

**Benjamin Franklin.**

(Born January 17, 1706; died April 17, 1790).

The life of Benjamin Franklin, the second centennial of whose birth occurs on the 17th of this month, is so full of interest to boys and girls on account of his early struggles that we devote a little space to it. He was the youngest, except two daughters, of a family of seventeen children. He was sent to school at the age of eight, and showed great aptitude for study. The poverty of his parents, however, led to his being taken from school at the age of ten to "help in the shop," and he was afterwards apprenticed to his brother James to learn the trade of a printer. He was a great reader, wrote ballads, mastered arithmetic and studied navigation at the age of sixteen. He adopted a vegetable diet that he might save money to buy books.

At the age of seventeen he went to Philadelphia, having quarreled with his brother. He arrived there with one dollar in his pocket. He bought three rolls of bread and ate one as he walked up street with the others under his arms, and his pockets stuffed with stockings and shirts. A girl stood in a doorway and commented on the funny appearance he presented. This girl afterwards became his wife. The governor of the province became interested in him and promised to set him up in business, a promise which he failed to keep. Franklin spent eighteen months in London, perfecting himself in his trade of printer, reading and writing much; committed follies of which his strong common sense made him afterwards much ashamed. Returned to Philadelphia where he established the Pennsylvania Gazette and soon became a man of mark. His great intelligence and industry gained for him a prominent place in education, in municipal affairs, and afterwards in the councils of the united colonies. He studied diligently the ancient and modern languages, and was honored later with degrees from St. Andrew's, Edinburg and Oxford universities, and also from Harvard and Yale.

The invention of the lightning rod was a result of his studies in electricity. He proposed a plan of union for the American colonies which was rejected in England as too democratic. After the disastrous defeat of Braddock he organized a volunteer militia and took the field as their commander. Later he proposed a plan for the conquest of Canada. When the project of taxing the colonies came up Franklin was an uncompromising opponent. On

the eve of the Revolution, "he was," says Bancroft, "twice venerable, from genius, fame in the world of science, and age, being already nearly threescore and ten." In his voyages across the Atlantic he made observations on the Gulf Stream, and his chart of it forms the basis of charts now in use.

Shortly after the Peace of 1783, he retired to private life, after having served his country for fifty-three years. "His venerable age, his plain deportment, his fame as a philosopher and statesman, the charm of his conversation, his wit, his vast information, his varied aptitudes and discoveries, all secured for him the enthusiastic admiration of a circle of ardent friends embracing the very widest range of human characters."

His epitaph, written by himself many years before his death, has become famous.

**The Disciplinary Value of Grammar.**

For the REVIEW.

John Stuart Mill, the great apostle of the Utilitarians, has this to say about the teaching of grammar and analysis:

Consider for a moment what grammar is. It is the most elementary part of logic. It is the beginning of the analysis of the thinking process. The principles and rules of grammar are the means by which the forms of language are made to correspond with the universal forms of thought. The distinctions between the various parts of speech, between the cases of nouns, the moods and tenses of verbs, the functions of particles, are distinctions in thought, not merely in words. Single nouns and verbs express objects and events, many of which can be cognized by the senses; but the modes of putting nouns and verbs together express the relations of objects and events which can be cognized only by the intellect: and each different mode corresponds to a different relation. The structure of every sentence is a lesson in logic. The various rules of syntax oblige us to distinguish between the subject and predicate of a proposition, between the agent, the action, and the thing acted upon: to mark when an idea is intended to modify or qualify or merely to unite with some other idea: what assertions are categorical, what only conditional: whether the intention is to express similarity or contrast, to make a plurality of assertions conjunctively or disjunctively: what portions of a sentence, though grammatically complete within themselves, are mere members or subordinate parts of the assertion made by the entire sentence.

Can it not be said that school instruction when employed upon the materials of grammar is both better from an intellectual point of view and also more *practical* than when engaged in changing centigrade degrees to Fahrenheit, metric weights and measures to English weights and measures, or