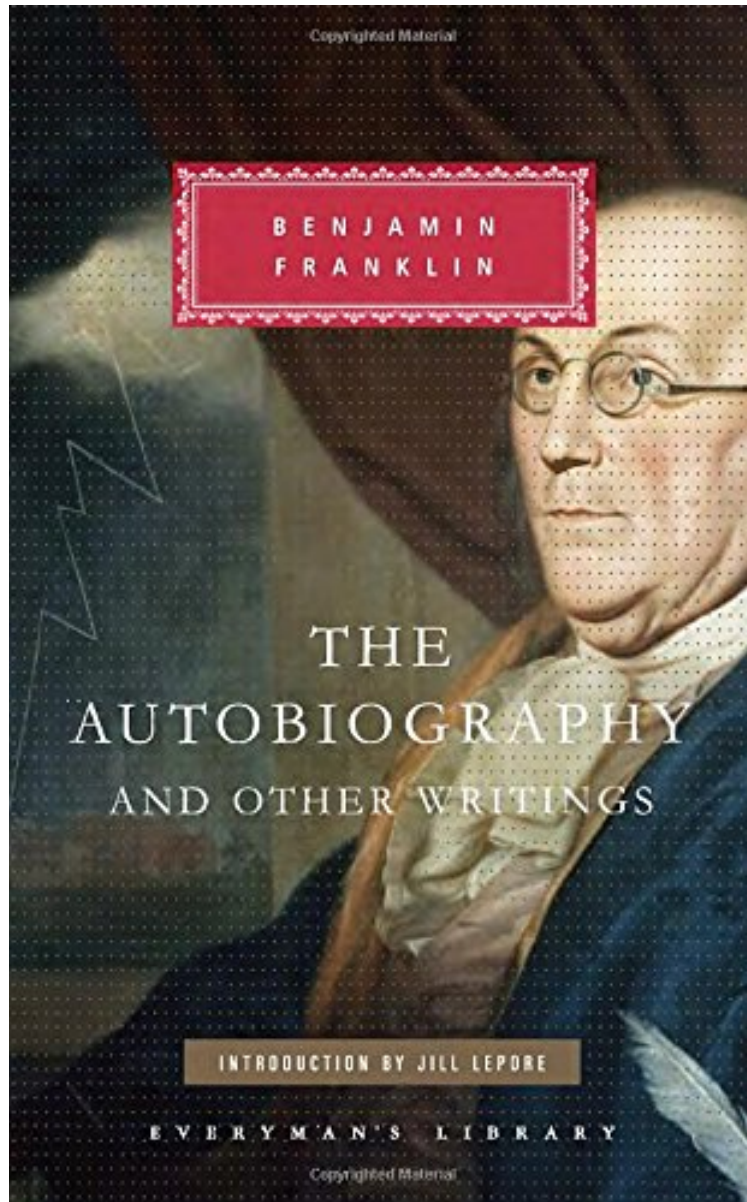


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The Autobiography and Other Writings (Everyman's Library (Cloth))

Benjamin Franklin
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Benjamin Franklin : The Autobiography and Other Writings (Everyman's Library (Cloth)) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Autobiography and Other Writings (Everyman's Library (Cloth)):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Word About the Bookbinder's Art By Michael Kear Since most readers are already well acquainted with the content of this volume, *The Autobiography* as well as a small selection of Franklin's other writings, I want to focus this review on the construction of this book. First, let me say that I collect books published by Everyman's Library and have always been a huge fan of their look, feel, and durable binding. This particular book was printed and bound in Germany by GGP Media. As with other volumes of the EL series, this book is bound in a cloth cover. It's important to distinguish between a mere "hardcover," which is usually just a cover made of paper-covered cardboard, and a cloth cover book. A cloth cover is just that - a hardbound book with cloth, actual fabric, over the covers. This kind of cover is old school, reminiscent of the great bookbinders of yesteryear. The book block itself is sewn, not glued. Again, this is an old school way of binding a book to last. And that's the point! Everyman's Library is a collection meant to pass on to your children and grandchildren. Over the cloth covers, the EL comes with a tasteful dust jacket. I must also mention that this volume comes with an olive green ribbon marker. The paper used in this volume is exceptionally nice. It is thick, opaque, creamy. The type is set in Bembo which was originally cut by the punch-cutter Francesco Griffo for the Venetian printer-publisher Aldus Manutius in early 1495. It is very readable and easy on the eyes. This volume retails for \$26.95, which is an exceptional value for the level of quality. 's price is even better!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Another outstanding publication by one of the best English-language By Robert Moore Benjamin Franklin has always been one of the most important Americans but has been differently valued from one generation to another. He is frequently reformed as a self-made man, a free market capitalist before Adam Smith, but those are not accurate stereotypes. Franklin was acutely aware that he owed his success in the world in large part to others who were not in a position to benefit from their labors as he. This is why he was such a strong advocate for a strongly progressive tax system. It was only fair, he argued, that those like himself, who benefitted more from a system in which so many participated, should pay a larger share. Franklin may have been rugged, but he was hardly an individualist. Neither was he much of a free marketer. He in fact shared the conviction of many of his time that government needed to discipline the market, that those involved in trade were too self-interested to regulate themselves. So strong, in fact, was his conviction that he refused to engage in political activity until he had retired from market activity. Like Adam Smith, he felt that those in the market should abstain from serving in the public sector until his personal interests no longer conflicted with the general good. Unlike many ideologues from today, Franklin never, ever confused private and public good. When the two conflicted, Franklin always sided with the public good. Not that Franklin felt that all individuals were made of equal parts. He was keenly aware of his own achievements and self-worth. He was, at the height of his public career, quite possibly the most celebrated individual in the world, as lauded in France and England as in the Colonies. Even during the war for American independence he remained respected in England, maintaining a correspondence with many of England's greatest minds. Needless to say, Franklin was aware that his story was one he wanted to share and others were anxious to hear. Sadly, he was never able to complete his autobiography. He wrote much of what we have in 1771, while living in England, and the rest in fits and starts through the rest of his life, world events preventing him from working on it at any length. When he did finally have the time, his famous rotund figure shrunken to nothing due to his heavy use of opium to combat the intense pain that dominated his life. What is perhaps shocking to many who read this is what an unflashy book it is. One might say it was almost Puritanical, so stripped it was of artifice and literary device. It is a somber reflection on his life, almost a how-to manual for those who wanted to achieve the kind of life that he had. Sadly, the account stops short of his public career. For many of us, that would have been the most interesting part of his book. As a result, the book has always been a little imbalanced. We get the private Franklin, but not the later, public, more famous one. I love Everyman's classics - the paper, the font, the cloth the boards are wrapped in, and the intros, and this is no exception. Normally, if a title is available in an Everyman's, that is the edition I prefer, but there are exceptions, and this might be one of those. This is the fourth edition of Franklin's autobiography that I have added to my library. Besides the Everyman's, I also have the Library of America edition, a Penguin Classic edition, and the Yale Nota Bene edition. The Library of America has a large number of works beside the autobiography, but like most Library of America volumes, it has a disappointing amount of critical material. To be honest, I very rarely read Library of America editions unless there is no other source for the text. This is really unfortunate because the texts themselves are almost always the best available, as with their Melville volumes. So while you won't find a better text of almost all the editions, you can almost always find more useful ones. Still, if you have all of the LOA volumes, you have a tremendous study aide. The Yale is perhaps the best standalone edition, with a great Intro and all kinds of detailed notes on the history of the text. The Penguin is also a very fine edition, with lots of fine supplements and notes by Kenneth Silverman. All things considered, I think the Penguin will be my edition of choice for a very simple reason, perhaps a concession to age: I love the font. I do like the Everyman's edition and the extra texts are great. It features a good intro by Jill Lepore. But do I like it overall more than the Penguin? I think it is merely a question of cost. You get about the same value for a lot less money. Nonetheless, if you - like I frequently am - intent on getting the Everyman's, you certainly won't be doing yourself a disservice. Everyman's is a great imprint and each new edition that they publish makes me even a bigger fan than I always was. These, along with their recent outstanding collection of Edmund Burke's works, shows that they continue to be one of the best presses around today.

1 of 1 people found the

following review helpful. Great writing. Excellent quality book. By Narut UjnatI will review this book on two points. The first is the content of the written material, which is much of the writings of Benjamin Franklin, including his autobiography. On this basis, this is excellent and classic American reading. Franklin was truly a autodidact that created so many inventions we take for granted today, whether the library, postal system amongst others. He was truly a founding genius, without mentioning his contributions to political thought in the American colonies. His writings are interesting and quintessentially American. This book deserves to be read thoroughly and widely, though the audience will unfortunately be small. Whether correspondence on various matters, or essays, it is always interesting reading and also his writing gives lessons in good efficient writing as well. As to the book itself, this is part of the series of Everyman's Library, which has been published for decades and such books are available in used bookstores because they are an excellent value. This new edition is easily as well made. The book jacket is of high quality and the book binding is excellent. This is clearly made at a higher level than the average hardcover you find at a bookstore - or purchase online. In other words, the quality is excellent and seems as it will last a long time.

Benjamin Franklin's account of his rise from poverty and obscurity to affluence and fame has charmed every generation of readers since it first appeared. Begun as a collection of anecdotes for his son, the memoir grew into a history of his remarkable achievements in the literary, scientific, and political realms. A printer, inventor, scientist, diplomat, and statesman, Franklin was also a brilliant writer whose wit and wisdom shine on every page. His Autobiography has deservedly become the most widely read American autobiography of all time the self-portrait of a quintessential American. Franklin was a remarkably prolific writer, and is equally beloved for his humorous, philosophical, parodic, and satirical writings, parables, and maxims, which he published under an astonishing number of pen names, including Poor Richard, the Busy-Body, and Silence Dogood. This hardcover edition of The Autobiography and Other Writings contains a varied selection of these, including The Kite Experiment, A Parable Against Persecution, Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Rules for Making Oneself a Disagreeable Companion, and The Way to Wealth.

About the Author BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790) was a printer, writer, inventor, scientist, diplomat, and statesman. JILL LEPORE is the David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History at Harvard University and a staff writer at The New Yorker. Her books include Book of Ages, a finalist for the National Book Award; New York Burning, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; The Name of War, winner of the Bancroft Prize; The Mansion of Happiness, which was short-listed for the 2013 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction; and The Secret History of Wonder Woman. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Excerpt from the Introduction by Jill Lepore I N T R O D U C T I O N Or, from the Printer to the Reader I could as easily make a Collection for you of all the past Parings of my Nails, Benjamin Franklin wrote to his sister Jane in 1767, after she asked him to send her all his old essays on politics. It was as if, in dashing off articles, he had been sloughing off pages, like a snake shedding skin. [1] Franklin liked to think of himself as a book: a man of letters, spine of bone, flesh of paper, blood of ink, his skin a cover of leather, stitched. When he wrote, he molted. He could be as sneaky as a snake, too, something to bear in mind when reading his autobiography, as sly an account as anything Franklin ever allowed himself the grave indiscretion of putting on paper. Franklin was a writer, a scientist, and a statesman but, first and last, he was a printer. He knew every form and each style, every font and each type. In his shop, he sold quills and inkstands, foolscap and folios, almanacs and spelling books. He bought rags for making paper. READY MONEY for old RAGS, may be had of the Printer thereof, he announced in the pages of his newspaper, the Pennsylvania Gazette. [2] He owned papermills and printing presses. He printed newspapers and novels, magazines and treatises. He sold, in his shop, an entire inventory of blank forms: Bills of Lading bound and unbound, Common Blank Bonds for Money, Bonds with Judgment, Counterbonds, Arbitration Bonds, Arbitration Bonds with Umpirage, Bail Bonds, Counterbonds to save Bail harmless, Bills of Sale, Powers of Attorney, Writs, Summons, Apprentices Indentures, Servants Indentures, Penal Bills, Promissory Notes, c. all the Blanks in the most authentick Forms, and correctly printed. [3] He was a jack-of-allpages: authentick, and correctly printed. A printer of money, a trader in the authentic, a master of every form, Benjamin Franklin had a genius for counterfeit. Long after he stopped buying rags, soaking them, pressing them into pages, gracing them with ink, and selling them as books turning rags into riches he signed himself B. Franklin, printer. But what he liked best was not signing his name. He loved satire, imposture, and anonymity. He once wrote a parody of a gentlemans conduct manual in the form of a letter advising a young man suffering from violent natural Inclinations that hard-to-be governd Passion of Youth but unwilling to get married to remedy what ailed him, to take only older women for mistresses. Their Conversation is more improving, he remarked; theyre more prudent and discreet, and theyre better at other things, too, every Knack being by Practice capable of Improvement, not to mention, There is no hazard of Children. Then, too, in the dark all Cats are grey and, after all, They are so grateful !! [4] Not counting his mistresses, he rarely placed his faith in the discretion of others. Three can keep a secret if two of them are dead, went one of the many proverbs Franklin signed using the name of Richard Saunders, a fictional character he had created, a daft astrologer who was the alleged author of Poor Richards

Almanack.[5] (Poor Richard was Franklins affectionate homage to Jonathan Swifts imaginary almanac-maker, Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.) Most of his best fakes he never printed; instead, he read them performed them for friends. (Strange! that a Man who has wit enough to write a Satyr; should have folly enough to publish it, Poor Richard says.) He faked court documents, elegies, and even Scripture. He was an exceptionally skilled mimic: he taught himself to write by reading Swift, and by copying the style of the essayists in an English gentlemens magazine, The Spectator. He once wrote a chapter of the Old Testament in pitch-perfect King James that he bound within the pages of his own Bible so that he could read it aloud to see who would fall for it. (Hed never have published it because, as Poor Richard says, Talking against Religion is unchaining a Tyger.) In Franklins fake Genesis chapter 39, Abraham is sitting in the door of his tent at sundown when behold a Man, bowed with Age, came from the Way of the Wilderness, leaning on a Staff. Abraham invites the stranger into the tent but when the old man reveals himself an infidel, Abraham, self-righteous, kicks him out. The next morning, God, finding the old man gone, is peevish and exasperated: Have I borne with him these hundred ninety and eight Years, and nourished him, and cloathed him, notwithstanding his Rebellion against me, and couldst not thou, that art thyself a Sinner, bear with himoneNight?Swift first published nearly everything he ever wrote either anonymously, or using a pen name; so did Franklin. When the Writer conceals himself, he has the Advantage of hearing the Censure both of Friends and Enemies, expressd with more Impartiality, Franklin explained.[6] It was also more fun that way: he wished to delight himself. Some of Franklins satires are so cunning they werent discovered to be hoaxes, or his, until long after he was dead, and some, once discovered, were buried, or even destroyed. The first scholar to collect Franklins papers, the Harvard historian and former chaplain of Congress, Jared Sparks, who published a ten-volume edition of Franklins Works in the 1830s, was a humorless pedant who suppressed anything he found in Franklin that offended his sensibilities, silently cutting out of Franklins letters, for instance, all of his filthy jokes. Needless to say, Sparks included in his edition of Franklins Works neither Franklins advice about taking old women as mistresses nor his parable against religious persecution. If you woud not be forgotten/As soon as you are dead and rotten, Poor Richard says, Either write things worth the reading,/Or do things worth the writing. He might have added: And leave your papers in the hands of a better editor.He was a hard lot, Mark Twain once wrote about Franklin, but all Twain or anyone else knew, for a century, was Sparkss Franklin, which was hardly Franklin at all.[7] In 1938, when Carl Van Doren published a biography of Benjamin Franklin, on the heels of a biography of Jonathan Swift, he explained that he felt he had no choice. It was as if Sparks had locked Franklin in a box. The dry, prim people seem to regard him as a treasure shut up in a savings bank, to which they have the lawful key, Van Doren wrote. I herewith give him back, in grand dimensions, to his nation and the world.[8] But it was, by then, nearly too late: Franklin is still locked in that bank vault, his face on the hundred-dollar bill, his best-known essay The Way to Wealth, as if what he stood for was making money. Nothing could be less true. What Franklin stood for was making knowledge.Much of what Sparks kept out of Franklins Works he set aside because it offended him, but a lot of it he never found. After Franklins death, his papers, including drafts of the story of his life, had been scattered. Sheaves of his papers wound up in a tailors shop on St. Jamess Street in London, cut into sleeve patterns. Then there was the matter of disguise; it was impossible, when Sparks was writing, and it remains difficult, even today, to find everything that Franklin ever wrote. By the latest count, which is doubtless incomplete, Franklin used more than a hundred pen names. Silence Dogood was the first he used it when hewas sixteen and the funniest; Historicus, the name under which he published an anti-slavery essay hewrote from his deathbed, the last, and the most serious. In between, he signed himself everything from the slipslop Homespun and the indelicate FART-HING to the imperious Benevolus and the pretentious Americanus. Once, as The Busy-Body, he expressed his opinion that a writer ought to be judged by his words alone the man, his book and that signing ones own name to ones essays was nothing more than an act of vanity: Every Man will own, that an Author, as such, ought to be tryd by the Merit of his Productions only.[9] But, honestly, few writers were vainer. Most People dislike Vanity in others whatever Share they have of it themselves, he admitted, but I give it fair Quarter wherever I meet with it.Franklins love of anonymity and disguisemake it strange that hes best known for writing the only kind of book an author cant publish under a fake name: an autobiography. (An aside about the title. Franklin never called it an autobiography: that word wasnt coined until, seven years after his death, it appeared in an English literary magazine, where it was meant as a joke was there ever a sillier word?[10] It was Sparks who first called what Franklin had written an autobiography, in all seriousness, when he included it in the first volume of his Works.) In fact, Franklins style is actually a very poor fit for the form, which may be why it took him nearly twenty years to write what little he did of the story of his life, why he never finished it, and why he never allowed any part of it to be printed.Another reason the very existence of Franklins autobiography is surprising is that he was forever advising other people not to talk about themselves so much, because nattering on about your own life is so dreadfully tiresome: What is it to the Company we fall into whether we quarrel with our Servants, whether our Children are froward and dirty, or what we intend to have for Dinner to morrow? he asked, in On Conversation, an essay he published in the Pennsylvania Gazette in 1730.[11] Talkmuch of your-self, your Education, your Knowledge, your Circumstances, your Successes in Business, your Victories in Disputes, your ownwise Sayings and Observations on particular Occasions, c. c. c., Franklin wrote in 1750, in Rules for Making Oneself a Disagreeable Companion,[12] which is nothing if not an excellent set of instructions for writers of

autobiographies.1 BF to Jane Franklin Mecom, London, December 24, 1767.2 Advertisement, Pennsylvania Gazette, April 18, 1734.3 Advertisement, Pennsylvania Gazette, October 9, 1729.4 Advice to a Young Man on the Choice of a Mistress, 1745.5 BF, Poor Richards Almanack, 1732.5.6 BF, On Literary Style, printed in The Pennsylvania Gazette, August 2, 1733.7 Mark Twain, The Late Benjamin Franklin, The Galaxy, July 1870, pp. 138-40.8 Carl Van Doren, Benjamin Franklin (1938), viii.9 BF, The Busy-Body, No. 8, printed in The American Weekly Mercury, March 27, 1729. And see The Printer to the Reader, printed in The New-England Courant, February 11, 1723:[On anonymity] As for the Author, that is the next Question. But tho we profess our selves ready to oblige the ingenious and courteous Reader with most Sorts of Intelligence, yet here we beg a Reserve. Nor will it be any Manner of Advantage either to them or to the Writers, that their Names should be published; and therefore in this Matter we desire the Favour of you to suffer us to hold our Tongues: Which tho at this Time of Day it may sound like a very uncommon Request, yet it proceeds from the very Hearts of your Humble Servants.10 Self-biography, a writer for Londons Monthly mused in 1797, was probably not a legitimate word: it is not very usual in English to employ hybrid words partly Saxon and partly Greek: yet autobiography would have seemed pedantic. OED: W. Taylor in Monthly Rev. 2nd Ser. 24 375.11 BF, On Conversation, printed in The Pennsylvania Gazette, October 15, 1730.12 BF, Rules for Making Oneself a Disagreeable Companion, printed in The Pennsylvania Gazette, November 15, 1750.