JOURNAL
OF
THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE
OF THE
State of Pennsylvania
AND
AMERICAN REPERTORY.

APRIL, 1844.

Civil Engineering.

FOR THE JOURNAL OF THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE.

Letter on Engineering. By DR. FRANKLIN.

The following letter on the improvement of the navigation of the river Schuylkill, written by Dr. Franklin, in London, in 1772, and addressed to S. Rhoads, Esq., of Philadelphia, the original of which is in the possession of a gentleman of this city, is a fine illustration of the sound, common sense, and far-seeing sagacity of that great philosopher, and is well worthy of a place in the Journal of the Institute which bears his name.

Since the days of Brindley and Smeaton, the fathers of British engineering, the improvements in hydraulic constructions, with the additional experience obtained in *slack-water navigations*, have made them, in many cases, preferable to canals, particularly for large boats, and in places where the preponderating trade is descending.

In twenty years, since the Schuylkill navigation was first opened, nearly eight millions of tons have been transported upon it; during the whole of which time it has been progressively improving, and adding more and more to the prosperity of Philadelphia.

S. W. R.

[COPY.]

London, August 22, 1772.

Dear Friend,—I think I before acknowledged your favor of February 29th; I have since received that of May 30th. I am glad my canal papers were agreeable to you. If any work of that kind is set on foot in America, I think it would be saving money to engage, by a handsome salary, an engineer from here, who has been accustomed