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John Eccleston

Tench Coxe to Alexander Hamilton, Treasury Department, Philadelphia, 14 December 1792

[Recommending appointment as surveyor of inspection for Maryland.] In regard to Mr. Eccleston he was a Colonel in the Army, is said to have been in the confidence of General Greene, is a man of pure and extensive public Esteem, lives in the distilling Country, and the center of the Survey, has been recently sheriff of the County with great satisfaction to the bar, which evinces his punctuality and office talents. He has served in popular offices, but has had nothing lucrative in the executive line. Though not at all involved, it is supposed the emoluments of the present Office would be pleasing and convenient to him, and it appears to me that his appointment would carry the impression of remunerating Services and bestowing a benefit where it has been merited, and is likely to be compensated by future official desert.

William Ellery

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

A lawyer somewhat cynical in his temper, but a faithful friend to the liberties of his country. He seldom spoke in Congress, but frequently amused himself in writing epigrams on the speakers which were generally witty and pertinent and sometimes poetical. Mr. [Robert Treat] Paine had once given in a report in favor of purchasing some guns for the United States, that were not bored. Some time after this, a motion was made to call upon the citizens of Philadelphia to furnish ready made clothes for the army, for materials to make them could not then be obtained in any of the stores. Mr. Paine opposed this motion, by holding up to the imagination the ridiculous figure our soldiers would make when paraded, or marching in cloaths of different lengths and colors. While he was speaking Mr. Ellery struck off with his pencil the following lines.

"Say O! my mus—why all this puzzle:
Talk against long cloaths and give guns without muzzles."

David Ramsay to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 9 June 1782

Mr. Ellery from that state is left out [of Congress], it is said because he does not like Gen. Washington.

Charles Thomson to Hannah Thomson, Princeton, N.J., 18 September 1783

Ellery . . . has a predominant passion to be thought a wit, and whose wit indeed, though far from being acute or refined, much surpasses his judgment or honesty . . . and as he scorns to confine his fancy within the bounds of truth, he boldly attempted to impose on the members [of Congress] by the grossest falsehoods, in which however he was immediately detected. But to cover his confusion, he endeavoured to turn the Attention of the house by an attack upon the secretary [i.e., Thomson himself] who had contributed of the detection. In this he was also foiled. And he was obliged

to sit still under the disgrace of having either lost his wit or his memory or of having no regard to truth.

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 9 June 1787

I past the day at Judge Dana's. Mr. W. Ellery is there: his first address is certainly not in his favour. He talks too much about Newport; and our State, and his State; First impressions if they are not favourable, should not be attended to; but unless I am much mistaken this gentleman, is very far from being either a Statesman, or an hero.

William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I., 15 June 1789

I am much obliged to you for the compliment, involved in your wishes;—but I am growing old, and am and shall be too obnoxious to the characters, who I expect for some years to come will govern this State, to expect any appointment from them.—I think I have hitherto, and I mean through life to maintain a consistancy of character—I am not, nor do I ever intend to be a Courtier.

Henry Marchant to John Adams, Newport, R.I., 7 June 1790

I can't but feel anxious for Our old Friend Mr. Ellery, altho' I cannot conceive the Pretensions of any of the three or four Characters I have heard mentioned as Candidates for the Office of Collector for Newport are comparable to those of Mr. Eller—He seems to think it possible it may be thought, the Loan office hereafter may be brought up again; and that some may suggest that Mr. Ellery may be placed there.—But Mr. Ellery has no Idea that it will ever be considerable as to Profit; and hopes His Friends will support his Application for the Collectors Place—His long tryed Service, in this State, and in Congress, His Integrity, Family, Character and Sufferings, cannot I think be forgot.—I will pledge myself that in the Eyes & Wishes of the People here He is unrivalled—

Jabez Bowen to George Washington, Providence, R.I., post-14 June 1790

William Ellery Esqr.—Was one of the Judges previous to the late system of paper money—is esteemed a man of abilities—firmness & integrity—and a sanguine & uniform supporter of the Genl. Government.

John Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Montezillo (Quincy), Mass., 20 February 1820

I have this Morning learnt the death of my Patriarchal friend William Ellery in his 94th. year—which is a greater age than human Nature can well bear, his picture is fresh in my imagination as I saw him 70 years ago, in Mr. Trowbridge's Pew in Cambridge Church—His Death leaves no signers of Independence above ground—but Jefferson, Carrol and Floyd—he was a Wit, a Humorist, a droll, a doggerel Poet, and what is worth a Million of such Characters, an honest and sensible Man—

Henry Dearborn to Thomas Jefferson, Boston, 3 March 1820

I still hope that you will recover your usual good health, so far at least as to enable you to enjoy a good share of the comforts of life for some years yet to come, with your uniformly exact manner,

of living & good constitution, you ought to live as long as your old friend Ellery of Rhode Island who died lately at the age of 94. and was capable of performing business correctly, and of reading and writing, to the last day. I do not think it desirable that a man of an exalted charactor should outlive his faculties & enjoyments, but you can have nothing to fear on that score for at least ten years yet to come.

Oliver Ellsworth

Oliver Ellsworth to Abigail Ellsworth, Philadelphia, 21 July 1787

My health holds better than I feared. To preserve I walk a good deal in the cool of the afternoon and frequently stop in and take a little chat and tea sipping with good Connecticut women who are dispersed about in different parts of the city.

William Pierce: Sketches of Delegates to the Constitutional Convention, c. September 1787

Mr. Elsworth is a Judge of the Supreme Court in Connecticut;—he is a Gentleman of a clear, deep, and copious understanding; eloquent, and connected in public debate; and always attentive to his duty. He is very happy in a reply, and choice in selecting such parts of his adversary's arguments as he finds make the strongest impressions,—in order to take off the force of them, so as to admit the power of his own. Mr. Elsworth is about 37 years of age, a Man much respected for his integrity, and venerated for his abilities.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Former member of Congress, is a man of absolutely the same cast of mind and disposition [as Samuel Huntington]. The same can be said of Mr. Sherman. In general the men of this state [Connecticut] have a national character that is rarely found in the other parts of this continent. They are nearing republican simplicity; they are completely at ease without opulence. Rural economy and domestic industry have grown for a long time in Connecticut; the people are happy there.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Hartford, Conn., 16 November 1788

Our Landlord who is an intelligent man fell into politicks today, inquired who were talked of for Senators in our state, &c. but finding no politicians in company few observations were made. He was high in praise of Dr, Johnson and Judge Elsworth, hop'd the rest of the States would send as good Men and then he did not believe that the House of Lords in England could equal them. . . . he wanted those Men in office whose Fame had resounded throughout all the States.

John Adams to William Tudor, New York, 9 May 1789

The Sentiments that I have read and heard in America these fifteen Years, and that I still continue to hear every day, even from Men of Education, Reading, Age, and travel, upon the subject of Government appear to me as extravagant, as the drivelings of Idiotism, or the ravings of delirium, a total inattention to every Thing in human nature by which Mankind ever were or ever will be governed is obvious in numbers who have the Reputation, and who really are Men of Sense and

Experience as well as of letters. Our Chief has some just notions, and here and there one is to be found, who is quite right. Mr. Ellsworth of Connecticut, appears to me to be more exactly and completely right, than any Man I ever met in Congress, and what crowns all, is, he is not afraid to think or Speak.

William Maclay: Journal, 15 May 1789

I cannot help here noting a Trait of insolence in Lee, Elsworth and Johnson.

Tristram Dalton to Michael Hodge, New York, 4 June 1789

Mr. Ellsworth, one of the best speakers in the Senate.

William Maclay: Journal, 9 April 1790

I can with Truth pronounce him the most uncandid man I ever knew possessing such Abilities. I am often led to doubt Whether he has a particle of Integrity, perhaps such a Quality is Useless in Connecticut.

William Maclay: Journal, 12 June 1790

Elsworth a Man of great Faculties, and eloquent in debate, but he has taken too much on himself. He wishes to reconcile the Secretary's [Alexander Hamilton's] System to the public Opinion, and Welfare but it is too much. He cannot retain the Confidence of the People & remain in the Good graces of the Secretary. He may lose both.

William Maclay: Journal, 10 February 1791

This man has abilities, but Abilities without candor and integrity, are the characteristics of the Devil.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 20 January 1795

Hamilton will do better [than Henry Knox]. He is younger and has more Economy. It is said he refuses all public Employment and goes resolutely to the Bar at New York. He refused to stand Candidate for Governor.

Jonathan Trumbull to John Trumbull, Philadelphia, 4 March 1796

. . . Our Mr. Elsworth has been taken from *our Corps* to fill the Seat of Chief Justice on the federal Bench—in room of Mr. Rutledge dementated—a great Loss this to the Senate!—but a valuable acquisition to the Court—an acquisition which has been much needed.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 5 March 1796

Yesterday Mr. Ellsworth's Nomination was consented to as Chief Justice, by which We loose the clearest head and most diligent hand We had. It will give a Nobility to the Government however, to place a Man of his Courage, Constancy, fortitude and Capacity in that situation. The Nomination of Mr. Chase had given Occasion to uncharitable Reflections and Mr. Wilson's ardent

Speculations had given offence to some, and his too frequent affectation of Popularity to others. Though Ellsworth has the Stiffness of Connecticut: though His Air and Gilt are not elegant: though He cannot enter a Room nor retire from it with the Ease and Grace of a Courtier: Yet his Understanding is as sound, his Information as good and his heart as steady as any Man can boast.

Jeremiah Smith to William Plumer, Philadelphia, 5 March 1796

. . . I write merely to inform you that yesterday Mr. Ellsworth was appointed Chief Justice of the United States—The vote was unanimous in Senate except *Mason* of Virginia who is a very ill natured & sour *man* as well as *politician*.—I presume no appointment in the U.S. has been more wise or judicious than this: He is a very able lawyer, a very learned man, a very great Politician & a very honest man. In short he is every thing one would desire.—I know this will give you much pleasure as you are a sincere well wisher to good Government & especially to a good judiciary; a thing which *we* know the Value of by the want of it. I hope he will accept.—

Connecticut can not send his equal into the Senate—He was the life & soul of that body & they will severely feel his loss—He was a man of investigation & uncommon Industry—Nothing passed without his examination.—I believe his enemies placed as much Confidence in him as his friends, if this is not an improper expression—

Oliver Wolcott, Sr., to Jonathan Trumbull, Litchfield, Conn., 14 March 1796

Mr. Ellsworth's appointment [as Chief Justice of the United States] will be very satisfactory to all who are willing to be pleased. If our country shall be preserved from anarchy and confusion, it must be by men of his character.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 20 March 1796

I both rejoiced and mourned at the Appointment of Mr. Ellsworth as Chief Justice, but what the Senate lose, the Bench will acquire. I rejoice that they have obtained a Man of a fair Fame, distinguished abilities and integrity. Caesar's Wife ought not to be suspected. This will apply to that office.

Oliver Wolcott, Sr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Litchfield, Conn., 21 March 1796

The established principles and abilities of Mr. Ellsworth render his appointment [as Chief Justice] proper.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 29 March 1796

The Appointment of the C.J. was a wise Measure.—My Mind is quite at ease on that subject—

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 17 April 1797

I have just been reading Chief Justice Ellsworth's Charge to the Grand jury at New York! Did the good gentleman never write before? Can it be genuine. The language is stiffer than his person. I find it difficult to pick out his meaning in many sentences. I am sorry it was ever published.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 24 April 1797

You and Such petit Maitres and Maitresses as you, are forever criticising the Periods and Diction of Such great Men as Presidents and Chief Justices. Do you think their Minds are taken up with such Trifles? There is solid, keen, deep sense in that Morsel of Ellsworth's. You ought to be punished for wishing it not published.

Frederick Wolcott to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Hartford, Conn., 23 January 1798

. . . Mr. Ellsworth will not go to Philadelphia till some time the next week.—He is considerably unwell, I understand quite hypochondriac.

Oliver Ellsworth to John Adams, L'Havre, 16 October 1800

Constantly afflicted with the gravel, and the gout in my kidnies, the unfortunate fruit of sufferings at Sea, and by a winters journey through Spain, I am not in a condition to undertake a voyage to America at this late season of the year; nor if I were there, should I be able to discharge my official duties. I must therefore pray you, Sir, to accept this my resignation of the office of Chief Justice of the United States.

After a few weeks spent in England, I shall retire, for winter quarters, to the South of France; and wait impatiently for the opening of the Spring.

Oliver Ellsworth to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., L'Havre, 16 October 1800

Sufferings at sea and by a winter's journey through Spain, gave me an obstinate gravel, which, by wounding the kidneys, has drawn and fixed my wandering gout to those parts. My pains are constant, and at times excruciating; they do not permit me to embark for America at this late season of the year, nor, if there, would they permit me to discharge my official duties. I have, therefore, sent my resignation of the office of chief justice, and shall, after spending a few weeks in England, retire for winter-quarters to the south of France.

Theodore Sedgwick to Alexander Hamilton, Washington, 17 December 1800

. . . the mind as well as body of Mr. Ellsworth are rendered feeble by disease. He has resigned as Chief Justice.

John Adams to John Trumbull, Quincy, Mass., 8 July 1805

Elsworth, in political prudence was equal to Sherman: in education and general information, superiour: but not superiour in either of these last to Webster, nor equal in Application.

John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 14 December 1807

I cannot omit to mention the Death of Elseworth, or to lament it as a misfortune to his Country. Not to mention his Probity, Integrity or Public Spirit, in which he was equalled by few and perhaps exceeded by none, he had the clearest head in the United States.

Jonathan Elmer

Cumberland County, N.J.: Address to Senator Elmer, 26 March 1789

As you are shortly to set out for New-York, to take your seat in the Federal Senate, we embrace this opportunity to take leave of you, by expressing our entire approbation of the choice of our Legislature in appointing you one of the Senators of Congress for this state.

Your literary acquirements, the early and active part you took in the cause of liberty and your country in the late revolution, your knowledge and experience in the science of government, and in the affairs of the United States, and the many public characters which you have sustained with honor and reputation, for a series of years, have procured you the esteem and confidence of your fellow citizens, and are evidences of your integrity and abilities to serve your country in the high and important station in which you are now placed.

William Maclay: Journal, 3 September 1789

Mr. Elmer called in the evening. I know not in the Senate a Man, if I were to choose a friend, on whom I would cast the Eyes of Confidence so soon as on, this little Doctor. He does not always vote right, and so I think of every Man who differs from me. But I never yet saw him give a Vote, but I thought I could observe disinterestedness in his Countenance. If such an one errs, it is the Sin of Ignorance, and I think heaven has pardons ready sealed for every one of them.

William Eustis

John Quincy Adams to William Vans Murray, 8 December 1798

E. has all the qualities you mention, together with the fluency and flash of a Frenchman. But he is so turbulent, so captious, and bombastic, he has such an instinct of perverseness, and withal so little moderation and prudence, that he cannot be a formidable though a very troublesome enemy.

Edward Everett

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 28 October 1814

I have great pleasure in giving this Letter to the Gentleman who requests it. The Revd. Edward Everett, the Successor of Mr. Buckminster and Thatcher and Cooper in the politest Congregation in Boston, and probably the first literary Character of his Age and State, is very desirous of Seeing Mr. Jefferson. I hope he will arrive before your Library is translated to Washington. . . . Mr. Everett is respectable in every View; in Family fortune Station Genius Learning and Character. What more ought to be Said.

John Ewing

Benjamin Rush to John Montgomery, Philadelphia, 20 February 1786

You wonder at my leaving the Old Side church. It was because I detected the father of the Old Side party, Dr. Ewing, in lying, drunkenness, and profane conversation, and afterwards found him supported by *Old Side* Presbyterians and New Side Skunks in every part of the state.

Benjamin Rush to Ashbel Green, Philadelphia, 11 August 1787

In May 1785 I offered to maintain before the synod or a presbytery a charge against Dr. Ewing for *lying, drunkenness, and unchristian language*. This offer was made to Dr. Smith, Mr. Linn, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Erwin. No notice was however taken of it, and the Doctor continued to retain his standing and to increase in influence among the Presbyterians. This instance of neglect in a matter so essential to the honor of the religious society to which I belonged and the vindication of my own character would have detached me from it, had I not considered Dr. Sproat's church as an asylum from him. I thought while the Arch Street pulpit retained its purity and the congregation their principles, I never should have the mortification of seeing a man in it whose disposition to injure me I believed was restrained by nothing but law from taking my life, and whose profligate character fitted him more to officiate at the rites of a heathen god than at the worship of Jesus Christ.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 18 December 1796

Dr. Ewing is Sick & melancholly. Has lost his Wife's fortune by trusting Speculators and has had recourse to imprudent means to raise his Spirits as they Say. He has done preaching for the present at least.

Arthur Fenner

Daniel Owen: Circular Letter, Providence, R.I., 19 March 1790

You will remember Sir, that in the Convention held at South Kingstown on Saturday Evening 6th of March current, it was thought best that a Prox [i.e., a slate of candidates] should then be agreed on; And after discussing the subject I had the Honor of being nominated for the head of the Prox. Sensible of the confidence reposed in me, I sincerely thanked the Convention, wished to be excused & gave my reasons, which were my local situation, my infirmities etc. & proposed Mr. Fenner, knowing his situation to be much more eligible than mine, & that his superior abilities, his candor & firmness, his veracity, his Attachment to, & Zeal for the Liberties & Privileges of the People of this State could not be doubted. Mr. Fenner being then present rather declined & I was overruled.

Previous to my being appointed a Delegate to the State convention, I frequently solicited Esqr. Fenner to permit me to nominate him for that Honorable Post. He refused me as he did the Convention. Since my return home I have repeated my solicitations & with the assistance of our

Friends have at length prevailed on him to accept. With the unanimous consent of the Brethren & Friends in the Northern part of the State, I have willingly & cheerfully resigned to him hoping he will not only meet your approbation & support, but also of all our Friends in the State.

Gazette of the United States (New York), 12 May 1790

There will be a majority of antes in our new assembly, which convenes at New-Port next week. Mr. FENNER who succeeds Gov. Collins, possesses good natural abilities, and without the graces of a courtier, had acquired a considerable popularity—the appointment was not his wish, but the result of necessity, it being more consonant to his views to govern behind the curtain, as he was free from responsibility if any measures should prove injurious, and could claim the credit of such as were beneficial; but the antes fearful that a federal character might be in nomination, brought him forward as the most popular man of their party.

David Howell to Thomas Jefferson, Providence, R.I., 1 June 1790

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Rhode Island, to his friend in this city, dated April 28: Our present Governor is a man of good abilities and I hope it will be one of his objects to moderate the heat of party.

John Rutledge, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Newport, R.I., 17 July 1800

Governor Fenner & Senator Foster . . . were trimmers.

Albany Register*, 18 July 1800

The man who is by far the *most influential man* in that state [Rhode Island] . . . The honest farmer . . . who is an old politician, understands trap too well to be caught in the toils of *anglo-federalism. . . .*

*Report of a conversation between Fenner and Alexander Hamilton.

Thomas Jefferson to David Howell, Monticello, 15 December 1810

No one was more sensible than myself, while Governor Fenner was in the Senate, of the soundness of his political principles, and rectitude of his conduct. Among those of my fellow laborers of whom I had a distinguished opinion, he was one, and I have no doubt those among whom he lives, and who have already given him so many proofs of their unequivocal confidence in him, will continue to do so.

John Adams to the Printers of the *Boston Patriot, June* 1812

Fenner . . . certainly was a sagacious Man, and I believe as honest and sincere as an y leading Federalist in Rhode Island.

John Fenno

Christopher Gore to Rufus King, Boston, 18 January 1789

This will be handed you by my friend Mr. John Fenno, who has conceived a plan, of publishing a newspaper in the city of New York, or in such a place as Congress may reside, for the purpose of disseminating favorable sentiments of the federal Constitution, and its administration. His literary accomplishments are very handsome, and from long acquaintance, I am confident his honor & fidelity are unquestionable. His talents, as the editor of a public paper, are unrivalled in this Commonwealth—and the cause of truth, and federalism are much indebted to his pen for the various and honorable supports, they have received from the *Centinel*. The particular and definite objects of his plan, as well as the manner of prosecuting it, he will do himself the honor to lay before you—from his capacity in this character, and his assiduity in business, he is in hopes of obtaining the patronage of Congress, and rendering himself worthy of confidence in the printing of their journals, and official papers. If, in either of these objects you can promote his designs, you will aid a sensible & deserving man; who, in my opinion, is capable of performing essential service in the cause of federalism & good government.

John Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Quincy, Mass., 28 January 1803

I, however must lie under any Slanders they please to fabricate: for I have no friends to contradict any thing. I hire no Duanes, Freneaus, Callenders, Cheethams, Woods or Paines, to write Lyes or Truths for me. There is one Lye they have propagated and insisted on for fourteen years, which has never been contradicted vizt that I sett up John Fenno, and his Gazette at New York & Philadelphia. A falshood so entirely without foundation, or even Colour, was never told and so often repeated for so long a time, without contradiction in any Country. When I went to take my place in Senate as Vice President in 1789 in April, I found Mr. Fenno Settled there with his Family and editing his News Paper. I scarcely knew the Man. I never contributed one farthing to assist him in beginning carrying on or concluding his Affairs, in any other way than taking one of his Papers. After I became acquainted with him I esteemed the Man for his, good Sense and honesty, and would have been very glad to have assisted him, with a Loan of Money or otherwise, if it had not been inconsistent with a rule I thought it necessary to observe, vizt to avoid *every possible Imputation* or just Suspicion of hiring Libellers to abuse my Ennemies, or to flatter my Friends or myself.

Joseph Ward to John Adams, Boston, 18 January 1810

Here let me mention John Fenno, whose name you mention with respect. He was a worthy man; his principles correct, his patriotism sincere, & his morals pure. An intimate friendship subsisted between him and me many years, & continued to the close of his life. He often expressed to me his grateful impressions for your friendship and condescending attentions to him; which animated him in the pursuit in which his mind was engaged. Few minds felt with greater sensibility the approbation of the wise and good; and in him it produced the happiest effect, it stimulated him in the path of duty. The world does not abound with such men.

William Few

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Without being a great genius, he has more knowledge than his name or appearance seem to indicate. Although still young, he had been constantly employed during the war. His colleagues have a good opinion of him. He is very timid and embarrassed in Society unless one speaks to him about business.

Aaron Burr to Samuel Smith, New York, 1 June 1801

You must have known Col. Few during the time that he was a Member of the Senate of the U.S. from the State of Georgia—if not this will introduce him to you—He has lately removed to this City and at our last election has been chosen a member of our assembly and there is no doubt he will be the leading character in that house. Col. Few is perfectly well informed of the politicks of this City and State and enjoys the entire esteem and Confidence of our Republicans: to these he is eminently entitled by his Candor, his discernment and the Uniform firmness with which he has espoused Republican principles.

William Findley

Theodore Sedgwick to Pamela Sedgwick, Philadelphia, 9 January 1791

Yesterday I had the pleasure to dine with the famous Findley. He is now I believe about 45 years old. Lives on the other side the allegany mountains. Came to this country a poor irish weaver about 24 years ago, is now one of the most important characters in Pensylvania, He is so far as I can judge from having spent the afternoon & evening with him, not only one of the best informed men, but is one of the most agreable with whom I have conversed. The Gentleman at whose house we were told me it was Findley's perticular request that I should be there, and that he had expressed a strong wish to get acquainted with me. To me the interveiw was agreable. but I was disappointed, I had been taught to expect a rough, overbearing, haughty Irish ment. But on the contrary I found him modest, unassuming, intelligent.

Abigail Adams to Robert Goodloe Harper, Philadelphia, 13 April 1798

In Porcupines paper of last Evening I read a Letter Said to be Written by Mr. Findley to his Friends in the Western Country.

Is it to be wonderd at that the people are disunited in sentiment When such grose Misrepresentation are made them respecting the Views and designs of the Government, and its Representatives? It is rather a subject of surprise that So little Effect is produced by them.

I hope that Letter will not be permitted to pass Without a due comment & refutation for Such a texture of lies and falsehood are woven into it, as none but a Knave could fabricate.

It cannot have escaped your notice sir, that a part of the French System is to render as much as possible the Chief Majestrate unpopular With the People by asscribing to him views and designs as foreign to his Heart and mind as honesty and truth are to the Heart and mind of Mr. Findley.

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 21 April 1798

Old Findley has written a Letter to his Friends in the Western Country, which has by some means got into Peters paper; it is one continued tissue of Lies from beginning to end. The journals of congress & senate are proofs that it is so, and the old wretch could not but know it. He will get enough of it before Congress rises.

Theodore Sedgwick to Pamela Sedgwick, Philadelphia, 9 January 1791

Yesterday I had the pleasure to dine with the famous Findley. . . . He is so far as I can judge from having spent the afternoon & evening with him, not only one of the best informed men, but is one of the most agreeable with whom I have conversed. . . . To me the interview was agreeable but I was disappointed, I had been taught to expect a rough, overbearing, haughty Irishmen, but on the contrary I found him modest, unassuming, intelligent.

Mathew Carey: Memoirs, June 1829

Wm Findley—This gentleman possessed a very powerful mind—and on any subject which depended on native intellect he was fully equal to Robert Morris or Thomas Fitzsimmons, the leaders of the opposite party, & in some greatly superior. In the debate on the question of allowing Theatrical representations, he was on the negative side and towered far above the friends of the measure in point of argument. They contended that a well regulated theatre was a school of morality. He showed from experience that the attempt so to regulate a Theatre, as to render it a school or morality was found by general experience to be [illegible word]—and that the most popular plays in the English language were of a pernicious tendency either in regard to the plot—the incidents—or the dialogue. The permission was however granted.

Ebenezer Finley

Benjamin Rush to Henry Knox, Baltimore, Md., 30 January 1777

If the tender Acquaintance I have with you will not justify the freedom I am about to take in recommending a young gentleman of distinguished merit to your patronage, I am sure a regard for the credit of your corps will excuse me. The young gentleman is a graduate of the New Jersey College, and is intimately acquainted with those branches of knowledge with [which] are connected with the Science of War. He possesses moreover military talents, has great industry & ingenuity, draws well, and has given proofs of real courage. He is now a third lieutenant in a company of Artillery, but has the Offer of a company of infantry from the State of Maryland. As his genius & inclination both mark him for the Artillery, he is willing to give up his offer of a company of infantry for a company of Artillery in your brigade. You will I am sure esteem him a great acquisition. I should have informed you before that his military talents receive great lustre from

the purity of his morals, and from the agreeableness of his manners. He is a perfect little Gentleman. His name is Ebenr. Finley. He is the third Son of the late Dr. Finley the president of the College of New Jersey. Please to communicate the event of this application to me as soon as possible, and it shall immediately be communicated to Mr. Finley.

Miers Fisher

John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 7 September 1774

Dined with Mr. Miers Fisher, a young Quaker and a Lawyer. We saw his Library, which is clever.

But this plain friend, and his plain, though pretty Wife, with her Thee's and Thou's, had provided us the most Costly Entertainment—Ducks, Hams, Chickens, Beef, Pig, tarts, Creams, Custards, Gellies, fools, Trifles, floating Islands, Beer, Porter, Punch, Wine and a long &c.

Thomas FitzSimons

William Pierce: Sketches of Delegates to the Constitutional Convention, c. September 1787

Mr. Fitzsimmons is a Merchant of considerable talents, and speaks very well I am told, in the Legislature of Pennsylvania.—He is about 40 Years old.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 22 January 1789

Mr. Fitzsimons is an enlightened merchant and an able politician.

Arthur Lee to Francis Lightfoot Lee, New York, 9 May 1789

Mr. Fitzsimons is said to lead this litigation. But he never acts but for the impulse of R. M. [Robert Morris].

Fisher Ames to George Richards Minot, New York, 18 May 1789

Fitzsimmons, of Philadelphia, is supposed to understand trade, and he assumes some weight in such matters. He is plausible, though not over civil; is artful, has a glaring eye, a down look, speaks low, and with apparent candor and coolness. I have heard him compared to ——. The similitude is not unapt. He is one of those people, whose face, manner, and sentiments concur to produce caution, if not apprehension and disgust.

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 26 August 1811

At one o'clock this morning died of a broken heart my excellent friend, Thos. Fitzsimmons Esq., in the 70th year of his age. Few such men have lived or died. From an obscure mechanic he became not only one of the most enlightened and intelligent merchants in the United States, but a

correct English scholar and a man of extensive reading upon all subjects. He filled many important stations both in the general and state governments with great reputation during the Revolutionary War. His opinions upon all questions connected with the commerce of our country were always regarded with respect and even homage by his fellow citizens. In private life he was truly amiable. Hundreds in various occupations owe their establishments in business to his advice and good offices. His friendships upon all occasions except one, and that was when his friends solicited favors from him. From his inability to resist the importunities, and even the sight of distress, he suffered a reverse of fortune in the evening of his life. Even in this situation his mind retained its native energy and his heart its native goodness, and hence it may be truly said in spite of all his many and immense losses, he died rich in affection, esteem, and gratitude of all classes of his fellow citizens.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 4 September 1811

On the 26th: of last month Mr: Thos: Fitzsimons added a unit to the catalogue of our departed revolutionary worthies. He died of a broken heart, induced not so much by great losses, as by the Unkindness of the persons by whom he sustained them. He lent 160,000 dollars to the late Robt Morris, not a dollar of which was ever repaid. It was my affliction to see the gradual decay of his body and mind. I loved him sincerely, and have deplored his death for he was my uniform friend. In my last visits to him, he now & then spoke of you, & always with a tribute of homage to the purity of your intentions in all the public Acts of your life.

Mathew Carey: Memoirs

When he arrived in this City [he] was I am informed, a journeyman Baker, and carried Bread round to the Customers of his master in a large basked ~~an~~ on his shoulder. By dint of superior talents, & industry, and honesty he raised himself to the grade of an eminent merchant—was for four years a leading member of the House of Assembly and afterwards for a considerable time a member of the Congress—He was a shrewd, intelligent, and an able debater in the State legislature—what was his standing in Congress I never had any means of ascertaining.

Royal Flint

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Middlebrook, N.J., 6 March 1779

I wish you had such a cool man as Mr. Flint with you. I am afraid of your heat and fire. Remember a good politician never gets angry but views every thing with as much impartiality as if he wasn't concerned.

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Middlebrook, N.J., 19 March 1779

He is a very sensible fine fellow—few men possess greater abilities than he does. We had a very agreeable time at Trenton, where Mr. Flint had the pleasure of gazing upon the agreeable Miss Gracia Cox. Such looks and such squeezes as he gave her hand, plainly indicated his wishes.

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Morristown, N.J., 5 January 1780

Mr. Flint like the truly great man sinks not at the difficulties before him, but labors continually to improve every circumstance to the best advantage; and is fruitful in expedients to extricate us from our distresses.

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Morristown, N.J., 8 February 1780

Mr. Flint will continue with me for a few Weeks. My situation is a little critical at this time. My family sick, and business pressing on every side. He will be very useful to me as his judgment is good, and he is quick in composition; and as there appears a scheme of plots and counterplots, I shall want his aid to counteract them.

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Morristown, N.J., 2 March 1780

Mr. Flint is become a prodigious beau and a great dancer, I don't believe he will be able to breath in the confined air of the holy land [i.e., Connecticut]. However he has a pretty happy faculty of accommodating himself to time and circumstances. In a word he is as sensible and as clever a fellow as I know of. You need not tell him so, lest he should think I mean to flatter him. I have too much affection for him to make use of such little artifice.

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Camp Precaness, N.J., 10 July 1780

I am glad Mr. Flint is with Mr. Corney for many reasons: His good Sense, knowledge of business, and acquaintance in the Country, as well as his mild and gentle temper will all serve to give him a favorable opinion of you and your measures; for we commonly judge of things from their connections where we have no better grounds to go upon.

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Headquarters Pon Pon, S.C., 9 February 1782

I had a letter from my friend Royal Flint a few days ago. I was very happy to hear from him; but I find his value is not sufficiently known to do justice to his merit and worth.

Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Headquarters near Bacon's Bridge, S.C., post-1 July 1782

How is our old friend Mr. Flint? I am afraid he is not in a way to do justice to his merit or talents. I love him exceedingly; and think there are few Men to whom nature has been equally bountiful.

Massachusetts Delegates to Congress to Governor James Bowdoin, New York, 23 August 1785

Your Excellency is undoubtedly informed that Mr. Royal Flynt is proposed by the Board of Treasury, as a Commissioner to liquidate the Accounts of the U. States with Massachusetts. We have no Knowledge of his Character but what is derived from Letters to the Board from General Knox, & Colonel Wadsworth: they speak of him in high Terms, as a person of Integrity, abilities & Assiduity, & our Confidence in him is established by their Opinion.

William Floyd

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

A mild and decided Republican. He seldom spoke in Congress, but always voted with the zealous friends to liberty and independence.

John Jay to Governor George Clinton, Philadelphia, 27 August 1779

Colonel Floyd's conduct while here [in Congress] gained him much respect; he moved on steady uniform principles, and appeared always to judge for himself, which in my opinion is one very essential qualification in a delegate, and absolutely necessary to prevent his being a mere tool.

Mathew Ford

Alexander Hamilton to Robert Livingston, 25 April 1785

The truth is that the state is now governed by a couple of New England adventurers—Ford and Adgate; who make tools of the Yates and their Associates. A number of attempts have been made by this junto to subvert the constitution and destroy the rights of private property; which but for the Council of Revision would have had the most serious effects.

Abiel Foster

John Wendell to Elbridge Gerry, Portsmouth, N.H., 23 July 1789

Judge F. is a good honest Worthy Member of Society, and so are others of our Representatives but they do not seem to be Speakers, or Men of Argument. They may be Voters, & that only.

Theodore Foster

William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I., 5 April 1790

[Foster wants to be elected a U.S. Senator. He is] a brother in law to Mr. Fenner but a clever fellow and a Fed at heart.

William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I., 12 June 1790

Theodore Foster . . . is a Fed and a modest, ingenious man. . . . Mr. Foster by being brother in law to our present Governour, and a moderate man had the voices of the Antis with him, and so carried the election [as U.S. Senator].

Henry Marchant to John Adams, Newport, R.I., 12 June 1790

The Candidates for Senators were at first numerous, but like the weaker Blossoms they fell off at length to four; and we pushed them so hard, as to oblige them to put up a Federal, Mr. Theodore Foster Esqr. as good a Man as we could wish, save his Connection with Our Govr. Fenner whose antie Principles have given us great Trouble—Mr. Foster is the Son of your late Judge Foster of Massachusetts—He has had a liberal Education, regularly studied the Law, has been in Practice, but too modest and diffident for a Speaker at the Bar—He has ever been a good Foederal, and an honest virtuous Man—He married Govr. Fenner's Sister, and that has been a Restraint upon Him.

Royal Flint to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 14 June 1790

Mr. Foster is an intriguing man, of great insight on the State. He is thought to have been in a degree bought by the Antifederalists with the promise of having any office which it was in their power to give.—He has been very popular in Providence, he is of easy accomodating manners—& his appointment would not be disagreeable in the manner that [Edward] Thomson's would be. It would very much please the Paper money People—He will probably be a senator.

Jabez Bowen to George Washington, Providence, R.I., post-14 June 1790

Mr. Th. Foster—the present Naval Officer is not much known to Mr. B[owen] but he has the character of an intriguing man—and has been a warm advocate for the late measures of the State—and much opposed to the Genl. Government.

William Ellery to Elbridge Gerry, Newport, R.I., 15 June 1790

Our Senators I expect will be at Newyork by the middle of next week.—One of them (Mr. Foster of Providence) is a modest, ingenious man.

George Benson to Theodore Sedgwick, Providence, R.I., 18 June 1790

You are no doubt before this apprizd of the names & Characters of the Gentlemen who are Elected Senators from this State—Collo. [Joseph] Stanton is avowedly in the Antifederal interest, and adverse to the assumption—but from Mr. Foster we hope and expect *better things*—his liberal and cultivated understanding—his Probity—his Zeal for the Public good all all conspire to excite the most Confident expectations that his Conduct in this most interesting Business will realize our fervent wishes. . . . He is so distinguished for an amiable Moral Character—that he is very Popular.

John Rutledge, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Newport, R.I., 17 July 1800

Governor Fenner & Senator Foster . . . were trimmers.

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin to Jacques Barbeu-Dubourg, London, 28 July 1768

I will . . . mention a practice to which I have accustomed myself. You know the cold bath has long been in vogue here as a tonic; but the shock of the cold water has always appeared to me, generally speaking, as too violent: and I have found it much more agreeable to my constitution, to bathe in another element, I mean, cold air. With this view I rise early almost every morning, and sit in my chamber, without any clothes whatever, half an hour or an hour, according to the season, either reading or writing. This practice is not in the least painful, but on the contrary, agreeable; and if I return to bed afterwards, before I dress myself, as sometimes happens, I make a supplement to my night's rest, of one or two hours of the most pleasing sleep that can be imagined. I find no ill consequences whatever resulting from it, and that at least it does not injure my health, if it does not in fact contribute much to its preservation. I shall therefore call it for the future a bracing or tonic bath.

Benjamin Franklin to Jane Mecom, London, 30 December 1770

What in my younger Days enabled me more easily to walk upright, was, that I had a Trade; and that I could live upon a little; and thence (never having had views of making a Fortune) I was free from Avarice, and contented with the plentiful Supplies my business afforded me. And now it is still more easy for me to preserve my Freedom and Integrity, when I consider, that I am almost at the End of my Journey, and therefore need less to complete the Expence of it; and that what I now possess thro' the Blessing of God may with tolerable Oeconomy, be sufficient for me (great Misfortunes excepted) tho' I should add nothing more to it by any Office or Employment whatsoever.

James Madison to William Bradford, 19 June 1775

Little did I ever expect to hear that Jeremiah's Doctrine that "the heart of man is deceitful above all things & desperately wicked" was exemplified in the celebrated Dr. Franklin, & if the suspicions against him be well founded it certainly is remarkably exemplified. Indeed it appears to me that the bare suspicion of his guilt amounts very nearly to a proof of its reality. If he were the man he formerly was, & has even of late pretended to be, his conduct in Philadelphia on this critical occasion could have left no room for surmise or distrust. He certainly would have been both a faithful informer & an active member of the Congress. His behavior would have been explicit & his Zeal warm and conspicuous.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, 23 July 1775

Dr. Franklin has been very constant in his Attendance on Congress from the Beginning. His Conduct has been composed and grave and in the Opinion of many Gentlemen very reserved. He has not assumed any Thing, nor affected to take the lead; but has seemed to choose that the Congress should pursue their own Principles and sentiments and adopt their own Plans: Yet he has not been backward: has been very useful, on many occasions, and discovered a Disposition entirely American. He does not hesitate at our boldest Measures, but rather seems to think us, too irresolute, and backward. He thinks us at present in an odd State, neither in Peace nor War, neither dependent nor independent. But he thinks that We shall soon assume a Character more decisive.

He thinks that We have the Power of preserving ourselves, and that even if We should be driven to the disagreeable Necessity of assuming a total independency, and set up a separate state, We could maintain it. The People of England, have thought that the Opposition in America, was wholly owing to Dr. Franklin: and I suppose their scribblers will attribute the Temper, and Proceedings of this Congress to him: but there cannot be a greater Mistake. He has had but little share farther than to co operate and assist. He is however a great and good Man.

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 30 September 1775

Dr. Franklin needs nothing to be said. There is no abler or better American, that I know of.

James Warren to John Adams, Watertown, Mass., 20 October 1775

Doctr. Franklin who I never saw before Appears venerable in the Characters of A Gentleman, A Philosopher, and Statesman.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree, Mass., 5 November 1775

I hope you have received several Letters from me in this fortnight past. I wrote by Mr. Lynch, and by Dr. Franklin the latter of whom I had the pleasure of dining with, and of admiring him whose character from my Infancy I had been taught to venerate. I found him social, but not talkative, and when he spoke something useful dropped from his Tongue; he was grave, yet pleasant, and affable.—You know I make some pretensions to physiognomy and I thought I could read in his countenance the Virtues of his Heart, among which patriotism shined in its full Lustre—and with that is blended every virtue of a Christian, for a true patriot must be a religious Man.

John Adams to James Warren, 18 February 1776

Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Chase of Maryland, and Mr. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, are chosen a Committee to go to Canada. I must confess I have very great Confidence, in the Abilities and Integrity, the Political Principles and good Disposition of this Committee.

Franklin's Character you know. His masterly Acquaintance with the French Language, his extensive Correspondence in France, his great Experience in Life, his Wisdom, Prudence, Caution, his engaging Address, united to his unshaken Firmness in the present American System of Politics and War, point him out as the fittest Character for this momentous Undertaking.

William Carmichael to C.W.F. Dumas, L'Havre, 21 January 1777

You will no doubt have our Paris news from the prophet who draws down fire from heaven.

Jonathan Williams, Jr., to Benjamin Franklin, Nantes, France, 25 January 1777

I am treated here with as much Respect as if I were the Nephew of a prince. So much is your name respeted that I hear the Ladies of Nantes are about making an addition to their heads in imitation of your Hair Cap, which they intend to call *a la Franklin*.

Benjamin Franklin to Emma Thompson, Paris, 8 February 1777

Figure me in your mind as jolly as formerly, and as strong and hearty, only a few Years older, very plainly dressed, wearing my thin grey stright Hair, that peeps out under my only Coiffure, a fine Fur Cap, which comes down my Forehead almost to my Spectacles. Think how this must appear among the Powdered Heads of Paris. I wish evet Gentleman and Lady in France would only be so obliging as to follow my Fashion, comb their own Heads as I do mine.

Silas Deane to President of Congress John Hancock, Paris, c. 16 March 1777

[Franklin] is universally esteemed and respected here, as well as in America, and, I may say, through the learned world.

William Carmichael To William Bingham, Paris, 25 June 1777

The age of Dr. Franklin in some measure hinders him from taking so active a part in the drudgery of business as his great zeal and abilities would otherwise enable him to execute. He is the master to whom we children in politics all look up for counsel, and whose name is everywhere a passport to be well received.

Thomas McKean to Sarah McKean, York, Pa., 10 February 1778

Doctor Franklin is said to be assassinated in his bed in a village called Passy, about four miles from Paris; though this account contains all the particular circumstances attending this horrid deed, I doubt about the truth of it.

John Henry to Thomas Johnson, York, Pa., 14 February 1778

What think you of Dr. Franklin's assassination; with some Gentlemen here, the tale has the appearance of probability, with others it is esteemed a fact. I hope both opinions are groundless. His death will stagnate our system in France and probably shatter some of the Doctor's flattering hopes of serving his country through the sides of France.

John Adams: Diary, 16 April 1778

Dr. F. is reported to speak French very well, but I find upon attending to him that he does not speak it Grammatically, and indeed upon inquiring, he confesses that he is wholly inattentive to the Grammar. His Pronunciation too, upon which the French Gentlemen and Ladies compliment him, and which he seems to think is pretty well, I am sure is very far from being exact.

Indeed Dr. Franklin's Knowledge of French, at least his Faculty of speaking it, may be said to have begun with his Embassy to this Court. He told me that when he was in France before, Sir John Pringle was with him, and did all his Conversation for him as Interpreter, and that he understood and spoke French with great Difficulty, until he came here last, although he read it.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Passy, France, 25 April 1778

My venerable Colleague enjoys a Privilege here, that is much to be envied. Being seventy Years of Age, the Ladies not only allow him to embrace them as often as he pleases, but they are perpetually embracing him.—I told him Yesterday, I would write this to America.

John Adams: Diary, 10 May 1778

[The Rev. Hezekiah Ford]: I came to France with the highest opinion of Dr. F.—as a Philosopher, a Statesman and as even the Pater Patriae. But I assure you Tempora mutantur.

He has very moderate Abilities, He knows nothing of Philosophy, but his few Experiments in Electricity; He is an Atheist, he don't believe any future State: Yet he is terribly afraid of dying.

This is Ford's Opinion. This is his Character of the great Man.

I [i.e., Adams] believe it is too much to say that he is an Atheist, and that he don't believe a future State: though I am not certain his Hints, and Squibbs sometimes go so far as to raise Suspicions:—and he never tells any Body, I fancy that he believes a G[od], a P[urgatory] or f[uture] s[tate]. It is too rank to say that he understands nothing of Philosophy, but his own electrical Experiments, although I don't think him so deeply read in Philosophy, as his Names imputes.

He has a Passion for Reputation and Fame, as strong as you can imagine, and his Time and Thoughts are chiefly employed to obtain it, and to set Tongues and Pens male and female, to celebrating him. Painters, Statuaries, Sculptors, China Potters, and all are set to work for this End. He has the most affectionate and insinuating Way of charming the Women or the Man that he fixes on. It is the most silly and ridiculous Way imaginable, in the Sight of an American, but it succeeds, to admiration, fulsome and sickish as it is, in Europe.

John Adams: Autobiography, 27 May 1778

I found that the Business of our Commission would never be done, unless I did it. My two Colleagues would agree in nothing. The Life of Dr. Franklin was a Scene of continual dissipation. I could never obtain the favour of his Company in a Morning before Breakfast which would have been the most convenient time to read over the Letters and papers, deliberate on their contents, and decide upon the Substance of the Answers. It was late when he breakfasted, and as soon as Breakfast was over, a crowd of Carriages came to his Levee or if you like the term better to his Lodgings, with all Sorts of People; some Philosophers, Academicians and Economists; some of his small tribe of humble friends in the literary Way whom he employed to translate some of his ancient Compositions, such as his Bonhomme Richard and for what I know his Polly Baker &c.; but by far the greater part were Women and Children, come to have the honor to see the great Franklin, and to have the pleasure of telling Stories about his Simplicity, his bald head and scattering strait hairs, among their Acquaintances. These Visitors occupied all the time, commonly, till it was time to dress to go to Dinner. He was invited to dine abroad every day and never declined unless when We had invited Company to dine with Us. I was always invited with him, till I found it necessary to send Apologies, that I might have some time to study the French Language and do the Business of the mission. Mr. Franklin kept a horn book always in his Pocket in which he minuted all his invitations to dinner, and Mr. [Arthur] Lee said it was the only thing in which he was punctual. It was the Custom in France to dine between one and two O'clock: so that when the time came to dress, it was time for the Voiture to be ready to carry him to dinner. Mr. Lee came daily to my Apartment to attend to Business, but we could rarely obtain the Company of Dr. Franklin for a few minutes, and often when I had drawn the Papers and had them fairly copied for Signature, and Mr. Lee and I had signed them, I was frequently obliged to wait several days, before I could procure the Signature of Dr. Franklin to them. He went according to his Invitation to his Dinner and after that went sometimes to the Play, sometimes to the Philosophers but most commonly to visit those Ladies who were complaisant enough to depart from the custom of France so far as to procure Sets of Tea Gear as it is called and make Tea for him. Some of these Ladies I knew as

Madam Hellvetius, Madam Brillon, Madam Chaumont, Madam Le Roy &c. and others whom I never knew and never inquired for. After Tea the Evening was spent, in hearing the Ladies sing and play upon their Piano Fortes and other instruments of Music, and in various Games as Cards, Chess, Backgammon, &c. &c. Mr. Franklin I believe however never played at any Thing but Chess or Checkers. In these Agreeable and important Occupations and Amusements, the Afternoon and Evening was spent, and he came home at all hours from Nine to twelve O'clock at night. This Course of Life contributed to his Pleasure and I believe to his health and Longevity. He was now between Seventy and Eighty and I had so much respect and compassion for his Age, that I should have been happy to have done all the Business or rather all the Drudgery, if I could have been favoured with a few moments in a day to receive his Advice concerning the manner in which it ought to be done. But this condescension was not attainable. All that could be had was his Signature, after it was done, and this it is true he very rarely refused though he sometimes delayed.

Ralph Izard to Henry Laurens, Paris, 28 June 1778

His abilities are great and his reputation high. Removed as he is at so considerable a distance from the observation of his constituents, if he is not guided by principles of virtue and honor those abilities and that reputation may produce the most mischievous effects. (In my conscience I declare to you, that I believe him to be under no such internal restraint; and God knows that I speak the real unprejudiced sentiments of my heart. If at any time I have been under the influence of prejudice, it has been in his favor, and nothing but my own observation could have convinced me so thoroughly how undeservedly it is possible for public approbation to be bestowed.)

Richard Henry Lee to Arthur Lee, Philadelphia, 16 September 1778

The Doctor is as I always thought him, I am not in the least disappointed or informed by any thing immoral that I hear of him. We do not know he has written any thing against you but I strongly suspect it from the conduct of some Men. However, virtue will prevail over vice in the end if tolerable prudence support the former. The Doctor is old and must soon be called to account for his misdeeds; therefore bear with him, if possible.

Silas Deane to Henry Laurens, Philadelphia, 12 October 1778

[In criticizing the letters of Arthur Lee and Ralph Izard that censured Benjamin Franklin.] Gratitude as well as justice to that truly great man, to whose friendship and counsel I owe much, oblige me to say on this occasion that I not only believe, but know, that this is, to say no more of it, directly the reverse of the character which Dr. Franklin has ever sustained, and which he now most eminently supports. It gives me pleasure to reflect on the honors and respect universally paid him by all orders of people in France, and never did I enjoy greater satisfaction than in being the spectator of the public honors often paid him. A celebrated cause being to be heard before the parliament of Paris, and the house and streets leading to it crowded with people, on the appearance of Dr. Franklin way was made for him in the most respectful manner, and he passed through the crowd to the seat reserved for him amid the acclamations of the people; an honor seldom paid to their first princes of the blood. When he attended the operas and plays similar honors were paid him, and I confess I felt a joy and pride which were pure and honest, though not disinterested, for I considered it an honor to be known to be an American and his friend. What were the sensations of the writers of these letters on such occasions, I leave their letters and conduct towards him to

speak, and I can not now express the indignation and grief I feel at finding such a character represented as the worst that human depravity is capable of exhibiting, and that such a representation should be made by an American in a public character.

John Adams to James Warren, Passy, France, 5 December 1778

The other [Franklin] you knew personally, and that he loves his ease, hates to offend, and seldom gives any opinion until obliged to do it. I know also, and it is necessary you should be informed that he is overwhelmed with a Correspondence from all quarters, most of them upon trifling subjects, and in a mere trifling style; with unmeaning visits from Multitudes of People chiefly from the vanity of having it to say they have seen him.

John Adams to Samuel Adams, Passy, France, 7 December 1778

The other [i.e., Franklin] you know personally, and that he loves his Ease, hates to offend, and seldom gives any Opinion until obliged to do it. I know also and it is necessary you should be informed, that he is overwhelmed with a Correspondence from all Quarters, most of them upon trifling subjects, and in a more trifling Style; with unmeaning Visits from Multitudes of People, chiefly from the Vanity of Having it to say that they have Seen him. There is another Thing which I am obliged to mention, there are So many private Families, Ladies and Gentlemen that he visits So often, and they are So fond of him that he cannot well avoid it, and So much Intercourse with Academicians, that all these Things together keep his Mind in Such a constant State of Dissipation, that if he is left alone here, the public Business, will Suffer in a degree beyond Description, provided our Affairs are continued upon the present footing.

John Adams: Diary, 9 February 1779

. . . there is another, whose Love of Ease, and Dissipation, will prevent any thorough Reformation of any Thing—and his Silence and Reserve, render it very difficult to do any Thing with him. . . .

On Dr. F. the Eyes of all Europe are fixed, as the most important Character, in American Affairs in Europe. Neither L[ee] nor myself, are looked upon of much Consequence. The Attention of the Court seems most to F. and no Wonder. His long and great Reputation to which L's and mine are in their infancy, are enough to Account for this. His Age, and real Character render it impossible for him to search every Thing to the Bottom, and L. with his privy Council, are evermore, contriving. The Results of their Contrivances, render many Measures more difficult.

John Adams to James Lovell, Passy, France, 20 February 1779

On the other Hand, there was a Monopoly of Reputation here, and an Indecency in displaying it, which did great Injustice to the real Merit of others, that I do not wonder was resented. There was an Indolence—there was a Dissipation—which gave just Occasion of Complaint—there was a Complaisance to interested Adventurers. There was an Intimacy, with stock jobbers, there was an Acquaintance with Persons from England, which gave just Occasion of Jealousy, however innocent the intentions were. I have learned that total silence is enough to procure a Character for Prudence, whatever Indiscretions a Man may commit.

Samuel Adams to John Adams, Philadelphia, 9 March 1779

I find that an older Man than I am, can in the apparent Coolness of Mind, stabb a dreaded Rival to the Vitals. His Words are like Honey, but there is a large Mixture of Poison.

Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 24 March 1779

There are some of our Friends, who having been long habituated to admire the Wisdom of the Philosopher, cannot easily be perswaded to believe, that in the different Character of a Politician, he may be lyable to human Frailties at the Age of more than three Score and ten.

Benjamin Franklin to John Adams, Passy, France, 3 April 1779

My Gout continued to disable me from walking longer than formerly, but on Tuesday the 23d past, I thought myself able to go through the Ceremony and accordingly went to Court, had my Audience of the King in the new Character, presented my Letter of Credence, and was received very graciously. After which I went the Rounds with the other Foreign Ministers, in visiting all the Royal Family. The fatigue however was a little too much for my Feet, and disabled me for near another Week.

John Adams: Diary, 18 June 1779

[In a conversation with Marbois.] That it was often affirmed that Mr. Franklin spoke French as fluently and elegantly, as a Courtier at Versailles, but every Man that knew and spoke sincerely, agreed that he spoke it very ill. Persons spoke of these Things, according to their Affections.

He said it was Flattery. That he would not flatter, it was very true that both Mr. F. and I spoke French, badly.

John Adams: Diary, 23 June 1779

I said that Mr. Franklin had great Merit as a Philosopher. His Discoveries in Electricity were very grand, and he certainly was a Great Genius, and had great Merit in our American Affairs. But he had no Title to the Legislator of America.

Mr. M [Marbois] said he had Wit and Irony, but these were not the Faculties of Statesmen. His Essay upon the true Means of bringing a great Empire to be a small one was very pretty.—I said he had wrote many Things, which had great Merit and infinite Wit and Ingenuity. His bonhomme Richard was a very ingenious Thing, which had been recommended by Curates and Bishops to so many Parishes and Dioceses.

James Lovell to Samuel Adams, Philadelphia, 10 July 1779

I forgot to remark above that if Doctor. Franklin has the Confidence of the French Court it is strange that we have not a Line from him by their Packet. He was, indeed, always very backward of writing to the *State* which employed him, though he was lengthy to Individuals. I verily believe that they folgerize* us in France often.

*That is, the French steal American diplomatic dispatches, as was the case of John Folger.

Conrad Alexandre Gérard: State Papers Read before Congress, 14 July 1779

The king and ministry were extremely pleased with the resolution which Congress has taken to maintain only one minister plenipotentiary at this court, as well as with the exclusive appointment of so steady and honest a man and so firm and solid a patriot as Dr. Franklin. . . .

There is every reason to believe that Congress will very soon receive proofs of the confidence which his court was always willing to show to the servants of these States. The personal character of Dr. Franklin will enable the court to act with a frankness becoming the alliance, and they will have no occasion to withhold any more the secrets which may interest the United States and the alliance.

John Adams to Thomas McKean, Braintree, Mass., 20 September 1779

I presume Congress intend to appoint a secretary to the Commission, and Consuls for the Management of Commercial and maritime matters. It is highly necessary. Franklin is a Wit and a Humorist, I know. He may be a Philosopher, for what I know, but he is not a sufficient Statesman, he knows too little of American Affairs or the Politicks of Europe, and takes too little Pains to inform himself of Either. He is too old, too infirm, too indolent and dissipated, to be sufficient for the Discharge of all the important Duties of Ambassador, Secretary, Admiral, Commercial Agent, Board of War, Board of Treasury, Commissary of Prisoners, &c. &c. &c. as he is at present in that Department, besides an immense Correspondence, and Acquaintance, each of which would be enough for the whole Time of the most active Man in the Vigor of Youth.

Yet such is his Name on both Sides the Water, that it is best, perhaps that he should be left there. But a secretary and Consuls should be appointed to do the Business, or it will not be done, or if done it will not be done by him, but by busy People who insinuate themselves into his Confidence without either such Heads or Hearts as Congress should trust.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Braintree, Mass., 18 October 1779

I must confess myself, very nearly of your Opinion in all the Articles of your Political Creed excepting as to the Recall of Dr. Franklin. I know as well as Dr. L. [i.e., Arthur Lee] or Mr. Iz[ard] every Thing that is to be said for this Measure, but his Name is so great in Europe and America and the People have rested upon him in their own Minds so long, however erroneously, it would take so much Time and Pains to let the People into the Grounds, Reason and Motives of it, that I have ever hitherto hestitated at it.

John Paul Jones to Mr. Morris, L'Orient, France, 27 June 1780

I thank God that I am of no party and have no brothers or relations to serve, but I am convinced that Mr. [Arthur] Lee has acted in this matter merely because I would not become the enemy of the venerable, the wise, and good Franklin, whose heart as well as head does and will always do honor to human nature. I know the great and good in this kingdom better, perhaps, than any other American who has appeared in Europe since the treaty of alliance, and if my testimony could add anything to Franklin's reputation I would witness the universal veneration and esteem with which his name inspires all ranks, not only at Versailles and all over this kingdom, but also in Spain and Holland. And I can add from the testimony of the first characters of other nations that with them envy is dumb when the name of Franklin is but mentioned.

John Jay to Benjamin Franklin, Madrid, 30 October 1780

I have often congratulated my country and myself on your being at present in France. I once expected to have seen you there, and to have profited by the lessons which time and much experience have taught you. Miracles have ceased, and my constitution does not promise length of days, or I should probably desire you, when you ascend, to drop me your mantle.

Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Huntington, Passy, France, 12 March 1781

I must now beg leave to say something relating to myself; a Subject with which I have not often troubled the Congress. I have passed my 75th. Year, and I find that the long & severe Fit of the Gout which I had the last Winter, has shaken me exceedingly, and I am yet far from having recovered the bodily Strength I before enjoyed. I do not know that my mental Faculties are impaired; perhaps I shall be the last to discover that; but I am sensible of great Diminution in my Activity; a Quality I think particularly necessary in your Minister for this Court. I am afraid therefore that your Affairs may some time or other suffer by my Deficiency. I find also that the Business is too heavy for me and too confining. The constant Attendance at home which is necessary for receiving and accepting your Bills of Exchange, (a Matter foreign to my ministerial Functions) to answer Letters and perform other Parts of my Employment, prevents my taking the Air and Exercise which my annual Journeys formerly used to afford me, and which contributed much to the Preservation of my Health. There are many other little personal Attentions, which the Infirmities of Age render necessary to an old Man's Comfort, even perhaps in some Degree to the Continuance of his Existence, and with which Business often interferes. I have been engaged in public Affairs, and enjoyed public Confidence in some Shape or other, during the long Term of fifty Years, an Honor sufficient to satisfy any reasonable Ambition, and I have no other left, but that of Repose, which I hope the Congress will grant me, by sending some Person to supply my Place. At the same time, I beg they may be assured, that it is not any Disgust received in their Service, that induces me to decline it, but purely and simply the Reasons above-mentioned.

John Jay to Samuel Huntington, Madrid, 21 April 1781

By the letter from Doctor Franklin, herewith enclosed, and which he was so obliging as to leave open for my perusal, I find he has requested permission to retire on account of his age and infirmities. How far his health may be improved I know not, since the letters I have received from him bear no marks of age. There is an acuteness and sententious brevity in them which do not bespeak an understanding injured by years. I have many reasons to think our country is much indebted to him, and I confess it would mortify my pride as an American if his constituents should be the only people to whom his character is known that should deny his merit and services. Justice demands of me to assure you that his reputation and respectability are acknowledged and have weight here, and that I have received from him all that uniform attention and aid which was due to the importance of the affairs committed to me.

John Jay to President Samuel Huntington, Madrid, 25 April 1781

I perceive that Dr. Franklin desires to retire. This circumstance calls upon me to assure Congress that I have reason to be perfectly satisfied with his conduct towards me, and that I have received from him all the aid and attention I could wish or expect. His character is very high here, and I

really believe that the respectability, which he enjoys throughout Europe, has been of general use to our cause and country.

Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, 15 June 1781

What I always knew must now be clear to everyone—that it was not Dr. Lee but his principles that were offensive to the French Court: since in conjunction with Dr. Franklin, they have commenced the very same intrigues against our friend Mr. J. Adams. They know that his intentions are too honest, and his mind too firm, for their purposes; and therefore they are endeavoring to disgrace him, or shackle him with the wiles of that old, corrupt Serpent, who has constantly sold this Country to them.

Alice Lee Shippen to Elizabeth Welles Adams (Mrs. Samuel Adams), Philadelphia, 17 June 1781*

The British are making sad Havoc in Virginia, they have taken six Members of their Assembly: I am much distressed lest a Brother I have in that Body should be one of their number. I am sure none of my Brothers will find any Mercy with them. A French fleet in Virginia now might do every thing we wish, but I despair of such assistance while a certain person is our Minister. He has sent his resignation to Congress; this is probably no more than a State Trick to fix him more form in the Saddle. He says perhaps he is too Old, but he does not perceive any thing like it himself; and then gives a strong Proof of it by recommending his Grandson as the Person who will, in a Year or two, be most fit for our Plenipotentiary. From this recommendation one or the other of these two things is clear, either Mr. F——'s faculties are impaired, or he thinks ours are. This same Gentleman is now blackening the Character of Mr. J.A. to Congress more than he did Mr. L——'s [Arthur Lee], and he has got the French Minister to join him.

*Addressed to Mrs. Adams, this letter was incorrectly delivered to Abigail Adams, who realized the error and, after reading the letter, passed it along to the right recipient.

Abigail Adams to James Lovell, Braintree, Mass., 30 June 1781

[On Franklin's influence over French Foreign Secretary Vergennes or former French Minister to the U.S. Luzerne.] If the [influence is over the] Latter I am very Sorry that he should become a dupe to the wiles of the Sorcerer.

[On Benjamin Franklin's attacks on John Adams and others.] Was the Man a Gallant I should think he had been monopolizing the Women from the enchanter. Was he a Modern Courtier I should think he had outwitted him in court intrigue. Was He a selfish avaricious designing deceitful Villain I should think he had encroached upon the old Gentleman's prerogatives but as he is neither, what can raise his malice against an honest republican? Tis fear, fear, that fear which made the first grand deceiver start up his own shape when touched by Ithuriel's Spear. The honest Zeal of a Man who has no Sinister views to serve, no Friends to advance to places of profit and Emolument, no ambition to make a fortune with the Spoil of his country, or to eat the Bread of Idleness and dissipation—this this man must be crushed, he must be calumniated and abused. It needs great courage Sir to engage in the cause of America, we have not only an open but secret foes to contend with. It comes not unexpected upon me I assure you, he who had unjustly traduced the character of one Man, would not hesitate to attack every one who should obstruct his views and no Man however honest his views and intentions will be safe whilst this Gentleman hold his office. I hope

you will be very particular not only in transmitting the accusation but what Effect it has had in your Body [Congress], what measures have been taken in consequence, and whether you have acquainted my Friend with it. If not I beg it may be done that he may take proper measures in his defense.

Abigail Adams to Alice Lee Shippen, Braintree, Mass., 30 June 1781

Your favor of June 17 . . . explained to me the machinations of a Man, Grown old in the practice of deception and calumny.

If upright and good intentions with a fair full and diligent discharge of the duties of his office will merit the approbation of his employers I dare say my absent Friend will be able to justify his conduct and to exculpate himself from the Slander of his accuser whose sly secret Malice is of a more dangerous kind than the open attacks of an avowed Enemy. It is some consolation however to have an associate even in misfortune, and my Friends character is not the first which has been immolated by this unprincipled Gentleman to the Altars of envy, Calumny and disappointed ambition. It has been the Misfortune of America in the unhappy tragedy in which She has been engaged, that some of her principal characters have disgraced the Scenes. Her Franklin, Dean, and Arnold may be ranked with her Hutchinson and Galloway. If the Aspersions you mention are such as to obtain the Notice of Congress, I hope they will do my Friend the justice to acquaint him with them before they give credit to a Gentleman whom they have long had reason to execrate and who if continued in office will still embarrass their affairs and discourage the faithfulest servants of the public from engaging in its service.

Abigail Adams to James Lovell, Braintree, Mass., 14 July 1781

Join with him [i.e., John Adams] an upright honest Man of real abilities and he will thank you for an assistant should a negotiation [for peace] commence, but do not Saddle him with a Man who looks no further than the present state of existence for a retribution of his virtues or his vices, but who considering this world as the summun bonum of Man might I think have a little more regard to the happiness of his fellow Mortals in the present state, and not quite so willing to relinquish their Natural Rights. One will speak a bold and firm language becoming a free sovereign and Independent Nation, the other will be indecisive yielding fawning flattery.

Abigail Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Braintree, Mass., 20 July 1781

The plan which appears to be adopted both at Home and abroad, is a servile adulation and complaisance to the Court of our Allies, even to the giving up some of our most valuable privileges. The Independent Spirit of your Friend, abroad, does not coincide with the selfish views and inordinate ambition of your Minister, who in consequence of it, is determined upon his destruction. Stung with envy at a merit he cannot emulate, he is alarmed with the apprehension of losing the Honor of some Brilliant action; and is using his endeavors that every enterprise shall miscarry, in which he has not the command. To Effect this purpose he has insinuated into the minds of those in power the falsest prejudices against your Friend, and they have so far influenced the united Counsels of these States, as to induce them to join this unprincipled Man, in Commission with him for future Negotiations. If Congress had thought proper to have joined ant Gentleman of real abilities and integrity with our Friend, who could have acted in concert with him; he would have gratefully received his assistance—but to clog him with a Man, who has shown himself so Inimical

to him, who has discovered the marks of a little and narrow Spirit by his malicious aspersions, and ungenerous insinuations, and whose measures for a long time they have had no reason to be gratified with, is such a proof to me of what my absent Friend has reason to expect, and what you know, Sir, I very early feared; that I can see nothing but dishonor, and disgrace attending his most faithful, and zealous exertions for the welfare of his Country.

Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, 27 July 1781

Congress have very injudiciously I fear, and contrary to their resolutions when there was a plot to remove me, joined Dr. F. in commission with Mr. Adams when they know that unprincipled old man has created differences with Mr. Adams and is endeavoring to ruin his reputation. Mr. Jay, Laurens the elder and Governor Jefferson are added. But their Instructions are such as throw them at the feet of Count Vergennes in everything but Independency. Mr. Adams can no more escape the Snares of old Franklin with the Count to assist him, than I could. I do not say that such treatment of Mr. Adams is unwise and unworthy; only, it is as cruel as if they had stretched him upon an iron bed of torture and left the old man at full liberty to glut himself with tormenting him.

Elbridge Gerry to Abigail Adams, Marblehead, Mass., 30 July 1781

[John Adams instructions can no longer be changed in Congress.] I am grieved to impart, that the Decree is past for revoking all the former Powers of our Friend, and for appointing him to execute new Instructions, with a Fraternity, some of whom to injure him, would I fear go greater Lengths than Judas did, to betray his Lord.

Alice Lee Shippen to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, August 1781

Money and power are now in the hands of bad men, and there is no popular Ear. You are acquainted by this time with particulars. It is a little surprising is it not that Congress should have joined Dr. Franklin in commission with your Friend after what has passed; Can harmony be expected by joining a man's calumniator with him? It is certainly putting your friend in a disagreeable situation, 'tis most probable if an advantageous peace should be negotiated, Dr. Franklin will take the credit: if otherwise, he will throw the blame on him he has already marked out; but my dear Madam, the slander of corrupt men in a corrupt age, is better than their praise. The Dr. appears to be no respecter of persons, he breaks through every tie of gratitude, and of Country, all his affections center in one character. He loves a knave wherever he finds him.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, 21 October 1781

The whole junto will be soon known in America for a set of wicked unprincipled debauched wretches, from the old Deceiver down to the young Cockatrice.*

*Franklin to William Temple Franklin.

Elkanah Watson: Memoirs, 19 November 1781

On November 19. I dined and spent the evening with Franklin, at Passy; arriving at an early hour, I observed him in a distant room reading, in the exact position he is represented in an excellent engraving, his left arm resting on a table, and his chin in his right hand thumb. I was soon

conducted to him, and was cordially received, as usual. From a long habit of mixing with courtiers and men of eminence, as well in America as in Europe, he possesses an urbanity of manners, in connection with his venerable locks suspended over his shoulders, and his personal dignity, which commands reverence and respect; and yet so natural and fascinating in his deportment, that I always find myself perfectly at ease in his presence. Although he loves adulation, he woos it and hugs it to his heart in a manner unperceived, and therefore diminishes naught from his sterling merit. Not so with the vain boaster, trumpeting his own fame above all the fraudulent men who float upon borrowed plumes. Such men are always detected; soon sink into contempt, and hold a short run with posterity. But the name of Franklin will freshen with posterity, and increase in fame, through a long line of generations, while America shall bear a name. . . . He asked me if I knew he was a musician, and then conducted me across the room to an instrument of his own invention, fixed as a harpsichord. On my intimating a wish to see him perform, he immediately placed himself before it with his habitual condescension, touching the ends of his fingers on a moistened piece of sponge, and commenced playing with his right foot, bearing upon a treadel fixed in the manner of a spinning wheel, which turned a set of musical glasses, presenting their edges in perpendicular positions, in the shape of saucers graduated of different sizes, so as to produce all the requisite tones. He touched the edges with the ends of his fingers, playing a Scottish pastoral tune, in sweet delicate melody, which thrilled me to my very soul.—Besides, the novel spectacle was highly gratifying to my high toned American pride, to contemplate a native son of my native state, a distinguished philosopher in his 76th year, exhibiting on an instrument of his own invention, which he has named Harmonica. . . . At times his Philosophy seemed to abandon him in gloomy despondency—& then viewing the issue in an opposite light, his hopes would flash into a concertion of complete success. Although in his 76th year, yet his whole machinery appeared in a state of elasticity, and in active play—So much was he exhilerated when hope predominated.

John Paul Jones to Benjamin Franklin, Portsmouth, N.H., 13 December 1781

Enjoy, dear Sir, your present happiness! You are beloved; and will ever, while Virtue is honorable, be revered as a Father and Savior of your Country.

Peter Oliver: Origin & Progress of the American Rebellion, 1782

There was one Person more who might, now, be termed, the *instar omnium* of Rebellion. The Features of whose Soul were so minutely expressed in the Lines of his Countenance, that a Gentleman, whose Acumen was so great as to strike out a Character from a very slight View of a Face, was introduced to his Company many Years since; and upon his being asked his Opinion of the Man, he replied, "that he was calculated to set a whole Kingdom in a Flame." This was his Opinion of Dr. Benjamin Franklin.

This Narrative hath been frequently interrupted by the Description of Characters; but it seemed necessary to describe, when the Persons introduced theirselves upon the Stage. Let this suffice for Apology. It is now Dr. Franklin's Turn to sit for his Portrait; & I shall endeavor to sketch the Outlines; perhaps I may catch a Feature or two as I go on with the Narrative.

Dr. Benjamin Franklin was a Native of Boston in the Massachusetts Bay. He was born in 1706, of very reputable Parents. His Father was a capital Tallow Chandler, & a worthy honest Man. His Brother also was a Man held in very good esteem. the Doctor himself was what is called a *Printer's Devil*, but, by a Climax in Reputation, he reversed the Phrase, & taught us to read it backward, as Witches do the Lords Prayer. He worked at the Business of the Press until he went to England, &

continued in London for about two Years, to perfect himself in the Art, & black as the Art was before, he made it much blacker, by forcing the Press often to speak the Thing that was not. He published a Libel in Boston, for which he was obliged to quit. He fled to Rhode Island, the Asylum for those who had done what they ought not to have done—from thence he went to Philadelphia, & settled in the printing Business. The Philadelphia News Paper was published by him; & the Almanacs of *Poor Richard*, which he annually struck off, were interlaced with many useful Observations in Agriculture & other Sciences.

Dr. Franklin (pardon the Expression) was cursed with a full Share of Understanding, he was a Man of Genius, but of so unprincipled an Heart, that the Merit of all his political & philosophical Disquisitions can never atone for the Mischiefs which he plunged Society into, by the Perversion of his Genius. He had such an Insight into human Nature, that he insinuated himself into various public Departments in the Province of Pennsylvania, & at last arrived to the Office of one of the Post Masters in America, a Place worth 4 or £500 Sterling p Year. He was now released from the necessary Cares for a moderate Support; & was at Leisure to indulge in what might first strike his Fancy. . . .

Pride is Dr. Franklin's ruling Passion, & from this Source may be traced all the Actions of his life. He had a Contempt of Religion, of Mankind, & even of those whom he had duped; & had he viewed the Subject in a moral Light, he would have contemned hisself. . . .

Benjamin Franklin to William Carmichael, Passy, France, 23 January 1782

I wonder at What you have heard that the Congress had for eight Months no Letters from Mr. Adams, as I think him the most diligent of all Correspondents, having seen in the Votes of Congress Mention made of the Dates of Letters received from him, by which it seemed that he had written almost every Day, & sometimes twice a Day. My great Fault is writing too seldom: I should write oftener (and should be happy) if I had nothing else to do.

John Jay to Benjamin Franklin, Madrid, 30 January 1782

France has done, and is still doing so much for us that Gratitude as well as Policy demands from us the utmost Moderation & Delicacy in our Applications for Aids. And considering the very singular plan of drawing Bills at a Venture I think we have no less Reason to admire the Patience, than to be satisfied with the Liberality of our good & generous Allies—

Mr. De Neufville had given me a Hint of the Embarrassments occasioned by "the Affair of our Goods in Holland." It seems as if Trouble finds its Way to you from every Quarter.—Our Credit in Holland leans upon you on one hand &, in Spain, on the other,—thus you continue like the Key Stone of an Arch, pressed by both sides & yet sustaining each. How grateful ought we to be to France for enabling you to do it!—

John Jay to Robert R. Livingston, Paris, 25 June 1782

I shall endeavor to get lodgings as near to Dr. Franklin as I can. He is in perfect good health, and his mind appears more vigorous than that of any man of his age I have known. He certainly is a valuable Minister, and an agreeable companion.

Arthur Lee to Francis Dana, Philadelphia, 6 July 1782

I am sorry that the attempts you mention have in any measure succeeded; though they have failed of the whole intent, which was to place the negotiation of peace in corrupt and servile hands only. The wickedness of that old Man is beyond example, & his good fortune in escaping the punishment due to his crimes so well known, is as extraordinary. Horace says—raro antecedentem scelestum deseruit pede poena claudo.* Dr. Franklin is the rare exception to his rule.

*Horace, *Odes*: "rarely does Vengeance, albeit of halting gait, fail to o'ertake the guilty, though he gain the start."

Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, August 1782

By the absolute order of France, Dr. Franklin & Mr Jay were joind in commission with Mr. Adams for negociating a Peace. At this very time Congress had the fullest evidence and conviction that Dr Franklin was both a dishonest & incapable man. Mr. Laurens & Mr. Jefferson were added, but the first was a prisoner, & the latter woud not go. Mr. Jay has with a very becoming spirit desird to be left out of a Commission, which is accompanied with Instructions to obey ultimately the opinion of the french Ministers. This he states as in his apprehension, so humiliating to the Commissioners, so disgraceful & injurious to America that he cannot submit to it. I have movd in vain for a reconsideration of these Instructions. The yoke is riveted upon us, & the man who I am sure sold us in the negociation with France, is the sole adjunct with Mr. Adams, in a negociation on which every thing that is dear & honorable to us depend. He, good man, felt no qualms at such a commission, no sense of dishonor or injury to his Country. On the contrary he expressd the utmost alacrity in accepting it, & I beleive most cordially; since it puts him in the way of receiving money, which is the God of his Idolatry. The French therefore are to make a peace for us.

John Adams to Edmund Jenings, The Hague, 12 August 1782

Franklin I verily believe has a Number of Scribblers in his pay in London to trumpet his Fame, and to make more Reputation for him as well as support what he has. It would be well me thinks to have that Money applied to support the Honor, Dignity, Reputation and other Interests of our Country.

Samuel Osgood to John Lowell, Philadelphia, 19–25 September 1782

Matters are all going exceeding well in Europe; Doctor. Franklin & Mr. Jay appear to be very happy at Passy. The latter, in explicit Terms, commends the *former*, as an able and prudent minister. His Abilities, he says, exceed any Man's of his Age, that he ever saw—*agreed*.

John Adams to Arthur Lee, The Hague, 10 October 1782

Dr. Franklin, whose System has ever been [to] sweep Europe clear of every Minister but himself, that he might have a clear unrivalled Stage. . . .

John Adams to Abigail Adams, The Hague, 12 October 1782

Dr. Franklin has been a long time much indisposed as I lately learn with the Gout and Strangury.

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, Paris, 8 November 1782

It is for the determinate purpose of carrying these points [in the peace treaty negotiations] that one man, who is submission itself [Franklin], is puffed up to the top of Jacob's ladder in the clouds and every other man depressed to the bottom of it in the dust. This is my opinion; let me be punished for it, for assuredly I am guilty.

John Adams to Jonathan Jackson, Paris, 17 November 1782

I must go further and Say, that the least Appearance of an independent Spirit in any American Minister, has been uniformly cause enough, to have his Character attacked.—Luckily, Mr. Deane out of the Question, every American Minister in Europe, except Dr. Franklin, has discovered, a Judgment, a Conscience and a Resolution of his own, and of Consequence every Minister, who has ever been here, has been frowned upon. On the Contrary Dr. Franklin who has been plyant and Submissive in every Thing has been constantly cryed up to the Stars without doing any Thing to deserve it.

Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, 12 December 1782

There never I think existed a man more meanly envious and selfish than Dr. Franklin. The reason probably why it is not seen so as to make men despise him is, that men in general listen much to professions, and look little to actions.

John Jay to Robert R. Livingston, Paris, 12 December 1782

Dr. Franklin's firmness and exertions on the subject of the Tories did us much service. I enclose herewith a copy of a letter he wrote [on November 26] about that matter to Mr. [Richard] Oswald. It had much weight, and is written with a degree of acuteness and spirit seldom to be met with in persons of his age.

Arthur Lee to John Adams, In Congress, 14 January 1783

I presume you have heard that Dr. F. has written to Congress against you. His enmity you cannot be a stranger to, & you will be induced to despise this effort of it, when I assure you it, has no manner of effect. It is however justice due to him to say that he allows you to be sensible & honest.

Arthur Lee to John Adams, Philadelphia, 26 January 1783

The servility, envy, & avarice of the old man you mention have been the more pernicious to our cause, as he is most unaccountably rooted in the opinion of many, and nothing but success will in their eyes justify a conduct founded upon opposite principles.

John Adams to President of Congress Thomas McKean, Paris, 6 February 1783

If you take the Recommendations of foreign Courts or foreign Ministers or secretaries, you will be the meerest Dupes & Bubbles in the World, you will have ignorant Boys [i.e., William Temple Franklin] imposed upon you, or dishonest Dotards in their Second Childhood [i.e., Benjamin Franklin], for the most important Places in your disposal.

Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, 12 March 1783

Mr. J. Adams is so persuaded, that Peace is settled that he has desired leave to resign & return home. I am not of opinion that we can spare him yet. He & Mr. Jay have acted a spirited, independent, & therefore, in my judgment, a most laudable part; & will be necessary in Europe to counteract the treachery of old Franklin. I had drawn up a vote of thanks to Mr. Adams for the extraordinary Services he has rendered us in Holland; but upon sounding I found the jealousy which Dr. F's friends, after his example, entertain of any approbation bestowed upon another, being a censure upon him, would render the passage of it doubtful. It was therefore thought more prudent not to move it. There never I think existed a man more meanly envious & selfish than Dr. Franklin. The reason probably why it is not seen so as to make men despise him is, that men in general listen much to professions, & look little to actions.

James Madison to Edmund Randolph, Philadelphia, 12 March 1783

Franklin's correspondence on this occasion denotes a vigor of intellect, which is astonishing at his age, a letter to the British Minister on the case of the Tories in particular is remarkable for strength of reasoning, of sentiment & of expression. He concludes his letter to Congress with observing that he is now entering on his 78th year, 50 of which have been spent in the public Service; and that having lived to see like Simeon of old the salvation of his Country, his prayer is that he may be permitted to retire from public life.

John Adams to William Lee, Paris, 15 March 1783

[In assuming to have the sole power to negotiate a treaty with Sweden, Franklin had offended Adams and Francis Dana who had such an authority.] The feelings, if not the rights of every American Minister in Europe have been wantonly sacrificed to Dr. F.'s vanity—

You know the old acquaintance of the C. de V. [Comte de Vergennes] at the Swedish Court, from whence, as I conjecture, this manuvre originated. It seems to have been the policy to prevent any other American than Dr. F. from obtaining reputation in Europe—that, when he should die, all opinion of American wisdom & virtue should die with him: or, more probably, Dr. F. was thought to be more pliable than some others. Il scavoit mieux se donner aux convenances et bien seances—

John Adams to William Lee, Paris, 10 April 1783

I know not to what extravagances Adulation may extend in regard to Dr. Franklin—nor do I much care, now the Independence of our Country, her Tom Cod & Buckskins* are so well secured. I expect soon to see a proposition to name the 18th Century, the Franklinian Age, le Siegle Franklinnien, & am willing to leave the Question, whether it shall have this epithet or that of Fredericien, to the Dr. & the King: tho', the latter will stand a poor Chance with a certain French Writer, who, within a few weeks, has said, that the Dr., after a few ages, will be considered as a God, and I think the King has not eno: of the Caesar in him to dispute with the Skies—

The title of "Founder of the American Empire," which as you observe, the Eng[lish] Newspapers give him, does not, most certainly belong to him: and it is extremely fortunate for our Country that no one man has the least Color of a just pretension to that popular & bewitching Appellation—

*The Newfoundland fisheries and the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains.

John Adams to Samuel Osgood, Paris, 12 April 1783

The Shackles which have been fastened upon American Ministers have obstructed and injured our Cause in a great degree—And for what? For no other Reason under Heaven, than to give to one French Minister and one American Minister the Reputation of doing every thing—That one Soul burning in the Flames of Ambition may be cooled with the proud Title of "Pacificateur de l'Europe," and another with that of "Pacificateur de l'Amerique."—Gentlemen must search the human Heart a little more profoundly, than they seem to have done on some Occasions, or our Country will be made the Sport of Passions, in which She has no Interest.—

John Adams to James Warren, Paris, 13 April 1783

I have in some late Letters opened to You in Confidence the Dangers, which our most important Interests have been in, as well as the Opposition and Jealousy and Slanders, which your Ministers have met with, from the vain, ambitious and despotic Character of one Minister, I mean the C. de Vergennes. But You will form but an imperfect Idea after all of the Difficulties We have had to encounter, without taking into Consideration another Character equally selfish and interested, equally vain and ambitious, more jealous and envious, and more false and deceitful, I mean Dr. Franklin.

It is a saying of Algernon Sidney concerning Sir Walter Raleigh, that "his Morals were not sufficiently exact for a great Man." And the Observation can never be applied with more propriety than to Dr. Franklin. His whole Life has been one continued Insult to good Manners and to Decency. . . .

A sacred regard to Truth is among the first and most essential Virtues of a public Man. How many Kings have involved themselves and their Kingdoms in Misfortunes, by a Laxness in this particular? How much Mischief has been done in all Ages by Ministers of State, who have indulged themselves in a Duplicity and Finesse, or in other Words, in an Hypocrisy and falsehood, which some are even abandoned enough to recommend and prescribe to Politicians, but which never yet did anything but Harm and Mischief. I am sorry to say, but strict and impartial Justice obliges me to say, that from five complete Years of Experience of Dr. Franklin, which I have now had in Europe, I can have no Dependence on his Word. I never know when he speaks the Truth, and when not. If he talked as much as other Men, and deviated from the Truth as often in proportion as he does now, he would have been the Scorn of the Universe long ago. But his perpetual Taciturnity has saved him.

It would be Folly to deny that he has had a great Genius, and that he had written several things in Philosophy and in Politics, profoundly. But his Philosophy and his Politics have been infinitely exaggerated, by the studied Arts of Empiricism, until his Reputation has become one of the grossest Impostures, that has ever been practiced upon Mankind since the Days of Mahomet.

A Reputation so imposing in a Man of Artifice and Duplicity, of Ambition and Vanity, of Jealousy and Envy, is as real a Tyranny as that of the Grand Seignor. It is in vain to talk of Laws and Justice, of Right, of Truth, of Liberty, against the Authority of such a Reputation. It produces all the Servility of Adulation, all the Fear, all the Expectation and Dependence in Court and of Imperial Splendor. He had been very sensible of this, and has taken Advantage of it.

As if he had been conscious of the Laziness, Inactivity and real Insignificance of his advanced Age, he has considered every American Minister, who has come to Europe, as his natural Enemy. He has been afraid that some one would serve his Country, acquire a reputation, and begin to be thought of by Congress to replace him.

Sensible that his Character has not been so much respected in America as in Europe, he has sought as Alliance to support him with Mr. de Sartine and the Comte de Vergennes and their "Autours"—Satellites. It is impossible to prove, but from what I know of him, I have no doubt, that he is the Man, who, by means of the Emissaries or Satellites just alluded to, made to those Ministers all the malicious Insinuations against Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard, which, although absolutely false and groundless, have made as much Noise in the World, and had almost the same Effects, as if they had been true. From the same detestable Source came the Insinuations and Prejudices against me, and the shameless abandoned Attack upon me, the History of which You know better than I. Hence too the Prejudices against Mr. Dana, Mr. Jay and every other. These are my Opinions, though I cannot prove them, otherwise than by what I have seen and heard myself, what results from a long Series of Letters and Transactions, and what I know of the Characters of Men. The C. has had his Head filled with so many Prejudices against others, and in favor of him, and has found him so convenient a Minister, ready always to comply with every Desire, never asking anything but when ordered and obliged to ask for Money, never proposing anything, never advising anything, that he has adopted all his Passions, Prejudices and Jealousies, and has supported him, as if his own Office depended upon him. He and his Office of Interpreters have filled all the gazettes of Europe with the most senseless Flattery of him, and by means of the Police set every Spectacle, Society, and even private Club and Circle to clapping him with such Applause, as they give to Opera Girls. This being the unfortunate Situation of foreign Affairs, what is to be done?

Franklin has, as he gives out, asked Leave to resign. He does not mean to obtain it, but to save the Shame of being recalled. I wish with all my Soul he was out of public Service, and in Retirement, repenting of his past Life, and preparing, as he ought to be, for another World. But as the Peace is made, and he is old, and it will make a horrid Wonder in the World to remove him, and it would be impossible to publish the whole Truth in Justification of it to the People of America as well as of Europe, perhaps it may be as well to let him alone. But at least Congress should firmly and steadily support their other Ministers against his insidious Manouvres. They should add no more Feathers to his Cap. French Influence will forever aid him, and both will be eternally attacking openly and secretly every other Minister. So that I am persuaded he will remain as long as he lives, the Demon of Discord among our Ministers, and the Curse and Scourge of our foreign Affairs.

John Adams to William Gordon, Paris, 15 April 1783

I confess to you I have been so fatigued, perplexed & distressed with that system of Duplicity & Chicanery, which has been practised upon Congress & their Servants in Europe, that I am worn out. My Strength & Spirits are exhausted. Mr. Jay & Mr. Dana are not less weary & disgusted; nor would Mr. Laurens I believe have been less so, if he had been in the way of knowing as much as we do—Dr. F. is disgusted with nothing but Integrity & cares for nothing but his place; for the preservation of which alone, in the negotiations for Peace, he meanly abandoned the System, which he had firmly pursued, & joined Mr. Jay and me in that principle, for which he had quarrelled with me for a course of years & attacked & abused me without mercy—

William Lee to John Adams, Brussels, 24 April 1783

. . . as to Dr. Franklin, I am convinced, that with all his Art &c, he wou'd soon sink into total oblivion like his friend Silas Deane, if the expenditure of the Public Money was taken out of his hands, & his adversaries were to cease talking of him, unless they mean to bring him to a Public

Tryal for his enormous misdeeds. I know him too well, to suppose for a moment, that he wou'd pay a single Livre of his own money, to any little insignificant French Novellist for ranking him with the Gods.—

John Adams: Diary, 2 May 1783

In Truth Congress and their Ministers have been played upon like Children, trifled with, imposed upon, deceived. Franklin's Servility and insidious faithless Selfishness is the true and only Cause why this Game has succeeded. He has aided Vergennes with all his Weight, and his great Reputation, in both Worlds, has supported this ignominious System and blasted every Man and every Effort to shake it off. I only have had a little Success against him.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Paris, 8 September 1783

Jay & I do admirably well with the old Man. We go on very smoothly, & make him know what is right & do it, for absolutely he does not know of himself.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Paris, 10 September 1783

If Franklin is suffered to go on with that low Cunning, and mean Craft, with which he has always acted, & by which he has done much Mischief, the public will suffer.

John Adams to James Warren, Paris, 10 September 1783

Mr. Dana will soon be with you. He can give you very entertaining and instructive Histories not of Voyages and Travels alone, but of Negotiations. His defeat comes from the same source, very secret and cunning, but very malicious to every Man and every project, calculated for the public Good. This one Man seems to have a positive Spite against every public service, that he does not exclusively perform himself. He opposes it and persecutes the Agent in it with a Malice and Rancor that is astonishing. I could have formed no Idea, that Jealousy, Envy and Vanity could have gone such Lengths.

Elbridge Gerry to Abigail Adams, Princeton, N.J., 18 September 1783

. . . the Doctor's Craft is apparent.

Henry Laurens to Benjamin Franklin, Paris, 21 September 1783

Touching your particular Conduct, respecting the Fishery Territory, & every other Article, coming within my Cognizance I have from the moment I came in as an acting Commissioner observed in you that Sagacity, Penetration, & Perspicuity which denote the able Minister, that Zeal & Attention to the Business of the United States of America, which mark Fidelity. Your Country Sir & Posterity will do you Justice; as a Colleague & a Fellow Citizen I should be ungrateful in withholding my Acknowledgements.

I believe by this time it is pretty well known, I am unaddicted to Flattery, in the present Case, I am sure, there can be no motive for commencing the Art.

With most fervent Wishes that the Evening of your Days may be blessed with Tranquility equal to your well-earned Honors.

James Warren to John Adams, Milton, Mass., 27 October 1783

I don't know that I detest any Character more than that of the Old Man, who is, as you might expect your determined Enemy. You will before this reaches you get a paragraph of one of his Letters, which if you should by an Interval be in possession of your right Mind will put the Matter out of Doubt; How long will he live? and if he lives how long can he be able to preserve the good Opinion and Confidence of his Country? The Bubble must burst soon, or Mankind are more lost to Sentiment and Virtue, than I can suppose.

Samuel Osgood to John Adams, Annapolis, Md., 7 December 1783

It was a Matter of Surprise and Astonishment to the Franklinites, that the God of Electricity consented to act with you secretly [without informing the French]. However, if I might be allowed to form an Opinion, it would be, that the electrical Machine discharged itself invisibly—for where there is unbounded Confidence, surely there is no Reason for the least Reserve. He does not consider his most C—— M—— [Christian Majesty, Louis XVI of France] as an Ally, but as a Father to the United States. Whenever he mentions him it is in this Light.

Comte de Vergennes to Chevalier de la Luzerne, Versailles, 15 February 1784

We think that Congress has acted wisely in recalling most of its agents in Europe; their character is too little conciliatory, and their head too much excited, to admit of their being useful to their country. The calmness and the prudence of Mr. Franklin are certainly grave faults in their eyes; but it is by those qualities that this minister has inspired us with confidence. I do not believe that the superior services which this minister has rendered to his country will be requited; I can say that it will be very difficult for Congress to replace him.

James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Orange, Va., 25 April 1784

Your letter gave me the first information both of his [Philip Mazzei's] view toward a consulate and of his enmity toward Franklin. The first was not betrayed to me by any conversation. . . . As to the second he was unreserved alleging at the same time that the exquisite cunning of the old fox has so enveloped his iniquity that its reality cannot be proved by those who are thoroughly satisfied of it. It is evident from several circumstances stated by himself that his enmity has been embittered if not wholly occasioned by incidents of a personal nature. Mr. Adams is the only public man whom he thinks favorable of or seems to have associated with. A circumstance which their mutual characters may perhaps account for.

Elbridge Gerry to John Adams, Philadelphia, 16 June 1784

We have not been reserved in Congress with respect to the Doctor; having declared in so many Words, that so far advanced in Years & so tractable is he, as that it has become a matter of indifference to Us, whether We employ him or the C——t de V——s [Comte de Vergennes] to negotiate our Concerns at the C——t of V—— [Court of Versailles].

Arthur Lee to John Adams, New York, 12 August 1784

You are now to enter with a new partner [Thomas Jefferson] whose real character you will study well before you confide in him. His genius is mediocre, his application great, his affectation greater, & his vanity greater than all. This last is the wheel by which the french and Dr. Franklin will endeavor to work him to their purposes. For a time I doubt not they will succeed. But it is not improbable that Dr. Franklin's jealousy of being eclipsed by him will soon produce a schism. You know how greedy Dr. F. is of praise & power—how intolerant, even to brutality & villainy, he is of any other person's praise. Mr. J. will snuff up the incense of french adulation, with not a bit less avidity; & as they are both in the same course for obtaining it, I should not wonder if they were soon to become rivals & enemies. But at first you must expect they will draw together, especially in one of the most material points, the carrying on the Negotiations at Paris.

Abigail Adams (Nabby): Journal in France, 24 August 1784

Went in the morning with my papa and mamma to pay our respects to Dr. Franklin; this man on whom the world have passed such high encomiums, and perhaps justly; he is now near 80 years old and looks in good health

John Adams to Francis Dana, Auteuil near Paris, 4 November 1784

The Dr. is very gracious never so much soi Since he was born, at least since I knew him. Nothing on my Part Shall give him cause to be otherwise.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Auteuil near Paris, 4 November 1784

We are going on, with as much dispatch as the Nature of our Business will admit of, and We proceed with wonderful Harmony, good Humour and Unanimity. The Dr. is confined to his House and Garden by the Stone as he thinks. He has not been farther from Home, than my House at Auteuil which is within a mile of his, for these twelve months. He cannot ride in a Carriage, because the motion of that machine in the Posture in which he must sit gives him too much pain, and makes him void blood. He cannot walk out, nor in the House without Suffering as I am told. All these Things considered, We are obliged to conduct all our Negotiations at Passy.

John Adams to Elbride Gerry, Auteuil near Paris, 12 December 1784

Dr. Franklin is so bad with the Stone, that he has not been to Versailles nor Paris these twelve months; he has ventured to Auteuil, three or four times to dine with me, but the last Time he suffered such cruel Tortures in coming and going, that he seems determined to venture out no more unless in a Sedan. Mr. Jefferson has been a long time ill and confined, so that I have been much employ'd as a go between Passy and Paris. The Dr. has appeared to me, a long time to wish to go to England whether to see his Friends or to consult Physicians and be cut for the Stone. I know not.

John Adams to Samuel Osgood, Auteuil near Paris, 13 December 1784

Dr. F. was So bad with the Stone that he had neither, been to Paris or Versailles for a Year, and could not ride a mile in a Carriage, without Torment. This is increased So much that he cannot ride

at all. Yet he proposes, if the British Ministry insist upon it, to go to London either by Water, descending the River Seine to Havre de Grace or in a Litter.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Autueil near Paris, 31 January 1785

Dr. F. shew me Yesterday a Letter from Mr. Jay, in which he says, "that the Dr. Letter requesting Leave to return to America was committed, and not reported on." You can judge best, from his Letters whether he is Sincere in his Request. If he is, you will make a new Arrangement. He may be, Sincere, for a Voyage Seems to be the only chance he has for his Life.—He can now neither walk nor ride, unless in a Litter, but he is Strong and eats freely, So that he will soon have other Complaints besides the Stone, if he continues to live as entirely without Exercise as he does at present. Whatever it is his increasing Pain and Infirmity, or whether it is his disappointment in his vain Imaginations for himself and his [grand]son, that has Softened him I know not, but he Seems much less insolent than he has been, and I have too much Compassion for his Melancholly Situation to think of reminding him of his past faults to me. So that We go on very smoothly.

John Adams to John Jay, Autueil near Paris, 31 January 1785

I am happy in my old Friend Jefferson, and in my young one [David] Humphreys. We do Business at Passy, because the Dr. is wholly confined to his house. His stone has grown So painful, that when he walks or rides that he has wholly renounced both. I learn from his Cousin [Jonathan] Williams, and his Grandson [William Temple Franklin], that he can no longer Walk, his hour in his Chamber as he used. He appears otherwise well, and strong, but the loss of his Exercise, must soon affect his Health in other Particulars.

John Adams to Arthur Lee, Autueil near Paris, 31 January 1785

Dr. F. is at present too much an Object of Compassion to be, one of Resentment. His Stone torments him, when he rides or walks to such a degree that he is wholly confined to his House, and of late is obliged to desist from his Walks in his Chamber which he has been used to for many Years. So that without relief, his Health must Soon Suffer for want of Exercise.—His pain, or his Disappointment, or his dependence upon my Bank for Money, even to live on, have humbled him in Appearance, So that at least he now affects to be very good.—I wish it were possible [to] blot out of the Page of History and the Book of Remembrance his support of [Silas] Deane & Co., and his insolent Persecutions of you and me and others, and the Motives of them a Sordid Jealousy and insidious Selfishness, but it is not, as long as the Names of others remain the Records of them will be eternal.

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 26 February 1785

Mr. Franklin has been so long in France, that he is more a Frenchman than an American: I doubt whether he will enjoy himself perfectly if he returns to America.

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 17 March 1785

Mr. and Mrs. Bingham, and Commodore Jones, Coll. Humphreys, and Mr. Williamos, and several other gentlemen dined at the Doctor's. The old gentleman, is perfectly well, except the Stone,

which prevents him from riding in a Coach, and even from walking; he says he is determined to return to America this Spring. The motion of a Vessel, would not, he thinks, be painful to him.

Abigail Adams (Nabby): Journal in France, 25 March 1785

. . . we went to take tea at Dr. Franklin's . . . The Dr. is always silent, unless he has some diverting story to tell, of which he has a great collection. Mr. F [William Temple Franklin] copies him in this way, and although he tells a story well, yet I do not think it a pleasing trait in the character of a young man—it appears better in age; it seems then expressive of a desire to be agreeable—which in old age is not always attended to. The Dr. has something so venerable in his appearance, that he inspires one with respect. I never saw an old man more so.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Auteuil near Paris, 2 May 1785

I Should be more vain than I am, if I pretended to be at all times destitute of Vanity.—I never yet saw nor do I expect to see a Man without it. I never knew but one Man who pretended to be wholly free from it, or whom any body thought to be so and him I know to be in his heart the vainest Man, and the falsest Character I have ever met with in life. The Pretension to have none of it is Affectation and gross Hypocrisy, and depend upon it, the Man who makes so much Pretension to it and takes so much cunning Pains to conceal at all times his Feelings, has artfull designs to carry, and infinitely more sordid Passions to gratify, Avarice, Envy, Jealousy, Ambition or Revenge.

Comte de Vergennes to François Barbé de Marbois, Versailles, 10 May 1785

We have learned with the greatest regret, Sir, of the recall of Mr. Franklin; this minister has won the King's esteem, and I personally have the greatest confidence in his principles and in his integrity: the United States will never have a more zealous and more useful Servant than Mr. Franklin.

C.W.F. Dumas to John Adams, The Hague, 7 June 1785

I hope that Mr. Franklin shall conserve as much vigor of body as he demonstrates of mind as he engages himself ay eighty years of age.

Elbridge Gerry to Samuel Adams, New York, 30 September 1785

Doctor Franklin has, as You will perceive by the Pennsylvania papers, been puffed at a great Rate, & will probably be in the Chair of that State. His Grandson came to this City last Evening, but his object I cannot yet ascertain. I confess to You, I have a jealous Eye on the Doctor: he is devoted to the Court of Versailles, & should he come to Congress as a Delegate & obtain the Chair, he may do more Mischief than We are apt to imagine. But his great Age seems almost an insuperable Bar to the Execution of an extensive plan.

William Gordon to John Adams, Jamaica Plain, Mass., 4 October 1785

Dr. F is arrived, is honoured, is caressed &c but his friends will not be very wise should they promote him to the Presidentship in Pennsylvania, nor he be prudent, should he accept it, at his time of life, when he cannot answer for the continuance of his faculties for a single day.

Benjamin Rush to Richard Price, Philadelphia, 15 October 1785

Dr. Franklin . . . has succeeded Mr. Dickinson as our governor. . . . The Doctor enjoys in his eightieth year the full exercise of all faculties of his mind. While Spain boasts of her Ximenes, France of her Fleury, and Britain of her Mansfield, all of whom sustained the burden of government after they passed the eightieth year of their lives, America claims a Franklin, inferior to none of them in activity of mind and clearness of perception on the great affairs of government. We expect, in consequence of his arrival, a revolution in favor of reason, justice, and humanity in our country. He has already begun to point out abuses and to propose scheme that are full of wisdom and benevolence.

Uncertain

He is about 70 years of age, and his face is even-featured, venerable, and sincere. His manners are simple. He is likable and courteous, but at the same time a skillful and wise statesman. He has a natural son who was governor of New Jersey before the war and is now an officer in the British navy, whose son, also natural, lives with his grandfather and served as secretary for American affairs in Paris. Thus this family was of equal service to the American Republic and the English, and, although arisen from nothing and continued by illegitimate means, held respectable offices in both parties.

Elkanah Watson: Memoirs, 1786

On my first entering the room, he observed that all his old friends were dead, and he found himself alone, in the midst of a new generation, and added the remark, alike characteristic of the man and the philosopher, "he was in their way, and it was time he was off the stage." Yet he delighted a circle of young people (for he was a most instructive companion to youth in his old age) the whole evening with pleasant anecdote and interesting stories. His voice was very sonorous and clear, but at the same time hollow and peculiar.

Franklin was the first and greatest of American philosophers—a brilliant star in the galaxy of America's best benefactors—a child of nature, destitute of early literary acquirements, yet occupying a lofty position among the most distinguished literary men of his age. His own history will most adequately illustrate his useful career in a long life devoted to the promotion of the happiness of his fellow-men, and by his last will dispensing his beneficence centuries after his decease. Franklin was not averse to popular applause; he loved fame—not the blast of surreptitious honors; but that renown which was based on his own great deeds.

Benjamin Franklin to Jonathan Shipley, Philadelphia, 24 February 1786

You will kindly expect a Word or two concerning myself. My Health and Spirits continue, Thanks to God, as when you saw me. The only complaint I then had, does not grow worse, and is

tolerable. I still have Enjoyment in the Company of my Friends; and being easy in my Circumstances, have many Reasons to like Living. But the Course of Nature must soon put a period to my present Mode of Existence. This I shall submit to with less Regret, as, having seen during a long Life a good deal of this World, I feel a growing Curiosity to be acquainted with some other; and can chearfully, with filial Confidence, resign my Spirit to the conduct of that great and good Parent of Mankind, who created it, and who has so graciously protected and prospered me from my Birth to the present Hour.

Benjamin Rush to Richard Price, Philadelphia, 25 May 1786

Our venerable friend Dr. Franklin continues to enjoy as much health and spirits as are compatible with his time of life. I dined with him a few days ago in a most agreeable circle, where he appeared as cheerful and gay as a young man of five-and-twenty. But his conversation was full of the wisdom and experience of mellow old age. He has destroyed party rage in our state, or to borrow an allusion from one of his discoveries, his presence and advice, like oil upon troubled waters, have composed the contending waves of faction which for so many years agitated the State of Pennsylvania.

Benjamin Rush to Richard Price, Philadelphia, 27 October 1786

Our venerable friend Dr. Franklin has found considerable benefit from the use of the remedy you recommended to him, joined with the blackberry jam. He informed me a few days ago that he had not enjoyed better health for the last 30 years of his life than he does at present. His faculties are still in their full vigor. He amuses himself daily in superintending two or three houses which he is building in the neighborhood of his dwelling house. One of them is for a printing office for his grandson, a promising youth who was educated by him in France.

William Pierce: Sketches of Delegates to the Constitutional Convention, c. September 1787

Dr. Franklin is well known to be the greatest philosopher of the present age;—all the operations of nature he seems to understand,—the very heavens obey him, and the Clouds yield up their Lightening to be imprisoned in his rod. But what claim he has to the politician, posterity must determine. It is certain that he does not shine much in public Council,—he is no Speaker, nor does he seem to let politics engage his attention. He is, however, a most extraordinary Man, and tells a story in a style more engaging than anything I ever heard. Let his Biographer finish his character. He is 82 years old, and possesses an activity of mind equal to a youth of 25 years of age.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Presently president of this state, too well known to need the praise which we give him. He feels more than all other Americans that to be truly patriotic one must be a friend of France. Unfortunately, this philosopher, who has braved the lightening of the heavens and of the English Parliament, will not much longer struggle against the infirmities of age. We regret that immortality only pertains to his name and his writings.

Jonathan Williams to Marianne Williams, Philadelphia, 15 April 1789

You have been misinformed as to any Intention of making Dr. Franklin vice president. He alas, has arrived at his ne plus ultra in political fame, and now retires, not into tranquility, but into irremediable pain. The Stone in his Bladder allows him little or no ease but what is the Effect of Laudanum and the alternative with him now is either to suffer torture, or destroy his sense; he goes as far as 120 drops in a night, & is obliged to appeal to its aid very frequently in the day time: Now & then he gets a little better, but this does not last above a Week or so. What is very extraordinary at his great Age is the compleat possession of his intellectual Powers when they are not impair'd by Opium, & in the intervals of Pain (for it is always by starts) he will tell pleasant stories as usual. I see him but seldom; I only can see him when I am lucky enough to call at a convenient moment, for I am as much estranged from the other Part of the family as if I had never been acquainted in it.

Benjamin Franklin to George Washington, Philadelphia, 16 September 1789

My Malady renders my Sitting up to write rather painful to me, but I cannot let my Son-in-law Mr. Bache part for New York, without congratulating you by him on the Recovery of your Health, so precious to us all, and on the growing Strength of our New Government under your Administration. For my own personal Ease, I should have died two Years ago; but though those Years have been spent in excruciating Pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present Situation. I am now finishing my 84th and probably with it my Career in this Life; but in whatever State of Existence I am placed hereafter, if I retain any Memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the Esteem, Respect, and Affection with which I have long been, my dear Friend, Yours most sincerely.

George Washington to Benjamin Franklin, New York, 23 September 1789

The affectionate congratulations on the recovery of my health—and the warm expressions of personal friendship which were contained in your favor of the 16th instant claim my gratitude. And the consideration that it was written when you were afflicted with a painful malady, greatly increases my obligation for it.

Would to God, my dear Sir, that I could congratulate you upon the removal of that excruciating pain under which you labor! and that your existence might close with as much ease to yourself, as its continuance has been beneficial to our Country & useful to Mankind—or, if the united wishes of a free people, joined with the earnest prayers of every friend to science & humanity could relieve the body from pains or infirmities, you could claim an exemption on this score. But this cannot be, and you have within yourself the only resource to which we can confidently apply for relief—a philosophic mind.

If to be venerated for benevolence—if to be admired for talent—if to be esteemed for patriotism—if to be beloved for philanthropy can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain; and I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured that so long as I retain my memory—you will be thought on with respect, veneration and affection by Dear Sir Your sincere friend and obedient Humble Servant.

Letter from Philadelphia, Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*, 26 March 1790

The situation of Dr. Franklin is such, that some politicians, finding he cannot be of much further service to them, presume to abuse him, who heretofore were as extravagant in extolling; but if they had the opportunity of conversing with him, would discover his faculties of mind to be vigorous beyond all expectations, and his judgments on the natural rights of men unfettered by the shackles of slave-holding, and therefore was induced to sign the memorial on the principles of justice and conviction.*

*As president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Franklin had signed an anti-slavery petition to Congress. Representative James Jackson of Georgia said in debate that senility alone motivated Franklin's support of the petition.

Thomas Jefferson to Madame d'Houdetot, New York, 2 April 1790

I found our friend Doctor Franklin in his bed, cheerful, and free from pain, but still in his bed. He took a lively interest in the details I gave him of your revolution. I observed his face often flushed in the course of it. He is much emaciated.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, New York, 4 April 1790

The History of our Revolution will be one continued Lie from one end to the other. the essence of the whole will be that Dr. Franklin's electrical Rod, smote the Earth and out sprung General Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod—and thence forward these two conducted all the Policy, Negotiations, Legislatures and War.

William Maclay: Journal, 14 April 1790

The House adjourned. and as I was to dine this day with Mr. [Ralph] Izard, the Speaker and Genl. [Muhlenberg] being likewise engaged at the same place. We had an hour on hand to Saunter away before dinner. it began to rain as we got to Izards. There was of the Company Old [Pieter Johan] Van Berkel. The Speaker of the New York House of Representatives [Gulian Ver Planck] Members of Congress &ca. among our Wine I mentioned the expected death of Dr. Franklin. Izard knew him as well as any Man in the World. Docr. [William Samuel] Johnson would Yield to no Man, in intimate acquaintance with his Character. And at him they both went. I really never was much of an admirer of the Doctor. but I could hardly find in my heart to paint the Devil so bad. he had every fault of Vanity ambition want of Sincerity. &c. &ca. Lee's rascally Virtue of Prudence was all They would leave him.

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 18 April 1790

Last evening at 11 o'clock died the venerable Dr. Franklin. He had been reduced by the stone in his bladder, but died finally of a pleurisy which terminated in an abscess in his lungs from which he discharged matter a few days before his death. This pleurisy was caught by lying with his windows open. He possessed his reason to the last day of his life, but spoke nothing of his future existence or expectation beyond the grave.

Benjamin Rush to Elias Boudinot, Philadelphia, 18 April 1790

Last evening at 11 oClock the great and good Dr. Franklin closed his useful life. . . .

The Doctor was unable to speak for a day or two before he died, but retained his reason to the last hour of his life. A pleurisy which ended in an abscess in his lungs cut his last sinews. He expired without a struggle. I have not heard of anything that fell from him which discovered what his expectations were beyond the grave. My dear Julia [Mrs. Rush] wished this day that he had left a short testimony in favor of Christianity. I told her that if he had, he would have overset much stronger evidences of its truth, for we are told "that not many *wise* are called," and that "the world by *wisdom* knew not God." [I Corinthians I:26,21]

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 21 April 1790

Attended the funeral of Dr. Franklin. The concourse of spectators and followers were supposed to amount to 20,000 people. On the Monday preceding I visited at the Doctor's old mansion house, and was introduced by Mr. Bache, his son-in-law, to view his corpse. It was much reduced, but not changed. Had his beard been shaved after his death, he would have looked like himself, but this was forbidden by Mr. Bache. I obtained a promise, while viewing him, from Mr. Bache, of a lock of his hair, which I afterward procured, and sent some of it to Dr. Price and some of it to the Marquis of Fayette.

Thomas FitzSimons to Benjamin Rush, New York, 22 April 1790

Your favor of the 20 was the first intimation I had of Doctr. Franklin's death. Tho I had been led to expect it, by prior advices I think it happy that he is released from the painfull situation in Which he has been, for some time past. Now he is gone. I have no doubt more Justice will be done to his Character (in his own Country) than was while he lived—in other Countrys he will be Celebrated—the hint you gave has been attended to. And this day the Resolution it put was Agreed to in our house. We did not think it prudent to hazard it without previous preparation Which Occasioned its being delayd—the event proved the propriety of the precaution for tho it was not Opposed the Acceptance was not as Cordial as might have been wished. His Eastern brethren were not its supporters. I have had no oppy. of Inquireing whether the senate have followd our example. The preparatory Inquirys was first to be made because a Rejection would be dishonorable to all partys. We preferred the Motion in our house being made by some other than a Pennsylvanian. Mr. Madison undertook it cheerfully & was warmly interested in it. On all this I shall avoid Making observation but it Suggests some Which all public men in Popular Governments have had occasion at some period of their lives to make.

William Maclay: Journal, 22 April 1790

This day there were accounts published of the death of Doctor Franklin, & the House of Representatives resolv'd to crape their arms for a Month. When I consider how much the Doctor has been celebrated and When I compare his public fame, with what I know of his private Character, I am tempted to doubt Whether ever any Man was perfect. Yet perhaps it is for the good of Society that patterns of perfection should be held up, for Men to copy after. I will therefore give him my vote of praise, & if any Senator moves for crape for his Memory I shall have no Objection to it.

James Madison: Motion in House of Representatives, 22 April 1790*

Mr. Madison rose and made the following motion: Mr. Speaker said he, Though we have been informed not only through the channel of the newspapers but by a more direct communication, of

the decease of an illustrious character whose native genius has rendered distinguished services to the cause of science and of mankind in general, and whose patriotic exertions have contributed in a high degree to the independence and prosperity of this country in particular—the occasion seems to call upon us to pay some tribute to his memory expressive of the tender veneration his country feels for such distinguished merit. I therefore move the following resolution:

The house being informed of the decease of Benjamin Franklin, a citizen whose native genius was not more an ornament to human nature, than his various exertions of it have been precious to science, to freedom, and to his country, do resolve, as a mark of the veneration due to his memory, that the members wear the customary badge of mourning for one month.

*Printed in the New York *Daily Advertiser*, 23 April 1790.

Robert Morris to Mary Morris, New York, 22 April 1790

He richly deserves to be happy where he is gone, for he delighted in making happy as many of his Species in this world as came within his circle; indeed that circle had in many instances no other Bounds than the Globe we inhabit.

Thomas Jefferson to Ferdinand Grand, New York, 23 April 1790

The good old Doctor Franklin, so long the ornament of our country and I may say of the world, has at length closed his eminent career: he died on the 17th instant, of an imposthume of his lungs, which having suppurated and burst, he had not the strength to throw off the matter, and was suffocated by it: his illness from this imposthume was of sixteen days. Congress wear mourning for him by a resolve of their body.

William Maclay to Benjamin Rush, New York, 24 April 1790

So it seems death has been with You, and taken away the aged *Doctor*. The Representatives in Congress, have put on Crape for him. A Motion in our house to the same purpose miscarries. It seems as if some People carried their resentments beyond the Grave. The Doctor was accused, in his life time, of triming, so as to gain all Men. If he really practised this Art, it has not been with the fullest Success. For there are enemies to his fame. The disposition is a bad One. It is certainly in favour of Virtue, to pay respect to the Memory of great men, to forget their Foibles, if they had any, & hand down their good qualities, as patterns for Posterity.

John Adams to John Trumbull, New York, 25 April 1790

Franklin is gone, Peace to his Shade—Personal Resentments and Hatreds are not to be found in my nature in public affairs. I feel no ill will to his Memory—but I owe more to Truth than to his Fame; and I owe the Truth to my Country and Posterity. The last Letter of abuse to Congress in which he mentioned me he said I "was always an honest Man."—I wish my Conscience would allow me to say as much of him.—But from the first to the last of my acquaintance with him, I can reconcile his Conduct in public affairs neither to the Character of an honest Man, nor to that of a Man of Sense.

William Maclay to George Logan, New York, 25 April 1790

Your letter of the 12th did not reach my hands 'till Yesterday. You have my hearty thanks for it. I find by the public papers, That the Death of Doctor Franklin, which You mentioned as very probable, has actually taken place. He was old and full of days and honors too. He certainly deserv'd the name of a *Great Man*. How few have arrived at his degree of Usefulness, with all the advantages of expensive educations. His abilities may be said to have been all his own.

The Representatives in Congress have resolved to wear crape, in the usual way, for a Month, as Mourning for him. A motion of a similar kind was made in the Senate, but it miscarried.

Elias Boudinot to Benjamin Rush, New York, 28 April 1790

Your letter of the 18th, announced the death of one of the first of our fellow-citizens—his loss, is great to your city—state—our country, and to the world—although at the same time, we ought to be thankful, that he was continued to so good an old age, for the common benefit of mankind.

The public papers will inform you of what Congress has done to testify their respect for the memory of so worthy a fellow citizen—We have been blamed for this measure and the Senate refused to follow our example, as being improper for a citizen who was not in a public character at the time of his death. I confess the objection appears to me a weak one—Poor republics have no other means of shewing their grateful remembrance of important services but by testimonies of this sort, and I think too great attention to those of the deceased cannot be shewn. There can [no] injury arise from the precedent, as I doubt whether he has left his equal behind, in point of usefulness to his country.

Had the Doctor left a death bed testimony in favor of religion, it might have brought many of our pretended Deists to some serious consideration: for I do believe that a man who has the reputation of great wisdom and an uncommon insight into the works of nature, dying calmly and with apparent satisfaction, has a tendency to lull those of a careless turn of mind, or whose interest it is (in their own conceit) that a future state should be a mere fable to rest in the wisdom of this world without even turning a serious thought, to the concerns of futurity.

John Trumbull to John Adams, Hartford, Conn., 5 June 1790

Fame has certainly been very liberal to Franklyn in his lifetime—but I doubt She will hereafter reclaim a great part of her donations. I could never view him as the extraordinary Genius, either in Politics or Literature which he has been called. Except his invention of Electric rods, I know no claim he has to merit as a Philosopher [i.e., scientist]. He certainly never rose to high eminence as a literary character, & tho' always busy in politics & party, seems not to have been well versed in the Science of Legislation, or the Theory of Government.

Eulogy by the Duke de La Rochefoucauld d'Anville, *Journal de la Societe de 1789*, 19 June 1790*

I have met in America a great many enlightened statesmen and virtuous men, but none has possessed to such a high degree as Franklin the characteristics of the true philosopher. You know what these characteristics are, my friend: love of the human race to the extent that this love becomes the preoccupation of every waking moment; indefatigable zeal in the service of humanity; vast knowledge and understanding; simplicity of manners and purity of morals. Yet these traits alone would not establish a sufficiently clear line of distinction between him and other patriotic

statesmen. Therefore one more of his characteristics must be listed; namely, that Franklin, in the very center of the broad stage where he played so brilliant a rile, constantly has kept in view the far vaster stage of heaven and the future life. This viewpoint is the only one that can give strength and detachment, enhance a man's stature on earth, and transform him into a true philosopher. Franklin's whole life has been devoted to the study and practice of philosophy.

*Reprinted in Brissot de Warville: New Travels in the United States of America.

Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, I, 1791

The situation of Dr. Franklin as Minister from America to France, should be taken into the chain of circumstances. The diplomatic character is of itself the narrowest sphere of society that man can act in. It forbids intercourse by a reciprocity of suspicion; and a Diplomatic is a sort of unconnected atom, continually repelling and repelled. But this was not the case with Dr. Franklin. He was not the diplomatic of a Court, but of MAN. His character as a philosopher had been long established, and his circle of society in France was universal.

Thomas Jefferson to William Smith, Philadelphia, 19 February 1791

I can only therefore testify in general that there appeared to me more respect & veneration attached to the character of Doctor Franklin in France, than to that of any other person in the same country, foreign or native. I had opportunities of knowing particularly how far these sentiments were felt by the foreign ambassadors & ministers at the court of Versailles. The fable of his capture by the Algerines, propagated by the English newspapers, excited no uneasiness; as it was seen at once to be a dish cooked up to the palate of their readers. But nothing could exceed the anxiety of his diplomatic brethren, on a subsequent report of his death, which, though premature, bore some marks of authenticity.

I found the ministers of France equally impressed with the talents & integrity of Doctor Franklin. The Comte de Vergennes particularly gave me repeated and unequivocal demonstrations of his entire confidence in him. . . .

His death was an affliction which was to happen to us at some time or other. We have reason to be thankful he was so long spared; that the most useful life should be the longest also; that it was protracted so far beyond the ordinary span allotted to man, as to avail us of his wisdom in the establishment of our own freedom, & to bless him with a view of its dawn in the east, where they seemed, till now, to have learned everything, but how to be free.

The succession to Doctor Franklin, at the court of France, was an excellent school of humility. On being presented to any one as the minister of America, the commonplace question used in such cases was "*'est vous, Monsieur, qui remplace le Docteur Franklin*?" "it is you, Sir, who replaces Doctor Franklin?" I generally answered, "no one can replace him, Sir: I am only his successor."

Vice President John Adams to William Tudor, Philadelphia, 15 March 1791

You Seem to threaten me with a Place in the Pages of some Tory Historian. . . . I have long expected that my memory would be blackened by a thousand Lyes, from that quarter; but there is another region from which Volumes of Obloquy will be found in dastardly Secret Letters, concerning me. I mean From the Tools and slaves of Franklin in France England Holland and elsewhere. I expect more Lyes and slanders from that Quarter than from the Tories, who to do them Justice, if they were not more honest, as I believe, they were less ungenerous Ennemies I know.

Never did the little Passions of Envy Jealousy and Rivalry operate with more malignity on any human heart, than they did in that of that old Dotard, against me. I hold however in deep Contempt all the scandal that Ecritoirs* can vomit forth. Both Tories and frenchified slaves have ever been compelled to acknowledge my Integrity and this will presrve me.

*Writers.

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 25 August 1791

Visited Mr. Rittenhouse this day. He told me that he once heard Dr. Franklin say that "if he were to make a religion he would admit no repentance or pardon in it."

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 3 July 1794

Dr. Priestley dined with me. His conversation was highly instructive. He said that he had been very intimate with Dr. Franklin, and that from his often saying "he should like to peep out of his grave an hundred years hence" he concluded that he did not believe in a future state. He said that he had made many Deists. He acknowledged a belief only in the Being of a God, and a particular providence.

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Philadelphia, 18 July 1794

[After reading] six large folio volumes [in the state department office] containing your dispatches to Congress while you were in Europe . . . The contemptuous insolence of V. [the Comte de Vergennes] towards you, and his base malignity as well as his fear of you, and his perfidy to this Country, will at some future period appear in the full face of Day, as well as the miserable dupery, if it was not something worse, of *"papa F."*

Thomas Paine: *Age of Reason*, II, 1795

To be happy in old age, it is necessary that we accustom ourselves to objects that can accompany the mind all the way through life, and that we take the rest as good in their day. The man of pleasure is miserable in old age, and the mere drudge in business is but little better: whereas natural philosophy, mathematical, and mechanical science, are a continual source of tranquil pleasure. . . . Those who knew Benjamin Franklin will recollect that his mind was ever young; his temper ever serene. Science, that never grows grey, was always his mistress. He was never without an object; for when we cease to have an object, we become like an invalid in an hospital waiting for death.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 9 January 1797

Hamilton I know to be a proud Spirited, conceited, aspiring Mortal always pretending to Morality, with as debauched Morals as old Franklin who is more his Model than any one I know.

Toasts for an American Dinner, 4 July 1798

The memory of the Great franklyn, the pride of America, & the benefactor of the World.

Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Smith, Monticello, 22 August 1798

Dr. Franklin, the greatest man and ornament of the age and country in which he lived.

Benjamin Rush: Travels Through Life, c. 1800

I never visited him without learning something.

Benjamin Rush: Sketches, c. 1800

He seldom spoke in Congress but was useful in committees, in which he was punctual and indefatigable. He was a firm Republican, and treated kingly power at all times with ridicule and contempt. He early declared himself in favor of Independence. John Adams used to say he was more of a philosopher than a politician. It is certain he patronized the first constitution of Pennsylvania, in which there were contained nearly all the defects which could enter into a government, and to the influence of his name it owed its establishment. I sat next to him in Congress, when he was elected by the unanimous vote of every State in the Union to an embassy to the Court of France in the year 1776. When the vote was declared, I congratulated him upon it. He thanked me, and said "I am like the remnant of a piece of unsalable cloath you may have, as the shopkeepers say, for what you please." He was then 70 years of age. His services to his country in effecting the treaty with France were highly appreciated at the time that event took place. He was treated with great respect by the French Court. A letter from Paris written while he was there contained the following expression. "Dr. Franklin seldom goes to court. When he does he says but little, but what he says flies by the next post to every part of the Kingdom."

John Adams to John Marshall, Washington, 10 February 1801

. . . Dr. Franklin, the most concise, sprightly, and entertaining writer of his time.

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 20 February 1801

Dr. Priestley told me Dr. Franklin always wrote down his arguments or reason for or against any measure before he decided on it, and carefully viewed his papers, &c.

Mercy Otis Warren, History of the American Revolution, 1805

The celebrity of Doctor Franklin has been so just and so extensive, that it is painful even for the impartial historian, who contemplates the superiority of his genius, to record the foibles of the man; but intoxicated by the warm caresses and unbounded applauses of all ranks, among a people where the art of pleasing is systematized, he appeared, notwithstanding his age and experience, in a short time after his residence in France, little less a Gallican than an American. This might be from policy. It was said, however, that he attached himself to the interest of the Count de Vergennes, who, though he countenanced the American revolution, and co-operated in measures that completed it, yet it was afterwards discovered, that he secretly wished to embarrass their councils, and dreaded the rising glory of the United States. Whatever suggestions there might have been, it was never supposed that Doctor Franklin was led off from his attachment to the interest of America; yet this distinguished sage became susceptible of a court influence, that startled his jealous and more frigid colleague, Mr. Lee.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 19 September 1806

My experience is perfectly conformable to yours respecting silent men. Silence is most commonly design and intrigue. In Franklin it was very remarkable, because he was naturally a great talker. I have conversed with him frequently in his garrulous humors, and his grandson, or son, Billy, has told me that he never knew a greater talker than his grandfather. But at other times he was as silent as midnight, and often upon occasions and in relation to subjects on which it was his duty to speak. Arthur Lee told me he had known him to sit whole evenings in London, without uttering a word, in company with the first men for science and literature, when the conversation had turned upon subjects on which he was supposed to be well informed.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 31 October 1807

Dr. Franklin thought a great deal, wrote occasionally, but read during the middle and latter years of his life very little, and hence the errors of several of his opinions upon government.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 18 January 1808

What a pitty it is; and indeed what a Shame it is, that We have not a Word in our language to express the idea of the French Word *Naiveté*? There is not a figure of Rhetorick So impressive as this is 'tho it is no figure, but the most perfect simplicity. I know not whether it is possible to define it. Neat and plain, Seems to be flat and poor. Simple Nature, is not Satisfactory. Simplex munditiis* in Latin comes nearer. After all I know of no Single Word, nor of any definition in any language that pleases me, though the Thing itself is the most striking beauty in Poetry oratory and every Species of fine Writing. Homer, Shakespeare are the most indebted to it. Our Franklin, owes a great part of his Merit to it—It is not less visible or attractive in Architecture Painting and Sculpture.

*Unaffected by manners.

Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, Washington, 24 November 1808

It was one of the rules which, above all others, made Doctor Franklin the amiable of men in society, "never to contradict anybody." If he was urged to announce an opinion, he did it rather by asking questions, as if for information, or by suggesting doubts.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 12 April 1809

Dr. Franklin's behavior had been so excessively complaisant to the French ministry, and in my opinion had so endangered the essential interests of our country, that I had been frequently obliged to differ from him, and sometimes to withstand him to his face; so that I knew he had conceived an irreconcilable hatred of me, and that he had propagated and would continue to propagate prejudices, if nothing worse, against me in America from one end of it to the other.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 6 August 1811

It is scarcely safe to mention Dr Franklins name with respect in some Companies in our city. An Old Quaker tory in walking by his Statue which stands over our library door a few years ago,

gave the true reason for the hostility to his name which I have mentioned, in the following words. "But for *that* fellow we never should have had independance."

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 19 August 1811

The Doctor was a rigid economist, but he was in every stage of his life charitable, hospitable, and generous. In his private intercourse with his fellow citizens he was honest even above suspicion, and from all I have ever seen and know of him I believe he was strictly upright and correct as a servant of the public.

Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Cooper, Monticello, 10 July 1812

You know the just esteem which attached itself to Doctor Franklin's science, because he always endeavored to direct it to something useful in private life.

Thomas Jefferson to John Sinclair, Monticello, 31 July 1816

Like our good old Franklin, your labors and science go all to the utilities of human life.

Caspar Wistar, Philadelphia, 20 May 1817

Inclosed is an account of the publication of Dr. Franklin's letters & some small specimens of them. I believe this publication will evince that the writer was fairly entitled, not only to all the reputation he enjoyed, but a great deal more; & for the excellence of his heart as well as the clearness of his head. . . . It ought to be remembered that he embraced every proper occasion of being merry.

I beleive that he was fond of the pleasure of the table. An old Lady whose husband was one of his intimate friends, & had a very florid face, enquired of the Doctor how he preserved his face of Such a proper colour—"Madam, when my irons grow too hot, I draw them out of the fire," was the reply.

Donald Fraser to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 30 June 1817

I frequently ruminate of the three Corinthian Pillars, of the American Revolution—*George Washington, Thomas Jefferson* & *Benjn. Franklin*: whose names, will doubtless, be held in high veneration, by the American Nation, for many Centuries to come; & revered, & admired, by all the lovers of rational Liberty, throughout the civilized world.

Thomas Jefferson to Robert Walsh, Monticello, 4 December 1818

Dr. Franklin had many political enemies, as every character must which, with decision enough to have opinions, has energy & talent to give them effect on the feelings of the adversary opinion. . . . As to the charge of subservience to France, besides the evidence of his friendly colleagues before named [Arthur Lee and John Adams], two years of my own service with him at Paris, daily visits, and the most friendly and confidential conversation, convince me it had not a shadow of foundation. He possessed the confidence of that government in the highest degree, insomuch, that it may truly be said, that they were more under his influence, than he under theirs. The fact is, that his temper was so amiable and conciliatory, his conduct so rational, never urging impossibilities,

or even things unreasonably inconvenient to them, in short, so moderate and attentive to their difficulties, as well as our own, that what his enemies called subserviency, I saw was only that reasonable disposition, which, sensible that advantages are not all to be on one side, yielding what is just and liberal, is the more certain of obtaining liberality and justice. Mutual confidence produces, of course, mutual influence, and this was all which subsisted between Dr. Franklin and the government of France.

Manasseh Cutler: Reminiscences, post-1821*

As I walked up the avenue to his house, I reflected, I am going into the presence of a *great man*–one who had stood before kings and mighty ones of the earth. I hesitated; my knees smote together; but I could not retreat. I was greatly surprised to see in Dr. Franklin a small, lively, old man in his morning-gown, perfectly simple and unaffected in his appearance and manners. He immediately recognized me as the author of a botanical work—invited me to walk in his spacious and elegant garden; and in five minutes I felt as free and as much at home with him as with my own family or my most intimate friend.

*As related by Ira Cheever.

Vine Utley to Thomas Jefferson, Lyme County of New London, Conn., 18 March 1822

It would be gratifying to me to learn, whether you have made use of the warm bath to prevent the symtoms of old age.—Doct. Franklin owed much of his cheerfulness and strength of intellect, for the last thirty years of his life, to the use of the warm bath twice a week. That Philosopher commenced the practice of warm bathing, at the time he began to feel the symtoms of old age.

John Finch's Account of a Visit to Monticello, before 5 April 1824

On returning to the drawing-room, we had a conversation which continued three hours, and the following were some of the sentiments Mr. Jefferson expressed: . . .

"I played with Dr. Franklin at chess, and was equal to him at the game."

William Steele to Jonathan D. Steele, Painted Post, September 1825

My dear Son:—

I some time ago repeated to you an historical anecdote, in which you felt so much interested that you extorted from em a promise, that I would at some moment of leisure commit it to paper for you. I am now seated for that purpose, and shall relate it as nearly as I can recollect, in the words of General Jonathan Dayton, one of the members of the General Convention, who framed the Constitution. . . .

Happily for the United States, the Convention contained some individuals possessed of talents and virtues of the highest order, whose hearts were deeply interested in the establishment of a new and efficient form of government; and whose penetrating minds had already deplored the evils which would spring up in our newly established republic, should the present attempt to consolidate it prove abortive. Among those personages, the most prominent was Dr. Franklin. He was esteemed the *Mentor* of our body. To a mind naturally *strong* and *capacious*, enriched by much reading and the experience of many years, he added a manner of communicating his thoughts peculiarly his own—in which simplicity, beauty, and strength were equally conspicuous.

Interview with James Madison, In Jared Sparks' Journal, 25 April 1830

In the Convention Dr. Franklin seldom spoke. As he was too feeble to stand long at a time, his speeches were generally written. He would arise and ask the favor of one of his colleagues to read what he had written. Occasionally, however, he would make short extemporaneous speeches with great pertinency and effect.

James Madison to James K. Paulding, April 1831

[Franklin] has written his own life: and no man had a finer one to write, or a better title to be himself the writer.

James Madison: Detached Memorandum, pre-1832

I did not become acquainted with Dr. Franklin till after his return from France and election to the Chief Magistracy of Pennsylvania. During the Session of the Grand Convention, of which he was a member and as long after as he lived, I had opportunities of enjoying much of his conversation, which was always a feast to me. I never passed half an hour in his company without hearing some observation or anecdote worth remembering. . . .

On entering his chamber in his extreme age when he had been much exhausted by pain and was particularly sensible of his weakness, Mr. M. said he, these machines of ours however admirably formed will not last always. Mine I find is just worn out. It must have been an uncommonly good one I observed to last so long, especially under the painful malady which had co-operated with age in preying on it; adding that I could not but hope that he was yet to remain some time with us, and that the cause of his suffering might wear out faster than his Constitution. The only alleviation he said to his pain was opium, and that he found as yet to be a pretty sure one. I told him I took for granted he used it as sparingly as possible as frequent doses must otherwise impair his constitutional strength. He was well aware he said that every Dose he took had that effect; but he had no other remedy; and thought the best terms he could make with his complaint was to give up a part of his remaining life, for the greater ease of the rest.

William Temple Franklin

Silas Deane to President of Congress John Hancock, Paris, c. 16 March 1777

At present, as no Secretary is sent out, he with Mr. Franklin, supply the place, who is a young gentleman of great ingenuity, and gives the most favorable presage of future eminence.

Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Huntington, Passy, France, 12 March 1781

I have one Request more to make which if I have served the Congress to their Satisfaction I hope they will not refuse me. It is that they will be pleased to take under their Protection my Grandson Wm. Temple Franklin. I have educated him from his Infancy, & I brought him over with an Intention of placing him where he might be qualified for the Profession of the Law; but the constant Occasion I had for his Service as a private Secretary during the time of the Commissioners, and more extensively since their Departure, has induced me to keep him always with me; and

indeed being continually disappointed of the Secretary Congress had at different Times intended me, it would have been impossible for me without this young Gentleman's Assistance, to have gone through the Business incumbent on me! He has thereby lost so much of the time necessary for Law Studies, that I think it rather advisable for him to continue, if it may be, in the Line of public foreign Affairs, for which he seems qualified by a Sagacity, & Judgment above his Years, great Diligence and Activity, exact Probity, a genteel Address, a Facility in Speaking well the French Tongue, and all the Knowledge of Business to be obtained by a four Years' constant Employment in the Secretary's Office, where he may be said to have served kind of Apprenticeship. After all the Allowance I am capable of making for the Partiality of a Parent to his Offspring, I cannot but think he may in time make a very able foreign Minister for the Congress, in whose Service his Fidelity may be relied on. But I do not at present propose him as such; for though he is now of Age, a few Years more of Experience will not be amiss. In the mean time, if they shall think fit to employ him as Secretary to their Minister at any European Court, I am persuaded they will have Reason to be satisfied with his Conduct, and I shall be thankful for his Appointment as a Favour to me.

Benjamin Franklin to Robert R. Livingston, Passy, France, 22 July 1783

You mention that an entire new arrangement with respect to foreign affairs is under consideration. I wish to know whether any notice is likely to be taken in it of my grandson. He has now gone through an apprenticeship of near seven years in the ministerial business, and is very capable of serving the States in that line, as possessing all the requisites of knowledge, zeal, activity, language, and address. He is well liked here, and Count de Vergennes has expressed to me in warm terms his very good opinion of him. The late Swedish ambassador, Count de Creutz, who has gone home to be prime minister, desired I would endeavor to procure his being sent to Sweden with a public character, assuring me that he should be glad to receive him there as our minister, and that he knew it would be pleasing to the King.

Samuel Osgood to John Adams, Annapolis, Md., 7 December 1783

Doctor Franklin has long been urging Congress to make his Grandson a Minister; his last Letter presses them on this Subject & is accompanied with a particular Request purporting to be from the Minister of Sweden.—Nothing is to be feared from these Instances—for I am sure at present, that Congress will not make him a Minister; & I hope the Period never will arrive.—It is said he has served an Apprenticeship: But with such a Master, & such Examples, [he] must be tenfold the worse for it.—

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Paris, 11 November 1784

Can nothing be done for young Franklin. He is sensible, discreet, polite, & good humoured & fully qualified as a Secretaire d'Ambassade. His grandfather has none annexed to his legation at this court. He is most sensibly wounded at his grandson's being superseded.

Abigail Adams (Nabby): Journal in France, 25 March 1785

Mr. F. is always sociable, and is very satirical in general. He reminds me of a lady famed in this way, whom I have known in America.

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Paris, 5 July 1785

I have never been with him enough to unravel his character with certainty. Seems to be good in the main. I see sometimes an attempt to keep himself unpenetrated, which perhaps is the effect of the old lesson of his grandfather; his understanding is good enough for common use, but not great enough for uncommon ones. However, you will have better opportunity of knowing him. The Doctor is extremely wounded by the inattention of Congress to his application for him. He expects something to be done as a reward for his service. He will present a determined silence on this subject in future.

Brissot de Warville: New Travels in the United States of America, August 1788

Mr. Temple Franklin's house is five miles from Burlington, in the midst of a pine forest growing in sandy soil. It is a simple dwelling with a well-kept garden, and the view is gradually being extended as the trees are cleared. This American has a very good library. Here is a place which indeed seems to be designed to be the retreat of a philosopher.

David Salisbury Franks

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Baltimore, Md., 14 February 1783

My stay here has given me opportunities of making some experiments on my amanuensis F——s, perhaps better than I may have in France. He appears to have a good enough heart, an understanding somewhat better than common, but too little guard over his lips, I have marked him particularly in the company of women where he loses all power over himself and becomes almost a fright. His temperature would not be proof against their allurements, were such to be employed as engines against him. This is in some measure the vice of his age* but it seems to be increased also by his peculiar constitution.

*Franks was forty-two years old at this time.

James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 18 February 1783

Your portrait of your amanuensis is I conceive drawn to the life. For all unconfidential services he is a convenient instrument. For any thing farther ne sutor ultra crepidam.*

*An inaccurate and shortened version of *ne supra crepidam sutor indicaret* (let the cobbler stick to his last) from Plinius, *Historia Naturalis*.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Paris, 30 January 1787

You will see Franks and doubtless he will be asking some appointment. I wish there may be any one for which he is fit. He is light, indiscrete, active, honest affectionate.

Joseph French

William Plumer to John Hale, Exeter, N.H., 20 September 1786

Joseph French was their commander [i.e., the mob that surrounded the N.H. legislature at Exeter]. He had heretofore supported the character of an honest, inoffensive, weak, ignorant man.

Philip Freneau

James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 1 May 1791

I have seen Freneau also and given him a line to you. He sets out for Philada. today or tomorrow, though it is not improbable that he may halt in N. Jersey. He is in the habit I find of translating the Leyden Gazette and consequently must be fully equal to the task you had allotted him. He had supposed that besides this degree of skill, it might be expected that he should be able to translate with equal propriety into French: and under this idea, his delicacy had taken an insuperable objection to the undertaking. Being now set right as to this particular, and being made sensible of the advantages of Philada. over N. Jersey for his private undertaking, his mind is taking another turn; and if the scantiness of his capital should not be a bar, I think he will establish himself in the former. At all events he will give his friends there an opportunity of aiding his decision by their information and counsel. The more I learn of his character talents and principles, the more I should regret his burying himself in the obscurity he had chosen in N. Jersey. It is certain that there is not to be found in the whole catalogue of American Printers, a single name that can approach towards a rivalship.

James Madison to Joseph Jones, Philadelphia, post-23 August 1791

This will be handed you by Mr. [Francis] Childs who solicits subscriptions to a new Gazette to be edited from his press by Mr. Freneau. The plan will be shown you & speaks its own merits. Those of Mr. Childs have besides other vouchers the character & success of a paper of which he has long been the printer in *New York*. With Mr. Freneau I have been long thoroughly acquainted. He is a man of genius, of literature, of experience in the business he is to conduct, and of great integrity. These qualifications promise a vehicle of intelligence & entertainment to the public which has pretensions to its best patronage. I take the liberty of recommending the undertaking to yours, not only from a persuasion, that in bestowing it you will render a valuable service to our Country by opening so good a source of information, but from a desire of contributing to render the profits as proportional as may be to the justice of Mr. Freneau's title to them.

Daniel Carroll to James Madison, Georgetown, Md., 27 June 1792

Fenno & Freneau are at open war. The first has I think constructed his paper systematically for the accomplishment of certain views, which it would be well should be checked or exposed. The Latter certainly wants discretion to do this with effect. Some of his Customers likewise here are much disgusted with his illiberality in matters of Religion—& his want of decency on that Subject.

To Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 15 January 1797

I have lately recd. a letter from Mr. Freneau, who formerly edited the National Gazette in this City, in which he tells me that he has removed from N. Jersey to N. York, and is associating himself with Mr. Greenleaf in the publication of a Daily & Biweekly papers. Having been acquainted with Mr. Freneau from our youths, and being sensible of his private worth, his literary talents, and his steady attachment to the true principles of liberty as displayed in our Revolution & republican forms of Government, I feel an interest in the success of his laudable pursuits, which will I hope apologize for the freedom of recommending him to your esteem and countenance. You can appreciate much better than I can the particular undertaking he has in mind, but if it merits the encouragement which I hope it does, the value of your favorable attention to it, justifies the ambition he feels to obtain it.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 25 June 1807

Phillip Freneau is one of the Number: but I know not in what Light to consider him. A Libeller, he certainly was not only against me but against the whole Administration of the Government at that time. But he Seems to have been an Instrument in the hands of others, and not well Satisfied with his Employment or his Employers. He has retired for many years into total obscurity certainly neglected by the Party which Seduced him and I hope repenting of his Wickedness If this is the Case he ought to be forgiven by all whom he has injured or offended, as he certainly has been long since, by me.

Moore Furman

Nathanael Greene to George Washington, Fredericksburg, N.Y., 27 October 1778

The Deputy Quarter Master for the State of New-Jersey is a Gentleman of great Industry, well acquainted with Business and stands fair with the People