

SCIENCE

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THE BEGINNINGS OF AMERICAN ASTRONOMY.

It is impossible, even in the briefest sketch, not to emphasize the debt of American science and learning to the intelligent

interest and patronage of our early Presidents—Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams. The powerful impetus given by them and through them has shaped the liberal policy of our governments, National and State, towards education and towards science. Sir Lyon Playfair, in his address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1885), has recognized this influence in the truest and most graceful way. He said: "In the United Kingdom we are just beginning to understand the wisdom of Washington's Farewell Address to his Countrymen (1796) when he said: 'Promote, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the increase and diffusion of knowledge; in proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.'"

Until the Revolution (1776) American science was but English science transplanted, and it looked to the Royal Society of London as its censor and patron. Winthrop, Franklin and Rittenhouse were, more or less, English astronomers. Franklin was the sturdiest American of the three. As early as 1743 he suggested the formation of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia. John Adams founded the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston in 1780. These two societies, together with Harvard College (founded in