He himself had alre

ady begun his electrical researches, which, with other scientific inquiries, he called on in the intervals of money-making and politics to the end of his life. In 1748 he sold his business in order to get leisure for study, having now acquired comparative wealth; and in a few years he had made discoveries that gave him a reputation with the learned throughout Europe. In politics he proved very able both as an administrator and as a controversialist; but his record as an office-holder is stained by the use he made of his position to advance his relatives. His most notable service in home politics was his reform of the postal system; but his fame as a statesman rests chiefly on his services in connection with the relations of the Colonies with Great Britain, and later with France. In 1757 he was sent to England to protest against the influence of the Pens in the government of the colony, and for five years he remained there, striving to enlighten the people and the ministry of England as to Colonial conditions. On his return to America he played an honorable part in the Paxton affair, through which he lost his seat in the Assembly; but in 1764 he was again dispatched to England as agent for the colony, this time to petition the King to resume the government from the hands of the proprietors. In London he actively opposed the proposed Stamp Act, but lost the credit for this and much of his popularity through his securing for a friend the office of stamp agent in America. Even his effective work in helping to obtain the repeal of the act left him still a suspect; but he continued his efforts to present the case for the Colonies as the troubles thickened toward the crisis of the Revolution. In 1767 he crossed to France, where he was received with honor; but before his return home in 1775 he lost his position as postmaster through his share in divulging to Massachusetts the famous letter of Hutchinson and Oliver. On his arrival in Philadelphia he was chosen a member of the Continental Congress and in 1777 he was dispatched to France as commissioner for the United States. Here he remained till 1785, the favorite of French society; and with such success did he conduct the affairs of his country that when he finally returned he received a place only second to that of Washington as the champion of American.