

consideration I put down under the different heads short hints of the different motives that at different times occur to me for and against the measure. When I have thus got them all together in one view I endeavour to estimate their respective weights; and where I find two, one on each side, that seem equal I strike them both out. If I find a reason pro equal to some two reasons con, I strike out the three. If I judge some two reasons con equal to some three reasons pro I strike out the five; and thus proceeding I find at length where the balance lies . . . and come to a determination accordingly. And, though the weight of reasons cannot be taken with the precision of algebraic quantities, yet when each is thus considered separately and comparatively and the whole lies before me, I think I can judge better and am less liable to make a rash step; and in fact I have found great advantage from this kind of equation in what may be called moral or prudential algebra."⁴⁹

By December Franklin was in active correspondence with Barbeau Dubourg, who had undertaken to translate the collected *Observations and Experiments* into French and who wanted new material for his edition. The book aimed to give the body of Franklin's philosophy, with letters to him as well as from him on the matters he discussed. Colonial politics, left out of the English collection, appeared in the letters of 1754 to Governor Shirley. *The Way to Wealth* was translated as *Le moyen de s'enrichir*, and Poor Richard became *le pauvre Henri* (to avoid the pun in *pauvre* and *richard*). Franklin's two remarkable letters on swimming⁵⁰ here reached the public first in French, and are known in English only as translated, along with his account of flies apparently drowned in wine but revived by the sun. "I wish it were possible, from this instance, to invent a method of embalming drowned persons in such a manner that they may be recalled to life at any period, however distant; for, having a very ardent desire to see and observe the state of America a hundred years hence, I should prefer to any ordinary death the being immersed in a cask of Madeira wine, with a few friends, till that time, to be then recalled to life by the solar warmth of my dear country."⁵¹ In July 1773 Dubourg's two volumes—*Œuvres de M. Franklin*—were nearly printed, and on 1 September Franklin wrote about them to his wife. "To the French edition they have prefixed a print of me which, though a copy of that by