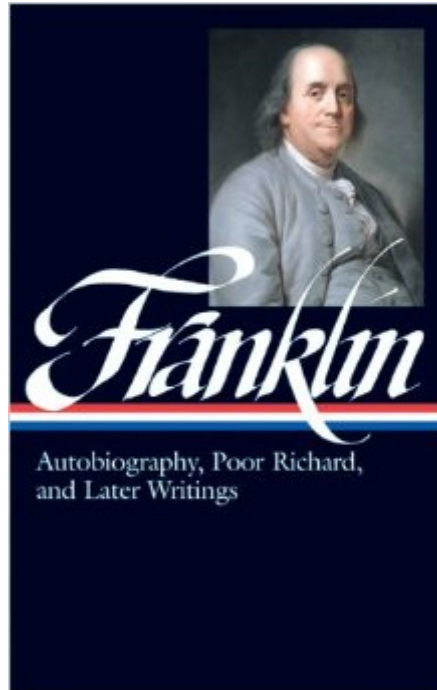


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Benjamin Franklin: Autobiography, Poor Richard, And Later Writings (Library Of America)



Synopsis

"Writing has been of Great Use to me in the Course of my Life," Benjamin Franklin said in his famous Autobiography. With characteristically calculated understatement, he attributed his enormous and varied successes to "my having learnt a little to scribble." This collection of Franklin's works begins with letters sent from London (1757-1775) describing the events and diplomacy preceding the Revolutionary War. The volume also contains political satires, bagatelles, pamphlets, and letters written in Paris (1776-1785), where he represented the revolutionary United States at the court of Louis XVI, as well as his speeches given in the Constitutional Convention and other works written in Philadelphia (1785-1790), including his last published article, a searing satire against slavery. Also included are the delightfully shrewd prefaces to Poor Richard's Almanack (1733-1758) and their worldly, pungent maxims that have entered our American culture. Finally, the classic Autobiography, Franklin's last word on his greatest literary creation-his own invented personality-is presented here in a new edition, completely faithful to Franklin's manuscript.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a compilation of Franklin's Letters (from London 1757-75, from Paris 1776-85, and Philadelphia 1785-90), Poor Richard's Almanack (1733-58), his 4 part Autobiography (part 1: from 7/30-8/13/1771, part 2: 1784, part 3: 1788-5/1789, & part 4: 11/13/1789), a Chronology, Notes, and an Index. The letters were extremely interesting, not just as context for the period, but because they demonstrate the situation before, during, and after the Revolutionary War as well as Franklin's many

roles during his lifetime. The Chronology helps to put all of this into perspective. The 1st part of the Autobiography reads like a novel and was quite enjoyable. The later parts went into much detail of a limited number of activities and, unfortunately were never completed and didn't cover his activities in France. Poor Richards' Almanack was delightful in its later expositions of scientific advances etc. and, of course in its plethora of pithy sayings, maxims, and observations--though these were not just in Poor Richard's but exist throughout the entire volume. The Notes are particularly helpful by translating the many Latin expressions within the text. Some of these are political: p. 110: The wisest councils are liable to be misled, especially in matters remote from their inspection. p. 553: Laws like Cobwebs catch small flies, great ones break through before your eyes. p. 510: Pardoning the bad is injuring the good. p. 537 Ignorance leads me into a party, and shame keeps them from getting out again. p. 546: Laws too gentle are seldom obeyed; too severe, seldom executed. Some are psychological: p. 357: We are men, all subject to errors.

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