

LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE

by

THE EDITOR OF "THE NATIONAL"

with

**Preface, Notes, and Portraits of the most
celebrated of Mr. Paine's Friends**

by

Peter Eckler

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The Life of Thomas Paine

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"Notes, and Portraits of the most celebrated of Mr. Paine's Friends"
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Publisher's Preface.

THE object of the present work is to place before the public, at a low price, a concise and impartial history of the life of Thomas Paine; so that the people who have been so grossly misled in regard to his real character, and so greatly benefited by his services, may learn to respect with honor the memory of their great benefactor.

But few, who have not specially examined the subject, realize the great and beneficent influence which Paine's writings have exerted and are still destined to exert. He was, as is well known, one of the chief instigators and promoters of the American Revolution, and also one of the most earnest and zealous workers in the brave struggle of the Colonies for Freedom and Independence.

His success and popularity in America insured him an enthusiastic welcome in France, where he was elected a deputy to the National Convention from two different departments. The revolution in France, after many excesses and reverses, has at length proved successful, and the Republic there, as in America, is permanently established. In England, the revolutionary spirit was also invoked but, unfortunately, suppressed by the strong hand of power, aided by bribery and treachery.¹

"The French Revolution," says James Cheetham,² "that terrible concussion which had perniciously affected all Europe, and particularly England, had prepared the Clubs for the unhinging doctrines of the *Rights of Man*. Never did the parched earth receive refreshing rain with more welcome, than that with which the revolutionary people of England admitted amongst them the tumultuous writings of Paine. To that which was his object; to commotion, to the overthrow of the government, and to bloodshed, in all its horrid forms, they were rapidly hastening. Thus predisposed, the cordiality and enthusiasm with

¹ The government purchased the work at any price. Paine refused £1,000 for the copyright of the *Rights of Man* but freely permitted all to publish his works who desired. He could not be bribed or corrupted. Edmund Burke, one of Paine's intimate correspondents, suddenly changed his political views, under Pitt's baneful influence, and wrote his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. When bribery did not succeed and publishers could not be intimidated, they were arrested, tried, convicted and imprisoned.

² See Preface to Cheetham's *Life of Paine*, pages xvii and xviii.

which the first part of the *Rights of Man* was greeted, although flattering to the vanity and encouraging to the hopes of the author, were not surprising. The Clubs, zealous to a degree of frenzy; always vigilant, always alert, published a groat³ edition of thirty thousand copies of the work, which was distributed amongst the poor, who could not afford to purchase. In the great manufacturing towns, Paine was considered by the ignorant as an apostle of freedom. A song was privately circulated, beginning with—

"God save great Thomas Paine,
His Rights of Man proclaim,
From Pole to Pole! "

"The government, alarmed, knew not how to meet the evil. Burke did, however, by his successive and impressive appeals, animate measures."

This is the language of James Cheetham, the enemy of Paine, and the convicted libeller of Madame Bonneville. But Cheetham, whose writings cannot always be relied upon, may be believed when he is forced, as in the present instance, to admit, most unwillingly, the great influence of Paine's writings upon the masses. Before Paine announced in the *Age of Reason* his belief in "One God and no more," no writer in Europe or America was more popular and respected; but when Christians realized that the great author's religion was Deism and not Trinitarianism nor Catholicism, their former friendship was turned to enmity, and their admiration changed to hatred. His patriotic services were ungratefully ignored, his motives misrepresented, his character basely slandered, and his memory maligned. Still, there were many members of the community who believed in the religious views of Thomas Paine, and who also upheld his political doctrines. These formed a brave and gallant band who sturdily defended his memory from clerical assaults, and refuted many of the wicked slanders of his enemies. Their efforts to vindicate Paine's character were ably seconded by reformers of every kind—by Theists, Pantheists, Materialists, Agnostics and Atheists—

³ An English coin of the value of four pence.

that is to say, by that numerous and worthy class of citizens whom Paine styled Infidels!⁴

In the twenty-first chapter and twenty-fifth verse of the Gospel of St. John, we are told that if the many things which Jesus did "should be written every one, I suppose even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

This romantic and apostolic statement, even if inspired, may not be absolutely true; but it is an indisputable fact that if all the libels which have been written and published against Thomas Paine, were printed in one book, that book would form a volume much larger than both the Old and New Testaments combined.

Touchstone speaks of a lie seven times removed.*1 That is, first, the retort courteous; second, the quip modest; third, the reply churlish; fourth, the reproof *valiant*; fifth, the *countercheck quarrelsome*; sixth, the lie *circumstantial*; seventh, the lie direct;—but it would require a greater genius than even the famed bard of Avon to describe and define all the various grades and varieties of misrepresentations, untruths, and absolute falsehoods with which Christian rancor has assailed the character of Thomas Paine.

The friend and companion of three presidents,—Washington, Jefferson, and Monroe,—the friend of Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Adams, De Witt Clinton, Joel Barlow, Benjamin Rush, and the most prominent patriots of the American Revolution—the associate of Count Volney, Marquis de La Fayette, Condorcet, Brissot, Madame Roland, and the leaders of the Revolution in France, the companion of Clio Rickman, Mary Wollstonecraft, Horne Tooke, Dr. Priestley, Dr. Towers, Romney, the painter, Sharp, the engraver, Col. Oswald. &c., &c., in England, has been described by Christian writers as a drunkard, a debauchee, and an outcast, while the plain truth is, that he was temperate, unselfish, patriotic, and the devoted friend of mankind.

At the present day the number of Paine's friends has become so great and their influence so potent, that only the most reckless and audacious of romancers now venture to repeat the stale, well-worn, and oft-refuted slanders of former years, and, as a consequence, more

⁴ See *Discourse to the Society of Theophilanthropists*, Paine's Theological Works, pp. 300-306.

tolerant and rational views in regard to his character are becoming prevalent in the community.

The spirit of enquiry is also abroad, and has greatly modified the religious bigotry of former years. The advance of science—the diffusion of knowledge—the criticisms of the learned—the teachings of the emancipated—have produced their salutary effects. Doubts have arisen, questions have been propounded, reasons have been advanced, and Heresy—the fair child of Wisdom and Knowledge—has not only travelled from pews to pulpit, but has even invaded Schools, Seminaries and Colleges—the very nurseries of faith and doctrine—the sacred strongholds of orthodox theology. In the first page of the first part of the *Age of Reason*, Mr. Paine tells us, that he had intended to publish his thoughts upon religion at an advanced period of life, when the purity of the motive could not admit of a question. In the preface to the second part of the same work, and also in a letter to his friend Samuel Adams, he tells us why he published his religious views sooner than he had intended.

"I saw," says he, "my life in continual danger. 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. This accounts for my writing at the time I did, and so nicely did the time and intention meet, that I had not finished the first part of the work six hours before I was arrested and taken to prison.

"Toward the latter end of December," (1793,) he continues, "a motion was made and carried to exclude foreigners from the Convention. There were but two in it, Anacharsis Clootz⁵ and myself; and I saw I was particularly pointed at by Bourdon de l'Oise, in his speech on that motion."

We quote from Lamartine⁶ the violent language used by Chauvette, the blood-thirsty orator of La Montagne and of the tribunes, and also by the speaker of the deputation of Jacobins, to show the

⁵ Baron Jean Baptiste de Clootz, or better known as World Citizen Anacharsis Clootz from Cleves. Dreamed of a Universal Republic, or union of all Peoples and Kindreds in one and the same fraternal bond, and on God only, *the people*. He was arrested and guillotined after two month's imprisonment in the Luxembourg—the same prison in which Paine was also confined.

⁶ *History of the Girondists*. vol. iii, pp. 119-120.

intense excitement that preceded and prevailed during the dark period of the "Reign of Terror."

"Citizens," said Chaumette, "they desire to starve us. They wish to compel the people to exchange their sovereignty for a morsel of bread. New aristocrats, no less cruel, no less covetous, no less insolent than the old ones, have raised themselves upon the ruins of feudalism. They calculate with an atrocious indifference how much they may derive from a famine, an insurrection, and a massacre. Where is the arm that shall turn your weapons against the breasts of these traitors? Where is the hand to strike these guilty heads? Your enemies must be destroyed, or they will destroy you. They have defied the people; the people this day accept the defiance. And you, Montagne, forever celebrated in the pages of history, be you the Sinai of the French! Hurl the decrees of the justice and the will of the people in the midst of thunder! Holy Montagne! become a volcano, whose lava shall devour our enemies! No more quarter! No more mercy for traitors! Let us place between them and us the barrier of eternity!"

The orator of the Jacobins was next heard:—

"Impunity emboldens our enemies," said he. "The people are discouraged by seeing the most guilty escape their vengeance. Brissot still breathes—that monster vomited forth by England to disturb and shackle the Revolution. Let him be judged, he and his accomplices."

The words, "his accomplices," includes the Girondists and also the friend of Brissot, Thomas Paine; and this intemperate language comprises all the speaker could urge against the author of the *Rights of Man*. Paine was guilty of having been born in England; he was also opposed to the guillotine, and had voted with the Girondists to spare the lives of the king and royal family. He wished to temper justice with mercy—to destroy king-craft, but to spare the king's life; and for advocating this leniency towards the dethroned monarch, he placed his own liberty and life in imminent danger.

It was among scenes like these—scenes of violence and bloodshed that disgraced the grandest revolution in the world's history—that Thomas Paine, the patriot and philosopher, with mind undaunted and serene, regardless of his own fate, and inspired only by his great love for humanity, penned his unanswerable protest against Venerable Error and Credulous Faith—and bequeathed to mankind his priceless and immortal work the *Age of Reason*.

The writings of Paine, like those of Shakespeare, "are not for a day, but for all time," and the political principles he so ably taught—the moral truths he so earnestly enforced—will be remembered and commended whilst reason holds her throne and justice survives among mankind.

Paine loved his fellow men,—his life was dedicated to Humanity,—his writings aroused the world,—his genius immortalized his name,—his faith in Democracy was sublime,—his labors were crowned with success,—his reward was neglect, obloquy, and scorn!

Peter Eckler

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LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE

Chapter I. The Stay-Maker;⁷ The Sailor; The Usher.

THOMAS PAINE—the sturdy champion of political and religious liberty—was born at Thetford, in the county of Norfolk, on the 29th of January, 1737. His father, Joseph Paine, was a stay-maker of that place, a man of good character, and belonged to the Society of Friends, but was disowned by them on account of his marriage with a member of the established church, Frances Cocke, the daughter of an attorney at Thetford. Probably in consequence of this difference in the religious denomination of his parents, Paine was never baptized; yet, owing to the orthodox care of an aunt, he was in due time confirmed by the Bishop of Norwich. Some trifling verses, written in his childhood—of the usual character of children's rhymes—are recorded as the first literary efforts of the future disturber of the old-time tranquility of tyranny and priestcraft. His heretical opinions also commenced at a very early period. He says in his *Age of Reason*:

"I well remember, 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."

There is little remarkable in this early bent. Perhaps there are few children whose undirected minds do not thus revolt from the apparent incongruities of revelation, before the discipline of religious education has accustomed them to those mysteries undiscoverable by human reason, and removed from their limited perception the many entanglements of faith. In Paine's case, however, this early-excited skepticism lasted during his life. No interference with his reason ever

⁷ It is probable that Paine acquired in the manufacture of ship stays, the skill which enabled him to forge and manufacture with his own hands the models for his iron bridge spoken of on page 53.—E

had sufficient potency to lay that spirit of inquiry so dangerous to all systems not founded upon evidence within the reach of human investigation. He was educated, indeed, at Thetford grammar school: but religion is not acquired at grammar schools. "His studies were directed merely to the useful branches of reading, writing, and arithmetic."⁸ Latin he did not learn, having no inclination for it, and because of the well-grounded objection the Quakers have against the book in which the language is taught. But this did not prevent him from becoming acquainted with the subjects of all the Latin books used in the school.⁹ From his father, he says, he received a "good moral education and a tolerable stock of useful learning."¹⁰ About the age of thirteen he was taken into his father's shop to learn the business of stay-making.

When "little more than sixteen years of age," he tells us,¹¹ "raw and adventurous, and heated with the false heroism of a master (Rev. Mr. Knowles, master of the grammar-school at Thetford) who had served in a man-of-war, I became the carver of my own fortune, and entered on board the Terrible privateer, Capt. Death. From this adventure I was happily prevented by the affectionate and moral remonstrance of a good father, who, from his own habits of life, being of the Quaker profession, must begin to look upon me as lost. But the impression, much as it effected at the time, began to wear away, and I entered afterwards in the King of Prussia privateer Capt. Mendez, and went with her to sea."¹² We have no means of ascertaining how

⁸ Rickman p. 34

⁹ *Age of Reason*, part 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Rights of Man*, Part 2.

¹² The following from a life published under the assumed name of Oldys, may serve as a sample of the lies "like truths" with which it has been more than once endeavored to prejudice the public mind." He (Paine) tells what surely can not be true. He was sixteen on the 29th of January, 1753. But the war was not declared against France till the 17th of May, 1756, when he had entered into his twentieth year. The Terrible was fitted out probably in the summer of 1756, and was certainly captured in January, 1757. These facts evince how little Paine is to be trusted."—Oldys, p. 8. tenth edition. Referring to Smollett's History we find that though war against France was not proclaimed till 1756, yet in 1752, the King of Prussia complained of the depredations of English privateers then infesting the seas. Probably the Terrible was one of these privateers.

long he was at sea. The next notice we have of him, is in 1756 (but there is much confusion of dates in the various accounts of this period of his life) when he was in London, and, probably compelled by his necessities to resume his business, working with a Mr. Morris, a noted stay-maker in Hanover Street, Long Acre. In 1758 we find him at Dover, at the same trade of stay-making?¹³ In April, 1759, he settled as a master stay-maker, at Sandwich, in Kent; and on the 27th of the following September, he married Mary Lambert, the daughter of an exciseman of that place. In April, 1760, he removed to Margate, where, shortly after, his wife died. Paine resought London. In the course of the next year he returned to his father's house, at Thetford; finally renouncing stay-making to study for the excise, in which, through the interest of Mr. Cocksedge, the recorder of Thetford, he obtained a situation as supernumerary. For some fault, possibly an official irregularity, he was dismissed from this employment, when he had held it for rather more than a year. The following is a copy of his petition to the Board of Excise, tqo be restored to his situation:¹⁴

"Honorable Sirs:

"In humble obedience to your honors' letter of discharge, bearing date August 29, 1765, I delivered up my commission, and since that time have given you no trouble.

"I confess the justice of your honors' displeasure, and humbly beg leave to add my thanks for the candor and lenity which you at that unfortunate time indulged me with."

And though the nature of the report and my own confession cut off all expectations of enjoying your honors' favor then, yet I humbly hope it has not finally excluded me therefrom; upon which hope I humbly presume to entreat your honors to restore me.

"The time I enjoyed my former commission was short and unfortunate—an officer only a single year. No complaint of the least dishonesty, or intemperance, ever appeared against me; and if I am so happy as to succeed in this my humble petition, I will endeavor that my future conduct shall as much engage your honors' approbation, as my former has merited your displeasure. "I am

"your honors' most dutiful, humble servant,

¹³ Rickman, p. 35. 4.

¹⁴ Sherwin, p. 9.

"Thomas Paine.

"London, July 3, 1766."

"July 4, 1766.—*To be restored on a proper vacancy.*

"S. B."

His remark—"No complaint of the least dishonesty, or intemperance, ever appeared against me"—and the readiness of his restoration, sufficiently prove his offence to have been unimportant and little affecting his moral character; and the humility and confession that his conduct had "merited displeasure", is but the customary form of petition, and amounts to nothing.

In the time between his dismissal and return to office he was engaged as teacher at Mr. Noble's Academy, in Leman Street, Goodman's Fields; and afterwards at Mr. Gardner's Academy, at Kensington. During his residence in London, he attended the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson, and became acquainted with Dr. Bevis, the astronomer, a member of the Royal Society.¹⁵ He also purchased a pair of globes, and appears to have closely studied and to have acquired great proficiency in mechanics, mathematics, and astronomy.

In 1768 he was settled, as an exciseman at Lewes, in Sussex; and there, in 1771, married Elizabeth Ollive, shortly after the death of her father, a tobacconist of that place, with whom he had lodged, and whose business he entered into and carried on. In 1772 he wrote a pamphlet—*The Case of the Officers of Excise*—advocating the claims of the excisemen to higher salaries. Four thousand copies of this work were printed at Lewes.¹⁶ He also, about this time wrote

¹⁵ *Age of Reason.*

¹⁶ "This pamphlet," says Richard Carlile in his *Life of Paine*, page 6, is the first known literary production of Mr. Paine. "He was selected by the body of excisemen to draw up a case in support of a petition they were about to present to Parliament for an increase of salary. This task he performed in a most able manner; and, although this incident drew forth his first essay at prose composition, it would have done honor to the first literary character in the country. It did not fail to obtain for its author universal approbation. *The Case of the Officers of Excise* is so temperately stated, the propriety of increasing their salaries—which were then but small urged with such powerful reasons and striking convictions, that, although we might abhor such an inquisitorial system of excise as has long disgraced this country, we cannot fail to admire the arguments and abilities of Mr. Paine, who was then an exciseman,

several little pieces in verse,¹⁷ which, however, hardly bear him out in his remark that he had "some talent for poetry."¹⁸ In April, 1774, on the plea that his trading in excisable articles was incompatible with his situation, he was again dismissed from the excise. This was the ostensible reason: it is not impossible that his pamphlet—in so much as it evinced a resolute and independent spirit, a disposition to oppose injustice, to sift and eradicate abuses—had something to do with his discharge; since nothing was adduced against him beyond a mere suspicion that he connived at and was concerned in smuggling, a common practice among his neighbors and fellow-officers. Indeed, so well was his duty performed, that he received several letters from the principal clerk in the Excise-Office, thanking him for his assiduity.¹⁹ In the same month the goods of his shop were sold to pay his debts; and almost immediately after, he was separated from his wife, by mutual agreement, articles of which were settled on the following 4th of June.²⁰ He had never cohabited with her from their marriage till the day of their separation, a period of three years, although they lived in the same house. To those, who upon this circumstance would find an unfavorable opinion, we will only say, that no inference bearing upon Paine's character can be deduced from the bare fact, of which neither the extrinsic causes nor the personal motives can be known; referring them to his own reply to the questioning of his friend Clio Rickman, who attests the truth of our relation:—"It is

in an endeavor to increase their salaries. He was evidently the child of Nature from the beginning, and the success of his writings was mainly attributable to his never losing sight of this infallible guide. In his recommendation to Government to increase the salaries of excisemen, he argues from natural feelings, and shows the absolute necessity of placing a man beyond the reach of want, if honesty be expected in a place of trust and that the strongest inducement to honesty is to raise the spirit of a man, by enabling at and amouraging him to make a respectable appearance."

"This *Case of the Officers of Excise*" says Carlile, "procured Mr. Paine an introduction to Oliver Goldsmith, with whom he continued on terms of intimacy during his stay in England."—Eckler.

¹⁷ These poetical productions consisted of *The Death of Wolfe*, a song; and the humorous narrative about *The Three Justices and Farnes Short's Dog*.—Eckler.

¹⁸ *Age of Reason*.

¹⁹ Rickman, p. 45.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

nobody's business but my own: I had cause for it, but I will name it to no one.

He returned to London; and in the same year became acquainted with Dr. Franklin, then in London as agent for the House of Representatives of Massachusetts. He had happened, when a school-boy, to pick up a pleasing Natural History of Virginia; and his inclination from that day of seeing the western side of the Atlantic never left him.²¹ Being now without home or employment, this inclination appears to have gained strength, probably encouraged by Franklin; and, furnished by him with letters of introduction, he proceeded forthwith to America;²² arriving at Philadelphia, in the winter of 1774, a few months previous to the commencement of actual hostilities between Great Britain and her rebellious colonies.

His first engagement in the New World was with a Mr. Aitkin, a bookseller, as editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, at a salary of £25 a year. The first number of this work, containing an introduction written by him, bears date, January 24, 1775. The well-known song, *On the Death of General Wolfe*, written by him at Lewes, appeared in an early number. In a number for November of the same year, he proposed the plan of a *Salpetre Association for supplying the national magazines with gunpowder*, all foreign supplies being cut off. His writings in the magazine procured him the society of many of the leading men in America, and the work seems to have acquired an extensive circulation, mainly owing to his ability. His purpose, in coming to America, had been to open a school for the instruction of

²¹ Crisis, Note to No. 3

²² Carlile in his *Life of Paine* states the case somewhat fuller. He says that in the autumn of 1774, Paine was introduced to the celebrated Dr. Franklin, then on an embassy to England respecting the dispute with the Colonies, and the doctor was so much pleased with Mr. Paine that he pointed his attention to America as the best mart for his talents and principles, and gave him letters of recommendation to several friends. He took his voyage immediately, and reached Philadelphia just before Christmas. In January he had become acquainted with a Mr. Aitkin, a bookseller, who, it appears, started a magazine for the purpose of availing himself of Mr. Paine's talents. It was called the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, and, from our author's abilities, soon obtained a currency that exceeded any other work of the kind in America. Many of Mr. Paine's productions in the papers and magazines of America have never reached this country (England) so as to be republished, but such as we have seen are excellent, and compel us to admit that his literary productions are as admirable for style as his political and theological are for principle."—Eckler.

young ladies in certain branches of knowledge:²³ from this we may conclude he was diverted by his connection with Mr. Aitkin. He had up to this time no thought of political writing: indeed he says that he believed he should never have been known to the world as an author but for the affairs of America. In early life he had no disposition for "what is called politics,"²⁴ regarding them merely as a species of "jockey-ship," in which was no material for improvement, in which an honest man was sure to be deemed "impracticable." We have given, however, sufficient evidence of his early detection and detestation of wrong, whatever guise it might assume. The masterfeeling is apparent in his child-like thoughts upon religion, and in his first literary attempt in behalf of his brethren of the excise. These afford clear indications of his character: opportunity alone was wanting. Opportunity there was none in England, then grovelling fast-bound in ignorance, and unresisting and degrading serfdom: but the upstarting of America called him forth; and the man was ready to work out his destiny. *Common Sense* was written in the close of the year 1775,²⁵ and published on the 1st of January, 1776.²⁶

²³ Letter from Dr. Rush, quoted by Rickman. p. 49.

²⁴ *Age of Reason*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ "This pamphlet appeared at the commencement of the year 1776," says Richard Carlile, "and electrified the minds of the oppressed Americans. They had not ventured to harbor the idea of independence, and they dreaded war so much as to be anxious for reconciliation with Britain. One incident which gave a stimulus to the pamphlet *Common Sense* was, that it happened to appear on the very day that the King of England's speech reached the United States, in which the merchants were denounced as rebels and traitors, and in which speech it was asserted to be the right of the legislature of England to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever! Such menace and assertion as this could not fail to kindle the ire of the Americans, and *Common Sense* came forward to touch their feelings with the spirit of independence in the very nick of time."—Eckler.

Chapter II.

A Revolution.

A BRIEF account of the commencement of the American Revolution is almost indispensable for the proper appreciation of the importance of Paine's first great work, at the time of its publication.

So early as the year 1764, at the beginning of the reign of George III., the longest, and, perhaps the most disastrous in British annals, the selfish policy of Great Britain had sown the seeds of offence, by vexatiously interfering with the trade of her North American colonies. By an act passed in September of that year, the long-accustomed and beneficial trade between the British colonists and the French and Spanish settlements was loaded with such heavy duties, that it amounted to a prohibition; and a clause of the same act prescribed that all offenders against its provisions should be tried in the Admiralty Court, where they were deprived of trial by jury. Yet more offensive was the preamble of this legislative injustice, in which the House of Commons laid claim to a right of taxing the colonies for the service of the mother country:—"Whereas it is just and necessary that a revenue be raised in America, for defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same, We, the Commons, &c., towards raising the same, give and grant unto your Majesty, &c." This was followed by a resolution of the English Parliament, "that it may be proper to charge certain stamp duties in the said colonies and plantations." When intelligence of this resolution reached America, the colonists were filled with alarm, and petitions and remonstrances were hurried to the foot of the throne: these petitions were utterly disregarded. The Stamp Act was passed: and the colonies, emphatically denying the power of the British Senate to tax them, proceeded to organize methods of resistance. The Assembly of Virginia led the way, in a series of spirited resolutions denouncing the encroachment and all its supporters. These resolutions were promptly responded to by the other States: and on the 6th of June, 1765, the Assembly of Massachusetts invited the other colonial legislative bodies to send deputies to a general congress to be holden in New York, on the second Tuesday of October, to deliberate on the measures rendered necessary by existing circumstances. The representatives of nine States met; and agreed upon a declaration of rights,

and a statement of their grievances; and also drew up petitions to the king and both houses of parliament. Similar steps were taken by the other States, prevented by their respective governors from sending deputies to the congress. The first of November, the day on which the Stamp Act was to come into operation, was ushered in throughout the States, by the funeral tolling of bells. This particular tax had been chosen under the idea that the legal nullity of all transactions in which the prescribed stamps were not used would ensure its working: but not a stamp was bought to legalize any contract; no notice was taken of the act, save its burning in public amid the execrations of the indignant multitude. The colonists pledged themselves not to import any articles of British manufacture, till the repeal of the act; and an association was formed to oppose its operation by force. This last resistance was not needed: the stoppage of trade brought such distress upon the British manufacturers and merchants, that the government, besieged by remonstrances, was compelled to rein in its violence; and the obnoxious act was repealed, in the commencement of 1766. But there was no intention of leaving the colonies at peace. When, indeed, does tyranny refrain from any mischief which it has the power to perpetrate? The very repeal was accompanied by an insolent declaration that "Parliament had, and of right ought to have, power to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." In the following year another attempt was made. A bill for granting duties in the British colonies on glass, paper, painters' colors, and tea, passed through the corrupt British legislature; and a board of commissioners of customs was established at Boston. Again the colonies resisted. Non-importation agreements were again had recourse to; cargoes of goods, actually arrived, were sent back to Great Britain: and the baffled ministry rescinded all the duties except that on tea. This reservation of the contested right was of course most odious. Accordingly, all use of tea, save that supplied by smuggling, was resolutely forborne to such an extent, that seventeen millions of pounds of tea accumulated in the East India Company's warehouses. With a view of getting rid of this stock, and at the same time of aiding the ministry, the company proposed that an act should be passed, authorizing them to receive a drawback of the full import duties on all teas which they should export to America. The government agreed to this scheme, in the hope that the colonists—thus enabled, on paying the

duty for landing tea in their harbors, to buy it at a cheaper rate than they could from the contraband dealers—would sacrifice their patriotic scruples for the sake of gain. They did not know their men, the descendants of those stern religionists who for conscience sake had left their father-land, to seek a home in the trans-atlantic wilderness. Resolutions were passed throughout the States, declaring that whosoever should aid or abet in landing or vending the expected tea, should be deemed an enemy to his country; and appointing committees to wait upon the agents of the East India Company, to demand the resignation of their agencies. These demands were complied with, except in Massachusetts, where the agents, relying on the support of a strong military force stationed at Boston, determined to land and attempt the sale of the interdicted commodity. The tea ships were in the harbor, ready to land their cargoes, when the leading patriots boarded the vessels and emptied the tea chests into the water. Great was the rejoicing of the evil-desiring and infatuated ministry at this "outrage." The British Parliament immediately set aside the charter of Massachusetts; and declared Boston to be no longer a port, prohibiting "the landing and discharging, lading and shipping of goods, wares, and merchandize at the said town of Boston, or within the harbor thereof." This was early in 1774. General Gage was sent out with an army, as governor of Massachusetts; and soon announced his intention of transferring the seat of government from Boston to Salem, for the purpose of ruining the rebellious citizens of Boston. Immediately, in the condemned city, property was fearfully depreciated; houses and warehouses, were emptied and abandoned; the quays were deserted; silence reigned in the ship-yards; and thousands of unemployed artizans wandered breadless about the streets. Curses, loud and violent, echoed the decree of the British Parliament; but not a murmur was heard against the democratic leaders. Contributions poured in from all quarters for the relief of the sufferers; public meetings were promptly held in every township of every province, in which it was resolved to make common cause with the doomed citizens of Massachusetts; thanks were voted to the men of Boston; the inhabitants of Marble Head offered their warehouses to the Boston merchant; and those of Salem, in an address to the governor, grandly declared that they could not "indulge one thought to seize on wealth, or raise their fortunes on the ruin of their suffering neighbors." The

proceedings of the governor were continually baffled by the counsel and unanimity of the patriots. In conformity with the statute, he issued a proclamation, prohibiting the calling of any meetings after the first of August, 1774. Nevertheless a meeting was held: and, on his endeavoring to disperse it, he was informed that the assembly was not in violation of the Act of Parliament, "for that only prohibited the calling of town meetings, and that no such call had been made; a former legal meeting before the first of August having only adjourned themselves from time to time." At this meeting a "solemn league and covenant" was entered into: the parties thereto binding themselves to suspend all commercial intercourse with Great Britain until the offensive laws should be repealed and the colony of Massachusetts be restored to its chartered rights. The governor's proclamations were treated with contempt. When Gage attempted to organize the new constitution, most of the counsellors, whom he appointed, declined to act; and juries refused to serve under judges nominated by the crown. Congress, composed of the several committees of the provinces, met in Philadelphia, and issued a declaration that it "most thoroughly approved the wisdom and fortitude displayed in Massachusetts, and that no obedience was due to the restraining statutes. The governor, alarmed at these demonstrations, set about erecting a fortress at the entrance of Boston; and on his refusal to desist, a provincial assembly, held at Concord, appointed a committee to draw up a plan for arming the province. The assembling the militia was intrusted to a committee of public safety; a committee of supply was empowered to expend £15,000 in provisions, military accoutrements and stores, which were accordingly provided; resolutions were passed to raise an army of twelve thousand men; delegates were sent to the adjacent States, to urge their co-operation; and it was determined that the British troops should be attacked if they presumed to march in field equipment beyond Boston. Congress issued a declaration of rights, claiming complete exemption from internal taxation by the British Parliament; protesting against the infringement of their charters, and the introduction of a standing army into the colonies without their own consent. Committees were instructed to watch the conduct of the people, as regarded the suspension of trade with Britain till the redress of grievances. Neither was the desire of pacification wanting on the aggrieved side. An address was agreed upon to

the British people; the king was petitioned: ("We ask," said the petitioners, "but for peace, liberty, and safety.") The answer of Parliament was the voting, in February, 1775, an addition to the ordinary military force, for the purpose of coercing the rebellious provinces; and the passing an act to cripple the American commerce. On the 19th of April, 1775, a few months after the arrival of Paine in America, war commenced. On the night preceding that eventful day, General Gage had ordered a detachment of eight hundred picked men of his garrison to march upon Concord, to seize the stores of the insurgents, there deposited. They encountered, at Lexington, a small party of the American militia, who, hesitating to disperse, were fired upon by the king's troops, and three or four of them were killed: the rest fled. The detachment proceeded to Concord, and destroyed the stores, but before they could evacuate the place, were attacked by the Americans, who, accumulating by degrees, harassed their march, taking advantage of every inequality in the ground and annoying them from behind the stone walls that flanked the road. The marauders would inevitably have been cut off, had they not been reinforced by nine hundred men under the command of Lord Percy. In a state of great exhaustion the united British forces reached Boston, with the loss of sixty-five killed, one hundred and eighty wounded, and twenty-eight prisoners. Blood being thus drawn, the whole of the discontented States flew to arms, and adopted energetic and prompt measures to repel the royal usurpation. Volunteers enrolled themselves in every province, and throughout the Union the "king's" stores were seized for the use of the rebels. George Washington was appointed commander-in-chief, and military operations commenced. Hopes of reconciliation were still entertained by many; and another petition, temperate and respectful, was presented, on the 1st of September, to the "Muley Moloch" of England, the "Father of his people." Three days after Mr. Penn, the bearer, was informed by Lord Dartmouth that "no answer would be given to it." In accordance with this "policy," immense levies of soldiers were made in England; treaties were entered into with some of the paltry butcher-sovereigns of Germany, the "divine-right" sellers of human flesh, who agreed to furnish "men" at so much a head, to murder the rebellious Americans; and, not only in opposition to the commercial interests of Great Britain, but also in despite of the expressed wishes of great bodies of

the British people, of the wishes of all, indeed, save the high church-and-king bigots and the priest-ridden serfs, havoc was let loose by God's vicegerent upon an unoffending people; and all chance of peace, save through "unconditional" and most base submission, effectually annihilated. Previously to this, a desultory civil war, began at Lexington, was prosecuted with alternating success. Many of the colonists still held aloof from the cause of liberty: some in sheer cowardice; some "moderate" men, half inclined to slavery, whose chains were tolerably gilded, or whose spirits were degraded; some honest patriots, but men of peace, anxious to avert the desolation of their country, anxiously watching any shadow of reconciliation; some summer soldiers, tired of hard fare and blows: these formed a large party of neutrals, enough to swamp the best endeavors. While the public mind was thus divided, news arrived of the hateful obstinacy of the English government. The waverers were yet more fearful; traitors more calmerous.—What hope for the peace seekers? What escape for the peace-breakers? What was to be done? On the very day on which the king's firebrand speech made its appearance, *Common Sense* confronted it—confronted the timid and the time-waiting—and answered the question. The Independence of America was proclaimed!

Chapter III. The Author; The Soldier; The Secretary.

"NOTHING could have been better timed"²⁷ than the appearance of *Common Sense*. "This pamphlet of forty-seven octave pages, holding out relief by proposing independence to an oppressed and despairing people, was published in January, 1776; speaking a language which the colonists had felt, but not thought of. Its popularity, terrible in its consequences to the parent country, was unexampled in the history of the press. At first involving the colonists, it was thought, in the crime of rebellion, and pointing to a road leading inevitably to ruin, it was read with indignation and alarm; but when the reader (and every body read it), recovering from the first shock, re-perused it, its arguments, nourishing his feelings and appealing to his pride, re-animated his hopes, and satisfied his understanding that *Common Sense*, backed by the resources and force of the colonies, poor and feeble as they were, could alone rescue them from the unqualified oppression with which they were threatened. The unknown author, in the moments of enthusiasm which succeeded, was hailed as an angel sent from heaven to save from all the horrors of slavery, by his timely, powerful and unerring councils, a faithful but abused, a brave but misrepresented people."²⁸ Thus writes even the infamous traducer of Paine. Thus sufficiently witnesses the avidity with which the contents of the pamphlet were seized by the American mind. "I gave the copyright," says the author, "to every state in the Union, and the demand ran to not less than one hundred thousand copies."²⁹ Owing to this disinterestedness, though the sale of *Common Sense* was so great, the author was in debt to the printer £29 12s. 1d.³⁰ The motives which produced the work may also claim our admiration, as much as this magnificent offering at the shrine of freedom. Hear him state them himself, with some little egotism it may be, but with a self-gratulation surely warranted and inoffensive:

²⁷ Ramsay's *American Revolution*.

²⁸ Cheetham.

²⁹ *Rights of Man*, part 2.

³⁰ Rickman, p. 68.

"Politics and self-interest have been so uniformly connected, that the world, from being so often deceived, has a right to be suspicious of public characters. But with regard to myself I am perfectly easy on this head. I did not, at my first setting out in public life, turn my thoughts to subjects of government from motives of interest; and my conduct proves the fact. I saw an opportunity in which I thought I could do some good, and I followed exactly what my heart dictated. I neither read books nor studied other people's opinions—I thought for myself."³¹—"It was the cause of America that made me an author. The force with which it struck my mind made it impossible for me, feeling as I did, to be silent; and if I have rendered her any service, I have added likewise something to the reputation of literature, by freely and disinterestedly employing it in the service of mankind, and showing there may be genius without prostitution."

Mighty indeed was the effect of the publication of this one man's thoughts. Million-voiced their echo from the hearts of colonized America. The doctrine of independence had found an efficient preacher; and the independent spirit was breathed even into the dry bones of the world-withered trembler. The dead became quick; the living had found a voice. On the first of January a word was spoken by a poor vagrant staymaker: by the 4th of July it had been repeated from Vermont even to Georgia; on that day the Independence of thirteen States was proclaimed; a home, and rallying-place, was established for Freedom; and from that day to this, far-throned monarchy has not ceased to quail, in sad presentiment of its assured doom.

A groundless suspicion arose that *Common Sense* was not written by Paine. He thus notices the rumor, and silences it; for it cannot be supposed that such an assertion, if false, would have been allowed to pass unchallenged:

"Dr. Franklin, Mr. Samuel, and John Adams were severally spoken of as the supposed author. I had not, at that time, the pleasure of either personally knowing or being known to the last two gentlemen. The favor of Dr. Franklin's friendship, I possessed in England, and my introduction to this part of the world was through his patronage. In October, 1775, Dr. Franklin proposed giving me such materials as were in his hands towards completing a history of the present trans-

³¹ *Rights of Man*, Part 2.

actions, and seemed desirous of having the first volume out the next spring. I had then formed the outlines of *Common Sense* and finished nearly the first part; and as I supposed the doctor's design in getting out a history, was to open the new year with a new system, I expected to surprise him with a production on that subject, much earlier than he thought of; and without informing him of what I was doing, got it ready for the press as fast as I conveniently could, and sent him the first pamphlet that was printed off."³²

Toward the close of 1776 he wrote a cutting and pithy reply to a late piece—entitled, *The Ancient Testimony and Principles of the People called Quakers renewed, with respect to the King and Government, and touching the Commotions now prevailing in these and other parts of America, addressed to the People in England*,— which had denied the right of rebellion, and hypocritically defended that parasite doctrine of court convenience, that (as the Testimony phrases it) "the setting up and putting down kings and government is God's peculiar prerogative for causes best known to himself; and that it is not our" (the people's) "business to have any hand or contrivance therein." "Wherefore," says Paine, "what occasion is there for your political testimony?"

But our author was not content with writing. The Declaration of Independence was a declaration of war to the death; and soldiers were not to many. Paine joined the army under Washington, at New York; and accompanied it in the retreat (after the defeat at Long Island, on the 26th of August,) from New York to the Delaware. At the tables of the officers he appears to have been a welcome guest, on account both of his genius and of his conversational powers; and Washington himself was not backward in expressions of admiration and personal esteem.³³

³² *Crisis*, No. 3.

³³ "Paine was the favorite," says Richard Carlile, "of all the officers, and of every other liberal-minded man that advocated the independence of his country, and preferred liberty to slavery. It does not appear that he held any rank in the army, but merely assisted with his advice and presence as a private individual, acting as a sort of literary and friendly aide-de-camp to different generals. In one of the latter pieces of his writing he states himself, particularly, to have been aide-de-camp to General Greene,"—Eckler

On the 19th of December,³⁴ of the same year, he published the first number of the *Crisis*: written to re-animate the Americans, who were generally dispirited by the reverses of the campaign. This work was continued, at various periods, as events called it out, till the consummation of the revolution: the last of the series appearing on the 19th of April, 1783; on which day a cessation of hostilities was proclaimed. Thirteen numbers appeared; besides a *Crisis Extraordinary, on the subject, of Taxation*, dated October 6th, 1780; a brief *Supernumerary Crisis*, addressed to Sir Guy Carleton, May 31, 1782; and another supernumerary, December 9, 1783.

In 1777 Paine left the army, being appointed, by Congress, secretary to the committee for foreign affairs: an office, he says, "agreeable to me, because it gave me the opportunity of seeing into the abilities of foreign courts, and their manner of doing business." Some fuss has been made, both by friends and foes, about his assuming the title of *Secretary for Foreign Affairs*: why! it may be difficult to say; since he certainly was such, though not minister and director as English secretaries of state unfortunately are wont to be. He resigned his secretaryship in January, 1779, in consequence of a disagreement with Congress, of which his own account, in his letter to Congress, appears to give the true reason:—"I prevented Deane's fraudulent demand being paid, and so far the country is obliged to me; but I became the victim of my integrity."³⁵

Silas Deane, in the early part of the war, had been employed by Congress to negotiate a loan with the French government, for the supply of the patriot army. Without waiting the result of his mission, Dr. Franklin and Mr. Lee were sent to co-operate with him. Louis readily furnished the supplies; but, not being prepared for a rupture with Great Britain, he took a pledge of the American commissioners that the affair should remain secret. The supplies were shipped in the name of a M. Beaumarchais, and consigned to an imaginary house in the United States. Deane, taking advantage of the necessity for secrecy, presented a claim for "compensation—hush-money; and Congress seemed inclined to suffer the imposition. Paine, perceiving this, and, of course, aware of the circumstances of the case, published

³⁴ Rickman, p. 67.

³⁵ Memorial to Congress. February 14. 1808.

several articles in the newspapers, under the title of *Common Sense to the Public, on Mr. Deane's Affairs*; exposing the impudent attempt of Deane. In consequence of this publicity, the auditing committee rejected Deane's demand; and that worthy soon after absconded to England. Paine's breach of "official confidence" was, however, severely animadverted upon by several members of Congress; and, though a motion for his dismissal was lost, his application to be heard in explanation was negatived; and he therefore sent in his resignation, concluding with these words:—"As I cannot, consistently with my character as a freeman submit to be censured unheard; therefore, to preserve that character and maintain that right, I think it my duty to resign the office of secretary to the committee for foreign affairs, and I do hereby resign the same."³⁶

Having received but very poor pay while secretary, and not choosing to derive any emolument from the sale of his writings, (a conduct which he faithfully preserved throughout his career), he now engaged himself as clerk, to a Mr. Biddle, an attorney at Philadelphia. Neither his principles nor exertions were affected by the loss of place—a rare instance of political consistency. About this time the degree of Master of Arts was conferred on him by the University of Philadelphia; and he was shortly after appointed clerk to the Assembly of Pennsylvania,³⁷ and also chosen a member of the American Philosophical Society, on its revival by the Pennsylvanian legislature. Somewhere near this period he published a pamphlet entitled *Public Good*, an examination of the claim of Virginia to the vacant western territory, a

³⁶ Paine, however, says Richard Carlile, "carried no pique with him into his retirement, but was as ardent as ever in the cause of independence and a total separation from Britain. He published several plans for an equal system of taxation to enable Congress to recruit the finances and to reinforce the army: and in the most clear and pointed manner, held out to the inhabitants of the United States the important advantages they would gain by a cheerful contribution towards the exigencies of the times and at once to make themselves formidable, not only to cope with, but to defeat the enemy. He reasoned with them on the impossibility of any army that Britain could send against them being sufficient to conquer the continent of America. He again and again explained to them that nothing but fortitude and exertion were necessary on their part to annihilate in one campaign the forces of Britain, and to put a stop to the war. It is evident and admitted on all sides, that these writings became the main-spring of that action which procured independence to the United States."—Eckler.

³⁷ Memorial to Congress.

work of little interest now, but worthy of notice here, as evidence of his uncompromising spirit. The part he took was in opposition to the claim of Virginia, though he knew that a proposition was pending before the legislature of that state, for voting him a gratuity, on account of his labors in behalf of American independence. It seems that he lost the grant in consequence of his untimely stiffness; yet his example deserves occasional imitation, however "inconvenient" such conduct may be to the mere marketable politician of our degenerate day.³⁸

In February, 1781, the financial distress of America induced Congress to send Colonel Laurens, a son of the late president, to France, in order to obtain a loan; and, at his solicitation, Paine, whose suggestion seems to have originated the mission, accompanied him. They were again in America in August, having accomplished the object of their mission more readily, and to a greater amount, than was expected.³⁹ In 1782 he published a *Letter to the Abbé Raynal*, to expose the errors of the abbé's history of the American Revolution.⁴⁰

³⁸ "Nothing can more strongly argue the genuine patriotism and real disinterestedness of the man," says Richard Carlile, whose honest intrepid spirit was in harmony with that of Paine, "than his opposing the claims of this State at a moment when it was about to make him a more liberal grant than any other State had done."—Eckler.

³⁹ "They returned to America," says Richard Carlile "with two millions and a half of livres in silver, and stores to the united value of sixteen millions of livres. This circumstance gave such vigor to the cause of the Americans, that they shortly afterwards brought the Marquis Cornwallis to a capitulation, and the war for independence to an end. Six millions of livres were a present from France, and ten millions were borrowed from Holland on the security of France. In this trip to France, Mr. Paine not only accomplished the object of his embassy, but he also made a full discovery of the traitorous conduct of Silas Deane: and, on his return fully justified himself before his fellow citizens in the steps he had taken in that affair: whilst Deane was obliged to shelter himself in England from the punishment due to his crimes."—Eckler.

⁴⁰ "With a hope of correcting the future historian," says Richard Carlile, "Mr. Paine answered the Abbé in a letter, and pointed out all his misstatements. This letter is remarkably well written, and abounds with brilliant ideas and natural embellishments. Ovid's classical and highly admired picture of Envy can scarcely vie with the picture our author has here drawn of Prejudice."

"There is something exceedingly curious in the constitution and operation of prejudice. It has the singular ability of accommodating itself to all the varieties of the human mind. Some passions and vices are but thinly scattered among mankind and

We have before noticed Franklin's friendship for Paine. His society, according to the accounts of those who best knew him, was highly esteemed; "his value, his firmness, his independence, as a political character, were now universally acknowledged; his great talents, and the high purposes to which he devoted them, made him generally sought after and looked up to; and General Washington was foremost to express the great sense he had of the excellence of his character, and the importance of his services."⁴¹

"When the war ended," says Paine, "I went from Philadelphia to Bordentown, on the east bank of the Delaware, where I have a small place. Congress was at this time at Princetown, fifteen miles distant; and General Washington had taken his headquarters at Rocky-Hill, within the neighborhood of Congress, for the purpose of resigning his commission, (the object for which he had accepted it being accomplished,) and of retiring to private life. While he was on this business he wrote me the letter which I here subjoin."⁴²

"Rocky-Hill, September 10, 1783.

"I have learned since I have been at this place, that you are at Bordentown. Whether for the sake of retirement or economy, I know not. Be it for either, for both, or whatever it may, if you will come to this place and partake with me, I shall be exceedingly happy to see you in it. Your presence may remind Congress of your past services to this country, and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom; as they will be rendered cheerfully by one

find only here and there a fitness of reception. But prejudice, like the spider, makes everywhere its home. It has neither taste nor choice of place, and all that it requires is room. There is scarcely a situation except fire or water in which a spider will not live. So let the mind be as naked as the walls of an empty and forsaken tenement, gloomy as a dungeon or ornamented with the richest abilities of thinking—let it be hot or cold, dark or light, lonely or uninhabited, still prejudice if undisturbed, will fill it with cobwebs, and live like the spider where there seems nothing to live on. If the one prepares her food by poisoning it to her palate and her use, the other does the same: and as several of our passions are strongly characterized by the animal world, prejudice may be denominated the spider of the mind."

"He never deviated from the path of nature, and was unquestionably as bright an ornament as ever our Common Parent held up to mankind. He studied men and things in preference to books, and thought and compared as well as read."—Eckler.

⁴¹ Rickman, p. 70.

⁴² *Rights of Man*, part 2.

who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who, with much pleasure, subscribes himself

"Your sincere friend, "G. WASHINGTON."

In 1785 Congress granted Paine three thousand dollars, in consideration of his public services, as is shown by the following extracts from the journals of Congress:

"Friday, August 25, 1785.

"On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. Gerry, Mr. Petit, and Mr. King, to whom was referred a letter of the 13th, from Thomas Paine:

"Resolved, That the early, unsolicited, and continued labor of Thomas Paine, in explaining the principles of the late revolution, by ingenious and timely publications upon the nature of liberty and civil government, have been well received by the citizens of these states, and merit the approbation of Congress; and that in consideration of these services, and the benefits produced thereby, Mr. Paine is entitled to a liberal gratification from the United States."

"Monday, October 3, 1785.

"On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. Gerry, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Long, to whom were referred sundry letters from Mr. Thomas Paine, and a report on his letter of the 13th of September:

"Resolved, That the board of treasury take order for paying to Mr. Thomas Paine the sum of three thousand dollars, for the considerations mentioned in the resolution of the 26th of August last."

One of his biographers (Sherwin) disputes the inference to be drawn from the above resolutions, that the grant was in payment of his literary labors. There is an error, he says, in the wording of the resolutions. "The case was this:—The salary which Mr. Paine received as secretary to the committee of foreign affairs was very small, being only eight hundred dollars a year; and the depreciation which took place in consequence of the immense and repeated issues of paper money reduced even this to less than a fifth of its nominal value. Mr. Paine, aware of the difficulties in which the Congress were placed, forebore to harass them with any applications for money during the war; but after it was closed he addressed to them a letter requesting

that they would make up the depreciation, with some other incidental expenses which he had been at in the discharge of his official duties. The letter was referred to a committee, of which Mr. Gerry was chairman. This gentleman, came to Mr. Paine, and informed him that "the committee had consulted upon the subject, that they intended to bring in a handsome report, but they thought it best not to take any notice of Deane's affair or Mr. Paine's salary."— "They will indemnify you," said he, "without it. The case is, there are some motions on the journals of Congress for censuring you with respect to Deane's affair, which cannot now be recalled because they have been printed. We will, therefore, bring in a report that will supersede them, without mentioning the purport of your letter."⁴³

In the same year (1785) the state of Pennsylvania (where he first published *Common Sense* and *The Crisis*) presented him with £6500. New York gave him the confiscated estate of a royalist, situated at New Rochelle, in the county of Westchester; consisting of more than three hundred acres of land in high cultivation, with an elegant stone house, outhouses, &c. Virginia, we have seen, had good intentions towards him: the purposed grant of that state was lost by a single vote. In 1786 he published, in Philadelphia, a *Dissertation on Government, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money*, in opposition to an attack upon the Bank of North America, incorporated in 1781. In 1780, the army being in a most forlorn and almost mutinous state (when the British forces, having laid waste the southern states, closed their ravages by the capture of Charleston), Washington addressed a letter to the Pennsylvanian Assembly, which Paine, as clerk to the Assembly, was ordered to read. "A despairing silence pervaded the House:" the public treasury was empty, the country already overburdened with taxation. No resource presented itself but voluntary subscription. The state of affairs was critical, and no time was to be lost. Paine, on his return home, drew the salary due to him on account of his clerkship, and proposed a prompt subscription, laying down five hundred dollars as his own contribution. The scheme was successful. The subscribers formed themselves into a bank (incorporated by Congress in the following year), which supplied the wants of the

⁴³ Sherwin, p. 88-9 ; see also the Memorial to Congress.

army and was of essential service to the state. The Dissertation had the desired effect: the assault upon the bank was given up.

During the war Paine had meditated a visit to England. "I was," he says, "strongly impressed with the idea, that if I could get over to England without being known, and only remain in safety till I could get out a publication, that I could open the eyes of the country with respect to the madness and stupidity of its government. I saw that the parties in parliament had pitted themselves as far as they could go,⁴⁴ and could make no new impressions on each other."⁴⁵ He had thought of the project before the detection and execution of Major Andre, the agent in the treason of Arnold. That event had deterred him. His desire was renewed while he was in France with Colonel Laurens. An English packet to New York was seized by a French privateer, and, by some stratagem, the government dispatches were secured. These were sent to Paris, and presented by the French minister, Count Vergennes, to Colonel Laurens and Mr. Paine, for the information of Congress. This circumstance revived Paine's intention of visiting England, but he was induced to postpone undertaking it, as Colonel Laurens was unwilling to return alone to America. Now, however, 1787, the independence of America fully established, and his main occupation gone, he resolved to fulfil his purpose. In April, 1787,⁴⁶ he set sail from the United States; visited Paris (where he made a brief sojourn, enjoying the society of several of the most scientific men of France, and exhibiting to the Academy of Sciences, the model of an iron bridge of his own invention);⁴⁷ and arrived in

⁴⁴ This was 100 years ago.

⁴⁵ *Rights of Man*, part 1.

⁴⁶ Sherwin, p. 94.

⁴⁷ "The famous iron bridge of one arch at Sunderland," says Richard Carlile, "was the first result of this discovery, although another claimed the invention and took credit for it with impunity, in consequence of the general prejudice against the name and writings of Mr. Paine. It is a sufficient attestation of this fact, to say, that the Sunderland bridge was cast at the foundry of Mr. Walker, at Rotherham, in Yorkshire, where Mr. Paine had made his first experiment on an extensive scale.

"How few are those," continues Carlile, "who walk across the bridge of Vauxhall and call to mind the fact, that Thomas Paine was the first to suggest and recommend the use of the iron bridge! He says he borrowed the idea of this kind of bridge from seeing a certain species of spider spin its web! In the mechanical arts he took great delight and made considerable progress. In this, as in his political and theological

England, in the beginning of September, just thirteen years after his departure for America.

pursuits, to ameliorate the condition, by adding to the comforts of his fellow-men, was his first object and final aim.“—Eckler.

Chapter IV. The Mechanic; The "Seditious."

ON his arrival in England, Paine hastened to his native place, Thetford. His father was dead, and his mother was in a state of penury. Upon her he settled a weekly allowance; and remained some weeks at Thetford, leading a recluse life, occupied in writing a pamphlet on the state of the British nation, which was published in London, before the close of the year, (1787,) under the title of *Prospects of the Rubicon*.

In 1788, he went to reside at Rotherham, in Yorkshire, to superintend the manufacture of an iron bridge after the model exhibited in Paris. In May 1789, he wrote an account of his proceeding to Sir George Staunton, who forwarded the letter to the Society of Arts, &c., in the Adelphi. The society determined that this account of his invention was well worthy of a place in their "Transactions;" but the appearance of the *Rights of Man* altered their scientific opinions, marvellously depreciating the value of the iron bridge.⁴⁸

He appears to have visited Paris again both in 1789 and '90: but his biographers throw little light upon his movements, for nearly two years. Rickman has no notice of him from '88 to '91, and Sherwin,⁴⁹ without mentioning time, simply states, that "he hastened over to Paris, that he might have the pleasure of witnessing the downfall of Bourbon despotism."⁵⁰ The following sentence—"The destruction of the Bastile, and the universal diffusion of republican Principles throughout the French empire, had rendered that country a singular object of terror to the English government,"—leads us to infer that the visit alluded to was after the destruction of the Bastile, July 14, 1789. "He left France," says Sherwin, "in November, 1790:"⁵¹ yet, in one of his letters, (given by Sherwin in the appendix to his life)⁵² dated from Paris, March 16, 1790, he says, "I leave this place tomorrow for London: I go "expressly for the purpose of erecting an iron

⁴⁸ Footnote missing/pma

⁴⁹ Footnote missing/pma

⁵⁰ Sherwin, p 99.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 100.

⁵² Appendix, p. 16.

bridge, which Messrs. Walker, of Rotherham, Yorkshire, and I have constructed, and which is now ready for putting together."

In the erection of this bridge he appears to have been at considerable expense, which was principally defrayed by a Mr. Whiteside, an American merchant, probably on the strength of some security on Paine's property in America. This person becoming bankrupt, Paine, who had overdrawn his account, was arrested by the assignees for the balance. He was, however, soon bailed out by two American merchants, and in a very short time was enabled to clear himself.

In the House of Commons, early in 1790, Mr. Burke had attacked the principles of the French Revolution. Shortly after, appeared an advertisement in the newspapers of his intention of publishing a pamphlet on the same subject; and Paine promised the friends of the revolution, that he would reply to it.⁵³ The pensioner's *Reflections* appeared just after Paine's return to England (in November, 1790); and in less than three months after, was produced the first part of the

⁵³ "The friend of Washington and Franklin," says Carlile, "could not fail to obtain an Introduction to the leading political characters in England, such as Burke, Home Tooke, and the most celebrated persons of that day. Burke had been the opponent of the English Government during the American war, and was admired as the advocate of constitutional freedom. Pitt, the most insidious and destructive man that ever swayed the affairs of England, saw the necessity of tampering with Burke, and found him venal. It was agreed between them that Burke should receive a pension in a fictitious name, but outwardly continue his former character, the better to learn the dispositions of the leaders in the Opposition, as to the principles they might imbibe from the American Revolution, and the approaching revolution in France. This was the masterpiece of Pitt's policy; he bought up all the talent that was opposed to his measures; but, instead of requiring a direct support, he made such persons continue as spies on their former associates; and thus was not only informed of all that was passing, but, by his agents, was enabled to stifle every measure that was calculated to affect him, by interposing the advice of his bribed opponents and pseudo patriots.

"It was thus that Mr. Paine was drawn into the company of Burke, even into a correspondence with him on the affairs of France; and it was not until Pitt saw the necessity of availing himself of the avowed apostasy of Burke, and of getting him to make a violent attack upon the French Revolution, that Mr. Paine discovered his mistake in the man. It is beyond question that Burke's attack on the French Revolution had a most powerful effect in this country, [England,] and kindled a hatred without showing a cause for it: but still, as honest principles will always outlive treachery, it drew forth the *Right's of Man* which will stand as a lesson to all people in all future generations, whose government may require reformation. Vice can triumph but for a moment, whilst the triumph of virtue is perpetual."—Eckler.

Rights of Man. This was written "partly at the Angel at Islington, partly in Harding Street, Fetter Lane, and finished at Versailles."⁵⁴

The work was printed in February,⁵⁵ for Mr. Johnson, of St. Paul's Church-yard; but he, on reperusing it, finding certain passages which he thought liable to prosecution, declined having anything further to do with it.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Rickman, p. 84.

⁵⁵ Sherwin, p. 101. Rickman says it was published in February; but his dates are very little to be depended upon.

⁵⁶ "The laws of England have been a great bar to the propagation of sound principles and useful lessons on government," says Richard Carlile, "for, whatever might have been the disposition and abilities of authors, they have been compelled to limit that disposition and those abilities to the disposition and abilities of the publisher. Thus, it has been difficult for a bold and honest man to find a bold and honest publisher; even in the present day it continues to be the same; and the only effectual way of going to work is for every author to become his own printer and publisher. Without this measure every good work has to be mangled according to the humor of the publisher employed. It was thus that Mr. Paine found great difficulty in procuring a publisher even for his First Part of *Rights of Man*. It was thus that the great and good Major Cartwright found it necessary, during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, to take a shop and sell his own pamphlets. I do not mean to say that there is a fault in publishers; the fault lies elsewhere; for it is well known that as soon as a man finds himself within the walls of a gaol for any patriotic act, those outside trouble themselves but little about him. It is the want of a due encouragement which the nation should bestow on all useful and persecuted publishers.

"Mr. Paine would not allow any man to make the least alteration, or even correction in his writings. He would say that he only wished to be known as what he really was, without being decked with the plumes of another. I admire and follow this part of his principles, as well as most of his others, and I hold the act to be furtive and criminal where one man prunes, mangles, and alters the writings of another. It is a vicious forgery, and merits punishment."

Mr. Paine had been particularly intimate with Burke and I have seen an original letter of Burke's to a friend, wherein he expressed the high gratification he felt at having dined at the duke of Portland's with Thomas Paine, the great political writer of the United States, and the author of *Common Sense*. Whether the English ministers had funned a desire to corrupt Mr. Paine by inviting him to their tables, it is difficult to say, but not improbable: one thing is certain, that, if ever they had formed the wish, they were foiled in their design: for the price of £1,000 which Chapman, the printer of the Second Part of *Rights of Man* offered for its copyright, and which was refused, is a proof that he was incorruptible on this score. Mr Paine was evidently much pleased with his intimacy with Burke; for it appeals that hr took considerable pains to furnish him with all the correspondence possible on the affairs of France, little thinking that he was cherishing a viper, a man that would hand those documents over to the minister: hut such was the case, until Mr. Burke was compel-

After some difficulty, a willing publisher was found—a Mr. Jordan, of No. 166, Fleet Street; and the book was brought out by him, on the 13th of March, 1791. Its immediate circulation—allowing for some exaggeration on the part of his friend, Clio Rickman—appears to have been of an extent unprecedented, if we except that of *Common Sense*.

In May, Paine revisited France; and was in Paris at the time of the king's flight. On that occasion, he is said to have remarked to a friend:—"You see the absurdity of monarchical governments. Here will be a whole nation disturbed by the folly of one man."

While in France, the Abbé Sieyès having avowed an intention of writing in defence of monarchy, against republicanism, Paine offered to controvert his arguments, in a given number of pages: but the abbé's work never appeared.

On the 13th of July, he returned to London, and was present, August 20th, at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's Street, at a meeting (of which Home Tooke was chairman) of the "Friends of Universal Peace and Liberty," for whom he drew up an address in approbation of the French Revolution, and to protest against an underhand government interference, which had hindered their purposed commemoration of the fourth of August.⁵⁷

The following account of Paine's manner of life, about this period, is given by his friend Clio Rickman:⁵⁸

"Mr. Paine's life in London was a quiet round of philosophical leisure and enjoyment. It was occupied in writing, in a small epistolary correspondence, in walking about with me to visit different friends, occasionally lounging at coffee-houses and public places, or being visited by a select few. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the French and American ambassadors, Mr. Sharp, the engraver, Romney the painter, Mrs. Wollstonecraft, Joel Barlow, Mr. Hull, Mr. Christie, Dr.

led to display his apostasy in the House of Commons, and to bid his former associates beware of him."—Eckler.

⁵⁷ 4th of August, 1789—the day on which the nobles of France, enlightened by the burning of their mansions, "voluntarily" surrendered their privileges (which they could not retain,—which were no longer allowed,) not to the people, but to their "representatives." the moneyed classes, whose patriotism fomented the revolution, and whose philosophy overthrew it.

⁵⁸ Rickman, p. 100.

Priestley, Dr. Towers, Colonel Oswald, the walking Stewart, Captain Sampson Perry, Mr. Tufin, Mr. William Choppin, Captain De Stark, Mr. Home Tooke, &c, &c, were among the number of his friends and acquaintance; and of course, as he was my inmate, the most of my associates were frequently his. At this time he read but little, took his nap after dinner, and played with my family at some game in the evening, as chess, dominoes, and drafts; in recitations, singing, music, &c.; or passed it in conversation: the part he took in the latter was always enlightened, full of information, entertainment, and anecdote. Occasionally we visited enlightened friends, indulged in domestic jaunts, and recreations from home, frequently lounging at the White Bear, Picadilly, with his old friend the walking Stewart, and other clever travellers from France, and different parts of Europe and America. When by ourselves we sat very late, and often broke in on the morning hours, indulging the reciprocal interchange of affectionate and confidential intercourse."

Paine was now engaged in preparing the second part of the *Rights of Man*.⁵⁹ The ministry endeavored to prevent its publication. Having

⁵⁹ "The publication of *Rights of Man*, says Richard Carlisle, in his Life of Paine, "formed as great an era in the politics of England as *Common Sense* had done in America: the difference is only this—the latter had an opportunity of being acted upon instantly, while the former has had to encounter corruption and persecution; but that it will finally form the basis of the English Government is certain. Its principles are so self-evident that they flash conviction on the most unwilling mind that gives the work a calm perusal. The First Part of *Rights of Man* passed unnoticed as to prosecution, nor did Burke venture a reply, though he was mean enough to advise a criminal process against its author. The proper principles of a government, where the welfare of the community is the object of that government, as the case should always be, are so correctly and forcibly laid down in *Rights of Man*, that the book will stand, as long as the English language is spoken, as a monument of political wisdom and integrity.

"It should be observed that Mr. Paine never sought profit from his writings, and when he found that *Rights of Man* had obtained a peculiar attraction, he gave up the copyright to whomsoever would print it, although he had had so high a price offered for it. He would always say they were works of principle, written solely to ameliorate the condition of mankind, and, as soon as published, the common property of anyone who thought proper to circulate them.

"The First Part of *Rights of Man* has not that methodical arrangement which is to be found in the Second Part, but an apology arises for it: Mr. Paine had to tread the "wilderness of rhapsodies" that Burke had prepared for him. The part is, however, interspersed with such delightful ornaments, and such indisputable principles, that

discovered the printer, they employed him to purchase the entire copyright of this second part, as well as the remaining copyright of the first part. Beginning with an offer of one hundred guineas, he increased his bidding to one thousand; but Paine replied, that "he would never put it in the power of any printer or publisher to suppress or alter a work of his, by making him master of the copy, or give him the right of selling it to any minister, or to any other person, or to treat as a mere matter of traffic that which he intended should operate as a principle." Failing in this, the ministry next attempted to delay the publication of the work. It contained, among other matters, a proposition for reducing the taxes; and it was desirous that it should appear on the day of the meeting of parliament: but the printer, finding he could not purchase it, suddenly refused to proceed with the printing; and another printer had to be sought for. The Appendix furnishes reason to believe, that this honest man (the first printer,) regularly forwarded the proof sheets to the minister; and that certain alterations in the taxes, &c., proposed by Mr. Pitt, at the opening of

the path does not become tedious. No work has better defined the causes of the French Revolution, and the advantages that would have arisen from it had France been free from the corrupting influence of foreign powers.

"After some difficulty, a publisher was found for *Rights of Man*, in Mr. Jordan, late of 166, Fleet-street. The First Part appeared on the 13th of March, 1791, and the Second Part on the 16th of February in the following year. The Government was paralyzed at the rapid sale of the First Part, and the appearance of the Second. The attempt to purchase having failed, the agents of the Government next set to work to ridicule it, and to call it a contemptible work. Whig and Tory members, in both houses of Parliament, affected to sneer at it, and to laud our glorious constitution as a something impregnable to the assaults of such a book. However, Whig and Tory members had just begun to be known, and their affected contempt for *Rights of Man* served but as advertisements, and greatly accelerated its sale. In the month of May, 1792, the King issued his proclamation, and the King's devil, his ex-officio information, on the very same day, against *Rights of Man*. This in some measure impeded its sale, or occasioned it to be sold in a private manner; through which means it is impossible to give effectual circulation to any publication. One part of the community is afraid to sell, and another to purchase, under such conditions. It is not too much to say that, if *Rights of Man* had obtained two or three years' free circulation in England and Scotland, it would have produced a similar effect to that which *Common Sense* did in the United States of America. The French Revolution had set the people of England and Scotland to think, and *Rights of Man* was the book to furnish materials for thinking."—*Eckler*.

the session of parliament, were the result of these confidential communications with the purpose of forestalling Paine's objections.

The *RIGHTS OF MAN, part the second—combining principle and practice*—was published by Mr. Jordan, on the 16th of February, 1792; and the sale equalled that of the first part. The following extract from Hazlitt, no mean authority, will evidence the sensation which the appearance of this masterly work produced:

"Paine's *Rights of Man* was the only really powerful reply (to Burke's Reflections), and, indeed, so powerful and explicit, that the government undertook to crush it by an ex-officio information, and by a declaration of war against France to still the ferment, and excite an odium against its admirers, as taking part with a foreign enemy against their prince and country."⁶⁰ The following note was left with the publisher.⁶¹

"Feb. 16, 1792.

Sir,

"Should any person, under the sanction of any kind of authority, inquire of you respecting the author and publisher of the *Rights of Man*, you will please to mention me as the author and publisher of that work, and show to such person this letter. I will, as soon as I am made acquainted with it, appear and answer for the work personally."⁶²

⁶⁰ Hazlitt's *Life of Napoleon*.

⁶¹ Sherwin, p. 1 15.

⁶² "On reaching Paris," says Richard Carlile, "Paine addressed a letter to the English Attorney-General, apprising him of the circumstances of his departure from England, and hinting to him that any further prosecution of *Rights of Man*, would form a proof that the author was not altogether the object, but the book, and the people of England who should approve its sentiments. A hint was also thrown out that the events in France ought to form a lesson for the English Government, on its attempt to arrest the progress of correct principles and wholesome truths. This letter was in some measure due to the Attorney-General, as Mr. Paine had written to him in England, on the commencement of the prosecution, assuring him that he should defend the work in person. Notwithstanding his departure, as a member of the French National Convention, the information against the *Rights of Man* was laid before a jury, on the 2nd of December, in the same year, and the government and its agents were obliged to content themselves with outlawing him, and punishing him in effigy throughout the country! Many a faggot have I gathered in my youth to burn old Tom Paine! In the West of England his name became quite a substitute for that of Guy Faux. Prejudice, so aptly termed by Mr. Paine, the spider of the mind, was

"Your humble servant,

"Thomas Paine."

"Mr. Jordan,

"No. 166, Fleet-street."

On the 14th of May, Paine, then at Bromley, in Kent, learned that Mr. Jordan had been served with a summons to appear at the court of King's Bench; and he immediately appointed a meeting with him, provided a solicitor, and engaged to furnish the necessary expenses for his defence. Jordan, however, preferred compromising the matter by agreeing to appear in court and plead guilty, which course seeming to imply a condemnation of the work, partially answered the purpose of the ministry.⁶³ He also consented to give up all papers in his possession relative to the *Rights of Man*, in order to facilitate the conviction of the author, against whom proceedings were openly commenced on the 21st of May. On the same day that the government commenced legal proceedings against Paine, they issued a proclamation against "seditious writings," of course not with any intention of biasing the minds of a jury. Loyal addresses, (words to which sycophants attach their names) were also manufactured as a means of counteracting the effect of the "wicked and seditious libel," which had dared to assert in clear language, and to prove by incontrovertible arguments, the universality and inalienability of human rights. Notwithstanding, several addresses of a more spirited character congratulated the country "on the influence which Mr. Paine's publications appear to have had, in procuring the repeal" (before adverted to) "of some oppressive taxes, in the present session of parliament; and hoping that the other great plans of public benefit, which Mr. Paine has so powerfully recommended, will be speedily carried into effect,"⁶⁴ Paine was not to be intimidated. About August, of the same

never before carried to such a height against any other individual; and what will future ages think of the corrupt influence of the English Government at the close of the eighteenth century, when it could excite the rancor of a majority of the nation against such a man as Thomas Paine—*Eckler*.

⁶³ Sherwin, p. 116. See also the letter from Paine to Sir Archibald Macdonald, then attorney-general.

⁶⁴ Resolutions of the Manchester Constitutional Society.

year,⁶⁵ he prepared another publication in defence of his principles and conduct, entitled *A Letter addressed to the Addressers on the late Proclamation*, a subject most favorable for the exercise of his fierce sarcasm, in which he thus adverts to the accusation against him:—

"If to expose the fraud and imposition of monarchy and every species of hereditary government—to lessen the oppression of taxes—to propose plans for the education of helpless infancy, and the comfortable support of the aged and distressed—to endeavor to conciliate nations to each other—to extirpate the horrid practice of war—to promote universal peace, civilization, and commerce—and to break the chains of political superstition, and raise degraded man to his proper rank;—if these things be libellous, let me live the life of a Libeller, and let the name of LIBELLER be engraven on my tomb!"

In the *Letter*, he also denies that unprincipled crown-lawyers and packed and prejudiced juries are competent to decide so momentous a question: whether individuals have a right to investigate the principles of government and to publish the result of their inquiries; and contends that the government-brand of "wicked and malicious" is in reality an attack upon this liberty of expression, a liberty ever most dreaded by corrupt power. He had at first intended to conduct his defence in person; but was induced to change his purpose by the announcement of a French deputation, in September, 1792, that the department of Calais had elected him, as their representative in the National Convention. This, in his estimation, was a matter of more importance than that of defending his own conduct before judges predetermined to condemn him; and, accordingly, he proceeded to Dover, with the intention of immediately embarking for Calais. At Dover he met with much unworthy treatment and annoyance, under cover of the custom-house regulations, even his papers not escaping examination; but he was at length suffered to embark, a few minutes before the arrival of a government order for his detention. His reception at Calais was most enthusiastic: a salute was fired from the battery; the soldiers at the gates were drawn up in his honor; he was welcomed with shouts of "Long live Thomas Paine;" and was escorted by crowds to the Town-hall. On his road to Paris he was met with similar demonstrations of respect. He had been elected deputy

⁶⁵ Sherwin, p. 127.

for Versailles,⁶⁶ as well as for Calais, but preferred representing the latter, as they had first elected him.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Sherwin says, for Abbeville and Beauvais also.

⁶⁷ "On reaching Calais," says Richard Carlile, "the name of Thomas Paine was no sooner announced than the beach was crowded; all the soldiers on duty were drawn up; the officer of the guard embraced him on landing, and presented him with the national cockade, which a handsome young woman, who was standing by, begged the honor of fixing in his hat, and returned it to him, expressing a hope that he would continue his exertions in the behalf of Liberty, France, and the Rights of Man. A salute was then fired from the battery, to announce to the people of Calais the arrival of their new representative. This ceremony being over, he walked to Deissein's, in the Rue de l'Egalite (formerly Rue de Roi), the men, women, and children crowding around him, and calling out "Vive Thomas Paine!" He was then conducted to the Town Hall, and there presented to the municipality, who with the greatest affection embraced their representative. The Mayor addressed him in a short speech, which was interpreted to him by his friend and conductor, M. Audibert, to which Mr. Paine, laying his hand on his heart, replied, that his life should be devoted to their service.

"At the inn he was waited upon by the different persons in authority, and by the President of the Constitutional Society, who desired he would attend their meeting of that night. He cheerfully complied with the request, and the whole town would have been there had there been room: the hall of the Minimes was so crowded that it was with the greatest difficulty they made way for Mr. Paine to the side of the President. Over the chair in which he sat was placed the bust of Mirabeau, and the colors of France, England, and America united. A speaker acquainted him from the tribune with his election, amidst the plaudits of the people. For some minutes after this ceremony nothing was heard but "Vive la Nation!" "Vive Thomas Paine!" in voices male and female.

"On the following day an extra meeting was appointed to be held in the church, in honor of their new Deputy to the Convention, the Minimes being found quite suffocating from the vast concourse of people which had assembled on the previous occasion. A play was performed at the theatre on the evening after his arrival, and a box was specially reserved" for the author of Rights of Alan, the object of the English Proclamation."—*Eckler*.

Chapter V. The Representative; The Prisoner; The Infidel.

OF Paine's conduct in the National Convention we know but little. He voted for the king's trial: but exerted himself to prevent the sentence of death.⁶⁸ He was one of a committee, appointed to frame the new Constitution,⁶⁹ whose labors were superseded by the democratic Constitution, proposed by the Jacobins; and he appears to have sided with the Girondists, the moderate reformers who murdered the republic. We do not mean by this to impeach his political honesty. It is possible that his former acquaintance with La Fayette (in America), and with Brissot, may have predisposed him to associate with them and their party (among whom, no doubt, there were honest men, as there are honest men in all parties,) rather than to seek the companionship of those whose "ultra" opinions were not, we may be sure, too favorably represented by their adversaries; and once surrounded by the sophistry of "respectability," there was little chance of his learning the true characters of the real republicans, the Friends of the People. Not fully understanding their views, his humanity, too, would be enlisted against the extreme section of the Jacobins, who

⁶⁸ "Louis fell under the guillotine," says Richard Carlile, "and Mr. Paine's deprecation of that act brought down upon him the hatred of the whole Robespierrean party. The reign of terror now commenced in France; every public man who breathed a sigh for Louis was denounced as a traitor to the nation, and as such was put to death. Every man who complained of the despotism and violence of the party in power was hurried to a prison or before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and to immediate execution. Mr. Paine, although a Member of the Convention, was first excluded on the ground of being a foreigner, and then thrown into prison, because he had been born in England! His place of confinement was Luxembourg; the time about eleven months, during which he was seized with the most violent fever, that rendered him insensible to all that was passing, and to which circumstance he attributes his escape from the guillotine.

"Mr. Paine willingly voted for the trial of Louis, as a necessary exposure of court intrigue and corruption; but when he found a disposition to destroy him at once, in preference to banishment, he exposed the safety of his own person in his endeavor to save the life of Louis. Mr. Paine was a perfectly humane man; he deprecated the punishment of death on any occasion. His object was to destroy the monarchy, but not the man who had filled the office of monarch."—*Eckler*.

⁶⁹ "In place of the unsatisfactory Constitution of 1791. That of '93 was in its turn set aside, to make room for the "moderate" Constitution of '95, the "good intentions" of which paved the hell-path of Napoleon.

feared not to declare, that they deemed the life of a peer, or a priest, of no more worth than the life of a proletarian;⁷⁰ and who, while they directed their cannon against the distant foe, whetted the guillotine for the more dangerous traitors, the hypocritical "friends" at home. That Paine acted with the Brissotins, on the trial of Louis, and in other instances, is evident: but this will no more justify us in condemning him as a half-reformer, than their association with him will lead us to infer the soundness of their political faith—if they had faith, "who were sure of but one thing, that a man and a Girondin ought to have footing somewhere, and to stand firmly upon it, keeping well "with the respectable classes."⁷¹ That Paine in principle was a thorough republican, let his own words avouch:—"The true, and only true basis of representative government is equality of rights. Every man has a right to one vote, and no more, in the choice of representatives. The rich have no more right to exclude the poor from the right of voting, *or of electing, and being elected*, than the poor have to exclude the rich; and wherever it is attempted, it is a question of force, and not of right."—*Dissertation on First Principles of Government*.

"That which is now called aristocracy, implies an inequality of rights."—*Ib.*

"Inequality of rights is created by a combination in one part of the community to exclude another part from its rights."—*Ib.*

"He that would employ his pecuniary property, or presume upon the influence it gives him, to dispossess or, rob another of his *property of rights*, uses that pecuniary property as he would use fire-arms, and merits to have it taken from him."—*Ib.*

"In any view of the case it is dangerous and impolitic, sometimes ridiculous, and always unjust, to make property the criterion of the right of voting."—*Ib.*

Hardly prepared were the Girondists to work out these principles. These were not their motors. They, the virtuous, the philosophic, the always moderate men, preferred a property-qualification, which Robespierre, the "Incorruptible" (called so even by his enemies), so

⁷⁰ Proletarian—One whose only business in the world is to labor and beget laborers.

⁷¹ Carlyle's French Revolution.

intrepidly denounced. The Constituent Assembly, the framers of the so much vaunted Constitution of '91, had divided the nation into "active" and "passive" citizens, establishing, in opposition to Robespierre and a few others, two degrees of qualification for the exercise of the universal right. The payment of direct taxes to the amount of three days wages was the qualification for voting in the primary assemblies, in other words, of choosing those who were to elect the deputies, a property qualification being required from these secondary electors. It was for opposing this law of disfranchisement, and other laws as iniquitous, that Robespierre lost his life, and became the Slandered of History. Paine could have had but little sympathy with such reformers as these Girondists; and it is hard to account for his moving in their ranks. It is manifest from the *Rights of Man*, that, when he wrote that work, he was not aware of the manifold delinquencies of the Constituent Assembly.⁷²

His knowledge of the French language, too, appears to have been very imperfect; and even this may have been some hindrance to his forming a just estimate of what was passing around him. His addresses in the Convention were all written in English, and translated for him. His intimacy with Brissot was preserved, partly, because Brissot spoke English.⁷³

The "libeller" was not forgotten in England. On the 18th of December his trial came on at the Guildhall, London, before Lord Kenyon. The result was such as might have been anticipated: the judge (as is usual in political cases) being a mere tool of the government, the jury his obsequious obeyers; no inquiry being instituted as to the truth of the condemned principles; the only question raised, being, whether their publication disturbed the government. The jury found a verdict for the crown, "without the trouble of deliberation:"—guilty—guilty of speaking the truth to enlighten his fellow men, the old blasphemy, unforgiven of political or spiritual despotism. Mr. Erskine was the defendant's counsel, and addressed the jury for some hours, in an able, lawyerlike speech, of which Paine remarked, that it

⁷² See for one instance, where he says, "The Constitution of France says, that every man who pays a tax of sixty sous per annum is an elector." We have shown it was no such thing.

⁷³ Rickman, p. 102

was "a good speech for himself, but a poor defence of the *Rights of Man*." A number of state prosecutions against the vendors of Paine's works, followed hard upon his conviction. Any one having a copy of the proscribed book was a marked man; and every endeavor was used by the paternal care of the government, to prevent the spreading of these "inflammatory" writings—for some time with considerable success; but after a while, as is always the case, rather aiding than retarding the advancement of the interdicted opinions. Paine's frequent toast was, "The best way of advertising good books: by prosecution."

Though the representative of Calais held opinions on most questions far beyond the protestations or the policy of the Brissot faction,⁷⁴ yet, as was to be expected, his connection with them excited

⁷⁴ Witness the following:—"No question has arisen within the records of history that pressed with the importance of the present. It is not whether this or that party shall be in or out, whether whig or tory, high or low shall prevail; but whether man shall inherit his right, and universal civilization take place? Whether the fruits of his labors shall be enjoyed by himself or consumed by the profligacy of governments? Whether robbery shall be banished from courts, and wretchedness from countries?"

"When, in countries that are called civilized, we see age going to the work-house, and youth to the gallows, something must be wrong in the system of government. It would seem, by the exterior appearance of such countries, that all was happiness; but there lies hidden from the eye of common observation, a mass of wretchedness that has scarcely any other chance than to expire in poverty or infamy.—

"Why is it, that scarcely any are executed but the poor?" The fact is a proof, among other things, of a wretchedness in their condition. Bred up without morals and cast upon the world without a prospect, they are the exposed sacrifice of vice and legal barbarity.

"It is difficult to discover what is meant by the *landed interest*, if it does not mean a combination of aristocratical landholders.—

"If the Baron merited a monument to be erected in Runnymede, Wat Tyler merits one in Smithfield."—*Rights of Man*, part 2.

See also, in the same work, Paine's scheme for improving the condition of the poor and abolishing the inhuman poor-laws; also his table of progressive taxation to restrict accumulation within certain limits;—and compare the above with the following, from a Declaration of Rights, proposed by Robespierre. It will then be seen how well Paine and Robespierre accorded; and how little the former was that unprincipled emasculation, self-named a "moderate reformer."

"Art. 1. The end of all political associations is the maintenance of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man, and the development of all his faculties.

"Art 2. The principal rights of man are those of providing for the preservation of his existence and liberty.

suspicion. In the close of 1793, he lost his seat in the Convention, in consequence of a successful motion, made by Bourdon de L'Oise, for expelling foreigners from that body; and immediately afterwards, he was arrested and conveyed to the Luxembourg, by order of the Committees of Public Safety and General Surety (of which Barrere and Vadier were presidents, and Robespierre not "dictator") in pursuance of a former decree for imprisoning natives of England, from which Paine had been excepted in virtue of his seat in the Convention.

The following, from Rickman, gives us a tolerable insight into his private life in Paris:—"His company was now coveted universally—by many who for some reasons never chose to avow it. With the Earl of Lauderdale, and Dr. Moore, whose company he was fond of, he dined every Friday, till Lord Gower's departure made it necessary for them to quit France, which was early in 1793. About this period he removed from White's Hotel to one near the Rue Richelieu, where he was so plagued and interrupted by numerous visitors, and sometimes by adventurers, that, in order to have some time to himself, he ap-

"Art. 3. These rights belong to all men equally.

"Art. 7. The right of property is limited, like all other rights, by the obligation to respect the rights of others.

"Art. 10. Society is under obligation to provide subsistence for all its members, either by procuring employment for them, or by insuring the means of existence to those that are incapable of labor.

"Art. 11. The relief indispensable to those that are in want of necessaries is a debt due from the possessors of superfluities. It belongs to the law to determine the manner in which the debt should be discharged.

Art. 12. Citizens, where the income does not exceed what is necessary to their subsistence, are dispensed from contributing to the public expenditure. The rest ought to contribute progressively, according to the extent of their fortunes.

"Art. 21. All the citizens are equally admissible to all public functions.

"Art. 22. All the citizens have an equal right to concur in the nomination of the delegates of the people.

"Art. 29. When the government violates the rights of the people, insurrection is for the people, and for every portion of the people, the most sacred of rights, and the most indispensable of duties.

"Art. 30. When the social guarantee, or compact, fails to protect a citizen, he resumes his natural right to defend personally all his rights.

"Art. 31. In either of the two preceding cases, to subject to legal forms the resistance to oppression, is the last refinement of tyranny."—*Maximilien Robespierre, given in Buonarroti's History of Babeuf's Conspiracy or Equality.*

propriated two mornings in a week for his levee days. To this indeed he was extremely averse, from the fuss and formality attending it, but he was nevertheless obliged to adopt it. Annoyed and disconcerted with a life so contrary to his wishes and habits, he retired to the Fauxbourg St, Dennis,⁷⁵ where he occupied part of the hotel that Madame de Pompadour once resided in. Here was a good garden, well laid out; and here too our mutual friend Mr. Choppin occupied apartments. At this residence, which for a town one was very quiet, he lived a life of retirement and philosophical ease, while it was believed he was gone into the country for his health, which by this time indeed was much impaired by intense application to business, and by the anxious solicitude he felt for the welfare of public affairs. Here with a chosen few he unbent himself; among whom were Brissot, the Marquis de Chatelet le Roi of the gallerie de honore,⁷⁶ and an old friend of Dr. Franklin, Bancal, and sometimes General Miranda. His English associates were Christie and family, Mrs. Wollstonecraft, Mr. and Mrs. Stone, &c. Among his American friends were Capt Imlay, Joel Barlow, &c., &c To these parties the French inmates were generally invited.—He usually rose about seven, breakfasted

⁷⁵ He himself says, "In 1793, I had lodgings in the Rue Fauxburg, St. Dennis, No. 63. They were the most agreeable for situation of any I ever had in Paris, except that they were too remote from the Convention, of which I was then a member. The house, which was enclosed by a wall and gateway from the street, was a good deal like an old mansion farmhouse, and the courtyard was like a farmyard, stocked with fowls, ducks, turkeys, and geese; which, for amusement, we used to feed out of the window of the parlor of the ground floor. There were some butts for rabbits, and a sty with two pigs. Beyond was a garden of more than an acre of ground, well laid out, and stocked with excellent fruit trees. The orange, apricot, and the greengage plum were the best I ever tasted; and it is the only place where I saw the wild cucumber, which they told me is poisonous. My apartments consisted of three rooms. The first for wood, water, &c., with an old fashioned closet chest, high enough to bang up clothes in. The next was the bedroom, and beyond that the sitting-room. At the end of the sitting-room, which looked into the garden, was a glass door, and on the outside a small landing-place railed in, and a flight of narrow stairs almost hidden by the vines that grew over it, by which I could descend into the garden, without going down stairs through the house. I used to find some relief by walking alone in the garden after it was dark, and cursing with hearty good will the authors of that terrible system, that had turned the character of the revolution I had been proud to defend."—Yorke's Letters from France.

⁷⁶ Possibly du *Chatelet du Roi of the gallerie d'honneur*.

with his friend Choppin, Johnson, and two or three other Englishmen, and a Monsieur La Borde, who had been an officer in the *civ-devant* garde-du-corps, an intolerable aristocrat, but whose skill in mechanics and geometry brought on a friendship between him and Paine.—After breakfast he usually strayed an hour or two in the garden, where he one morning pointed out the kind of spider whose web furnished him with the first idea of constructing his iron bridge.—The little happy circle who lived with him here will ever remember these days with delight: with these select friends he would talk of his boyish days, play at chess, whist, piquet, or cribbage, and enliven the moments by many interesting anecdotes: with these he would play at marbles, scotch hops, battledores, &c., on the broad and fine gravel walk at the upper end of the garden; and then retire to his boudoir, where he was up to his knees in letters and papers of various descriptions. Here he remained till dinner time; and, unless he visited Brissot's family or some particular friend in the evening, which was his frequent custom, he joined again a society of his favorites and fellow-boarders, with whom his conversation was often witty and cheerful, always acute and improving, but never frivolous."⁷⁷

"On the day of the trial of Marat, Mr. Paine dined at White's Hotel with Mr. Milnes, a gentleman of great hospitality and profusion, who usually gave a public dinner to twenty or thirty gentlemen, once a week. At table, among many others besides Mr. Paine, was a Capt. Grimstone, a high aristocrat. He took little pains to conceal his political principles, and when the glass had freely circulated a short time after dinner, he attempted loudly and impertinently to combat the political doctrines of the philosopher. Mr. Paine in few words, with much acuteness and address, continued exposing the fallacy of his reasoning, and rebutting his invectives. The captain became more violent, and waxed so angry, that at length, rising from his chair, he walked around the table to where Mr. Paine was sitting, and here began a volley of abuse, calling him incendiary, traitor to his country and struck him a violent blow that nearly knocked him off his seat. Capt. Grimstone was a stout young man about thirty and Mr. Paine at this time nearly sixty. The company, who had occasion frequently during dinner to call him to order, were now obliged to give him in

⁷⁷ Brickman, p. 129 to 136.

charge of the national guard. An act of the Convention had made it death to strike a deputy, and every one in company with the person committing the assault, refusing to give up the offender, was considered an accomplice.

Paine immediately applied to Barrere, at that time president of the Committee of Public Safety, for a passport for the unhappy man, who must otherwise have suffered death; and at length accomplished it, at the same time sending Grimstone money to defray his travelling expenses; for his passport was of so short a duration, that he was obliged to go immediately from his prison to the messagerie nationale."⁷⁸

At the time of his arrest, Paine confided to his friend Joel Barlow, the manuscript of the *first part* of the AGE OF REASON. A considerable portion of the second part was written during his imprisonment, (pens, ink, and paper being allowed even in the "Rein of Terror.") He also amused his prison hours with the composition of several trifles, both in prose and verse.

When he had been in the Luxembourg about three weeks,⁷⁹ the Americans resident in Paris went in a body to the Convention to demand his liberation; but were answered that Mr. Paine was born in England: it was also signified to them that their act had no authority from the American government.⁸⁰ The American ambassador, Morris, did not interfere in his behalf. Washington, too, neglected him. "I had been imprisoned seven months, and the silence of the executive part of the government of America (Mr. Washington) upon the case, and upon every thing respecting me, was explanation enough to Robespierre that he might proceed to extremities. A violent fever, which had nearly terminated my existence, was, I believe, the circumstance that preserved it. I was not in a condition to be removed, or to know of what was passing, for more than a month. It makes a blank in my remembrance of life. The first thing I was informed of was the fall of Robespierre. About a week after this Mr. Monroe arrived to supersede Gouverneur Morris, and as soon as I was able to write a note legible enough to be read, I found a way to convey one

⁷⁸ Rickman, p. 151-2-3.

⁷⁹ Sherwin. p. 152.

⁸⁰ *Paine's Letter to George Washington*, Paris, August 3, 1796.

to him by means of the man who lighted the lamps in the prison; and whose unabated friendship for me, from whom he had never received any service, and with difficulty accepted any recompense, puts the character of Mr. Washington to shame. In a few days I received a message from Mr. Monroe, conveyed to me in a note from an intermediate person, with assurance of his friendship, and expressing a desire that I would rest the case in his hands. After a fortnight or more had passed, hearing nothing further, I wrote to a friend who was then in Paris, a citizen of Philadelphia, requesting him to inform me what was the true situation of things with respect to me. I was sure that something was the matter; I began to have hard thoughts of Mr. Washington, but I was unwilling to encourage them. In about ten days, I received an answer to my letter, in which the writer says, 'Mr. Monroe has told me that he has no order (meaning from the president, Mr. Washington) respecting you, but that he (Mr. Monroe) will do every thing in his power to liberate you; but from what I learn from the Americans lately arrived in Paris, you are not considered either by the American government, or by individuals, as an American citizen.' Upon the receipt of the letter, I sent a memorial to Mr. Monroe, and received from him the following answer. It is dated the 18th of September, but did not come to hand till about the 18th of October. I was then falling into a relapse, the weather was becoming damp and cold, fuel was not to be had, and an abscess in my side, the consequence of those things, and of want of air and exercise, was beginning to form, and has continued immovable ever since."⁸¹ Monroe, in his reply, states that Congress had not decided upon the question of citizenship, but that the Americans, "the great mass of people," could not be otherwise than interested in his welfare. Of Washington he speaks cautiously and evasively, thus:—"Of the sense which the President has always entertained of your merits, and of his friendly disposition towards you, you are too well assured to require any declaration of it from me. That I forward his wishes in seeking your safety is what I well know; and this will form an additional obligation on me to perform what I should otherwise consider as a

⁸¹ Letter to Washington.

duty."⁸² This almost amounts to an acknowledgment that Washington had given no orders whatever about him.

In a letter written by Paine after his return to America,⁸³ we find the following "miraculous intervention:"

"One hundred and sixty-eight persons were taken out of the Luxembourg in one night, and a hundred and sixty of them guillotined the next day, of which I know I was to have been one; and the manner I escaped that fate is curious and has all the appearance of accident. The room in which I was lodged was on the ground floor, and one of a long range of rooms under a gallery, and the door of it opened outward and flat against the wall; so that when it was open the inside of the door appeared outward, and the contrary when it was shut. I had three comrades, fellow-prisoners with me, Joseph Vanhuile or Bruges, since president of the municipality of that town, Michael Robins, and Bastini of Louvain. When persons by scores and hundreds were to be taken out of prison for the guillotine, it was always done in the night, and those who performed that office had a private mark or signal, by which they knew what rooms to go to, and what number to take. We, as I have said, were four, and the door of our room was marked, unobserved by us, with that number in chalk; but it happened, if happening is a proper word, that the mark was put on when the door was open and flat against the wall, and thereby came on the inside when we shut it at night, and the destroying angel passed by it. A few days after this Robespierre fell." Yet though that "sanguinary tyrant" was murdered by the "Moderates" on the 28th of July, 1794, Paine did not obtain his liberty (and then through much exertion on the part of Monroe) till the 4th of November following.⁸⁴ He himself says, "All that period of my imprisonment, at least, I owe to George Washington."⁸⁵

After his liberation he found a friendly home in the house of Monroe,⁸⁶ (afterwards president of the United States), with whom he resided, for eighteen months. His constitution suffered materially from

⁸² Letter to Washington.

⁸³ Sherwin, p. 161-2.

⁸⁴ Letter to Washington.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Rickman, p. 164; Sherwin, p. 159.

his confinement: and thus circumstanced he hastened to complete the *second part* of the AGE OF REASON. The first part had also been produced under great disadvantages. He says, in the preface to the second part:—"It had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon religion; but I had reserved it to a later period in life, intending it to be the last work I should undertake. The circumstances, however, which existed in France in the latter end of the year 1792, determined me to delay it no longer. I saw many of my most intimate friends" (Brissot among others) "destroyed; others daily carried to prison: and I had reason to believe, and had also intimations given me, that the same danger was approaching myself. Under these disadvantages, I began the former part of the *Age of Reason*; I had, besides, neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any; notwithstanding which, I have produced a work that no Bible believer, though writing at his ease, and with a library of church books about him, can refute. Towards the latter end of December of that year, a motion was made and carried, to exclude foreigners from the Convention. There were but two in it, Anacharsis Cloutz and myself; and I saw I was particularly pointed at by Bourdon de l'Oise, in his speech on that motion. Conceiving, after this, that I had but a few days of liberty, I sat down and brought the work to a close as speedily as possible: and I had not finished it more than six hours, in the state it has since appeared, before a guard came, with an order for putting me in arrestation."

The first part of the *Age of Reason* was probably published by Barlow,⁸⁷ during Paine's imprisonment. The second part made its appearance about the end of 1795.⁸⁸

At the invitation of a unanimous vote of the Convention, Paine resumed his seat; but it would seem that he little accorded with the now unmasked Respectables, then manufacturing a new constitution to displace that of '93, which, principally framed by Robespierre, had received the sanction of four millions of adult Frenchmen.⁸⁹ More especially he contended against that odious distinction (formerly so strenuously opposed by the maligned Robespierre) between direct

⁸⁷ Gorton's Biographical Dictionary.

⁸⁸ Sherwin says, early in '95, but Paine's Letter to Washington, contradicts this.

⁸⁹ Buonarroti's History of Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality.

and indirect taxes as qualifications for the rights of citizenship.⁹⁰ His objections had little weight with the Convention; and a new election following the formation of the "Constitution," Paine was not re-elected. Possibly his opinions were too extreme for the new regime of shopocrats.

During the English invasion of Holland, he went to Brussels, where he passed a few days with General Brune.⁹¹ "For some years before he left Paris, he lodged at M. Bonville's," (Bonneville), "associating occasionally with the great men of the day, Condorcet,⁹² Volney, Mercier, Joel Barlow, &c., &c., and sometimes dining with Bonaparte and his generals."⁹³ The following is amusing: When Bonaparte returned from Italy "he called on Mr. Paine, and invited him to dinner: in the course of his rapturous ecstasies, he declared that a statue of gold ought to be erected to him in every city in the universe; he also assured him that he always slept with his *Rights of Man* under his pillow, and conjured him to honor him with his correspondence and advice."⁹⁴

"Paine now indulged his mechanical taste, and amused himself in bridge and ship modelling, and in pursuing his favorite studies, the mathematics and natural philosophy. 'These models,' says a correspondent of that time,⁹⁵ 'exhibit an extraordinary degree not only of skill, but of taste in mechanics; and are wrought with extreme delicacy entirely by his own hands. The largest of these, the model of a bridge, is nearly four feet in length: the iron-works, the chains, and every other article belonging to it were forged and manufactured by himself. It is intended as the model of a bridge which is to be constructed across the Delaware, extending four hundred and eighty feet with only one arch. He also forged himself the model of a crane of a new description, which, when put together, exhibited the power of the lever to a most surprising degree.' "⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Sherwin, p. 175.

⁹¹ Yorke's Letters from France.

⁹² Condorcet died 28th of March, 1791. Paine's acquaintance with him must have been previous to his imprisonment.

⁹³ Rickman. p. 164.

⁹⁴ Yorke's Letters from France.

⁹⁵ Redhead Yorke.

⁹⁶ Rickman, p. 165

Soon after the publication of the second part of the *Age of Reason*, he gave to the world his *Dissertation of First Principles of Government; Agrarian Justice, opposed to Agrarian Law and to Agrarian Monopoly*; and *The Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance*. In 1796, too, he published his *Letter to George Washington*. In 1797 he published *Discourse delivered to the Society of Theophilanthropists at Paris* (a society of which he had been a principal promoter); *A Letter to the People of France on the events of the 18th Fructidor*; and *A Letter to Camille Jordan on Priests' Bells and Public Worship*.⁹⁷ His popularity was now waning, in consequence of his assault upon the Bible. If we may believe Mr. Yorke's *Letters from France in 1802*, he, who had been obliged by the press of visitors to appoint regular levee days, was then the lonely habitant of the second story of a bookseller's in the Rue du Theatre Francais; occupying "a little dirty room, containing a small wooden table and two chairs. The chimney-hearth was a heap of dirt; there was not a speck of cleanliness to be seen; three shelves were filled with pasteboard boxes, each labelled after the manner of a minister of foreign affairs. *Correspondence Americaine, Britanntque, Franquaise; Notices Politiques; Le Citoyen Franqais*,⁹⁸ &c. In one corner of the room stood several huge bars of iron, curiously shaped, and two large trunks; opposite the fireplace, a board covered with pamphlets and journals, having more the appearance of a dresser in a scullery than a side-board.—Mr. Paine came down stairs, and entered the room, dressed in a long flannel gown. Time seemed to have made dreadful ravages over his whole frame, and a settled melancholy was visible on his countenance."

He was detained in France much longer than he desired, through fear of the British cruisers. "When Monroe left France, to return to America," he says, "I was to have gone with him; it was fortunate I did not. The vessel he sailed in was visited by a British frigate, that searched every part of it, and down to the hold, for Thomas Paine. I then went, the same year, to embark at Havre; but several British frigates were cruising in sight of the port, who knew I was there, and I had to return again to Paris. Seeing myself thus cut off from every

⁹⁷ Sherwin, p. 175 to 181.

⁹⁸ In which he is said to have written

opportunity that was in my power to command, I wrote to Mr. Jefferson, that if the fate of the election should put him in the chair of the presidency, and he should have occasion to send a frigate to France, he would give me the opportunity of returning by it, which he did" (in a letter dated July, 1802); "but I declined coming by the *Maryland*, the vessel that was offered me, and waited for the frigate that was to bring the new minister, Mr. Chancellor Livingston, to France; but that frigate was ordered round to the Mediterranean; and as at that time the war was over, and the British cruisers called in, I could come any way; I then agreed to come with Commodore Barney in a vessel he had engaged. It was again fortunate I did not, for the vessel sunk at sea, and the people were preserved in the boat. Had half the number of evils befallen me, that the number of dangers amount to through which I have been preserved, there are those who would ascribe it to the wrath of heaven; why then do they not ascribe my preservation to the protecting favor of heaven?"⁹⁹

On the 1st of September, 1802, disgusted with the loyal apathy of England and the "slavish politics"¹⁰⁰ of Consular France, Paine turned his back on Europe, embarking in the London packet, at Havre de Grace for America, after an absence of fifteen years.

⁹⁹ No. 4 of the Letters to the Citizens of the United States.

¹⁰⁰ "After Bonaparte had usurped the sovereign power." says Richard Carlile, "and everything in the shape of a representative system of government had subsided, Mr. Paine led quite a retired life, saw but little company, and for many years brooded over the misfortunes of France, and the advantages it had thrown away, by anticipating its present disgrace. He saw plainly, that all the benefits which the Revolution ought to have preserved would be foiled by the military ambition of Bonaparte. He would not allow the epithet Republic to be applied to it, without condemning such an association of ideas, and insisted upon it that the United States of America was alone of all the governments on the face of the earth, entitled to that honorable appellation"—*Eckler*.

Chapter VI. The Abandoned.

WE have followed our "rebellious needleman" from obscurity to the summit of literary fame, to the zenith of political glory; we have seen kings and rulers of nations quailing at his unprivileged words; priestcraft has shrunk back aghast, for his grip is on her: it is time for him to rest. But old age and disease are undermining the Overthrower of thrones and altars; and as if these were all the household comforts a worn-out man can need, old friends are falling off and some begin to think that "he has gone too far"—has been too much in earnest. Truly, it requires some virtue—greater virtue than may get a name in a revolution—to stand by him who likes no abuses. England has cast him forth: he was not to be bought with place or pension; neither would he take holy orders. France, counter-revolutionized, would disenfranchise such as he. And America, his "beloved America," is too proud of her independence to welcome back the—infidel. Certainly, to no men are reformers more offensive than to their friends, the slower-paced. Let a man be advised: and be careful to cut his conscience to the stature of his friends! There will be no condemnation like theirs. "Why, we are liberal; but we cannot tolerate that:"—Doubtless a sufficient proof of your liberality! The thousand thousand to whom *Common Sense* was given, to say nothing of some little efficient service in the war for *Independence*, independent as they were, crowded not to the sea-shore to hail back their friend, not the least to be esteemed among their liberators. Even Washington had forgotten his own hand-writing; or held he too precise a memory of Paine's angry letter from Paris, thus ending—"As to you, Sir, treacherous in private friendship and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide, whether you are an APOSTATE or an IMPOSTOR, whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any."¹⁰¹ That letter, too, contained some ill-looking facts, not yet cleared up: at least Peter Porcupine's *Answer* says nothing. Such things are not to be forgiven by Christian men; neither may Infidelity be countenanced. Other causes of neglect may have been at work. The Commander-in-chief was a *Federalist*, and feared the

¹⁰¹ Letter to George Washington.

republic might become too republican. Paine, though he misunderstood Robespierre, was a thorough-going democrat; thought La Fayette required spurring. Very dangerous these unaccommodating men, never halting at word of command, to respectable slave proprietors, who fain would harness revolutions to their family chariots, and hold the reins themselves. Here too was another sore. The great Washington was a slave-holder. Paine hated the "infernal traffic in negroes;" had only kept silence on that subject during the revolution, for fear of ruining all. But he had since written—"We must push that matter" (of abolition) "further on your side of the water. I wish that a few well-instructed negroes could be sent among their brethren in bondage; for until they are enabled to take their own part nothing will be done."¹⁰² Was this to be forgotten? Yet Jefferson was a slaveholder; and he at least could write friendly, with "assurance of high esteem and affectionate attachment."¹⁰³ An infidel, too, was Jefferson; but too wary to publish it till he was out of reach. After all, something must be allowed for the bent of a man's character. Washington's great point seems to have been *respectability*, and respectability, "thin film" as it is, keeps the wearer well with the slow-eyed world, "whose God is the Almighty Dollar;" and how shall great things be done without it? Truth is not to be spoken at all times. Your politic reformer will allow as much: but Paine was not of that stamp. He was one of those who "achieve greatness;" Washington one upon whom greatness is "thrust." The difference is worth notice when medals are struck.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Letter to a friend in Philadelphia. Paris, March 16th, 1789.

¹⁰³ Jefferson to Paine, July, 1802.

¹⁰⁴ "It is evident from all the writings of Mr. Paine, says Richard Carlile, "that he lived in the closest intimacy with Washington up to the time of his quitting America in 1787, and it further appears that they corresponded up to the time of Mr. Paine's imprisonment in the Luxembourg. But here a fatal breach took place. Washington, having been the nominal commander-in-chief during the struggle for independence, obtained much celebrity, not for his exertions during that struggle, but in laying down all command and authority immediately on its close, and in retiring to private life, instead of assuming anything like authority or dictation in the government of the United States, which his former situation would have enabled him to do if he had chosen. This was a circumstance only to be paralleled during the purest periods of the Roman and Grecian republics, and this circumstance obtained for Washington a fame to which his generalship could not aspire. Mr. Paine says that "the disposition

Paine arrived at Baltimore, in Maryland, on the 30th of October, 1802. "From New Hampshire to Georgia (an extent of 1500 miles) every newspaper was filled with applause or abuse."¹⁰⁵ The Federalists (the American Tories) of course resented his onslaught upon the General. Many of the democratic party were also estranged from him on account of his "infidelity." Others, among whom was Jefferson, then president, received him with joy and gratulation. The leaders of the many religious sects were not the least anxious to see the author of the *Age of Reason*. On his way from Baltimore to New York, he was interrupted by a Mr. Hargrove, minister of the New Jerusalem-ites. "You are Mr. Paine," said Mr. Hargrove. "Yes."—"My name Sir, is Hargrove; I am minister of the New Jerusalem church here. We, Sir, explain the scriptures in their true meaning. We have found the key which has been lost above four thousand years." "It must have been very rusty," said Paine. At New York he remained some time, residing at Lovett's Hotel. Here his former friends gathered

of Washington was apathy itself, and that nothing could kindle a fire in his bosom—neither friendship, fame, nor country." This might in some measure account for the relinquishment of all authority at a time when he might have held it, and, on the other hand, should have moderated the tone of Mr. Paine in complaining of Washington's neglect of himself whilst confined in France. The apathy which was made a sufficient excuse for the one case should have also formed a sufficient excuse for the other. This was certainly a defect in Mr. Paine's career as a political character. He might have attacked the conduct of John Adams, who was a bitter foe to Paine, republicanism, and purity of principle, and who found the apathy and indifference of Washington a sufficient cloak and opportunity to enable him to carry on every species of court and monarchical intrigue in the character of vice-president. He openly avowed his attachment to the monarchical system of government; he made an open proposition to make the presidency of the United States hereditary in the family of Washington, although the latter had no children of his own; and even ran into an intrigue and correspondence with the court and ministry of England on the subject of his diabolical purposes. All this intelligence burst upon Mr. Paine immediately on his liberation from a dreadful imprisonment, and at a moment when the neglect of the American government had nearly cost him his life. It was this which drew forth his virulent letter against Washington. The slightest interference of Washington would have saved him from several months' unjust and unnecessary imprisonment, for there was not the least charge against him further than that of having been born in England, although he had actually been outlawed in that country for supporting the cause of France and of mankind!—*Eckler*.

¹⁰⁵ Letter to Clio Rickman; Rickman, p. 175-6

around him; a public dinner was held in his honor; other demonstrations of joy at his return were evinced: yet he could not but perceive how many of his political admirers were offended at the avowal of his religious principles; and that many, secretly approving of his opinions, openly denounced them, and shunned his society. These were things to disturb a man's serenity: and Paine was now old, and suffering, moreover, from an abscess in his side, the consequence of his long imprisonment. He appears to have become peevish and irritable; and this alienated other friends, who thought that the blighting of life's first hopes, persecution, imprisonment, old age, pain, neglect, and occasional insult, were, or ought to be, excellent promoters of tranquillity: yet there is not the slightest evidence that the benevolent disposition which had characterized him through life was at all diminished.

While in Paris, Paine had lodged some time with M. Bonneville, the proprietor of a republican paper, which was suppressed, to the impoverishing of Bonneville, on the usurpation of Bonaparte. When, therefore, Paine arrived in America, finding his estate prosperous, he returned certain kindnesses which he had received from Bonneville, by inviting him and his family to become his visitors.¹⁰⁶ That gentleman accepted his invitation, and sent his wife and three sons to New York; but stayed himself in Paris to settle his affairs; which improving, he remained in France, and the eldest of the boys returned to him. Madame Bonneville was placed by Paine in a small house and farm of his, at Bordentown, where he wished her to keep a school; however, she preferred residing at New York, drawing funds from him, and occasionally teaching French. "On one occasion she ran in debt on Mr. Paine's credit; but as this was without his authority, he declined paying, and suffered himself to be sued. He gained the cause, but generously paid the debt immediately. She also attempted a fraud on him to a large amount: he then, for a time, refused her assistance, but took care of her children. His god-son Thomas, he afterwards got into the West Point Academy, and we believe the other brother also; at least both were educated by him."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Sherwin. p. 208; Rickman, p. 179.

¹⁰⁷ From Vale's *Life of Paine*, formerly published in the *Beacon*, a New York periodical.

Paine's popularity ceased with the New York dinner. Respectable people dared not own the *Deist*; aspiring politicians feared his acquaintance—it might injure them at the ballot-box. Many of his old friends contented themselves with a formal visit. There were honorable exceptions however, "Jefferson corresponded with him to the day of his death. De Witt Clinton sought him out and rapturously hailed him as a friend. A close intimacy existed also between him and Elihu Palmer, the eloquent Deistical lecturer. Mr. Palmer was blind, and while he lived, and Paine was in New York, he visited him almost daily, and at his death, rendered his widow essential service."¹⁰⁸ Paine's worldly circumstances were now very good. He writes to Clio Rickman. "My property in this country has been taken great care of by my friends, and is now worth £6000 sterling; which put in the funds, will bring me £400 sterling a year." He thus states the conduct he intended to adopt in America. "I have no occasion to ask, and do not intend to accept, any place or office in the Government. There is none it could give me, that would be any ways equal to the profits I could make as an author, for I have an established fame in the literary world, could I reconcile it to my principles to make money by my politics or religion; I must be in everything what I have ever been, a disinterested volunteer. My proper sphere of action is on the common floor of citizenship, and to honest men I give my hand and my heart freely.

"I have some manuscript works to publish, of which I shall give proper notice, and some mechanical affairs to bring forward, that will employ all my leisure time. I shall continue these letters as I see occasion, and as to the low prints that choose to abuse me, they are welcome. I shall not descend to answer them. I have been too much used to such common stuff to take any notice of it. The Government of England honored me with a thousand martyrdoms, by burning me in effigy in every town in that country, and their hirelings in America may do the same."¹⁰⁹ The remnant of his public life is soon told. In the close of 1802, and in the beginning of 1803, he wrote his *Letters to the Citizens of the United States of America, after an absence of fifteen years*: seven letters, chiefly in opposition to the Federal, or

¹⁰⁸ Vale.

¹⁰⁹ No. 1 of the Letters to the Citizens of the United States.

English-assimilation party, written at Washington, at New York, and at Bordentown, and published in the Aurora newspaper. In June, 1803, he forwarded to Congress an account of the Construction of Iron Bridges; and presented to them his models, which, we believe, have been much followed. He also busied himself in electioneering proceedings, exposing the mal-practices of the Federalists; and he appears to have made some attempts to establish the "Deistical Church." In September, 1804, he wrote an article against the French inhabitants of Louisiana, (then just incorporated with the United States) who, in a memorial to Congress, petitioned among other rights, for the "right" of importing negroes; and in August, 1805, we find him addressing a paper to the *Citizens of Pennsylvania, on the proposal for calling a Convention*. In June, 1806, he published an inquiry into the *Cause of the Yellow Fever, and the Means of preventing it*; and in the latter part of that year, and in the course of the next, he wrote various papers, on political *Emissaries, the Liberty of the Press, Affairs of Europe, Gunboats, Fortifications, &c., &c.* In 1807, he published the *Third Part of the Age of Reason—an examination of the Prophecies, an Essay on Dreams, and an Appendix, with "My private Thoughts on a future State."* Some of his papers are dated as late as 1808. *The Essay on the Origin of Freemasonry, and his Reply to the Bishop of Llandaff*, were not published till after his death. These last writings are written with unabated vigor, and well sustain his literary reputation.

He appears to have been continually assailed by the hirelings of the press; but he was well able to defend himself from the rancor of these reptiles. The assaults of age were not so easily repelled. He suffered from epilepsy, and from the abscess in his side; and, though his mind still burned brightly, his body was fast wearing out. In June, 1803, he left New York for New Rochelle, and boarded with the occupant of his farm, for some weeks, when he again returned to the city. His tenant left in the spring of the following year, and Paine went again to the farm, taking with him Madame Bonneville's two children; but as he did not intend to attend to farming himself, he hired a person for that purpose, and, for the sake of greater comfort, took lodgings in the neighborhood.¹¹⁰ On the Christmas Eve of 1804,

¹¹⁰ Sherwin, p. 312.

he narrowly escaped a bullet fired through his window by a man who was considerably in his debt. He seems to have resided at New Rochelle, probably occasionally visiting Bordentown and New York, till the summer of 1806, when he went to reside with Mr. Jarvis, a portrait painter, in Church Street, New York. He was now very infirm, and this seems to have been the signal for religious bigots of all denominations to begin to worry him, in hopes of a recantation. The following is a specimen of their kindly endeavors. He usually took a short nap after dinner, and would not be disturbed by any one.

"One afternoon, a very old lady, in a large scarlet cloak, knocked at the door, and inquired for Thomas Paine. Mr. Jarvis told her he was asleep. 'I am very sorry for that,' said she, 'for I want to see him very particularly.' Thinking it a pity to make an old woman call twice, Mr. Jarvis waked him. He arose upon one elbow, and with an expression of eye that staggered the old woman, asked, 'What do you want?'—'Is your name Paine?'—'Yes'—'Well, then, I come from Almighty God to tell you, that if you do not repent of your sins, and believe in our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ, you will be damned.'—'Poh, poh, it is not true. You were not sent with any such impertinent message. Jarvis, make her go away. Pshaw! he would not send such a foolish, ugly old woman about with his messages. Go away; go back; shut the door!' The old lady retired in mute astonishment."¹¹¹

Paine resided with Mr. Jarvis till the end of 1808. His continued illness rendering boarding troublesome, he then removed to a small house, in Columbia Street, Greenwich, about two miles from New York, which Madame Bonneville took for him.¹¹² This lady also engaged a Mrs. Hadden (or Hedden,) a "religious" woman as his nurse, as he was too feeble to do anything for himself. His bodily sufferings were great; and he often expressed his wish to die, as there was no other chance of getting rid of them. He also seems to have been solicitous about his burial, and desirous of a place in the Quaker burial-ground. Mr. Willet Hicks, a member of the Society of Friends, who had shown him much kindly attention during his illness, called upon him, at his request, to confer upon the subject. Paine told him that he desired to be buried among the Quakers, as he preferred their

¹¹¹ Rickman, p. 182; Sherwin, p. 214

¹¹² Vale. Sherwin says he boarded at a Mr. Ryder's, in Burrow Street, Greenwich,

principles to those of any other Christian sect, and approved their mode of burial; his father, also, was a Quaker. Mr. Hicks conveyed his request to the committee who superintend the Quaker cemetery, and funerals, but they refused to comply with his solicitation.

"About the 4th of May, symptoms of approaching dissolution became very evident to himself, and he soon fell off his milk-punch, and became too infirm to take any thing; complaining of much bodily pain."¹¹³ "For the last three weeks before his death, he suffered the most excruciating pain. His body was in many places covered with ulcers, and his feet with discolored blisters, which baffled every effort to arrest their progress. He was at the same time laboring under a confirmed dropsy, attended with frequent cough and vomiting, and his decease was every day expected by those about him. In this deplorable situation, Mrs. Hedden frequently read the Bible to him—"¹¹⁴ in hopes of easing his pain by a pleasant belief in damnation. In her most Christian endeavors she was aided by the charity of the Rev. Mr. Milledollar, a Presbyterian minister, and the Rev. Mr. Cunningham, who visited him about a fortnight before his death. "The latter gentleman said—'Mr. Paine, we visit yon as friends and neighbors. You have now a full view of death; you cannot live long, and whosoever does not believe in Jesus Christ will assuredly be damned.'—'Let me have none of your popish stuff,' replied Paine. 'Get away with you. Good morning, good morning.'

Mr. Milledollar attempted to address him, but he was interrupted with the same language. When they were gone, he said to Mrs. Hedden, 'Don't let 'em come here again; they trouble me.' Their pious anxiety soon prompted them to renew their visit, but Mrs. Hedden told them that they could not be admitted, and that she thought the attempt useless, for if God did not change his mind, she was sure no human power could."¹¹⁵

Even his medical attendant. Dr. Mauley, must needs so far forget his office as to join in these cold-blooded attempts to torture the mighty mind which it was vainly hoped physical decay had reduced to the miserable level of his tormentors. "The day before he died, Dr.

¹¹³ Rickman, p. 186.

¹¹⁴ Sherwin, p. 222.

¹¹⁵ Sherwin, p. 230.

Manley says he purposely paid him a very late visit with view to ascertain the true state of his mind. After asking him several questions about his belief, without receiving any answer, he endeavored to qualify the subject by saying—"Do you wish to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" He answered, 'I have no wish to believe on the subject.'¹¹⁶ These, Dr. Manley believes, were the last words he uttered. On the 8th of June, 1809, about nine in the morning, "placidly and almost without a struggle,"¹¹⁷ died Thomas Paine, aged seventy-two years and five months; preserving to the last his intellectual power—his hostility to the Christian faith.

On the day after his decease, his body was removed, attended by seven persons, to New Rochelle, where he was interred upon his own farm. A stone was placed at the head of his grave,¹¹⁸ according to the direction in his will, bearing the following inscription:—

THOMAS PAINE,
Author of *Common Sense*.
Died June 8th, 1809, aged 72 years and 5 months.

Few writers have contributed so much as Paine has, toward the enfranchisement of man from the hereditary thralldom. Let the immediate effects of *Common Sense*, now matter of history; let the wide and ever-increasing circulation of the *Rights of Man*, the continual reference thereto, attest the worth of his political works. Of his theological, let priestcraft speak, and own that scarcely any deadlier, and, assuredly, no directer, blow than the *Age of Reason*, has been aimed against the stability of the Cross. And of the Man what shall we say? He seems to have been especially what Cobbett styles him, "a true Englishman;" a fine specimen of the national character: clear-headed, honest in the fullest meaning of the word, active, energetic, and persevering, sturdy, and inflexible, but generous with "naturally warm

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 223; see also Vale, and Cheetham.

¹¹⁷ Cheetham, &c.

¹¹⁸ The grave has since been allowed to go to decay. Cobbett, resenting the indifference of the Americans, exhumed the bones of Paine, and took them to England. They are still, we believe, in England, and above ground. A handsome monument is now erected near the place where his bones should be, at New Rochelle.

feelings, which could ill-brook any slight."¹¹⁹ A truer Englishman than Cobbett, for Paine was consistent; he never swerved: there was no fickleness in him, nor the appearance of turning. The real John-Bull spirit of antagonism was in him: but of that his writings are themselves the best defence. What did he assail that did not deserve assault? If his innate hatred of wrong was at times too severely expressed, if his sarcasms were bitter, and his denunciations fierce, let his earnestness excuse him. No politic, mere self-loving prize-fighter was he; but combatted for principles: and if, in the conflict for more than life, he dealt some awkward blows, there was no ungenerous purpose; the fault was in the position of his adversary. His irritability of temperament, and some roughness of demeanor when offended (and little opportunity for annoyance did his dastardly enemies forego,) the obstinacy into which his inflexibility sometimes rankly grew, were more than redeemed by his uniform benevolence. He was gentlemanly at the core, nor ever, save when grossly insulted, threw off the rind of gentlemanly manners. He only took off his coat when compelled to fight it out. But he could forgive and assist his declared foe, though he refused to pardon the treachery of a "friend." In his worst rudeness was a well-meaning sincerity, rendering it far more tolerable than that formal politeness, but too commonly a masking-word for hypocrisy, not a whit more careful of offence-giving than the rough frankness so fashionably condemned. He was religious! a steady Theist, not without faith in "things hoped for," but not evidenced: witness his *Age of Reason*, his "Thoughts on a future state," and his directions in his last will, that his adopted children be instructed "in their duty to God." "He was always charitable to the poor beyond his means."¹²⁰ Few public characters would pass unscathed through the ordeal to which suspicious tyranny and the frenzy of fanaticism have subjected him. Malice has here done its worst; working like Sisyphus, but not eternally. History holds not many names of such integrity. No insufficient occasion might he have pleaded for the self-esteem, the "tincture of vanity" (by no means the worst of human failings) which is manifest in his writings. How should he be blind to his own greatness, whose living monument filled a thousand

¹¹⁹ Rickman.

¹²⁰ Letter from Joel Barlow to Cheetham.

square miles? What Mirabeau said of Robespierre, might be said of him: "This man believes all he says." And let it not be forgotten that Paine was one of the People, of the hand-laboring class, of the men without political existence, with whom, in the day of his high advancement, he never ceased to sympathize; that, save a little grammar-school ploughing, he was self-taught. Let the Serf bear this in mind; and let the Nobly-born pay homage to this "Son of the lower orders"—the outlawed Stay-maker.

"Paine was about five feet ten inches high, and rather athletic; he was broad-shouldered, and latterly stooped a little. His eye was full, brilliant, and singularly piercing; it had in it the 'muse of fire.' In his dress and person he was generally very cleanly, though careless, and wore his hair queued, with side curls, and powdered, like a gentleman of the old French school.

"His manners were easy and gracious, his knowledge was universal; among friends his conversation had every fascination that anecdote, novelty and truth could give it. In mixed company and among strangers he said little, and was no public speaker."¹²¹ The power of his memory was so great that he could repeat at will any passage from any of his writings. The only book that he had studied was the Bible, with every part of which he was familiar.

And now, most discriminating reader, what wilt thou say of Paine? "Wilt thou address him—"Thou art a troubler of privileged orders; we will tar and feather thee: the nobles abhor thee, and kings think thee mad!" or wilt thou rather put on thy spectacles, study his physiognomy, purchase his portrait, hang it over thy chimney-piece, and, pointing to it, say—"This is no common man. This is THE POOR MAN'S FRIEND.' "

¹²¹ Rickman.

Chapter VII. The Slanderers.

WE dedicate this chapter to the envious and the malignant; to the depreciator and the libeller; to the snarling, ill-natured critic and the censorious "Christian." We need not answer the calumnious "lives" of "Oldys" and Cheetham. They carry abundant proof of their own falsity. The poisonous lie may be its own antidote. But we desire to disabuse the public mind of certain slanders still palmed upon its uninquiring credulity. Paine was the enemy of abuses: therefore has he been reviled. Of what is he accused? Of *coarseness*—*intemperance*—*licentiousness*—and *recantation* of his published religious opinions.

The charge of coarseness includes also "want of cleanliness and absence of gentlemanly manners." You may know a man by his companions. Paine was intimate with Franklin;¹²² was the welcome guest of Washington and his officers during the American war.¹²³ In London he visited, and was visited by Priestley, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Burke, Home Tooke, and other leading men of the liberal party:¹²⁴ dined at the Duke of Portland's;¹²⁵ in France, with Dr. Moore and the Earl of Lauderdale, with Bonaparte and his generals;¹²⁶ enjoyed the friendship of La Fayette; associated occasionally with Volney, Condorcet, &c., &c.;¹²⁷ and after his imprisonment resided a year and a half with Monroe, the American ambassador, afterwards president of the United States. Redhead Yorke attests his "affability,"¹²⁸ and Col. Burr, who knew him after his return to America, thus replied to a query concerning the alleged vulgarity, intemperance, and want of cleanliness—"Sir, he dined at my table:"¹²⁹ and added—"I always considered Mr. Paine a gentleman, a pleasant companion, and a good-natured and intelligent man; decid-

¹²² Dr. Rush's Letters to Cheetham, &c., &c.

¹²³ Ibid..

¹²⁴ Rickman.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Letter from Paris in 1802.

¹²⁹ The inquirer was Mr. Vale of New York, editor of the *Beacon*. See No. 30 of the *Beacon*, May, 1837.

edly temperate, with a proper regard to his personal appearance, whenever I saw him." Similar testimonials are given by all who were personally acquainted with him.

For his *intemperance*—drunkenness, if it please the world's charity—much might be said in extenuation, even were it a proved thing. Small marvel were it, nor meriting the extreme of censure, if a man, exiled and almost universally shunned, homeless, wifeless, and childless, and latterly nearly friendless, should attempt even such escape from the iron discipline of toil and excessive pain, the sorrow of disappointment, and grey-haired, unaccustomed solitude. What if he did indulge more freely than is consistent with the temperate morality of those who know not how to pity him? May not the sorrow-goaded sleep even for a moment? What if the habit had grown upon him (as all habits will grow,) until he became a confirmed drunkard? Even this might only prove that he was not so hard-headed as some of the uncondemned, of the condemners. In his days it was deemed gentlemanly, hospitable, sociable, to drink deeply. Is Charles James Fox branded as a drunkard? Is Sheridan? Do the church-and-state worshippers who would stigmatize Paine, write the name of beast on the front of George the Fourth? What "vision of judgment" had they for him? Verily, the soul of that monstrous tun, the "halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack" anointed with sacramental oil, sleeps sweetly in Abraham's bosom, assoiled of all its foulness. He was indeed a drunkard: lying History cannot deny that. But no drunkard was Paine. Col. Burr's statement is before us:—He was "decidedly temperate." His friend Rickman, too, shall speak for him, "nothing extenuate." "During his residence with me in London, in and about the year 1792, and in the course of his life previous to that time, he was not in the habit of drinking to excess; he was clean in his person, and in his manners polite and engaging; and ten years after this, when I was with him in France, he did not drink spirits, and wine he took moderately; he even objected to any spirits being laid in as a part of his sea stock, observing to me, that though sometimes, borne down by public and private affliction, he had been driven to excesses in Paris, the cause and effect would cease together, and that in America he should live as he liked, and as he

ought to live."¹³⁰ So did he live: witness the following, published by Mr. Vale, in New York, in July, 1837:—"Mr. John Fellows, who knew Mr. Paine during the whole period of his residence in this country, thus speaks of his habits. He was cleanly in his person, but careless or easy in his dress. He lived plainly, but took a glass of sweetened rum and water after dinner, and another after supper: he limited not only himself, but his friends. Mr. Fellows never saw him drunk during the six months he boarded in the same house with him; but he was once a little excited with liquor, and then he had been to dinner with an Irish friend, remarkable for his hospitality, which at that period sanctioned excess. We could repeat here a long list of respectable names, who knew Mr. Paine socially, or were in the frequent habit of seeing him, who confirm this testimony. But it will be said. Did not Cheetham refer to living witnesses? Yes, he did—he referred to Mr. Jarvis; and tells anecdotes in relation to Mr. Paine's filthy habits, and in support of his excesses; and *Mr. Jarvis tells us that Cheetham lied*, and we are authorized to say so. *Carver*¹³¹ has marked his copy of the life by Cheetham with similar expressions throughout the margin: and this copy we have had the use of, by favor of Mr. Parkins, ex-sheriff of London, whose property it has become.—But there are persons who say they knew Mr. Paine, and say that he was drunken. Mr. Daniel Ward, of Gold Street, near Frankfort, who lived at Rochelle, has mentioned the son of a man who lived on Paine's farm, one Mr. Purdy, who has since kept a school, and who is a religious man; this individual told Mr. Ward, that Paine did get drunk every evening: in the same conversation, however, he told Mr. Ward, that he was in the habit of generally reading manuscript to Mr. Paine of an evening, thus disproving his drunken situation: but Mr. Ward adds, (which is of more consequence) that he and others knew Purdy to be subject to mis-statements, notwithstanding his religious character."¹³² Mr. Holden, with whom I am well acquainted," says Mr. Clark, writing to Sherwin, "informs me that he lived close to Mr. Paine for several months, and never saw him intoxicated; in fact, to use his own expression, 'It

¹³⁰ Richman, p. 11-12.

¹³¹ See his name in the accusation of Paine's licentiousness.

¹³² Beacon, No. 35.

was a lie to say he is a drunkard.' Dr. Manley says, 'While I attended him, he never was inebriated.' "¹³³ Here are references to reliable witnesses; yet more, if necessary, could give their evidence in his favor. But enough, perhaps more than enough, has been already adduced to refute this "weak invention of the enemy," long industriously propagated in the pages of "Religious Tracts," for the promotion of Christian truth and charity. Pass we to the next count in the indictment.

The charge of licentiousness alludes solely to an accusation illicit intercourse with Madame Bonneville; and is unsupported by any evidence; resting on the same authority that originated the foregoing calumnies, the authority of Mr. Carver, of New York, with whom Paine at one time boarded, and who, in consequence of a miserable money-quarrel, wrote a hasty and scurrilous letter to Paine, wherein he indulged in several gross aspersions, which he afterwards was ashamed of and explained away. This letter was invidiously laid hold of by Cheetham, and amplified in his "Life." Madame Bonneville prosecuted Cheetham for the libel, and obtained damages. The following gives some insight into Cheetham's character:—

October 27, 1807.

" Mr. Cheetham:

"Unless you make a public apology for the abuse and falsehood in your paper of Tuesday, October 27, respecting me, I will prosecute you for lying.

"It is by your talent for abuse and falsehood, that you have brought so many prosecutions on your back. You cannot even state truth without running it to falsehood.

"Thomas Paine."

Cheetham was in the first instance an admirer of Paine, and was present at the dinner given to him in New York. Afterwards he became a rancorous opponent, and was strongly suspected of being bought by Pitt. Paine exposed his baseness; and hence the libeller's hatred. Cheetham could not bring the shadow of evidence in support of his assertions: but were the libel true, it is no proof of licentiousness. By what law, human or divine, was Paine bound to celibacy? That,

¹³³ Sherwin, p. 226.

whatever the nature of his intimacy with Madame Bonneville, the public had nothing to do with it, is shown by the conduct of the husband. Bonneville and his wife lived together after the libel, in the very house in which Paine had boarded. In all such cases the world's interference (and begging the world's pardon, however clean-handed it may be, it is not pure-hearted enough to throw stones, even at those *taken in adultery*) public prosecution, or persecution, is as indecent as it is useless and mischievous. Bonneville, his wife, and his two sons, are all included in Paine's will.

It remains for us to notice the weakest "invention"—the fanatics' lie, that on his death-bed Paine renounced his published opinions of Christianity. It is difficult to discover what could be gained for truth by the clearest proof of such a recantation. Is the utterance of a feverish fear, when a man's mind is enfeebled by disease and confused by pain, to be more regarded than the calm and healthful voice of undisturbed and ripe reflection? or, is it imagined that the dying sees through the grave, and, looking in the face of eternity, dares not lie. What then? How seldom shall we be able to distinguish the inspirations of the far-world vision from the ravings of delirium. An unstable religion that, which needs so often appeal to the disordered and impressible imaginations of diseased men whose constancy has been worn out by the repeated droppings of priestly venom. It is time this death-bed cant should be exploded. The blasphemous absurdity (if anything is blasphemous) of sinners, terrified into a false and foolish repentance, carried by angels from the deserved gallows to undesired glory, the outcasts of human justice gemming the diadem of Mercy—even this is less offensive than the hateful exultation of lying priests, and sectarians possessed by piety, over the supposed and prayed-for agonies of high-souled men who never flinched or feared, who loved truth better than "belief", inquiry more than authority, and good works rather than damning and unholy words. A recent work, highly spoken of by the press (the *Diary of a Physician*,) furnishes us with the following piece of ludicrous solemnity. A dying student wildly exclaims to his medical attendant—"Doctor, keep them off!" to which the pious practitioner appends this interesting note:—"I once before heard these strange words fall from the lips of a dying patient, a lady. To me they suggest very unpleasant, I may say, fearful thoughts—What is to be kept off?" What, indeed? Had the ex-

claimer been in sound health, the physician would have suggested a strait waistcoat; but in the frenzy of a pain-enfeebled mind he beheld the Glorious Majesty of Superstition's God, the Devil. But Paine gave no opportunity for the reveries of the faithful. He retained his intellectual faculties to the last. His eye was not dim, nor the natural force of his mind abated. In the midst of keen bodily pangs, and heartless annoyance, his spirit was unshaken. "He died, as he lived, an enemy to the Christian Religion," placidly, and unhaunted by unnatural apprehensions of a priest-ordered eternity. Even Cheetham (whose word may be taken against himself, if for nothing else) is compelled to acknowledge this. Paine was too clear-headed, and too clear-hearted withal, to dread damnation. He had thought himself dying, in his captivity, in the Luxembourg; and felt then as little inclined to recantation. "It was then," he says, "that I remembered with satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely, on having written the former part of the *Age of Reason*. I had then but little expectation of surviving. I know, therefore, by experience, the conscientious trial of my principles."¹³⁴

Mr. Bond, an English surgeon of the suite of General O'Hara, was at that time in the Luxembourg. Let us hear him. "Mr. Paine, while hourly expecting to die, read to me parts of his *Age of Reason*; and every night when I left him to be separately locked up, and expected not to see him alive in the morning, he always expressed his firm belief in the principles of that book, and begged I would tell the world such were his dying opinions."¹³⁵ Such *were* his dying opinions. Dr. Manley, his intimate friends—Mr. Pelton and Mr. Fellows, Mr. Jarvis—with whom he lived, and every other intimate, without exception, testify to his adherence to his published faith.¹³⁶ Yet further corroboration has just reached us from New York. Mr. Vale says—"We have just returned from Boston. One object of our visit to that city, was to see a Mr. Amasa Woodsworth, an engineer, now retired in a handsome cottage and garden at East Cambridge, Boston. This gentleman owned the house rented by Mrs. Bonneville for Mr. Paine at his death; while he lived next door. As an act of kindness,

¹³⁴ Preface to the second part of the *Age of Reason*.

¹³⁵ Rickman. p. 194.

¹³⁶ No. 34 of the *Beacon*, June, 1837.

Mr. Woodsworth visited Mr. Paine every day for six weeks before his death; he frequently sat up with him, and did so on the two last nights of his life. He was present when Dr. Manley asked Mr. Paine 'if he wished to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God,' and he describes Mr. Paine's answer as animated. He says, that lying on his back, he used some action, and with much emphasis replied, 'I have no wish to believe on that subject.' He lived a short time after this, but was not known to speak; for he died tranquilly. He accounts for the insinuating style of Dr. Mauley's letter, by stating, that that gentleman just after its publication joined a church. He informs us that he has openly reprov'd the Doctor for the falsity contained in the spirit of that letter, boldly declaring before Dr. Manley, who is yet living, that nothing which he saw justified his (the Doctor's) insinuations.¹³⁷

Mr. Woodsworth assures us, that he neither heard nor saw anything to justify the belief of any mental change in the opinions of Mr. Paine previous to his death: but that being very ill, and in pain, chiefly arising from the skin being removed in some parts, by long lying, he was generally too uneasy to enjoy conversation on abstract subjects. This, then, is the best evidence that can be procured on this subject; and we publish it while the contravening parties are yet alive, and with the authority of Mr. Woodsworth."¹³⁸

Needs there more satisfactory refutation? Let the following relation, exemplifying the usual method in which "death-bed confessions" are fabricated, supply the place of further argument. It is an answer, by William Cobbett, to a recantation-story that was widely distributed by a "Religious Tract Society," and copied into most of the newspapers.

"I happen to know the origin of this story; and I possess the real, original document, whence have proceeded the divers editions of the falsehood, of the very invention of which I was, perhaps, myself, the innocent cause.

"About two years ago, I, being then on Long Island, published my intention of writing an account of the life, labors, and death of Paine.

¹³⁷ The Doctor thought, "that had Mr. Paine not been a conspicuous character, it is likely he would have changed his opinions." Letter from Mr. Clarke to Sherwin.

¹³⁸ *New York Beacon*, June 15, 1839.

Soon after this, a Quaker at New York, named Charles Collins, made many applications for an interview with me, which, at last, he obtained. I found that his object was to persuade me, that Paine had recanted. I laughed at him, and sent him away. But, he returned again and again to the charge. He wanted me to promise, that I would say, 'that it was said,' that Paine recanted. 'No,' said I; 'but, I will say, that you say it, and that you tell a lie, unless you prove the truth of what you say; and, if you do that, I shall gladly insert the fact.' This posed 'friend Charley,' whom I suspected to be a most consummate hypocrite. He had a sodden face, a simper, and manoeuvred his features, precisely like the most perfidious wretch that I have ever known or read or heard of. He was precisely the reverse of my honest, open and sincere Quaker friends, the Pauls of Pennsylvania. Friend Charley plied me with remonstrances and reasonings; but I always answered him—'Give me proof, name persons, state times, state precise words; or I denounce you as a liar.' Thus put to his trumps, friend Charley resorted to the aid of a person of his own stamp; and, at last he brought me a paper, containing matter, of which the above statement of Mr. Burke's is a garbled edition! This paper, very cautiously and craftily drawn up, contained only the initials of names. This would not do. I made him, at last, put down the full name and address of the *informer*, 'Mary Hinsdale, No. 10 Anthony Street, New York.' I got this from friend Charley, some time about June last; and had no opportunity of visiting the party till late in October, just before I sailed.

"The informer was a Quaker woman, who, at the time of Mr. Paine's last illness, was a servant in the family of Mr. Willet Hicks, an eminent merchant, a man of excellent character, a Quaker, and even, I believe, a Quaker preacher. Mr. Hicks, a kind and liberal and rich man, visited Mr. Paine in his illness, and, from his house, which was near that of Mr. Paine, little nice things (as is the practice in America) were sometimes sent to him; of which this servant, friend Mary, was the bearer: and this was the way in which the lying cant got into the room of Mr. Paine.

"To 'friend Mary,' therefore, I went, on the 26th of October last, with friend Charley's paper in my pocket. I found her in a lodging in a back room up one pair of stairs. I knew that I had no common cunning to set my wit against. I began with all the art I was master of. I

had got a prodigiously broad-brimmed hat on; I patted a little child that she had sitting beside her; I called her friend; and played all the tricks of an undisciplined wheedler. But, I was compelled to come quickly to business. She asked, 'What's thy name, friend?' and, the moment I said William Cobbett, up went her mouth as tight as a purse! Sack-making appeared to be her occupation; and that I might not extract through her eyes that which she was resolved I should not get out of her mouth, she went and took up a sack, and began to sew; and not another look or glance could I get from her.

"However, I took out my paper, read it, and, stopping at several points, asked her if it was true. Talk of the Jesuits, indeed! The whole tribe of Loyola, who have shaken so many kingdoms to their base, never possessed a millionth part of the cunning of this drab-colored little woman, whose face simplicity and innocence seemed to have chosen as the place of their triumph. She shuffled; she evaded; she equivocated; she warded off; she affected not to understand me, not to understand the paper, not to remember; and all this with so much seeming simplicity and single-heartedness, and in a voice so mild, so soft, and so sweet, that, if the Devil had been sitting where I was, he would certainly have jumped up and hugged her to his bosom!

"The result was: that it was *so long ago* that she could not speak positively to any part of the matter; that she would not say that any part of the paper was true; that she had never seen the paper; and, that she had never given 'friend Charley,' (for so she called him) authority to say anything about the matter in her name, I pushed her closely upon the subject of the 'unhappy French female';¹³⁹ asked her whether she should know her again:—'Oh, no! friend: I tell thee that I have no recollection of any person or thing that I saw at Thomas Paine's house.' The truth is, that the cunning little thing knew that the French lady was at hand; and that detection was easy, if she had said that she should know her upon sight!

I had now nothing to do but to bring friend Charley's nose to the grindstone. But Charley, who is a grocer, living in Cherry Street, near Pearl Street, though so pious a man, and, doubtless, in great haste to get to everlasting bliss, had *moved out of the city for fear of the fever* not liking, apparently, to go off to the next world in a yel-

¹³⁹ Madame Bonneville.

low skin. And thus he escaped me, who sailed from New York in four days afterwards: or, Charley should have found that there was something else, on this side the grave, pretty nearly as troublesome and as dreadful as the yellow fever.

"This is, I think, a pretty good instance of the lengths to which hypocrisy will go. The whole, as far as relates to recantation and to the "unhappy French femal" is a lie, from the beginning to the end. Mr. Paine declares, in his last will, that he retains all his publicly expressed opinions as to religion. His executors, and many other gentlemen of undoubted veracity, had the same declaration from his dying lips. Mr. Willet Hicks visited him to nearly the last. This gentleman says, that there was no change of opinions intimated to him: and, will any man believe, that Paine would have withheld from Mr. Hicks, that which he was so forward to communicate to Mr. Hicks' servant-girl?"¹⁴⁰

The sequel of the story is worth recording.

"For some time a division has existed among the Society of Friends, respecting some opinions advanced by Elias Hicks, one of their principal preachers. Among those who adopted and openly maintained his views, was a young woman, lately deceased, named Mary Lockwood, possessing talents and education which qualified her to become a teacher of the children of Friends. In this dispute, Mary Hinsdale, the calumniator of Paine, avowed herself an opponent of Elias Hicks. Finding of late that her party were losing ground, and recollecting the success of her former scheme to destroy the reputation of Paine, she appears to have calculated on a similar result by pursuing the same course as to Mary Lockwood. Accordingly, on the decease of that young woman, she openly declared, that, on her death-bed, she had recanted her former opinions, and expressed the deepest penitence for the countenance she had given to Elias Hicks, whom she reprobated as an enemy to truth, and an artful deceiver.

"The reverse of these representations as to Mary Lockwood, being perfectly known to many of the Friends, it was considered necessary that the matter should be investigated; when evidence was brought forward which clearly convicted Mary Hinsdale of deliberate false-

¹⁴⁰ Republican, February 13th, 1824, vol. ix, p. 221, &c.

hood, and that all she had said respecting the recantation of Mary Lockwood, was a wicked fabrication."—¹⁴¹

Paine died, as he lived, an enemy to the "established" religion. Follower of the establishment! what hast thou to do with that? Art thou justified in violently assailing either the man or his works? Let a Christian answer; even the worthy Gilbert Wakefield, who wrote against the *Age of Reason* but wrote thus of public prosecutions:—¹⁴²

"What right, I wish to be informed, can one man claim, distinct from power and tyranny, and usurpation, to dictate creeds, and to prescribe sentiments, for another? Let us put an extreme case upon this question, which will abundantly elucidate, and indubitably decide the controversy: I mean the publication of Paine's *Age of Reason*,

"I would not forcibly suppress this book; much less would I punish, by fine or imprisonment, from any possible consideration, the publisher or author of these pages.

"*Prudential motives* would prevent me: because such interdiction serves only to excite the restless curiosity of mankind; and the restraints of law give fresh vigor to circulation.

"*Motives of Philosophy* would prevent me: because inquiry and discussion are hereby provoked; and sparks of truth, which would otherwise have been concealed for ever, are elicited by the collision of debate; to the unspeakable emolument and illumination of mankind, in the promotion of mutual forbearance and esteem, in the furtherance of valuable knowledge, and in the consequent propagation of all happiness and virtue. Truth can never suffer from argument and inquiry; but may be essentially injured by the tyrannous interference of her pretended advocates."

"*Motives of Justice* would deter me. Why should I refuse another that privilege of thinking and writing, which I claim and exercise myself?

"*Motives of Humanity* would deter me. I should think with horror on the punishment of any man for his belief, in which he has no discretionary power, but is necessarily swayed by the controlling despotism of arguments and reasons; and at what licence or patent shop

¹⁴¹ New York Correspondent; Lion, August first. 1828. vol. ii p. 141.

¹⁴² Letter from Gilbert Wakefield to Sir John Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon.

shall I purchase a gag to silence him? Or, what shall hinder him from forming the same unfavorable judgment of my opinions, and pursuing in his turn the same measures of intimidation and coercion with myself?

"Lastly, *Motives of Religion* would deter me from molesting any writer for the publication of his sentiments."

"Who, then, art Thou, vain dust and ashes! by whatever name thou art called, whether a King, a Bishop, a Church, or a State, a Parliament, or any thing else, that obtrudest thine insignificance between the soul of man and its Maker? MIND THINE OWN CONCERNS. IF HE BELIEVES NOT AS THOU BELIEVEST, IT IS A PROOF THAT THOU BELIEVEST NOT AS HE BELIEVETH, AND THERE IS NO EARTHLY POWER CAN DETERMINE BETWEEN YOU."

Appendix.

IN Moore's *Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, fifth son of the Duke of Leinster, and nephew to the Duke of Richmond; in a letter from Fitzgerald to his mother, dated "Paris, October 30th, 1792, the following passage occurs, throwing light on the high character of Paine:—

"I lodge with my friend Paine,—we breakfast, dine, and sup together. The more I see his interior, the more I like and respect him. I cannot express how kind he is to me; there is a simplicity of manner, a goodness of heart, and a strength of mind in him, that I never knew a man before possess."

Dr. Walker was a great enemy to slavery under all its forms. He, one day, inquired of Thomas Paine how it was to be accounted for, that he had not taken up the pen to advocate the cause of the blacks. The answer offers as great a testimony to his judgment, as it does honor to his feelings. "An unfitter person," said he "for such a work could hardly be found. The cause would have suffered in my hands. I could not have treated it with any chance of success; for I could never think of their condition but with feelings of indignation."

"The counsel, that Thomas Paine had the courage to offer, in the French National Convention, on attempting to save the life of Louis the XVIth, must be approved and admired by every liberal mind. He proposed that the fallen king should be sent to the United States, where he would find many friends, not forgetful of the aid which he had rendered them in days of need, when striving to shake off the British yoke. On this dreadful occasion, Lord Edward Fitzgerald was his interpreter."—Dr. Epps' *Life of Dr. Walker*, pp. 140, 141.

[The following extract is taken from a private letter of Mr. Paine's, dated July 31st, 1805, and addressed to Mr. John Fellows, of New York. It is quoted mainly to show the plain and quiet manner in which Mr. Paine lived; and to destroy the attempts so often made by the self-styled and exclusively religious people, that he was an intemperate man. A copy of the entire letter is in the hands of the publisher. It was given by Mr. Fellows to Mr. William Clark, of London.]

"I am master of an empty house, or nearly so. I have six chairs and a table, a straw bed, a feather bed, and a bag of straw for Thomas, a tea kettle, an iron pot, an iron baking pan, a frying pan, a gridiron, cups, saucers, plates and dishes, knives and forks, two candlesticks and a pair of snuffers.

"I have a fine pair of oxen and an ox-cart, a good horse, a chaise, and a one horse-cart; a cow, and a sow and nine pigs. When you come you must take such fare as you meet with, for I live upon tea, milk, fruit, pies, plain dumplings, and a piece of meat when I get it; but I live with that retirement and quiet that suits me.

"If you can make yourself up a straw bed, lean let you have blankets, and you will have no occasion to go over to the tavern to sleep.

"Yours in friendship,

"Thomas Paine."