

*Thomas Paine*

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THE WRITINGS  
OF  
THOMAS PAINE

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE," "OMITTED CHAPTERS OF HISTORY  
DISCLOSED IN THE LIFE AND PAPERS OF EDMUND RANDOLPH,"  
"GEORGE WASHINGTON AND MOUNT VERNON," ETC.

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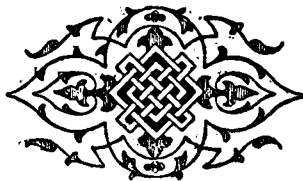


## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD VOLUME . . . . .	v
I.—THE REPUBLICAN PROCLAMATION . . . . .	i
II.—TO THE AUTHORS OF "LE RÉPUBLICAIN" . . . . .	4
III.—TO THE ABBÉ SIÈYES . . . . .	9
IV.—TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL . . . . .	11
V.—TO MR. SECRETARY DUNDAS . . . . .	15
VI.—LETTERS TO ONSLOW CRANLEY . . . . .	30
VII.—TO THE SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX . . . . .	37
VIII.—TO MR. SECRETARY DUNDAS . . . . .	41
IX.—LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE ADDRESSERS ON THE LATE PROCLAMATION . . . . .	45
X.—ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE . . . . .	97
XI.—ANTI-MONARCHAL ESSAY . . . . .	101
XII.—TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, ON THE PROSE- CUTION AGAINST THE SECOND PART OF RIGHTS OF MAN . . . . .	110
XIII.—ON THE PROPRIETY OF BRINGING LOUIS XVI. TO TRIAL . . . . .	114
XIV.—REASONS FOR PRESERVING THE LIFE OF LOUIS CAPET . . . . .	119
XV.—SHALL LOUIS XVI. HAVE RESPITE? . . . . .	125
XVI.—DECLARATION OF RIGHTS . . . . .	128
XVII.—PRIVATE LETTERS TO JEFFERSON . . . . .	132
XVIII.—LETTERS TO DANTON . . . . .	135

	PAGE
XIX.—A CITIZEN OF AMERICA TO THE CITIZENS OF EUROPE . . . . .	140
XX.—APPEAL TO THE CONVENTION . . . . .	147
XXI.—THE MEMORIAL TO MONROE . . . . .	150
XXII.—LETTER TO GEORGE WASHINGTON . . . . .	213
XXIII.—OBSERVATIONS . . . . .	253
XXIV.—DISSERTATION ON FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT . . . . .	256
XXV.—THE CONSTITUTION OF 1795 . . . . .	278
XXVI.—THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ENGLISH SYSTEM OF FINANCE . . . . .	286
XXVII.—FORGETFULNESS . . . . .	313
XXVIII.—AGRARIAN JUSTICE . . . . .	322
XXIX.—THE EIGHTEENTH FRUCTIDOR . . . . .	345
XXX.—THE RECALL OF MONROE . . . . .	368
XXXI.—PRIVATE LETTER TO PRESIDENT JEFFERSON . . . . .	371
XXXII.—PROPOSAL THAT LOUISIANA BE PURCHASED . . . . .	379
XXXIII.—THOMAS PAINE TO THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES . . . . .	381
XXXIV.—TO THE FRENCH INHABITANTS OF LOUISIANA . . . . .	430





## INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD VOLUME.

WITH HISTORICAL NOTES AND DOCUMENTS.

IN a letter of Lafayette to Washington ("Paris, 12 Jan., 1790") he writes: "*Common Sense* is writing for you a brochure where you will see a part of my adventures." It thus appears that the narrative embodied in the reply to Burke ("Rights of Man," Part I.), dedicated to Washington, was begun with Lafayette's collaboration fourteen months before its publication (March 13, 1791).

In another letter of Lafayette to Washington (March 17, 1790) he writes:

"To Mr. Paine, who leaves for London, I entrust the care of sending you my news. . . . Permit me, my dear General, to offer you a picture representing the Bastille as it was some days after I gave the order for its demolition. I also pay you the homage of sending you the principal Key of that fortress of despotism. It is a tribute I owe as a son to my adoptive father, as aide-de-camp to my General, as a missionary of liberty to his Patriarch."

The Key was entrusted to Paine, and by him to J. Rutledge, Jr., who sailed from London in May. I have found in the manuscript despatches of Louis Otto, Chargé d' Affaires, several amusing paragraphs, addressed to his government at Paris, about this Key.

"August 4, 1790. In attending yesterday the public audience of the President, I was surprised by a question from the Chief Magistrate, 'whether I would like to see the Key of the Bastille?' One of his secretaries showed me at the same moment a large Key, which had been sent to the President by desire of the Marquis de la Fayette. I dissembled my surprise in observing to the President that 'the time had not yet come in America to do iron-



work equal to that before him.' The Americans present looked at the key with indifference, and as if wondering why it had been sent. But the serene face of the President showed that he regarded it as an homage from the French nation." "December 13, 1790. The Key of the Bastille, regularly shown at the President's audiences, is now also on exhibition in Mrs. Washington's *salon*, where it satisfies the curiosity of the Philadelphians. I am persuaded, Monseigneur, that it is only their vanity that finds pleasure in the exhibition of this trophy, but Frenchmen here are not the less piqued, and many will not enter the President's house on this account."

In sending the Key Paine, who saw farther than these distant Frenchmen, wrote to Washington: "That the principles of America opened the Bastille is not to be doubted, and therefore the Key comes to the right place."

Early in May, 1791 (the exact date is not given), Lafayette writes Washington: "I send you the rather indifferent translation of Mr. Paine as a kind of preservative and to keep me near you." This was a hasty translation of "Rights of Man," Part I., by F. Soules, presently superseded by that of Lanthenas.

The first convert of Paine to pure republicanism in France was Achille Duchâtelet, son of the Duke, and grandson of the authoress,—the friend of Voltaire. It was he and Paine who, after the flight of Louis XVI., placarded Paris with the Proclamation of a Republic, given as the first chapter of this volume. An account of this incident is here quoted from Étienne Dumont's "Recollections of Mirabeau":

"The celebrated Paine was at this time in Paris, and intimate in Condorcet's family. Thinking that he had effected the American Revolution, he fancied himself called upon to bring about one in France. Duchâtelet called on me, and after a little preface placed in my hand an English manuscript—a Proclamation to the French People. It was nothing less than an anti-royalist Manifesto, and summoned the nation to seize the opportunity and establish a Republic. Paine was its author. Duchâtelet had adopted and was resolved to sign, placard the walls of Paris with it, and take the consequences. He had come to request me to

translate and develop it. I began discussing the strange proposal, and pointed out the danger of raising a republican standard without concurrence of the National Assembly, and nothing being as yet known of the king's intentions, resources, alliances, and possibilities of support by the army, and in the provinces. I asked if he had consulted any of the most influential leaders,—Sièyes, Lafayette, etc. He had not : he and Paine had acted alone. An American and an impulsive nobleman had put themselves forward to change the whole governmental system of France. Resisting his entreaties, I refused to translate the Proclamation. Next day the republican Proclamation appeared on the walls in every part of Paris, and was denounced to the Assembly. The idea of a Republic had previously presented itself to no one : this first intimation filled with consternation the Right and the moderates of the Left. Malouet, Cazales, and others proposed prosecution of the author, but Chapelier, and a numerous party, fearing to add fuel to the fire instead of extinguishing it, prevented this. But some of the seed sown by the audacious hand of Paine were now budding in leading minds."

A Republican Club was formed in July, consisting of five members, the others who joined themselves to Paine and Duchâtelet being Condorcet, and probably Lanthenas (translator of Paine's works), and Nicolas de Bonneville. They advanced so far as to print "*Le Républicain*," of which, however, only one number ever appeared. From it is taken the second piece in this volume.

Early in the year 1792 Paine lodged in the house and book-shop of Thomas "Clio" Rickman, now as then 7 Upper Marylebone Street. Among his friends was the mystical artist and poet, William Blake. Paine had become to him a transcendental type ; he is one of the Seven who appear in Blake's "*Prophecy*" concerning America (1793):

"The Guardian Prince of Albion burns in his nightly tent.  
Sullen fires across the Atlantic glow to America's shore ;  
Piercing the souls of warlike men, who rise in silent night :—  
Washington, Franklin, Paine, and Warren, Gates, Hancock, and  
Greene,  
Meet on the coast glowing with blood from Albion's fiery Prince."

The Seven are wrapt in the flames of their enthusiasm. Albion's Prince sends to America his thirteen Angels, who, however, there become Governors of the thirteen States. It is difficult to discover from Blake's mystical visions how much political radicalism was in him, but he certainly saved Paine from the scaffold by forewarning him (September 13, 1792) that an order had been issued for his arrest. Without repeating the story told in Gilchrist's "Life of Blake," and in my "Life of Paine," I may add here my belief that Paine also appears in one of Blake's pictures. The picture is in the National Gallery (London), and called "The spiritual form of Pitt guiding Behemoth." The monster jaws of Behemoth are full of struggling men, some of whom stretch imploring hands to another spiritual form, who reaches down from a crescent moon in the sky, as if to rescue them. This face and form appear to me certainly meant for Paine.

Acting on Blake's warning Paine's friends got him off to Dover, where, after some trouble, related in a letter to Dundas (see p. 41 of this volume), he reached Calais. He had been elected by four departments to the National Convention, and selected Calais, where he was welcomed with grand civic parades. On September 19, 1792, he arrived in Paris, stopping at "White's Hotel," 7 Passage des Pétits Pères, about five minutes' walk from the Salle de Manège, where, on September 21st, the National Convention opened its sessions. The spot is now indicated by a tablet on the wall of the Tuileries Garden, Rue de Rivoli. On that day Paine was introduced to the Convention by the Abbé Grégoire, and received with acclamation.

The French Minister in London, Chauvelin, had sent to his government (still royalist) a despatch unfavorable to Paine's work in England, part of which I translate :

"May 23, 1792. An Association [for Parliamentary Reform, see pp. 78, 93, of this volume] has been formed to seek the means of forwarding the demand. It includes some distinguished members of the Commons, and a few peers. The writings of M. Payne which preceded this Association by a few days have done

it infinite harm. People suspect under the veil of a reform long demanded by justice and reason an intention to destroy a constitution equally dear to the peers whose privileges it consecrates, to the wealthy whom it protects, and to the entire nation, to which it assures all the liberty desired by a people methodical and slow in character, and who, absorbed in their commercial interests, do not like being perpetually worried about the imbecile George III. or public affairs. Vainly have the friends of reform protested their attachment to the Constitution. Vainly they declare that they desire to demand nothing, to obtain nothing, save in lawful ways. They are persistently disbelieved. Payne alone is seen in all their movements; and this author has not, like Mackintosh, rendered imposing his refutation of Burke. The members of the Association, although very different in principles, find themselves involved in the now almost general disgrace of Payne."

M. Noël writes from London, November 2, 1792, to the republican Minister, Le Brun, concerning the approaching trial of Paine, which had been fixed for December 18th.

"This matter above all excites the liveliest interest. People desire to know whether they live in a free country, where criticism even of government is a right of every citizen. Whatever may be the decision in this interesting trial, the result can only be fortunate for the cause of liberty. But the government cannot conceal from itself that it is suspended over a volcano. The wild dissipations of the King's sons add to the discontent, and if something is overlooked in the Prince of Wales, who is loved enough, it is not so with the Duke of York, who has few friends. The latter has so many debts that at this moment the receivers are in his house, and the creditors wish even his bed to be seized: You perceive, Citizen, what a text fruitful in reflexions this conduct presents to a people groaning under the weight of taxes for the support of such whelps (*louveteaux*)."

Under date of December 22, 1792, M. Noël writes:

"London is perfectly tranquil. The arbitrary measures taken by the government in advance [of Paine's trial] cause no anxiety to the mass of the nation about its liberties. Some

clear-headed people see well that the royal prerogative will gain in this crisis, and that it is dangerous to leave executive power to become arbitrary at pleasure; but this very small number groan in silence, and dare not speak for fear of seeing their property pillaged or burned by what the miserable hirelings of government call 'Loyal Mob,' or 'Church and King Mob.' To the 'Addressers,' of whom I wrote you, are added the associations for maintaining the Constitution they are doing all they can to destroy. There is no corporation, no parish, which is not mustered for this object. All have assembled, one on the other, to press against those whom they call 'The Republicans and the Levellers,' the most inquisitorial measures. Among other parishes, one (S. James' Vestry Room) distinguishes itself by a decree worthy of the sixteenth century. It promises twenty guineas reward to any one who shall denounce those who in conversation or otherwise propagate opinions contrary to the public tranquillity, and places the denouncer under protection of the parish. The inhabitants of London are now placed under a new kind of *Test*, and those who refuse it will undoubtedly be persecuted. Meantime these papers are carried from house to house to be signed, especially by those lodging as strangers. This *Test* causes murmurs, and some try to evade signature, but the number is few. The example of the capital is generally followed.

"The trial of Payne, which at one time seemed likely to cause events, has ended in the most peaceful way. Erskine has been borne to his house by people shouting *God Save the King! Erskine forever!* The friends of liberty generally are much dissatisfied with the way in which he has defended his client. They find that he threw himself into commonplaces which could make his eloquence shine, but guarded himself well from going to the bottom of the question. Vane especially, a distinguished advocate and zealous democrat, is furious against Erskine. It is now for Payne to defend himself. But whatever he does, he will have trouble enough to reverse the opinion. The Jury's verdict is generally applauded: a mortal blow is dealt to freedom of thought. People sing in the streets, even at midnight, *God save the King and damn Tom Payne!*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The despatches from which these translations are made are in the Archives of the Department of State at Paris, series marked *Angleterre*, vol. 581.

The student of that period will find some instruction in a collection, now in the British Museum, of coins and medals mostly struck after the trial and outlawry of Paine. A half-penny, January 21, 1793: *obverse*, a man hanging on a gibbet, with church in the distance; motto "End of Pain"; *reverse*, open book inscribed "The Wrongs of Man." A token: bust of Paine, with his name; *reverse*, "The Mountain in Labour, 1793." Farthing: Paine gibbeted; *reverse*, breeches burning, legend, "Pandora's breeches"; beneath, serpent decapitated by a dagger, the severed head that of Paine. Similar farthing, but *reverse*, combustibles intermixed with labels issuing from a globe marked "Fraternity"; the labels inscribed "Regicide," "Robbery," "Falsity," "Requisition"; legend, "French Reforms, 1797"; near by, a church with flag, on it a cross. Half-penny without date, but no doubt struck in 1794, when a rumor reached London that Paine had been guillotined: Paine gibbeted; above, devil smoking a pipe; *reverse*, monkey dancing; legend, "We dance, Paine swings." Farthing: three men hanging on a gallows; "The three Thomases, 1796." *Reverse*, "May the three knaves of Jacobin Clubs never get a trick." The three Thomases were Thomas Paine, Thomas Muir, and Thomas Spence. In 1794 Spence was imprisoned seven months for publishing some of Paine's works at his so-called "Hive of Liberty." Muir, a Scotch lawyer, was banished to Botany Bay for fourteen years for having got up in Edinburgh (1792) a "Convention," in imitation of that just opened in Paris; two years later he escaped from Botany Bay on an American ship, and found his way to Paine in Paris. Among these coins there are two of opposite character. A farthing represents Pitt on a gibbet, against which rests a ladder; inscription, "End of P [here an eye] T." *Reverse*, face of Pitt conjoined with that of the devil, and legend, "Even Fellows." Another farthing like the last, except an added legend, "Such is the reward of tyrants, 1796." These anti-Pitt farthings were struck by Thomas Spence.

In the winter of 1792-3 the only Reign of Terror was in England. The Ministry had replied to Paine's "Rights of

Man" by a royal proclamation against seditious literature, surrounding London with militia, and calling a meeting of Parliament (December, 1792) out of season. Even before the trial of Paine his case was prejudged by the royal proclamation, and by the Addresses got up throughout the country in response,—documents which elicited Paine's Address to the Addressers, chapter IX. in this volume. The Tory gentry employed roughs to burn Paine in effigy throughout the country, and to harry the Nonconformists. Dr. Priestley's house was gutted. Mr. Fox (December 14, 1792) reminded the House of Commons that all the mobs had "Church and King" for their watchword, no mob having been heard of for "The Rights of Man"; and he vainly appealed to the government to prosecute the dangerous libels against Dissenters as they were prosecuting Paine's work. Burke, who in the extra session of Parliament for the first time took his seat on the Treasury Bench, was reminded that he had once "exulted at the victories of that rebel Washington," and welcomed Franklin. "Franklin," he said, "was a native of America; Paine was born in England, and lived under the protection of our laws; but, instigated by his evil genius, he conspired against the very country which gave him birth, by attempting to introduce the new and pernicious doctrines of republicans."

In the course of the same harangue, Burke alluded to the English and Irish deputations, then in Paris, which had congratulated the Convention on the defeat of the invaders of the Republic. Among them he named Lord Semphill, John Frost, D. Adams, and "Joel—Joel the Prophet" (Joel Barlow). These men were among those who, towards the close of 1792, formed a sort of Paine Club at "Philadelphia House"—as White's Hotel was now called. The men gathered around Paine, as the exponent of republican principles, were animated by a passion for liberty which withheld no sacrifice. Some of them threw away wealth and rank as trifles. At a banquet of the Club, at Philadelphia House, November 18, 1792, where Paine presided, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Sir Robert Smyth, Baronet, formally re-

nounced their titles. Sir Robert proposed the toast, "A speedy abolition of all hereditary titles and feudal distinctions." Another toast was, "Paine—and 'the new way of making good books known by a Royal proclamation and a King's Bench prosecution."

There was also Franklin's friend, Benjamin Vaughan, Member of Parliament, who, compromised by an intercepted letter, took refuge in Paris under the name of Jean Martin. Other Englishmen were Rev. Jeremiah Joyce, a Unitarian minister and author (coadjutor of Dr. Gregory in his "Cyclopædia"); Henry Redhead Yorke, a West Indian with some negro blood (afterwards an agent of Pitt, under whom he had been imprisoned); Robert Merry, husband of the actress "Miss Brunton"; Sayer, Rayment, Macdonald, Perry.

Sampson Perry of London, having attacked the government in his journal, "The Argus," fled from an indictment, and reached Paris in January, 1793. These men, who for a time formed at Philadelphia House their Parliament of Man, were dashed by swift storms on their several rocks. Sir Robert Smyth was long a prisoner under the Reign of Terror, and died (1802) of the illness thereby contracted. Lord Edward Fitzgerald was slain while trying to kindle a revolution in Ireland. Perry was a prisoner in the Luxembourg, and afterwards in London. John Frost, a lawyer (struck off the roll), ventured back to London, where he was imprisoned six months in Newgate, sitting in the pillory at Charing Cross one hour per day. Robert Merry went to Baltimore, where he died in 1798. Nearly all of these men suffered griefs known only to the "man without a country."

Sampson Perry, who in 1796 published an interesting "History of the French Revolution," has left an account of his visit to Paine in January, 1793:

"I breakfasted with Paine about this time at the Philadelphia Hotel, and asked him which province in America he conceived the best calculated for a fugitive to settle in, and, as it were, to begin the world with no other means or pretensions than common sense and common honesty. Whether he saw the occasion and



felt the tendency of this question I know not ; but he turned it aside by the political news of the day, and added that he was going to dine with Petion, the mayor, and that he knew I should be welcome and be entertained. We went to the mayoralty in a hackney coach, and were seated at a table about which were placed the following persons : Petion, the mayor of Paris, with his female relation who did the honour of the table ; Dumourier, the commander-in-chief of the French forces, and one of his aides-de-camp ; Santerre, the commandant of the armed force of Paris, and an aide-de-camp ; Condorcet ; Brissot ; Gaudet ; Gensonnet ; Danton ; Kersaint ; Clavière ; Vergniaud ; and Syèyes ; which, with three other persons, whose names I do not now recollect, and including Paine and myself, made in all nineteen."

Paine found warm welcome in the home of Achille Duchâtelet, who with him had first proclaimed the Republic, and was now a General. Madame Duchâtelet was an English lady of rank, Charlotte Comyn, and English was fluently spoken in the family. They resided at Auteuil, not far from the Abbé Moulet, who preserved an arm-chair with the inscription, *Benjamin Franklin hic sedebat*. Paine was a guest of the Duchâtelets soon after he got to work in the Convention, as I have just discovered by a letter addressed "To Citizen Le Brun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris."

"Auteuil, Friday, the 4th December, 1792. I enclose an Irish newspaper which has been sent me from Belfast. It contains the Address of the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin (of which Society I am a member) to the volunteers of Ireland. None of the English newspapers that I have seen have ventured to republish this Address, and as there is no other copy of it than this which I send you, I request you not to let it go out of your possession. Before I received this newspaper I had drawn up a statement of the affairs of Ireland, which I had communicated to my friend General Duchâtelet at Auteuil, where I now am. I wish to confer with you on that subject, but as I do not speak French, and as the matter requires confidence, General Duchâtelet has desired me to say that if you can make it convenient to dine with him and me at Auteuil, he will with pleasure do the office of in-

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terpreter. I send this letter by my servant, but as it may not be convenient to you to give an answer directly, I have told him not to wait.—THOMAS PAINE."

It will be noticed that Paine now keeps his servant, and drives to the Mayor's dinner in a hackney coach. A portrait painted in Paris about this time, now owned by Mr. Alfred Howlett of Syracuse, N. Y., shows him in elegant costume.

It is mournful to reflect, even at this distance, that only a little later both Paine and his friend General Duchâtelet were prisoners. The latter poisoned himself in prison (1794).

The illustrative notes and documents which it seems best to set before the reader at the outset may here terminate. As in the previous volumes the writings are, as a rule, given in chronological sequence, but an exception is now made in respect of Paine's religious writings, some of which antedate essays in the present volume. The religious writings are reserved for the fourth and final volume, to which will be added an Appendix containing Paine's poems, scientific fragments, and several letters of general interest.

