

were themselves. Brutus, it is true, owned slaves, and in his way he was probably a genuine lover of freedom ; but he did not live in the days of Wilberforce. The triumph of George the Third and Lord North, or even of worse rulers than George the Third and Lord North, would have been preferable to the triumph of the tyrannicides who were destined to found the slave power.

The life of Washington in this series has not yet appeared. But one of the writers truly says that he was the indispensable man without whom, in that war, America could not have won. Not only was Washington indispensable, Howe with his lethargy and Burgoyne with his blunders were equally indispensable ; the wooden Hessians were indispensable ; French aid, as Washington in accents of despair proclaimed, was indispensable ; and French aid would have profited little if there had not been a party in the British Parliament which insisted on peace ; for Rodney would have swept the fleet of France from the sea, and her army could not have maintained itself in America alone. Washington held together, as no other man could, an army which had been reduced to a scarecrow by the ebb of rhetorical enthusiasm and the hollowness of the cause. He quelled the mutiny which ingratitude to the army springing from the same sources had brought on, and which unquelled would have been ruin. Afterwards his ascendancy saved the ill-cemented republic from being torn in pieces by faction and rivalry. He saved her from throwing herself at the feet of revolutionary France, and settled her foreign policy on a footing of wisdom—that is, on a footing thoroughly American. He alone could have borne the strain laid on the government by Jay's treaty. That his figure has been seen through a halo, and that he had more infirmities of temper than we wot of, as Mr. MacMaster, the author of the valuable *History of the American People*, tells us, may be true ; though, at the most trying moments, when he has to contend for himself and his starved and unclad soldiers with jobbery as well as with neglect, his despatches are perfectly calm. To praise him for not having played Napoleon is absurd ; he was not tempted in that way ; but he may be almost called a Heaven-sent man. The rupture having once taken place, it was clearly desirable that the colonies should win their independence, and there should be no protraction or renewal of the fatal struggle. For this result we are indebted to Washington. A writer in this series seems to think that, after all that has been said, there is something in the character of Washington which eludes analysis. Is the mysterious element anything more than the decided strain of a British officer which Washington had contracted from his military associations ? A simpler character, we should say, does not offer itself to the inspection of history.

Franklin's life also is wanting in this series. Like Priestley, he represents political liberalism as connected with scientific progress.