each other, but, in all probability, never saw each other. Brought up under like circumstances of frugality and small means, both rose to fill high places in the affairs of nations, and gained distinction in fields of science. Both are remarkable for the eminently practical character of their investigations, and in many other respects their careers are parallel; but Rumford's work, unlike Franklin's, was done in the service of foreign countries.

Benjamin Thompson was born in the town of Woburn, Mass., in the year 1753. To the public school of the town he was sent as soon as he was old enough, and there, even at this early age, was distinguished for the quickness of his perception and the energy of his character. When thirteen years old he was taken from school and bound as apprentice to a merchant in Salem. He did not, however, neglect his studies while here, and his leisure time was employed with experiments in physics and mechanics. At length, having been thrown out of employment, he returned to Woburn, where he resumed his studies in earnest. At about this time the annual course of lectures in experimental physics, at Harvard, was to be delivered. Thompson, together with his friend Baldwin, afterward the eminent engineer, although not matriculated students, obtained permission to attend. The two used to walk to Cambridge and back every day, and repeat, at home, after each lecture, to the best of their ability, the experiments which they had seen performed. Thompson's zeal for the acquirement of knowledge had now begun to attract attention, and he was called to take charge of the Academy at Concord, N. H.

In Concord he met Mrs. Rolfe, a widowed lady of culture and refinement, and, falling in love with her, after a short courtship married her. His marriage raised him into the first circle of society, and placed him in possession of ample means.

Once, when on a visit to Portsmouth, then the capital of New Hampshire, he was presented to Gov. Wentworth. The latter was most favorably impressed by the young man, and soon after offered him the vacant position of Major in the New Hampshire militia. Thompson accepted, and the jealousy of the lower officers, at having a new man placed over them, was the indirect cause which forced him to leave this country.

It was now on the eve of the Revolution. Thompson refrained from taking an active part in the agitation, and from the favor in which he was held by the royal governor of New Hampshire, came to be pointed out as a disaffected one. Forced to leave Concord by the popular feeling, he went to Woburn, and then to Charlestown, where he was received with much friendship and hospitality by the British officers. Having inquired from his friends whether it would be safe to return, and having been assured that it would, he went back to his mother's house in Woburn. His friends were mistaken, however, for no sooner back, than a mob was about to attack him, from which he was saved only by his friend, Col. Baldwin.

The name Tory now having been indelibly stamped upon him, he became convinced that there was no security for him except within the British lines. Soon after, he petitioned the Committee of Safety, of Woburn, for an investigation of his record. Nothing of importance could be charged against him, and he was not condemned, although not given a full acquittal. Consequently he sought refuge from civic prosecution in the camp, where he was protected by military discipline, and endeavored, unsuccessfully, to obtain a commission. His position was now becoming irksome, and even dangerous. He had done all in his power to obtain an opportunity to fight on the side of his country, and not even being granted protection there, at length sought refuge within the British lines.

After having been a short time with the British troops, he was sent to England, the bearer of some important dispatches. Arrived there, his ability was at once recognized, and he was appointed to a position in the department of State, where he soon won great influence. With better facilities at hand, Thompson now resumed his scientific studies. In 1777 he conducted a