

A
S P E E C H
DELIVERED TO
THE ROYAL SOCIETY,
ON WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 30, 1780,
BEING THEIR ANNIVERSARY.

By JOSEPH BANKS, Esq.
P R E S I D E N T.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE COUNCIL.

THE Emotions of Gratitude inspired by the very Place in which, by the Munificence of our Royal Patron, we are now for the first Time assembled, render it impossible for me to neglect the Opportunity which this Season, when ye have been used to hear yourselves addressed from the Chair, affords me, of offering my small Tribute of Acknowledgement for a Benefit so eminently calculated to promote the Honour and Advancement of this Society.

Established originally by the Munificence of a Royal Founder ; fostered and encouraged since that Time by every successive Monarch who has swayed the British Sceptre, ye have ever proved yourselves

worthy the Favor of your Royal Protectors. A NEWTON, who pruned his infant Wing under your Auspices, when his maturer Flights soared to Worlds unmeasurably distant, still thought a Place among you an honorable Distinction. A NEWTON's immortal Labors, a BOYLE, a FLAMSTEAD, a HALLEY, a RAY, and many others, of whom I trust it is needless to remind you, have made ample Returns for the Patronage of former Monarchs.

But bountiful as the Encouragement ye have received from former Patrons has ever been, the Favors which Science has, through your Intercession, received from his present Majesty (whom God long preserve!) have eminently outdone their most extensive Ideas of Liberality. Ample Funds, by Him provided, have enabled you to reward Men of extensive Knowledge and Ability, for spending whole Years in the Service of Science; observing twice the Transit of the Planet Venus over the Disk of the Sun. At your Request, the Publick defrayed the Expence of convey-
ing

ing them to the most distant Parts of the Globe we inhabit, where the purposes of their Mission, so important to the Science of Astronomy, could best be fulfilled; while ye alone enjoy among your Fellow Academies the Reputation of having both sent and rewarded them.

And more; those very Donations were so liberally planned by that Attention to Science which has ever distinguished His present Majesty's Reign, and will for ever bear Testimony of his enlarged Mind, and Disposition favorable to the Advancement of true Knowledge, that the Surplus alone enabled you, with his Royal Approbation, to institute Experiments on the Attraction of Mountains, amidst the barren and bleak Precipices of the Highlands of Scotland, which then, for the first Time, beheld Instruments of the nicest Construction transported to the Summits of their pathless Crags, and Men, used to other Habitations, voluntarily residing in temporary Huts, eager to express a grateful Sense of their Royal Patron's Liberality,

rality, by thus promoting to the utmost the Cause of Science, in which they were, under his Protection, embarked.

Gifts like these, unsolicited and unconditionally bestowed, might have satisfied the Impulses even of a Princely Munificence; but not so with our Royal Patron. Amply informed in every Branch of real Knowledge, He resolved to bestow a still more distinguished Mark of his Favor on Science which he loved, and in this his last best Gift has fulfilled his Royal Resolution.

Such a Donation, so suited to our present prosperous and flourishing Condition under his Royal Patronage and Protection, is admirably calculated to increase the Respect, great as it is, which ye have ever received from the Learned of all Europe, placing you at once, in every Point of splendid Accommodation, as much above all Foreign Academies, as the Labors of your learned Predecessors had raised you above them in literary Reputation.

Let

Let then Gratitude to a Sovereign, from whom ye have received such conspicuous Encouragement, engage you, by an Application to a Promotion of the Sciences ye severally possess, to deserve a Continuance of his Royal Favor ; to measure your future Exertions by the Standard of his princely Liberality ; and thus shew the World, that ye still are, as ye always have been, worthy the Patronage of your King!

