

and printed letters to himself, either to emphasize some truth or to give him the opportunity to ridicule some folly in a reply to "Alice Addertongue," "Anthony Afterwit," or other mythical but none the less typical person.

If the countryman did not read a newspaper, or buy books, he was, at any rate, sure to own an almanac. So in 1732 Franklin brought out *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Three editions were sold within a few months. Year after year the sayings of Richard Saunders, the alleged publisher, and Bridget, his wife, creations of Franklin's fancy, were printed in the almanac. Years later the most striking of these sayings were collected and published. This work has been translated into as many as twenty languages and is still in circulation today.

Franklin kept a shop in connection with his printing office, where he sold a strange variety of goods: legal blanks, ink, pens, paper, books, maps, pictures, chocolate, coffee, cheese, codfish, soap, linseed oil, broadcloth, Godfrey's cordial, tea, spectacles, rattlesnake root, lottery tickets, and stoves — to mention only a few of the many articles he advertised. Deborah Read, who became his wife in 1730, looked after his house, tended shop, folded and stitched pamphlets,