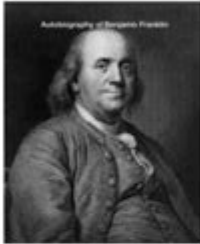


Benjamin Franklin Autobiography Part 2



Excerpt of the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin



It was about this time I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished 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 care was employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised 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 completely 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

dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contrived the following method.

In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I met 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 confined 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 proposed to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annexed to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurred to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully expressed 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 expense but to do good to others or yourself, i.e., waste nothing.



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Benjamin Franklin Autobiography Part 2 delves deeper into the life of one of America's most celebrated founding fathers. Franklin's autobiography is not just a recounting of events but a reflection on his philosophies, achievements, and the lessons learned throughout his life. Part 2 continues from where the first part left off, covering his later years, including his professional endeavors, personal relationships, and contributions to society. This article explores the key themes and insights from this significant historical document.

Overview of Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography

Benjamin Franklin began writing his autobiography in 1771, with the intention of sharing his

life story and imparting wisdom to future generations. The work is divided into several parts, with Part 2 focusing on his life from his early adult years to his late middle age. This section emphasizes Franklin's self-improvement, his innovative spirit, and his civic responsibilities.

Key Themes in Part 2

The second part of Franklin's autobiography is rich with themes that are reflective of his character and the values he held dear. Here are some of the key themes:

- **Self-Improvement:** Franklin's commitment to personal development is a recurring theme. He outlines his methodical approach to cultivating virtues and habits that would lead to a more fulfilling life.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** His ventures in printing, publishing, and other businesses highlight his entrepreneurial spirit and contributions to American commerce.
- **Civic Responsibility:** Franklin's dedication to public service and community improvement is evident, showcasing his belief in the importance of civic engagement.
- **Education and Knowledge:** He emphasizes the value of education, advocating for libraries and institutions that promote learning.

Franklin's Pursuits in Business and Innovation

In Part 2 of his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin reflects on his early business ventures and how they shaped his future. He describes his experiences in the printing industry, where he found success and established himself as a respected figure in Philadelphia.

Establishing a Printing Business

Franklin's foray into the printing business began with a printing shop he launched in partnership with his brother. However, the relationship soured, leading him to establish his own printing press. His printing business thrived due to several factors:

1. **Quality Products:** Franklin ensured that his publications were of high quality, which garnered a loyal customer base.
2. **Innovation:** He introduced new printing techniques and technologies, setting his business apart from competitors.

3. **Networking:** Franklin built strong relationships with influential figures, including politicians and intellectuals, which helped promote his work.

Contributions to Science and Innovation

Franklin was not only a businessman but also a prolific inventor and scientist. His curiosity and desire to understand the world around him led to several groundbreaking discoveries and inventions, including:

- **The Lightning Rod:** This invention was designed to protect buildings from lightning strikes, showcasing Franklin's scientific prowess and practical thinking.
- **Franklin Stove:** A more efficient heating stove that revolutionized home heating, reflecting his focus on improving daily life through innovation.
- **Bi-focal Glasses:** To assist those with both near and far vision problems, this invention demonstrated Franklin's empathy and understanding of human needs.

Franklin's Civic Engagement and Philanthropy

A significant portion of Part 2 is dedicated to Franklin's civic engagements and his belief in the importance of giving back to the community.

Founding of Public Institutions

Franklin was instrumental in establishing several public institutions that aimed to improve society. His contributions include:

- **Library Company of Philadelphia:** Founded in 1731, this was one of the first lending libraries in America, promoting literacy and access to knowledge.
- **Philadelphia Academy:** This institution later became the University of Pennsylvania, showcasing Franklin's commitment to education.
- **Fire Department:** Franklin established the Union Fire Company, reflecting his concern for public safety and community welfare.

Philosophy of Giving

Franklin believed in the power of philanthropy and the importance of helping others. He practiced what he preached by donating time and resources to various causes, emphasizing that:

1. Helping others fosters a sense of community.
2. Philanthropy contributes to personal fulfillment.
3. Investing in the welfare of others ultimately benefits society as a whole.

Reflections on Life and Legacy

As Part 2 of Franklin's autobiography draws to a close, he reflects on his life, the choices he made, and the legacy he hopes to leave behind.

Lessons Learned

Franklin shares valuable lessons from his experiences, including:

- **The Importance of Hard Work:** He emphasizes that diligence and perseverance are key to achieving success.
- **Embracing Change:** Franklin encourages readers to adapt to new circumstances and to embrace innovation.
- **The Value of Relationships:** Building strong relationships and networks is crucial for personal and professional growth.

Franklin's Vision for the Future

In his closing remarks, Franklin expresses hope for future generations. He emphasizes the importance of education, civic responsibility, and the pursuit of knowledge. His vision aligns with the ideals of the newly forming nation, advocating for a society built on enlightenment principles and communal support.

Conclusion

Benjamin Franklin Autobiography Part 2 is not just a record of one man's life; it is a treasure trove of wisdom, reflecting Franklin's character, his entrepreneurial spirit, and his commitment to the betterment of society. Through self-improvement, innovation, civic engagement, and philanthropy, Franklin set a precedent for future generations. His life story serves as an inspiration, reminding us of the impact one individual can have on the world. Reading Franklin's autobiography offers invaluable insights, encouraging us to lead lives filled with purpose, curiosity, and a desire to contribute positively to society.

Frequently Asked Questions

What themes are explored in Part 2 of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography?

Part 2 explores themes of self-improvement, virtue, personal responsibility, and the importance of education.

How does Franklin describe his approach to achieving moral perfection?

Franklin outlines a systematic approach to moral perfection, using a list of 13 virtues to focus on and improve upon over time.

What is the significance of Franklin's 'Plan for Attaining Moral Perfection'?

The plan illustrates Franklin's belief in the power of self-discipline and the ability to cultivate virtues through consistent practice.

How does Franklin's view on education manifest in Part 2 of his autobiography?

Franklin emphasizes the value of lifelong learning and the importance of education in achieving personal and societal progress.

What role does community play in Franklin's life as described in Part 2?

Franklin highlights the importance of community involvement and civic responsibility, showcasing his contributions to local institutions and improvements.

In what ways does Franklin's autobiography reflect

Enlightenment ideals?

Franklin's writing reflects Enlightenment ideals through its focus on reason, individualism, empirical approach to knowledge, and the belief in progress.

What personal anecdotes does Franklin share in Part 2 that illustrate his character?

Franklin shares anecdotes about his early career, his experiences in establishing the first public library, and his efforts in civic projects, showcasing his industriousness and innovative spirit.

How does Franklin's narrative style contribute to the autobiography's impact?

Franklin's conversational tone, humor, and straightforward style make his autobiography engaging and relatable, allowing readers to connect with his experiences.

What insights does Franklin provide about the American identity in Part 2?

Franklin provides insights into the emerging American identity by discussing values such as pragmatism, self-reliance, and the pursuit of happiness.

How does Franklin address the concept of virtue in his autobiography?

Franklin discusses virtue as a practical guide to living well, emphasizing the importance of moral behavior in personal success and societal harmony.

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