

POOR RICHARD'S MAXIMS.

Extracted from Dr. Benjamin Franklin's Political Works.

"THE WAY TO WEALTH,"

As clearly shewn in the preface of an old Pennsylvania Almanack, intituled 'poor Richard improved,' which contains a most useful and instructive lesson for people of all ranks; and, if duly attended to cannot fail rewarding the reader abundantly for his pains

COURTEOUS READER,

I Have heard that nothing gives an author so great pleasure as to find his works respectfully quoted by others. Judge, then, how much I must have been gratified by an accident I am going to relate to you. I stopped my horse lately, where a great number of people were collected at an auction of merchants goods. The hour of sale not being come, they were conversing on the badness of the times, and one of the company called to a plain, clean, old man, with white lock's, pray, father Abraham, what think you of the times? Will not these taxes quite ruin the country? How shall we be ever able to pay them? What would you advise us to,—"Father Abraham stood up, and replied, if you will have my advice, I will give it you in short, "for a word to the wise is enough," as poor Richard says. They joined in desiring him to speak his mind, and gathering round him he proceeded as follows:

"Friend, says he, the taxes are indeed very heavy; and if those laid on by government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly; and from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us, by allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice, and something may be done for us; "God helps them that help themselves," as poor Richard says.

I. 'It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one tenth part of their time to be employed in its service: but idleness taxes many of us much more; sloth, bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. "Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright," as poor Richard says.—"But dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life, is made of," as poor Richard says. "How much more then is necessary do we spend in sleep! forgetting that the sleeping fox catches no poultry, and that there will be sleeping enough in the grave," as poor Richard says.

"If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be," as poor Richard says, the greatest prodigality; "since as he elsewhere tells us. "Lost time is never found again; & what we call time enough, is always little enough:" let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose; for by diligence we shall do more with less perplexity. "Sloth makes all things difficult, hut industry all easy; and he that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business, at night; while laziness travels so slowly, that poverty soon overtakes him. Drive thy business, let not business drive thee; and early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," as Poor Richard says.

[*Dr. Franklin, wishing to collect into one piece all the sayings upon the following subjects, which he dropped in the course of publishing the Almanacs, called Poor Richard; introduces Father Abraham for this purpose. Hence it is, that Poor Richard is too often wanted, and that, in the present title, he is said to be improved. Notwithstanding the stroke of humour in the concluding paragraph of this address, Poor Richard (Saunders) and Father Abraham have proved in America, that they are no common preachers. And shall we, brother Irishmen, refuse good sense and favor, knowledge, because it comes from the other side of the water.]

"So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times; we may make these times better, if we bestir ourselves. "Industry, need not wish, and he that lives upon hope, will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help hands, for I have no lands," or, if I have they are smartly taxed. "He that hath a trade hath an estate; and he that hath calling, hath an office of profit and honor," as poor Richard says; but "then the trade must be worked at, or the calling well followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious we shall never starve, for, "at the working man's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter." Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter, for, industry pays debts, while despair encreaseth them." What though you have found no treasure, nor has any rich relation left you a legacy, "diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry. Then plow deep, while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep." Work while it is called to-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered to-morrow. "One to-day is worth two to-morrows," as poor Richard says; and father, never leave that till to-morrow, which you can do to day."—If you were a servant, would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Are you then your own master? be ashamed to catch yourself idle, when there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, your country, and your king. Handle your tools without mittens, remember that "the cat in gloves catches no mice," as poor Richard says. It is true, there is much to be done, and perhaps, you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects; for "constant dropping wears away stones; and by diligence and patience the mouse ate in two the cable; and little strokes fell great oaks."

"Methinks I hear some of you say, "Must a man afford himself no leisure?"

Will tell thee, my friend what poor Richard says; "Employ thy time well, thou meanest to gain leisure, and, since thou art not sure of a minute, throw no way an hour." Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; for, "A life of leisure, and a life of laziness are two things, Many, without leisure, would live by their wits only, but they speak for want of stock," whereas industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect. "Folly pleasures and they will follow you. The diligent spinner has a large shift, and now I have a sheep and a cow and every body bids me good-morrow."

II. "But with our industry we must likewise be steady, settled, and careful, and oversee our own affairs with our own eyes, and not trust too much to others, for, as Poor Richard says"

I never saw an oft removed tree,
Nor yet an oft removed family,
That thrive so well as those that settled be."

And again, "Three removes are as bad as a fire," and again, "Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee," and again, if you would have your business done, go, if not send. "And again, He that by the plough would thrive. Himself must either hold or drive."

(To be continued.)