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POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC

To us it seems most doubtful if in all the world, at any time, there has existed any one who gave to young and old alike so much advice which was good and sound as did Franklin. Benjamin Franklin was truly a philosopher in the finest sense, for his philosophy was of and for the common people, whom, according to Abraham Lincoln, God loved most "because he made so many of them." Today there are to be found a certain few who fancy times have changed so much in our country since Franklin's day that his sayings are no longer applicable as rules of life, but it seems to us that some of the truths uttered by the creator of "Poor Richard" are so "eternal" that they will prevail yet many generations ere they are forgotten. Franklin would be an interesting subject for study at any time, and the study should not be superficial by any means—he demands your best thought, your respect, and receives it, too. For the benefit of many of our readers who may through lack of opportunity have no acquaintance with Franklin we are going to make some quotations from a "preliminary address in Poor Richard's Almanac for the year 1758," as follows:

Methinks I hear some of you say, "Must a man afford himself no leisure?" I will tell thee, my friend, what Poor Richard says: "Employ thy time well if thou meanest to gain leisure; and since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour." Leisure is time for doing something useful. This leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; so that "A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things."

Do you imagine that the sloth will afford you more comfort than labor? No; for "Troubles spring from idleness, and grievous toils from needless ease; many without labor would live by their wits only; but they would break for want of stock." Whereas industry gives comfort and plenty, and respect. "Fly pleasures, and they will follow you; the diligent spinner has a large shift; and now that I have a sheep and a cow everybody bids me good-morrow," all of which is well said.

But with our industry we must likewise be steady and settled and careful and oversee our own affairs with our own eyes, and not trust too much to others, for, as Poor Richard says:

"I never saw an oft-removed tree,
Nor yet an oft-removed family,
That throve so well as one that settled be."

And again, "Three moves are as bad as a fire;" and "keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee;" and again, "If you would have your business done, go; if not, send."

"He that by the plow would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive."

And again, he says: "The eye of the master must do more work than both of his hands," and "Want of care does more damage than want of knowledge." He says, "Not to oversee workmen is to leave your purse open." Trusting too much to others' care is the ruin of many, for, as the Almanac says, "In the affairs of the world men are saved not by faith, but by the want of it."

Again we find it declared, "Learning is to the studious, and riches to the careful, as well as power to the bold, and heaven to the virtuous." Think over this saw: "If you would have a faithful servant, and one that you would like, serve yourself." How very true. The Almanac advises, "A little neglect may breed mischief."

So much for industry and attention to one's own business; but to these we must add frugality if we would make our industry more certainly successful. A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, "Keep his nose to the grindstone all his life, and die not worth a groat at last."

"Many estates are spent in the getting,
"Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting,
And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting."

In one Almanac he says, "If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as getting; the Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes." Away then with expensive follies, and you will not have much cause to complain of hard times, heavy taxes, etc., for:

"Women and wine, game and deceit,
Make the wealth small and the want great."

Again it is declared that "What maintains one vice will bring up two children." One may think perhaps, that a little tea, or a little punch, now and then, diet a little more costly, clothes a little finer, and a little entertainment now and then, can be of no great matter, but remember "Many a little makes a meikle."

(Continued on page 4)