

**CEREMONIES ATTENDING
THE UNVEILING OF THE
STATUE OF BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN, JUNE 14, 1899**

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Ceremonies Attending the Unveiling of the Statue of Benjamin Franklin, June 14, 1899 by
Justus C. Strawbridge

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OF THE
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JUNE 14, 1899

PRESENTED TO THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

BY

MR. JUSTUS C. STRAWBRIDGE



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[All of whom are descendants of Benjamin Franklin.]

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Introduction

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THIS volume is prepared as a memorial of the presentation to the city of Philadelphia of the statue of Benjamin Franklin, by Mr. Justus C. Strawbridge, of Philadelphia. His attention was directed to the fact that there did not exist in the city of Philadelphia a fitting monument to its greatest citizen. While we cannot claim Franklin as a Philadelphian by birth, it is remembered that he came to us unheralded by fame, cast his lot with our people, and here took his chances in the fortunes of the world—which seem to have dealt generously with him. It was with us that he achieved his great success in many fields of activity. We all know of his devotion to the interests of the city of Philadelphia; of the conspicuous services he rendered the Colony, and subsequently State, of Pennsylvania; the patriotic service he rendered the country during its period of War for Independence; and afterward, in the pacific and quiet upbuilding of the Republic.

It would very much transgress the limits of this introduction to refer even by title to the notable acts of Franklin's life; or to recount what he did for science, for education, or even in the thousand and one minor ways in which the service of public affairs attracted his active interest; from the gravest question to the consideration of an ordinance to

keep the streets of the town clean; nothing seemed too great—nothing too small—for his careful and philosophical attention.

Our people have good reason to felicitate the donor of the beautiful statue, which stands on the site made memorable by having been once occupied by the noble mansion erected by Pennsylvania to be a home for the President of the United States, and when that plan failed through the removal of the seat of Government, by the University of Pennsylvania for a period of seventy years, and now a permanent part of the public domain as the site of the United States Post Office.

The committee in charge of these exercises represented institutions which were directly or indirectly brought into being by Benjamin Franklin; and, indeed, it is doubtful if a parallel case can be found in the country; for instance, the Philadelphia Hospital was represented on this Committee—the first hospital inaugurated in what is now the United States; the first learned body, of which Franklin can justly be called the founder, the Philosophical Society; the Library Company, and the University of Pennsylvania. All can trace their being and authorship to the marvelous foresightedness of the man whom we honor. The Historical Society and the Franklin Institute—both organized a quarter of a century or more subsequent to Franklin's death—are the direct outgrowth of the above-mentioned institution. It would indeed be a work of supererogation to proceed in this vein.

Prior to the ceremonies at the Opera House, luncheon was served at the University Club. At the request of Mr. Strawbridge, Postmaster-General Charles Emory Smith bade the guests welcome in a few most happily chosen words.