

a violent quick shaking of my body, which gradually remitting, my sense as gradually returned. . . . That part of my hand and fingers which held the chain was left white, as though the blood had been driven out, and remained so eight or ten minutes after, feeling like dead flesh; and I had a numbness in my arms and the back of my neck which continued till the next morning but wore off. . . . I am ashamed to have been guilty of so notorious a blunder; a match for that of the Irishman . . . who, being about to steal powder, made a hole in the cask with a hot iron." "The greatest known effects of common lightning," Franklin thought the next year, might be exceeded by linking up enough electric bottles, "which a few years since could not have been believed and even now may seem to many a little extravagant to suppose. So we are got beyond the skill of Rabelais's devils of two years old, who, he humorously says, had only learnt to thunder and lighten a little round the head of a cabbage."¹⁵

Again Franklin, soon to be a member of the Assembly and active in the founding of a new college and a new hospital, was drawn away from philosophic leisure. The Royal Society listened to his papers, offered to it by Collinson, but did not value them enough to publish them in full. "One paper, which I wrote for Mr. Kinnersley, on the sameness of lightning with electricity, I sent to Dr. Mitchel [John Mitchell, who had been Franklin's correspondent while living in Virginia], an acquaintance of mine and one of the members also of that society, who wrote me word that it had been read, but was laughed at by the connoisseurs."¹⁶ John Fothergill, a London physician who was later to be one of Franklin's best friends in England, urged that the electrical letters be printed. Collinson turned them over to Edward Cave for his *Gentleman's Magazine*, but he issued them in a separate pamphlet as *Experiments and Observations on Electricity, Made at Philadelphia in America (1751)*, with a preface by Fothergill. Watson, Franklin's English rival in electrical research, read an abstract of the pamphlet to the Royal Society on 6 June of that year, in which he asked the members to notice how much Franklin's observations "coincide with and support those which I some time since communicated to the Society," but said not a word about the experiment to find out if lightning was electricity and could be prevented by iron rods from

doing mischief. (I fully credited Hoeries they had ma

France was mor of Franklin's bool the Jardin du Re make a better ver and public were a delphian experim mental philosophy carry out the gre D'Alibard, first to been done in Phi Paris, he set up a pointed with bras it from the grou plank with three on the afternoon followed by hail. named Coiffier, l and hurried to tl the iron with a c of Marly, who ha Meeting the chil believing that Co the beating hail. from the rod, bu hear the cracklin fire. He sat dov D'Alibard, who t Royale des Scienc lined, he said, h idea was no longe

On 18 May the Abbé Mazéas wa Royal Society in Collinson. John 20 July. In Engla