

Thomas Paine

by

Ellery Sedgwick

Ellery Sedgwick  
*Thomas Paine*  
Published 1899 by  
Small, Maynard & Company

\*

This issue 2024  
By grundskyld.dk

The photogravure (not reproduced/pma) used as a frontispiece to this volume is reproduced from a photograph of the portrait of Thomas Paine which hangs in Independence Hall. This painting, presented to the city of Philadelphia in 1869 by a number of prominent citizens, is a copy by Bass Otis of a portrait by John Wesley Jarvis; an intimate friend of Paine's. The picture shows Paine in the prime of life, and the careful dress is characteristic of his personal habits. The reproduction here given is by John Andrew & Son, of Boston.

## **Content**

Preface. ....	5
Chronology. ....	6
Thomas Paine.....	9
II.....	17
III.....	27
IV.....	35
V.....	45
VI.....	55
Bibliography. ....	63

## **Preface.**

Politics and religion have bred the best haters among men. Thomas Paine has been abhorred as a revolutionist and execrated as a heretic. He lived during the mightiest events of modern history, at a time when no public man was safe from the bitterest assaults of rancor and of malice; but not one of his contemporaries has been slandered more relentlessly than he. He attached all who differed from him in the two most sensitive spots in human nature, and richly has he paid the penalty.

The literature which has grown up about Paine and his works bears this witness. It is almost exclusively controversial. One writer assails: the next defends. Of dispassionate narrative there is very little. Paine's earliest biographers, George Chalmers and James Cheetham, paused at no lies which could dirty their victim's reputation. Their volumes became the basis of a mythology which cannot bear casual investigation. The writers who answered them were eulogists of Paine. It has remained for Mr. Moncure D. Conway to publish in 1892 an accurate and exhaustive biography, which must be the basis of all honest subsequent investigation. But Mr. Conway's zeal for the right has led him too far. He presents his voluminous material to the reader with the utmost candor, but his deductions from it are colored by his sympathies. His book is the ablest argument for the defence.

The purpose of this small volume is to tell the story of Thomas Paine without bias and without argument. It is difficult, indeed, to write of Paine without enthusiasm for his genius and a lively recognition of his great services to liberty. But his faults are set down frankly. The reader shall be judge and jury.

In respect to the more obscure episodes in the life of Paine, it seems well to add that lack of space has prevented any explanation of the course I have preferred to follow. Nothing, I hope, has been written without authority or without reflection,

Ellery Sedgwick.

Boston, November 1, 1899.

## **Chronology.**

1737

January 29. Thomas Paine was born in Thetford, Norfolk County, England.

1750

Left school to learn the trade of stay-making.

1756

Shipped on the privateer King of Prussia, Left the service, and followed his trade in London.

1759

Established himself as a master stay-maker at Sandwich, Kent.

September 29. Married Mary Lambert. Failed in business.

1760

His wife died.

1761

Became an exciseman.

1765

Discharged from his position.

1766

Taught school in London. Reinstated in the excise.

1770

Engaged in the tobacco business.

1771

March 26. Married Elizabeth Ollive at Lewes, Sussex.

1772

Addressed a pamphlet to Parliament in behalf of the salaries of excisemen.

1774

Again dismissed from the excise. Failed in business. Legally separated from his wife.

October. Sailed for America with a letter from Dr. Franklin.

1775

Assumed the editorship of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*.

1776

January 10. Published the pamphlet *Common Sense*.

Controversy with the Tory, Rev. William Smith. Conferred with Jefferson concerning the form of the Declaration of Independence. Enlisted in the Continental Army.

December 19. Published the first *Crisis*.

1777

January. Appointed secretary of commission to treat with the Indians.

April. Elected secretary of Congressional Committee for Foreign Affairs. Requested to keep the Pennsylvanian Assembly informed in regard to military movements. Published the second, third, and fourth *Crisis*.

1778

Published the fifth, sixth, and seventh *Crisis*.

1779

Controversy with Silas Deane. Resigned his Congressional appointment. Became clerk in the office of Owen Biddle. Appointed clerk of the Assembly of Pennsylvania.

1780

Headed a subscription for the benefit of the army, which subsequently became the foundation of the Bank of North America. Received degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Published the eighth and ninth *Crisis* and the *Crisis Extraordinary*.

1781

Accompanied Colonel Laurens on a successful mission to get money from France.

1782

Employed by Congress as a salaried writer. Published the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth *Crisis*. Published *Letter to Abbe Raynal*.

1783

April 19. Published the last *Crisis*.

Urged a stronger union among the States.

1784

His services recognized by New York and Pennsylvania.

1785

Presented by Congress with \$3,000. Designed models for bridges.

1787

Sailed for France. Revisited England for the first time. Published *Prospects on the Rubicon*.

1791

Published *Rights of Man*, Part I. Helped to found "La Societe Republicaine" and to placard Paris with republican manifestoes.

1792

Published *Rights of Man*, Part II. Published *Address to the Addressers*. Tried and convicted of libel. Elected a member of the French Convention. Appointed second member of committee for framing a constitution.

1793

Endeavored to save the life of Louis XVI. Allied himself with the Girondins. Wrote *Age of Reason*, Part I. December. Denounced, arrested, and sent to prison.

1794

Was dangerously ill in prison.

November. Released and restored to the Convention.

1795 Declined a pension offered by the French government. Spoke against limitation of the franchise. Suffered relapse of his illness. Wrote *Age of Reason*, Part II.

1796

Published a bitter letter addressed to Washington. Published *Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance*.

1797

Founded the Church of Theophilanthropy.

[Published *Agrarian Justice* / PMA]

1798

Advised a French expedition against England.

1798-1802

Remained in Paris, interesting himself in inventions.

1802

Returned to America.

1803-1806

Lived in Bordentown, New Jersey, New Rochelle, and New York. Persecuted by his enemies.

1806

His vote rejected at New Rochelle. Stricken with apoplexy.

1807-1809

Lived chiefly in New York City.

1809 June 8. Thomas Paine died in New York City.

### **Thomas Paine.**

Thomas Paine was born at Thetford in the shire of Norfolk, England, on January 29, 1737. His father, Joseph Paine, was an honest Quaker, who earned a scanty livelihood by the aid of a small farm and a shop, where he followed his trade of making stays. His mother, whose maiden name had been Frances Cocke, was a member of the Established Church.

The boy's education was of the scantiest. As a child, he attended the free grammar school, and was duly taught how to write, spell, and figure by the Rev. William Knowler. For languages he had small aptitude, and, owing to Quaker prejudice, Latin had no place in his curriculum but he early displayed the taste for science which distinguished him throughout his career. His heresies began with boyhood. "I well remember," he wrote in later life, "when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the Church, upon the subject of what is called Redemption by the death of the Son of God. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden and, as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man that killed his son, when he could not revenge himself any other way, and, as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had anything in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it." It was this which led Paine to believe that "a system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system."

He also gave evidence of a precocious turn for verse-making but this was happily discouraged, for there was not in him the stuff that poets are made of. His pet crow died, and the child wrote its epitaph:—

*"Here lies the body of John Crow,  
Who once was high, but now is low.  
Ye brother crows, take warning all,  
For, as you rise, so must you fall."*

The time of childhood was short. At thirteen the boy was taken from his books, and set to work on a bench in his father's shop. But stay-making was irksome to him. His mind ran on stories of the sea his schoolmaster had told him and, when war with France approached, he made an attempt to enlist aboard the privateer *Terrible*, Captain Death. But his father, who looked on war as perdition, dissuaded him from his purpose. Restlessness, however, was still upon him and in 1756 he shipped under Captain Mendez on *The King of Prussia*. The voyage was short, but long enough to show him the difference between picture and reality and the same year Paine left his Majesty's service to seek his fortune in London.

In London he remained two years, earning his bread by making stays for Mr. Morris of the city, and spending his free hours in studying the sciences. What little money he could spare went to purchase a pair of astronomical globes; and he found time to attend the lectures given by two self-taught men of science, James Ferguson and Benjamin Martin.

In 1758 Paine again tried to better his condition, and sought employment in his trade at Dover. But the following year found him installed as a master stay-maker at Sandwich, Kent. For a brief period his trade flourished and he soon married Mary Lambert, a serving-maid in the family of a woolen-draper. But Paine was not born to make his fortune. His business failed miserably, and he moved to Margate. Here in 1760 his wife died; and Paine, thoroughly discouraged, determined to relinquish his trade.

His wife's father had been an exciseman, and Paine now applied for a position in the revenue service. After some delay his request was granted, and he returned to Thetford as a supernumerary officer at a salary of £50 a year. By law every exciseman was obliged to keep his own horse and, when the necessary sums were deducted, Paine found that one shilling nine-pence farthing must cover each day's expenses. Nor was this the only unpleasantness of his position. There has always been a blind spot in the moral vision, when smug-

gling is in view. To-day in America men vote high tariffs while their wives, returning from Paris, omit the formalities of the custom-house. During the last century the average Englishman looked upon the excise as tyranny, and upon excisemen as publicans. The round of Paine's duties was thus extremely disagreeable and, like others before him, he entered in his reports minutes of surveys which he had never made. The imposition was detected and, upon his own confession, Paine was discharged from office.

For a brief period he resumed his hated trade at Diss in Norfolk, and then drifted back to London, where he taught English, first at an academy in Goodman's Fields, and afterward in Kensington. These employments gave Paine some opportunity to continue his studies. But poverty was heavy upon him, and he applied to the board of excise for reinstatement. The petition was favorably received; and early in 1768 Paine was appointed officer at Lewes, Sussex, where he took up his residence with Mr. Samuel Ollive, tobacconist.

It is at Lewes that we find the first traces of Paine's interest in public affairs. One day, while he was bowling with a friend, the latter carelessly remarked that Frederick of Prussia was "the best fellow in the world for a king, he had so much of the devil in him" and it struck Paine, not unnaturally, that, if a king needed the devil, perhaps people had best contrive to get on without them both.

Paine was a Whig by birthright, and his misfortunes had deepened his convictions. Politics now began to take hold of him. He wrote a campaign song for a local election, and his muse soared a very little higher in a patriotic effusion on the death of General Wolfe. But a more serious matter presently claimed his attention. The wretchedly inadequate salaries of excisemen insured bad work and tempted honesty.

Their cause was Paine's, and he spent a whole winter in drawing up an appeal to Parliament. Four thousand copies were struck off and distributed among members of Parliament and various men of influence. Later on Paine went himself to London but he was unknown, and Parliament was well aware that the people of England were not averse to seeing an occasional exciseman driven to the wall. The petition was quietly ignored.

Paine's journey, however, had not been taken in vain for in London he was introduced to Dr. Franklin, who had been living there for

some years, as agent for the State of Pennsylvania. The young man's scientific tastes rendered the meeting of peculiar interest to him; and Franklin, whose judgment of men was shrewd as common sense could make it, soon recognized the exciseman's ability.

At Lewes, Paine's misfortunes thickened. In 1769 Ollive, the tobacconist with whom he lodged, died, leaving his slender business to be continued by his widow and his daughter, Elizabeth. In 1770 Paine joined forces with the two women in carrying it on and in March of the following year he was married to Elizabeth Ollive. The union was a most unhappy one. The little tobacco mill and shop yielded smaller and smaller returns. During Paine's absence in London, business was at a standstill and, when he returned from his unsuccessful mission, the creditors foreclosed, and Paine had to leave town to escape arrest. His entire stock in trade was sold at public auction to pay his debts. Nor was this all. Paine had been absent from duty without permission and, as he had been discharged once before, the board was deaf to excuses. He was again dismissed, and left the king's service forever.

At home there was no comfort. Paine's relations with his wife have never been made clear. From the first they had not lived together and in June, 1774, by common consent, they agreed to a formal separation, Elizabeth retaining the property left her by her father. In after years Paine often sent his wife sums of money anonymously. He always spoke of her with kindness and respect, but he treated as impertinent the least allusion to the mystery which was between them.

Paine had been jack-of-all-trades, and had mastered none. He had been stay-maker, sailor, teacher, exciseman, shopkeeper. Now at thirty-seven he was an outcast. In the desperate state of his fortunes the New World seemed alone to offer hope. He went to London, and again saw Franklin. The philosopher knew Paine better than Paine knew himself. He advised him strongly to go to America, and gave him a kindly letter to his son-in-law Richard Bache, representing the bearer, Mr. Thomas Paine, as an "ingenious worthy young man," very capable of acting as a clerk, tutor, or assistant surveyor. It was not least among the services which Franklin rendered his country. Paine set sail in October, and landed at Philadelphia on the last day of November, 1774.

In spite of his lack of early advantages, there was nothing boorish about Paine's appearance, or unmannerly in his address. He was a man of middle height, slender and well-proportioned. His forehead was high, his nose prominent. His eyes were the eyes of an enthusiast, brilliant and restless, yet with a look of penetration in them. He was vigorous and fond of exercise and his dress, when he had money to pay for it, was chosen with some care. His manners were easy. Friends, like enemies, he made with little effort for, come friend, come foe, he wore his principles upon his sleeve, and, as for tact, the thought was strange to him.

Paine left England at a critical epoch in the history of her constitutional liberty. During the summer of that momentous year had occurred the historic debate in the House of Commons on the bill introduced by Fuller to repeal the Tea Act and to relinquish once for all the vicious principle of taxing colonies for the benefit of the mother country. Then Burke, Fox, and Barre had fought for the rights of Englishmen born by upholding the cause of Washington and Franklin but Lord North's majority had voted new bulwarks for rotten boroughs and royal corruption by defeating the bill and substituting in its place an act to punish Boston by closing its port and to deprive Massachusetts of its constitutional charter.

The battle had been lost in England. It was fought on in America. The other colonies rallied about Massachusetts and in October the delegates of twelve colonies met in Carpenters' Hall, Philadelphia, to form the Continental Congress. The first news Paine heard on landing was that two months before, the towns of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, had declared the withdrawal of their charter null and void, and that Congress had despatched Paul Revere to Boston with a formal approval of their action. The revolution was coming on apace.

Paine's first necessity was bread, and Franklin's letter guided the way. He became private tutor, on advantageous terms, to several young gentlemen, and was presently engaged by Mr. Robert Aitkin as editor of the new Pennsylvania Magazine at a salary of £50 per annum.

For a year and a half Paine conducted this magazine. His sympathies and his originality were apparent in every number. One of his first contributions was an appeal for the emancipation of the negro, such as might have been written in Boston in the '50's. This article

procured for him the friendship of Dr. Benjamin Rush, who, like Paine, had the subject much at heart. Little more than a month after its appearance, the first American anti-slavery society was formed in Philadelphia. International copyright was scarcely dreamed of in those days: Paine pleaded for it. Duelling still had a place in a gentleman's code of honor: Paine wrote against it with indignation and, rising to a still nobler conception, he wrote: "I am thus far a Quaker that I would gladly agree with all the world to lay aside the use of arms, and settle matters by negotiations but, unless the whole world wills, the matter ends. . . . We live not in a world of angels."

In truth, it was not a world of angels. The British ministry decided to increase the garrison of Boston to ten thousand men. In March, 1775, Franklin returned to America, and another strand in the rope which bound the colonies to England snapped. A month later Pitcairn met Parker on the green at Lexington and war was no longer inevitable, but a fact. In the course of the summer the hopelessness of reconciliation was emphasized by the king's contemptuous refusal to receive a petition which Richard Penn had brought to London from the members of Congress and on October 31 news reached Philadelphia that the town of Portland had been burned by British ships, and that King George had hired four generals and twenty thousand mercenaries to teach obedience to his American subjects. Even now, when the eleventh hour had struck, the American people did not wish an American nation,—far from it. Looking back through the perspective of history, it seems incredible that the hope of compromise could have endured so long among them. But the love for England was not extinct. The memory of the men who had fought for them and with them against the power of France was not yet a generation old. Dread, however, more than sentiment, governed the multitude. Among many the fear of the king was the beginning of folly while others, as good patriots as lived, believed that the disruption of the fabric of British dominion meant the first stride of anarchy. Independence was not government: it might be chaos.

Even the leaders were but just reaching their inevitable decision. Washington, writing toward the close of 1774, remarked that a person "who could believe that the people of Massachusetts were setting up for independency and what not" had been grossly abused; and (as he afterward said) so late as July, 1775, when he first took command

of the army, he "abhorred the idea of independence." "Before the 19th of April, 1775," said Jefferson, "I never heard a whisper of a disposition to separate from the mother country," and, if ever a man had sharp ears to catch the whispers of the people, it was Jefferson. When, in March of the same year, Franklin declared that "no American, drunk or sober, thought of independence," he was not far from right.

While events were slowly urging the leaders forward, Paine had come to his own conclusions. On October 18, 1775, he published in the Pennsylvania Journal over the signature "Humanus," words which freemen should hold in remembrance: "And when I reflect on the use she [Great Britain] hath made of the discovery of this new world—that the little paltry dignity of earthly kings hath been set up in preference to the great cause of the King of kings—That instead of Christian examples to the Indians, she hath basely tampered with their passions, imposed on their ignorance, and made them the tools of treachery and murder—And when to these and many other melancholy reflexions I add this sad remark, that ever since the discovery of America, she hath employed herself in the most horrid of all traffics, that of human flesh, unknown to the most savage nations, hath yearly (without provocation and in cold blood) ravaged the hapless shores of Africa, robbing it of its unoffending inhabitants to cultivate her stolen dominions in the West—When I reflect on these, I hesitate not for a moment to believe that the Almighty will finally separate America from Britain. Call it Independency or what you will, if it is the cause of God and humanity, it will go on."

When this was written, the next step was not a long one. In fact, Paine had already outlined the pamphlet that was to make him famous. During this same month Dr. Franklin urged him to write a history of the times but, preferring to postpone the scheme for the present, he brought his manuscript to completion. He showed it to Dr. Rush and one or two intimate friends, and asked their advice concerning the crucial difficulty of publication. One or two publishers courteously declined to make the experiment but the manuscript was accepted by Robert Bell, a Scotch republican of sturdy stripe. On January 10, 1776, *Common Sense* was offered to the public.

No political tract was ever better shaped to serve its purpose. It was eloquent but its influence with the people lay in the simple, prac-

tical wisdom of its reasoning. Starting with a philosophic admission of the evil inherent in all government, Paine assailed the logical absurdity of hereditary power, exposed the king's vicious system of maladministration, and clearly showed how little mercy rebels must expect from "The Royal Brute of Great Britain." Then, reversing the shield, he pictured the natural future of America governed by Americans, and, in the practical language which characterizes the whole pamphlet, set forth plainly the power of the people to be free and independent, if they will. This was the true, the only solution. Americans must not be rebels, but a nation doing battle for its rights. Here and there the argument was crude but, as a whole, *Common Sense* was, as Washington said, sound and unanswerable.

If Paine underestimated the difficulties which blocked the path of the new commonwealth, his hopefulness only aided the cause. Bell's presses could not begin to meet the demand, and Paine gave his copyright to every colony of the thirteen. In April no less than 120,000 copies of *Common Sense* flooded the country, from Maine to the Carolinas and where it went it brought conviction.

When the pamphlet reached New York City, the Provincial Congress was assembled there. Toryism was in the ascendant. The first member to read the pamphlet was alarmed at its temerity, and proposed to several of his colleagues to hold a private meeting and discuss Paine's position. This meeting was held but opposing arguments were not forthcoming, and it was thought best not to attempt an answer. At this confession of weakness the patriots in the assembly took courage and the fight continued, until the discovery of Governor Tryon's conspiracy to kidnap Washington turned the tide in their favor. The New York delegates to Congress were not instructed to vote against the Declaration of Independence.

Paine, wisely thinking that the name of an Englishman lately arrived in America had best be withheld, had signed his pamphlet simply "Common Sense" and the work was promptly fathered upon Franklin.

"How could you," said a lady of Tory sympathies, "speak of his Majesty so untowardly as 'The Royal Brute of Britain'?"

"Madam," replied the diplomatist, "had it been I, I should never have so dishonored brute creation."

On June 8 Richard Henry Lee of Virginia offered the resolution that "These united colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent States" and four days later a committee of five members, headed by Jefferson, was appointed to consider the manner of the Declaration. Paine was now a marked man to those who knew the authorship of *Common Sense*; and Jefferson, whose intimacy with him dates from this time, seems to have sought his advice concerning the language of the instrument. There is little evidence to show that words of Paine's were actually incorporated by Jefferson but his influence appeared in a fine passage of the preliminary draft denouncing slavery. This clause was born before its time, and did not live in the Declaration of Independence.

A pack of Tory pamphleteers were soon barking at the heels of *Common Sense* but the only writer whose argument deserved an answer was the Rev. Dr. William Smith, a man of some attainments and president of the college which afterward became the University of Pennsylvania. Writing under the pseudonym of "Cato" he made a plausible appeal to peace-loving citizens against the irrevocable step, and urged delay, at least until the arrival of the proposals which Admiral Lord Howe was even then bringing with him from England.

Paine knew the danger of such arguments to Quaker minds, which could not believe that his Majesty's most generous terms were unconditional surrender, with an added assurance of further consideration of their grievances and he answered "Cato" in three vigorous letters signed "The Forester."

But the tide of independence was risen too high to be stemmed by procrastination. On the evening of July 4 the Declaration was unanimously adopted by every State except New York.

## II

While the gentlemen of Congress were signing the Declaration of Independence, Paine enlisted under the flag of the United States. After serving in a "flying camp" of temporary volunteers, he joined the command of General Nathanael Greene, then in garrison at Fort Lee, which crowned the "Palisades" of the Hudson River.

The most disastrous campaign of the war was in progress. Washington, unable to hold New York against the fleet and army of the Howes, evacuated the city in the middle of September, and, after a

stand on Harlem Heights, fell back upon White Plains. Fort Lee in New Jersey and Fort Washington on the New York bank opposite it were now the only barriers to a British advance up the river. Fort Washington was patently untenable but Congress, with the military sagacity inherent in legislatures, strongly urged that it be held. Unhappily, Washington was absent. Greene obeyed orders against his better judgment and on November 16 Paine beheld from the ramparts of Fort Lee the capture of three thousand Continental veterans. Three days later the British crossed the Hudson in force above Fort Lee and the startled garrison, leaving their blankets in their tents and their kettles on their fires, fell tumultuously back upon the main army, which was then in New Jersey.

The dismal retreat continued. When the army reached Newark, its chiefs were looking demoralization in the face and there it was that Paine began his first *Crisis*, writing at night, for his day was filled with a soldier's duties. On December 19 it was published in the Pennsylvania Journal, and a few hours later copies were despatched to the front. Washington had fixed on Christmas Day, at one hour before daybreak, for the forlorn hope of an attack on the British centre at Trenton. On the 23d the *Crisis* reached him. He read it, and, instantly feeling its power, gave orders to have it read that very evening before every corporal's guard of his dejected army. Most of the rank and file believed the end to be approaching. And now, on the eve of their last desperate opportunity, when hope seemed hopeless, they listened to these words:—"These are the times which try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny like hell is not easily conquered yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph: what we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated."

The next night Washington crossed the Delaware. His little army lost four men and took a thousand prisoners. The crisis had passed.

Paine's appeal had been signed "Common Sense" but the secret was no secret now. Scarcely a month after the appearance of the first

*Crisis* he published a second in the form of a letter of advice to Lord Howe and, as in the case of all his American pamphlets, he gave the proceeds to the cause of independence. At the beginning of the new year his services were officially acknowledged by an appointment as secretary of a commission sent by Congress to treat with the Indians at Easton, Pennsylvania. The mission was successful and on April 17, when the Congressional Committee of Foreign Affairs was first formally constituted, Paine was elected its secretary, at the modest salary of \$70 a month.

The office was no sinecure, but Paine's capacity for work was uncommon. Much of the time he spent with the army, acting as a volunteer aide-de-camp to General Greene and, when he was requested by the Assembly of Pennsylvania to furnish it with regular intelligence of the movements of the army, he at once complied. Besides all this, he found time to celebrate the third anniversary of Lexington by another *Crisis*, in which he advised the Continental government to exact an oath of allegiance from its subjects, and to increase its revenues at the expense of all who refused.

During the summer of 1777, while Burgoyne was marching southward to his destruction, there was but little fighting between the armies of Washington and Howe. But with the autumn came the British success at Brandywine. The road to Philadelphia lay open, and Congress fled in consternation to Lancaster. Paine still hoped that the city might be saved, and urged a general rising of citizens in its defence. But the plan seemed impracticable to the authorities and on September 21 Paine left Philadelphia, which was occupied by Cornwallis five days later. The battle of Germantown followed, and Paine rejoined the army just as its victory was turned into incomprehensible defeat.

His services were soon required. General Howe had turned his attention to the American strongholds on the river Delaware, Forts Mercer and Mifflin. A sharp but unsuccessful assault was made on Fort Mercer; and, when the attack was renewed with the assistance of the fleet, Paine, with Colonel Christopher Greene, was despatched down the Delaware in an open boat to learn the condition of the garrison at Fort Mifflin. Under fire from the British batteries along the shore, it was a trying experience but Paine acquitted himself with credit. Not long afterward, however, both forts fell into the hands of

the enemy and, after some manoeuvring, the army went into its unhappy quarters at Valley Forge.

At this period Paine had reached a singular height of prestige and popularity, but a curious train of events was then in progress which had a melancholy influence upon his career.

When first the American colonies revolted, "Great Britain and 1763" meant to Frenchmen much what "Germany and 1871" means to-day. Germany has torn two provinces from France: Britain seized two empires. An opportunity for revenge seemed at length to have arisen and Vergennes, the crafty minister for foreign affairs, casting about him for the safest means to obtain it, bethought himself of Beaumarchais, who was known to be in sympathy with the American cause. The author of *Figaro* was adept at making a plot in history as in comedy. He was keen, quite free from scruples, and, as an adventurer of shadowy reputation, might be disavowed at convenience. Beaumarchais met Vergennes half-way; and between them it was agreed that the playwright should address a series of letters to the king, inviting his Majesty to advance a million livres to aid the colonies. Vergennes himself cared not a fig for America. His object was not to end, but to prolong the war.

Peace between France and England was profound as diplomacy could make it, and of course official relations with rebels were unspeakable. So Beaumarchais suggested that the money be advanced through a fictitious merchant, to be paid for in real tobacco, with all the circumstances of a genuine business transaction. The playwright's zeal for the colonies was sincere, but it was not unselfish. From the first he determined that revenge for France and liberty for America must co-operate to line his coat. He therefore proposed that half the sum be sent to America in money and half in supplies, to be bartered to the colonies, at far more than their face value, for good Virginian tobacco, hoping that a little care might make some of the profit go where, in his opinion, it was most needed. This delicate proposition he conveyed to the king in language which implied that the French exchequer was to be the gainer in a commercial venture.

Louis considered the proposition, but the game was hazardous. He hesitated, and the fertile Beaumarchais brought new influence to bear. He had put himself into communication with Arthur Lee, then acting as secret agent for Virginia in London and to him he had de-

scribed the burning altruism of France in language that would have done honor to Figaro himself. The gift must indeed smell a little of snuff and tobacco but this was dictated by prudence, and the king's delicate conception of honor. Arthur Lee was duly grateful and, to clinch the bargain, he wrote an appeal to the king, offering to France, in return for her aid, a secret and advantageous treaty of commerce. The king's sympathies were with the struggling colonies, his queen pleaded their cause, and this offer decided him. Early in June a million livres were made over to Beaumarchais. He reported the transaction to Lee, and Lee at once despatched a messenger to convey the pleasant news to Congress.

A month later a new actor complicated the plot. Silas Deane, a prominent citizen of Connecticut, came to Paris as a commercial agent of Congress. Lee at once informed him that the million had already been paid to Beaumarchais but that worthy denied up and down that he had touched the money, and represented to Deane that the business was a *bona fide* commercial enterprise. The colonies had plenty of tobacco for export. The difficulty was to find a purchaser willing to repay them in contraband of war. Beaumarchais' comedy firm (Roderigue Hortalez & Co. he called it) would thus do America a very real service. Just how much Deane understood of the real truth will never be accurately known. He certainly appeared to be convinced by Beaumarchais' story and signed a formal contract binding the United States to make some returns for the supplies within six months and to pay the balance within a year.

Beaumarchais prosecuted the business with energy. Three ships were soon sent to America, though but one of them reached its destination. Later on, he quietly despatched an agent to Congress to collect the bill; while Deane with remarkable self-importance assumed the credit of the entire transaction, and further busied himself in securing the services of various foreign officers for the American army.

Soon after Silas Deane's departure from America, Congress instructed Dr. Franklin and Arthur Lee to join him in Paris and the three were constituted a commission for formal negotiations with France. The king's ministers were now inclining toward an alliance and commercial treaty and, with diplomatic forgetfulness of the little understanding with Beaumarchais, they assured the commissioners

that the supplies were a free gift to America. The commission in turn transmitted the information to Congress.

Congress was delighted with such stores as arrived but, when the bill came, indorsed by Deane, the affair looked suspicious. Deane's behavior in regard to the selection of foreign officers was unsatisfactory, and he was summarily recalled.

When he appeared before Congress, however, the case against him was worse. The letter sent by the commissioners had been purloined on its way to this country, though other letters in the same packet had remained untouched and Congress had been informed of its contents only by a duplicate copy enclosed with the documents of the French alliance, which had since been consummated. Deane was asked to produce the vouchers for his contracts, and replied that he had left them abroad. He further admitted being under personal pecuniary obligation to Beaumarchais. The affair smelled of fraud. It was lucky for Deane that he had powerful friends in Congress, and that President John Jay was among them.

Two hearings were granted Deane, but he failed to clear himself; and a third audience was denied him. Furious at this slight, he published an article impugning the honesty of Congress, attacking Arthur Lee, and arrogating to himself the credit of work accomplished before his arrival.

Paine's blood was up. As secretary of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, he knew Congressional secrets which, as Gouverneur Morris said, Congress was too wise to trust itself with. He was convinced that an attempt was afoot to rob the poverty-stricken exchequer. If any creditor was to be paid, it was France herself and France could afford to wait for her money. Furthermore, he feared the effects which Deane's attack on Congress might have upon the people.

Accordingly, on December 15, 1778, he rushed into the thickest of his neighbor's fray, and published a statement to the effect that, however the supplies had been secured, it was certainly not thanks to Mr. Deane, who had reached Paris after the million had been provided. This was bad enough, considering how spotless was the French king's honor, and how very close to the mud. But worse came a fortnight later, when Paine gave to the public the unvarnished truth, that the supplies had been furnished by the French government a year and more before the alliance was concluded. Here was to-do in plenty.

Every word that Paine said in this regard was true, and every word marked the Christian Majesty of France a most unchristian liar. Gerard, the French minister, who seems himself to have been interested in the Beaumarchais claim, made complaint, and demanded a retraction. Congress was in a quandary. To accuse Paine formally meant explanations, and explanations were precisely what were not wanted.

Under the guidance of Jay an ingenious plan of action was hit upon. Paine was summoned before Congress, and asked whether he had written the objectionable articles. He answered, "Yes" and before he could utter another syllable was commanded to withdraw. Two memorials which he presented to Congress were suppressed and, although a motion for his dismissal was lost on a tie vote, he would not submit to be censured, unheard, and resigned his office. Jay sent profuse apologies to Gerard, and assured him of the perfect incredulity with which Congress had listened to Paine's charges. Once again the king's honor shone untarnished.

The controversy concerning Deane, aggravated by Paine, has never ended. It is clear that Paine acted honestly, for his oath as secretary bound him to secrecy solely concerning matters which he should be directed to keep secret. But it is equally clear that he was guilty of colossal imprudence. Hitherto he had gone from success to success. Naturally a vain man, he had come to believe his influence irresistible. Urged by honorable considerations, he felt no reluctance toward meddling in the affairs of others, and displayed in his action a striking want of the common sense with which the public still identified his work. Had Paine learned wisdom at Franklin's feet, he might have been one of the supreme figures of his time.

Once again poor Paine had to return to the starting-point of the race. In his penury he applied to Mr. Owen Biddle, of Philadelphia, for a common clerkship, and reverted to his former plan of a history of the Revolution. He proposed also to issue a collected edition of his works. But, for this, money was essential and Paine, relying upon the value of his services, applied to the executive council of the State of Pennsylvania for a loan of £1,500. The council, fearful of offending France, obsequiously asked permission of her minister before replying to the request, and, when this was accorded, proposed that, in lieu of the loan, Paine should be made clerk of the Assembly. His elec-

tion took place on November 2, 1779 and it is an interesting coincidence that on the same day an act was introduced, the preamble of which Paine himself had had the honor of writing, to abolish slavery forever in the State of Pennsylvania. Four months later the act became law, adding, as Paine said, one more step to universal civilization.

About this time Paine considered an audacious and fantastic scheme for a descent upon England. He proposed to go incognito, and to quicken public sympathy with America by another pamphlet after the manner of *Common Sense*. Fortunately, he was dissuaded from the design by General Greene, who thought Paine's usefulness in America was not yet over. And, indeed, it was not.

Throughout 1779 a train of disasters had befallen the American cause. In May, 1780, Joseph Reed, president of the Pennsylvania Assembly, received a letter from Washington, which he bade Paine, as clerk, read aloud to the members. "I can assure you," wrote Washington, with terrible truth, "every idea you can form of our distress will fall short of the reality. There is such a combination of circumstances to exhaust the patience of the soldiery that it begins at length to be worn out, and we see in every line of the army the most serious features of mutiny and sedition."

The Assembly listened in despair, and the letter moved Paine profoundly. Of his own accord he proposed a public subscription, and headed it with \$500 of his meagre salary. In the evening a meeting was held, the subscription was decided upon, and the energetic Robert Morris took it in charge. The sum of £300,000 was raised, and ultimately became the foundation of the Bank of North America. The soldiers were paid, and another crisis was averted. That same summer the University of Pennsylvania honored Paine with the degree of Master of Arts.

The crisis had been averted, but not passed. During the summer the "Continental" dollar fell till it passed current at sixteen cents and less. Samuel Adams, who was no exquisite, paid \$2,000 for a hat and suit of clothes and Paine himself gave \$300 for a pair of woollen stockings. Congress, unable to enforce taxes, was powerless and the colonies, discouraged with five years of fighting, had no conception of their own resources. In this dark season Paine published his *Crisis Extraordinary*, which gave to masses of people their first clear idea

that ample wealth to push the war to a conclusion was in the country, and comforted them with proofs that Englishmen were crushed by taxes still heavier than their own.

In the autumn of 1780 Paine relinquished his Assembly clerkship, hoping to be able to work upon his history. But his attention was soon distracted, and presently he busied himself in drawing up a new proposal for a loan from France. The scheme was discouraged at the time, but it got abroad and Congress decided to send Colonel John Laurens as a special emissary to the French government. At his personal request Paine accompanied him. The mission was successful and Laurens was enabled to send Washington promises which were of the utmost assistance, as he gathered his strength for the supreme effort of Yorktown. On August 25, 1781, Laurens and Paine returned to Boston with two and a half million livres in cash and a ship loaded with military stores. Laurens rejoined the army and in October Paine, penniless as usual, wrote to the colonel that he should be glad to send on his boots if he could only scrape up money enough to pay the bootmaker!

With the capitulation of Yorktown the fortunes of war were secure, but for Paine the future looked black. He turned to Washington for assistance, and Washington, with the aid of Robert Morris and Robert Livingston, secured him a position as a salaried writer on national affairs.

On April 18, 1783, General Washington announced the cessation of hostilities and on the following day, the eighth anniversary of Lexington, Paine published his last *Crisis* beginning with the comfortable words, "The times which tried men's souls are over."

Paine's work now seemed done. He retired to a little house which he had bought at Bordentown, New Jersey; but he was soon called from his retreat by a kindly invitation from Washington to visit his headquarters. Nor did the general's gratitude to the author of the *Crisis* end here. Paine, who had no feeling akin to false shame in pressing his deserts, had written to Congress, calling the attention of the honorable members to a balance still owing him on account of the depreciation of his former salary as secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. But Congress, unwilling to rake up the secrets of Silas Deane, which it had buried so carefully, was not inclined to look favorably upon the petition. Paine appealed to Washington, and

Washington championed his claim with ardor. The State of New York presented Paine as a token of public esteem with the fine house and estate of the Loyalist Frederick Devoe. In advocating the propriety of feeding the public treasury from the pockets of rich Tories, Paine had once quoted a saying of King James, of thrifty memory, "A rich man makes a bonny traitor" and now he saw no reason for changing his opinion. Pennsylvania followed suit and made Paine a gift of £500 in cash, but Washington's hope that Virginia would do likewise was frustrated by an old grudge. In an early pamphlet, Paine, insisting upon the supremacy of the central government, had contended that certain territory to which Virginia had a doubtful claim properly belonged to the United States. He was a pioneer of union, and he suffered for it now.

The succeeding years were happy ones for Paine. Secure from want, he once more postponed work on his history, and gave himself up to one of the darling projects of his life,—the designing of an iron bridge.

Throughout Europe, bridges rested upon piers but in America the spring ice-floes were found to interfere seriously with this form of construction. Turning to nature for guidance, Paine watched the strong and beautiful curves by which the spider holds in place a web a hundred times more delicate than fine-spun silk, and then with his own hands wrought the lines into an iron model. Such a curve as this, springing from solid foundations in either bank, should, he hoped, bridge the broad Schuylkill with a single arch. There was genius in the design, and people mistrusted it. Dr. Franklin comprehended the model, and pronounced it practicable; but the scheme of the bridge was never approved by the Pennsylvania legislature.

Paine's Imagination was not confined to his bridge. He amused himself inventing planing machines, smokeless candles, and a dozen other ingenious contrivances. Nor were his interests wholly scientific. In 1786 rose one of those spasmodic crazes for cheap money which have so often afflicted this country. The attack was directed against the Bank of North America, and a violent effort was made to have its charter repealed. In a lucid and intelligent pamphlet, Paine set forth the fallacies of his opponents, and the sacredness of private contract against the power of legislative majorities. It was this pamphlet which turned the tide.

For a long time Paine had desired to revisit his native land. Now he was doubly anxious to cross the water, in order to obtain the opinion of the best French engineers in regard to his bridge. When the delegates to the constitutional convention were elected, Paine was not among them. The omission was a wise one. Compromise was the only hope of union, and the spirit of it was not in Paine. His presence was no longer required in America. Taking with him his well-beloved model and new letters of introduction from Franklin, he set sail for France in the spring of 1787. He meant to be away a twelve-month, at most. It was fifteen years afterward that he returned.

### III.

Paine had warm friends at Paris in Jefferson, the American minister, and in the Marquis de la Fayette, while his brief visit of three years before had made him known to many persons of prominence. Besides, like other things American, *Common Sense* was much in vogue in the French capital where it had appeared shorn of questionable references to the divine right of kings. By the Academy Paine was received in complimentary fashion, his bridge was lauded, and he was advised to go to London and display it before the Royal Society. This he determined to do.

But he had other and larger interests. Ever since a republic had been established in the New World, he had dreamed of becoming the great emancipator in a revolution of Europe, now that the times were ripening in France, he shared the hopes of idealists like Condorcet and Brissot, and felt an ardent sympathy with the heroic liberalism of Burke and Fox. The British government he abhorred, and its policy of ceaseless enmity to France was to him an unnatural crime against humanity. The English people were not, could not, be party to it but, to understand the aims of Frenchmen, they must know France better.

Full of self-confidence, he drew up a letter denouncing "the madness of war, and the wretched impolicy of two nations, like England and France, continually worrying each other to no other end than that of a mutual increase of burdens and taxes"; and this he found means to lay before the Cardinal Minister de Brienne, who readily lent his signature. With this letter and the model of his bridge, Paine crossed the Channel.

In England one of his first cares was to visit Thetford, where he found his mother, at the age of ninety-one still living, and provided for her wants by a small annuity. In London he was warmly received by Sir Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society and he soon made arrangements with a great firm of iron manufacturers to have a bridge erected after his model and set up for exhibition, hoping that he might be employed as engineer to bridge the Thames.

When Paine called upon Burke and showed him his letter, the statesman received him with kindly interest. In 1788 the rising flood in France was not yet a deluge, and Burke still sympathized with the hopes of the Revolution. Paine felt that here, indeed, was a leader to be loved and trusted. Fox, in opposition, he had always admired, now he met him as a friend; and, thinking doubtless of his stay-making past, he wrote to Jefferson with some complacency of his intimacy with these great men, of invitations from my Lord Fitzwilliam, and of visits to the Duke of Portland.

During the first three years of his life abroad Paine divided his time between France and England, following the drift of political sentiment with intense interest. In May, 1789, the States-General met in Paris and in the following July the Bastille was torn to pieces. Paine's exultation was supreme; and, when la Fayette wished to send the key of the fortress by him as a gift to Washington, he saw in it the symbolic ideal of his aspirations. Although actual outbreaks during the next year were few, the half-repressed excitement in France continually increased and Europe waited in suspense. Burke's sympathy with the Revolution had long been struggling with his prophetic vision. The Revolutionary clubs in England had startled him. At last, fearing what each day might bring forth and looking far ahead to the time when a despot must arise in France, he published his famous *Reflexions on the Revolution of France*. This work, so admired and so detested, is a medley of genius and ignorance. Burke utterly mis-comprehended the social causes of the Revolution, but he saw its destiny more clearly than any man alive. He dwelt with passionate pathos on the sufferings of a few thousands, and was blind to the deliverance of millions. The book produced an immediate and wonderful effect. "It's a good book," said the king, with Hanoverian wit,—"a very good book. Every gentleman ought to read it." The Whigs felt that it forever divided Burke's path from their own.

When Burke had spoken against the Revolution in Parliament early in the year, Paine had been amazed and grieved but this blow struck him like a murderous assault. Burke was the lost leader who had sold himself for a pension, the great apostate fallen like Lucifer from heaven. Paine was at Islington at the time. He immediately began to write a reply.

Never, perhaps, was a great pamphlet more greatly answered than Burke's *Reflexions* by *Rights of Man*. This work was the first textbook of republicanism. Paine saw the future through a glass darkly but his conception of the present was infinitely truer, infinitely nobler than Burke's. To Burke the Revolution was a revolt against persons: to Paine it was an uprising for eternal principles. Like Rousseau, he believed government a social compact. It must be renewed from generation to generation. Burke looked upon the English Revolution of 1688 as the Jews looked upon Sinai and the Bill of Rights was as the tables of the law cut in everlasting stone. Paine believed it a crime to hold men bound by bargains clinched with their fathers. An hereditary crown is as great an absurdity as an hereditary laureate. Shall the three houses of Old Sarum return two members till eternity, and shall Manchester never be represented because its birthright was sold two hundred years ago?

The splendor of Burke's eloquence was lost upon the democrat. The passage on the queen, which Burke had wetted with his tears, was the glitter of the actor's tinsel. "The Quixot age of chivalry nonsense was gone" for Paine.

Mr. Johnson, a radical publisher, undertook to issue Paine's pamphlet but his radicalism was judicious, and only a few copies were issued before he relinquished the contract. Another publisher, Jordan, continued the work and *Rights of Man* was soon familiar in men's mouths. The radical societies hailed it as a fifth gospel. Romney, the painter. Sharp, the engraver. Brand Holies, Lord Edward Fitz-Gerald, Home Tooke, and a crowd of apostles preached it everywhere.

In America, where parties were now divided scarcely less sharply than in England, *Rights of Man* reaped a whirlwind. Without troubling himself to obtain permission, Paine had dedicated his pamphlet to the President, though even then Washington distrusted France, and was secretly inclined to a commercial treaty with Great Britain.

An odd incident re-enforced the impression that Paine had the official indorsement of the American government. A copy of *Rights of Man* had been sent to Jefferson, at that time Secretary of State. He read it with delight; and in forwarding it to a brother of the printer, as he had been requested to do, he enclosed a private note expressing his satisfaction. The printer himself saw his opportunity, and calmly published the book with the Secretary's indorsement as a preface. Here, then, was a book fiercely assailing the English Constitution, dedicated to the President, and introduced by the Secretary of State. Adams, Jay, and the English loving Federalists were horrified. The British minister asked for explanations and Jefferson, while he could not disavow his sentiments, assured him that the publication of his note had not been authorized. But the mischief was done and Paine's book, the triple essence of democracy, became the focus of party strife. In their enthusiasm, Jefferson, Madison, and Edmund Randolph pressed Paine for a cabinet appointment as successor to Osgood, the Postmaster-General. To this the President prudently refused to agree and, ignoring the embarrassing compliment of the dedication of *Rights of Man*, he wrote to Paine some time later, politely thanking him for "the token of his remembrance" in forwarding fifty copies of his pamphlet.

No sooner was his work published in England than Paine hastened to Paris to have it translated into French. The dominating figure of Mirabeau had just passed from the scene. With him disappeared the last hope for monarchy in France. In June, 1791, the foolish king attempted to escape. Paris was in ebullition. "You see," remarked Paine to a friend, "the absurdity of monarchical government. Here will be a whole nation disturbed by the folly of one man." To bring back the runaway king seemed to Paine the height of un-wisdom, but brought back he was and on June 25 Paine was among the crowd which read from every wall that "whoever applauds the king shall be flogged and whoever insults him shall be hanged." But, alone among the throng, Paine had neglected to pin his principles to his hat. He wore no tricolor cockade. Here was a traitor, self-confessed. The mob seized him; some one shouted, "Aristocrat a la lanterne!" and poor Paine, ignorant of the language and thunderstruck at such treatment from fellow-republicans, was hustled roughly along. Happily, a man near him knew English. Quickly explaining the situation

to Paine, he assured the crowd that their prisoner was guiltless; and Paine was free to go his way.

Wherever revolution was, there was Paine also. With Brissot, dear to him as an apostle of abolition, with the honest and pedantic Condorcet, and two other enthusiasts, he formed the "Société Républicaine," the secret membership of which was a conjecture of every club and salon. On the night of July 1 these five placarded Paris with republican manifestoes. One copy was even nailed to the door of the Assembly. A violent debate within the Assembly followed, but it led to nothing and the society followed up its attack by issuing the first and only number of a republican newspaper, controverting the monarchical notions of Abbe Sieyes, the most prolific writer of constitutions whom France has yet produced.

In the midst of the controversy which followed, Paine returned to England. The republican glory about his head had brightened with his achievements in France, and he at once became the centre of the radical reformers. It was proposed that the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille should be celebrated by lovers of liberty at the sign of the Crown and Anchor in London. But the authorities foolishly advised the landlord to deny the use of his public house for a perfectly legitimate meeting. This was patent interference with the right of free speech, and the reformers determined to make the most of it. A few days later they met at the Thatched House Tavern, and under the chairmanship of Home Tooke adopted a manifesto which had previously been written by Paine. The "Address and Declaration of the Friends of Universal Peace and Liberty," declared earnest sympathy with the French Revolution, denounced the extortionate taxation of the English people, and proclaimed the authority of reason and the right of free speech. It was a document such as might well precede revolution, and the government was on its guard. The ringleader, however, was peaceable enough. He settled down in the household of his admirer and friend, Thomas Rickman, bookseller, and devoted himself to the Second Part of *Rights of Man*.

Paine could not, however, find it in him to refuse to be the guest of honor at a dinner of the radical "Revolution Society." The members rose to greet him, singing the triumphant chorus,

*"Freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom.  
Rights of Man and Paine resound."*

The climax of the evening came when Paine rose to make his speech. Raising his glass, he looked about the waiting assemblage, and said, "Gentlemen, I give you the revolution of the world!"

Before publishing the Second Part of *Rights of Man*, Paine waited for some time in hopes of a reply from Burke to his earlier pamphlet. That reply never came but in his Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs Burke quoted from Paine at length, and his single comment was that such ideas deserved one answer,—criminal justice. Paine himself had expected prosecution, and regretted the inaction of the government. To play the martyr for a nation's liberties was not repugnant to his feelings, but he had a better motive in hoping for a trial. In that event the government must take its stand definitely across the pathway of liberty. If it lost the case, the victory was won. If it secured a conviction, the decree must be registered in black and white, plain for men to see. For centuries of English history the law court has been a battle-ground of English liberty. John Hampden fighting for his twenty shillings tells the story of the British Constitution.

In the Second Part of *Rights of Man*, Paine made his trial very certain. With the strength of conviction he arraigned the abuses of the Constitution and, with the eager enthusiasm of a republican while republics are young, he contrasted the light taxes of America with the intolerable burdens of the British taxpayer, and cited a hundred measures of reform. The whole tenor of his argument demanded a new constitution, based on the rights of man, and enforced by representatives of the people.

Impressed by the sales of Paine's former pamphlet, Chapman, a London publisher, bid a thousand guineas for the manuscript but Paine, unwilling to put it in another's power to suppress or alter the work, refused the offer, and simply made a bargain with Chapman for his services. Chapman, however, after printing a certain portion of the work, grew frightened and declined to proceed. The manuscript was then given to Mr. Jordan, of Fleet Street. Soon afterward Pitt introduced a bill for taxation reform and, as it incorporated several items of relief proposed by Paine, the latter suspected that Pitt

had had access to his manuscript through the obsequious Chapman. This is not incredible, but it is difficult to believe that the thousand guineas offered to Paine was a veiled ministerial bribe for suppressing the work.

Poor, weak-kneed Jordan had many qualms but Paine stiffened his resolution by giving him a note, explicitly avowing himself the author and publisher of *Rights of Man* and further bade the printer refer inquirers straight to him. He was not disappointed. In May, 1792, a summons was served upon Jordan and the printer surrendered at discretion, giving up Paine's note, and promising to plead guilty in the hope of pardon. The following week another summons was left at Paine's London lodgings, and the day this was done the king issued a proclamation against seditious writings. In the parliamentary debate which followed, Secretary Dundas declared that proceedings against the printer had been instituted because Paine was not to be found but the device was flimsy, and Paine at once addressed a letter to Dundas, declaring his readiness to appear in court. The trial was fixed for June 8; but, greatly to Paine's disappointment, it was subsequently postponed till December, and in the mean time many events occurred.

In the whole matter the ministry proceeded with obvious reluctance. Paine had forced the issue on ground of his own choosing. Reformation societies were springing up all over the country. The Society for Constitutional Information, of which Home Tooke was the leading member, publicly thanked Paine on the completion of each portion of his work; and, like many kindred clubs, it assiduously circulated *Rights of Man*. The copyright was relinquished, and various publishers multiplied cheap editions. The conservative, well-to-do classes, alarmed at the turn of events in France, flocked to the support of the ministry; but great numbers of the people openly sympathized with the Revolution and made *Rights of Man* their rallying cry. Nearly two hundred thousand copies of Part I. were already in circulation. No threats of violence were made, but Jacobinism was rampant. The government felt that any course but prosecution would be construed as surrender.

Meantime events were marching in France to the music of the "Marseillaise." On August 10 a long day's work was done. The Tuileries was stormed, hereditary representation abolished, and a Con-

vention called to make another constitution, the French panacea for earthly difficulties. On August 26 citizenship was conferred on various distinguished republicans of the world. Washington, Hamilton, Priestley, Wilberforce, Kosciuszko, Paine, and many others were included. Paine's books had made him a power in France. His persecution made him beloved. Four departments vied with each other for the honor of securing him as their representative to the Convention. A deputy from Calais reached him first. Paine hesitated. He had put his hand to the plough, and the furrow was still incomplete. On September 12 he spoke at a meeting of the "Friends of Liberty." The fever of revolution was upon him, and his speech transgressed all bounds of prudence.

The next evening he met a number of his friends at the house of Johnson, the publisher. The talk was earnest and excited. Of the company was William Blake, whose religion was the rights of man. Poet and mystic as he was, Blake was the prudent spirit among these visionary enthusiasts. As Paine rose to go, he laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"You must not go home," he said earnestly, "or you are a dead man."

Mr. Frost, a good friend, took the same ground. He led Paine away, and together they made for Dover by a roundabout route. When they reached the wharf, a packet was making ready to sail but here a collector stopped them, and insisted upon overturning Paine's baggage. The haste of the travellers was evident, and the man's suspicions were aroused. Thrusting his hands into a trunk, he drew forth a bundle of letters. The first he opened was the last note Paine had received from the President of the United States.

"It is very extraordinary," remarked Paine, "that George Washington cannot write me a letter of private friendship without its being subject to be read by a custom-house officer." Before the fellow could answer, Frost clapped his hand over the paper, and, seizing it, told him to mind his business, and not read private letters. "But," added Frost, "I will read you a part of it." And then he read: "And as no one can feel a greater interest in the happiness of mankind than I do, it is the first wish of my heart that the enlightened policy of the present age may diffuse to all men those blessings to which they are entitled, and lay the foundation of happiness for future generations."

This and the President's signature were too much for the custom-house official. He stood aside. The friends boarded the packet, which almost immediately sailed for Calais. Twenty minutes later officers reached Dover, bearing a warrant for Paine's arrest.

#### IV.

Paine was gone, but his works remained behind him. As the trial approached, excitement continually increased and Paine heightened it still more by a Parthian shot. His Address to the Addressers, a satirical eulogy on the perfection of the British Constitution, was everywhere received by radical enthusiasts as completing *Rights of Man*. Nor were conservative men less stirred. George Chalmers, a clerk in the employ of the Government Board of Trade, was suborned to write a scurrilous biography of Paine. This accomplished liar published the work under the assumed name of "Francis Oldys," borrowing a fictitious "M.A." from the University of Pennsylvania to compete with Paine's genuine degree. The slanders which he interwove with the story of Paine's life were read, applauded, and frequently believed.

Pamphleteers and cartoonists plied their trade. "The rebellious Needleman" was placarded about the country, with his *Rights of Man* under one arm and a pair of stays under the other. Sometimes the amusement was varied, and he was gibbeted and burned in effigy. Indeed, a malicious biographer would have us believe that the ladies of Lewes, where Paine had lived, were but voicing the feminine sentiment of England as they cried in their graceful way: "'Od rot 'im! Let 'im come 'ere if he dast, an' we'll tell 'im what the rights of women is. We'll toss 'im in a blanket an' ring 'im out o' Lewes wi' our frying-pans."

The trial was appointed for December, 18, 1792 and, to the chagrin of his friends and the surprise of the public, Thomas Erskine, attorney-general to the Prince of Wales, appeared as counsel for the defence. The government, however, took the precaution of committing the case to a special jury, to be rewarded, as the judicious custom was, with an extra guinea a man and a dinner to boot in case of conviction.

Before Lord Kenyon and a jury of twelve merchants, Sir Archibald Macdonald, the attorney-general, opened the case for the

crown. He began by reciting the charges against Thomas Paine, late of London, gentleman, who "did wickedly, falsely, maliciously, scandalously and seditiously publish a certain book called *Second Part of Rights of Man*, containing many false, wicked, scandalous, malicious and seditious assertions."

The "libellous" passages were then set forth and, certainly, they were not without the ring of free speech. "All hereditary government," Paine had written, "is in its nature tyranny." And another of his dicta ran: "The time is not very distant when England will laugh at itself for sending to Holland, Hanover, Zell or Brunswick for men, at the expense of a million a year, who understood neither her laws, her language nor her interest, and whose capacities would scarcely have fitted them for the office of a parish constable."

This, and much more, was read and discoursed upon and then Sir Archibald Macdonald passed on to the question of authorship. Of this there was no doubt. The attorney-general had in his hands the letter Paine had written to Jordan, but in his pocket was a more dangerous weapon.

"I shall also produce," said he, "a letter which this gentleman was pleased to address to myself, in which letter he avows himself in so many words the author. ... Now, gentlemen, with respect to his correspondence with me, or rather the letter written to me"—

Erskine, who knew well what was coming, was on his feet in an instant, and protested against admitting in evidence a letter which contained unequivocal libel; but which had been written long subsequently to the matter then in court.

"I am clearly of the opinion," replied Lord Kenyon, "that, if it goes to prove that he is the author of this book, I cannot object to it."

In that moment the fate of the case was decided. Here is part of the mad letter to which the jury listened: "The time, sir, is becoming too serious to play with court prosecutions and sport with national rights. ... That the government of England is as great, if not the greatest, perfection of fraud and corruption that ever took place since governments began is what you cannot be a stranger to, unless the constant habit of seeing it has blinded your senses.

"Is it possible that you or I can believe, or that reason can make other men believe, that the capacity of such a man as Mr. Guelph or any of his profligate sons is necessary to the good of a nation? I

speak to you as one man ought to speak to another and I know also that I speak what other people are beginning to think.

"That you cannot obtain a verdict (and, if you do, it will signify nothing) without packing a jury, and we both know that such tricks are practised, is what I have very great reason to believe."

Erskine rose to the measure of his greatness. In the face of certain defeat the attorney to the eldest of "Mr. Guelph's profligate sons" explained to the jury that the libellous letter just read was entirely divorced from the case before them and then, in a wise, eloquent, and conciliatory argument, he pleaded for liberty of the press. Paine, he urged, was honestly upholding opinions he believed and, no matter how severe his strictures, he was not subject to criminal justice unless it were proved "that at the time he so wrote, and at the time he so published, he did it, not contemplating the happiness, but seeking the misery of the human race." The advocate brought his long speech to a close in the words of Lucian's fable:—

"You must all remember, gentlemen, the pleasant story in that fable respecting the countryman and Jupiter. They were conversing with great freedom and familiarity on the subjects of heaven and earth. The countryman listened with great attention and acquiesced in the conversation, so long as Jupiter tried only to convince him by reason and argument; but the countryman happening to hint a doubt as to the truth and propriety of something Jupiter had advanced, he instantly turned round and threatened him with his thunder. 'No,' says the countryman, 'if you up with your thunder, I believe you are in the wrong. You are always wrong when you appeal to your thunder.' So, gentlemen, I cannot fight against the united voice of the people of England, and God forbid that I should. I am an obedient subject and servant of the law."

When Erskine ceased, the attorney-general rose but the foreman of the jury saved him the trouble of a reply. Paine was found guilty of libel, and outlawed. Such property as he had in England was seized, and the bridge on which so many hopes were built was torn down and sold.

Nor did the government rest here. Erskine was deprived of his office. A dozen or more publishers were indicted for libel, many convictions were secured, and the unfortunate men were imprisoned or heavily fined. Even readers of the book were not safe. No wonder the

town-crier of Bolton announced that in all his rounds he could find neither the rights of man nor common sense! No wonder Charles Fox exclaimed in disgust, "Good God, that a man should be sent to Botany Bay for advising another to read Paine's book!"

Meantime a very different scene had been enacted across the Channel. At Calais, Paine was received with every mark of honor. Troops were drawn up to receive him at the city gate; officers embraced him, like the Frenchmen they were a charming *citoyenne* pinned the cockade in his hat; and the crowd shouted, "Vive Thomas Paine, vivent les Droits de l'homme!" In the evening, when he was formally notified of his election, he was seated beneath the bust of Mirabeau, with the colors of France, America, and England entwined behind his chair.

On September 21 the Convention met in the old Biding School at Paris and the same day the French Republic, one and indivisible, was proclaimed. The constitution of 1791 had outlived its usefulness, and a committee was appointed to frame a new one. Sieyes was given the first place, Paine was the second member, and the remainder of the committee consisted mainly of prominent Girondins. The single statesman of the entire number, Danton, did not long remain to share labors which he saw would be fruitless.

But the main question before the Convention was the fate of the king, whose trial was inevitable. From the first Paine struggled to save his life. Before Louis' flight, he had believed the revolution could be effected without dethronement. Now that his Majesty was *Citoyen* Capet, every consideration of humanity and policy seemed to Paine to forbid the extremity of death. Since his Quaker childhood, humanity had been a mainspring of his actions and, as he grew older, it became in his mind indissolubly connected with liberty. Royalty he thought folly, and worse: the man who wore the crown was as other men are. "I'm of the Scotch parson's opinion," he had said years before in England, "when he prayed against Louis XIV.," 'Lord, shake him over the mouth of hell, but don't let him drop;' "Monarchy did not depend on the king's life and it was clear that his death must alienate the single friend France had, the country which regarded Louis as her saviour,—America. Paine understood this fully, and the lesson taught by the history of the Stuarts re-enforced his conviction.

He early tried to impress the nonentity of Louis upon his fellow-deputies. Of the abolition of royalty he wrote, "Amid the general joy inspired by this event one cannot forbear some pain at the folly of our ancestors who have placed us under the necessity of treating seriously the abolition of a phantom." Louis, he thought and wrote, must be tried. Kings, like other men, must, when accused, come to the bar before their peers. The king was party to a conspiracy of "crowned brigands," and his testimony was necessary to detect and thwart the schemes of the partners of his crime.

During the month which preceded the actual trial of Louis, the frenzy of Paris constantly increased. An iron chest was discovered, filled with proofs of the king's correspondence with the nation's enemies and of the hollowness of every promise he had made to obey the constitution. The Jacobins of the "Mountain" terrified the vacillating and divided Girondins. "Revolutions," called Danton, tauntingly, to Paine, across the floor of the Convention, "are not made with rose-water."

On December 3 Robespierre decided the king's fate. The death penalty, he argued, was not a question of ethics or even of justice so much as a political necessity. France must show her power and her determination. On the 11th Louis was called to the bar of the Convention.

For the next month the debates were full of sound and fury. The distorted argument of political necessity hopelessly divided the wavering Gironde. On January 14, 1793, it was agreed that the roll of the Convention should be called, and that every member should answer in turn the three questions: first, Is Louis guilty of crimes against the nation? second, Shall the judgment be submitted to the people? third. What shall be the penalty?

On the first question the vote was overwhelmingly affirmative. On the second an appeal to the people was rejected. On both questions Paine voted with the majority. Of his motives there is no doubt. Like most of the moderate members of the Convention, Paine mistook the shriek of the Commune for the voice of France. The king himself supposed that an appeal to the people meant death. Paine had no doubt of it. It was a cruel, a fatal mistake. The judgment of the twenty-five millions of French people would not have sent Louis to the scaffold.

The vote on the third question was delayed till the following day. Before it was put, Paine gave to the president a manuscript address. There was no time to have it read, and it was printed. In it Paine answers Robespierre's contention of political necessity. Every sound argument of policy pleads for the king's life. The friendship of America depends upon it. The death of the king does not kill kings. His family remain a constant menace to the nation's peace. And then Paine strikes home, and recalls Robespierre's former speech for the abolition of capital punishment. The true solution is to hold Louis prisoner during the rest of the war, and then banish him to those United States which, by fulfilling the will of a generous people, he had done so much to serve.

The Mountain, who knew that the secret of its power was to dare the worst, would have recked little of such words, even if they had been spoken before the Convention. Amid shouts and confusion the voting began. It lasted throughout the night and far into the next day. When Paine's name was called, he stuck fast to his colors. "I vote," he cried, in his broken French, "for the detention of Louis till the end of the war, and after that for his perpetual banishment." Three hundred and thirty-three members voted like Paine. Twenty-six wished timorously to postpone the penalty. Three hundred and sixty-one, in the whole Convention, a majority of one, voted unconditionally for death.

A single hope remained. Could not Louis be held beneath the shadow of the guillotine, a hostage of the nation's enemies? Respite meant much: it might mean everything. On the 20th the vote was to be taken. English persecution gave Paine credentials to republicanism which could not be disputed. He determined on one more attempt. On the 19th he ascended the tribune with a written address, followed by the deputy Bancal, who was to read his speech for him. For a time the tumultuous assembly was still. "Very sincerely" began Bancal, "do I regret the Convention's vote for death."

Marat sprang from his seat far up on the left. "I submit," he shouted, "that Thomas Paine is unfitted to vote on this question. As a Quaker, his religious principles oppose capital punishment."

An uproar followed but cries of "Free Speech!" rose from the "Plain," and the noise sank to murmurs. Bancal continued his reading. The speech was not a fervid appeal for mercy, but a calm protest

against haste in an irrevocable step. The Convention, it urged, was but a temporary body.

The execution of the sentence should be left subject to the will of deputies chosen under a national constitution. But the power of the "Mountain" was in the Convention. Its members meant to make the Convention perpetual, and they were terribly in earnest.

"This," shouted Thuriot, "is not the language of Thomas Paine." Marat took the cue: "I denounce the interpreter," he screamed. "This is not Thomas Paine's opinion. The translation is false!"

A moderate deputy arose, and protested that the translation was correct. He had read the original. There was wild confusion in the hall. Paine, unable to express himself, and imperfectly comprehending the shrieks and cries about him, stood silent in the tribune. Bancal, protesting earnestly that his translation was accurate, was at length allowed to proceed.

"Ah, citizens," he read, "give not the tyrant of England the triumph of seeing the man perish on the scaffold who has aided my much loved America to break her chains."

Scarcely had he finished the closing words, when Marat rushed from his seat to the centre of the floor. "Paine voted," cried he, "against the punishment of death because he is a Quaker."

"I voted against it," replied Paine, speaking with difficulty, "both from moral motives and from motives of public policy."

This scene, half-forgotten among mightier events, was one of the fine moments of Paine's career. There was no rhetoric in his appeal. He had never consulted safety: now he had no thought of himself. He was an Anglo-Saxon pleading for justice, a man pleading for humanity.

Madness laid hold of the Convention. A courageous minority, led by Buzot, voted for postponement; but a majority, three hundred and eighty strong, voted that Louis must die within twenty-four hours.

The Gironde was divided, but its segments still controlled a considerable majority in the Convention and, through his friendship with its leaders, Paine was appointed a member of the Committee of Surveillance. In those days, France had not yet been swept clear of foreigners, and a few rash Englishmen still remained in the capital. Among them was a certain Captain Grimstone, a man of conservative principles and radical temper. One day this gentleman sauntered

into the Palais Royal,—called, in republican style, Palais Égalite,—and found Paine in a coffee-room, discoursing upon politics to a group of friends. Being known to the company, the captain joined them, and at once, in virtue of his British birthright, hotly attacked Paine's principles. Paine retorted and the fellow, losing his temper, struck him a violent blow. Death was the penalty for raising hand against a deputy, and Grimstone was hurried off to prison. Paine, deeply troubled, hastened to his friend Brissot, and asked for a safe-conduct for his assailant. Brissot wished the law to take its course, but Paine was in earnest. He secured the passport, and it was by the aid of his pocket-book that Grimstone was provided with the necessary funds to escape from France. This is not the only recorded instance of Paine's magnanimity in times when compassion was interpreted as treason.

But, in his efforts to save bloodshed, Paine entered a more dangerous path. He still believed that war with England might be averted. Many of the Gironde concurred in his opinion, and it was commonly understood that Pitt was willing to receive the co-operation of moderate republicans to this end. The Girondins staked their political hopes largely on the military prestige of General Dumouriez, whom they wished to identify with their party. When he came to Paris in the autumn of 1792, fresh from the glory of Yalmy, Paine gave him a dinner at the Hotel de Yille. English radicals and French moderates met about the board. Shortly afterward it was proposed that Dumouriez should go to London to interview Pitt but this absurd scheme was relinquished, and Maret, a less conspicuous agent, was chosen. Maret, however, was speedily denounced by Chauvelin, the revolutionary envoy, and promptly ordered home by the French government. Soon afterward came the fatal trial of the king. The indignation of England and the inflammatory eloquence of Burke forced Pitt's hand. Chauvelin was dismissed, and France retorted by a declaration of war.

Humane as were Paine's motives, the part he played in this episode was dubious. A member of the French government, he was in secret communication with Pitt. For a brief space he trod the path which the selfish Dumouriez followed to the precipice. The boundary line of treason is often ill-defined, and Paine was blinded by his principles. The Girondins were lacking in patriotism, but it is not as a

patriot that we must judge Paine. When Franklin said to him, "Where liberty is, there is my country," Paine replied, "Where liberty is not, there is mine." The words were true. It mattered not to him where he was fighting the powers of oppression: England, France, America, were battle-grounds of the same crusade. In France he saw mutiny in the army of liberty. The Mountain was a new tyranny, and Paine resisted it.

Once war was declared, however, he was for war heart and soul. The combined powers of England and Prussia were for him oppression incarnate. There could be no peace while they were dominant in Europe.

Meantime Paine was toiling over the constitution which was to end the troubles of France. Never was there a more chimerical remedy. The Condorcet scheme, as history calls it, after its principal author, was involved beyond the possibility of enforcement. Paine protested against a single executive and an executive council was recommended, consisting of seven ministers and a secretary, of whom half were to retire every year. There was to be a single legislative body. The rights of the individual were elaborated to the last extent. All offices were elective, and terms of office were for six months or a year at most. Had the constitution been put in practice, the life of every Frenchman must have centred about his journeys to and from the polling booths. Thus were the rights of man to be guaranteed.

March 1 was set for the discussion of this fantastic scheme but the mere mention of a constitution was intolerable to the Mountain, and the same day its leaders made a bitter attack on the Gironde, and clamored for the arrest of twenty-two members of the Convention. In this they were foiled; but Robespierre, high priest of Rousseau, demanded that all consideration of the constitution should be prefaced by a discussion of the introductory "Declaration of Rights," which had been written by Paine. This was a subject dear to the red republican heart, that might be discussed till the last trump should sound.

In chronicling the rights of man, Paine had not even alluded to Robespierre's protege, *l'Être Suprême*. Here was atheism rampant. An excited discussion of the "Declaration" followed; and, when preamble and constitution alike were recommitted, a number of the Mountaineers were forced upon the committee. The constitution was

entirely remodelled, and on June 25 it was actually adopted by the Convention. But for France, encircled by enemies and divided at home, it was no season to experiment with theories. The organization of the new government was postponed until universal peace, and the Constitution of 1793 was quietly slipped into the waste-basket of history.

During the debate more important events had passed. Marat was tried and acquitted, and the ruin of the Girondins came on apace. On June 2 the Convention was intimidated by an organized mob, and thirty-one members of the Gironde were placed under arrest. Paine was not on the list of the proscribed. The Jacobins knew that revolutions are not made with rose-water but with blood.

During the fearful months which followed, Paine left his seat in the Convention empty, and lived in retirement in a little house once owned by Madame de Pompadour. A small group of friends gathered about him, but one by one they dropped apart. On September 5 Terror was declared the order of the day, and daily executions became an essential of the government's policy. On the last day of October a holocaust of Paine's closest friends in the Gironde was offered up. It was a time to make men mad. Paine took to brandy. For a time he drank himself into oblivion, but his despair was not lasting. He expected death, and did not fear it. He did not even shun it, but preferred to stay in Paris and complete one last work.

Tyranny in dogma is of the same essence as tyranny in government, and Paine hated both in kind. At the same time he was horrified at the counter-tyranny of atheism, which abolished the worship of God in France. To save religion, it must be stripped of all which renders it repellent to reason. Some years later Paine wrote to Samuel Adams of the time in which *The Age of Reason* was written: "My friends were falling as fast as the guillotine could cut their heads off and, as I expected every day the same fate, I resolved to begin my work. I appeared to myself to be on my death-bed for death was on every side of me, and I had no time to lose. This accounts for my writing at the time I did, and so nicely did time and intention meet that I had not finished the first part of the work more than six hours before I was arrested and taken to prison. The people of France were running headlong into atheism and I had the work translated into their own language to stop them in that career, and fix them in the

first article of every man's creed who has any creed at all,—I believe in God."

On October 3 Paine was denounced in the Convention in the harangue which was the death sentence of the Girondins. They went to the scaffold while he sat in his room writing the testimony he wished to leave behind him. On Christmas night he was formally expelled from the Convention. As a citizen of the United States, he was still under the protection of a friendly government but, if he could be considered an Englishman, he was immediately liable to arrest under the law which early in the year had sentenced to imprisonment all resident foreigners belonging to countries at war with France. His enemies were at no loss how to act. On the night of December 28 Paine was arrested, and taken to the Luxembourg Prison. On his way thither he was allowed to intrust to a friend the manuscript which he wished given immediately to a printer.

*V.*

Unhappily for Paine, he had one enemy whom he had not reckoned upon. This was the American minister. Gouverneur Morris was a thorough-going Federalist. Paine and his democratic principles were odious to him. During the controversy over Deane, Morris had urged Paine's summary dismissal and in Paris he had repeatedly suspected Paine of intriguing against him. On the other hand, the appointment, as minister to France, of a man avowedly out of sympathy with the revolutionary movement, had seemed to Paine most injudicious. He had written his opinion to Jefferson without reserve, and had not made a secret of his feelings to friends in Paris. But the French leaders had no need of this advice to form an estimate of Morris. They knew his sympathies and, although ignorant of the lengths to which his intrigues in favor of the king had gone, they disliked, and suspected him. Twice his recall was requested of the American government, and twice President Washington had taken no action. Morris's position seemed fixed and, for fear of offending America, France dared not go to greater lengths. Paine meanwhile, through his influence in the Convention, was able to do for American citizens many services which fell naturally within the minister's province. One such occasion led to an open breach between them.

In the summer of 1793, France, following the exasperating practice of England, seized a large number of American vessels on the high seas, under pretence that their cargoes were for the support of the enemy. The captains came to Paris, and requested the American minister to take immediate action. Morris, who was not sorry to watch the wedge enter between France and America, received them with indifference; and the captains turned indignantly to Paine. He took up their cause and promptly secured for them permission to clear their ships and to trade with all colonies of France. On this occasion Paine wrote Morris a sharp note, and thenceforth even outward friendliness was ended between them.

Shortly after this Morris had occasion to protest to the French government against the conduct of Genet, its representative in America, who had taken it upon himself to intrigue with Kentucky. At the same time the astute minister took the opportunity to hint that America desired the French government to deal directly with her accredited representative, and to disregard an "overruling influence from the other side of the Channel." This was, of course, a hit at Paine, and gave the French government to understand that he was no longer looked upon with favor in the land of his adoption. This, undoubtedly, weakened Paine's position but it is presuming on scant evidence to hold Morris directly responsible for his imprisonment.

Once Paine was in prison, however, Morris's influence was quite adequate to keep the door bolted on the outside. After the failure of a petition in his behalf, signed by Americans living in Paris, Paine applied to the minister to claim him as an American citizen. Such he certainly was. The Convention, since it was not properly a legislative body, had exacted no oath of allegiance from its members and the French citizenship conferred upon Paine was purely honorary. He was imprisoned as an English citizen; but since July 4, 1776, he had not been a subject of King George. Still, his position bore an appearance of ambiguity and Morris took advantage of it. He applied to the Foreign Office for the causes of Paine's detention, but spoke of him as an adopted citizen of France, and made no claim of his American citizenship. Writing to his own government, however, Morris asserted that he had made such a claim, but added that he believed it ill-founded, and recommended that no further steps be taken. Paine's present obscurity, he argued ingeniously, was his surest safeguard.

An intemperate use of ardent spirits had impaired his slender stock of sense. He had best remain quietly in prison, where "he amuses himself with publishing a pamphlet against Jesus Christ." When the matter was placed in this light, the American government naturally took no farther steps. Jefferson, Paine's friend, soon afterwards resigned the Secretary-ship of State and Paine was left to the tender mercies of the revolutionary genii which he had helped to loose.

Discreditable as is the whole affair to Morris, there is little reason to doubt his belief that sound policy jumped with his wishes. He regarded Paine as an impudent and dangerous meddler, whose imprisonment was most desirable for society. And, after all, the guillotine could do such a head no great harm.

The Luxembourg was the genteel prison of revolutionary Paris. Ladies of birth, gentlemen of rank and fortune, orators and statesmen, who shortly before had been idols of the people, mingled freely in its strange society. One day the gates opened to admit the hideous and great Danton. Adversity makes strange friends, and Paine was almost the first to welcome him. But, as he addressed him in stumbling French, Danton said in good English:—

"Mr. Paine, you have had the happiness of pleading in your country a cause which I shall no longer plead in mine." And then with honest envy he contrasted with his own a career which had not been shackled by the duties of office at times when policy seemed not to square with right. "I have been less fortunate," he added, "but not less innocent. They will send me to the scaffold. Very well, I shall go gayly." Eight days later he kept his word.

Few tarried long in the Luxembourg. The number of executions mounted daily. In a single night one hundred and sixty-eight persons were taken from this prison; and, of these, eight alone escaped the guillotine. Paine had been marked for slaughter with the rest, but a singular incident saved him. The room which he shared with three other prisoners happened to be one of a long series on the ground floor. The door opened outward and, as the prisoners were still allowed to wander where they chose within the walls of the building, they chanced one day to leave it wide open. For the sake of quiet, condemned persons were removed at night and, to facilitate the work, the turnkeys taking a hint from Morgiana went secretly about, marking with chalk the doors of those who were to die. While this

was being done, Paine's door stood open flat against the wall and the jailer marked a tiny "4" on the inside. Unconscious of their danger, the four prisoners closed their door before retiring for the night, thus hiding the fatal number. While they slept, the officers of death passed them by. Paine himself believed the escape pure accident but in those days Providence hobnobbed with the guillotine, and it is probable that some good friend of Paine's within the prison did him a timely service.

In June the rigors of imprisonment were increased by the substitution of a new warden for the kind-hearted Benoit. Communication with the outside world was denied the prisoners. Rumors most terrible, but not worse than the reality, were rife among them and men and women went to sleep at night knowing that they or their neighbors must be waked for the guillotine.

During the first months of his imprisonment, Paine worked over the proof-sheets of *The Age of Reason* but, as time went on, the awful strain told upon him. His health gave way completely. He was stricken with fever, and an abscess formed in his side. Dangerous as the illness was, it was merciful at such a time. The fever mounted to his brain, and for a long period he lay unconscious or wandering in his mind. In July, 1794, Robespierre followed his rival to the scaffold, and this was the news which greeted Paine's recovery. It was none too soon. Among Robespierre's papers was found a memorandum demanding "that Thomas Paine be decreed of accusation for the interests of America as well as of France." Trial might not have meant death" but in those fraternal days prisoners had no counsel. Cases might be closed before the evidence was heard, and Robespierre's name was leaden in the scales of justice.

After the death of Robespierre the prisons emptied rapidly but it was not until Morris was superseded by James Monroe that Paine's liberation came. The new minister had brought no definite instructions with him from America; but, upon receiving a memorial from the prisoner, he claimed him as a citizen of the United States, and with some difficulty procured his release after an incarceration of more than ten months. Monroe's kindness went to much greater lengths. He took Paine into his own household, kept him for upward of a year, supplied him with money, and had him nursed through a serious relapse of the illness which had befallen him in prison.

Moderation once again appeared in France. The Girondins, who had survived the Terror, were restored to the bosom of the Convention. Paine himself was reinstated, and offered a pension for literary services, which he declined. His pen was still at the service of France; and he published a *Dissertation on the First Principles of Government*, which contained a clear and temperate statement of his theories. The new constitution, however, devised to supersede the Constitution of 1793, was out of joint with a cardinal principle of democratic philosophy. All citizens, veterans excepted, who did not pay direct taxes, were to be denied the right of suffrage. This natural reaction against the riot of democracy seemed to Paine a blow at the root of republican institutions. For the last time he mounted the tribune where a clerk read his speech, pleading with the Convention to trust the people. The protest went unheeded; and, with the organization of the Directory, Paine left the arena of French politics.

One of the most melancholy chapters in Paine's history follows. Throughout his long imprisonment he had continually hoped that Washington, with whom he had exchanged so many proofs of friendship, would demand his liberation. But Washington, as Paine did not know, had been misled by the representations of Morris and there can be no doubt that the whole course of Paine's revolutionary career in France and England was exceedingly distasteful to him. The dearest hope of the President's declining years was to free American soil of the British garrisons which still remained on the northern frontier, and to establish a treaty of amity and commerce with the mother country. To any such treaty Washington knew that Paine was violently opposed, and he also knew that Paine was as offensive to England as any American alive. Further, he doubtless shared Morris's belief that Paine was conducting an intrigue in Paris to supplant the minister. Once assured by Morris that a reclamation had been made, Washington's silence was natural and proper. Paine, ignorant of the circumstances, sick and neglected, thought it perfidy. Moreover, his vanity was stung in its tenderest spot. His friend, the President, had not thought it worth while to interfere.

Smarting beneath his grievance, Paine wrote Washington a reproachful letter but this Monroe persuaded him not to send. His bitterness only grew with time and in September, 1795, suffering from the illness induced by his country's neglect, he wrote to Washington,

accusing him of conniving at his imprisonment, and bidding the President exonerate himself if he could. This impertinent communication received no answer. Paine waited nearly a year. Then the vials of his gall and wrath burst forth, and he published the letter to Washington which remains to-day a monument of grief and shame. It is not only that he accuses Washington of malice and treachery, but in a review of his career he belittles his successes, distorts his actions, treats his agreement with England like a criminal intrigue, and belies what he himself had so often written in *The Crisis*. Let us in charity remember all that Paine had passed through, and be mindful of his misunderstandings, since even then spite and vanity and littleness of spirit have, in this instance, left a mark upon his memory which we may disregard, but cannot forget.

But it is another pamphlet which, among multitudes of good people, has made the name of Paine a *nom de guerre* of the devil incarnate. The first part of *The Age of Reason* was, as we have seen, written on the threshold of the prison whence men passed to the guillotine. Part II. was added after Paine's restoration to liberty. The pamphlet was published both in French and English.

Ours is an age which has lost its interest in theology. Strauss and Baur did their work in a past generation. A new Kuenen could not wake an echo of the tumult raised by the old. It is less the fashion now to drive men from the Church than to invite them in. Heretics of a hundred years ago might be bishops of to-day. The odium theologicum which passes the other hates of this world, can nowadays give us no conception of the fulness of its fruition when Paine wrote. Men could no longer burn each other all the more reason for hate. This we must remember if we would understand the unreasoning passions which Paine's pamphlet let loose.

Paine's confession of faith is simple. He was an ardent Deist, believing in a God who created the world, and who is known to mankind through the world which he created. Nature was Paine's Bible, and science its only interpreter. Regarding science as a holy thing, and nature as beneficent and kind, he stood for a purely natural religion. The God who had made him would not, he believed, deny him a life beyond the grave.

Surely these were not startling precepts. At the end of the eighteenth century, Deism had long been known both in France and Eng-

land. But Paine came to his own conclusions by his own reasoning. He was in childish ignorance of books. The Bible and his own works made up the sum of his written lore, and his belief had in it all the vitality and strength of a new religion.

But it was the breaking down, not the building up, which turned men's minds. Paine's God was omnipotent goodness and the blood-guilty Jehovah of the Old Testament, who bade His favorites wade in the blood of their enemies, was an intolerable calumny.

Rousseau's hatred of the clergy, which had permeated France, was rampant in Paine and he treated the whole Bible story as an invention of priestcraft. Once examined by the principles which science sanctifies, the entire fable disintegrates. "It is certain" he wrote "that what is called the Christian system of faith, including in it the whimsical account of creation, the strange story of Eve, the snake, and the apple, the amphibious idea of a man-God, the corporeal idea of the death of a God, the mythological idea of a family of Gods, and the Christian system of arithmetic, that three are one and one is three, are all irreconcilable, not only to the divine gift of reason that God has given to man, but to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom of God by the aid of the sciences, and by studying the structure of the universe that God has made."

The idea of revelation of the word is absurd for revelation is made but to one person at a time, and all who listen to him listen to hearsay. True revelation is the creation which we behold, which speaks a universal language and needs not translation to be understood by all men.

The New Testament is intertwined with the Old, and must abide or die with it. For Christ himself Paine felt sincere respect, but, confusing his principles with the dogmatism of churches, he held Christianity responsible for all the crimes committed in its name and in the fury of fight he styled revealed religion "the most dishonorable belief against the character of the Divinity, the most destructive to morality and to the peace and happiness of man, that has ever been propagated since man began to exist."

The miracles Paine treated with contempt. All things are possible with the Creator but, had He seen fit to resort to such childish displays of omnipotence. He would at least have made sure of His object of making men believe. He would not have chosen a few obscure

witnesses, whose word must be doubted nor would He have made his miracles themselves capable of misinterpretation.

The story of Jonah had been better, had the prophet swallowed the whale. But even then, in default of many witnesses, the question must arise. Which is more probable, that a man should swallow a whale or tell a lie?

Paine's language was not shaped for conciliation. He spoke with the brutal freedom of a reformer, careless of the things which other men held sacred, as Cromwell's troopers of a church where they stabled their horses. His purely speculative imagination had no touch of reverence. He was blind to the moral grandeur of the prophets and deaf to the spiritual music of the Gospels. He wrote in clear, strong English which the people could understand and he wrote as one of them,—a stay-maker balling his dirty fists against white-shirted tyranny. Here was his originality, and here his power. Those who had gone before him—Collins, Tindal, Gibbon, and the band of eighteenth century free thinkers—were scholars speaking to men of education. Paine spoke to men who sweated for their daily bread and read *Rights of Man* by the light of the evening fire.

The wheel of time had circled since Christ established his pure democracy on earth. Here was Paine, a democrat of democrats, attacking Christianity because it was not a religion for the people!

The shriek which went up when *The Age of Reason* was published has echoed and re-echoed unto this day. Its cause was partly horror, partly ignorance, but chiefly fear. Timid citizens, who had looked upon *Rights of Man* as a gunpowder plot against all governments, now thought *The Age of Reason* an attempt to destroy all religion. Shrewder men, who knew that Paine was no nihilist, were scarcely less afraid. They realized that his voice was the voice of struggling masses, that democracy was feeling its strength in religion as in politics but even they were slow to understand the moral conviction which was the power of Paine's argument.

Paine was answered by thousands. Most of them replied as mobs reply. They hanged and burned his effigy anew. They called him "Tom" and devils and broomsticks were added to his pictures. When rumor reached England that Paine's illness had proved fatal crowds sang in chorus,—

*"The Fox has lost his tail,  
The Ass has done his braying,  
The Devil has got Tom Paine,"*

and much more of the kind.

A few dozens attempted serious replies; but with fatal judgment they answered Paine as theologians, attacking his scholarship, when he had none, and shoring up the buckling walls in the old way. One of them alone, Paine eventually thought worthy of a reply.

Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, who was waiting till the archbishopric of York should be the gift of a Whig ministry, thought it wise, meantime, to splinter a few lances for the glory of God. One had broken short off in a bout with Gibbon, and now he entered the lists against Paine. The bishop's Apology displays rather unctuous regret at the sins of his antagonist but, as a whole, its tone is surprisingly liberal. Its admissions lent new strength to the logic of *The Age of Reason*, and persuaded people to read Paine's vigorous response.

While the Church of England fulminated, the secular lightning struck. Thomas Williams, an English publisher of *The Age of Reason*, was tried for blasphemy and such is the influence of established order that Erskine himself appeared for the prosecution. The scapegoat was sent to prison for a year, and the churches were soothed with the odor of sacrifice.

Meantime the arch-infidel was leading a quiet and industrious life in Paris. Early in 1796 he published *The Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance* foretelling the suspension of specie payments by the Bank of England which was to ensue and in the following year he devoted himself to the advancement of a small Deistic society in Paris.

This Church of Theophilanthropy, as it was called from the Greek words for God, love, and man, was the precursor of the multifarious ethical societies which have since sprung up. At its birth, five families of friends met together in simple fashion to discuss questions of morals, ethics, and religion. It was Paine's hope that the sphere of the society's labors might be widened by public lectures on various practical subjects, interspersed with moral teaching. The creed of Theophilanthropy embraced no tenets except a belief in God and in the

immortality of the soul. Its professors sought to level all barriers which might exclude the members of other churches.

During the years which followed there were a few offshoots from the parent stem. Vague as was its outline, Theophilanthropy was a generous plan for the help of humanity, and Paine's heart was in it but a church without organization cannot survive. A French politician with leanings toward the new faith asked Talleyrand how it could be propagated. "All you must do," replied the old cynic, "is to be crucified and buried and revive on the third day." He was right. Every great religion has pointed back to its miracles. Now no miracle appeared. When Napoleon signed his Concordat with the pope in 1801, the Church again became universal in France; and, with a multitude of other heresies, Theophilanthropy was swept away.

In the earlier stages of his career, Napoleon thought Paine worth conciliating. When he returned from his first wonderful campaign in Italy, he called upon Paine in his modest quarters, and assured the delighted republican that *Rights of Man* was nightly beneath his pillow, and that its author deserved a statue of fine gold. This Paine did not deny, and he heartily accepted Napoleon's invitation to accompany him in his approaching descent upon England.

For a time this idea of the conquest of England filled Paine's mind. He believed, as Napoleon did in later years, that this was the only way to end the war, and busied himself with plans for the undertaking, which were actually adopted by the Directory. The compliment, however, was not an important one for the whole scheme merely served to cloak the expedition to Egypt, whither Bonaparte sailed in May, 1798.

After Monroe's recall to America, late in 1796, Paine took up his residence in the household of Nicholas Bonneville, a republican journalist, who had long been one of his most intimate friends. The vision of the Republic of the World grew fainter and fainter before his eyes, as the power of Napoleon continually increased. As his hope declined, Paine's interest in politics lessened and he sought comfort in mechanical diversions, discussing steam-engines with Robert Fulton or working upon a new bridge model,—one of the most beautiful objects the eye can behold."

His longing to return to America grew stronger month by month. There alone were liberty and democracy and, now that his work was

done, he wished to spend his closing years at peace. Return was dangerous, for British cruisers swept the sea and Thomas Paine was contraband-of-war. Several vessels were searched in hopes of finding him, and in one instance a change of plan at the last moment alone disappointed his enemies.

In the autumn of 1802 he at length set sail, and reached America fifteen years after he had left it. They were years such as few men may experience and live, and they had left him older than his age or infirmities could measure. But now he had not far to go.

## VI.

The story of Paine's latter years is a sad one. The sorrows of age were the least he had to bear. The disappointment of failure, the revilement of enemies, the falling away of friends, were his in full measure. He had left many enemies in America; his career abroad had made him few friends at home and *The Age of Reason* had alienated many who had hitherto been faithful. His finances however had improved during his absence. His property now brought him in some £400 a year,—a snug income for those days. But, as is often the case with old bachelors, penuriousness grew upon him toward the end of his life. He constantly underestimated his means and worried himself with baseless fears.

When Paine landed at Baltimore, every newspaper from Maine to Georgia, as he says himself, "was filled with applause or abuse" but abuse was in far the greater volume. Some people still gave him credit for his honesty. Many sought to convert him. A minister of the Church of the New Jerusalem came smilingly to greet him.

"We, sir," said he, "explain the Scripture in its true meaning. The key has been lost above four thousand years, and we have found it." "Then it must be very rusty," remarked Paine.

Jefferson was in the White House, and Paine went straight to Washington. The Federalist press, seizing its chance, redoubled its abuse of the President and "The Two Toms" walking the streets of the capital, arm in arm, were the text of many an edifying editorial. Jefferson was too shrewd to be unconscious of the disadvantages of Paine's friendship, and it is much to his credit that he made such public profession of it. Throughout his Presidency, Paine's pen was at his

disposal but the author of *The Age of Reason* carried an authority very different from that of the author of *Common Sense*.

Nearly a year after Paine's arrival, Madame Bonneville and her three sons followed him to America. Her husband Nicholas was to have come also but he was detained in France on business, and later the surveillance of republicans, instituted by Napoleon, kept him from crossing the water for many years. Revolution does not breed conventions, and Madame Bonneville came with no thought that a malicious interpretation could be put upon her relations with an old friend of nearly twice her age. Paine owed much to the Bonneville family for their kindness and sympathy in Paris but, although he urged their coming, the family proved no slight embarrassment to him in America. The expense was serious, for the Bonneville family were without resources; and, as they spoke no English and Paine almost no French, the pleasures of social intercourse were somewhat restricted. However, Madame Bonneville had a sincere respect for the old republican, and did what she could to make his house comfortable for him to live in. The boys were sent to school. The youngest lived to become General Bonneville, U.S.A. The eldest returned to France while Paine's namesake, the second son, was made, after Paine's death, the basis of an infamous libel against his memory. "Thomas," wrote James Cheetham, in the *Life* which is a buttress of the Paine mythology, "has the features, countenance, and temper of Paine." Madame Bonneville forthwith brought suit for libel. The evidence which her lawyers adduced at the trial was conclusive, and the jury found Cheetham guilty but Judge Hoffmann (his name ought not to be forgotten), with casuistry worthy of his version of Christianity, held that Mr. Cheetham, while guilty of libel, had written a very useful book in favor of religion, and fixed the damages at the modest sum of \$150. Thus sheltered, Cheetham's lies grew into history. The reasoning is clear. Paine had written a book against Christianity, ergo he was a liar, ergo a vile rogue, ergo infamous and accursed be his name among the sons of men forever.

In Bordentown, whither Paine moved not long after his return, the persecution against him grew past endurance. Acquaintances refused him their hands. "Tom" and the devil were cartooned on the same broomstick, and ministers warned their flocks against the ravaging wolf. At the neighboring town of Trenton, Paine applied for a seat in

a stage, "I'll be d—d," said the owner, "if he shall go in my stage." And another stage-driver observed, "My horses were struck by lightning once, and I don't want them to suffer again."

A few old companions stuck by Paine. Colonel Kirkbride, a substantial citizen, gave him every evidence of his regard. Jarvis, the portrait painter, Mayor Clinton, and a circle of devoted Republicans welcomed him to New York, whither he moved early in 1804 but the bulk of the party fought shy of the stigma of infidelity. John Pintard, founder of Tammany Hall (God rest him!) said to Paine: "I have read and reread your *Age of Reason*, and any doubts which I before entertained of the truth of revelation have been removed by your logic. Yes, sir, your very arguments against Christianity have convinced me of its truth. "Well, then," replied Paine, "I may return to my couch to-night with the consolation that I have made at least one Christian."

Madame Bonneville, who found Bordentown sedative after Paris, followed Paine to New York. The continuous expense of her support disturbed him and, irritated at some of her little extravagances, he declared himself not responsible for her debts. Shortly afterward he was sued by a petty creditor; but, after winning his case, he was magnanimous enough to settle the account.

Paine still had many intellectual interests. He had warmly favored Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana but the admission of the new Territory to Statehood, with the right to continue the importation of slaves, roused all his old fire. He addressed a memorial to Congress, denouncing the petition of the French inhabitants, who "would renew in Louisiana all the horrors of San Domingo." Again, for the last time, he revived his plan for a collective edition of his works, and, with versatility that even a modern reporter would respect, turned from a pamphlet of inquiry into the causes of yellow fever to Predestination and the Prophets.

New York City was not a pleasant place for Paine to live in; and for a time he took up his residence in New Rochelle, where was situated the manor house which the State had given him. The fear of poverty, quickened by actual decline in the value of his interest-bearing property, grew to alarm and his old importunity for rewards from States and country began again. He urged Jefferson to persuade the legislature of Virginia to remember his services, but this plan

came to nothing and a year or two later he petitioned Congress afresh, reciting the well-known story of his wrongs and his deserts, and claiming credit for having proposed the French loan, which Colonel Laurens had afterward secured with his assistance. If there was one virtue to which the Continental Congress had justly been entitled, it was a cheerful readiness to ask for help and this argument had little weight. Paine had become exceedingly unpopular throughout the country. No votes were to be won by doing him honor. His services dated back a quarter of a century and more, and he had already been rewarded. The petition was rejected, and here the whole distressing episode ended.

The remainder of Paine's life was divided between New Rochelle and New York. His ostracism grew rather than diminished and, for a man who had tasted adulation and found it sweet, this was hard to bear. The press abused him with all the freedom of a free country. Federalist newspapers attacked him as a matter of party principle and *The American Citizen*, for years the only Republican paper in New York, soon became his bitterest enemy. Its editor was James Cheetham, author of the *Life* which has been spoken of before. He was an Englishman by birth, and had formerly professed devotion to Paine's principles but now, still clinging to Republican patronage, he began to attack Jefferson. Paine took up the cudgels for his friend and, in the controversy which ensued, neither side was reticent in regard to its opinions of the other. The *Citizen* blackguarded Paine heartily as a liar and a drunkard. Paine brought suit for libel, but his death occurred before the case came up in court; and Cheetham devoted his talents to defaming his opponent's memory. His principal confederate in his work was one William Carver, a farrier, with whom Paine had boarded for a time in New York. Several altercations had occurred between them in regard to bills and other unpleasant details of boardinghouse life but the man's prime object was blackmail, and he went so far as to show one of his slanderous letters to Paine before it was despatched to Cheetham. The farrier, however, was cheated of his hopes of money and his subsequent testimony against Madame Bonneville's good name was riddled in a court of justice. In later years he turned on his accomplice, called Cheetham a liar, and declared his regret at his own misconduct. The whole dirty business would not deserve an allusion, were it not that Carver's

falsehoods, elaborated by Cheetham and grafted into the earlier *Life* by "Oldys," have been the fruitful root of a century of calumination.

The one bright spot in Paine's horizon was the victory of the Republican party. Jefferson was triumphantly re-elected, but just at this season of rejoicing Paine's enemies struck him a hard blow. When he offered his vote at the polls in New Rochelle, it was rejected on the ground that he was not an American citizen. No records of the case remain but Paine's status as a citizen of the United States was precisely that of every American after the Declaration of Independence, and his disfranchisement was a cruel injustice in the country which he had done so much to make.

In August, 1806, Paine was stricken with apoplexy and, although the dangerous symptoms passed away, he was left greatly enfeebled. The bugbear of poverty worried him continually. He sold part of his property, and moved into cheap lodgings in New York, but was later persuaded to occupy more comfortable quarters.

In the beginning of 1809 Paine felt that death was approaching. He wrote and signed his will, bequeathing his property to the Bonnevilles, and solemnly reaffirming his belief in his Creator. Fear that people might give credence to some pious story of death-bed repentance beset him and he dreaded being left alone, lest some spy should gain admittance. Nor was this alarm ill-founded. The brutal curiosity of the public, which has betrayed its sensational interest in the death of every unbeliever or reputed sceptic from Voltaire downward, was rife about Paine. Even his nurse was caught attempting to smuggle in a witness, who might testify to some fearful agony of remorse and Madame Bonneville, Willett Hicks, an honest Quaker preacher, and a very few close friends had to be continually on their guard to shelter the dying man from some impudent intruder.

One day two clergymen actually gained entrance to the sick-room.

"You have now a full view of death," said one of them, solemnly. "Whosoever does not believe in Jesus Christ will assuredly be damned."

"Let me have none of your popish stuff!" grunted Paine. "Get away with you!" And the story seemed scarcely adapted to the purpose of the visitors.

At eight o'clock on the morning of June 8, 1809, Paine died quietly and at peace in the seventy-third year of his age. He had ex-

pressed a wish to be buried in the Quaker cemetery, for the Quakers were the only Christian sect he held in respect; but the request was denied. Two days after his death his body was carried for burial to his farm at New Rochelle, twenty-five miles away. The Bonneville, good Willett Hicks, and two negroes were his mourners, and followed him to the journey's end. A stone was placed to mark the grave; and ten years later William Cobbett, once a mistaken vilifier of Paine and afterward his eulogist, had his bones removed and carried to England, intending to raise a monument to him in his native land. But the old outcry was heard again. A towncrier was sent to jail for proclaiming the arrival of the infidel's bones. Cobbett relinquished his design, and no one in the world to day knows the resting place of Thomas Paine.

In the hurry of this brief narrative of an extraordinary career, I have perhaps said too little of Paine as a man and it is fitting to attempt some slight estimate of his capacity and character.

Like other men, Paine was moulded by circumstances. Born and bred in poverty, he reached the mature age of thirty-eight with almost nothing of what the world calls education, and then suddenly proved himself a pamphleteer of the first ability. The feat was wonderful but its secret lay in Paine's keen observation, his logical, scientific mind, and his abundant sympathy with the people.

As a statesman, he failed. No man is born a statesman and, besides his total lack of training, Paine had a constitutional inability to see any question in more ways than one. In matters of finance, where system is based on mathematics, his counsel was sound and just but, when men were to be governed or policies shaped, he was impractical. Men are not checkers, neither can you prove constitutions by syllogism. All Paine's logic did not avail him here. Morris once wrote of Paine that he had always possessed more of every other kind of sense than common sense, and there is truth in the satire. The pamphlet which made his reputation, amply justified its title; but it was an argument founded on existing circumstances and directed toward a single issue. It was not a work of constructive policy. Paine was one of the people. He had developed with the times, and his eloquence and logic were precisely what were needed to shape the approaching decision of his fellow citizens. In general, his theories were based on extremely speculative views and, though they were

justifiable in the abstract, Paine was denied the foundation of wisdom in this world,—a knowledge of men. In concrete matters his judgment was hasty and his self-confidence fanatical. He always believed he was right, and he never counted consequences. His interference in the affairs of Silas Deane and the midsummer madness of his letter to the king's attorney-general are paramount instances of the blunders which checkered his career.

Paine had many virtues, but the greatest of them was his large humanity. He hated cruelty in every form. He hated war, he hated slavery, he hated injustice and his public life was one long battle against every form of oppression. Intolerance he counted tyranny. Toleration itself was to him but a form of intolerance for it implies mercy, when justice alone is asked. This fine hate of wrong is of itself enough to lift his fame high above the vulgar slander of his enemies and the cloud of his own error. It was not peoples, but principles, which Paine loved; yet America must count him among the builders of her nation. When some one said that next to George III. the independence of the colonies was mostly due to him, he doubtless accepted the compliment. But, putting aside this humorous exaggeration, it is mere justice to say that, of all the writers of the Revolutionary era in America, Paine was incomparably the most effective, that the publication of *Common Sense* deeply and suddenly affected the judgment of a nation, and that the important *Crisis* were worth regiments to Washington.

Paine was a religious man. His convictions were few and profound. So strong was his faith that it led him into the very intolerance he detested, and made him ridicule where he ought to have shown respect. "Deism," quoted Franklin from a pious author, "that is atheism" and his comment was, "Chalk, that is charcoal." Paine's God was more present to him than the Christian God to many a Christian man. Paine trusted in Him, and in His name he wrote *The Age of Reason*.

The most striking characteristic of Paine's genius was his versatile originality. Many subjects he was the first to approach; and, where he followed, he was generally ignorant of those who had gone before. His talent for mechanics was extraordinary. Within these narrow limits it is idle to discuss his great contributions to the science of bridge-building or his share in the adaptation of steam to machinery.

With education and a life of more concentrated interests, he must, beyond question, have been numbered among great inventors.

In private life Paine was uncorrupted by the worst vices of his generation. He was never abstemious, and during the Reign of Terror he drank to excess but, if there be any truth in the accounts of drunkenness in his later years, it lies in very occasional indulgence at a time when gentlemen slept under the table and awoke still gentlemen. The stories of his filthy habits are slander, though toward the close of his life he became more careless of his dress, and maybe did not brush his coat after each pinch of snuff. He was always gentle to children and to animals. In manner he was kindly, and in conversation intelligent; but he was intolerant of contradiction, and not disinclined to assume the god in a gathering of friends.

Like most vain men, Paine had little pride. His repeated requests for money for his services grate harshly enough, but their origin was not in meanness. His copyrights might have made him rich, yet he gave the proceeds away without a trace of reluctance and, even at times of his greatest poverty, he was ready and glad to give to any cause he loved. The reasons for his petitions are rather to be found in continual poverty, a constant desire for recognition, and a frank belief that he had earned his money.

Let us treat the memory of Thomas Paine without prejudice. This insurgent democrat was not an attractive person, as we look at him from the ranks of respectable society but among the real revolutionists of the world, even amongst the greatest of them, how many should we have cared to treat as friends? We might as reasonably seek courtesy in Luther or urbanity in Cromwell as moderation in Paine. It is the pioneers who have done the hardest work the world has given men to do. Had they been gentler or more sensitive, they could not have endured to the end. Thus it was with Paine. His tasks were not all done wisely, but they were done bravely. Too often his light was darkness; but he walked steadfastly in its path, and the goal which he sought was the happiness of his fellow-men.

### **Bibliography.**

Of the vast deal that has been written concerning Thomas Paine, but little is of permanent value. Pamphlets unnumbered about him and his works have gone the way of pamphlets. The earlier so-called "Lives" are merely fragmentary sketches, tilled with slander or with eulogy, as the case may be. Several of them, however, are worth reading, if for no other reason, at least to enable one to appreciate the growth of the Paine mythology.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Paine's career cannot be fully understood without the aid of reliable histories of the American and French Revolutions and of the great liberal movement in England, so long held in subjection by the ministers of George III. Moreover, many interesting references to Paine may be found in the letters of his great contemporaries, Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. Above all, Thomas Paine as he lived appears in his own works, which contain much autobiographical material. These have happily been collected and edited by M. D. Conway (New York, 1894: G. P. Putnam's Sons).

A short list of the principal biographies of Paine is as follows:—

- I. The Life of Thomas Paine, Author of *The Rights of Man*, with a Defense of his Writings. By Francis Oldys (George Chalmers), A.M. of the University of Pennsylvania. (London, 1791: J. Stockdale.)
- II. The Life of Thomas Paine. By James Cheetham. (New York, 1809: Southwick & Pelsue.)
- III. The Life of Thomas Paine. By T. C. Rickman. (London, 1819: T. C. Rickman.)
- IV. Memoirs of the Life of Thomas Paine. By W. T. Sherwin. (London, 1819: E. Carlyle.)
- V. The Life of Thomas Paine. By G. Yale. (New York, 1841.)
- VI. The Life of Thomas Paine. By Moncure D. Conway. 2 vols. (New York, 1892: G. P. Putnam's Sons.)