

to Philadelphia he exchanged affectionate letters with both of them, though the two had separated.⁸²

In a letter to Ingenhousz on 26 April 1777 Franklin commented on the apparent differences between the Leyden jar and Volta's new electrophorus. In August he wrote again at considerable length on the effects of lightning which had struck a steeple in Cremona. But he asked Ingenhousz not to publish the notes, "as it perhaps may occasion disputes and I have no time to attend to them."⁸³ In October, for the same reason, he declined to take up the controversy over pointed and blunt conductors in England, where George III had decided against Franklin. By December 1778 he had written his paper on the *Aurora Borealis* which seems to have been read at a meeting of the Academy of Sciences after Easter of the following year and was published in both French and English.⁸⁴ "The rapid progress true science now makes," he wrote to Priestley on 8 February 1780, "occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the power of man over matter. . . . O that moral science were in as fair a way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another, and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity."⁸⁵ During his attack of gout in 1780 Franklin wrote on 13 November to Edward Nairne, a former friend in London, about hygrometers with observations on the humidity of the air in London, Philadelphia, and Passy. Possibly in this same painful leisure he set down for Ingenhousz, who had visited Passy that summer, answers to various questions on electricity.⁸⁶ On 1 May 1781 he replied to Turgot's questions about a new kind of smoke-consuming stove which Franklin had invented in London but had not yet had time to describe for the public.

In a letter to Court de Gebelin on 7 May Franklin touched on American linguistics: "As the Indians had no letters they had no orthography. The Delaware language being differently spelt from the Virginian may not always arise from a difference in the languages; for strangers who learn the language of an Indian nation, finding no orthography, are at liberty in writing the language to use such compositions of letters as they think will best produce the sounds of the words. I have observed that our Europeans of differ-

ent nations who learn their own orthography and write in his own language differ very much in the powers of the letter to come at the pronunciation. I thought some of the Phœnicians arrived rather think it was of their long and a Denmark and Norway Newfoundland, North themselves certainly

On 20 July he wrote to Antoinette and sent her notes (read or heard in dead bodies, pointed by exacter observation. Franklin remarked on prose writers. I see but nobody tells me literary history."⁸⁸ Ingenhousz, in answer to interrupted that he on 6 April, being questioned the way to have found shut were correct in what may have needed had lost none of Cowper's *Poems* though "the relish been pleased with it more than once

Absorbed by the sciences through constant pain with