power. This my Brother-in-Law afterwards told me in Boston. But I knew as yet nothing of it; when one Day Keimer and I being at Work together near the Window, we saw the Governor and another Gentleman (which prov'd to be Col. French, of New

Castle) finely dress'd, come directly across the Street to our House, and heard them at the Door.

Keimer ran down immediately, thinking it a Visit to him. But the Governor enquir'd for me, came up, and with a Condescension and Politeness I had been quite unus'd to, made me many Compliments, desired to be acquainted with me, blam'd me kindly for not having made my self known to him when I first came to the Place, and would have me away with him to the Tavern where he was going with Col. French to taste as he said some excellent Madeira. I was not a little surpriz'd, and Keimer star'd like a Pig poison'd. I went however with the Governor and Col. French, to a Tavern the Corner of Third Street, and over the Madeira he propos'd my Setting up my Business, laid before me the Probabilities of Success, and both he and Col. French assur'd me I should have their Interest and Influence in procuring the Publick Business of both Governments. On my doubting whether my Father would assist me in it, Sir William said he would give me a Letter to him, in which he would state the Advantages, and he did not doubt of prevailing with him. So it was concluded I should return to Boston in the first Vessel with

the Governor's Letter recommending me to my Father. In the mean time the Intention was to be kept secret, and I went on working with Keimer as usual, the Governor sending for me now and then to dine with him, a very great Honour I thought it, and conversing with me in the most affable, familiar, and friendly manner imaginable.

About the End of April 1724. a little Vessel offer'd for Boston. I took Leave of Keimer as going to see my Friends. The Governor gave me an ample Letter, saying many flattering things of me to my Father, and strongly recommending the Project of my setting up at Philadelphia, as a Thing that must make my Fortune. We struck on a Shoal in going down the Bay and sprung a Leak, we had a blustering time at Sea, and were oblig'd to pump almost continually, at which I took my Turn. We arriv'd safe however at Boston in about a Fortnight. I had been absent Seven Months and my Friends had heard nothing of me; for my Br. Holmes was not yet return'd; and had not written about me. My unexpected Appearance surpriz'd the Family; all were however very glad to see me

and made me Welcome, except my Brother. I went to see him at his Printing-House: I was better dress'd than ever while in his Service, having a genteel new Suit from Head to foot, a Watch, and my Pockets lin'd with near Five Pounds Sterling in Silver. He receiv'd me not very frankly, look'd me all over, and turn'd to his Work again.

The Journey-Men were inquisitive where I had been, what sort of a Country it was, and how I lik'd it? I prais'd it much, and the happy Life I led in it; expressing strongly my Intention of returning to it; and one of them asking what kind of Money we had there, I produc'd a handful of Silver and spread it before them, which was a kind of Raree-Show they had not been us'd to, Paper being the Money of Boston. Then I took an Opportunity of letting them see my Watch: and lastly, (my Brother still grum and sullen) I gave them a Piece of Eight to drink and took my Leave. This Visit of mine offended him extreamly. For when my Mother some time after spoke to him of a Reconciliation, and of her Wishes to see us on good Terms together, and that we might live for the future as Brothers, he said, I had insulted him in such a

Manner before his People that he could never forget or forgive it. In this however he was mistaken.

My Father receiv'd the Governor's Letter with some apparent Surprise; but said little of it to me for some Days; when Capt. Homes returning, he show'd it to him, ask'd if he knew Keith, and what kind of a Man he was: Adding his Opinion that he must be of small Discretion, to think of setting a Boy up in Business who wanted yet 3 Years of being at Man's Estate. Homes said what he could in favour of the Project; but my Father was clear in the Impropriety of it; and at last gave a flat Denial to it. Then he wrote a civil Letter to Sir William thanking him for the Patronage he had so kindly offered me, but declining to assist me as yet in Setting up, I being in his Opinion too young to be trusted with the Management of a Business so important, and for which the Preparation must be so expensive.

My Friend and Companion Collins, who was a Clerk at the Post-Office, pleas'd with the Account I gave him of my new Country, determin'd to go thither also: And while I waited for my Fathers Determination, he set out before me by Land to



Rhode-island, leaving his Books which were a pretty Collection of Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy, to come with mine and me to New York where he propos'd to wait for me.

My Father, tho' he did not approve Sir William's Proposition was yet pleas'd that I had been able to obtain so advantageous a Character from a Person of such Note where I had resided, and that I had been so industrious and careful as to equip my self so handsomely in so short a time: therefore seeing no Prospect of an Accommodation between my Brother and me, he gave his Consent to my Returning again to Philadelphia, advis'd me to behave respectfully to the People there, endeavour to obtain the general Esteem, and avoid lampooning and libelling to which he thought I had too much Inclination; telling me, that by steady Industry and a prudent Parsimony, I might save enough by the time I was One and Twenty to set me up, and that if I came near the Matter he would help me out with the rest. This was all I could obtain, except some small Gifts as Tokens of his and my Mother's Love, when I embark'd again for New-York, now with their Approbation and their Blessing.

## CHAPTER 04

The Sloop putting in at Newport, Rhodeisland, I visited my Brother John, who had been married and settled there some Years. He received me very affectionately, for he always lov'd me. A Friend of his, one Vernon, having some Money due to him in Pensilvania, about 35 Pounds Currency, desired I would receive it for him, and keep it till I had his Directions what to remit it in. Accordingly he gave me an Order. This afterwards occasion'd me a good deal of Uneasiness.

At Newport we took in a Number of Passengers for New York: Among which were two young Women, Companions, and a grave, sensible Matron-like Quaker-Woman with her Attendants. I had shown an obliging readiness to do her some little Services which impress'd her I suppose with a degree of Good-will towards me. Therefore when she saw a daily growing Familiarity between me and the two Young Women, which they appear'd to encourage, she took me aside and said, Young Man, I am concern'd for thee, as thou has no Friend with thee, and seems not to know much of the World, or of the Snares Youth is expos'd to; depend upon it

those are very bad Women, I can see it in all their Actions, and if thee art not upon thy Guard, they will draw thee into some Danger: they are Strangers to thee, and I advise thee in a friendly Concern for thy Welfare, to have no Acquaintance with them. As I seem'd at first not to think so ill of them as she did, she mention'd some Things she had observ'd and heard that had escap'd my Notice; but now convinc'd me she was right. I thank'd her for her kind Advice, and promis'd to follow it. When we arriv'd at New York, they told me where they liv'd, and invited me to come and see them: but I avoided it. And it was well I did: For the next Day, the Captain miss'd a Silver Spoon and some other Things that had been taken out of his Cabbin, and knowing that these were a Couple of Strumpets, he got a Warrant to search their Lodgings, found the stolen Goods, and had the Thieves punish'd. So tho' we had escap'd a sunken Rock which we scrap'd upon in the Passage, I thought this Escape of rather more Importance to me.

At New York I found my Friend Collins, who had arriv'd there some Time before me. We had been intimate from Children, and had read the same Books together. But he had the

Advantage of more time for reading, and Studying and a wonderful Genius for Mathematical Learning in which he far outstript me. While I liv'd in Boston most of my Hours of Leisure for Conversation were spent with him, and he continu'd a sober as well as an industrious Lad; was much respected for his Learning by several of the Clergy and other Gentlemen, and seem'd to promise making a good Figure in Life: but during my Absence he had acquir'd a Habit of Sotting with Brandy; and I found by his own Account and what I heard from others, that he had been drunk every day since his Arrival at New York, and behav'd very oddly. He had gam'd too and lost his Money, so that I was oblig'd to discharge his Lodgings, and defray his Expences to and at Philadelphia: Which prov'd extreamly inconvenient to me.

The then Governor of N. York, Burnet, Son of Bishop Burnet, hearing from the Captain that a young Man, one of his Passengers, had a great many Books, desired he would bring me to see him. I waited upon him accordingly, and should have taken Collins with me but that he was not sober. The Governor treated me with great Civility, show'd me his Library, which was a very large one, and we had a good deal

of Conversation about Books and Authors. This was the second Governor who had done me the Honour to take Notice of me, which to a poor Boy like me was very pleasing.

We proceeded to Philadelphia. I received on the Way Vernon's Money, without which we could hardly have finish'd our Journey. Collins wish'd to be employ'd in some Counting House; but whether they discover'd his Dramming by his Breath, or by his Behaviour, tho' he had some Recommendations, he met with no Success in any Application, and continu'd Lodging and Boarding at the same House with me and at my Expence. Knowing I had that Money of Vernon's he was continually borrowing of me, still promising Repayment as soon as he should be in Business. At length, he had got so much of it, that I was distress'd to think what I should do, in case of being call'd on to remit it.

His Drinking continu'd about which we sometimes quarrel'd, for when a little intoxicated he was very fractious. Once in a Boat on the Delaware with some other young Men, he refused to row in his Turn: "I will be row'd home, "says he. "We will not row you, "says I. "You must or stay all Night on

the Water," says he, "just as you please. "The others said, "Let us row; what signifies it?" But my Mind being soured with his other Conduct, I continu'd to refuse. So he swore he would make me row, or throw me overboard; and coming along stepping on the Thwarts towards me, when he came up and struck at me I clapt my Hand under his Crutch, and rising pitch'd him head-foremost into the River. I knew he was a good Swimmer, and so was under little Concern about him; but before he could get round to lay hold of the Boat, we had with a few Strokes pull'd her out of his Reach. And ever when he drew near the Boat, we ask'd if he would row, striking a few Strokes to slide her away from him. He was ready to die with Vexation, and obstinately would not promise to row; however seeing him at last beginning to tire, we lifted him in; and brought him home dripping wet in the Evening. We hardly exchang'd a civil Word afterwards; and a West India Captain who had a Commission to procure a Tutor for the Sons of a Gentleman at Barbadoes, happening to meet with him, agreed to carry him thither. He left me then, promising to remit me the first Money he should receive in order to discharge the Debt. But I never heard of him after.

The Breaking into this Money of Vernon's was one of the first great Errata of my Life. And this Affair show'd that my Father was not much out in his Judgment when he suppos'd me too young to manage Business of Importance. But Sir William, on reading his Letter, said he was too prudent. There was great Difference in Persons, and Discretion did not always accompany Years, nor was Youth always without it. "And since he will not set you up, "says he, "I will do it my self. Give me an Inventory of the Things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolv'd to have a good Printer here, and I am sure you must succeed." This was spoken with such an Appearance of Cordiality, that I had not the least doubt of his meaning what he said. I had hitherto kept the Proposition of my Setting up a Secret in Philadelphia, and I still kept it. Had it been known that I depended on the Governor, probably some Friend that knew him better would have advis'd me not to rely on him, as I afterwards heard it as his known Character to be liberal of Promises which he never meant to keep. Yet unsolicited as he was by me, how could I think his

generous Offers insincere? I believ'd him one of the best Men in the World.

I presented him an Inventory of a little Printing House, amounting by my Computation to about £ 100 Sterling. He lik'd it, but ask'd me if my being on the Spot in England to chuse the Types and see that every thing was good of the kind, might not be of some Advantage. "Then," says he, "when there, you may make Acquaintances and establish Correspondencies in the Bookselling and Stationary Way." I agreed that this might be advantageous. "Then," says he, "get yourself ready to go with Annis"; which was the annual Ship, and the only one at that Time usually passing between London and Philadelphia. But it would be some Months before Annis sail'd, so I continu'd working with Keimer, fretting about the Money Collins had got from me, and in daily Apprehensions of being call'd upon by Vernon, which however did not happen for some Years after.

I believe I have omitted mentioning that in my first Voyage from Boston, being becalm'd off Block Island, our People set



about catching Cod and hawl'd up a great many. Hitherto I had stuck to my Resolution of not eating animal Food; and on this Occasion, I consider'd with my Master Tryon, the taking every Fish as a kind of unprovok'd Murder, since none of them had or ever could do us any Injury that might justify the Slaughter. All this seem'd very reasonable. But I had formerly been a great Lover of Fish, and when this came hot out of the Frying Pan, it smelt admirably well. I balanc'd some time between Principle and Inclination: till I recollected, that when the Fish were opened, I saw smaller Fish taken out of their Stomachs: Then thought I, if you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you. So I din'd upon Cod very heartily and continu'd to eat with other People, returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable Diet. So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable Creature, since it enables one to find or make a Reason for every thing one has a mind to do.

Keimer and I liv'd on a pretty good familiar Footing and agreed tolerably well: for he suspected nothing of my Setting up. He retain'd a great deal of his old Enthusiasms, and lov'd Argumentation. We therefore had many Disputations. I us'd

to work him so with my Socratic Method, and had trepann'd him so often by Questions apparently so distant from any Point we had in hand, and yet by degrees led to the Point, and brought him into Difficulties and Contradictions that at last he grew ridiculously cautious, and would hardly answer me the most common Question, without asking first, What do you intend to infer from that? However it gave him so high an Opinion of my Abilities in the Confuting Way, that he seriously propos'd my being his Colleague in a Project he had of setting up a new Sect. He was to preach the Doctrines, and I was to confound all Opponents. When he came to explain with me upon the Doctrines, I found several Conundrums which I objected to unless I might have my Way a little too, and introduce some of mine.

Keimer wore his Beard at full Length, because somewhere in the Mosaic Law it is said, thou shalt not mar the Corners of thy Beard. He likewise kept the seventh day Sabbath; and these two Points were Essentials with him. I dislik'd both, but agreed to admit them upon Condition of his adopting the Doctrine of using no animal Food. "I doubt," says he, "my Constitution will not bear that." I assur'd him it would, and

that he would be the better for it. He was usually a great Glutton, and I promis'd my self some Diversion in half-starving him. He agreed to try the Practice if I would keep him Company. I did so and we held it for three Months. We had our Victuals dress'd and brought to us regularly by a Woman in the Neighbourhood, who had from me a List of 40 Dishes to be prepar'd for us at different times, in all which there was neither Fish Flesh nor Fowl, and the whim suited me the better at this time from the Cheapness of it, not costing us above 18d. Sterling each, per Week. I have since kept several Lents most strictly, Leaving the common Diet for that, and that for the common, abruptly, without the least Inconvenience: So that I think there is little in the Advice of making those Changes by easy Gradations. I went on pleasantly, but poor Keimer suffer'd grievously, tir'd of the Project, long'd for the Flesh Pots of Egypt, and order'd a roast Pig. He invited me and two Women Friends to dine with him, but it being brought too soon upon table, he could not resist the Temptation, and ate it all up before we came.

I had made some Courtship during this time to Miss Read. I had a great Respect and Affection for her, and had some Reason to believe she had the same for me: but as I was about to take a long Voyage, and we were both very young, only a little above 18. it was thought most prudent by her Mother to prevent our going too far at present, as a Marriage if it was to take place would be more convenient after my Return, when I should be as I expected set up in my Business. Perhaps too she thought my Expectations not so wellfounded as I imagined them to be.

My chief Acquaintances at this time were, Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson, and James Ralph; All Lovers of Reading. The two first were Clerks to an eminent Scrivener or Conveyancer in the Town, Charles Brogden; the other was Clerk to a Merchant. Watson was a pious sensible young Man, of great Integrity. The others rather more lax in their Principles of Religion, particularly Ralph, who as well as Collins had been unsettled by me, for which they both made me suffer. Osborne was sensible, candid, frank, sincere, and affectionate to his Friends; but in literary Matters too fond of Criticising. Ralph, was ingenious, genteel in his Manners, and

extreamly eloquent; I think I never knew a prettier Talker. Both of them great Admirers of Poetry, and began to try their Hands in little Pieces. Many pleasant Walks we four had together on Sundays into the Woods near Skuykill, where we read to one another and conferr'd on what we read.

Ralph was inclin'd to pursue the Study of Poetry, not doubting but he might become eminent in it and make his Fortune by it, alledging that the best Poets must when they first began to write, make as many Faults as he did. Osborne dissuaded him, assur'd him he had no Genius for Poetry, and advis'd him to think of nothing beyond the Business he was bred to; that in the mercantile way tho' he had no Stock, he might by his Diligence and Punctuality recommend himself to Employment as a Factor, and in time acquire wherewith to trade on his own Account. I approv'd the amusing one's self with Poetry now and then, so far as to improve one's Language, but no farther.

On this it was propos'd that we should each of us at our next Meeting produce a Piece of our own Composing, in order to improve by our mutual Observations, Criticisms and

Corrections. As Language and Expression was what we had in View, we excluded all Considerations of Invention, by agreeing that the Task should be a Version of the 18th Psalm, which describes the Descent of a Deity. When the Time of our Meeting drew nigh, Ralph call'd on me first, and let me know his Piece was ready. I told him I had been busy, and having little Inclination had done nothing. He then show'd me his Piece for my Opinion; and I much approv'd it, as it appear'd to me to have great Merit. "Now, "says he, "Osborne never will allow the least Merit in any thing of mine, but makes 1000 Criticisms out of mere Envy. He is not so jealous of you. I wish therefore you would take this Piece, and produce it as yours. I will pretend not to have had time, and so produce nothing: We shall then see what he will say to it." It was agreed, and I immediately transcrib'd it that it might appear in my own hand.

We met. Watson's Performance was read: there were some Beauties in it: but many Defects. Osborne's was read: It was much better. Ralph did it Justice, remark'd some Faults, but applauded the Beauties. He himself had nothing to produce. I was backward, seem'd desirous of being excus'd, had not

had sufficient Time to correct; &c. but no Excuse could be admitted, produce I must. It was read and repeated; Watson and Osborne gave up the Contest; and join'd in applauding it immoderately. Ralph only made some Criticisms and propos'd some Amendments, but I defended my Text.

Osborne was against Ralph, and told him he was no better a Critic than Poet; so he dropt the Argument. As they two went home together, Osborne express'd himself still more strongly in favour of what he thought my Production, having restrain'd himself before as he said, lest I should think it Flattery. "But who would have imagin'd," says he, "that Franklin had been capable of such a Performance; such Painting, such Force! such Fire! he has even improv'd the Original! In his common Conversation, he seems to have no Choice of Words; he hesitates and blunders; and yet, good God, how he writes!" When we next met, Ralph discover'd the Trick, we had plaid him, and Osborne was a little laught at.

This Transaction fix'd Ralph in his Resolution of becoming a Poet. I did all I could to dissuade him from it, but He continued scribbling Verses, till Pope cur'd him. He became

however a pretty good Prose Writer. More of him hereafter. But as I may not have occasion again to mention the other two, I shall just remark here, that Watson died in my Arms a few Years after, much lamented, being the best of our Set. Osborne went to the West Indies, where he became an eminent Lawyer and made Money, but died young. He and I had made a serious Agreement, that the one who happen'd first to die, should if possible make a friendly Visit to the other, and acquaint him how he found things in that Separate State. But he never fulfill'd his Promise.

## **CHAPTER 05**

The Governor, seeming to like my Company, had me frequently to his House; and his Setting me up was always mention'd as a fix'd thing. I was to take with me Letters recommendatory to a Number of his Friends, besides the Letter of Credit to furnish me with the necessary Money for purchasing the Press and Types, Paper, &c. For these Letters I was appointed to call at different times, when they were to be ready, but a future time was still named. Thus we went on till the Ship whose Departure too had been several times



postponed was on the Point of sailing. Then when I call'd to take my Leave and Receive the Letters, his Secretary, Dr. Bard, came out to me and said the Governor was extreamly busy, in writing, but would be down at Newcastle before the Ship, and there the Letters would be delivered to me.

Ralph, tho' married and having one Child, had determined to accompany me in this Voyage. It was thought he intended to establish a Correspondence, and obtain Goods to sell on Commission. But I found afterwards, that thro' some Discontent with his Wife's Relations, he purposed to leave her on their Hands, and never return again. Having taken leave of my Friends, and interchang'd some Promises with Miss Read, I left Philadelphia in the Ship, which anchor'd at Newcastle. The Governor was there. But when I went to his Lodging, the Secretary came to me from him with the civillest Message in the World, that he could not then see me being engag'd in Business of the utmost Importance; but should send the Letters to me on board, wish'd me heartily a good Voyage and a speedy Return, &c. I return'd on board, a little puzzled, but still not doubting.

Mr. Andrew Hamilton, a famous Lawyer of Philadelphia, had taken Passage in the same Ship for himself and Son: and with Mr. Denham a Quaker Merchant, and Messrs. Onion and Russel Masters of an Iron Work in Maryland, had engag'd the Great Cabin; so that Ralph and I were forc'd to take up with a Birth in the Steerage: And none on board knowing us, were considered as ordinary Persons. But Mr. Hamilton and his Son (it was James, since Governor) return'd from New Castle to Philadelphia, the Father being recall'd by a great Fee to plead for a seized Ship. And just before we sail'd Col. French coming on board, and showing me great Respect, I was more taken Notice of, and with my Friend Ralph invited by the other Gentlemen to come into the Cabin, there being now Room. Accordingly we remov'd thither.

Understanding that Col. French had brought on board the Governor's Dispatches, I ask'd the Captain for those Letters that were to be under my Care. He said all were put into the Bag together; and he could not then come at them; but before we landed in England, I should have an Opportunity of picking them out. So I was satisfy'd for the present, and we proceeded on our Voyage. We had a sociable Company in the

Cabin, and lived uncommonly well, having the Addition of all Mr. Hamilton's Stores, who had laid in plentifully. In this Passage Mr. Denham contracted a Friendship for me that continued during his Life. The Voyage was otherwise not a pleasant one, as we had a great deal of bad Weather.

When we came into the Channel, the Captain kept his Word with me, and gave me an Opportunity of examining the Bag for the Governor's Letters. I found none upon which my Name was put, as under my Care; I pick'd out 6 or 7 that by the Hand writing I thought might be the promis'd Letters, especially as one of them was directed to Basket the King's Printer, and another to some Stationer. We arriv'd in London the 24th of December, 1724. I waited upon the Stationer who came first in my Way, delivering the Letter as from Gov. Keith. "I don't know such a Person," says he: "but opening the Letter, O, this is from Riddlesden; I have lately found him to be a compleat Rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any Letters from him." So putting the Letter into my Hand, he turn'd on his Heel and left me to serve some Customer. I was surprized to find these were not the Governor's Letters. And after recollecting and comparing

Circumstances, I began to doubt his Sincerity. I found my Friend Denham, and opened the whole Affair to him. He let me into Keith's Character, told me there was not the least Probability that he had written any Letters for me, that no one who knew him had the smallest Dependence on him, and he laugh'd at the Notion of the Governor's giving me a Letter of Credit, having as he said no Credit to give. On my expressing some Concern about what I should do: He advis'd me to endeavour getting some Employment in the Way of my Business. "Among the Printers here," says he, "you will improve yourself; and when you return to America, you will set up to greater Advantage."

We both of us happen'd to know, as well as the Stationer, that Riddlesden the Attorney, was a very Knave. He had half ruin'd Miss Read's Father by drawing him in to be bound for him. By his Letter it appear'd, there was a secret Scheme on foot to the Prejudice of Hamilton, (Suppos'd to be then coming over with us,) and that Keith was concern'd in it with Riddlesden. Denham, who was a Friend of Hamilton's, thought he ought to be acquainted with it. So when he arriv'd in England, which was soon after, partly from

Resentment and Ill-Will to Keith and Riddlesden, and partly from Good Will to him: I waited on him, and gave him the Letter. He thank'd me cordially, the Information being of Importance to him. And from that time he became my Friend, greatly to my Advantage afterwards on many Occasions.

But what shall we think of a Governor's playing such pitiful Tricks, and imposing so grossly on a poor ignorant Boy! It was a Habit he had acquired. He wish'd to please every body; and having little to give, he gave Expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious sensible Man, a pretty good Writer, and a good Governor for the People, tho' not for his Constituents the Proprietaries, whose Instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best Laws were of his Planning, and pass'd during his Administration.

Ralph and I were inseparable Companions. We took Lodgings together in Little Britain at 3s. 6d. per Week, as much as we could then afford. He found some Relations, but they were poor and unable to assist him. He now let me know his

Intentions of remaining in London, and that he never meant to return to Philadelphia. He had brought no Money with him, the whole he could muster having been expended in paying his Passage. I had 15 Pistoles: So he borrowed occasionally of me, to subsist while he was looking out for Business. He first endeavoured to get into the Playhouse, believing himself qualify'd for an Actor; but Wilkes, to whom he apply'd, advis'd him candidly not to think of that, Employment, as it was impossible he should succeed in it. Then he propos'd to Roberts, a Publisher in Paternoster Row, to write for him a Weekly Paper like the Spectator, on certain Conditions, which Roberts did not approve. Then he endeavour'd to get Employment as a Hackney Writer to copy for the Stationers and Lawyers about the Temple: but could find no Vacancy.

I immediately got into Work at Palmer's then a famous Printing House in Bartholomew Close; and here I continu'd near a Year. I was pretty diligent; but spent with Ralph a good deal of my Earnings in going to Plays and other Places of Amusement. We had together consum'd all my Pistoles, and now just rubb'd on from hand to mouth. He seem'd quite

to forget his Wife and Child, and I by degrees my Engagements with Miss Read, to whom I never wrote more than one Letter, and that was to let her know I was not likely soon to return. This was another of the great Errata of my Life, which I should wish to correct if I were to live it over again. In fact, by our Expences, I was constantly kept unable to pay my Passage.

At Palmer's I was employ'd in composing for the second Edition of Woollaston's Religion of Nature. Some of his Reasonings not appearing to me well-founded, I wrote a little metaphysical Piece, in which I made Remarks on them. It was entitled, A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and pain. I inscrib'd it to my Friend Ralph. I printed a small Number. It occasion'd my being more consider'd by Mr. Palmer, as a young Man of some Ingenuity, tho' he seriously expostulated with me upon the Principles of my Pamphlet which to him appear'd abominable. My printing this Pamphlet was another Erratum. While I lodg'd in Little Britain I made an Acquaintance with one Wilcox a Bookseller, whose Shop was at the next Door. He had an immense Collection of second-hand Books. Circulating Libraries were not then in

Use; but we agreed that on certain reasonable Terms which I have now forgotten, I might take, read and return any of his Books. This I esteem'd a great Advantage, and I made as much use of it as I could.

My Pamphlet by some means falling into the Hands of one Lyons, a Surgeon, Author of a Book entitled The Infallibility of Human Judgment, it occasioned an Acquaintance between us; he took great Notice of me, call'd on me often, to converse on those Subjects, carried me to the Horns a pale Ale-House in [blank] Lane, Cheapside, and introduc'd me to Dr. Mandevile, Author of the Fable of the Bees who had a Club there, of which he was the Soul, being a most facetious entertaining Companion. Lyons too introduc'd me, to Dr. Pemberton, at Batson's Coffee House, who promis'd to give me an Opportunity some time or other of seeing Sir Isaac Newton, of which I was extreamly desirous; but this never happened.

I had brought over a few Curiosities among which the principal was a Purse made of the Asbestos, which purifies by Fire. Sir Hans Sloane heard of it, came to see me, and



invited me to his House in Bloomsbury Square, where he show'd me all his Curiosities, and persuaded me to let him add that to the Number, for which he paid me handsomely.

In our House there lodg'd a young Woman; a Milliner, who I think had a Shop in the Cloisters. She had been genteelly bred, was sensible and lively, and of most pleasing Conversation. Ralph read Plays to her in the Evenings, they grew intimate, she took another Lodging, and he follow'd her. They liv'd together some time, but he being still out of Business, and her Income not sufficient to maintain them with her Child, he took a Resolution of going from London, to try for a Country School, which he thought himself well qualify'd to undertake, as he wrote an excellent Hand, and was a Master of Arithmetic and Accounts. This however he deem'd a Business below him, and confident of future better Fortune when he should be unwilling to have it known that he once was so meanly employ'd, he chang'd his Name, and did me the Honour to assume mine. For I soon after had a Letter from him, acquainting me, that he was settled in a small Village in Berkshire, I think it was, where he taught reading and writing to 10 or a dozen Boys at 6 pence each

per Week, recommending Mrs. T. to my Care, and desiring me to write to him directing for Mr. Franklin Schoolmaster at such a Place.

He continu'd to write frequently, sending me large Specimens of an Epic Poem, which he was then composing, and desiring my Remarks and Corrections. These I gave him from time to time, but endeavour'd rather to discourage his Proceeding. One of Young's Satires was then just publish'd. I copy'd and sent him a great Part of it, which set in a strong Light the Folly of pursuing the Muses with any Hope of Advancement by them. All was in vain. Sheets of the Poem continu'd to come by every Post. In the mean time Mrs. T. having on his Account lost her Friends and Business, was often in Distresses, and us'd to send for me, and borrow what I could spare to help her out of them. I grew fond of her Company, and being at this time under no Religious Restraints, and presuming on my Importance to her, I attempted Familiarities, (another Erratum) which she repuls'd with a proper Resentment, and acquainted him with my Behaviour. This made a Breach between us, and when he return'd again to London, he let me know he thought I had

cancel'd all the Obligations he had been under to me. So I found I was never to expect his Repaying me what I lent to him or advanc'd for him. This was however not then of much Consequence, as he was totally unable. And in the Loss of his Friendship I found my self reliev'd from a Burthen. I now began to think of getting a little Money beforehand; and expecting better Work, I left Palmer's to work at Watts's near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a still greater Printing House. Here I continu'd all the rest of my Stay in London.

At my first Admission into this Printing House, I took to working at Press, imagining I felt a Want of the Bodily Exercise I had been us'd to in America, where Presswork is mix'd with Composing. I drank only Water; the other Workmen, near 50 in Number, were great Guzzlers of Beer. On occasion I carried up and down Stairs a large Form of Types in each hand, when others carried but one in both Hands. They wonder'd to see from this and several Instances that the Water-American as they call'd me was stronger than themselves who drank strong Beer. We had an Alehouse Boy

who attended always in the House to supply the Workmen. My Companion at the Press, drank every day a Pint before Breakfast, a Pint at Breakfast with his Bread and Cheese; a Pint between Breakfast and Dinner; a Pint at Dinner; a Pint in the Afternoon about Six o'Clock, and another when he had done his Day's-Work. I thought it a detestable Custom. But it was necessary, he suppos'd, to drink strong Beer that he might be strong to labour. I endeavour'd to convince him that the Bodily Strength afforded by Beer could only be in proportion to the Grain or Flour of the Barley dissolved in the Water of which it was made; that there was more Flour in a Penny-worth of Bread, and therefore if he would eat that with a Pint of Water, it would give him more Strength than a Quart of Beer. He drank on however, and had 4 or 5 Shillings to pay out of his Wages every Saturday Night for that muddling Liquor; an Expencc I was free from. And thus these poor Devils keep themselves always under.

Watts, after some Weeks, desiring to have me in the Composing Room, I left the Pressmen. A new Bienvenu or Sum for Drink, being 5 s., was demanded of me by the Compositors. I thought it an Imposition, as I had paid below.

The Master thought so too, and forbad my Paying it. I stood out two or three Weeks, was accordingly considered as an Excommunicate, and had so many little Pieces of private Mischief done me, by mixing my Sorts, transposing my Pages, breaking my Matter, &c. &c. if I were ever so little out of the Room, and all ascrib'd to the Chapel Ghost, which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted, that notwithstanding the Master's Protection, I found myself oblig'd to comply and pay the Money; convinc'd of the Folly of being on ill Terms with those one is to live with continually.

I was now on a fair Footing with them, and soon acquir'd considerable Influence. I propos'd some reasonable Alterations in their Chapel Laws, and carried them against all Opposition. From my Example a great Part of them, left their muddling Breakfast of Beer and Bread and Cheese, finding they could with me be supply'd from a neighbouring House with a large Porringer of hot Water-gruel, sprinkled with Pepper, crumb'd with Bread, and a Bit of Butter in it, for the Price of a Pint of Beer, viz., three halfpence. This was a more comfortable as well as cheaper Breakfast, and kept their Heads clearer. Those who continu'd sotting with Beer all day,

were often, by not paying, out of Credit at the Alehouse, and us'd to make Interest with me to get Beer, their Light, as they phras'd it, being out. I watch'd the Pay table on Saturday Night, and collected what I stood engag'd for them, having to pay some times near Thirty Shillings a Week on their Accounts. This, and my being esteem'd a pretty good Riggite, that is a jocular verbal Satyrist, supported my Consequence in the Society. My constant Attendance, (I never making a St. Monday), recommended me to the Master; and my uncommon Quickness at Composing, occasion'd my being put upon all Work of Dispatch which was generally better paid. So I went on now very agreeably.

My Lodging in Little Britain being too remote, I found another in Duke-street opposite to the Romish Chapel. It was two pair of Stairs backwards at an Italian Warehouse. A Widow Lady kept the House; she had a Daughter and a Maid Servant, and a Journeyman who attended the Warehouse, but lodg'd abroad. After sending to enquire my Character at the House where I last lodg'd, she agreed to take me in at the same Rate, 3s. 6d. per Week, cheaper as she said from the Protection she expected in having a Man lodge in the House.

She was a Widow, an elderly Woman, had been bred a Protestant, being a Clergyman's Daughter, but was converted to the Catholic Religion by her Husband, whose Memory she much revered, had lived much among People of Distinction, and knew a 1000 Anecdotes of them as far back as the Times of Charles the Second. She was lame in her Knees with the Gout, and therefore seldom stirr'd out of her Room, so sometimes wanted Company; and hers was so highly amusing to me; that I was sure to spend an Evening with her whenever she desired it. Our Supper was only half an Anchovy each, on a very little Strip of Bread and Butter, and half a Pint of Ale between us. But the Entertainment was in her Conversation. My always keeping good Hours, and giving little Trouble in the Family, made her unwilling to part with me; so that when I talk'd of a Lodging I had heard of, nearer my Business, for 2s. 6d. a Week, which, intent as I now was on saving Money, made some Difference; she bid me not think of it, for she would abate me two Shillings a Week for the future, so I remain'd with her at 1s. 6d. as long as I staid in London.

In a Garret of her House there lived a Maiden Lady of 70 in the most retired Manner, of whom my Landlady gave me this Account, that she was a Roman Catholic, had been sent abroad when young and lodg'd in a Nunnery with an Intent of becoming a Nun: but the Country not agreeing with her, she return'd to England, where there being no Nunnery, she had vow'd to lead the Life of a Nun as near as might be done in those Circumstances: Accordingly she had given all her Estate to charitable Uses, reserving only Twelve Pounds a Year to live on, and out of this Sum she still gave a great deal in Charity, living her self on Water-gruel only, and using no Fire but to boil it. She had lived many Years in that Garret, being permitted to remain there gratis by successive Catholic Tenants of the House below, as they deem'd it a Blessing to have her there. A Priest visited her, to confess her every Day. "I have ask'd her," says my Landlady, "how she, as she liv'd, could possibly find so much Employment for a Confessor?" "O," says she, "it is impossible to avoid vain Thoughts." I was permitted once to visit her: She was cheerful and polite, and convers'd pleasantly. The Room was clean, but had no other Furniture than a Matras, a Table with



a Crucifix and Book, a Stool, which she gave me to sit on, and a Picture over the Chimney of St. Veronica, displaying her Handkerchief with the miraculous Figure of Christ's bleeding Face on it, which she explain'd to me with great Seriousness. She look'd pale, but was never sick, and I give it as another Instance on how small an Income Life and Health may be supported.

At Watts's Printing-house I contracted an Acquaintance with an ingenious young Man, one Wygate, who having wealthy Relations, had been better educated than most Printers, was a tolerable Latinist, spoke French, and lov'd Reading. I taught him, and a Friend of his, to swim, at twice going into the River, and they soon became good Swimmers. They introduc'd me to some Gentlemen from the Country who went to Chelsea by Water to see the College and Don Saltero's Curiosities. In our Return, at the Request of the Company, whose Curiosity Wygate had excited, I stript and leapt into the River, and swam from near Chelsea to Blackfryars, performing on the Way many Feats of Activity both upon and under Water, that surpriz'd and pleas'd those to whom they were Novelties.

I had from a Child been ever delighted with this Exercise, had studied and practis'd all Thevenot's Motions and Positions, added some of my own, aiming at the graceful and easy, as well as the Useful. All these I took this Occasion of exhibiting to the Company, and was much flatter'd by their Admiration. And Wygate, who was desirous of becoming a Master, grew more and more attach'd to me, on that account, as well as from the Similarity of our Studies. He at length propos'd to me travelling all over Europe together, supporting ourselves everywhere by working at our Business. I was once inclin'd to it. But mentioning it to my good Friend Mr. Denham, with whom I often spent an Hour, when I had Leisure. He dissuaded me from it, advising me to think only of returning to Pensilvania, which he was now about to do.

I must record one Trait of this good Man's Character. He had formerly been in Business at Bristol, but fail'd in Debt to a Number of People, compounded and went to America. There, by a close Application to Business as a Merchant, he acquir'd a plentiful Fortune in a few Years. Returning to England in the Ship with me, He invited his old Creditors to an

Entertainment, at which he thank'd them for the easy Composition they had favour'd him with, and when they expected nothing but the Treat, every Man at the first Remove, found under his Plate an Order on a Banker for the full Amount of the unpaid Remainder with Interest.

He now told me he was about to return to Philadelphia, and should carry over a great Quantity of Goods in order to open a Store there: He propos'd to take me over as his Clerk, to keep his Books (in which he would instruct me) copy his Letters, and attend the Store. He added, that as soon as I should be acquainted with mercantile Business he would promote me by sending me with a Cargo of Flour and Bread &c. to the West Indies, and procure me Commissions from others; which would be profitable, and if I manag'd well, would establish me handsomely. The Thing pleas'd me, for I was grown tired of London, remember'd with Pleasure the happy Months I had spent in Pennsylvania, and wish'd again to see it. Therefore I immediately agreed, on the Terms of Fifty Pounds a Year, Pensylvania Money; less indeed than my present Gettings as a Compostor, but affording a better Prospect.

I now took Leave of Printing, as I thought for ever, and was daily employ'd in my new Business; going about with Mr. Denham among the Tradesmen, to purchase various Articles, and seeing them pack'd up, doing Errands, calling upon Workmen to dispatch, &c. and when all was on board, I had a few Days Leisure. On one of these Days I was to my Surprise sent for by a great Man I knew only by Name, a Sir William Wyndham and I waited upon him. He had heard by some means or other of my Swimming from Chelsey to Blackfryars, and of my teaching Wygate and another young Man to swim in a few Hours. He had two Sons about to set out on their Travels; he wish'd to have them first taught Swimming; and propos'd to gratify me handsomely if I would teach them. They were not yet come to Town and my Stay was uncertain, so I could not undertake it. But from this Incident I thought it likely, that if I were to remain in England and open a Swimming School, I might get a good deal of Money. And it struck me so strongly, that had the Overture been sooner made me, probably I should not so soon have returned to America. After many Years, you and I had something of more Importance to do with one of these Sons of Sir William

Wyndham, become Earl of Egremont, which I shall mention in its Place.

Thus I spent about 18 Months in London. Most Part of the Time, I work'd hard at my Business, and spent but little upon my self except in seeing Plays and in Books. My Friend Ralph had kept me poor. He owed me about 27 Pounds; which I was now never likely to receive; a great Sum out of my small Earnings. I lov'd him notwithstanding, for he had many amiable Qualities. Tho' I had by no means improv'd my Fortune. But I had pick'd up some very ingenious Acquaintance whose Conversation was of great Advantage to me, and I had read considerably.

## **CHAPTER 06**

We sail'd from Gravesend on the 23d of July 1726. For the Incidents of the Voyage, I refer you to my Journal, where you will find them all minutely related. Perhaps the most important Part of that Journal is the Plan to be found in it which I formed at Sea, for regulating my future Conduct in Life. It is the more remarkable, as being form'd when I was

so young, and yet being pretty faithfully adhered to quite thro' to old Age.

We landed in Philadelphia the 11th of October, where I found sundry Alterations. Keith was no longer Governor, being superceded by Major Gordon: I met him walking the Streets as a common Citizen. He seem'd a little asham'd at seeing me, but pass'd without saying any thing. I should have been as much asham'd at seeing Miss Read, had not her Friends, despairing with Reason of my Return, after the Receipt of my Letter, persuaded her to marry another, one Rogers, a Potter, which was done in my Absence. With him however she was never happy, and soon parted from him, refusing to cohabit with him, or bear his Name It being now said that he had another Wife. He was a worthless Fellow tho' an excellent Workman which was the Temptation to her Friends. He got into Debt, and ran away in 1727 or 28. Went to the West Indies, and died there. Keimer had got a better House, a Shop well supply'd with Stationary, plenty of new Types, a

number of Hands tho' none good, and seem'd to have a great deal of Business.

Mr. Denham took a Store in Water Street, where we open'd our Goods. I attended the Business diligently, studied Accounts, and grew in a little Time expert at selling. We lodg'd and boarded together, he counsell'd me as a Father, having a sincere Regard for me: I respected and lov'd him: and we might have gone on together very happily: But in the Beginning of Feb. 1726/7 when I had just pass'd my 21st Year, we both were taken ill. My Distemper was a Pleurisy, which very nearly carried me off: I suffered a good deal, gave up the Point in my own mind, and was rather disappointed when I found my Self recovering; regretting in some degree that I must now some time or other have all that disagreeable Work to do over again. I forget what his Distemper was. It held him a long time, and at length carried him off. He left me a small Legacy in a nuncupative Will, as a Token of his Kindness for me, and he left me once more to the wide World. For the Store was taken into the Care of his Executors, and my Employment under him ended: My Brother-in-law Homes, being now at Philadelphia, advis'd my

Return to my Business. And Keimer tempted me with an Offer of large Wages by the Year to come and take the Management of his Printing-House, that he might better attend his Stationer's Shop. I had heard a bad Character of him in London, from his Wife and her Friends, and was not fond of having any more to do with him. I try'd for farther Employment as a Merchant's Clerk; but not readily meeting with any, I clos'd again with Keimer.

I found in his House these Hands; Hugh Meredith a Welsh-Pensilvanian, 30 Years of Age, bred to Country Work: honest, sensible, had a great deal of solid Observation, was something of a Reader, but given to drink: Stephen Potts, a young Country Man of full Age, bred to the Same: of uncommon natural Parts, and great Wit and Humour, but a little idle. These he had agreed with at extream low Wages, per Week, to be rais'd a Shilling every 3 Months, as they would deserve by improving in their Business, and the Expectation of these high Wages to come on hereafter was what he had drawn them in with. Meredith was to work at Press, Potts at Bookbinding, which he by Agreement, was to teach them, tho' he knew neither one nor t'other. John —, a



wild Irishman brought up to no Business, whose Service for 4 Years Keimer had purchas'd from the Captain of a Ship. He too was to be made a Pressman. George Webb, an Oxford Scholar, whose Time for 4 Years he had likewise bought, intending him for a Compositor: of whom more presently. And David Harry, a Country Boy, whom he had taken Apprentice.

I soon perceiv'd that the Intention of engaging me at Wages so much higher than he had been us'd to give, was to have these raw cheap Hands form'd thro' me, and as soon as I had instructed them, then, they being all articled to him, he should be able to do without me. I went on however, very cheerfully; put his Printing House in Order, which had been in great Confusion, and brought his Hands by degrees to mind their Business and to do it better.

It was an odd Thing to find an Oxford Scholar in the Situation of a bought Servant. He was not more than 18 Years of Age, and gave me this Account of himself; that he was born in Gloucester, educated at a Grammar School there, had been distinguish'd among the Scholars for some apparent

Superiority in performing his Part when they exhibited Plays; belong'd to the Witty Club there, and had written some Pieces in Prose and Verse which were printed in the Gloucester Newspapers. Thence he was sent to Oxford; there he continu'd about a Year, but not well-satisfy'd, wishing of all things to see London and become a Player. At length receiving his Quarterly Allowance of 15 Guineas, instead of discharging his Debts, he walk'd out of Town, hid his Gown in a Furz Bush, and footed it to London, where having no Friend to advise him, he fell into bad Company, soon spent his Guineas, found no means of being introduc'd among the Players, grew necessitous, pawn'd his Cloaths and wanted Bread. Walking the Street very hungry, and not knowing what to do with himself, a Crimp's Bill was put into his Hand, offering immediate Entertainment and Encouragement to such as would bind themselves to serve in America.

He went directly, sign'd the Indentures, was put into the Ship and came over; never writing a Line to acquaint his Friends what was become of him. He was lively, witty, good-natur'd, and a pleasant Companion, but idle, thoughtless and imprudent to the last Degree.

John, the Irishman, soon ran away. With the rest I began to live very agreeably; for they all respected me, the more as they found Keimer incapable of instructing them, and that from me they learnt something daily. We never work'd on a Saturday, that being Keimer's Sabbath. So I had two Days for Reading. My Acquaintance with Ingenious People in the Town, increased. Keimer himself treated me with great Civility, and apparent Regard; and nothing now made me uneasy but my Debt to Vernon, which I was yet unable to pay being hitherto but a poor economist. He however kindly made no Demand of it.

Our Printing-House often wanted Sorts, and there was no Letter Founder in America. I had seen Types cast at James's in London, but without much Attention to the Manner: However I now contriv'd a Mould, made use of the Letters we had, as Puncheons, struck the Matrices in Lead, and thus supply'd in a pretty tolerable way all Deficiencies. I also engrav'd several Things on occasion. I made the Ink, I was Warehouse-man and every thing, in short quite a Factotum.

But, however serviceable I might be, I found that my Services became every Day of less Importance, as the other Hands improv'd in the Business. And when Keimer paid my second Quarter's Wages, he let me know that he felt them too heavy, and thought I should make an Abatement. He grew by degrees less civil, put on more of the Master, frequently found Fault, was captious and seem'd ready for an Out-breaking. I went on nevertheless with a good deal of Patience, thinking that his incumber'd Circumstances were partly the Cause. At length a Trifle snapt our Connexion. For a great Noise happening near the Courthouse, I put my Head out of the Window to see what was the Matter. Keimer being in the Street look'd up and saw me, call'd out to me in a loud Voice and angry Tone to mind my Business, adding some reproachful Words, that nettled me the more for their Publicity, all the Neighbours who were looking out on the same Occasion being Witnesses how I was treated. He came up immediately into the Printing-House, continu'd the Quarrel, high Words pass'd on both Sides, he gave me the Quarter's Warning we had stipulated, expressing a Wish that he had not been oblig'd to so long a Warning: I told him his

Wish was unnecessary for I would leave him that Instant; and so taking my Hat walk'd out of Doors; desiring Meredith whom I saw below to take care of some Things I left, and bring them to my Lodging.

Meredith came accordingly in the Evening, when we talk'd my Affair over. He had conceiv'd a great Regard for me, and was very unwilling that I should leave the House while he remain'd in it. He dissuaded me from returning to my native Country which I began to think of. He reminded me that Keimer was in debt for all he possess'd, that his Creditors began to be uneasy, that he kept his Shop miserably, sold often without Profit for ready Money, and often trusted without keeping Accounts. That he must therefore fail; which would make a Vacancy I might profit of. I objected my Want of Money. He then let me know, that his Father had a high Opinion of me, and from some Discourse that had pass'd between them, he was sure would advance Money to set us up, if I would enter into Partnership with him. "My Time," says he, "will be out with Keimer in the Spring. By that time

we may have our Press and Types in from London: I am sensible I am no Workman. If you like it, Your Skill in the Business shall be set against the Stock I furnish; and we will share the Profits equally."

The Proposal was agreeable, and I consented. His Father was in Town, and approv'd of it, the more as he saw I had great Influence with his Son, had prevail'd on him to abstain long from Dramdrinking, and he hop'd might break him of that wretched Habit entirely, when we came to be so closely connected. I gave an Inventory to the Father, who carry'd it to a Merchant; the Things were sent for; the Secret was to be kept till they should arrive, and in the mean time I was to get work if I could at the other Printing House. But I found no Vacancy there, and so remain'd idle a few Days, when Keimer, on a Prospect of being employ'd to print some Paper-money, in New Jersey, which would require Cuts and various Types that I only could supply, and apprehending Bradford might engage me and get the Job from him, sent me a very civil Message, that old Friends should not part for a few Words, the Effect of sudden Passion, and wishing me to return. Meredith persuaded me to comply, as it would give

more Opportunity for his Improvement under my daily Instructions. So I return'd, and we went on more smoothly than for some time before. The New Jersey Job was obtain'd. I contriv'd a Copper-Plate Press for it, the first that had been seen in the Country. I cut several Ornaments and Checks for the Bills. We went together to Burlington, where I executed the Whole to Satisfaction, and he received so large a Sum for the Work, as to be enabled thereby to keep his Head much longer above Water.

At Burlington I made an Acquaintance with many principal People of the Province. Several of them had been appointed by the Assembly a Committee to attend the Press, and take Care that no more Bills were printed than the Law directed. They were therefore by Turns constantly with us, and generally he who attended brought with him a Friend or two for Company. My mind having been much more improv'd by Reading than Keimer's, I suppose it was for that Reason my Conversation seem'd to be more valu'd. They had me to their Houses, introduc'd me to their Friends and show'd me much Civility, while he, tho' the Master, was a little neglected. In truth he was an odd Fish, ignorant of common Life, fond of

rudely opposing receiv'd Opinions, slovenly to extream dirtiness, enthusiastic in some Points of Religion, and a little Knavish withal.

We continu'd there near 3 Months, and by that time I could reckon among my acquired Friends, Judge Allen, Samuel Bustill, the Secretary of the Province, Isaac Pearson, Joseph Cooper and several of the Smiths, Members of Assembly, and Isaac Decow the Surveyor General. The latter was a shrewd sagacious old Man, who told me that he began for himself when young by wheeling Clay for the Brickmakers, learnt to write after he was of Age, carry'd the Chain for Surveyors, who taught him Surveying, and he had now by his Industry acquir'd a good Estate; and says he, "I foresee, that you will soon work this Man out of his Business and make a Fortune in it at Philadelphia." He had not then the least Intimation of my Intention to set up there or any where. These Friends were afterwards of great Use to me, as I occasionally was to some of them. They all continued their Regard for me as long as they lived.



Before I enter upon my public Appearance in Business it may be well to let you know the then State of my Mind, with regard to my Principles and Morals, that you may see how far those influenc'd the future Events of my Life. My Parents had early given me religious Impressions, and brought me through my Childhood piously in the Dissenting Way. But I was scarce 15 when, after doubting by turns of several Points as I found them disputed in the different Books I read, I began to doubt of Revelation it self. Some Books against Deism fell into my Hands; they were said to be the Substance of Sermons preached at Boyle's Lectures. It happened that they wrought an Effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them: For the Arguments of the Deists which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the Refutations. In short I soon became a thorough Deist. My Arguments perverted some others, particularly Collins and Ralph: but each of them having afterwards wrong'd me greatly without the least Compunction and recollecting Keith's Conduct towards me, (who was another Freethinker) and my own towards Vernon and Miss Read which at Times gave me great Trouble, I

began to suspect that this Doctrine tho' it might be true, was not very useful. My London Pamphlet, which had for its Motto those Lines of Dryden:

"Whatever is, is right.

Tho' purblind Man

Sees but a Part of the Chain, the nearest Link,

His Eyes not carrying to the equal Beam,

That poizes all, above."

And from the Attributes of God, his infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Power concluded that nothing could possibly be wrong in the World, and that Vice and Virtue were empty Distinctions, no such Things existing: appear'd now not so clever a Performance as I once thought it; and I doubted whether some Error had not insinuated itself unperceiv'd into my Argument, so as to infect all that follow'd, as is common in metaphysical Reasonings.

I grew convinc'd that Truth, Sincerity and Integrity in Dealings between Man and Man, were of the utmost

Importance to the Felicity of Life, and I form'd written Resolutions, (which still remain in my Journal Book) to practice them ever while I lived. Revelation had indeed no weight with me as such; but I entertain'd an Opinion, that tho' certain Actions might not be bad because they were forbidden by it, or good because it commanded them; yet probably those Actions might be forbidden because they were bad for us, or commanded because they were beneficial to us, in their own Natures, all the Circumstances of things considered. And this Persuasion, with the kind hand of Providence, or some guardian Angel, or accidental favourable Circumstances and Situations, or all together, preserved me (thro' this dangerous Time of Youth and the hazardous Situations I was sometimes in among Strangers, remote from the Eye and Advice of my Father) without any wilful gross Immorality or Injustice that might have been expected from my Want of Religion. I say wilful, because the Instances I have mentioned, had something of Necessity in them, from my Youth, Inexperience, and the Knavery of others. I had therefore a tolerable Character to begin the

World with, I valued it properly, and determin'd to preserve it.

## **CHAPTER 07**

There are Croakers in every Country, always boding its Ruin. Such a one then lived in Philadelphia, a Person of Note, an elderly Man, with a wise Look, and very grave Manner of speaking. His Name was Samuel Mickle. This Gentleman, a Stranger to me, stopt one Day at my Door, and asked me if I was the young Man who had lately opened a new Printing House: Being answer'd in the Affirmative; he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive Undertaking and the Expence would be lost; for Philadelphia was a sinking Place, the People already half Bankrupts or near being so; all Appearances of the contrary, such as new Buildings and the Rise of Rents being to his certain Knowledge fallacious, for they were in fact among the Things that would soon ruin us. And he gave me such a Detail of Misfortunes, now existing or that were soon to exist, that he left me half-melancholy. Had I known him before I engag'd in this Business, probably I never should have done it. This Man continu'd to live in this

decaying Place; and to declaim in the same Strain, refusing for many Years to buy a House there, because all was going to Destruction, and at last I had the Pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have bought it for when he first began his Croaking.

I should have mention'd before, that in the Autumn of the preceding Year I had form'd most of my ingenious Acquaintance into a Club for mutual Improvement, which we call'd the Junto. We met on Friday Evenings. The Rules I drew up requir'd that every Member in his Turn should produce one or more Queries on any Point of Morals, Politics or Natural Philosophy, to be discuss'd by the Company, and once in three Months produce and read an Essay of his own Writing on any Subject he pleased. Our Debates were to be under the Direction of a President, and to be conducted in the sincere Spirit of Enquiry after Truth, without Fondness for Dispute, or Desire of Victory; and to prevent Warmth all Expressions of Positiveness in Opinion, or of direct Contradiction, were after some time made contraband and prohibited under small pecuniary Penalties.

The first Members were Joseph Brientnal, a Copyer of Deeds for the Scriveners; a good-natur'd friendly middle-ag'd Man, a great Lover of Poetry, reading all he could meet with, and writing some that was tolerable; very ingenious in many little Nicknackeries, and of sensible Conversation.

Thomas Godfrey, a self-taught Mathematician, great in his Way, and afterwards Inventor of what is now call'd Hadley's Quadrant. But he knew little out of his way, and was not a pleasing Companion, as like most Great Mathematicians I have met with, he expected unusual Precision in every thing said, or was forever denying or distinguishing upon Trifles, to the Disturbance of all Conversation. He soon left us.

Nicholas Scull, a Surveyor, afterwards Surveyor-General, Who lov'd Books, and sometimes made a few Verses.

William Parsons, bred a Shoemaker, but loving Reading, had acquir'd a considerable Share of Mathematics, which he first studied with a View to Astrology that he afterwards laugh'd at. He also became Surveyor General.

William Maugridge, a Joiner, a most exquisite Mechanic and a solid sensible Man.

Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, and George Webb, I have Characteris'd before.

Robert Grace, a young Gentleman of some Fortune, generous, lively and witty, a Lover of Punning and of his Friends.

And William Coleman, then a Merchant's Clerk, about my Age, who had the coolest clearest Head, the best Heart, and the exactest Morals, of almost any Man I ever met with. He became afterwards a Merchant of great Note, and one of our Provincial Judges: Our Friendship continued without Interruption to his Death upwards of 40 Years. And the club continu'd almost as long and was the best School of Philosophy, Morals and Politics that then existed in the Province; for our Queries which were read the Week preceding their Discussion, put us on Reading with Attention upon the several Subjects, that we might speak more to the purpose: and here too we acquired better Habits of Conversation, every thing being studied in our Rules which

might prevent our disgusting each other. From hence the long Continuance of the Club, which I shall have frequent Occasion to speak farther of hereafter.

But my giving this Account of it here, is to show something of the Interest I had, every one of these exerting themselves in recommending Business to us. Brientnal particularly procur'd us from the Quakers, the Printing 40 Sheets of their History, the rest being to be done by Keimer: and upon this we work'd exceeding hard, for the Price was low. It was a Folio, Pro Patria Size, in Pica with Long Primer Notes. I compos'd of it a Sheet a Day, and Meredith work'd it off at Press. It was often 11 at Night and sometimes later, before I had finish'd my Distribution for the next days Work: For the little Jobs sent in by our other Friends now and then put us back. But so determin'd I was to continue doing a Sheet a Day of the Folio, that one Night when having impos'd my Forms, I thought my Days Work over, one of them by accident was broken and two Pages reduc'd to Pie, I immediately distributed and compos'd it over again before I went to bed. And this Industry visible to our Neighbours began to give us Character and Credit; particularly I was told, that mention



being made of the new Printing Office at the Merchants every-night-Club, the general Opinion was that it must fail, there being already two Printers in the Place, Keimer and Bradford; but Doctor Baird (whom you and I saw many Years after at his native Place, St. Andrews in Scotland) gave a contrary Opinion; "for the Industry of that Franklin," says he, "is superior to any thing I ever saw of the kind: I see him still at work when I go home from Club; and he is at Work again before his Neighbours are out of bed." This struck the rest, and we soon after had Offers from one of them to Supply us with Stationary. But as yet we did not chuse to engage in Shop Business.

I mention this Industry the more particularly and the more freely, tho' it seems to be talking in my own Praise, that those of my Posterity who shall read it, may know the Use of that Virtue, when they see its Effects in my Favour throughout this Relation.

George Webb, who had found a Female Friend that lent him wherewith to purchase his Time of Keimer, now came to offer

himself as a Journeyman to us. We could not then employ him, but I foolishly let him know, as a Secret, that I soon intended to begin a Newspaper, and might then have Work for him. My Hopes of Success as I told him were founded on this, that the then only Newspaper, printed by Bradford was a paltry thing, wretchedly manag'd, and no way entertaining; and yet was profitable to him. I therefore thought a good Paper could scarcely fail of good Encouragement. I requested Webb not to mention it, but he told it to Keimer, who immediately, to be beforehand with me, published Proposals for Printing one himself, on which Webb was to be employ'd. I resented this, and to counteract them, as I could not yet begin our Paper, I wrote several Pieces of Entertainment for Bradford's Paper, under the Title of the Busy Body which Bientnal continu'd some Months. By this means the Attention of the Publick was fix'd on that Paper, and Keimers Proposals which we burlesqu'd and ridicul'd, were disregarded. He began his Paper however, and after carrying it on three Quarters of a Year, with at most only 90 Subscribers, he offer'd it to me for a Trifle, and I having been

ready some time to go on with it, took it in hand directly, and it prov'd in a few Years extreamly profitable to me.

I perceive that I am apt to speak in the singular Number, though our Partnership still continu'd. The Reason may be, that in fact the whole Management of the Business lay upon me. Meredith was no Compositor, a poor Pressman, and seldom sober. My Friends lamented my Connection with him, but I was to make the best of it.

Our first Papers made a quite different Appearance from any before in the Province, a better Type and better printed: but some spirited Remarks of my Writing on the Dispute then going on between Govr. Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, struck the principal People, occasion'd the Paper and the Manager of it to be much talk'd of, and in a few Weeks brought them all to be our Subscribers. Their Example was follow'd by many, and our Number went on growing continually. This was one of the first good Effects of my having learnt a little to scribble. Another was, that the leading Men, seeing a News Paper now in the hands of one who could also handle a Pen, thought it convenient to oblige

and encourage me. Bradford still printed the Votes and Laws and other Publick Business. He had printed an Address of the House to the Governor in a coarse blundering manner; We reprinted it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every Member. They were sensible of the Difference, it strengthen'd the Hands of our Friends in the House, and they voted us their Printers for the Year ensuing.

Among my Friends in the House I must not forget Mr. Hamilton before mentioned, who was now returned from England and had a Seat in it. He interested himself for me strongly in that Instance, as he did in many others afterwards, continuing his Patronage till his Death.

Mr. Vernon, about this time, put me in mind of the Debt I ow'd him: but did not press me. I wrote him an ingenuous Letter of Acknowledgments, crav'd his Forbearance a little longer which he allow'd me, and as soon as I was able I paid the Principal with Interest and many Thanks. So that Erratum was in some degree corrected.

But now another Difficulty came upon me, which I had never the least Reason to expect. Mr. Meredith's Father, who was to

have paid for our Printing House according to the Expectations given me, was able to advance only one Hundred Pounds, Currency, which had been paid, and a Hundred more was due to the Merchant; who grew impatient and su'd us all. We gave Bail, but saw that if the Money could not be rais'd in time, the Suit must come to a Judgment and Execution, and our hopeful Prospects must with us be ruined, as the Press and Letters must be sold for Payment, perhaps at half Price.

In this Distress two true Friends whose Kindness I have never forgotten nor ever shall forget while I can remember any thing, came to me separately unknown to each other, and without any Application from me, offering each of them to advance me all the Money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole Business upon my self if that should be practicable, but they did not like my continuing the Partnership with Meredith, who as they said was often seen drunk in the Streets, and playing at low Games in Alehouses, much to our Discredit. These two Friends were William Coleman and Robert Grace. I told them I could not propose a Separation while any Prospect remain'd of the

Merediths fulfilling their Part of our Agreement. Because I thought myself under great Obligations to them for what they had done and would do if they could. But if they finally fail'd in their Performance, and our Partnership must be dissolv'd, I should then think myself at Liberty to accept the Assistance of my Friends.

Thus the matter rested for some time. When I said to my Partner, "perhaps your Father is dissatisfied at the Part you have undertaken in this Affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you alone: If that is the Case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you and go about my Business."

"No." says he, "my Father has really been disappointed and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him farther. I see this is a Business I am not fit for. I was bred a Farmer, and it was a Folly in me to come to Town and put my Self at 30 Years of Age an Apprentice to learn a new Trade. Many of our Welsh People are going to settle in North Carolina where Land is cheap: I am inclin'd to go with them, and follow my old Employment. You may find Friends to assist you. If you

will take the Debts of the Company upon you, return to my Father the hundred Pound he has advanc'd, pay my little personal Debts, and give me Thirty Pounds and a new Saddle, I will relinquish the Partnership and leave the whole in your Hands." I agreed to this Proposal. It was drawn up in Writing, sign'd and seal'd immediately. I gave him what he demanded and he went soon after to Carolina; from whence he sent me next Year two long Letters, containing the best Account that had been given of that Country, the Climate, Soil, Husbandry, &c. for in those Matters he was very judicious. I printed them in the Papers, and they gave grate Satisfaction to the Publick. As soon as he was gone, I recurr'd to my two Friends; and because I would not give an unkind Preference to either, I took half what each had offered and I wanted, of one, and half of the other; paid off the Company Debts, and went on with the Business in my own Name, advertising that the Partnership was dissolved. I think this was in or about the Year 1729.

About this Time there was a Cry among the People for more Paper-Money, only £15,000, being extant in the Province and that soon to be sunk. The wealthy Inhabitants oppos'd any Addition, being against all Paper Currency, from an Apprehension that it would depreciate as it had done in New England to the Prejudice of all Creditors. We had discuss'd this Point in our Junto, where I was on the Side of an Addition, being persuaded that the first small Sum struck in 1723 had done much good, by increasing the Trade Employment, and Number of Inhabitants in the Province, since I now saw all the old Houses inhabited, and many new ones building, where as I remember'd well, that when I first walk'd about the Streets of Philadelphia, eating my Roll, I saw most of the Houses in Walnut street between Second and Front streets with Bills on their Doors, "to be let"; and many likewise in Chestnut Street, and other Streets; which made me think the Inhabitants of the City were one after another deserting it.

Our Debates possess'd me so fully of the Subject, that I wrote and printed an anonymous Pamphlet on it, entitled, "The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency". It was well



receiv'd by the common People in general; but the Rich Men dislik'd it; for it increas'd and strengthen'd the Clamour for more Money; and they happening to have no Writers among them that were able to answer it, their Opposition slacken'd, and the Point was carried by a Majority in the House. My Friends there, who conceiv'd I had been of some Service, thought fit to reward me, by employing me in printing the Money, a very profitable Job, and a great Help to me. This was another Advantage gain'd by my being able to write.

The Utility of this Currency became by Time and Experience so evident, as never afterwards to be much disputed, so that it grew soon to £ 55000, and in 1739 to £ 80,000 since which it arose during War to upwards of £ 350,000. Trade, Building and Inhabitants all the while increasing. Tho' I now think there are Limits beyond which the Quantity may be hurtful. I soon after obtain'd, thro' my Friend Hamilton, the Printing of the New Castle Paper Money, another profitable Job, as I then thought it; small Things appearing great to those in small Circumstances. And these to me were really great Advantages, as they were great Encouragements. He procured me also the Printing of the Laws and Votes of that

Government which continu'd in my Hands as long as I follow'd the Business.

I now open'd a little Stationer's Shop. I had in it Blanks of all Sorts the correctest that ever appear'd among us, being assisted in that by my Friend Brientnal; I had also Paper, Parchment, Chapmen's Books, &c. One Whitemash a Compositor I had known in London, an excellent Workman now came to me and work'd with me constantly and diligently, and I took an Apprentice the Son of Aquila Rose.

I began now gradually to pay off the Debt I was under for the Printing-House. In order to secure my Credit and Character as a Tradesman, I took care not only to be in Reality Industrious and frugal, but to avoid all Appearances of the Contrary. I drest plainly; I was seen at no Places of idle Diversion; I never went out a-fishing or shooting; a Book, indeed, sometimes debauch'd me from my Work; but that was seldom, snug, and gave no Scandal: and to show that I was not above my Business, I sometimes brought home the Paper I purchas'd at the Stores, thro' the Streets on a Wheelbarrow. Thus being esteem'd an industrious thriving

young Man, and paying duly for what I bought, the Merchants who imported Stationary solicited my Custom, others propos'd supplying me with Books, and I went on swimmingly. In the mean time Keimer's Credit and Business declining daily, he was at last forc'd to sell his Printing-house to satisfy his Creditors. He went to Barbadoes, and there lived some Years, in very poor Circumstances.

His Apprentice, David Harry, whom I had instructed while I work'd with him, set up in his Place at Philadelphia, having bought his Materials. I was at first apprehensive of a powerful Rival in Harry, as his Friends were very able, and had a good deal of Interest. I therefore propos'd a Partnership to him; which he, fortunately for me, rejected with Scorn. He was very proud, dress'd like a Gentleman, liv'd expensively, took much Diversion and Pleasure abroad, ran in debt, and neglected his Business, upon which all Business left him; and finding nothing to do, he follow'd Keimer to Barbadoes; taking the Printinghouse with him. There this Apprentice employ'd his former Master as a Journeyman. They quarrel'd often. Harry went continually behindhand, and at length was forc'd to sell his Types, and

return to his Country Work in Pensilvania. The Person that bought them, employ'd Keimer to use them, but in a few years he died.

There remain'd now no Competitor with me at Philadelphia, but the old one, Bradford, who was rich and easy, did a little Printing now and then by straggling Hands, but was not very anxious about the Business. However, as he kept the Post Office, it was imagined he had better Opportunities of obtaining News, his Paper was thought a better Distributer of Advertisements than mine, and therefore had many more, which was a profitable thing to him and a Disadvantage to me. For tho' I did indeed receive and send Papers by Post, yet the publick Opinion was otherwise; for what I did send was by Bribing the Riders who took them privately: Bradford being unkind enough to forbid it: which occasion'd some Resentment on my Part; and I thought so meanly of him for it, that when I afterwards came into his Situation, I took care never to imitate it. I had hitherto continu'd to board with Godfrey who lived in Part of my House with his Wife and Children, and had one Side of the Shop for his Glazier's Business, tho' he work'd little, being always absorb'd in his

Mathematics. Mrs. Godfrey projected a Match for me with a Relation's Daughter, took Opportunities of bringing us often together, till a serious Courtship on my Part ensu'd, the Girl being in herself very deserving. The old Folks encourag'd me by continual Invitations to Supper, and by leaving us together, till at length it was time to explain. Mrs. Godfrey manag'd our little Treaty. I let her know that I expected as much Money with their Daughter as would pay off my Remaining Debt for the Printinghouse, which I believe was not then above a Hundred Pounds. She brought me Word they had no such Sum to spare. I said they might mortgage their House in the Loan Office. The Answer to this after some Days was, that they did not approve the Match; that on Enquiry of Bradford they had been inform'd the Printing Business was not a profitable one, the Types would soon be worn out and more wanted, that S. Keimer and D. Harry had fail'd one after the other, and I should probably soon follow them; and therefore I was forbidden the House, and the Daughter shut up.

Whether this was a real Change of Sentiment, or only Artifice, on a Supposition of our being too far engag'd in

Affection to retract, and therefore that we should steal a Marriage, which would leave them at Liberty to give or withhold what they pleas'd, I know not: But I suspected the latter, resented it, and went no more. Mrs. Godfrey brought me afterwards some more favourable Accounts of their Disposition, and would have drawn me on again: but I declared absolutely my Resolution to have nothing more to do with that Family. This was resented by the Godfreys, we differ'd, and they removed, leaving me the whole House, and I resolved to take no more Inmates.

But this Affair having turn'd my Thoughts to Marriage, I look'd round me, and made Overtures of Acquaintance in other Places; but soon found that the Business of a Printer being generally thought a poor one, I was not to expect Money with a Wife unless with such a one, as I should not otherwise think agreeable. In the mean time, that hard-to-be-govern'd Passion of Youth, had hurried me frequently into Intrigues with low Women that fell in my Way, which were attended with some Expence and great Inconvenience, besides a continual Risque to my Health by a Distemper which of all Things I dreaded, tho' by great good Luck I

escaped it. A friendly Correspondence as Neighbours and old Acquaintances, had continued between me and Mrs. Read's Family, who all had a Regard for me from the time of my first Lodging in their House. I was often invited there and consulted in their Affairs, wherein I sometimes was of service. I pity'd poor Miss Read's unfortunate Situation, who was generally dejected, seldom cheerful, and avoided Company. I consider'd my Giddiness and Inconstancy when in London as in a great degree the Cause of her Unhappiness; tho' the Mother was good enough to think the Fault more her own than mine, as she had prevented our Marrying before I went thither, and persuaded the other Match in my Absence. Our mutual Affection was revived, but there were now great Objections to our Union. That Match was indeed look'd upon as invalid, a preceding Wife being said to be living in England; but this could not easily be prov'd, because of the Distance. And tho' there was a Report of his Death, it was not certain. Then tho' it should be true, he had left many Debts which his Successor might be call'd on to pay. We ventured however, over all these Difficulties, and I [took] her to Wife Sept. 1, 1730. None of the

Inconveniencies happened that we had apprehended, she prov'd a good and faithful Helpmate, assisted me much by attending the Shop, we throve together, and have ever mutually endeavour'd to make each other happy. Thus I corrected that great Erratum as well as I could.

About this Time, our Club meeting, not at a Tavern, but in a little Room of Mr. Grace's set apart for that Purpose; a Proposition was made by me that since our Books were often referr'd to in our Disquisitions upon the Queries, it might be convenient to us to have them all together where we met, that upon Occasion they might be consulted; and by thus clubbing our Books to a common Library, we should, while we lik'd to keep them together, have each of us the Advantage of using the Books of all the other Members, which would be nearly as beneficial as if each owned the whole. It was lik'd and agreed to, and we fill'd one End of the Room with such Books as we could best spare. The Number was not so great as we expected; and tho' they had been of great Use, yet some Inconveniencies occurring for want of due Care of them, the Collection after about a Year was separated, and each took his Books home again.



And now I set on foot my first Project of a public Nature, that for a Subscription Library. I drew up the Proposals, got them put into Form by our great Scrivener Brockden, and by the help of my Friends in the Junto, procur'd Fifty Subscribers of 40s. each to begin with and 10s. a Year for 50 Years, the Term our Company was to continue. We afterwards obtain'd a Charter, the Company being increas'd to 100. This was the Mother of all the N American Subscription Libraries now so numerous. It is become a great thing itself, and continually increasing. These Libraries have improv'd the general Conversation of the Americans, made the common Tradesmen and Farmers as intelligent as most Gentlemen from other Countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the Stand so generally made throughout the Colonies in Defence of their Privileges.

## **Volume 2**

### **CHAPTER 08**

...It might, too, be much better done if I were at home among my Papers, which would aid my Memory and help to

ascertain Dates. But my Return being uncertain, and having just now a little Leisure, I will endeavour to recollect and write what I can; if I live to get home, it may there be corrected and improv'd.

Not having any Copy here of what is already written, I know not whether an Account is given of the means I used to establish the Philadelphia publick Library, which from a small Beginning is now become so considerable, though I remember to have come down to near the Time of that Transaction, 1730. I will therefore begin here, with an Account of it, which may be struck out if found to have been already given.

At the time I establish'd my self in Pensylvania, there was not a good Bookseller's Shop in any of the Colonies to the Southward of Boston. In New-York and Philadelphia the Printers were indeed Stationers, they sold only Paper, &c., Almanacks, Ballads, and a few common School Books. Those who lov'd Reading were oblig'd to send for their Books from England. The Members of the Junto had each a few. We had

left the Alehouse where we first met, and hired a Room to hold our Club in. I propos'd that we should all of us bring our Books to that Room, where they would not only be ready to consult in our Conferences, but become a common Benefit, each of us being at Liberty to borrow such as he wish'd to read at home. This was accordingly done, and for some time contented us.

Finding the Advantage of this little Collection, I propos'd to render the Benefit from Books more common by commencing a Public Subscription Library. I drew a Sketch of the Plan and Rules that would be necessary, and got a skilful Conveyancer, Mr. Charles Brockden to put the whole in Form of Articles of Agreement to be subscribed; by which each Subscriber engag'd to pay a certain Sum down for the first Purchase of Books and an annual Contribution for encreasing them. So few were the Readers at that time in Philadelphia, and the Majority of us so poor, that I was not able with great Industry to find more than Fifty Persons, mostly young Tradesmen, willing to pay down for this purpose Forty shillings each, and Ten Shillings per Annum. On this little Fund we began. The Books were imported. The Library was

open one Day in the Week for lending them to the Subscribers, on their Promisory Notes to pay Double the Value if not duly returned. The Institution soon manifested its Utility, was imitated by other Towns and in other Provinces, the Librarys were augmented by Donations, Reading became fashionable, and our People having no publick Amusements to divert their Attention from Study became better acquainted with Books, and in a few Years were observ'd by Strangers to be better instructed and more intelligent than People of the same Rank generally are in other Countries.

When we were about to sign the above-mentioned Articles, which were to be binding on us, our Heirs, &c. for fifty Years, Mr Brockden, the Scrivener, said to us, "You are young Men, but it is scarce probable that any of you will live to see the Expiration of the Term fix'd in this Instrument." A number of us, however, are yet living: But the Instrument was after a few Years rendered null by a Charter that incorporated and gave Perpetuity to the Company.

The Objections, and Reluctances I met with in Soliciting the Subscriptions, made me soon feel the Impropriety of

presenting one's self as the Proposer of any useful Project that might be suppos'd to raise one's Reputation in the smallest degree above that of one's Neighbours, when one has need of their Assistance to accomplish that Project. I therefore put my self as much as I could out of sight, and stated it as a Scheme of a Number of Friends, who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought Lovers of Reading. In this way my Affair went on more smoothly, and I ever after practis'd it on such Occasions; and from my frequent Successes, can heartily recommend it. The present little Sacrifice of your Vanity will afterwards be amply repaid. If it remains a while uncertain to whom the Merit belongs, some one more vain than yourself will be encourag'd to claim it, and then even Envy will be dispos'd to do you Justice, by plucking those assum'd Feathers, and restoring them to their right Owner.

This Library afforded me the means of Improvement by constant Study, for which I set apart an Hour or two each Day; and thus repair'd in some Degree the Loss of the Learned Education my Father once intended for me. Reading was the only Amusement I allow'd my self. I spent no time in

Taverns, Games, or Frolicks of any kind. And my Industry in my Business continu'd as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was in debt for my Printing-house, I had a young Family coming on to be educated, and I had to contend with for Business two Printers who were establish'd in the Place before me. My Circumstances however grew daily easier: my original Habits of Frugality continuing. And my Father having among his Instructions to me when a Boy, frequently repeated a Proverb of Solomon, "Seest thou a Man diligent in his Calling, he shall stand before Kings, he shall not stand before mean Men." I from thence consider'd Industry as a Means of obtaining Wealth and Distinction, which encourag'd me, tho' I did not think that I should ever literally stand before Kings, which however has since happened.—for I have stood before five, and even had the honour of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to Dinner.

We have an English Proverb that says, "He that would thrive Must ask his Wife;" it was lucky for me that I had one as much dispos'd to Industry and Frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my Business, folding and stitching Pamphlets, tending Shop, purchasing old Linen Rags for the

Paper-makers, &c., &c. We kept no idle Servants, our Table was plain and simple, our Furniture of the cheapest. For instance my Breakfast was a long time Bread and Milk (no Tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen Porringer with a Pewter Spoon. But mark how Luxury will enter Families, and make a Progress, in Spite of Principle. Being call'd one Morning to Breakfast, I found it in a China Bowl with a Spoon of Silver. They had been bought for me without my Knowledge by my Wife, and had cost her the enormous Sum of three and twenty Shillings, for which she had no other Excuse or Apology to make, but that she thought her Husband deserv'd a Silver Spoon and China Bowl as well as any of his Neighbours. This was the first Appearance of Plate and China in our House, which afterwards in a Course of Years as our Wealth encreas'd augmented gradually to several Hundred Pounds in Value.

## **CHAPTER 09**

I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; and tho' some of the Dogmas of that Persuasion, such as the Eternal Decrees of God, Election, Reprobation, &c. appear'd to me

unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the Public Assemblies of the Sect, Sunday being my Studying-Day, I never was without some religious Principles; I never doubted, for instance, the Existence of the Deity, that he made the World, and govern'd it by his Providence; that the most acceptable Service of God was the doing Good to Man; that our Souls are immortal; and that all Crime will be punished and Virtue rewarded either here or hereafter; these I esteem'd the Essentials of every Religion, and being to be found in all the Religions we had in our Country I respected them all, tho' with different degrees of Respect as I found them more or less mix'd with other Articles which without any Tendency to inspire, promote or confirm Morality, serv'd principally to divide us and make us unfriendly to one another. This Respect to all, with an Opinion that the worst had some good Effects, induc'd me to avoid all Discourse that might tend to lessen the good Opinion another might have of his own Religion; and as our Province increas'd in People and new Places of worship were continually wanted, and generally erected by voluntary Contribution, my Mite for



such purpose, whatever might be the Sect, was never refused.

Tho' I seldom attended any Public Worship, I had still an Opinion of its Propriety, and of its Utility when rightly conducted, and I regularly paid my annual Subscription for the Support of the only Presbyterian Minister or Meeting we had in Philadelphia. He us'd to visit me sometimes as a Friend, and admonish me to attend his Administrations, and I was now and then prevail'd on to do so, once for five Sundays successively. Had he been, in my Opinion, a good Preacher perhaps I might have continued, notwithstanding the occasion I had for the Sunday's Leisure in my Course of Study: But his Discourses were chiefly either polemic Arguments, or Explications of the peculiar Doctrines of our Sect, and were all to me very dry, uninteresting and unedifying, since not a single moral Principle was inculcated or enforc'd, their Aim seeming to be rather to make us Presbyterians than good Citizens.

At length he took for his Text that Verse of the 4th Chapter of Philippians, Finally, Brethren, Whatsoever Things are true,

honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report, if there be any virtue, or any praise, think on these Things; and I imagin'd in a Sermon on such a Text, we could not miss of having some Morality: But he confin'd himself to five Points only as meant by the Apostle, viz. 1. Keeping holy the Sabbath Day. 2. Being diligent in Reading the Holy Scriptures. 3. Attending duly the Publick Worship. 4. Partaking of the Sacrament. 5. Paying a due Respect to God's Ministers. These might be all good Things, but as they were not the kind of good Things that I expected from that Text, I despaired of ever meeting with them from any other, was disgusted, and attended his Preaching no more. I had some Years before compos'd a little Liturgy or Form of Prayer for my own private Use, viz., in 1728. entitled, Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion. I return'd to the Use of this, and went no more to the public Assemblies. My Conduct might be blameable, but I leave it without attempting farther to excuse it, my present purpose being to relate Facts, and not to make Apologies for them.

It was about this time that I conceiv'd the bold and arduous Project of arriving at moral Perfection. I wish'd to live without committing any Fault at any time; I would conquer all that

either Natural Inclination, Custom, or Company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a Task of more Difficulty than I had imagined. While my Attention was taken up in guarding against one Fault, I was often surpriz'd by another. Habit took the Advantage of Inattention.

Inclination was sometimes too strong for Reason. I concluded at length, that the mere speculative Conviction that it was our Interest to be compleatly virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our Slipping, and that the contrary Habits must be broken and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any Dependance on a steady uniform Rectitude of Conduct. For this purpose I therefore contriv'd the following Method.

In the various Enumerations of the moral Virtues I had met with in my Reading, I found the Catalogue more or less numerous, as different Writers included more or fewer Ideas under the same Name. Temperance, for Example, was by some confin'd to Eating and Drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other Pleasure,

Appetite, Inclination or Passion, bodily or mental, even to our Avarice and Ambition. I propos'd to myself, for the sake of Clearness, to use rather more Names with fewer Ideas annex'd to each, than a few Names with more Ideas; and I included under Thirteen Names of Virtues all that at that time occur'd to me as necessary or desirable, and annex'd to each a short Precept, which fully express'd the Extent I gave to its Meaning.

These Names of Virtues with their Precepts were:

1. TEMPERANCE.

Eat not to Dullness. Drink not to Elevation.

2. SILENCE.

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself.

Avoid trifling Conversation.

3. ORDER.

Let all your Things have their Places.

Let each Part of your Business have its Time.

#### 4. RESOLUTION.

Resolve to perform what you ought.

Perform without fail what you resolve.

#### 5. FRUGALITY.

Make no Expence but to do good to others or yourself:

i.e. Waste nothing.

#### 6. INDUSTRY.

Lose no Time. Be always employ'd in something useful.

Cut off all unnecessary Actions.

#### 7. SINCERITY.

Use no hurtful Deceit.

Think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

#### 8. JUSTICE.

Wrong none,

by doing Injuries or omitting the Benefits that are your Duty.

## 9. MODERATION.

Avoid Extrems.

Forbear resenting Injuries so much as you think they deserve.

## 10. CLEANLINESS.

Tolerate no Uncleaness in Body, Cloaths or Habitation.

## 11. TRANQUILITY.

Be not disturbed at Trifles, or at Accidents common or unavoidable.

## 12. CHASTITY.

Rarely use Venery but for Health or Offspring;

Never to Dulness, Weakness, or the Injury of your own or another's Peace or Reputation.

### 13. HUMILITY.

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My Intention being to acquire the Habitude of all these Virtues, I judg'd it would be well not to distract my Attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time, and when I should be Master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on till I should have gone thro' the thirteen. And as the previous Acquisition of some might facilitate the Acquisition of certain others, I arrang'd them with that View as they stand above. Temperance first, as it tends to procure that Coolness and Clearness of Head, which is so necessary where constant Vigilance was to be kept up, and Guard maintained, against the unremitting Attraction of ancient Habits, and the Force of perpetual Temptations. This being acquir'd and establish'd, Silence would be more easy, and my Desire being to gain Knowledge at the same time that I improv'd in Virtue, and considering that in Conversation it was obtain'd rather by the use of the Ears than of the Tongue, and therefore wishing to break a Habit I was getting into of Prattling, Punning and Joking, which only

made me acceptable to trifling Company, I gave Silence the second Place. This, and the next, Order, I expected would allow me more Time for attending to my Project and my Studies; RESOLUTION, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my Endeavours to obtain all the subsequent Virtues; Frugality and Industry, by freeing me from my remaining Debt, and producing Affluence and Independance, would make more easy the Practice of Sincerity and Justice, &c. &c. Conceiving then that agreeable to the Advice of Pythagoras in his Golden Verses daily Examination would be necessary, I contriv'd the following Method for conducting that Examination.

I made a little Book, in which I allotted a Page for each of the Virtues. I rul'd each Page with red Ink, so as to have seven Columns, one for each Day of the Week, marking each Column with a Letter for the Day. I cross'd these Columns with thirteen red Lines, marking the Beginning of each Line with the first Letter of one of the Virtues, on which Line and in its proper Column I might mark by a little black Spot every



Fault I found upon Examination to have been committed respecting that Virtue upon that Day.

I determined to give a Week's strict Attention to each of the Virtues successively. Thus in the first Week my great Guard was to avoid every the least Offence against Temperance, leaving the other Virtues to their ordinary Chance, only marking every Evening the Faults of the Day. Thus if in the first Week I could keep my first Line marked T clear of Spots, I suppos'd the Habit of that Virtue so much strengthen'd and its opposite weaken'd, that I might venture extending my Attention to include the next, and for the following Week keep both Lines clear of Spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go thro' a Course compleat in Thirteen Weeks, and four Courses in a Year. And like him who having a Garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad Herbs at once, which would exceed his Reach and his Strength, but works on one of the Beds at a time, and having accomplish'd the first proceeds to a Second; so I should have, (I hoped) the encouraging Pleasure of seeing on my Pages the Progress I made in Virtue, by clearing successively my Lines of their Spots, till in the End by a Number of Courses, I

should be happy in viewing a clean Book after a thirteen Weeks daily Examination.

Temperance							
<i>Eat not to Dulness.</i> <i>Drink not to Elevation.</i>							
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
T							
S	*	*		*		*	
O	**	*	*		*	*	*
R			*			*	
F		*			*		
I			*				
S							
G							
M							
Cl.							
T							
Ch.							
H							

This my little Book had for its Motto these Lines from Addison's Cato:

"Here will I hold: If there is a Pow'r above us,  
(And that there is, all Nature cries aloud  
Thro' all her Works), he must delight in Virtue;  
And that which he delights in must be happy."

Another from Cicero,

"O Vitae Philosophia Dux! O Virtutum indagatrix,  
expultrixque vitiorum! Unus dies, bene et ex preceptis  
tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati est anteponendus."

Another from the Proverbs of Solomon speaking of Wisdom  
or Virtue:

"Length of Days is in her right hand, and in her Left Hand  
Riches and Honours; Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness,  
and all her Paths are Peace." III, 16, 17.

And conceiving God to be the Fountain of Wisdom, I thought  
it right and necessary to solicit his Assistance for obtaining

it; to this End I form'd the following little Prayer, which was prefix'd to my Tables of Examination; for daily Use.

"O Powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide!  
Increase in me that Wisdom which discovers my truest  
Interests; Strengthen my Resolutions to perform what that  
Wisdom dictates. Accept my kind Offices to thy other  
Children, as the only Return in my Power for thy continual  
Favours to me."

I us'd also sometimes a little Prayer which I took from  
Thomson's Poems, viz.:

"Father of Light and Life, thou Good supreme,

O teach me what is good, teach me thy self !

Save me from Folly, Vanity and Vice,

From every low Pursuit, and fill my Soul

With Knowledge, conscious Peace, and Virtue pure,

Sacred, substantial, neverfading Bliss!"

The Precept of Order requiring that every Part of my Business should have its allotted Time, one Page in my little Book contain'd the following Scheme of Employment for the Twenty-four Hours of a natural Day.

The Morning Question, What Good shall I do this Day?	$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 5 \\ 6 \\ 7 \end{array} \right\}$	Rise, wash, and address Powerful Goodness; Contrive Day's Business and take the Resolution of the Day; prosecute the present Study: and breakfast?
	$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 8 \\ 9 \\ 10 \\ 11 \end{array} \right\}$	Work.
	$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 12 \\ 13 \end{array} \right\}$	Read, or overlook my Accounts, and dine.
	$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 14 \\ 15 \\ 16 \\ 17 \end{array} \right\}$	Work.
Evening Question, What Good have I done to day?	$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 18 \\ 19 \\ 20 \\ 21 \end{array} \right\}$	Put Things in their Places, Supper, Musick, or Diversion, or Conversation, Examination of the Day.
	$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 22 \\ 23 \\ 00 \\ 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \end{array} \right\}$	Sleep.

I enter'd upon the Execution of this Plan for Self Examination, and continu'd it with occasional Intermissions for some time. I was surpriz'd to find myself so much fuller of Faults than I had imagined, but I had the Satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the Trouble of renewing now and then my little Book, which by scraping out the Marks on the Paper of old Faults to make room for new Ones in a new Course, became full of Holes: I transferr'd my Tables and Precepts to the Ivory Leaves of a Memorandum Book, on which the Lines were drawn with red Ink that made a durable Stain, and on those Lines I mark'd my Faults with a black Lead Pencil, which Marks I could easily wipe out with a wet Sponge. After a while I went thro' one Course only in a Year, and afterwards only one in several Years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employ'd in Voyages and Business abroad with a Multiplicity of Affairs, that interfered, but I always carried my little Book with me.

My Scheme of ORDER, gave me the most Trouble, and I found, that tho' it might be practicable where a Man's Business was such as to leave him the Disposition of his Time, that of a Journey-man Printer for instance, it was not

possible to be exactly observ'd by a Master, who must mix with the World, and often receive People of Business at their own Hours. Order too, with regard to Places for Things, Papers, &c. I found extreamly difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to Method, and having an exceeding good Memory, I was not so sensible of the Inconvenience attending Want of Method. This Article therefore cost me so much painful Attention and my Faults in it vex'd me so much, and I made so little Progress in Amendment, and had such frequent Relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the Attempt, and content my self with a faulty Character in that respect. Like the Man who in buying an Ax of a Smith my neighbour, desired to have the whole of its Surface as bright as the Edge; the Smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the Wheel. He turn'd while the Smith press'd the broad Face of the Ax hard and heavily on the Stone, which made the Turning of it very fatiguing. The Man came every now and then from the Wheel to see how the Work went on; and at length would take his Ax as it was without farther Grinding. "No," says the Smith, "Turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by and by; as yet 'tis only speckled."



"Yes," says the Man; "but—I think I like a speckled Ax best." And I believe this may have been the Case with many who having for want of some such Means as I employ'd found the Difficulty of obtaining good, and breaking bad Habits, in other Points of Vice and Virtue, have given up the Struggle, and concluded that a speckled Ax was best. For something that pretended to be Reason was every now and then suggesting to me, that such extream Nicety as I exacted of my self might be a kind of Foppery in Morals, which if it were known would make me ridiculous; that a perfect Character might be attended with the Inconvenience of being envied and hated; and that a benevolent Man should allow a few Faults in himself, to keep his Friends in Countenance.

In Truth I found myself incorrigible with respect to Order; and now I am grown old, and my Memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But on the whole, tho' I never arrived at the Perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was by the Endeavour a better and a happier Man than I otherwise should have been, if I had not attempted it; As those who aim at perfect Writing by imitating the engraved Copies, tho' they never reach the

wish'd for Excellence of those Copies, their Hand is mended by the Endeavour, and is tolerable while it continues fair and legible.

And it may be well my Posterity should be informed that to this little Artifice, with the Blessing of God, their Ancestor ow'd the constant Felicity of his Life down to his 79th Year in which this is written. What Reverses may attend the Remainder is in the Hand of Providence: But if they arrive the Reflection on past Happiness enjoy'd ought to help his Bearing them with more Resignation. To Temperance he ascribes his long-continu'd Health, and what is still left to him of a good Constitution. To Industry and Frugality the early Easiness of his Circumstances, and Acquisition of his Fortune, with all that Knowledge which enabled him to be an useful Citizen, and obtain'd for him some Degree of Reputation among the Learned. To Sincerity and Justice the Confidence of his Country, and the honourable Employs it conferr'd upon him. And to the joint Influence of the whole Mass of the Virtues, even in the imperfect State he was able to acquire them, all that Evenness of Temper, and that Cheerfulness in Conversation which makes his Company still

sought for, and agreeable even to his younger Acquaintance. I hope therefore that some of my Descendants may follow the Example and reap the Benefit.

It will be remark'd that, tho' my Scheme was not wholly without Religion there was in it no Mark of any of the distinguishing Tenets of any particular Sect. I had purposely avoided them; for being fully persuaded of the Utility and Excellency of my Method, and that it might be serviceable to People in all Religions, and intending some time or other to publish it, I would not have any thing in it that should prejudice any one of any Sect against it. I purposed writing a little Comment on each Virtue, in which I would have shown the Advantages of possessing it, and the Mischiefs attending its opposite Vice; and I should have called my Book the ART of Virtue, because it would have shown the Means and Manner of obtaining Virtue, which would have distinguish'd it from the mere Exhortation to be good, that does not instruct and indicate the Means; but is like the Apostle's Man of verbal Charity, who only, without showing to the Naked and

the Hungry how or where they might get Cloaths or Victuals, exhorted them to be fed and clothed. James II, 15, 16.

But it so happened that my Intention of writing and publishing this Comment was never fulfilled. I did indeed, from time to time put down short Hints of the Sentiments, Reasonings, &c. to be made use of in it; some of which I have still by me: But the necessary close Attention to private Business in the earlier part of Life, and public Business since, have occasioned my postponing it. For it being connected in my Mind with a great and extensive Project that required the whole Man to execute, and which an unforeseen Succession of Employs prevented my attending to, it has hitherto remain'd unfinished.

In this Piece it was my Design to explain and enforce this Doctrine, that vicious Actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful, the Nature of Man alone consider'd: That it was therefore every one's Interest to be virtuous, who wish'd to be happy even in this World. And I should from this Circumstance, there being always in the World a Number of rich Merchants, Nobility,

States and Princes, who have need of honest Instruments for the Management of their Affairs, and such being so rare have endeavoured to convince young Persons, that no Qualities were so likely to make a poor Man's Fortune as those of Probity and Integrity.

My List of Virtues contain'd at first but twelve: But a Quaker Friend having kindly inform'd me that I was generally thought proud; that my Pride show'd itself frequently in Conversation; that I was not content with being in the right when discussing any Point, but was overbearing and rather insolent; of which he convinc'd me by mentioning several Instances; I determined endeavouring to cure myself if I could of this Vice or Folly among the rest, and I added Humility to my List, giving an extensive Meaning to the Word.

I cannot boast of much Success in acquiring the Reality of this Virtue; but I had a good deal with regard to the Appearance of it. I made it a Rule to forbear all direct Contradiction to the Sentiments of others, and all positive Assertion of my own. I even forbid myself agreeable to the old

Laws of our Junto, the Use of every Word or Expression in the Language that imported a fix'd Opinion; such as certainly, undoubtedly, &c. and I adopted instead of them, I conceive, I apprehend, or I imagine a thing to be so or so, or it so appears to me at present. When another asserted something, that I thought an Error, I deny'd my self the Pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and of showing immediately some Absurdity in his Proposition; and in answering I began by observing that in certain Cases or Circumstances his Opinion would be right, but that in the present case there appear'd or seem'd to me some Difference, &c. I soon found the Advantage of this Change in my Manners. The Conversations I engag'd in went on more pleasantly. The modest way in which I propos'd my Opinions, procur'd them a readier Reception and less Contradiction; I had less Mortification when I was found to be in the wrong, and I more easily prevail'd with others to give up their Mistakes and join with me when I happen'd to be in the right.

And this Mode, which I at first put on, with some violence to natural Inclination, became at length so easy and so habitual to me, that perhaps for these Fifty Years past no one has

ever heard a dogmatical Expression escape me. And to this Habit (after my Character of Integrity) I think it principally owing, that I had early so much Weight with my Fellow Citizens, when I proposed new Institutions, or Alterations in the old; and so much Influence in public Councils when I became a Member. For I was but a bad Speaker, never eloquent, subject to much Hesitation in my choice of Words, hardly correct in Language, and yet I generally carried my Points.

In reality, there is perhaps no one of our natural Passions so hard to subdue as Pride. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself. You will see it perhaps often in this History. For even if I could conceive that I had compleatly overcome it, I should probably be proud of my Humility.

Thus far written at Passy 1784.

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## 附录

### 生平年表

1706 出生于波士顿，在老南教堂受洗。

1714 八岁进入文法学校学习。

1716 十岁给父亲当帮手，从事油烛、肥皂生意。

1718 十二岁给哥哥詹姆斯当学徒，从事印刷生意。

1721 十五岁写歌谣印成小册子，在大街小巷贩卖；匿名向《新英格兰新闻报》投稿，短暂地编发该报；成为一名自由思想者和素食者。

1723 十七岁违反与哥哥的师徒契约；迁居费城，在凯默的印刷所里找到工作；放弃了素食。

1724 十八岁被基思总督说服决定独立开业，到伦敦购买铅字，在伦敦从事印刷行业。



1726 二十岁返回费城，先在一间纺织品店当店员，后来在凯默的印刷所里当经理。

1727 二十一岁组织成立“秘社”。

1728 二十二岁与梅雷迪斯共同创业，开办印刷所。

1729 二十三岁经营并编发《宾夕法尼亚公报》，匿名发表《论纸币的性质和必要》；开办文具店。

1730 二十四岁与里德小姐结婚。

1731 二十五岁创立费城图书馆。

1732 二十六岁以“理查德·桑德斯”为笔名出版了第一本《穷查理的历史》，此后连续出版了二十五年之久，其中包含了许多幽默练达的格言，对于凝聚和塑造美洲精神发挥了重要作用。

1733 二十七岁开始学习法语、意大利语、西班牙语和拉丁语。

1736 三十岁被聘为宾夕法尼亚议会秘书；组建费城联合消防队。

1740 三十四岁当选议会议员；被任命为邮政总局在费城的代办人；计划建立费城市警察局。

1742 三十六岁发明开放式壁炉。

1743 三十七岁提出建立学院的计划，六年后学院成立，后来发展为宾夕法尼亚大学。

1744 三十八岁成立“美洲科学学会”。

1746 四十岁出版小册子《简单的事实》，论述了防卫训练的必要性，并成立了一支民兵团队；开始进行电学实验。

1748 四十二岁转让印刷所生意；受命加入治安委员会；当选市议员和省议员。

1749 四十三岁被任命为与印第安人交易的专员。

1751 四十五岁资助建立医院。

1752 四十六岁做“风筝实验”，发现闪电就是一种放电现象，之后发明了避雷针。

1753 四十七岁因发现雷电而获得科普利奖章，被选为皇家学会的成员；接受哈佛大学和耶鲁大学颁发的文学硕士荣誉学位；被任命为美洲邮局联合局长。

1754 四十八岁参加在奥尔巴尼召开的殖民地大会，提出了各殖民地联合起来的建议。

1755 四十九岁为了帮布拉道克将军筹备军需物资，抵押私人财产；通过法案组建了志愿民兵队伍，被任命为上校并派往前线。

1757 五十一岁使议会通过法案，为费城街道铺砌道路；发表了著名的《致富之路》一文；代表议会前往英国请愿反对领主，受到英国科学界和文学界人士的优待。

1759 五十三岁在英国会见了经济学创立者、《国富论》作者亚当·斯密（Adam Smith）；亚当的学说曾采用了他提出的人口理论。

1762 五十六岁被牛津大学授予荣誉博士学位；同年公开了一份玻璃琴（Glass Harmonica）的发明资料，莫扎特和贝多芬后来曾为此乐器作曲。

1763 五十七岁以布雷博士（Dr. Bray）慈善会会长的身份访问该会资助的黑人学校，并称自己对黑色人种的天赋的看法比以往任何时候都要高。

1764 五十八岁反对英国议会对北美殖民地征收印花税的提案，在议会竞选中遭到人身攻击，私生子、种族歧视言论等往事被翻出，并被污蔑贪脏。

1768 六十二岁因担心英文单词只表意而不表音，使发音传统流失，便发明了一套拼音系统，并以此给友人写信。

1770 六十四岁被选为马萨诸塞众议院代理，至此身兼四个殖民地代理：宾夕法尼亚、佐治亚、新泽西和马萨诸塞。

1772 六十六岁私下获取马萨诸塞总督信件，发现英国当局与总督勾结压制波士顿市民，后发生波士顿茶党港口“倒茶事件”。

1774 六十八岁身陷信件盗窃指控；妻子里德在费城病逝（她因不能航海，两人分居十年不曾相见，从富兰克林十七岁首次向她求婚起到她病逝，两人相伴了半个世纪；富兰克林于次年返家）。

1775 六十九岁研究跨洋航行时间问题，证明了墨西哥湾流的温度高于两边的海水；同年，英国宣布北美殖民地叛乱；富兰克林与未来的美国国父乔治·华盛顿（George Washington）商谈。

1776 七十岁时儿子威廉·富兰克林因支持英皇而被新泽西民兵软禁，并被罢免了皇家总督的官职，富兰克林拒绝为其说情；同年加入起草《独立宣言》的委员会并设计了“美洲大印章”，印章上的名言“反叛暴君就是服从上帝”（Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God）被总起草人托马斯·杰弗逊（Thomas Jefferson）当成了座右铭；1776年7月4日，《独立宣言》被议会采纳，美国宣布独立。

1778 七十二岁代表美国出使法国，促使两国结盟，并为美国独立战争筹措了钱款和军需物资；其间与法国文化界名流来往，结交了法国启蒙运动泰斗伏尔泰（Voltaire）并主持了他的葬礼。

1779 七十三岁出版了第一部非科学专论性的作品《政论、杂文与科学文集》。

1784 七十八岁讽刺独立战争胜利后的革命元老们摆起了贵族排场；在给女儿的信中戏谑美国的象征不应该是鹰，而应该是火鸡。

1785 七十九岁发明了双焦眼镜。

1787 年愈八十担任“宾夕法尼亚促进废奴协会”的会长，向国会撰写并签署了多份反对奴隶制和奴隶贸易的进谏书，并公布了改善自由黑色人种生活状况的计划。

1790 4月17日晚，本杰明·富兰克林于家中平静去世，与妻儿合葬在费城基督教堂墓地，享年84岁。

## 自题墓志铭

人生如宴，客岁八十

享尽珍馐，也知餍足

今日安眠，感恩房主

与君道别，良夜不负

富兰克林写于1784年4月22日，七十八岁

If life's compared to a feast,

Near fourscore years I've been a guest:

I've been regaled with the best,

And feel quite satisfied.

'Tis time that I retire to rest;

Landlord, I thank ye!

Friends, good night.

B. Franklin April 22, 1784