

**THE STORY OF
YOUNG BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN**

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The story of young Benjamin Franklin by Wayne Whipple

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WAYNE WHIPPLE

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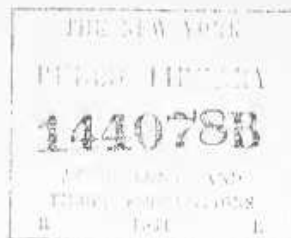
By

WAYNE WHIPPLE

Author of The Story of the American Flag, The Story of the
Liberty Bell, The Story of the White House, The Story
of Young George Washington, the Story of
Young Abraham Lincoln, etc.

Illustrated

P H I L A D E L P H I A
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY



IN UNIFORM STYLE BY THE
SAME AUTHOR

THE STORY OF
YOUNG GEORGE WASHINGTON

THE STORY OF
YOUNG ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE STORY OF
YOUNG BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

THE STORY OF
YOUNG U. S. GRANT

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INTRODUCTION

“THE FIRST AND GREATEST AMERICAN”

A GREAT man is like a lofty mountain—you cannot take in his true grandeur except at a great distance. From a point near Pike's Peak you cannot discern how much higher the towering mountain is than the hills around it.

The same is true of Benjamin Franklin. The American Revolution developed a rare group of great men, so strong in their different ways that it was impossible at the time to distinguish the greatest. Even the first United States Congress did not appreciate Washington. Some of its members were jealous of him, and a neighbor once said: “Washington would never have been anything but a land surveyor if he had not married a wealthy widow!” With such petty notions the Congress, that should have helped and supported the commander-in-chief, hampered

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and annoyed him, and was harder to cope with in some respects than the British and Hessian armies.

If it had not been for Franklin's tactful work and influence in Europe, Washington could never have gained his final victory at Yorktown nor achieved the independence of the United States. This fact is not so widely known as it should be, so "The Story of Young Benjamin Franklin" is meant to show vividly how Franklin, the great-hearted inventor, philosopher and diplomat, induced princes and people of the Old World to send men, ships and money to conquer the British armies and thus gain the grand boon of Liberty for the American Colonies.

It was by foreign nations that Franklin was first recognized as the greatest man of his time. Not only was he not appreciated in America, but he was narrowly misjudged because he was, in many respects, far in advance of his day.

While in London, a journeyman printer of nineteen, young Franklin wrote a strong liberal pamphlet setting forth what were called infidel ideas. This attracted the notice of some of the greatest minds in England. Franklin not only renounced the opinions given in this youthful

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essay, which would not be taken more seriously nowadays than a thesis written by a young man in college, but he also wrote in his Autobiography that his allowing his admiring employer to print this pamphlet was one of the worst mistakes he ever made.

Franklin was so far ahead of the world in many of his ideas that even progressive America, though following him with rapid strides for nearly two centuries, has not yet caught up with him.

He did not believe in the religion taught by the ministers of his day. He complained that they seemed to lose sight of the good they ought to be doing and wasted their efforts in mere theological arguments and bitter attacks on the beliefs of fellow Christians who did not think just as they did. In this the Christian world now agrees with Franklin—that men ought to be good, and do good, and make good in their own daily living instead of theorizing and arguing about the doctrines of others. There is not one Churchman in a hundred to-day who would side with the ministers of that period against Benjamin Franklin, but the good philosopher's reputation suffers yet from the narrow notions