

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AS  
THE INTRODUCTION TO THE  
FRANKLIN LECTURES, IN  
BOSTON, NOVEMBER 14, 1831**

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An Address Delivered as the Introduction to the Franklin Lectures, in Boston, November 14,  
1831 by Edward Everett

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**EDWARD EVERETT**

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AS  
THE INTRODUCTION TO THE  
FRANKLIN LECTURES, IN  
BOSTON, NOVEMBER 14, 1831**



*W. C. Cavanaugh*

*From*

*C. Everett*

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**EVERETT'S ADDRESS,**

INTRODUCTORY TO THE

**FRANKLIN LECTURES.**

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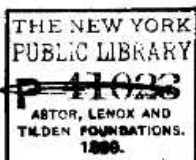
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**BY EDWARD EVERETT.**

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## ADDRESS.

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NOTWITHSTANDING the numerous institutions, for promoting useful knowledge, in our community, it was still found, that many were excluded from the benefit of them. The number of persons, that can be accommodated in any one hall, is of course limited; and it has been thought desirable to make the attempt to provide an additional course of lectures, on the various branches of useful knowledge, for the benefit of those, who have not had it in their power, for this or any other reason, to obtain access to the other institutions, which have set so praiseworthy an example, in this work of public utility. We are assembled, this evening, to make the beginning of this new course of popular instruction.

The plan of this course of lectures was suggested at so late a period this year, that it may not perhaps be possible, the present season, to carry it fully into effect, in such a manner as is wished and designed, in reference to the choice and variety of subjects. It is intended, eventually, that it should extend to the various branches of natural science. It will impart useful information, relative to the Earth, the Air, and the Ocean; the wonders of the heavens; and the mineral treasures beneath the surface of the globe. It may extend to the different branches of natural history, and acquaint you with the boundless variety of the animated creation. The various properties of natural bodies will form a prominent subject of consideration,

as the basis of so many of the arts and trades, and the sources from which so many of the wants of man are supplied. In like manner, those natural powers and properties of matter, the agency of fire, water, steam, and weight, which, in their various combinations, produce the wonders of improved machinery, by which industry is facilitated, and the most important fabrics are furnished cheaply and abundantly, will not be overlooked. It may be supposed, that a due share of attention will be paid to the geographical survey of the globe, to the history of our own race, the fortunes of the several nations, into which mankind have been divided, and the lives of great and good men, who, long after they have departed from life, survive in the gratitude and admiration of their fellow-men. A general and intelligible view of the constitution and laws of the country, in which we have the happiness to live, tending, as it will, to enlighten us in the discharge of our duties, as citizens, will no doubt be presented to you, by some, who will take a part in these lectures. Nor will they, I venture to hope, be brought to a close, without having occasionally directed your thoughts to those views of our common nature, which belong to us as rational and immortal beings, and to those duties and relations, which appertain to us as accountable agents.

The general plan of these lectures extends to these and all other branches of sound and useful knowledge; to be treated in such order, as circumstances may suggest; and with such variety and selection of subjects and fullness of detail, as the convenience of the lecturers and the advantage of the audience may dictate. They have been called the *Franklin Lectures*, in honor of our distinguished townsman, the immortal Franklin, the son of a tallow-chandler, and the apprentice to a printer in this town;—a man; who passed all his early years, and a very considerable portion of his life, in manual industry; and who was chiefly distinguished by his zealous and successful efforts for the promotion of useful knowledge. His name has given lustre to the highest walks of science, and adorns the proudest page of the history of our country, and the world. But we have thought it was still more a name of hope and promise, for an

institution like this, which aims to promote useful knowledge, (the great study of his life,) among that class of our fellow-citizens, from which it was ever his pride himself to have sprung.

It would seem, at the commencement of a course of public instruction of this kind, a pertinent inquiry, *Why* should we endeavor to cultivate and inform our minds, by the pursuit of knowledge?

This question, to which the good sense of every individual furnishes, without meditation, some general reply, demands a full and careful answer. I shall endeavor, in this address, to state some of the reasons, which go to furnish such an answer.

All men should seek to cultivate and inform their minds, by the pursuit of useful knowledge, as the great means of happiness and usefulness.

All other things being equal, the pursuit and attainment of knowledge are, at the time, the surest source of happiness. I do not mean, that knowledge will make up for the want of the necessaries and comforts of life: it will not relieve pain, heal sickness, nor bring back lost friends. But if knowledge will not do this, ignorance will do it still less. And it may even be affirmed, and all who have made the experiment themselves will testify to the truth of the remark, that nothing tends more to soothe the wounded feelings, to steal away the mind from its troubles, and to fill up the weariness of a sick chamber and a sick bed, than, for instance, some intelligible, entertaining, good book, read or listened to.

But knowledge is still more important, as the means of being useful; and the best part of the happiness, which it procures us, is of that purer and higher kind, which flows from the consciousness that, in some way or other, by good example or positive service, we have done good to our fellow-men. One of the greatest modern philosophers said, that *knowledge is power*; but it is power because it is usefulness. It gives men influence over their fellow-men, because it enables its possessors to instruct, to counsel, to direct, to please, and to serve their fellow-men. Nothing of this can be done, without the cultivation and improvement of the mind.