LIFE of Dr. FRANKLIN.

Continued from our last.

In 1765, when the unfortunate flame act created so much discontent and uneasiness in America, Dr. Franklin was examined, *respecting* the repeal of it, before the House of Commons. The queries put to him, together with answers, which were clear and decisive, were printed in the year 1767, under the form of a thilling pamphlet, and may be seen in his Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical pieces, page 255.

Governor Hutchinson, Lieutenant Governor Oliver, Charles Paxton, Esq. Nathaniel Rogers, Esq. and Mr. G. Roome, having sent from Boston certain representations and *informations reflecting* the disputes between Britain and the colonies, to Thomas Whately, Esq. private secretary to Mr. *George Grenville*, the parent of the stamp act, the letters were, by some private channel, conveyed back to Boston. As soon as the Assembly of the province of Massachusetts Bay saw them, they were forthwith *resolved*, that they without hesitation, accompanied by a petition and remonstrance for the removal of Governor Hutchinson and Lieutenant Governor Oliver from their places. On the 21st of August, 1773, this petition was transmitted by Dr. Franklin, agent for the house of representatives, to Lord Dartmouth, who having presented it to the King, his majesty was pleased to signify that it should be laid before him in his privy council.

Various conjectures were formed respecting the manner in which these confidential letters had escaped from among the papers of Mr. Whately, at this time deceased; and some mysterious hints on the subject passed between Mr. Whately's brother, a banker in Lombard-street, and John Temple, Esq. Governor of New Hampshire, through the medium of the public prints. The one gentleman willing to avoid the charge of having given them, and the other of having taken them, the dispute at length became so personal and pointed, that Mr. Temple thought it necessary to call the brother into the field. The challenge was given in the morning, and the receiver met in the afternoon in Hyde Park, when the former was dangerously wounded. Dr. Franklin was not then in town, and as he could not foresee what was paid, he endeavoured to prevent any further bad consequences, by the following letter, addressed to the Printer of the *Public Advertiser*, and dated Craven-street, December the 29th, 1773:—"Finding that two gentlemen have been unfortunately engaged in a duel about a transaction and its circumstances of which both of them are totally ignorant, and concerning I think it incumbent upon me to declare (for the prevention of further mischief, as far as such a declaration may contribute to prevent it) that I alone am the person who obtained and transmitted to Boston the letters in question. Mr. Whately could not communicate them, because they were sent to me in pulic packets, and the same reason they could not be taken from him by letters by post. They were not of the nature of *private* letters between friends. They were written by men in public station on public affairs, and intended to procure public measures; they were therefore binding to other public persons who might be influenced by them to produce those measures. Their tendency was to incense the mother-country against her colonies, and by the steps recommended, to widen the breach, which they effectually made. The caution expressed with regard to privacy was, to keep their contents from the colony agents; who, the writers apprehended, might inform, or excite other friends in America. That apprehension was it seems well founded; for the first agent who laid his hands on them thought it his duty to transmit them to his constituents."

Dr. Franklin's conduct on this occasion whatever his enemies may have laid to blacken his character, is consistent with that of a man of honour; since he gave up his name to public scrutiny, in order to prevent mischief to others, and yet did not betray his confidant to relieve his own fame from the foverd ignominy.

In consequence of the address presented to his Majesty by Lord Dartmouth, Mr. Mauduit preferred a petition to the privy council, humbly praying that he might be heard by counsel on behalf of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. On the 11st of January, 1774, Dr. Franklin was examined at the council chamber, on the subject of this address; but as the Doctor without advice have the affidavit of counsel, the affair was put off till Saturday the 29th. The privy council having then met, Mr. Dunning and Mr. Lee appeared counsel for the assembly, and Mr. Wedderburne, now Lord Longsborough, counsel for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Mr. Wedderburne was very long in his answer, which related chiefly to the mode of obtaining and sending away Mr. Whately's letters; and he spoke of Dr. Franklin, who was considered as the principal actor in this business, in terms of the grossest abuse. Alluding to the duel before mentioned, Mr. Wedderburne said, "The letters would have come to Dr. Franklin by fair means; the writers did not give them to him; nor yet did the deceased correspondents, who from our intimacy would otherwise have told me of it. Nothing then will acquit Dr. Franklin of the charge of obtaining them by fraudulent or corrupt means, for the most malignant of purposes; unless he dare to own the person who stole them. This argument is irrefragable.—I hope my Lords, you will mark [and brand] the man for the honour of this country, and Europe, and of mankind. Private correspondence has hitherto been held sacred, in times of the greatest party rage, not only in politics, but religion. He has broke through all ties of societies and of men. Into what companies will he hereafter go, with an unembarrassed face, or the honest intrepidity of virtue. Men will watch him with a jealous eye, and lock up their escritoires. He will henceforth esteem it to be called a man of letters; *homo trium literarum*.

"But he not only took away the letters from one brother, but kept himself concealed till he nearly accomplished the murder of the other. It is impossible to read his account of it without the coolest and most deliberate malice, without horror. Amidst these tragical events, of one person nearly murdered, of a father inconsolable for the loss of a worthy Governor hurt in his dearest interests, the fate of America in suspence, here is a man who, with the utmost insensibility of remorse sits down to sup and crows himself the author of all. I can compare it only to Zanga, in Dr. Young's Revenge.

" Know, then twas—I,
" I forged the letter, I disposed the picture;
" I hated, I despised, and I destroy."

I ask, my Lords, whether the revengeful temper attributed to Zanga, is so shocking to the bloody African is not surpassed by the coolness and apathy of the wily American"."

This philippic had a great effect, and the committee of the privy council having considered the petition, made a report in which was expressed the following opinion:—"The lords of the committee do humbly to report as their opinion to your Majesty, that the petition is founded upon resolutions formed on false and erroneous principles; and is grounded on vexations, and scandalous; and calculated only for the fedious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamour and discontent in the said province. And the lords of the committee do further humbly report to your Majesty, that nothing has been laid before them, which does or can, in their opinion, in any degree, impeach the honour, integrity, or conduct of the said governor, or lieutenant governor; and their lordships are humbly of opinion, that the said petition ought to be dismissed."

On the 7th of February, therefore, his Majesty, taking the said report into consideration, was pleased to approve of it, and order that the petition of the house of representatives of the province of Massachusetts Bay, be dismissed the board—as groundless, vexatious, and scandalous, and calculated only for the fedious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamour and discontent in the said province. This was a prelude to Dr. Franklin's disgrace; he was dismissed from the office of deputy post-master general for the colonies, which he had enjoyed for some time, and Mr. Wedderburne became in the high road for every kind of advancement. This gentleman's conduct, however, is obnoxious to the Americans, chiefly when they learned in what manner he has abused and insulted their agent, his effigies together with that of governor Hutchinson were put in a cart, and conducted through the streets of Philadelphia. On the breast of each a label was fixed, containing an inscription, couched in very violent and indecent terms, and there being exposed for several hours, they were hung, apparent in the evening, amidst a vast concourse of people, who testified their resentment at the originals, with the loudest exclamations.

Previous to this period, Dr. Franklin had used his utmost endeavours to prevent a breach between Great Britain and America but his counsels and advice were either disregarded or treated with contempt. Even in the end of the year 1774, he seems to have been desirous, notwithstanding the illage he had met with, of doing every thing in his power to accommodate matters, in an amicable manner. Some time previous to his departure, an intimate friend of Dr. Fothergill, being in company with a nobleman of great political experience, the conversation turned on the critical situation of the American colonies, and the latter prevailed this gentleman to attempt a compromise with Dr. Franklin, before he quitted England. From a cordial wish to promote the reconciliation between the two countries, the gentleman readily undertook he business, and accordingly applied to Dr. Fothergill, who heartily united in the cause. They therefore mutually invited Dr. Franklin to a conference the same evening, and, after much discussion, it was agreed that they should meet again the next evening. Dr. Franklin was to commit to paper such a conciliatory plan as he conceived America had a right to expect, and the other two were then to object to such claims as they should judge Great Britain ought to grant.

On the appointed evening Dr. Franklin produced a paper, containing several articles, which he forthwith objected to by Dr. Fothergill and his colleague, were given up by Dr. Franklin, and fullered to be expunged. In this flate a copy was taken, and carried to the minister. The other were of opinion that the propositions were such as appeared to demand too much, and, in consequence, several attempts were made to reconcile the parties, without success. At last it was stated, the article that "the late Massachusetts and Quebec acts should be repealed, and a free government granted to Canada," was rejected by Dr. Franklin, though many of the others were acceded to, the negociation was broken off, and nothing further attempted. From this time he endeavoured to prepare a determined spirit, the conduct of England, that neither politeness nor moderation could prevent him from giving vent, in mixed companies, to the bitter invectives against her measures and, indeed, it is but doing him justice to say, that he foretold all the subsequent calamities with an almost prophetic fagacity.

In the year 1775, Dr. Franklin, returned to Philadelphia. The general assembly was sitting when his arrival was announced, and he was immediately chosen one of their delegates to the continental congress, and took his seat accordingly.

The principal outlines of the American war are still flesh in the memory of every one. On the 4th of July, 1776, America declared herself independent, and Mr. Silas Deane was commissioned to negociate a treaty at Paris, and to endeavour to engage the French to afford her support in her dispute with the mother country. In the spring of the following year, Dr. Franklin was sent by congress to Canada, to prevail, if possible, on the inhabitants to join in the common cause, and to unite with the rest of the provinces in shaking off the British yoke. Having failed in this business, the doctor returned to Philadelphia, and as concerts well knew the esteem in which he was held at the Court of France, and that he acquired there by his discoveries, he was dispatched thither for the purpose of putting the last hand to the negociation which Mr. Deane had been carrying on, but in a very private manner. Though now entered on his seventieth year, Dr. Franklin accepted this delicate and important commission, and sailed from Paris on the 16th of December, on after took the house which had been occupied by Lord Stormont. "Never," says a French writer, "did I see a man so well lodged, or so happy as Dr. Franklin. It was on the day when Lord Stormont, the English Ambassador, quitted Paris on account of our rupture with that country. Lord Stormont, together, had a Doctor, who was generally very grave and composed, upon this occasion appeared to be quite another person."

In February, 1777, Dr. Franklin received a regular appointment of plenipotentiary from congress to the Court of France and in 1783, had the pleasure of signing treaty of peace with the English commissioners, and of seeing his country, after a long and tedious struggle, declared free and independent. To commemorate this happy event, the Doctor caused a medal to be struck, on one side of which is represented the genius of America, dringling two serpents, while a leopard, that seems amazed at its strength, and ready to fall upon him is resuilled by France, under the figure of a female, who turns towards him her shield in which there are three *fleurs de lis*. At the bottom, are the years 1777 and 1783 the epochs of the capitulations of the surrender of Burgoyne and Cornwallis, represented by the two serpents; on the other side, is Liberty, emblematically pourtrayed as a free woman; and on the exergue *libertas americana*.

Dr. Franklin laid for many years enjoyed good state of health, though often troubled with a violent pain in the stone. In 1782 this disorder became extremely violent, accompanied by a very painful nephritic colic, and it appears, that this was the origin of the flony with which he was afterwards attacked. Finding his maladies increase, and having now accomplished the highest object of his ambition, he longed to quit a country where he had been so instrumental in rendering free. He solicited Congress therefore for leave to return, and Mr. Jefferson being appointed in his fleed, when that gentleman arrived, he embarked at Havre, on the 24th of July, 1785, landed the same day at Southampton, and after a light refreshment, proceeded to Cowes, where a sufficient was ready to convey him to Philadelphia. When he arrived there, which was on the 18th of September, he was received with tears of joy, and accompanied to his house by the members of Congress, amidst the acclamations of citizens of all ranks. A gentleman, who was present, says he never saw so affecting a scene, and that it gladdened his heart to see it." He was addressed by the general assembly then sitting, and afterwards by all orders of men in Philadelphia, who concurred in the same sentiments, and testified their approbation of his conduct by every mark of attention and respect.

For three years following, after his return, Dr. Franklin was chosen president of the flate of Pennsylvania; but his great age and increasing infirmities not permitting him to apply to public business, he resigned and obtained leave to retire, that he might spend the remainder of his days in philosophical ease and tranquility. The hour, with which he had been for many years afraid, fast approached he was confined him almost continually to his bed; and during the painful paroxysms of that cruel disorder, he was obliged to swallow opium, which obtained leave to retire. In his moments of relief, however, he not only still amused himself with reading and conversing chiefly with his family and a few friends who visited him, but he was often employed in transacting business of a public, as well as a private nature. On every occasion he displayed the utmost readiness and dispatch, and, to the last, he gave the clearest and fullest evidence of his being in possession of all his mental faculties, he not unfrequently amused those around him, by indulging flashes of pleasantry, and by relating entertaining anecdotes. About fixteen days before his death, he was seized with a feverish indisposition, without any particular symptoms attending it, till the third or fourth day, when he complained of a pain in his left breast, which increased till it became excessive, with a cough and inclination to breathing. During this flate, when the severity of his pain some times drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe, that he was ashamed to be ashamed bear his afflictions as he ought; he acknowledged his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had made him the instrument of conveying to high rank and consideration among men, and made no doubt that what he suffered was kindly intended, to wean him from a world in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned him. In this frame of body and mind he continued until within five days of his death, when his pain and difficulty of breathing entirely left him, and his family were flattering themselves with the hopes of his recovery, but an impediment which had formed itself in his throat, prevented his speaking. A feverish flate succeeded, and on the 17th of April, 1790, about eleven o'clock at night, he expired in the eighty fifth year of his age, after enjoying a life spent in long and useful labours.

(To be Continued.)

ON THE VANITY OF YOUTHFUL HOPES.

IN life's gay morn, what vivid hues
Adorn the animatin views,
By fancy's magic pencil drawn!
No storms with gloomy afpect rife,
To cloud the azure of the skies,
No mists obscure the down.

With looks invariably gay,
Young pleasure leads them the way
To every blithe flands,
Where color, scent the breath of morn,
Where roses bloom without a thorn;
And mufic fills the glades.

Enraptur'd with the diffant view,
Youth thinks its fictious beauties true,
And prizes the prize to gain;
His grasp is gay illusion dis;
Experience thus the chest deceives,
And proves his hopes were vain

The path of life tho' flowers adorn,
Yet often will the rugged thorn,
Amidst the flowers arise;
Expect not then on earth to flare,
Enjoyment unalloy'd by care,
But look to be sky skies.