

to sell them both the first good opportunity, for we do not like Negro servants. . . .

"As to your grandchildren, Will is now nineteen years of age, a tall proper youth, and much of a beau. He acquired a habit of idleness on the expedition, but begins of late to apply himself to business, and I hope will become an industrious man. He imagined his father had got enough for him, but I have assured him that I intend to spend what little I have myself, if it please God that I live long enough; and, as he by no means wants sense, he can see by my going on that I am like to be as good as my word. Sally grows a fine girl, and is extremely industrious with her needle and delights in her book." Sarah Franklin was not yet seven. "She is of a most affectionate temper and perfectly dutiful and obliging to her parents, and to all. Perhaps I flatter myself too much, but I have hopes that she will prove an ingenious, sensible, notable, and worthy woman, like her Aunt Jenny. She goes now to the dancing school.

"For my own part, at present I pass my time agreeably enough. I enjoy, through mercy, a tolerable share of health. I read a great deal, ride a little, do a little business for myself, more for others, retire when I can, and go into company when I please; so the years roll round, and the last will come, when I would rather have it said 'He lived usefully' than 'He died rich.'"

Philosophers writing to their mothers, like other men, tell what they think their mothers would most like to hear, and Franklin told rather about his household than about the lightning rod he had just proposed or the academy he was helping to found or the public demands on his jealous time. There was an air of leisure about his letter, for he was then freer than he had recently been or was soon to be again. Retired from business, he had not yet seriously entered politics. That came with his election to the Assembly the year following.

His clerkship had been a long apprenticeship, since 15 October 1736. On that day, the day after the Assembly convened for its annual session, the members voted not to reappoint Joseph Grown, their former clerk. Then, the record says: "A petition from Benjamin Franklin was presented to the House, and read, setting forth that he hath been informed this House have a disposition to

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