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Richard Carlile**

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LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE

WRITTEN PURPOSELY TO BIND WITH HIS WRITINGS

By Richard Carlile

SECOND EDITION.

1821.

LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE

The present Memoir is not written as a thing altogether necessary, or what was much wanted, but because it is usual and fitting in all collections of the writings of the same Author to accompany them with a brief account of his life; so that the reader might at the same time be furnished with a key to the Author's mind, principles, and works, as the best general preface. On such an occasion it does not become the Compiler to seek after the adulation of friends, or the slander of enemies; it is equally unnecessary to please or perplex the reader with either; for when an author has passed the bar of nature, it behoves us not to listen to any tales about what he was, or what he did, but to form our judgments of the utility or non-utility of his life, by the writings he has left behind him. Our business is with the spirit or immortal part of the man. If his writings be calculated to render him immortal, we have nothing to do with the body that is earthly and corruptible, and which passes away into the common mass of regenerating matter. Whilst the man is living, we are justified in prying into his actions to see whether his example corresponds with his precept, but when dead, his writings must stand or fall by the test of reason and its influence on public opinion. The excess of

admiration and vituperation has gone forth against the name and memory of the Author of "Rights of Man," and "Age of Reason," but it shall be the endeavour of the present Compiler to steer clear of both, and to draw from the reader an acknowledgement that here the Life and Character of Paine is fairly stated, and that here the enquirer after truth may find that which he most desires—an unvarnished statement.

Thomas Paine was born at Thetford, in the county of Norfolk, in England, on the 29th of January, 1737. He received such education as the town could afford him, until he was thirteen years of age, when his father, who was a staymaker, took him upon the shop-board. Before his twentieth year, he set out for London to work as a journeyman, and from London to the coast of Kent. Here he became inflamed with the desire of a trip to sea, and he accordingly served in two privateers, but was prevailed upon by the affectionate remonstrances of his father, who had been bred a Quaker, to relinquish the sea-faring life. He then set up as a master stay maker at Sandwich, in the county of Kent, when he was about twenty-three years of age. It appears that he had a thorough distaste for this trade, and having married the daughter of an exciseman, he soon began to turn his attention to that office. Having qualified himself he soon got appointed, but from some unknown cause his commission scarcely exceeded a year. He then filled the office of an usher at two different schools in the suburbs of London, and by his assiduous application to study, and by his regular attendance at certain astronomical and mathematical lectures in London, he became a proficient in those sciences, and from this moment his mind, which was correct and sound, began to expand, and here that lustre began to sparkle, which subsequently burst into a blaze, and gave light both to America and Europe.

He again obtained an appointment in the Excise, and was stationed at Lewes, in Sussex, and in this town the first known production of his pen was printed and published. He had displayed considerable ability in two or three poetical compositions, and his fame beginning to spread in this neighbourhood, he was selected by the whole 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 and satisfactory manner, and although this incident drew forth his first essay at prose composition, it would have done honour to the first literary character in the country; and it did not fail to obtain for Mr. Paine 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, in an endeavour 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 shews 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 and encouraging him to make a respectable appearance.

This "Case of the Officers of Excise" procured Mr. Paine an introduction to Oliver Goldsmith, with whom he continued on terms of intimacy during his stay in England. His English poetical productions consisted of "The Death of Wolfe," a song; and the humorous narrative, about "The Three Justices and Farmer Short's Dog." At least, these two pieces are all that we now have in print. I have concisely stated Mr. Paine's advance to manhood and fame considering the act but infantile in being elaborate upon the infancy and youth of a public character who displays nothing extraordinary until he reaches manhood. My object here is not to make a volume, but to compress all that is desirable to be known of the Author, in as small a compass as possible. Mr. Paine was twice married, but obtained no children: his first wife he enjoyed but a short time, and his second he never enjoyed at all, as they never cohabited, and before Mr. Paine left England they separated by mutual consent, and by articles of agreement. Mr. Paine often said, that he found sufficient cause for this curious incident, but he never divulged the particulars to any person, and, when pressed to the point, he would say that it was nobody's business but his own.

In the autumn of 1774, being then out of the Excise, he 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. Mr. Paine 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 so as to be republished, but such as we have are extremely beautiful, and compel us to admit, that his literary productions are as admirable for style, as his political and theological are for principle.

From his connection with the leading characters at Philadelphia, Mr. Paine immediately took a part in the politics of the Colonies, and being a staunch friend to the general freedom and happiness of the human race, he was the first to advise the Americans to assert their independence. This he did in his famous pamphlet, intitled "Common Sense," which for its consequences and rapid effect was the most important production that ever issued from the press. This pamphlet appeared at the commencement of the year 1776, and it electrified the minds of the oppressed Americans. They had not ventured to harbour 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 Americans 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.

On the 4th of July, in the same year, the independence of the United States was declared, and Paine had then become so much an object of esteem, that he joined the army, and was with it a considerable time. He was the common favourite of all the officers, and every other liberal-minded man, that advocated the

independence of his country, and preferred liberty to slavery. It does not appear that Paine held any rank in the army, but merely assisted with his advice and presence as a private individual. Whilst with the army, he began, in December of the same year, to publish his papers intitled "The Crisis." These came out as small pamphlets and appeared in the newspapers, they were written occasionally, as circumstances required. The chief object of these seems to have been to encourage the Americans, to stimulate them to exertion in support and defence of their independence, and to rouse their spirits after any little disaster or defeat. Those papers, which also bore the signature of Common Sense, were continued every three or four months until the struggle was over.

In the year 1777, Mr. Paine was called away from the army by an unexpected appointment to fill the office of Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs. In this office, as all foreign correspondence passed through his hands, he obtained an insight into the mode of transacting business in the different Courts of Europe, and imbibed much important information. He did not continue in it above two years, and the circumstance of his resignation seems to have been much to his honour as an honest man. It was in consequence of some peculation discovered to have been committed by one Silas Deane who had been a commissioner from the United States to some part of Europe. The discovery was made by Mr. Paine, and he immediately published it in the papers, which gave offence to certain members of the Congress, and in consequence of some threat of Silas Deane, the Congress shewed a disposition to censure Mr. Paine without giving him a hearing, who immediately protested against such a proceeding, and resigned his situation. However, he 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 the 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 sufficiently 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 was necessary on their part to annihilate in one campaign the forces of Britain, and put a stop to the war. It is evident, and admitted on all sides, that these writings of Mr. Paine became the main spring of action in procuring independence to the United States.

Notwithstanding the little disagreement he had with the Congress, it was ready at the close of the war to acknowledge his services by a grant of three thousand dollars, and he also obtained from the State of New York, the confiscated estate of some slavish lory and royalist, situate at New Rochelle. This estate contained three hundred acres of highly cultivated land, and a large and substantial stone built house. The State of Pennsylvania, in which he first published "Common Sense" and "The Crisis," presented him with £500 sterling; and the State of Virginia had come to an agreement for a liberal grant, but in consequence of Mr. Paine's interference and resistance to some claim of territory made by that State, in his pamphlet, intitled "Public Good," he lost this grant by a majority of one vote. This pamphlet is worthy of reading, but for this single circumstance, and nothing can more strongly argue the genuine patriotism and real disinterestedness of the man, 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.

It was in the year 1779, that Mr. Paine resigned his office as Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, and in the year 1781, he was, in conjunction with a Colonel Laurens, dispatched to France to try to obtain a loan from that government. They succeeded in their object, and returned to America 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 vigour to the cause of the Americans, that they shortly afterwards brought the Marquis Cornwallis to a capitulation. 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.

In a number of the Crisis, Mr. Paine says, it was the cause of independence to the United States, that made him an author; by this it has been argued, that he could not have written "The Case of the Officers of Excise" before going to America, but this I consider to be easy of explanation. As the latter pamphlet was published by the subscriptions of the officers of excise, and as it was a mere statement of their case, drawn up at their request and suggestion, Mr. Paine might hardly consider himself, intitled to the name of author for such a production which had but a momentary and partial object. He might have considered himself as the mere amanueusis of the body of excisemen, and, to have done nothing more than state their complaint and sentiments. It does not appear that the pamphlet was printed for sale, or that the writer ever had, or thought to have, any emolument from it. It must have been in this light that Mr. Paine defined the character of an Author on the account of that pamphlet, for no man need be ashamed to father it either for principle or style. In the same manner might be considered his song "On the Death of General Wolfe," his "Reflections on the Death of Lord Clive," and several other essays and articles that appeared in the Pennsylvania Magazine, and the different newspapers of America, all of which had obtained celebrity as something superior to the general rank of literature that had appeared in the Colonies, and yet even on this ground he also relinquished the title of an author. To be sure, a man who writes a letter to his relatives or friends is an author, but Mr. Paine thought the word of more import, and did not call himself an author until he saw the benefits he had conferred on his fellow-citizens and mankind at large, by his well-timed "Common Sense" and "Crisis."

During the struggle for independence, the Abbe Raynal, a French author, had written and published what he called a History of the Revolution, or Reflections on that History, in which he had made some erroneous statements, probably guided by the errors, wilful or accidental, in the European newspapers. Mr. Paine answered the Abbe in a letter, and pointed out all his misstatements, with a hope of correcting the future historian. 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 drawn of Prejudice in this letter. It will be sure to arrest the reader's attention, therefore I will not mar it by an extract. Mr. Paine never deviated from the path of nature, and he was unquestionably as bright an ornament as ever

our Common Parent held up to mankind. He studied Nature in preference to books, and thought and compared as well as read.

The hopes of the British Government having been baffled in the expected reduction of the Colonies, and being compelled to acknowledge their independence, Mr. Paine had now leisure to turn to his mechanical and philosophical studies. He was admitted a member of the American Philosophical Society, and appointed Master of Arts, by the University of Philadelphia, and we find nothing from his pen in the shape of a pamphlet until the year 1786, He then published his "Dissertations on Governments, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money." The object of this pamphlet was to expose the injustice and ingratitude of the Congress in withdrawing the charter of incorporation from the American Bank, and to show, that it would rather injure than benefit the community. The origin of this Bank having been solely for the carrying on of the war with vigour, and to furnish the army with necessary supplies, at a time when the want of food and clothing threatened a mutiny, Mr. Paine condemned the attempt to suppress it as an act of ingratitude.

At a moment when the United States were overwhelmed with a general gloom by repeated losses and disasters, and by want of vigour to oppose the enemy, Mr. Paine proposed a voluntary contribution to recruit the army, and sent his proposal, and five hundred dollars as a commencement, to his friend Mr. M'Clenaghan. The proposal was instantly embraced, and such was the spirit by which it was followed, that the Congress established the leading subscribers into a Bank Company, and gave them a charter. This incident might be said to have saved America for that time, and as Mr. Paine has fairly shown that the Bank was highly advantageous to the interest of the United States at the time of its suppression, and that the act proceeded from party spleen, we cannot fail to applaud the spirit of this pamphlet, although it was an attack on the conduct of the Congress. It forms another proof that our Author never suffered his duty and principle to be biassed by his interest.

In the year 1787, Mr. Paine returned to Europe, and first proceeded to Paris, where he obtained considerable applause for the construction of a model of an iron bridge which he presented to the Academy of Sciences. The iron bridge is now becoming general in almost all new erections, and will doubtless, in a few years, supersede the more tedious and expensive method of building bridges with stone. How few are those who walk across the bridge of Vauxhall and call to mind that Thomas Paine was the first to suggest and recommend the use of the iron bridge: he says, that he borrowed the idea of this kind of bridge from seeing a certain species of spider spin its web*! In the mechanical arts Mr. Paine took great delight, and made considerable progress. In this, as in his political and theological pursuits, to ameliorate the condition, and to add to the comforts, of his fellow men, was his first object and final aim.

** The famous iron bridge of one arch at Sunderland was the first result of this discovery, although another gentleman 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 foundery of Mr. Walker, at Rotheram, in 'Yorkshire, where Mr. Paine had made his first experiment on an extensive scale.*

From Paris Mr. Paine returned to England after an absence of thirteen years, in which time he had lost his father, and found his mother in distress. He hastened to Thetford to relieve her, and settled a small weekly sum upon her to make her comfortable. He spent a few weeks in his native town, and wrote the pamphlet, intitled "Prospects on the Rubicon," &c. at this time, which appears to have been done as much for amusement and pastime as any thing else, as it has no peculiar object, like most of his other writings, and the want of that object is visible throughout the work. It is more of a general subject than Paine was in the habit of indulging in, and its publication in England produced but little attraction. France, at this moment, had scarcely begun to indicate her determination to reform her government.

England was engaged in the affairs of the Stadt-holder of Holland; and there seemed a confusion among the principal governments of Europe, but no disposition for war.

Mr. Paine having become intimate with Mr. Walker, a large iron-founder of Rotheram, in Yorkshire, retired thither for the purpose of trying the experiment of his bridge. The particulars of this experiment, with an explanation of its success, the reader will find fully developed in his letter to Sir George Staunton. This letter was sent to the Society of Arts in the Adelphi, and was about to be printed in their transactions, but the appearance of the First Part of "Rights of Man," put a stop to its publication in that shape, and afforded us a lesson that bigotry and prejudice form a woeful bar to science and improvement. For the expence of this bridge Mr. Paine had drawn considerable sums from a Mr. Whiteside, an American merchant, on the security of his American property, but this Mr. Whiteside becoming a bankrupt, Mr. Paine was suddenly arrested by his assignees, but soon liberated by two other American merchants becoming his bail, until he could make arrangements for the necessary remittances from America.

During the American war, Mr. Paine had felt a strong; desire to come privately into England, and publish a pamphlet on the real state of the war, and display to the people of England the atrocities of that cause they were so blinded to support. He had an impression that this step would have more effect to stop the bloody career of the English Government, than all he could write in America, and transmit to the English newspapers. It was with difficulty that his friends got him to abandon this idea, and after he had succeeded in obtaining the loan from the French Government, he proposed to Colonel Laurens to return alone, and let him go to England for this purpose. The Colonel, however, positively refused to return without him, and in this purpose he was overcome by the force of friendship. Still the same idea lingered in his bosom after the Americans had won their independence. Mr. Paine loved his country and countrymen, and was anxious to assist them in reforming their Government. The attack which Mr. Burke made upon the French Revolution soon gave him an opportunity of doing this, and the production of "Rights of Man" will ever rank Mr. Paine among the first and best of writers on political economy.

The friend and companion of Washington and Franklin could not fail to obtain an introduction to the leading political characters in England, such as Burke, Horne 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 most 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 master-piece 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 Mr. Paine was drawn into the company of Burke, and even a correspondence with him on the affairs of France; and it was not until Pitt saw the necessity of availing himself of the avowed apostacy 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, and kindled a hatred without shewing a cause for it, but still, as honest principle will always outlive treachery, it drew forth from Mr. Paine his "Rights of Man" which will stand as a lesson to all people in all future generations whose government might require reformation. Vice can triumph but for a moment, whilst the triumph of virtue is perpetual.

The laws of England have been a great bar to the propagation of sound principles and useful lessons on Government, 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 turn printer and publisher as well. Without this measure every good work has to be mangled according to the humour of the publisher employed. It was thus Mr. Paine found great difficulty in procuring a publisher even for his First Part of "Rights of Man." It was thus the great and good Major Cartwright found it necessary during the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus to take a shop and sell his own pamphlets. I do not mean to say that there is a fault in publishers, the fault lays 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. I may be told that this last observation has a selfish appearance, but let the general statement be first contradicted, then I will plead guilty to selfish views.

Mr. Paine would not allow any man to make any the least alteration or even correction in his writings. He carried this disposition so far as to refuse a friend to correct an avowed grammatical error. 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. If a man durst not publish the whole of the writings of another, he had far better leave them altogether, until another more bold and honest shall be found to undertake the task. Every curtailment must tend to misrepresent; and whatever may be the motive, the act is dishonest.

Mr. Paine had been particularly intimate with Burke, and I have seen an original letter of Burke to a friend, wherein he expressed the high gratification and pleasure 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 formed any idea or desire to corrupt 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 £1000, which Chapman, the printer of the Second Part of "Rights of Man," offered Mr. Paine for his copyright, is a proof that he was incorruptible on this score. Mr. Paine was evidently much pleased with his intimacy with Burke, for it appears he took considerable pains to furnish him with all the correspondence possible on the affairs of France, little thinking that he was cherishing a viper, and a man that would hand those documents over to the minister; but such was the case, until Mr. Burke was compelled to display his apostacy in the House of Commons, and to bid his former associates beware of him.

Mr. Paine promised the friends of the French Revolution, that he would answer Burke's pamphlet, as soon as he saw it; and it would be difficult to say, whether Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution," or Paine's "Rights of Man," had the more extensive circulation. One thing we know, Burke's book is buried with him, whilst "Rights of Man," still blazes and obtains an extensive circulation yearly, since it has been republished. Its principles will be co-existent with the human race, and the more they are known the more will they be admired. Nature assisted by Reason form their base: the only stable foundation on which the welfare of mankind can be erected. I have circulated near 5000 copies since November, 1817.

The publication of "Rights of Man," 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, whilst the former has had to encounter corruption and persecution; but that it will finally form the base of the English Government, I have neither fear or doubt. 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, neither did Burke venture a reply. The proper principles of 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 that they were works of principle, written solely to ameliorate the condition of mankind, and as soon as published they were common property to any one that thought proper to circulate them.

I do not concur in the propriety of Mr. Paine's conduct on this occasion, because, as he was the Author, he might as well have put the Author's profit into his pocket, as to let the bookseller pocket the profit of both. His pamphlets were never sold the cheaper for his neglecting to take his profit as an Author; but, it is now evident that Mr. Paine, by neglecting that affluence which he might have honestly and honourably possessed, deprived himself in the last dozen years of his life of the power of doing much good. It is not to be denied that property is the stamina of action and influence, and is looked up to by the mass of mankind in preference to principle in poverty. But there comes another danger and objection, that is, that the holders of much property are but seldom found to trouble themselves about principle. Their principle seldom goes a step beyond profession. But where principle and property unite, the individual becomes a host.

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 immutable principles, that the path does not become tedious. Perhaps no other volume whatever has so well 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. But I must recollect that my business here is to sketch the Life of Mr. Paine, I wish to avoid any thing in the shape of quotation from his writings, as I am of opinion, that the reader will glean their beauties from the proper source with more satisfaction; and no Life of Paine that can be compiled will ever express half so much of the man, as his own writings, as a whole, speak for themselves, and almost seem to say "*the hand that made us is divine.*"

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 of "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 afraid 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 what "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 just the book to furnish materials for thinking. About this time he also wrote his "Letter to the Addressers," and several letters to the Chairmen of different County Meetings, at which those addresses were voted.

Mr. Paine had resolved to defend the publication of "Rights of Man" in person, but in the month of September, a deputation from the inhabitants of Calais waited upon him to say, that they had elected him their deputy to the National Convention of France. This was an affair of more importance than supporting "Rights of Man," before a political judge and a packed jury, and, accordingly, Mr. Paine set off for France with the deputation, but not without being exposed to much insult at Dover; where the Government spies had apprised the Custom House Officers of his arrival, and some of those spies were present to overhaul all his papers.

It was said, that Mr. Paine had scarcely embarked twenty minutes before a warrant came to Dover, from the Home Department to arrest him. Be this as it may, Mr. Paine had more important scenes allotted to him. On reaching the opposite Shore the name of 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 honour 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 the arrival of their new representative. This ceremony being over, he walked to Deisseiu'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 he sat in, was placed the bust of Mirabeau, and the colours 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 honour 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 specifically reserved "for the author of 'Rights of Man,' the object of the English Proclamation."

Mr. Paine was likewise elected as deputy for Abbeville, Beauvais, and Versailles, as well as for the department of Calais, but the latter having been the first in their choice, he preferred being their representative.

On reaching Paris, Mr. Paine addressed a letter to the English Attorney General, apprizing 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 of France ought to form a lesson to 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 the departure of Mr. Paine, as a member of the French National Convention, the information against "Rights of Man" was laid before a jury, on the 2d of December in the same year, and the Government, and its agents, were obliged to content themselves with outlawing Mr. Paine, 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 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 rancour of a majority of the nation against such a man as Thomas Paine!

We now find Mr. Paine engaged in new and still more important scenes. His first effort as a member of the National Convention, was to lay the basis of a self-renovating constitution, and to repair the defects of that which had been previously adopted: but a circumstance very soon occurred, which baffled all his good intentions, and brought him to a narrow escape from the guillotine. It was his humane and strenuous opposition to the putting Louis the XVIth to death. The famous or infamous manifesto issued by the Duke of Brunswick, in July 1792, had roused such a spirit of hatred towards the Royal Family of France, and all other Royal Families, that nothing short of their utter destruction could appease the majority of the French nation. 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 endeavour to save the life of Louis. Mr. Paine was perfectly a humane man, he deprecated the punishment of death on any occasion whatever. His object was to destroy the monarchy, but not the man who had filled the office of monarch.

The following anecdote is another unparalleled instance of humanity, and the moral precept of returning good for evil. Mr. Paine happened to be dining one day with about twenty friends at a Coffee House in the Palais Egalité, now the Palais Royal, when unfortunately for the harmony of the company, a Captain in the English service contrived to introduce himself as one of the party. The military gentleman was a strenuous supporter of what is called in England, the constitution in church and state, and a decided enemy of the French Revolution. After the cloth was drawn, the conversation chiefly turned on the state of affairs in England, and the means which had been adopted by the government to check the increase of political knowledge. Mr. Paine delivered his opinions very freely, and much to the satisfaction of every one present, with the exception of Captain Grimstone, who returned his arguments by calling him a traitor to his country, with a variety of terms equally opprobrious. Mr. Paine treated his abuse with much good humour, which rendered the Captain so furious, that he walked up to the part of the room where Mr. Paine was sitting, and struck him a violent blow, which nearly knocked him off his seat. The cowardice of this behaviour from a stout young man towards a person of Mr. Paine's age (he being then upwards of sixty) is not the least disgraceful part of the transaction. There was, however, no time for reflections of this sort; an alarm was instantly given, that the Captain had struck a Citizen Deputy of the Convention, which was considered an insult to the nation at large; the offender was hurried into custody, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Paine prevented him from being executed on the spot.

It ought to be observed, that an act of the Convention had awarded the punishment of death to any one who should be convicted of striking a deputy; Mr. Paine was therefore placed in a very unpleasant situation. He immediately applied to Barrere, at that time president of the Committee of Public Safety, for a passport for his imprudent adversary, who after much hesitation complied with his request. It likewise occasioned Mr. Paine considerable personal inconvenience to procure his liberation; but even this was not sufficient; the Captain was without friends, and penniless, and Mr. Paine generously supplied him with money to defray his travelling expences.

Louis fell under the guillotine, 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 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 the Luxembourg; the time, about eleven months, during which he was seized with a most violent fever, that rendered him insensible to all that was passing, and to which circumstance he attributes his escape from the guillotine.

About this period Mr. Paine wrote his first and second part of Age of Reason. The first part was written before he went to the Luxembourg, as in his passage thither he deposited the manuscript with Joel Barlow. The second part he wrote during his confinement, and at a moment when he could not calculate on the preservation of his life for twenty-four hours: a circumstance which forms the best proof of his sincerity, and his conviction of the fallacy and imposture of all established religions: Throughout this work he has also trod the path of nature, and has laid down some of the best arguments to shew the existence of an Omnipotent Being, that ever were penned. Those who are in the habit of running down every thing that does not tally with their antiquated opinions, or the prejudices in which they have been educated, have decried Mr. Paine as an Atheist! Of all the men who ever wrote, Mr. Paine was the most remote from Atheism, and has advanced stronger arguments against the belief of no God, than any who have gone before him, or have lived since. If there be any chance of the failure of Mr. Paine's theological writings as a standard work, it will be on the ground of their being more superstitious than otherwise. However, their beauties, I doubt not, will at all times be a sufficient apology for a few trifling defects. Mr. Paine has been taxed with inconsistency in his theological opinions, because in his "Common Sense," and other political writings, he has had recourse to Bible phrases and arguments to illustrate some of his positions. But this can be no proof of hypocrisy,

because his "Common Sense" and his other political writings were intended as a vehicle for political principles only, and they were addressed to the most superstitious people in the world. If Mr. Paine had published any of his Deistical opinions in "Common Sense" or "The Crisis," he would have defeated the very purpose for which he wrote. The Bible is a most convenient book to afford precedents; and any man might support any opinion or any assertion by quotations from it, Mr. Paine tells us in his first Crisis that he has no superstition about him, which was a pretty broad hint of what his opinions on that score were at that time, but it would have been the height of madness to have urged any religious dissension among the inhabitants of the United States during their hostile struggle for independence. Such is not a time to think about making converts to religious opinions. Mr. Paine has certainly made use of the common hack term, "Christian this" and "Christian that," in many parts of his political writings; but let it be recollected to whom he addressed himself, and the object he had in view, before a charge of inconsistency be made. He first published his Age of Reason in France, where all compulsive systems of religion had been abolished, and here, certainly, he cannot be charged with being a disturber of religious opinions, because his work was translated and reprinted in the English language. He could have no objection to see it published in England, but it was by no means his own act, and he has expressly stated that he wrote it for the French nation and the United States. But truth will not be confined to a nation, nor to a continent, and there can never be an inconsistency proceeding from wrong to right, although there must naturally be a change.

After the fall of Robespierre and his faction, and the arrival of Mr. Monroe, a new minister from America, Mr. Paine was liberated from his most painful imprisonment, and again solicited to take his seat in the Convention, which he accordingly did. Again his utmost efforts were used to establish a constitution on correct principles and universal liberty, united with security both for person and property. He wrote his "Dissertation on First Principles of Government," and presented it to the Convention, accompanied with a speech, pointing out the defects of the then existing constitution.

Intrigue is the natural characteristic of Frenchmen, and they never appeared to relish any thing in the shape of purity or simplicity of principle. Their intrigue being always attended with an impetuosity, has been aptly compared by Voltaire to the joint qualities of the monkey and the tiger. Of all countries on the face of the earth, perhaps France was the least qualified to receive a pure Republican Government. The French nation had been so long dazzled with the false splendours of its grand monarch, that a Court seemed the only atmosphere in which the real character of Frenchmen could display itself. At least, the Court had assimilated the character of the whole nation to itself. The French Revolution was altogether financial, and not the effect of good triumphing over bad principles. At various periods the people assumed various attitudes, but they were by no means prepared for a Republican form of Government. Political information had made no progress among the mass of the people, as is the case in Britain at this moment. There were but few Frenchmen amongst the literate part of the community who had any notion of a representative system of Government. The United States had scarcely presented any thing like correct representation, and the boasted constitution of England is altogether a mockery of representation. The people of England have no more direct influence over the Legislature than the horses or asses of England. Mr. Paine saw this, both in France and England, and, at the same time, saw the necessity of inculcating correct notions of Government through all classes of the community. He struggled in vain during his own lifetime, but the seed of his principles has taken root, and is now beginning to shoot forth.

France, by a series of successful battles with the monarchs of Europe, began to assume a military character—the very soul of Frenchmen, but the bane of Republicanism. Hence arose a Buonaparte, and hence the fall of France, and the restoration of the hated Bourbons.

After Buonaparte had usurped the sovereign power, and every thing 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 Buonaparte. 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 honourable appellation.

In this retirement Mr. Paine wrote two small pamphlets of considerable interest: the one was his "Agrarian Justice opposed to Agrarian Law and Agrarian Monopoly;" the other was his "Decline and Fall of the English system of Finance," the first was a plan for creating a fund in all societies to give a certain sum of money to all young people about to enter into life, and live by their own industry, and to make a provision for all old persons, or such as were past labour, so that their old age might be spent serenely and comfortably. The idea was evidently the offspring of humanity and benevolence: of its practicability I cannot speak; here, as nothing but experience could prove it. His "Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance," is of more immediate importance, as no one of his pamphlets has displayed the acuteness, the foresight, and the ability of Mr. Paine, as a political economist, more than this. We can now speak most feelingly on this subject as this is the moment at which all his financial and funding system predictions are about to be fulfilled. Talk of Jewish prophets, or Christian prophets! look at this little pamphlet, and here you will find a prophet indeed! No imposter but a real prophet! A prophet who preferred common sense to divine inspiration. A prophet who stood not in need of any Holy Ghost to instruct him, but who prophesied from reason and natural circumstances. Mr. Cobbett has made this little pamphlet a text book, for most of his elaborate treatises, on our finances, and funding systems. This pamphlet was written in the year 1796, one year before the bank refused to pay its notes in gold. This latter circumstance, has in some measure had the effect of lengthening the existence of the funding system, although its occurrence was previously foretold by Mr. Paine, as one of the natural consequences of that system. On the authority of a late register of Mr. Cobbett's, I learn that the profits arising from the sale of this pamphlet, were devoted to the relief of the prisoners confined in Newgate for debt.

Mr. Paine, found it impossible to do any good in France, and he sighed for the shores of America. The English cruizers prevented his passing during the war; but immediately after the peace of Amiens he embarked and reached his adopted country. Before I follow him to America, I should notice his attack on

George Washington. It is evident from all the writings of Mr. Paine 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 any thing 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 of Washington was apathy itself, and that nothing could kindle a fire in his bosom—neither friendship, fame, or 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 mortal foe to Paine and all 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. I will, however, state this case more simply.

During the imprisonment of Mr. Paine in the Luxembourg, and under the reign of Robespierre, Washington was President of the United States, and John Adams was Vice-President. John Adams was altogether a puerile character, and totally unfit for any part of a Republican Government. 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 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 this virulent letter against Washington. The slightest interference of Washington would have saved Paine from several months unjust and unnecessary imprisonment, for there was not the least charge against him, further than being born an Englishman; although he had actually been outlawed in that country for supporting the cause of France and of mankind!

If all the charges which Mr. Paine has brought against Washington be true, and some of them are too palpable to be doubted, his character has been much overrated, and Mr. Paine has either lost sight of his duty in the arms of friendship, by giving Washington too much applause, or he has suffered an irritated feeling to overcome his prudence by a contradictory and violent attack. The letter written by Mr. Paine from France to Mr. Washington stands rather as a contrast to his former expressions, but he who reads the whole of Mr. Paine's writings can best judge for himself. Some little change might have taken place in the disposition of each of those persons towards the close of life, but I will not allow for a moment that Paine ever swerved in political integrity and principle. This letter seems to stand rather as a blur in a collection of Mr. Paine's writings, and every reader will, no doubt, exercise his right to form his own opinion between Paine and Washington. I am of opinion, that one Paine is worth a thousand Washingtons in point of utility to mankind.

We must now follow Mr. Paine to America, and here we find him still combating every thing in the shape of corruption, of which no small portion seems to have crept into the management of the affairs of the United States. He now carried on a paper war with the persons who called themselves Federalists; a faction which seems to have been leagued for no other purpose but to corrupt and to appropriate to their own use the fruits of their corruption. Mr. Paine published various letters and essays on the state of affairs, and on various other subjects, after his return to America, the whole of which convince us that he never lost an iota of his mental and intellectual faculties, although he was exposed to much bodily disease and lingering pain. He found a very different disposition in the United States on his return to what he had left there, when he first went to France. Fanaticism had made rapid strides, and to a great portion of the inhabitants Mr. Paine's theological writings were a dreadful sore. He had also to combat the Washington and John Adams party, who were both his bitter enemies, so that instead of retiring to the United States to enjoy repose in the decline of life, he found himself molested by venomous creatures on all sides. His pen, however, continued an overmatch for the whole brood, and his last essay will be read by the lover of liberty with the same satisfaction as the first.

Mr. Paine was exposed to many personal annoyances by the fanatics of the United States, and it may not be amiss to state here a few anecdotes on this head. On passing through Baltimore he was accosted by the preacher of a new sect called the New Jerusalemites. "You are Mr. Paine," said the preacher. "Yes."—"My name is Hargrove, Sir; I am minister of the New Jerusalem Church here. We, Sir, explain the Scripture in its true meaning. The key has been lost above four thousand years, and we have found it."—"Then," said Mr. Paine in his usual sarcastic manner, "it must have been very rusty." At another time, whilst residing in the house of a Mr. Jarvis, in the city of New York, an old lady, habited in a scarlet cloak, knocked at the door, and inquired for Thomas Paine. Mr. Jarvis told her he was asleep. "I am very sorry for that," she said, "for I want to see him very particularly." Mr. Jarvis having some feeling for the age and the earnestness of the old lady, took her into Mr. Paine's bed room and waked him. He arose upon one elbow, and with a steadfast look at the old lady, which induced her to retreat a step or two, asked her, "What do you want?"—"Is your name Paine?"—"Yes."—"Well, then, I am 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, and——"

"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 as you are about with his messages. Go away, go back, shut the door." The old lady raised her hands and walked away in mute astonishment.

Another instance of the kind happened about a fortnight before his death. Two priests, of the name of Milledollar and Cunningham, came to him, and the latter introduced himself and his companion in the following words, "Mr. Paine, we visit you as friends and neighbours. 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," replied Mr. Paine, "have none of your Popish stuff. Get away with you. Good morning, good morning." Mr. Milledollar attempted to address him, but he was interrupted with the same language. A few days after those same priests had the impudence to come again, but the nurse was afraid to admit them. Even the doctor who attended him in his last minutes took the latest possible opportunity to ask him, "Do you wish to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" to which Mr. Paine replied, "I have no wish to believe on the subject." These were his last words, for he died the following morning about nine o'clock, about nine hours after the Doctor had left him.

Mr. Paine, over and above what might have been expected of him, seemed much concerned about what spot his body should be laid in some time before his death. He requested permission to be interred in the Quaker's Burial Ground, saying that they were the most moral and upright sect of Christians; but this was peremptorily refused to him in his life-time, and gave him much uneasiness, or such as might not have been expected from such a man. On this refusal he ordered his body to be interred on his own farm, and a stone placed over it with the following inscription:

THOMAS PAINE,
AUTHOR OF
COMMON SENSE,
DIED JUNE 8, 1809,
AGED 72 YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS.

Little did Mr. Paine think when giving this instruction, that the Peter Porcupine who had heaped so much abuse upon him, beyond that of all other persons put together (for Porcupine was the only scribbling opponent that Mr. Paine ever deigned to mention by name) little did he think that this Peter Porcupine, in the person of William Cobbett, should have become his second self in the political world, And should have so far renounced his former opinions and principles as to resent the indifference paid to Paine by the majority of the inhabitants of the United States, and actually remove his bones to England. I consider this mark of respect and honest indignation, as an ample apology for all the abuse heaped upon the name and character of Paine by Mr. Cobbett. It is a volume of retractation, more ample and more convincing than his energetic pen could have produced. For my own part whilst we have his writings, I should have felt indifferent as to what became of his bones; but there was an open retractation due from Mr. Cobbett to the people of Britain, for his former abuse of Paine, and I for one am quite content with the apology made.

I shall now close this Memoir, and should the reader think the sketch insufficient, I would say to him that Mr. Paine's own writings will fill up the deficiency, as he was an actor as well as a writer in all the subjects on which he has treated. Wherever I have lightly touched an incident, the works themselves display the *minutiæ*, and when the reader has gone through the Memoir, and the Works too, he will say, "I am satisfied."

R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL, MAY 10, 1821.

ADVERTISEMENT.

This little Memoir of Mr. Paine was written purposely to accompany a new Edition of his Political Works, lately published by R. Carlile, and whilst it was in the press, it occurred to him that it would be desirable as a pamphlet to those persons who had made a previous purchase of those works. Accordingly he worked off 500 of them, and found that they were all sold in a few weeks, without a single advertisement beyond "The Republican." It has now been out of print for above three months, and finding a constant, and increasing demand for them, he has been induced to make a few corrections and some slight additions, and to print a second edition. Brief as the number of its pages must appear, for so interesting a character, the Compiler feels assured that it will be deemed sufficient by all persons who may possess Mr Paine's writings, for whose satisfaction it was solely written,

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