A Study of the Life and Works of Robert Treat Paine, Jr.

Ruth Thorndike Clough

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd/3325

This Open-Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.
Robert Treat Paine, Jr.

This likeness was copied from the portrait by Stuart.
A STUDY OF THE LIFE AND WORKS

of

ROBERT TREAT PAINE, JR.

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts (in English)

By

RUTH THORNDIKE CLOUGH

B. A., Goucher College, 1925

University of Maine

Orono

June, 1930
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Foreword</strong>.</td>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td><strong>Chapter I. Early Life (1773-1789)</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td><strong>Chapter II. The Student and the Poet (1789-1794)</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td><strong>Chapter III. The Editor (1794-1796)</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td><strong>Chapter IV. The Dilettante (1796-1809)</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td><strong>Chapter V. Last Years and Summary (1809-1811)</strong></td>
<td><strong>147</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Appendix.</strong></td>
<td><strong>184</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bibliography.</strong></td>
<td><strong>189</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The present study of the life and works of Robert Treat Paine, Jr. was begun one year ago as a thesis for the Master of Arts degree at the University of Maine. It is by no means an exhaustive study as much of the material which would serve to authenticate the more intimate facts of the poet's life has thus far successfully eluded an extensive search.

My studying has, for the most part, been done at Harvard Library, where I examined the files of newspapers over the period between 1790 and 1811, paying special attention to Paine's own publication, The Federal Orrery. I have also studied at the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Public Library, the State House Library in Boston, and the Library of Radcliffe College, Cambridge.

In my search for material, I visited the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, the Old Colony Historical Society at Taunton, the Essex Institute at Salem, the Boston Athenaeum, the New England Genealogical Society, the Old State House in Boston, the Suffolk County Court House, and the Boston City Hall, in each of these places examining such material as was available concerning the poet or his works.

To Dr. Milton Ellis of the University of Maine, I owe my special thanks for the inspiration, encouragement,
and unceasing help which has made this study possible. My thanks are also owing to Mr. Albert Matthews of Boston for his interest in my work and for bringing to my attention several inaccuracies recorded against Paine; and to Mr. John Paine of Boston for his courtesy in permitting me to examine his valuable collection of Paine papers, including the diaries of the Signer and his eldest son Robert Treat Paine, Jr. who died in 1798. To Dr. James A. Spalding of Portland, I am exceedingly grateful, both for his steady interest in my work and for his many helpful suggestions as to matters of research. I am also indebted to the custodians of Harvard Library, especially Mr. Robert H. Haynes for his prompt and kind assistance; and to the custodians of the Bangor Public Library and the University of Maine Library for their courtesy in complying with my requests for rare books.
FOREWORD

to a

STUDY OF THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ROBERT TREAT PAINE, JR.

"The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones."

To the student of American history, the name of Robert Treat Paine is still one to be conjured with; to the student of American literature, the name of Robert Treat Paine, Jr. usually means little more than a patriotic song, Boston culture in the late eighteenth century, and the faint but definite odor of scandal which still surrounds the ghost of the man who for a full decade of his life was lavishly courted by the satellites of Della Crusca in America, as poet par excellence, dramatic critic, and editor of a frankly partisan newspaper, the Federal Orrery.

During the twenty years in which Paine was writing, there was scarcely a newspaper, magazine or periodical of Massachusetts which did not in some way subscribe to his genius. The patriotic songs of his making were sung by all loyal citizens of the new America, and one, "Adams and Liberty," was known as the "Boston Patriotic Song" at the time of publication. Paine was called upon to

write occasional poetry and orations with a frequency which was in itself a tribute to the excellence of his dramatic composition, and the struggling stage of Boston could scarcely have existed without his youthful but ardent support. Washington and Adams alike praised his genius, and the literati of Cambridge and Boston honored his poetic effusions with gracious words and open purses. And yet, as is so often the case where genius has been too readily assumed, the news of the poet's death had scarcely reached the outer confines of Boston before his name was forgotten.

Within the year following Paine's death, a friend and fellow-editor took it upon himself to collect from everywhere the snatches of song, poetry, and dramatic essay which were all that remained as testimony to the immortality claimed for the poet. These he published, together with a long biographical preface compiled by another friend to the poet, in a single volume, entitled The Works in Verse and Prose of the Late Robert Treat Paine, Jun., Esq. If further evidence were needed to attest the fact that the fame of Paine had declined with

1. Joshua Belcher (1781-1816). He was the son of Captain Sarson and Fenton (Hill) Belcher and a first cousin to the novelist William Hill Brown. He entered a partnership with Samuel Turell Armstrong as Belcher and Armstrong, printers and publishers, the firm which published the Boston Weekly Magazine (1804-1805). Belcher died in 1816, heavily in debt.

2. Boston, 1812. Printed and Published by Joshua Belcher with Biographical Sketch of the Life and Character of the Late Robert Treat Paine, Jun., Esq., By Charles Prentiss.
such extraordinary rapidity, it could be supplied by the pages of this preface. There is much to be said for this last, which, for its day, must be considered as an adequate account of the poet's life. The author, Charles Prentiss, although obliged to dip deep into a memory all too often hazy on matters which are of most concern to the student of biography, did succeed in indicating the chief facts of the case. These he has presented in a style which leaves little doubt as to his ability to tell what he has to say beautifully, and with a sincerity calculated to impress the most erudite. His problem is also ours. At the time of writing, he must have realized that the vogue of Paine had passed and that he was left with the thankless task of trying to rekindle a bright spark from the dying ashes of a past-century idol in the cold dawn of a new century. Moreover, the poet's family was then living, and the stern attitude which the Signer held toward the moral vagrancy of his poet son was pretty generally appreciated by Boston society. Prentiss was obliged to tread a delicate way in order to avoid the incurrence of both private and public censure. He saw in his task, however, royal opportunity to point a moral, and the whole sketch leans sharply in that direction. The biographical material which Selfridge added to the sketch by Prentiss but
supplements the larger work.

Shortly after The Works of Paine appeared, the Port Folio published a colossal review of the book. The author of the review evidently hoped to cater to the tastes of Boston's leading moral critics by destroying the last vestige of the poet's reputation. In some fifteen pages of closely-printed matter, he has labored to remold the panegyric of Prentiss' sketch into the diatribe of avowedly artistic literary criticism. Under the weight of his critique Paine's Life and Works suffered immeasurably.

Nearly twenty years elapsed before the poet received further significant mention, when Kettell's Specimens of American Poetry, in attempting something like an exhaustive study of early American poetry, paid Paine the compliment of a half-page criticism of his works in which it was found for him that "his most elaborate pieces rise above mediocrity, but the bulk of his poetry has about the same degree of merit, as the common run of magazine rhymes."


4. Ibid., page 96.
After this, the case for the poet rested until the mid-century, when a number of encyclopedias and histories of literature appeared, in all of which Paine was given space among the minor poets of the late eighteenth century. Scholars of the period show a surprising degree of naiveté in dealing with Boston's patriotic rhymster. It is all too plain that Prentiss' biographical treatment of the poet forms the bona fide basis for their summary remarks. No one has attempted to pierce beyond the wall of that scholar's defense to get at the facts which occasioned it. All seem content to summarize to their needs the contentions of this one biographer, or to borrow from one another a particular critical attitude, with the result that errors pass as truths and impressions become traditions beyond comment or question. The essential critical attitude which these scholars held toward the works of Paine is in general as hostile as that of the era upon which it is patterned. Loring, lacking courage to attempt an original evaluation of the poet's works, feels called upon to recite the exact words of Paine's contemporaries. Duyckinck accords Paine a page of conventional biography without reaching any outstanding conclusion as to the value of his poet-

ry. Griswold regards the entire effort of the poet as "unintelligible and tawdry." Stedman passes lightly over him with a half-line reference to his "jingling verse." Buckingham, by reason of his nearness to Paine's own period, alone takes exception to the mid-nineteenth century; and by his different approach through the channels of journalism, offers the first original interpretation and constructive criticism of Paine for the century.

From the standpoint of the drama, Dunlap, Clapp and Seilhamer represent the century's quota of historians to cover that phase of the poet's life. Dunlap's reminiscences take on the nature of satirical skits, in which are presented a few of the more salient aspects of Paine's career. Clapp's references are the fragmentary gleanings of inaccurate scholarship. Seilhamer's comments, aside from the originality of their phrasing, go little further than the conventional remarks. To him, Paine "was the first American youth to set himself up as a professional dramatic critic" and the "first American journalist

3. Buckingham, J.T., Specimens of Newspaper Literature, 1850, pages 221-250.
5. Clapp, W.W., Jr., A Record of the Boston Stage, 1853.
to go to the devil allured by the limelight of the stage", and with little more he rests his case.

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, Allibone's Critical Dictionary of British and American Literature published a column on the most notable facts of Paine's life which, while it offered no fresh treatment on the subject, did serve as a large measure of proof that the reputation of Paine had survived the test of a century's abuse and bade fair to stand in even better favor with the coming century.

Twentieth-century scholars of American Literature are everywhere inclined to look more kindly upon the early sponsors of their national literature, and under their treatment Paine begins to take on new color. Trent, in particular, favors his "unique Bohemianism" and infuses into his personality a degree of substantiality with which he may better combat the criticism of a new century. In comparing Paine to Poe, Trent finds the former "on the whole a better scholar, speaker, conversationalist and wit, than the fortunate genius whose name is now honored in every land." Truly high praise

4. Ibid., page 199.
for one who, during an entire century, merited only fragmentary comment and contemptuous regard. While the generality of present-day scholars will not go all the way with Trent, they will accord to Paine an occasional significant paragraph and in that way keep alive our interest in this early American poet.

It is not the purpose of the present study to "de-bunk" Paine along the lines of popular biography. Tradition has performed that ignominy for him with startlingly slight effort, and the task is now to get at the man behind the mass of prejudice which has grown up about him. There is still much to be desired in the attitude which Lady Massachusetts assumes toward those of her progeny who step outside the beaten path, but as Paine is essentially Bostonian and essentially an appealing figure, it is hoped that these attributes will

1. Probably the most startling example of this attitude is that of Dr. Allen's American Biographical and Historical Dictionary which states of the poet:

Indolence and the theatre, wine and women ruined him. He died the victim of his own folly and vice...There is nothing of simple, natural beauty in any of the writings of Mr. Paine. His prose is in bad taste, and his poetry is entirely unworthy of the commendation bestowed upon it by his contemporaries. But, had he written the most beautiful poetry, it would have been worthless associated with his own immoral character. No poet has power over the heart, if known to be a gamester, and intemperate, and a profligate lover of pleasure. The virtuous and enobling sentiments, found in the poems of Cowper and Montgomery have tenfold power, because known to have come from the heart of virtuous good men.
in time, plead his case for him successfully. Literature must, of course, assert first claim to Paine because of his career as poet, but he should not be interesting from that standpoint alone. Historians will find in him the expression of a new country's spirit in the time of such crisis as the formation of her government. Psychologists will take delight in him if for no other reason than to make of his life a happy, though paradoxical, illustration of the quasi-philosophy contained in his sire's creed, which asserts "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

But before Paine can be thoroughly understood in any light, it remains for someone to re-cast the mold of his life to the principles of modern biography: to sort fact from fancy, prejudice from honest opinion, and by employing only the materials of contemporary evidence, to rebuild a new study of his life, where, despite the existing lacunae, the poet may be viewed as a poet and not as a literary bogie. There is one other task to be completed before we are done with Paine; the critical evaluation of such of his works as merit our attention in order that we may arrive at something like an understanding of their intrinsic value. In these intentions, then, does the present study of Paine, find its raison d'être.
Genealogical Table of Paine Family

James Paine (1665-1728)
  m.
Bethiah Thacher (1671-1734)

Thomas Paine (1694-1757)

Rev. Samuel Treat (1648-1717)
m.
Abigail Willard (1665-1746)

Robert Treat Paine (1731-1814)
m.
Funice Treat (1705-1747)

Ensign Morgan Cobb (1673-1755)
m.
Capt. Thomas Cobb (1705-1779)

Susannah Willis

Sarah (Sally) Cobb (1744-1816)

James Leonard (1677-1764)
m.
Lydia Leonard (17-- 1762)

Lydia Gulliver.
CHAPTER ONE

THOMAS PAINÉ (1773-1811)

(Robert Treat Paine, Jr.)

The poet did not take on the name of Robert Treat Paine, Jr. until 1803, eight years before his death. As most of his poems, outside of those written under pseudonyms, are signed with his original name, Thomas, it seems advisable to employ that name until we reach the period in his life when circumstances caused him to apply to the Massachusetts Legislature for the name which his older brother's death had left him free to claim.
Early Life (1773-1789)

With some remarks on his Genealogy

On March 9, 1773, at a time when the fate of the American Colonies hung in balance between the indifferent policies of King George's counsellors and the inflamed hatred of a few Colonial leaders for things English, a second son was born to Sally Cobb and Robert Treat Paine at their "elegant mansion" overlooking "the Green" in Taunton, Massachusetts. This son was called Thomas, the fourth of that name in a family rapidly becoming distinguished in America, not alone for its then most prominent member, Robert Treat Paine, but alike for its happy foundation and many years of service to a country always in need of loyal, tough-fibred men, and strong, sensible women.

Although Time has obscured the history of the first American ancestor of this branch of the Paine family, tradition has it that he was the Thomas Payne who came from England around 1622, bringing with him

1. Most of the genealogical material used in this chapter has been derived from Paine Ancestry, compiled by a member of the family, Sarah Cushing Paine, and edited for them by Charles Pope, Boston, 1912. For convenience, this book will be referred to hereafter as P.A.
a son of about ten years of age. This son, who is simply characterized as having lost "one eye by an arrow" previously to his arrival in America, is believed to have settled with his father on the outer edge of Cape Cod at Mattacheese, which became Yarmouth in 1638. Owing to his change of location occasioned by his marriage to Mary Snow of Eastham, however, he has come down to history as Thomas Paine of Eastham. That the pioneer Paines, father and son, early filled positions of trust and respect in their separate communities, is evidenced by records naming the former as one of the two deputies chosen to represent Yarmouth at the General Assembly at Plymouth Colony in 1639, while the latter, during his ninety-four years, acted as cooper, juror, and constable-of-sorts for Eastham and vicinity and at his death, which occurred in 1706, left to his ten children a respectable amount of property.

Of these children, the sixth son, James, carried on his father's trade as cooper in Barnstable, where he met and married the daughter of a pioneer family, and through a keen business sense and a more than ordinary knowledge of law, amassed for himself and family what was for those

2. Ibid., page 7.
days a veritable fortune. His only surviving son, Thomas, received the benefits of his father's skill and wealth at an early age indeed. Whether or not James Paine felt the need of establishing his claim to high caste through the superior education of his son, we do not know. At any rate, it was apparently determined from the beginning that Thomas should have the complete equipment of a gentleman, more, a scholar. Thus, after a splendid preparation for Harvard College, he entered and was graduated with distinction. Although a student of the Classics, he had shown while in college a remarkable ability to predict astronomical phenomena, and in 1717 and 1718 he published almanacs of his making. In this achievement, he may be said to have laid the cornerstone for the department of astronomy which his great-grandson was to make possible for Harvard through greater wealth and training. Following Harvard, Thomas Paine prepared for the ministry and was soon ordained as pastor of a church in Weymouth, Massachusetts, which he held until ill-health forced him to abandon it about 1730. He seems to have been a man of many talents, and it is noteworthy that his literary ability was not the least of his accomplishments. Many of his sermons were published and some of them are still extant in manuscript form. From casual observation, it

1. P.A., page 51
might readily be assumed that he was one in whom the
germ of piety, planted by the Puritan Fathers, had waxed
great; but it is true that the author of *A Lecture on
Original Sin* did not scorn the society of the most
fashionable families of Boston, among whom he was known
as a wealthy patron of arts, letters and commerce. His
marriage to Eunice Treat, daughter of the noted Boston
minister, the Reverend Samuel Treat, and granddaughter
of the first governor of Connecticut, Robert Treat, had
by no means lessened his claim to social and political
prominence. Indeed, his whole life until the loss of
his wealth about 1740, through the failure of the Land
Bank and the capture of his ships laden with cargo to
the Indies, was one of luxurious living, uncommon erudi-
tion, and notable public service to his country. He died
at his daughter Abigail's home, at Germantown in Braintree,
in 1757. The last lean years of his life could not quite
efface the memories of a full and happy career as schol-
ar, merchant and divine; and bitter as these late years
must have seemed, at times, to one who had known much
wealth and prestige both at home and abroad, they may be

1. Written, Boston, 1724.
said to have found compensation in the accomplishments of Robert Treat Paine, the beloved son of an illustrious father.

Such were the antecedents of Thomas Paine, the poet. The collateral branches of his admirable family tree present names in no way inferior to the stock with which they became allied, and include members of the Hopkins, Snow, Thacher, Willard and Winslow families, all pioneers of America. It remained for the Revolution to elevate one member of this lineage to lasting fame and set the stamp of approval upon all subsequent issue worthy of the name of Robert Treat Paine.

The poet's father needs but little introduction to the student of American history and literature. It will suffice to review only such events of his long life as fashion and explain the short life of his son Thomas. Robert Treat Paine was born in Boston about March 11, 1731. Up to his graduation from Harvard College in the year 1749, his life seems to have passed as happily and as successfully as can be imagined. The Reverend Thomas Paine had planned that his son should enter the ministry as befitted a gentleman and scholar, but such a career

1. P.A. gives his birth date as March 11, 1731 (page 25); The Paine Family Records, Vol. II, No. 7, page 169, have also stated that he was born on March 11, 1731. The Boston Records of Births, AD 1700-1800, however, gives the date as March 12, 1730 (page 199); while Davol, in his Two Men of Taunton, gives two dates, March 4, 1731 (page 69) and March 14, 1731 (page 403.)
meant years of preparation, and by the time Robert Treat had finished his preliminary education at Harvard, his father's business was bankrupt, and he was obliged to strike out for himself. One biographer has laid much stress on the experimental nature of his life, prior to the time of his marriage, but it would seem only natural that one of his temperament and training should drift about somewhat aimlessly when cut off from the substantial moorings of a lavishly indulgent home. For a time he acted as usher, or assistant teacher, in the South Grammar School in Boston and then took a school of his own in Lunenburg, Massachusetts. He followed the sea, fought in skirmishes with the French and Indians, and finally started the combined study of theology and law under his relative, Judge Willard. By 1757, he had been admitted to the Bar, and shortly after that, he began his legal career in the circuit court, which took him to Maine and throughout the southern part of his own state, Massachusetts. In 1761, he abandoned this circuit practice and settled in Taunton, which appears to have offered larger opportunity for the success of his legal career. Here he soon came to know Captain Thomas Cobb, whose affiliation through marriage with the Leonard

1. Davol, Two Men of Taunton, page 137.
3. Ibid., page 91.
family, then the leading iron-manufacturers of the country, had brought him to a considerable position and prominence. The Cobb family had come in from Attleboro but a short while before and were living in the second story of a capacious colonial house, over a tavern on the ground floor which supplied the Captain with an excuse for meting out the kindly hospitality for which he was famous. Taunton, at the time, was a flourishing town through which all travellers to Boston were wont to pass, and the tavern must have presented many lively scenes while host and guest alike talked and tippled to their hearts' content and settled their country's affairs before retiring for the night.

Sally Cobb, the Captain's oldest daughter, probably helped her father to entertain his guests and between times cared for her family, made motherless by the death of Lydia Leonard Cobb, shortly after their removal to Taunton. She must certainly have considered it high compliment that one of Paine's standing should choose to cultivate her father's acquaintance, for although Captain Cobb was undoubtedly a man of distinction in his community, he had not the education which would enable him to contend intellectually with the brilliant and talented young lawyer. For her own sake, she must have felt hap-

1. Two Men of Taunton, page 173.
py to receive the highly eligible bachelor in her father's home. There is Davol's glowing account of the affair, which, for our better understanding, is here quoted:

When the new lawyer took up his residence in Taunton,—well-born, witty, well-educated,—he held passports to the best society, and cultivated those leading families in which were marriageable maidens. His first Thanksgiving dinner in Taunton was eaten at Thomas Cobb's tavern in 1760. Captain Cobb was a religious man and presumably nodded to his guest to ask the blessing, since the young lawyer could not have wholly forgotten his ministerial experiences. Who doubts that Sally Cobb, then applecheeked, saucy, and sixteen, waited on the table, passing drumsticks, dumpling, celery and syllabub? and that here was the first stitch by Cupid, the sly old tailor, in basting these two hearts together?

And yet theirs does not seem to have been a highly romantic love affair. After a nine-year acquaintance, of which four years was avowed courtship, the two were finally married at Attleboro, by the Reverend Mr. Thacher, on March 15, 1770, two months before the birth of their son, Robert Treat, Jr.

The same month in which the marriage took place saw the beginning of a final break with England in what has come to be known as the Boston Massacre. Paine was called upon to take an active part in the trial which followed this significant event. Waves of hatred and resentment against all English soldiery radiated to the farthest cor-

1. Two Men of Taunton, page 173.
3. Two Men of Taunton, page 403.
ner of the State. As war became an inevitability, the inhabitants of the coast towns, realizing that they stood in imminent danger of attack from the sea, took alarm and fled inland. Taunton, from its position, offered safe harbor to these refugees. The "Green", a ragged square forming the center of the town and serving at once as children's playground and common pasture for the poultry and live-stock of neighboring families, turned almost overnight into a drill-ground for the patriots of Taunton.

With Sally Cobb's marriage had come a dowry, and the Paines now began to erect their new and pretentious house, which, from its post at the northeast corner of the "Green", commanded a direct view of the martial activities of patriotic Taunton and presented the embodiment of the good taste and culture of its owner. The Crockers, Faleses, Leonards, and Tillinghasts, all families of distinction in Massachusetts, undoubtedly welcomed such an attractive addition to their own group of gambrel-roofed colonial houses, which formed a semi-circle about the "Green" and but for a stray Lombardy poplar or two, showed little pretense of ornamentation. ¹ This was the home into which the poet

¹ Collections of the Old Colony Historical Society, Taunton, Massachusetts, pages 154-162.
The arrow marks the house in which the poet was born. It was built by his father in 1771 and has been preserved in a panel painting believed to be nearly one-hundred and fifty years old. The panel is now in the possession of the Old Colony Historical Society at Taunton.
was born, and these were the surroundings which welcomed his timely appearance.

Though little is known of the more intimate details of Thomas Paine's early life in Taunton, it is doubtful whether there was much in it to distinguish it from that of any normal child born in abnormal times. True, he had advantage in birth, but it is probable that his education there encompassed little more than a sketchy gleaning of the three R's as his mother found time to teach them in the hectic days when the clarion note of the Revolution was sounded and all able-bodied members of the Cobb and Paine families responded to the call. When Thomas was but a year old, his father was elected to the General Court of Massachusetts, and shortly after went with John and Samuel Adams and Thomas Cushing to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. The subsequent comings-and-goings on the significant errands of government kept him away from home a good deal of the

1. In his The Hundred Boston Orators, published, Boston, 1855, Loring records the following interesting account of these men (page 235): John Adams, in addressing his wife, tells her "by way of secret, that no mortal tale could equal the fidgets, the whims, the caprice, the vanity, the superstition and the irritability, of his compatriots, on their journey from New England to Philadelphia. These compatriots were Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, and Robert Treat Paine. The first of these was a distiller, and the last a lawyer; and both were weak and insignificant men, the tools of Samuel Adams, the grand confederate and correspondent of that hoary traitor, Franklin."
time. We have no reason to believe that his family was neglected during this service, however, for bits of information taken from the diary which he kept all of his life prove that he had his family constantly in mind and improved every opportunity to communicate with them. Moreover, Eunice Paine, his younger sister, had, since the death of her mother, made her home with the Paine family and must have been an important factor in Sally Paine's life while her husband was away. Eunice Paine's intimacy with her brother, Robert Treat, has been compared to the famous friendships of history. She appears to have been a woman of unique charm and uncommon education and is one of the few friends to whom Abigail Adams refers intimately in her letters to her husband.

The seven years in which the poet lived in Taunton, easily the most impressionable years of a child's life, were to form for him and his older brother and sister a never-ending source of interest and concern. We have already mentioned something of the historical significance of the "Green." It now remains to speak of those aspects of it which must have been most familiar to the growing Paine children. Daily, patriots came hither to

deliver inspired speeches to enthusiastic townsmen; here, loyal Whigs gathered to fire a ball into the chamber window of the Tory citizen, Daniel Leonard, kinsman to Sally Paine; here was effected one of the last celebrations of Guy Fawkes Day in America; and here, as late as the year 1786, the Shays insurrectionists, headed by Colonel Valentine, assembled to storm the doors of Uncle David Cobb's home in a vain attempt to gain his surrender of the legal court papers. We can imagine these children avidly watching one of the day's drillings on the "Green" or listening to accounts of the War's progress from their hard-swearing, hard-riding Uncle David, on one of his brief visits to his home during his command under General Washington. We can share with the entire family the excitement caused by Benjamin Franklin's visit to the Paine home at a time when Robert Treat was away on one of his important missions. In 1778, the Rev-

1. David Cobb, Sally's famous older brother, of whom it is said that "he held a greater diversity of public occupations and number of offices than any other living man in that age and discharged them all with honor and credit. He became a physician, a general, a judge, was President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, member of Congress/ one term, Councillor, and Lieutenant Governor." For a full account see Daggett's History of Attleborough, page 672.

2. Collections of the Old Colony Historical Society, pages 155-156.

3. Two Men of Taunton, pages 305-306.
erend Dr. Turner solemnized a wholesale baptism of the four children, Robert, Jr., Sally, Thomas, and the infant Charles, and in the following year, when an epidemic of smallpox broke out in the vicinity, Dr. Cobb wisely inoculated the entire family against that dread disease.

By 1781, the activities of the War had confined themselves largely to the South, leaving Boston temporarily free from danger. Robert Treat Paine had so far established his reputation as lawyer and statesman that he felt it necessary to be nearer to the center of professional activity. Consequently, he packed up his household goods and books and with his "little wagon" brought them piecemeal to Boston. By April, the entire family was esconced in the new home at the corner of Federal and Milk Streets, of which one biographer has made such a happy picture:

This house, purchased of Colonel John Amory, a Boston merchant, was once owned by Governor

---

1. Two Men of Taunton, pages 403-404.
2. Ms Diary, Robert Treat Paine, April 2, 1781.
3. The Boston Records, giving report of the Direct Tax Census of 1798, state the value of this house as $8000 and describe it as a "brick and wood dwelling of three stories and fifty windows, situated on a plot of land, 18, 476 feet square." (page 341)
4. Two Men of Taunton, pages 368-369.
Shirley. It was a large, two-storied brick dwelling with gambrel roof; in the spacious rear garden was the kitchen with its jack and turnspit. The location was in the middle of the town. The North End had become the resort of the ebb-tide aristocracy, and fashion was working around to the east and south of Beacon Hill. Paine's new home was not in the most healthful quarter, for salt water flowed up to the next square, and most imperfect drainage compelled occasional bailing from the cellar; peradventure also setting afloat the ten barrels of cider which he annually stored to promote the sociability of winter evenings. When his not-distant neighbors, Cushing, Quincy, Gardner, Wendell, Sam Adams or Bowdoin, dropped in after supper, young Robert was sent down cellar to fill the pitcher, while the guests talked the evening away over current events and the Attorney-General's business.

At the time the Paine family moved to Boston, Thomas was but seven years old. His father had been appointed to the office of Attorney General of the Supreme Court at Boston and was enjoying a growing reputation for integrity and worth among the most able and influential members of his state and country. Although we cannot dispute the fact that he was a brilliant and efficient man, we must also admit of his other side, a side which his friend and colleague John Adams saw, perhaps too clearly. It was not malice alone which brought the latter to record in his Diary the following scurrilous account of Paine, Senior:

1. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine, August 26, 1777.

Bob Paine is conceited, and pretends to more knowledge and genius than he has. I have heard him say that he took more pleasure in solving a problem in Algebra than in a frolic. He told me the other day that he was as curious after a minute and particular knowledge of mathematics and philosophy as I could be about the laws of antiquity. By his boldness in company he makes himself a great many enemies, his aim in company is to be admired, not to be beloved. . . . This impudence may set the million agape at him, but will make all persons of sense despise him or hate him. . . . He is an impudent, ill-bred, conceited fellow; yet he has wit, sense and learning, and a great deal of humor; and has virtue and pieté, except his fretful peevish, childish complaints against the disposition of things. This character is drawn with resentment of his ungenerous treatment of me, and allowances must therefore be made; but these are unexaggerated facts.

We do not need the foregoing account to see that Judge Paine was a hard man to know. Not only did he have an honest appreciation of his own sterling worth, but he was determined that others should hold the same opinion of him. While it cannot be denied that tradition and circumstance, coupled with much genuine ability, entitled him to a large degree of pride, it must be said in fairness to Adams's statement, that Paine was often insufferably arrogant and proud beyond reason. It can be seen, however, from the list of names mentioned above that he had the pick of the land to friend; and it is no small point that his sons grew up knowing these men and their families, intimate-
ly.

Up to the time, Thomas was commencing his formal education, there is nothing to prove that he showed any of the genius which was later ascribed to him. This could not be the fault of his parents, for his father, used as he was to warm his hands in the glow of public opinion, would most certainly have encouraged anything which would set his children up to the credit of the family. Robert, Jr. was undoubtedly his father's favorite child. Paine's Diary is full of mention of this son, whom he carried about with him in his "little wagon" and in whom he must have seen signs of great promise.

Prentiss states that Thomas was first placed with Master Carter, who kept one of the reading and writing schools of Boston, but he showed so little proficiency there that he was only reluctantly received by Master Hunt, who kept the Boston Latin School at the time. This may have been the case, although there is but a short period between April, the month in which the Paines moved to Boston, and July 18, 1781, the date on which Thomas entered the Latin School. To what rank he at-

1. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine (1776---), passim.
3. The material used in this description of the Latin School and its masters has been taken largely from the Boston Public Latin School Catalogue (1635-1884), Boston, published by the Boston Latin School Association, 1886.
tained while there, who his intimate friends were, or what he thought of Boston and school in general, we are unable to say. We do know something of his fellow classmates, who numbered twenty-two in all and included members of such prominent Boston families as the Coolidges, Danforths, Gardners, Jacksons, Millers, Lovells and Southacks. Although Master Hunt kept a catalog of his classes from 1776 to 1803, he has given us nothing of importance concerning his pupils; and it is a matter of almost singular misfortune that the class of 1781, to which Thomas and Robert, Jr. belonged, has been lost from the manuscript catalog. Thomas kept no diary of his daily activities, and Robert did not start one until the year in which he entered Harvard, 1785. We must look to other sources, then, for a picture of these early school days of the Paine boys.

The first school in Boston has gone under many names since the date of its founding, but it is most frequently referred to as the Boston Public Latin School. Under the guidance of such men as the venerable Maude, Cheever, Williams, and Lovell, who, with a Bible in one hand and a birch rod in the other, struggled to impart the essence of learning as they perceived it, young America marched haltingly through the rudiments of Latin, Greek and the three R's.
Master Samuel Hunt, who took over the Latin School in 1776 at the death of Lovell and by order of the governing board of education, came into a heritage which demanded unusual strength of character and purpose. The upheaval caused by the Revolution had sadly disarranged the morale of the School, and it was often difficult to maintain a school at all, when danger of a skirmish was at hand.

At the time in which the Paine boys were entering Latin School, Master Hunt had achieved a reputation for conscientiousness and rigid discipline, attributes which frequently involved him in difficulties with the parents of his pupils. His school, "a small, square, brick building," occupied a spot opposite the present City Hall site on School Street. Here the poet, his older brother, and the others of his class imbibed from the lips of their master the elements of Latin and Greek, from the grammar straight through to Homer and the Testament. Scriptural readings opened and closed the program for each day, and several hours of the week were given over to the study of arithmetic, reading and writing as taught by the masters of schools for that purpose located elsewhere in the town.

But all the while, Thomas was learning something more than Latin verbs and Greek declensions. He was
learning that men are not created equal, at least as to opportunity. He was finding out that only the sons of the rich were able to pursue the higher educational advantages of college, and he was probably glorying in the fortune which had given him the opportunity to further his early training in the Classics. Further, he was learning the essence of the American Constitution as it progressed in the minds of his father and his friends. There were other weighty matters of law and government which he heard discussed in his home almost and it is small wonder that he grew up with a sense of the social and cultural excellence, nay, of his family.

We are not for a moment to suppose that Thomas Llyddon appreciative of all that came his way, nor that he represented the embodiment of the old saying, "children should be seen and not heard." It now becomes necessary to bring forward the most extraordinary instance of Thomas Paine's precocity, a poem which he wrote at this period in response to some pun-

1. The poem, entitled "Cerberus," has fortunately been preserved for us in a Boston newspaper, The Mercury, January 13, 1795, and while it is not clear as to the means by which the editors of this newspaper procured so rare an example of the poet's early writing, the motive for its publication at the time is plainly that of political spite. Paine's answer to the Mercury article, Federal Orrery, January 15, 1795, sets the date of the poem at sometime in 1785, when he was but twelve years of age.
ishment inflicted by his father, and one which presents beyond a doubt, the definite and somewhat remarkable poetical proclivities of his youthful mind. This poem, which in his own words, represents "the mere petulant effusion of an angry boy, who irritated by supposed ill-treatment and prompted by the instigation of paternal resentment, sat down to write as bitterly as he could without consulting either truth or justice," is here quoted for our better understanding of his early talent for poetastering:

\[\text{CERBERUS}\]

A Very Curious and Uncommon Character.

Of this swift tribe, behold that uncouth form, "That looks a very monster in a storm;" Whose "gorgon" eye-balls roll a gloomy frown, From whose rough hide depends a silken gown. Dark is his visage as the shades below, And SPLEEN triumphant scowls upon his brow. Leave me to scourge this brutal son of earth, Whom "Nature" shrank from when she gave him birth. Hint not to me my Muse is indiscreet, She never saw that face she fear'd to meet. If common fame can prove th'assertion truth, In fighting first he employ'd his early youth, To piddling traffic next he turn'd his care, But still successless, found small profits there. Resolv'd to change the inglorious life he led, With Latin then he stor'd his empty head; By constant plodding learnt each grammar rule, Then ------ reign'd the sub-preceptor of a school. But dullness, ever careful of her own, To nobler heights, resolv'd to push her son, The path to fame, thro' fair religion's road,

1. "The dog of three heads, said to guard the gates of hell." This is Paine's name for his father, whose three main occupations as school-teacher, minister and judge have already been discussed in this chapter.
The leaden goddess to her offspring show'd.
How oft, alas! beneath that sacred veil
Do artful knaves the basest crimes conceal!
How does hypocrisy, the noble air
And generous front, of godlike virtue bear.
High in the Pulpit then a priest be shown,
And deals out others sermons as his own,
There whilst his tongue would gospel truths
impart,

He meditated mischief in his heart,
E'en while his lips pronounce'd the name of Lord,
His soul apostate scorn'd the awful word.
Last when fierce BRITAIN and her hireling host,
With wars loud thunders shook our menacing coast,
When DEATH terrific ravag'd every state,
And hapless orphans wail'd their father's fate,
'Twas then this wretch, in that disastrous hour,
Arm'd with the rod of persecuting pow'r
Thro' tempting avarice spurn'd the path he trod,
And for the venal bar forsook his GOD.
O CHURCHILL! could my genius strong like thine,
Launch the keen bolts of thy tremendous line,
Such as on blasted HOGARTH once you hurl'd,
Soon of this wretch I'd rid th'applauding world.
Shou'd hell's TARTARIAN gulf, and dire abyss,
The infernal crew of furious friends dismiss,
Shou'd dark COCYTUS from his sorrowing there,
On frighted earth his spleen-struck spectres pour,
Shou'd viper'd "malice" all her snakes uprear,
And grudging ENVY shed the spiteful tear,
Not all the passions of their train combin'd
Could form a harder heart or bloodier mind.
Stand forward CERBERUS --- thou monster fell,
Thou worse than HEATHEN-FABLED dog of Hell!
Nay, why so backward? wherefore wou'dst thou run,
Think'st thou by flight swift satyr's shafts to shun,
Or does reflection's goad thy bosom tear,
And conscious baseness chill thy soul with fear?
Say, is it guilt o'erspreads thy coward cheek?
Stand forth thou SAVAGE! hear me while I speak.
Did e'er the miseries of a wretch distrest,
With pity touch that adamantine breast?
When the sad widow told her tale of woe,
Did e'er thy soul with warm compassion glow?
Didst ever thou on PENURY’S demand
To pinching age stretch forth thy saving hand?
No—monster, no—to all sense of feeling lost
One generous act not all thy life can boast.
When MEMORY hands thee down to future times,
And in her faithful book records thy crimes,
Wrung with indignant ire th’astonish’d age,
Will shrink abhorrent from the dreadful page,
On INFAMY’S black scrawl inscrib’d, thy name
Shall stand, to damn thee to eternal fame.

Such was young Paine’s response to a punishment which
no one will doubt he richly deserved. If the above is a
sample of what he could write after a whipping, we hesi-
tate to think what a severer chastisement might have in-
spired in his vengeful breast. This is not a pretty piece
of writing certainly, nor does its subject do credit to
the author’s talents. It is significant for other rea-
sons, however. In the first place, it was to set the
pace for the poet’s later satiric couplets. Cerberus is
the type and symbol of his longest and most notable pieces.
In the second place, it establishes the attitude which,
all his life, Paine was to take toward his estimable
parent. The poem is most significant as an illustration
of the youth’s ability to apply his knowledge to a pur-
pose, despite the crudeness of that purpose.

Cerberus is undoubtedly a piece of practised writing.
Its couplets, modelled upon those of Churchill, are exe-
cuted with naturalness and vigor, while the skillful blend-
ing of classical and mythological allusion is almost mas-
terly. There is, indeed, small doubt that Paine had read
widely in the poetry of his century. He must have absorbed, from the beginning of his education, an exceptional amount of the cultural and classical learning available to one of his years. He may not have attained to the first place in his class, but we may be sure that he did not disgrace his master in the matter of his practical and polite education, nor exasperate with sluggish and slothful habits.

Fragmentary as are the facts which have come down to us from this period of Thomas Paine's life, we do gain from them a definite picture of the culture of eighteenth century Boston as expressed in the life of one of her most fortunately endowed progeny. This was the period when the poet was started along the path of classical learning, a path which he was to follow for the rest of his life, and the period which moulded his activities and fashioned his career.
CHAPTER TWO

The Student and The Poet
(1788-1794)

On July 19, 1788, Thomas Paine "was examined and admitted" at Harvard. His older brother Robert, then a junior at the College, records nothing of the new candidate's feelings upon this significant occasion in the Diary which he kept throughout this period. Possibly it did not hold the usual novelty for him, accustomed as he was to hearing almost daily accounts of college life. But Robert was by no means the only Harvard enthusiast of the family, for the boys' father kept in constant touch with his college, actually, and through his friends, many of whom were the patrons and officers of the institution. James Bowdoin, "that enlightened and constant friend of the college," was a colleague and near friend to Mr. Paine, and the eminent Judges Lowell and Cushing,

1. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine, Jr. July 19, 1788.
2. Governor James Bowdoin, economist, philanthropist, scholar, eminent lawyer and patron of arts and letters, graduated from Harvard in 1745 and was a member of the Corporation of the College during its period of adjustment.
3. John Lowell, the lawyer and scholar, graduated from Harvard in 1760. He not only served on the Corporation during the period of adjustment, but also helped to raise the standing of his college throughout his life.
4. Thomas Cushing: see Chapter One, page 19.
as well as the Professors Wigglesworth and Webber, all at some time members of the Harvard Corporation, were included among his most intimate acquaintances. Dr. Joseph Willard, the beloved president of Harvard, during the period in which the Paine boys attended, was not only a near friend but a distant relative as well. Judge Paine alludes frequently to dinners and other social affairs enjoyed at the home of the amiable scholar, upon the occasions when some college activity or professional duty took him to Cambridge for the day.

With Willard, a new regime had commenced at Harvard. The period of severe financial depression through which the college passed immediately after the Revolution, and which for a time threatened to undermine its very foundation, had given place to a new era of financial independence and prosperity. The discipline among

1. Edward Wigglesworth, Hollis Professor of Theology at Harvard, 1765-1794. He was a member of the Corporation of the College at the time Thomas Paine was attending.
2. Samuel Webber, Professor of Mathematics at Harvard, 1789-1806. He was elected fourteenth president of Harvard in 1806 and finished his term of office in 1810.
3. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine (1776--) passim.
5. The relationship is reckoned through the Siger's maternal grandmother, Abigail Willard, and can be found in full in Paine Family Records, Vol. II, No.7, page 169.
6. MS Diary, passim.
the students, however, was still far from good. Many
and elaborate were the wine parties given, of which the
following is but a sample:

Between 1789 and 1793, Number Eight Hollis
Hall was occupied by Mr. Charles Angier.
He conceived the grand idea of a perpetual
entertainment and a standing invitation.
The legend says: 'His table was always
supplied with wine, brandy and crackers,
of which his friends were at liberty to
partake at any time.'

Examinations and prize awards were the measures em-
ployed by the Government of the College for controlling
the student body as well as "to animate them in the
pursuit of literary merit and fame, and to excite in
their breasts a noble spirit of emulation." That the
students did not at first cooperate as heartily as
could be wished with these terms, the following anec-
dote will testify.

Sometime in 1791, the Junior class of which Thomas
Paine was a member, petitioned the Faculty to exempt
them from an examination. Their request was refused and
some members of the class decided to take the matter
into their own hands. Consequently, they obtained a
quantity of tartar emetic and emptied it into the kit-
chen boilers early in the morning of the day for which

2. Ibid., page 45.
the examination was scheduled. Coffee was later made of this water and when breakfast was served, practically all of the officers and students were taken violently ill. One conspirator had been seen while at work, however, and the rest were shortly discovered. Those caught were subjected to severe punishment as a reward for their cleverness and resistance.

There were other means by which the student body sought to vary the program for the day. Dancing was now a fairly common recreation and singing came next in order. Many of the students took regular lessons in these arts which were to be considered among the polite accomplishments of the late eighteenth century Bostonian. Whenever a good fight was wanted, the pugnacious freshmen and "sophimores" seem to have been all too willing to oblige and by the frequent references to such affairs in the diary of Robert Treat Paine, Jr. we may be sure that the vigor exhibited by Americans in the Revolutionary skirmishes was by no means lacking in the younger generation.

These are but a few of the activities of the Harvard students during the time in which Thomas Paine and his brothers were undergoing the most interesting part
of their formal education. They will suffice, however, to illustrate something of the condition of the college and the spirit which animated its student body.

During his first year at college, "Tom" Paine seems to have steered a strictly middle course among his academic pursuits, in none of which did he achieve either distinction or disgrace. He paid the usual number of fines for absences from prayers and recitations, but aside from these comparatively unimportant items, he apparently required little disciplining. His studies during this year were the courses prescribed by the College for the Bachelor of Arts degree and consisted largely of Latin with an appreciable amount of rhetoric, arithmetic, and the art of speaking. Although Davol asserts that "the custom of ranking students according to their family importance, instead of alphabetically, was questioned as inconsistent with the rising American ideals," as early as the days when Paine, Senior attended Harvard, it should not be supposed that the Paine boys were ever the subjects of disinterested tutelage. Latin was undoubtedly a prime favorite with

1. Faculty Records, Vol. VI. pages 608, 26-27, et seq.
3. Two Men of Taunton, pages 96-97.
both Robert and Thomas Paine, even as far back as Latin School days, and both boys must have spent long hours in preparation for the years in which they were to employ the language as an expression of scholarly and polite attainment. Dr. Willard was himself "a superior Greek Scholar" of the type who would encourage the study of the Classics wherever he found a natural aptitude for those languages among his students.

As to the companionships and various diversions of the Paine boys during this period of their academic training, we have been given adequate account. Robert, who was of a disposition to value the friendship of one, rather than the acquaintanceship of many, chose John Lathrop, Jr. for his chum, almost from the day when he entered college. Thomas was of a different cast, however. His positive personality and almost whimsical temperament, qualities of the leader where rightly applied, were sure to find for him a large following in any juvenile group, and equally sure to bring him enemies. A true son of his father, he fed upon the adulation and praise of his friends and deliberately turned his back upon those quarters from which he might have gained a more truthful estimate of his talents. It was fortunate

1. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine, Jr. passim.
2. Ibid., August 22, 1785.
that the Signer was not then in a position to indulge the instinctively bohemian tastes of his precocious son, or the latter might never have reached the heights to which he later aspired. The demands of a large house and family, together with the increasingly large demands of a growing profession, actually brought the eminent lawyer to want on more than one occasion. It was, however, quite possible for Thomas and Robert Paine to entertain their guests in their college rooms without any of the display which their social standing might seem to warrant. We may readily assume from Robert's frequent reference to college convivialities that at no time in their academic careers did he or his brothers suffer from lack of diversion.

At the close of Thomas' freshman year, 1789, his brother Robert was graduated from Harvard with "the first honors of the University--a degree of Bachelor of Arts." He took a significant part in the exercises of the day, which were "conducted with regularity and to general satisfaction," by delivering with his classmate Samuel Shap-

1. The Signer's children now numbered eight, Robert, Jr., Sally, Thomas, Charles, Henry, Mary, Maria Antoniette and Lucretia.

2. See Two Men of Taunton, pages 324-328, for a clear illustration of the Signer's financial standing at this time.

3. MS Diary, July 15, 1789.
leh, a dialogue entitled "A Conference in Latin upon the Comparative Advantages and Disadvantages of Monarchies and Republics." Shortly after, he entered the office of his father to begin the study of law.

Thomas, having completed his first year favorably, entered upon his sophomore year. It was an outstanding year for him in several ways. In October, President Washington, then on his famous New England tour, stopped at Cambridge to receive the honors of the College, and one can fairly hear young Thomas boast to his companions of his personal knowledge of the President. It is possible that the Paine family entertained Washington in their home at this time. Davol states merely, that Paine, Senior, "was glad to meet again, in 1789, his earlier acquaintance, when he made his famous visit to Boston as President." Robert seems to have been too excited about his "first pair of boots, bought of M. Archer" to give us an adequate account of the President's visit to Boston.

1. A graduate of the class of 1789 and Librarian of Harvard College in 1800.

2. Faculty Records, Vol. VI (1788-1797), U.A. 111, i.40, pages 26-27.

3. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine, Jr., July 18, 1789.

4. Two Men of Taunton, page 375.

5. MS Diary, October 16, 1789.
It is difficult to state with conviction at what period in his academic course, Paine began the writing of the poems which were shortly to make him famous among the "literati" of Boston. As many of these poems were in print as early as 1790, it may be concluded that this was the year in which he composed the most significant of his ephemeral pieces. We have shown in our preceding discussion of the subject that he dabbed in poetic composition during Latin School days, and the ease with which he handled his later couplets would suggest that the writing of "Cerberus" was not the only instance in which he attempted to prove his art. Prentiss, however, insists that "his first metrical effort" was in answer to a particularly vicious lampoon directed against him by Joseph Allen, Jr., the poet laureate of the class. Paine, as quick tempered and proud as his father, was prompted by this display of doubtful talent to fashion couplets of equal force and attained such marked success in his endeavor that his future as a rhymster was permanently secured. Having made the convenient discovery, he wasted no time in following it up and embarked at once upon the new

1. See Chapter One, page 29.
2. Works, pages xx and xxi.
and delightful venture of poetastering. Prentiss was probably sincere in his belief that Paine had never undertaken a couplet prior to his sophomore year at Harvard, and the poet, if for no other reason than to protect his name, was not likely to boast of his earlier efforts. As far as contemporary opinion was concerned, then, his muse was born at a critical period in the history of American speculation.

The cry of equalitarianism, but one aspect of a rapidly developing sentimentalism, extended into all branches of American science and philosophy. Pope's popularity had declined on the continent, leaving America temporarily devoid of models on which to pattern her poetry. The Della Cruscan poets were at the time enjoying momentary popularity in England and the extravagancies and affected sentiments of their "fantastic and insipid verse" found a ready following among the rising school of poets in America. Within a short time the genre had become so popular in this country that Cliffton had need to complain as he did in his "Epistle

1. A school of English poets who lived in Florence around 1785 and attended the Accademia della Crusca. Robert Merry, the foremost of the group was elected to the Accademia, and adopted the pseudonym "Della Crusca."
to W. Gifford, Esq.":

No time has been that touch'd the muse so near,
No age when learning had so much to fear,
As now, when love-lorn ladies light verse frame,
And every rebus-weaver talks of fame.

Poets of both sexes, headed by the redoutable "Philenia" took up the banner of Della Crusca and marched across America's early literary page with an almost formidable front. It is not strange that Paine should have caught the universal fever. His adolescent mind was peculiarly receptive to the charms of Della Cruscan superficiality, and Boston, anxious to contribute her quota of verse to a growing national literature, hailed with enthusiasm the most puerile efforts of this literary candidate.

Many of Paine's earliest poems, which Belcher has classified under the heading, "College Exercises," ap-

1. Duyckinck, Cycl. of Am. Lit., page 606, line 24 et seq.
3. It will be remembered from the "Foreword" to this Study, that Joshua Belcher was the man who collected and published Paine's Works. He attempted to classify the works of the poet under appropriate headings of chronological significance, giving, where he could, an additional section of notes and remarks for the greater enlightenment of the reader. In addition, he attempted to point out the passages in Paine's poems which showed a definite borrowing from contemporary and classical scholars but confessed that he was not able to go very deeply into these imitations because of lack of experience.
peared in the issues of the *Massachusetts Magazine*, during the last decade of the eighteenth century. His first printed poem, as nearly as can be discovered, was that contained in the May issue of the magazine in the year 1790. It was entitled "A Pastoral" and appropriately if "humbly dedicated to Philenia-Constantia." Written in the "stiff and swelling phrase" of the Augustan pattern, it offers little to merit attention, aside from a too close imitation of Pope's "Pastorals." Its structure, though clearly modelled on the latter piece, shows none of the feeling for eloquence and smoothness which distinguishes Pope's work, but sacrifices rhythmical flow to perfecting the couplet form. A few of the ideas of "A Pastoral" are too thinly disguised to escape the notice of the most desultory reader. Pope's line,

1. Poured o'er the whit'ning vale their fleecy care,

becomes in Paine's "Pastoral."

2. And with their flocks had whitened all the mead.

Poured o'er the whit'ning vale their fleecy care,

And with their flocks had whitened all the mead.


3. Mrs. Sarah Apthorp Morton's other Della Cruscan pseudonym. When another "Constantia" (Mrs. Judith Sargent Murray) appeared in the *Massachusetts Magazine*, Mrs. Morton, who had been writing under the name of "Constantia," changed her name to "Philenia Constantia," eventually dropping the second part of the name.


Often the imitation is closer. Pope's idea,

Celestial Venus haunts Idalia's groves,
is changed in Paine's piece to,
The Muses haunt Parnassus' cooling groves.

A third illustration of Paine's borrowing follows. Pope's line,

Hear how the birds on every bloomy spray,
becomes in "A Pastoral,"

Hark! how the birds from every blossom sing.

And so it goes. Pope's "purple year" becomes Paine's "purple spring;" "early linnets" is common to both pastoral; the "vernal airs" of the early piece is changed to "vernal gales" in the later.

Pope was by no means the only member of his school to whom Paine looked for inspiration, however. Indeed, if

1. Pope, page 24, line 5.
2. Works, page 44, line 93.
5. Pope, page 22, line 12.
one were to undertake a faithful and meticulous examination of his juvenile poems, as Belcher has tried to do, he would need to be thoroughly familiar with the entire field of eighteenth century literature and not a little of the late seventeenth. It must suffice for the present to mention only the most apparent of his imitations as they occur in the various poems under discussion.

Paine's early poems, which it seems advisable to re-classify for the purpose of illustration, under the headings of *Miscellaneous Verse*, *Translations*, and *College Dissertations*, may for the most part, be disposed of in short order. The first group, *Miscellaneous Verse*, comprises a large part of the total number of poems written during Paine's last two years at Harvard. They are, with few exceptions, literary exercises of minor value and can scarcely be distinguished among the bulk of poems written in the period. Occasionally the poet departs from his favorite pentameter couplet construction and attempts something along the line of blank verse. The untitled poem beginning with the line,

Bright is the sunbeam, smiling after showers;

written in the year 1790, is an example. It seems to

1. See note 3, page 43 of this chapter.
2. *Works*, page 7 et seq.
have been modelled upon Young's "Night Thoughts," both in form and content. Written in pentameter blank verse, Paine's poem proceeds to the line,

Dun night her sable curtain draws around,
suggesting,

Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne,
in the earlier poem. One line of the poem achieves a Miltonic ring:

Deep boiling o'er the top from confluent springs,
A river rolls adown the sloping hill;

but this is a rare instance for Paine. He is usually content to write in the following manner:

All hail, divine Compassion! see
Low at thy shrine, my bended knee!
Lend to my verse thy melting glow,
And all the tender plaintiveness of woe!

In November of the year 1790, Governor Bowdoin died at Boston, and Paine was inspired to commemorate his father's friend in a long poem entitled "Sacred to the Memory of Bowdoin." The form and content of this poem follows that of Gray's well-known Elegy. The first stanza of Paine's poem is here quoted in illustration:

1. Works, page 8, line 30 et seq.
Pale is the mournful eye of setting day;
The gloomy fields in weeds of woe appear;
O'er the dim lawn dread horror bends his way,
And solemn silence bids the mind revere.

The first line of the second stanza of the same poem is representative of Paine's debt to the English poet. It follows:

Beneath thick glooms the distant landscape fades; and is reminiscent of the first line of Gray's second stanza,

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight.

These are but a few of the more flagrant instances of Paine's borrowings from the eighteenth century poets. They are, however, sufficiently illustrative of his poetic proclivities and may serve to establish the belief that Paine was as widely read in the English poetry of his period as any other member of his school.

It is with the second group of minor poems, Translations, that we perceive the full flavor of Paine's youthful talents. The ancient and amatory verse of classical poets, Virgil, Horace and Ovid, offered a fertile field for his vivid imagination. His initial translation, of the "First Eclogue" of Virgil, although

1. Works, page 15, line 5.
scarcely a faithful translation of the original, contained none of the bombast and affectations typifying his later efforts. In June, 1790, the Massachusetts Magazine printed the second of his translations, this time, a Horatian Ode. Written in the four-line stanza form, the poem is an admirable example of Paine's imaginative ability. A third translation, another Horatian Ode (Book One, Ode V.) appeared in a subsequent issue of the magazine. In this, the poet has demonstrated his genius for expanding his theme until the heart of it is lost in a maze of ornamentation. As one critic has it, "his muse is so encumbered with ornament, that she loses the natural pliancy of her limbs, and the freedom of her gait." From the sixteen lines of original Latin, Paine has expanded his translation to twenty-eight.

Pleased with the popularity of his translations, the poet next turned his attention to Greek poetry. The type and focus of his interest in this field was a Sapphic Ode, but so wide is his departure from the original few lines

2. Ibid., page 697.
that one is forced to believe that he based his translation on that of some eighteenth century paraphrase. In support of this statement, as well as for purposes of illustration, we have taken the same ode as interpreted by Catullus.

Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
Ille, si fas est, superare divos,
Qui sedens adversus identidem te spectat et audit
dulce ridentem, misero quod omnis eripit sensus mini; nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi [vocis in ore]
lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
flamma demanat, sonitu suopte
tintinant aures, gemina teguntur
lumina nocte.

Here is Paine's translation:

Well may the happy youth rejoice,
Who, to thy arms a welcome guest,
Hears the soft musick of thy voice,
And on thy smiles may freely feast.

As gods above, securely blest,
He envies not the throne of Jove;
Endearing graces win his breast,
And sweetly charm him into love.

Ah, adverse fate! unhappy hour!
With horror, at thy form I start!
My faltering tongue forgets its power,
And struggling passions rend the heart!


Quick flames enkindle in my veins;  
Impervious clouds my eyes surround;  
Deep sighs I heave; wild Frenzy reigns;  
My ears with dismal murmurs sound!

My colour, like the lily fades;  
Rude tremours seize my throbbing frame;  
A gelid sweat my limbs pervades,  
And strives to quench the vital flame;  
My quivering pulse forgets to play;  
Enraged, confused, I faint away!

While this last appears to have been the sole instance in which Paine aspired to Greek translation, he did make one other attempt to illustrate his knowledge of the language. The "Faculty Records" of 1791, in registering the awards allotted recent dissertations winners, name Paine as the author of "A Greek Oration."

Says Prentiss of this:

This performance is generally nothing more than a recitation from some of the orations of Demosthenes or Isocrates, or a speech from Plutarch or Xenophon; but Paine chose to write his own in Greek, without first preparing in English; which he did much to the satisfaction of Dr. Willard, at that time President, who was considered a very accurate Greek scholar.

As no part of the composition has been preserved, it is not now possible to discuss its respective merits.

An examination of the subjects chosen by Paine's classmates, however, proves that it was an unusual offering.

for so young a student.

Paine's senior year at Harvard was in many respects the most interesting and eventful of his college career. This was the year in which he wrote the poems of the third group, *College Dissertations*. He had by now reached a high point in scholarship and through his growing reputation as poet, took an enviable position among his classmates. Their admiration doubtless stimulated his natural egotism and carried him to even greater heights of poetical achievement. But like many another before him, Paine could not assume his reputation with the required ease. Had he contained more of the stern and unimaginative qualities of his earlier ancestors, he might have escaped the pitfalls awaiting him among the circles to whom "temperament" was as yet akin to "insanity." In August, 1791, Paine was again elected to speak at a public exhibition of the college. This time he chose for his subject an English poem entitled "The Refinement of Manners and Progress of Society." The poem was, as its title implies, a long didactic essay, follow-

ing the principles of Locke's philosophy and the quasi-
philosophy of the American Constitution. One may well
believe that Paine delivered his composition in the
manner befitting a Signer's son. The exhibition was
attended by Robert, Jr., who describes the event in his
Diary as follows:

Rode to Cambridge with Sally Coll. Exhibition--
Company at Thos. room & chapel much crowded.
Misses By & Bl--k & Gr--gs with gent™ & myself
dined at Fresh Pond--took tea with many others
at Thos. chamber & went to ball in eve--Comp.
ret. in night. I returned next morn with
Sally. Thos. delivered a Poem on progress of
civilization of manners.

From this time on to the end of his college term, Paine
might have had a clear record, but for an unfortunate
occurrence, the details of which are best described in
the "Faculty Records:"

At a meeting of the President, Professors and
Tutors, November 16, 1791. 3a

It appeared that Paine Senior had greatly
distinguished himself and directly opposed
the authority of the College, by the for-
ward and active part, which he took in the
late disorders at evening commons; which
offence he afterwards greatly aggravated by
the indecent and impudent manner, in which
he pretended to justify himself, when called
before the government at different times. It
also appeared, upon enquiry into his general

1. September 27, 1791.

2. Sally Paine (1772-1823), Thomas' elder sister.


3a. At this time Thomas Paine's younger brothers, Charles
and Henry were both in Harvard. The faculty members
appear to have called Thomas, Paine Senior, to indi-
cate his place in college, not his family seniority.
conduct that, notwithstanding punishments heretofore inflicted for neglect of duty and the various means used to excite him thereto, he has been grossly negligent of most of the College exercises, through the greatest part of the quarter. Being fully convinced, by the facts above named, that both his own good and the good of the Society render his removal from the college necessary.

Voted, that Paine Senior be, and he accordingly is suspended for the term of four months; and that he be put under the care and instruction of the Rev'd. Mr. Sanger of Bridgewater with whom he is to prosecute his collegiate studies, in all respects conforming to the law in case of suspension provided.

So Thomas packed his books and clothes and went to Bridgewater. He was accompanied by his father, who undoubtedly improved the occasion by expressing his own feelings upon the matter.

Unlike Joseph Dennie, a friend and college mate, who had received a similar treatment at the hands of the College Government, Paine seems to have harbored no ill feeling against Harvard nor does he appear to

1. MS Diary Robert Treat Paine, Jr., November 28, 1791.

2. Joseph Dennie (1769-1812) was "rusticated" from Harvard during Paine's sophomore year. In a letter to Gilbert Hubbard, a classmate at the College, he writes from Groton where he is studying at the time: "with regard to the government, I shall ever feel a rooted prejudice, which no time shall destroy, etc." For a full account of the event, see Ellis, H.M., Joseph Dennie and His Times, University of Texas Bulletin, 1915, page 35.
to have derived any special impression from his stay with the Reverend Zedekiah Sanger in Bridgewater. The new master who is reputed to have been "strict in discipline and thorough in instruction" undoubtedly kept him to his studies a large part of the time. Although he was not appointed Preceptor of the Bridgewater Academy until 1799, Reverend Sanger had for some years been employed as tutor to many young men and women of the vicinity at the same time acting as Junior Pastor of the church in South Bridgewater. The able but strict disciplinarian and minister has been described by a pupil in the following efficient manner:

The personal appearance of Dr. Sanger was striking, and not easily forgotten. On his head he wore what was called, in those days, a cocked hat; or a hat with the brim turned up on three sides. On the Sabbath, he always appeared with small clothes; black silk or black worsted stockings and shoes with silver buckles. Among the boys, his appearance, as he approached church, excited much attention, and we used to watch for him to turn from the road into the common in front of the meeting house. He advanced with a slow step and dignified air, suffering no one to pass without respectful recognition, and taking off his three-cornered hat as the persons about the door stood back that he might enter.

Paine did not wholly abandon his literary practices during this period, however. He appears to have taken a late copy of the Massachusetts Magazine to

Bridgewater with him, probably in defiance of the regulations. This issue, October, 1791, contained a long poem entitled "Charades" and was signed "Ardelia."

Here was food indeed for Paine. His "Solution to the Charades," although written at Bridgewater, December 12, 1791, and signed with his characteristic pseudonym, did not appear in print until March, 1792. A rare stroke of diplomacy on the part of the poet!

The month of March found Paine back at his studies again. He had "returned with testimonials from Rev'd. Mr. Sanger of Bridgewater" that his conduct had been good and his scholarship in keeping. Within a short time he had passed the examinations deferred by reason of his absence. Anxious to establish himself in his former high place, he set about at once to repair his somewhat damaged reputation. Graduation was but four months away, but within that time he had been assigned the valedictory poem to be delivered at the last meeting of his class, June 21, 1792.

To assure the total effacement of his late disgrace, Paine was also given a significant part in the commencement exercises to be exhibited in the Meeting House,

2. Ibid., March, 1792, page 192.
4. Ibid., page 150.
5. Ibid., page 152.
before a large audience of parents, students and faculty. He selected for his subject another English poem "Upon the Nature and Progress of Liberty." As a piece of literature, the poem has little or no value but as an expression of America's feeling in foreign affairs, it achieves marked historical significance. The great Revolution had but recently broken out in France, and coming as it did upon the heels of our late triumph, it found a large amount of sympathy among kindred spirits in America. The day had not then arrived when even the most world-minded of our citizens were to find themselves outraged by the injudicious practices of "Citizen Genet" and the many other like expressions of French liberalism which took place in this country. Jefferson, but late returned from France where he had witnessed something of that nation's struggle against a thoroughly despotic government, played an ill-timed part in enlisting the sympathies of his countrymen for their oppressed friends. Thus it was that Paine with the spirit of a true journalist, captured the popular feeling for freedom, both at home and abroad, and enshrined it in the couplets of his commencement poem. The following stanza, taken from the

1. See Works, pages 70-77.
poem, will serve as illustration of his idea:

May struggling France her ancient freedom gain;
May Europe's sword oppose her rights in vain;
The dauntless Franks once spurned the tyrant's power;
May Frenchmen live; and Gallia be no more!

As was to be expected, the English statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke came in for his share of abuse at the hand of this student patriot. A caustic couplet, inserted near the end of the piece expresses this hope:

The fame of Burke in dark oblivion rust
His pen a meteor—and his page the dust.

The exhibition, so we are informed, was favored with a "very crowded audience," but here the description of the day's ceremonies ends. Paine, Senior, with characteristic frugality of expression, refers to the event as follows:

Very fine day. Commencement Cambridge.
Thomas took first degree—returned at night very tired.

While Paine's academic standing does not appear among any of the college records, it seems safe to conclude that he stood high, certainly as high as any other member of his class. Of the thirty-six other graduates, eight

---
1. Works, page 76, line 181 et seq.
2. Ibid., page 77, lines 211 and 212.
4. MS Diary Robert Treat Paine, July 18, 1792.
only went on to achieve higher educational honors. Two of the thirty-six became physicians, three tutors, and two, distinguished orators. Not a very significant showing for a class trained under Willard! Joseph Allen, the so-called instigator of Paine's poetic talents, wrote an occasional oration or poem after leaving college, but, in no way, ranked high among the writers of the period.

Thomas Paine had now arrived at the first cross-road in his short life. One month after graduation, he went into the store of Mr. James Tisdale in Merchant's Row, Boston, to serve his apprenticeship as clerk. This was a far cry from the professional leanings of the Paine family and it will probably never be known in what way young Paine reached his choice of a means of livelihood. It will be remembered that he early expressed his aversion to the study of the law, the ultimate goal of each of his brothers; and the ministry, his alternative, very obviously repelled his imaginative nature. Writing, as

2. See Loring's *Hundred Boston Orators* for a more detailed account of these two orators, Thomas Danforth and William Sullivan, pages 320-321, and pages 313-320.
3. The *Federal Orrery*, July 23, 1795, contains an Oration delivered by Mr. Joseph Allen, Jr. on July 4, at Worcester.
5. *MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine*, August 23, 1792.
a profession, was in his day considered among the other frivolities of a misdirected ambition. Probably the Signer hoped that the ardent spirits of his precocious son would be leavened by the drab activities of the counting-house. But whatever the reason for his choice, he broke away from tradition, for the moment, and entered upon another of his adventures, this time, a business.

At the time Thomas Paine was graduated from Harvard, he might well have been the most envied youth of Boston. He had poise and charm, and was possessed of a precocious wit, which, for his day, marked him as something of a genius. Furthermore, he had family, position, and a growing reputation as poet of certain promise. But, despite these distinctive attributes, he was destined to a life of irregular progress and singular lapses which too clearly betrayed the indecisive nature of the man. Content to take the short flights toward success, he regularly missed the course which should have brought him to a high position of dignity and esteem. As long as Paine was kept to his tasks by parents or teachers, he did achieve definite ends, but once away from their restrictive influence, he followed the dictates of his own impulsive nature without thought for the future.
We are not surprised then, to find him shirking the responsibilities of his new position as soon as the glamour began to wear away. Although never at any time addicted to mean or dishonest habits, he did resort to bohemian practices at a comparatively early point in his mercantile career. Prentiss has left us adequate material to support this belief. Paine, having been to the bank, where he had cashed a check to the amount of five hundred dollars for Mr. Tisdale, was returning to the store when he came across a group of his college associates. Without going on to obtain permission of his employer, he trotted off to Cambridge with them and there spent a full week sharing in the convivialities and discussions of that intellectual circle. At the end of the period, he returned to Boston and handed over to Mr. Tisdale the amount of the check, untouched.

As time went on, the poet leaned more and more toward his former literary practices. Encouraged by the readiness with which the editors of the Massachusetts Magazine accepted his desultory contributions, he now began for that magazine, a series of Della Cruscan poems, designed to flatter and exalt Boston's leading poetess.

"Philenia." Accordingly, he chose a new pseudonym, the one for which he was best known in contemporary circles, "Menander." Poetry lovers of the period were soon following with more than casual interest his impassioned wooing of the "American Sappho." If he sang to her:

Thou shalt survive, when Time shall whelm the bust,  
And lay the pyramids of Fame in dust.  
Unsoiled by years, shall thy pathetick verse  
Melt Memory's eye upon the Patriot's hearse;  
And while each distant age and clime admire  
The funeral honours of thy epick lyre,  
What Hero's bosom would not wish to bleed,  
That you might sing, and raptured ages read?  
'Till the last page of Nature's volume blaze,  
Shall live the tablet, graven with thy lays!

She protested warmly:

Thine be the chief, whose deeds sublime  
Shall through the world's wide mansion beam,  
Unsullied by the breath of Time,  
Exhaustless as his native stream.

Divine Menander, strike the string;  
With all thy sun-like splendour shine;  
The deeds of godlike heroes sing,  
And be the palm of Genius thine!

To "Menander," "Philenia's" poems represented the epitome of all that was talented in the poetry of the period. His compliments to her genius were profuse and extravagant and followed a definite strain of ardent

2. Ibid., page 133.
wooing. "Philenia," not to be outdone by her suitor, responded to this flattery with promptness and gratitude.

Finally, the public tired of these competitive "laudatory exertions," and the poetic courtship was brought to an end in the following amusing manner. An early issue of the Massachusetts Magazine for the year 1793, contained one of "Philenia's" sonnets, the opening stanza of which read:

Since first Affliction's dreary frown,
Gloom'd the bright summer of my days,
Né'er has my bankrupt bosom known
A solace, like his peerless praise.

"Truth," one of the correspondents to the newspaper Apollo, seeing in this stanza excellent material for satire, addressed the ensuing flagrant bit to "Philenia:"

Thy bosom bankrupt!—ah! too true the thought;
A bankruptcy indeed thy breast displays,
Which knows no joys but those from flatt'ry caught,
Which knows no 'solace' like Menander's praise.

It was not to be expected that Paine would bear this insult to the literary reputation of his beloved "Philenia" with calmness and dignity. His own reputation had also been slighted. The next Centinel bore his indignant remonstrance:

1. For a full account of the episode, see Buckingham's Newspaper Literature, Vol. I., pages 148-150.


3. Ibid.
Too true the thought! know Truth, that 'bankrupt breast,
A bank of genius and of taste contains:
While thy lank muse, of not a sous possesst,
Begs the Scant pittance of Its daily brains.

"Truth," not to be outdone, parried Paine's swift thrust
with these discourteous lines:

A bank of genius and a bank of taste!
But few Discounts, Menander, there we find;
With all the Charms of lofty nonsense graced
As well might wisdom issue from thy mind.

The literary quarrel continued and might in time have been
carried to some ridiculous end but for the interference
of one "Ironicus" who brought the matter to a close in
the following cryptic lines which he addressed to "Truth:"
The extended advertisement of the poets, although not entirely pleasant, did serve to enhance the literary reputation of each to a considerable degree.

In September of this same year, 1793, there occurred the untimely death of the Boston poet and novelist, William Hill Brown. Paine, whose kindred interests had brought him into some intimacy with Brown, was inspired to commemorate his friend's death in a long elegiac poem, entitled Monody to the Memory of William H. Brown. This last is by far the most notable of the poet's elegiac pieces, expressing as it does something more than the pretty, conventional phraseology of the popular elegy of the period. While we cannot feel with Belcher, who annotated the Monody at a later date, that Paine's "piece seems to have flowed almost without premeditation from his full and querulous sorrow," we do perceive the depth of the poet's sensibility and gain something of his tender and affectionate regard for his talented friend. A few of the stanzas of the Monody rise above mediocrity

1. William Hill Brown, the adopted son of Gawen Brown, a clock-maker of Boston. He was the author of a tragedy, West Point Preserved, or The Treason of Arnold, and a sentimental novel, Ira and Isabella. He died on September 2, 1793, at Murfreesborough, North Carolina, leaving to mourn his death a large number of the Boston "literati" many of whom were his friends as well as his admirers.

2. Works, pages 118-121.

3. Ibid., page 446. Belcher's relation to Brown has been mentioned in the "Foreword" to this Study, page 2.
and achieve the full melody of inspired writing. Such is the stanza with which the poet opens his mournful subject:

Pale sleeps the moonbeam on the shadowy surf;
Lorn to the gale, elegiac willows wave;
Cold-glistening, fall the night dews on the turf;
And Nature leans upon her Pollio's grave.

Paine had by now gone too far in his literary excursions to return to the sordid tasks of the mercantile clerk. Success of any sort went immediately to his head. Nowhere does it appear that the Signer attempted to curb the literary digressions of his son. He may well have remembered his own experimental youth and acted accordingly. On the other hand, he may not have had the opportunity to inquire frequently as to "Tom's" activities. The demands of his profession were exceedingly heavy at this time, and the poet was, after all, but one member of his large family.

But circumstances were arranging a course for "Tom" which neither he nor his family could have thwarted. In 1792, the friends of the drama, in Boston, began an active and organized campaign against the laws which had kept all entertainment of a theatrical nature from springing to life in the state of Massachusetts. Many

of these "friends" were men of outstanding importance in Boston and its vicinity who, in open defiance to the Prohibitory Law, soon opened an Exhibition Room in Board Alley. Here, companies of players performed their productions under the deceptive title of "moral lectures" or "dialogues." Shortly after, the law was repealed and Bostonians, anxious to express their devotion to the new movement, proceeded to draw up plans for a theatre which would surpass in every way those of New York and Philadelphia. Mr. Charles Powell, was chosen by the Committee governing the theatre as the manager of the entertainment and was dispatched almost at once to England to collect a suitable company of actors for the coming season. Like all other movements which gain force through continued suppression, the Boston Theatre soon boasted of a considerable following. Paine, always ready to welcome a new venture, also turned his attention in this direction, and, fascinated with the novelty of the enterprise, spent an increasingly large part of his time in fostering its cause.

Among the inducements offered by the Committee for the

1. Mr. Powell first came to Boston on June 14, 1793, as the producer of a light theatrical entertainment known as "The Brush." He remained here for some years and through his efforts and ambition, did much to give the Theatre a real start in Boston.
greater support of the theatre, was that of a prize award to the person writing the best prologue for the theatre's opening. This was the poet's own field. He set to work at once and was shortly awarded the prize over twenty other competitors.

1

Paine's Prize Prologue is by far the most ambitious of his pieces to that day. The poem follows in construction, the popular Popean couplet, and traces the virtues and growth of drama from its incipient beginnings to the modern period. Paine, inspired by his theme and the importance of the occasion, achieved some passages of real force, not the least of which is that dedicated to the theatre itself which reads,

And now, thou Dome, by Freedom's patrons reared,
With Beauty blazoned, and by Taste revered;
Apollo consecrates thy walls profane,—
Hence be thou sacred to the Muses reign!
In Thee, three ages in one shall conspire,
A Sophocles shall sweep his lofty lyre;
A Terence, rise, in chariest charms serene;
A Sheridan display the polished scene.
The first, with epick Grief shall swell the stage,
And give to virtue fiction's noblest rage;
The second, laws to Beauty shall impart,
And copy nature by the rules of art;
The last, great master, ends inventions strife,
And gilds the mirror, which he holds to life!
Thy classick lares shall exalt our times,
With distant ages and remotest climes;
And Athens, Rome, Augusta, blush to see,
Their virtue, beauty, grace, all shine—com-
bined in thee.


2. Ibid., pages 159-160.
His facile handling of classical allusion and contemporary art alike, is here most happily illustrated. With the exception of the last hypermetrical line, the foregoing stanza is among the best of Paine's poetic productions. Prentiss, while admitting that the poem contains "some bombast" and "several inaccuracies," insists that a "greater volume of poetic mind has seldom, if ever, been embodied in the same compass. He has gone on to say that Paine had originally planned that his Prologue should contain a sketch of each of the world's famous dramatists and to that end he worked and reworked its lines over a period of years. The poem as it has come down to us, however, must still be considered an unfinished product.

On February 3, 1794, the Boston Theatre was opened, and Mr. Powell, in the character of "Apollo," recited Paine's Prologue. Under Powell's eloquent interpretation of the piece, the poet was bound to feel more than a little pride in his late achievement. Clapp records that the theatre was crowded on the occasion and that the play presented on that night, Gustavus Vasa, could not have been more admirably adapted to the locality.

2. For a description of the Theatre, see Appendix B.
3. A Record of the Boston Stage, page 22.
corresponding as it did with the political opinions of a great majority of the townspeople.

Among the actors whom Powell had engaged for the season were Mr. Joseph Berkeley Baker of Martlet Court, Bow Street, Covent Garden, London, his wife Henrietta Maria and their daughter, Elizabeth. Mr. Baker was acting as co-manager with Mr. Powell and seems to have been a man of varied talents and great charm. He and his family took significant parts in the productions of the season. Seilhamer states that Paine looked with favor upon the charms of the sixteen-year-old Miss Baker, from the beginning. She appears to have been "handsome, amiable and intelligent," qualities known to have ensnared hearts less susceptible to feminine enchantments than was Paine's. It is not known how rapid a courtship Paine effected with the youthful actress, but it is certain that he was as much in love at the time as it is possible for a man to be. Several of his undated poems would point to this period of his life, treating as they do with the matter of love and jealousy. One of these, Sonnet to Eliza, is particularly significant of the poet's feelings, which for the moment, seem to have been under some constraint. Here, the poet makes earnest excuses to Eliza for his attentions to the "Philenias,"

"Cloras" and "Belindas" of the popular literature, concluding with the following apology for his treatment of fairest Eliza:

Yet weep not, that from Hymen's yoke, I've slipt my neck, For you've escaped a bite, while I have lost a spec.

It was not to be expected that Paine's infatuation with the theatre, not to mention his entanglement with one of its "painted daughters," would please his puritanical family. The high ambition which the Signer showed for all his children was well known to Boston society. It does not appear definitely that he took steps to draw "Tom" away from his novel pastime, but from the affair which followed, we do know that he was, at this period, totally out of sympathy both with the theatre and his son's connection with it.

Paine continued to haunt the stage, however, and may even have written an occasional brief criticism of the season's plays. From the newspaper advertisements of the time we learn that Messrs. Powell and Baker had been extremely busy arranging a program which would be agreeable to their cultured audiences. Boston need not have feared that her taste in drama would suffer any

criticism from other localities, however, if we are to judge from the list of plays produced in the Boston Theatre at this period. The season's repertoire included such popular pieces as Cumberland's West Indian, Lillo's George Barnwell, Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer and Murphy's The Citizen, in all of which the Baker family took significant parts. Although Selshamer asserts that "somehow neither Mrs. Baker nor her daughter found favor with the critics," this is not the whole story. It must be remembered that theatrical criticism was as yet a novel practice among writers of the day and what little there was presents a mild enough appearance. A contemporary Centinel, in reviewing Mrs. Baker's interpretation of the "Old Maid" in a play by that name, states that she "exhibited more genuine action, and brought the character nearer to nature than has been done at any time since the opening of the House." Miss Baker received even higher praise. The theatre section of the Mercury for May, 1794, records of her benefit performance,

1. Accounts of these plays are to be found in the issues of The Mercury between February 20 and April 4, 1794.
3. Columbian Centinel, Saturday, March 8, 1794.
4. The Mercury, Friday, May 23, 1794.
It is with pleasure we find Miss Baker has elected the "Haunted House" for performance this evening; as its excellence, worthy the pen of the justly celebrated Addison, we are confident would, exclusive of the addition, secure her that crowded house, to which the interesting delicacy and modest merit of this amiable actress entitles her expectations. The universal applause which was given when her benefit was announced, and the instant avidity for the tickets, pleasingly evinced that the patrons of the Drama, were happy in an opportunity of honorably distinguishing the lovely daughter of sensibility and innocence.

The highly eulogistic quality of the preceding paragraph would suggest Paine's authorship, but it cannot be shown that he was definitely connected with the Centinel at this time. Seilhamer has suggested that the original pantomimical prologue spoken by Mr. Baker at a later benefit and "written by a gentleman of Boston" was probably the work of Paine.

Mr. Baker's benefit, The Grecian Daughter, given at the Federal Street Theatre on June 30, 1794, closed the first season for the theatre in Boston. The public had by now become thoroughly enamoured of the novel art and the whole enterprise might have been considered a decided success but for Mr. Baker's quarrel with Powell which took place just at this time. The rift seems to have been occasioned by Powell's objections to a farce

2. For an account of this play see Columbian Centinel, Saturday, June 21, 1794.
of Baker's which, he claimed, had been written to ridicule some of the most prominent of the Theatre's patrons. After a public airing in which Baker exhibited the full extent of his pique, the Baker family severed their connections with the Boston Theatre. Paine, now thoroughly out of harmony with his former employment, and temporarily out of touch with the theatre, left Mr. Tisdale's store and proceeded to draw up his plans for another undertaking, one that would meet with the approval of friends and family alike, the publication of a newspaper.

1. The Columbian Centinel for July 2, 1794, contained Mr. Baker's denial of any intended "calumny" against his esteemed patrons.
CHAPTER THREE

THE EDITOR—(1794-1796)

The Federal Orrery

The Federal Orrery, although not the work for which Paine was best known, represents no small part of his literary achievement. Appearing as it did late in 1794, when the contention between the two governmental parties, Federalist and Democrat, was at its height, the Orrery might well seem to have been created for the express purpose of the political and personal aggrandizement of the editor and his friends. That such was not Paine's original intention, however, is best shown in the following paragraph, taken from the prospectus to the paper, which declares:

The Orrery will be the agent of all parties, but the slave of none. As subjects of discussion, it will never be the trumpeter or the denouncer, of public men or national measures;—Republicans can have the eye of an eagle, and can penetrate their spots, while they admire their splendor. The administrators of a free government should expect the scrutiny of their political creators;—but the demon of private slander shall never conduct, the orbit of the smallest satellite, that twinkles in the horizon of the Orrery.

To one turning the yellowed pages of the Orrery's volumes today, it is soon apparent that Paine's "scrutiny" too quickly becomes "private slander" when put to the

1. Columbian Centinel, September 6, 1794.
uses of defending party prerogatives. The fact remains, however, that the paper was created primarily for the enlightenment of a growing Bostonian society, among whom Paine was, at the moment, a prime favorite. His address to the "Friends of Liberty and Literature," the heading under which the prospectus is printed, expresses the further purpose of the Orrery, stating:

The rapid diffusion of elegant letters, and the spirit of political disquisition, which are daily becoming more extensive and prevalent, operate, as powerful inducements to the institution of a periodical work, whose impartial and variegated pages are destined not only for the reservoir of intelligence, but the museum of caste; when civilians and wits may deposit the productions and curiosities, which their invention can create, or their observation collect. Such has long been the wish of the classic and the politician; and such, under the auspices of the philosopher and the muse will be the Federal Orrery.

Proceeding with a deal more of the pompous affectation peculiar to his prose, Paine outlines further his plan for the new publication. Beneath the bombast of his lengthy address, we can discern something of the charm and appeal which this editor held for those who, in their period, may rightly be called the "literati." It was their respect and patronage which Paine was at-

1. Columbian Centinel, September 6, 1794.
tempting to enlist, and having learned from previous literary experience the brand of flattery suited to their tastes, he fed them compliments until even the most reluctant surrendered to his charm. At no time in his life, had the poet been in a happier position for this new undertaking. Prentiss asserts that:

The qualities, which had secured him esteem at the university were daily expanding and his reputation was daily increasing. His society was eagerly sought in the most polished and refined circles! he administered compliments with great address; and no beau was ever a greater favorite in the beau monde! His apparel was now in the extreme of fashion although at some subsequent periods when his fortunes were less propitious, he indulged in a truly poetical negligence of attire.

True to the anticipation of the editor and his public, the Orrery started out under especially auspicious conditions, on October 20, 1794. Weld & Greenough, at No. 42 Cornhill, were its printers; Thomas Paine, its editor and owner. As was expected, the subscription to the paper was extremely liberal, "even," according to Buckingham, "surpassing that, which had been given beforehand, to any other Boston paper." Under the appropriate motto, "Solemque suum, sua sidera, norunt" 2

2. The Orrery was published twice a week, every Tuesday and Friday, for as long as it lasted, the price, fifteen shillings a year.
3. Specimens of Newspaper Literature, page 221.
4. It may be translated, "They recognize their own sun and their own stars."
and other astronomical embellishment, the Orrery presented a decidedly attractive appearance. Its columns, although heterogeneously arranged, were filled with matter of cultural and political import, designed to attract the eye of the man of taste and education. In accordance with the popular taste, theatrical intelligence of every type comprised a considerable amount of the paper's space. News, foreign and domestic, of both a general and a specific nature, was scattered among biographical and satirical sketches, while original and varied advertisements offered an abundance of reading matter for those interested in the lesser functions of the newspaper.

Had Paine kept to his original plan, he might shortly have made of his Orrery, an aristocrat among journalistic publications. But as usual, he was too much interested in a number of other things to devote even a nominal amount of time to the care and arrangement of his paper. Soon, like many of his other undertakings, the Orrery began to deteriorate and long before its reputation was secured, it passed into other hands. Paine was, however, not without excuse for this shabby management of his paper. His marriage to Eliza
Baker, the actress, on February 22, 1795, barred him for some years from his father's house. This, coupled with his venomous lampooning of certain political opponents and his cowardly defense of his own and his paper's reputation, contributed to his further social ostracism. As his fortunes began to turn, Paine, instead of rallying his scattering forces, weakly sought solace in drink, and for a time it looked as if this last would undermine what little of self-respect and character he then possessed. Nothing could more clearly illustrate the rapid disintegration of the poet's social prestige than the pages of the Orrery. Gradually his editorials, once so large a part of the paper's appeal, disappeared from the paper. The theatrical criticisms, by far the most worth while of Paine's literary enterprises, as far as the Orrery was concerned, were given over to less competent hands. As the literary aspects of the paper lessened, its advertisements increased. In a comparatively short time, the Orrery slumped from a first, to a second rate newspaper. On April 18, 1796, scarcely eighteen months after its first appearance, the Orrery published the


2. Attacks on Paine are discussed further on in this chapter.
following notice:

To the Public

The subscriber, having sold the proprietary right of the Federal Orrery to Mr. Benjamin Sweetser, takes this opportunity of returning his sincerest thanks to his friends and the Public, for the liberality, which they have been ever pleased to extend him, and he hopes, in retiring from the publication of a paper whose existence has immediately emanated from their benignity, that he may safely bequeath to his successor a continuance and extension of their patronage and favor.

The public's most obedient servant,
Thomas Paine.

Debts, disgrace, and bad management had ruined the Orrery, and Paine, its editor, now faced his second failure.

Having thus cursorily sketched the Orrery's history, let us now enter upon a more detailed examination of its scope and character. Paine, in another part of his prospectus, had professed the following elaborate plan:

For the successful accomplishment for so novel and various an enterprise, the recluse son of science, the meditating moralist, the experienced pedestrian in the field of general literature, the able disputant in the form of jurisprudence, the Queen of the Columbian Muses, and all the family of Apollo, are respectively invoked. Their elegant and useful supplies, from the banks of genius,

1. Centinel, loc. cit.
2. Probably a compliment to Mrs. Sarah Morton.
education and taste, will be gratefully received; and political commentaries will never fail to meet that critical respect and impartial insertion, which, the editor intends shall give a momentum to the wheels of the Orrery.

It is indeed the political matter of the Orrery which, for a time, receives the largest share of Paine's attention in the beginning. Any idea of impartial judgment or neutral opinion which the editor may originally have entertained for his paper, too quickly went by the board. When the political parties were formed in 1794, the year in which the paper appeared, Paine enlisted his services in the cause of Federalism, and turned his satirical powers toward reviling the Democrats, whose sympathies with French "Jacobinism" were to bring upon their heads for the next few years, the keenest wrath of their political opponents.

Certainly one of the most salient features of the Orrery's politico-satires, was that series of papers, entitled "Remarks on the 'Jacobiniad'" which appeared intermittently in several issues of the newspaper. The first newspaper publication of the "Remarks" was that of December 8, 1794, which contained the following introductory note, signed "X.Z." and dated at Worcester. It read:
...I am requested, by a critical friend, to send you the following remarks on a poem, that deserves, I think to be better known. He informs me that there were but few copies of the poem struck off for some particular friends, and that the author's name is a secret.

By the above ingenious method, it is plain that the author hoped to intrigue the interest of his public and the wrath of his opponents. They could not get at the "Jacobiniad," since there was no such poem: neither could they learn the name of the author, whose "Remarks," written in a good-natured manner, contained the most scurrilous abuse of all those members of the Boston Constitutional Society, nicknamed the "Jacobin Club," who were known to their Federalist opponents. The "Jacobiniad," wherever we have been allowed to glimpse it, seems to have been modelled upon that brilliant contemporary English satire of Tory politics, The Rolliad. Proceeding, it attempts a definition of "Jacobinism" in general, and traces its rise and progress in France and America, caricaturing those of its followers who have come before the public eye. These last are thus prettily pictured:

Well may they dread the Muses fatal skill:--
Well may they tremble, when she draws her quill:--
Her magic quill, that, like Ithuriel's spear,
Reveals the cloven hoof or lengthened ear;

1. Remarks on the 'Jacobiniad', Boston, 1795, page 54.
Gives fools and demagogues their natural shapes,
Makes Austins' crocodiles—Vinals' apes:
Drags the vile Clubbist from his dark abode;
Till all the demon starts up from the toad.

The entire Federal State, in its turn, receives the following "elegant compliment" from the Goddess of Faction, who declaims:

Curst be that state, our party's direct foe,
Where hostile genius aims the unerring blow,
Where wit and satire point the potent quill,—
And lash our follies with relentless skill,
Where Faction's children dare not show their face,
And Faction's self is held in deep disgrace;
The unpitying vengeance of the galling muse,
Our every deed, our every word pursues.

Of course, there were many who believed Paine to have been the author of these diabolical "Remarks" and he was more than once given the full force of his opponents' rancor. The probable real author, the Reverend John Sylvester John Gardiner, then assistant rector of Trinity Church in Boston, and a well-known hater of French politics, was eventually made known and he, in turn, came in for his share of abuse. Shortly, the "Remarks" were collected and published under the following title: "Remarks of the 'Jacobiniad'; revised and corrected by the author; and embellished with caricatures." In this form, the blackest pages of America's

1. Benjamin Austin, Jr., the chief correspondent to the Independent Chronicle, over the pseudonym "Honestus", and a well-known "Jacobin."

2. Dr. Vinal, another member of the Constitutional Society.

3. Federal Orrery, August 27, 1795.

4. Published at Boston by E.W. Weld and W. Greenough, 1795.
political satire passed into the oblivion which they warranted.

Although Paine was not the author of the "Remarks", he did compose a sufficient number of the political satires of the Orrery to justify any amount of criticism from his adversaries. The "Jacobin" editors of the Independent Chronicle, the prominent members of Boston's Constitutional Society, even the Governor of Massachusetts, Samuel Adams, all became at some time, the objects of Paine's scathing criticism. Rarely, however, did his political indictments overshoot their marks, but when such did occur, the results were usually more disastrous to the editor than to his opponents. The Orrery for September 10, 1795, contained one of the most flagrant examples of Paine's hatred for the entire "Jacobin" regime. It was a lengthy satire in verse, entitled "The Lyars, a political eclogue--altered to the meridian of Boston," and depicts in a crude and vicious manner, an imaginary conversation among Genet, Jarvis, and Austin. The poem was not, however, with-

1. Adams & Larkin, sometimes known as "The Chronicle Pair."
2. At the rise of party government, Samuel Adams identified himself with the anti-federalists, and as a member of this group, soon became known as a sympathizer of French revolutionists.
3. "Citizen" Genet, the French Ambassador.
4. Dr. Charles Jarvis, another prominent member of the "Jacobin Club."
out its consequence. We are again indebted to Prentiss for his description of the disgraceful affair which followed. He writes:

The son of a gentleman, at whom the shafts of wit had been aimed, called upon the editor for personal satisfaction, which was denied. Mr. Paine apprehended an assault, and prepared himself, with an unloaded pistol, which he vainly imagined would appal his adversary. The parties accidentally met. Upon the approach of his assailant, whose overpowering force Mr. Paine could not resist, he presented his pistol; but the gentleman fearlessly rushed forward and violently assaulted him. Mr. Paine, who had little muscular power, and whose nerves had never been previously tested, considered this disastrous interview, as the most fatal incident of his life.

Apparently he offered little or no resistance and was soundly beaten. This inglorious defeat did not, however, put an end to his satirical practices. Subsequently, the columns of the Orrery were employed to the further ridicule of the hated "Jacobinic" element of the Boston press. No revilement was considered too mean for these "ministers of sedition and scandall," and whatever outside support Paine could solicit, he transferred "whole-cloth" to the pages of his paper. Among this last may be included another political lampoon, entitled, "The Political Ledger, stanzas in-

2. Buckingham states that "the son of a gentleman" was Samuel Jarvis, a brother to Dr. Charles Jarvis.
scribed to Charles Jarvis and Benjamin Austin." In this, Paine has reprinted a newspaper account of Jarvis and balanced it with a composition of his own, concerning the qualities of Mr. Austin. The attack is brutal but clever, the characteristics by which one may too often identify Paine's work in this respect.

These are but a few of the ways in which the Orrery carried on its political warfare against the "Jacobins" of America and France, but they are sufficient to illustrate the degree of Federalist fever under which Paine wrote. Only occasionally did his political adversaries attempt to parry his vicious lunges through the medium of literature. The following disagreeable incident in which Paine again played a conspicuous if none too happy part, is here given in illustration of the methods employed by the poet's political opponents when roused to the point of direct attack. We have already mentioned in our first chapter, Paine's early satirical effort, the poem "Cerberus", which he directed against his father in wrath at the age of twelve. It appears that the editors of a Boston newspaper, the Mercury, had obtained a copy of this poem in the form of a communication and now turned it to their own use, as well as to favor those

1. Federal Orrery, October 5, 1795.
gentlemen against whom so many of Paine's thrusts had been aimed, by printing it in an issue of their paper with this explanatory paragraph:

The following caricature flowed from the same pencil which has lately sketched so many Beautiful Portraits for the Federal Orrery; for so they undoubtedly appear to the juvenile editor of that 'attic' paper, as well as to his chosen friends 'male' and 'female.' How pleasing is the poignancy of satire when we are not the objects of its envenomed stings: But one can scarcely believe that the Son would be so utterly regardless of his own parent, as to permit the most licentious and virulent abuse of many honest and irreproachable characters to disgrace his Poetical Fount, from the identical pen, which has erst been dipped in gall to embitter his Father's peace. The learned Judge could readily inform his very promising child, of its being a maxim in Law, that the whole evidence of any individual should be taken together, in order that a just estimate may be made of its merits. If the 'Jacobiniad' is a true bill, what is the subsequent Poetical 'Jeu d'Esprit.'

Impartial Neutrality

An antidote for Tom--P----'s Jacobiniad.

Paine's reply to the Mercury is as usual, ingenious and witty, and as it contains some explanation of his writing of "Cerberus", is worth quoting in full, at this point:

1. The Mercury, Young & Minns, Boston, January 13, 1795.
2. Federal Orrery, January 15, 1795.
The Editor of the Orrery, [he writes], presents his compliments to the person, (whom he imagines to be one of the heroes of the 'Jacobiniad') that inserted a certain poem in last Mercury. That poem it is well known, was written ten years ago, and was then considered, as the mere, petulant effusion of an angry boy, who, irritated by supposed ill-treatment, and prompted by the instigation of paternal resentment, sat down to write as bitterly as he could, without consulting either truth or justice. The republication of this foolish production can effect no emotion in the breast of the Editor, or of any one of his family, except a slight twinge, or two, of sympathy, for the poor Jacobins, who have neither sufficient ability to parry the ridicule, which an impartial press has emitted against them, nor sufficient address to conceal the mortification of detected impotency. As to the identity of the political Dupe, whose alms-house brain was necessitated to steal his intellectual pittance, from the imputed author of the 'Jacobiniad,' the public entertain not the smallest shadow of a doubt. The prosaic introduction was so beggarly an attempt at wit: and the 'antidote' prescribed, was so anti-medicinal, that the Editor advises this quack of all trades, never more to meddle with literature, or pharmacy—the mortar, or the pestle!

'Asses and Owls, unseen, themselves betray,
When those attempt to hoot, and these to bray!

Whether the writer of the poem, in the Mercury, be the author of the 'Jacobiniad' is left to the 'literati,' who are best able to decide, if the gross language of the former can possibly consist with the pointed ridicule, so conspicuous in the latter. Who the real author of the 'Jacobiniad' is, will perhaps, never be known to the public. In the meantime, the persons, who are the objects of its satire, may throw their dirt, at random, on whom they please—on men, and on women; on the clergy, and on the laity. Their conjecture, their complaints, their scurrilities, their menaces, tend only to give celeb-
rity and circulation to the 'Jacobiniad,' which, when finished, will be reprinted in a pamphlet, for their farther amusement and edification.

Orrery-office.

Thus did Paine keep hammering at his literary adversaries, getting in two strokes to every one of theirs.

"Have these machines the vanity to imagine that their abuse is any scandal?" he cries. "Has not their calumny become a badge of honorable distinction? And do they not know, that their dismal scurrility, like the croaking tenants of a frog-pond, is regularly expected, and regularly forgotten?"

Paine did not, however, confine his journalistic ability to the political affairs of Boston alone. He also wrote many of the short squibs on foreign matters, which, for convenience, may be divided roughly into three groups, English, Algerian and French.

Of this first group, Jay's Treaty with Great Britain, is by far the most significant item. Jay, it will be recalled, had been sent to England in the latter part of the year 1794 to discuss terms concerning matters of commerce, navigation, and boundary lines. His proposition was not ratified by the United States Senate until June of the following year, and in the meantime, a deal of discussion had been carried on by the news-

1. Federal Orrery, September 14, 1795.
papers of both countries. The Orrery, as a Federal organ, had necessarily favored Jay, while the Democratic papers, which had opposed the Treaty from the start, dealt with the other side of the question. In Boston, especially, there was a considerable demonstration of hostility toward those who had sanctioned Jay's procedure, and Paine, roused to a fury at the leniency with which Governor Adams treated "these civic offenders; turned his wrath on that gentleman through the pages of his Orrery.

However harmless and amusing you may view the 'Watermelon frolics'—as you have been pleased to term them, he has gone on to say,

they may be death to your fellow citizens and constituents. Against your apparent connivance, let us not again remonstrate in vain...Every citizen has a right to the protection of the government under which he lives, and even contributes to its support; and if you had a right to interfere, when the destruction of some houses of ill-fame was contemplated and threatened, by perhaps the same, Rabble, who or what deprives you of the right to interfere when the lives of a reputable family are in absolute danger. The dwellings of our citizens have been attacked, and recourse for self-preservation, 'nature's first law!' has been had to a measure the most dangerous and fatal. If your supineness is not construed to an approbation of these riots, it is at least suspected to have proceeded from your enmity to the federal administration.

1. Federal Orrery, September 14, 1795.

2. The expression used by the governor when applied to on the subject of these riots.

3. Another of Governor Adams' terms for the riotous mobs.
Paine further outlined Jay's course, following its progress and merits and generally contributing, through the medium of his newspaper, to its ultimate success. In November of 1795, England declared war against Holland, and the Orrery followed the progress of this new entanglement with hearty interest.

Another foreign matter of especial interest to America was that of Algerian piracy. The rapidly expanding commerce of this country had taken our ships into the Mediterranean Sea where unbridled Moslem corsairs of the North African Coast roamed at large, capturing every unprotected ship within a wide range and holding crew and ship alike for a large ransom. America's lack of a navy left her in no position to combat this evil on the regular lines, and Colonel David Humphreys was sent as commissioner from this country to arrange some terms with the Dey of Algiers by which we might continue to carry on commercial interests in the Mediterranean. By March of the next year, 1796, Washington had agreed temporarily to pay the enormous sum which Nassan Bashan demanded each year in lieu of his previous nefarious practices. A lengthy discussion of the whole

1. The Orrery issue of March 21, 1796, contains three columns on the temporary treaty made between Washington and Dey Bashan.
procedure was contained in the current issues of the Orrery, and the American public thus awakened to its growing commercial needs.

We come now to a discussion of a new phase of the Orrery, a subject already slightly touched upon in connection with the political satires of the newspaper, America's vital interest in France at this period of her reconstruction. Almost from the beginning of his paper, Paine took as rabid a partisan viewpoint against the political radicals of that country, as he had against the "Jacobin" sympathizers of his own. It will be remembered in this respect that the poet had once championed the cause of freedom in France as enthusiastically as he now condemned it. This change in attitude was that of the entire Federalist group, who, disgusted with the turn freedom had taken in France, now deplored the whole measure as vigorously as they were able. One of the first issues of the Orrery contains an admirable illustration of Paine's new feeling toward France, and follows:

1. Federal Orrery, November 20, 1794; article signed "Hericlitus."

1a. Ibid., July 6, 1795, other Algerian news.


3. Federal Orrery, November 10, 1794.
Question to puzzle Jacobins. Whence happens it that virtuous sans culottes, the patriotic republicans of France, elected the worst men in that country to represent them in the National Convention? I say, the worst men; for two thirds of them have been condemned already for treason and conspiracy, the greatest crimes in society. Such a proportion of villains were never before elected to a legislative body in any country on earth. How happens this? Is it the fault of the electors—or the elected—or of neither? The fact is a novelty—the question is difficult—and I take it, none but wise democratic heads, such as elect themselves to watch over government, are equal to its solution.

Long articles on Robespierre, his tyranny and cruelty, further summed up Paine's hatred for French radicalism.

Articles on the following subjects, "A Little Plain Truth for the Jacobins of America," "Letter to M. Fouchet," "The Preliminary Speech of Boisy D'Anglais," "Robespierre's Will," "True Causes of the Decline of the French Nation" and "An Address of the National Convention to the French People" appeared from time to time among the miscellaneous matter of the Orrery's pages, for the benefit of the public and their fuller understanding of America's foreign interests. Often Paine made no discrimination between the "Jacobins" of

1. Federal Orrery, October 1, 1795.
2. Ibid., December 21, 1795. M. Fouchet succeeded Genet as French ambassador to America.
3. Ibid., September 24, 1795.
4. Ibid., November 17, 1794.
5. Ibid., November 20, 1796.
6. Ibid., December 8, 1794.
France and the "Jacobin" sympathizers among the Demo-
crats of our own country, but lampooned them all to-
gether in his usual affected verse. His poem, "Song
of Liberty and Equality" written for the celebration
of the third anniversary of the French Republic, and
inserted in the Orrery on the eve of the banquet to
be held in Faneuil Hall by members of the "Jacobin
Club", is an illustration. In his poem, Paine, after
addressing himself to the "Sons of Equality," as he
calls them, descends to this depth of crudeness:

Farewell, ye Sansculottes—I leave ye to dine
With your hoofs in your dishes, like swine—like swine,
For once stuff your stomachs, as long as they'll hold:
The Doctor will help you to purge it away,
And Perez and Hone attend you for pay:
While Samuel the old,
On stool of repentance,
Will whine out a sentence—to Heaven.

We might go on indefinitely to recount illustra-
tions of this sort. Suffice it to say for the present,
however, that Paine, despite his prejudices and parti-
san attitude, did accomplish a few editorials upon the
subject of "Jacobinism" which contributed vitally to the
interest of his paper. As his attention to his paper

1. September 27, 1795.
2. Dr. Charles Jarvis, before mentioned, page 84, note 4.
3. Perez Morton, the prominent Boston lawyer, and a "Ja-
cobin" sympathizer.
4. A humorous abbreviation of "Honestus;" Benjamin Austin, Jr.
5. Governor Samuel Adams, whose reputation for Calvinis-
tic practices made him a ripe subject for satire.
began to decline, he no longer tried to arouse his public to respond to his views, and the quality and substance of the Orrery dwindled accordingly.

Hand in hand with the affairs of foreign intelligence, were those which may be considered as affairs of domestic intelligence. A word will suffice to illustrate the character of these last which include short, cleverly written electioneering squibs, holiday orations, governmental affairs, Congressional news and Washington's internal policies.

We come now to domestic intelligence of a different type—that of a purely local nature, such as was the concern of Bostonians, chiefly. Under this heading, may be considered what, at the moment, seems to have been the most valuable and worthwhile aspect of the Orrery—Paine's theatrical criticisms.

Paine, undoubtedly at his best where the theatre was concerned, had, with the publishing of his newspaper, commenced the writing of his dramatic criticisms. The first number of the "Thespiad," the title under which he proposed to review the contemporary dramatic productions of the Boston Theatre, appeared in the Orrery for December 18, 1794. It contained a
detailed description of the company of actors, many of whom were playing for the first time in Boston, and who, under the management of Mr. Charles Powell, had opened the second season of the Theatre with a presentation of Shakespeare's difficult comedy, *As You Like It*. Among the new members of the cast was a Mr. Taylor, whom Paine found to be a "real acquisition to the stage," and whose interpretation of Orlando had to him, "eclipsed every competitor, in the genteel line of acting, whether we regard the elegance of his person, the gracefulness of his attitude or the justness of his delivery." Others of the cast, also received the kindly attentions of the exacting critic. Of the ladies, Mrs. Hellyer was thought to "sing well," but Miss Harrison, a member of the original company of the Boston Theatre was given the full brunt of Paine's distaste, for her "matchless insipidity." This, coupled with the fact that she had neither "face, voice, form, action; in short, no one talent for the profession," threw the critic into the bad temper which he was always to display when given to discussing inferior or indifferent acting. "The manager," he declares, "cannot surely
imagine the Bostonians such dupes, as to suffer wooden players, merely because they are his connexions." Messrs. Villiers, Jones, and Kenney are damned with but faint praise: Bartlett fares worse. Paine asserts of him:

> It was truly laughable to observe the elaborate essays of Mr. Bartlett, blowing the full blast of his lungs, to expectorate the fine, military song of 'Capt. Belville'.....If it were possible, to twine himself into the favor of the audience, he certainly merited success; for, (as a wit observed) he twisted himself into a cock-screw!!!

In the concluding paragraph of "Thespiad, No. 1," Paine applauds the efforts of the manager, Mr. Powell, especially in his choice of a play. Of the performers, Paine goes on to add:

> .....under the influence of such palliating circumstances, they must do him justice to say, that the extreme good conduct, and universal excellence, of some of his performers, will plead an ample apology for the extreme deficiency, and universal incapability of others.

In a second number of his "Thespiad," Paine hastens to defend the assertions of his preceding number, promising in addition that those of the actors, "who have received our censures, will reflect that they are not entailed on their future exertions; and

---

1. Federal Orrery, December 22, 1794.
those, who have received our eulogiums, will consider, that they are not a sinecure for the season;--the first dawn of improvement, in the former, will be as cordially applauded as if they have never disgusted; and the first deficiency of attention, in the latter, will be as severely reprehended as if they had never excelled." The play under review in this second criticism was Sheridan's _The Jew_. After complimenting author and work in his best manner, Paine departs from his theme to discuss the relative merits of the actors and their interpretations of the respective parts of the play.

In such fashion, did the "Thespiad" continue for several months, appearing intermittently in subsequent numbers of the _Orrery_. It is exceedingly interesting, if not wholly enlightening, to observe how different a face Paine presents as an authority on matters of the theatre. One would scarcely recognize in him the man who so vigorously damned every opposing party principle, and yet he was equally sincere in his treatment of both matters. It is precisely such aspects of his theatrical criticisms as we have illustrated, which brought Paine to the front among lovers of the drama and kept for him, while he lived, the enviable position as Boston's first dramatic critic.

1. The total number of these theatrical criticisms is ten; the last "Thespiad" seems to have been that which appeared in the _Federal Orrery_ for February 3, 1795.
Not only did he excel in the literary composition of his criticisms, but he also attempted to give his public a serious and sincere estimation of theatrical productions, indicating, wherever he found them, those elements which would serve either to enhance or retard the progress of the Boston Theatre.

We should not leave the theatrical criticisms of the Orrery without touching upon the famous controversy which took place between Paine and Mrs. Judith Sargent Murray, over the latter's new tragedy, The Traveller Returned. On March 14, 1796, the editor had included in his Orrery, a criticism of this first presentation of an American tragedy, under the mistaken impression that the author was Mrs. Murray's husband, the Reverend John Murray. The critique, on examination, presents no more harsh a treatment than is usual with Paine when given to such discussion. Mrs. Murray, however, took immediate offense at Paine's supposed attack, and sent him a card of complaint. This, he printed in a subsequent issue of the Orrery, and included his own note, which thus refuted her expression of pique:

'Nil de mortuis nisi bonum' is an ancient maxim of philosophic humanity; and the Editor hopes he shall not flagrantly offend against the Latin idiom, should he translate it—Damn not a play, which has gone to that bourne whence no Traveller Returns!!

1. Federal Orrery, March 17, 1796.
The rest of the affair is well-known. Some friend of Mrs. Murray's, thought by Paine to be her husband, entered the controversy, and Paine, now called upon to use his skill, resorted to his customary satirical measures and flayed the "Reverend Scribbler" in fine style. This was too much for the latter, who now addressed a dignified card to Paine, denying all manner of charges made against him and declaring further that he had never written a line of Mrs. Murray's play. This literary quarrel, in the face of Mrs. Murray's initial failure as the author of a comedy, The Medium, might well have discouraged a far more enterprising person than was this early contributor to American drama.

With Paine's flagging interest in the Orrery, the substance of his dramatic criticisms suffered accordingly. By March of the year 1796, the "Shop of Messrs. Colon & Spondee" had taken over the theatrical criticisms of the paper. Joseph Dennie, to whom we have referred in the previous chapter, was now temporarily situated in Boston while making arrangements for starting his periodical "The Tablet." Under the title "Colon" he had collaborated with Royal Tyler, who, as "Spondee" made up the second member of the famous "Shop." We shall have occasion to mention these men again at another point in our chapter, but it seems advisable to illustrate the trend
of their literary contributions at this time. The first communication ran as follows:

Messrs. Colon & Spondee request their brother haberdasher, T.P. to open an account current with their shop at the foot of the Green Mountain; and as their junior partner served the concluding year of his apprenticeship in the same warehouse of Apollo, clipped the tape of rhetoric with the same scissors, and handled the yardstick of sentiment behind the same counter, they doubt not of his ready compliance with the credit they require.

A very short while after, this second communication appeared in the Orrery under a discussion of Theatricals:

As Messrs. Colon & Spondee, agreeable to their original advertisement, professed to scribble on any, and on every subject, the public will not be surprised if Colon, tired with politics, adventure to hazard a theatrical opinion. Right merrily therefore, he resigns the rod of satire for the pen of panegyric; and eager to promote the cause of timid merit, he forgets that a jacobin club exists, or that the federal agreement has an opposer.

In the criticism which follows, Dennie, as "Colon," has shown his inexperience in matters of the theatre. The two plays under discussion, one by Farquhar and the other by Reynolds, have provided sufficient material for his pen, but he fails to give us any conception of his opinion of the production. "The lovely face, the symmetrical shape, and the expression of Mrs. Hughes" is more to his liking, while the "vivacity and pertness

1. Federal Orrery, February 23, 1795.
2. I.e. at Harvard.
3. Federal Orrery, March 14, 1795.
of a chambermaid, realized in Mrs. Collins' style of acting," completely charms.

Dennie's second attempt at theatrical review resulted in a still wider departure from the mode which Paine had made popular to the readers of the Orrery. Anticipating, as it does, his "Lay Preacher" articles of a later period, this second critique may better have been a criticism of the manners of a typical Boston audience than a criticism of the play and an estimate of the actors. The play under review was O'Keefe's comedy, *Wild Oats*, but the critic is not interested in a discussion of its merits. Rather, he has composed an indignant tirade against those aristocrats who hissed John Dory's line that "he should like to eat a piece of the king's beef, and drink his health that afternoon."

In deploring the vulgarity of the audience, in hissing any reference to Kings, Dennie has asserted of their whole attitude toward English productions:

> They propose that David Hume's eight volumes of the History of the princes of England be forbidden to be read; likewise such classic authors as Livy, Tacitus, etc. should go under an interdict, and their works in every Jacobin library be denied the 'honors of the fitting.'

Dennie's career as a theatrical critic to the *Orrery*

1. Federal Orrery, March 26, 1795.
did not last long. The two plays cited and a few additional theatrical squibs comprise his whole effort in this direction.

Continuing with our discussion of the Orrery, we come now to another division of articles which may be considered as a part of the paper's domestic intelligence, the original poetry of a local nature. An appreciable amount of the poems printed in the Orrery, was that written by enthusiastic Bostonian poets for the openings of the Theatre. These were printed under a section of the paper entitled The Galaxy, and represented the chief merits of the popular Della Cruscan genre. Doubtless the subscribers to the paper had hoped that Mrs. Morton would be one of its chief contributors, but in this they were bound to be disappointed. The three volumes of the Orrery which comprise its total publication, contain no more than a 1 scant handful of "Philenia's" poems and these, not of a superior type. Mrs. Pownall and Mrs. Rowson, two of the leading theatrical performers of the period, con-

1. Among these poems are Reanimation, and Address to Visitants, both formal occasional productions.
2. Mrs. Pownall was a popular singer and actor of the period.
3. Mrs. Susannah Rowson, actress and novelist, who came to Boston about this time.
tributed occasional bits of sentimental verse to *The Galaxy*. In general, the original poetry of the Orrery, outside of that of a political character, was of a decidedly inferior quality. It followed the approved mode of the day, however, and such titles as the "Ode to Venus," "Natal Effusions," "Ode to Spring," "Poem on Sorrow," "Ode to Despair," "Exhortations," and the like, too clearly illustrate the lachrymal quality of the popular verse of the period.

Occasionally the pages of the Orrery were enriched with articles of a purely cultural nature, designed alike for the palates of the literary epicure and the casual reader. As the paper fell more and more into the hands of others, different devices were employed for reviving the flagging life-blood of the Orrery. Fictitious wills, humorous biographical sketches, serial articles on a particular subject and a variety of subjects under one heading now filled the columns of the paper. Of this last, the "Omnium Gatherum" articles, written by William Bigelow, deserve special attention. Bigelow, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Charles Chatterbox, Esq." began his literary contributions to the Orrery while studying for the ministry in Lancaster. He had been a sophomore in Harvard dur-
ing Paine's senior year there and was known to a large intellectual group for his superior wit and literary talents.

The first of these "Omnium Gatherum" articles was a humorous biographical sketch of "Charles Chatterbox, Esq.," and contained a further outline of the plan for his future contributions. The second of the articles took the form of a will, in verse, wherein Bigelow displayed to good advantage his quiet humor and excellent understanding of his public. In "A Will," Bigelow has given us a splendid picture of Charles Prentiss, the well-known friend and biographer of Paine. A stanza of the description follows:

The said C------ P------s, humor's son,
Who long shall stay when I am gone,
The Muses' most successful suitor
I constitute my executor;
And for his trouble to requite him,
Member of Laughing Club I write him.

Another of Bigelow's poems, entitled "The Cheerful Par-
son," is even more expressive of the tolerant and kindly wit of this candidate to the ministry, who, in attempting to justify his choice of a profession, thus outlines his attitude toward religion:

Not damning a man for a different opinion
I'd mix with the Calvinist, Baptist, Arminian
Treat each like a man, like a Christian and brother,
Preach love to our Maker, ourselves and each other.

1. Federal Orrery, April 27, 1795.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., May 6, 1795.
Several other subjects were attempted by this versatile artist in a manner equally illustrative of his wide intellectual range and literary experience. His treatment of the so-called "Age of Freedom: an imitation of Pain's Age of Reason," is especially happy, displaying as it does the author's ability to paraphrase the greater work in a humorous and understanding manner. "Electioneering," another of this author's poems, emphasizes the most ridiculous aspects of current political matters and contains this delightful stanza:

The President's great chair I shun;
I cannot fight like Washington;
For when our enemies combat us,
The careless boobies fly right at us,
Which frights this coward soul of mine;
But then in Congress I could shine.

Shortly, these literary tidbits of Bigelow's inspired the corresponding efforts of a kindred spirit, who addressed himself to the Orrery's readers as "Roger Roundelay, the social recluse." So nearly alike are the styles of the two authors, however, that it is not possible to praise one without including the other.

Further cultural contributions to the Orrery were those made by "Messrs. Colon & Spondee." We have al-

1. Federal Orrery, May 10, 1795.
2. Ibid., May 25, 1795.
3. Ibid., June 27, 1795.
already mentioned something of "Colon's" theatrical contributions. It remains now to speak of those of his articles, which, under the title of "Lay Preacher" were reprinted in Paine's paper. During the year 1796, Dennie had moved to Walpole, N.H., where, in his association to the Farmer's Weekly Museum, he began the writing of this series of essays. Newspaper editors of the whole country, recognizing Dennie's superior literary ability, reprinted many of these "lay sermons" in their papers, and the Orrery boasted of an appreciable number. Deceit, falsehood, superstitions, quacks of all types, drunken Congressmen and avaricious Clergymen were the subjects of his essays, which, modelled upon Addison's Spectator papers, aim largely at social reform. Dennie's "Lay Preacher" essays form an essentially worth while element of the Orrery's literature and went far to renew the deteriorating character of the paper at the time.

Before leaving Dennie, however, we should mention one last fact concerning his satiric attack upon Harvard which appeared in a March issue of the Orrery, 1795. Here he complains at length of the "centoed orations and

1. Federal Orrery, March 15, 1795.
vapid rhymes" of the students of that institution, and the "dull discourses" of the "president, professors and tutors of a whole century." In defense of these last, Paine felt called upon to add a paragraph to the effect that "those who have heard the natural history of a Waterhouse, beheld the surgical operations of a Warren, witnessed the experimental Philosophy of a Webber, or listened attentively to the philosophical lectures of a Pearson may, perhaps, be inclined to doubt the verity of this statement."

"Spondee," Dennie's literary assistant, never contributed more than three short articles to the whole of the Orrery production, but these, of a light and humorous strain, are descriptive of the author. It is to Paine's credit that when he no longer looked to his paper as a source of income nor as a medium for his literary talents, he had the good judgment to continue to enlist the efforts of two such gifted men as "Messrs. Colon & Spondee."

Quite apart from any type of division are the advertisements or notices which comprise an increasingly large part of the Orrery's pages. As a rule, these

1. Two epigrams, Federal Orrery, November 27, 1794 and February 23, 1795, and a Prologue to a Clandestine Marriage, on this last date.
notices were largely confined to the last page of the paper, but there seems to have been no prescribed rule about their arrangement. Lotteries, book-sales, advertisements concerning the whereabouts of bond-servants who had run away, wet-nurses, canals, dramatic olios, dancing masters, private schools, business notices, pick-pockets, suicides: all these filled the columns of the paper and offered a variety of reading material to the public.

A few of the above mentioned subjects may be mentioned in more detail as holding special interest for those to whom the Orrery was not merely a newspaper but a mine of information and delight as well. In every issue of the paper there occurred one of the most significant of the current advertisements of the period, the Harvard Lottery. The growing student body at Harvard made plans for a new dormitory imperative, and the Corporation of the College had resorted to this means of obtaining the money for such a building. Their plan was that of twenty-five thousand tickets to be sold at five dollars each, twelve and one-half per cent of the whole could be used for the new student's hall and the rest, distributed among the winners of the lottery's prizes. We learn that:

So great is the demand for Tickets in the 2nd Class of Harvard College Lottery that it has become doubtful whether there will be any to dispose of, for several days previous to the 9th of April next, on which day the Lottery is positively to commence drawing. The spirit which animated the first settlers of this country, to promote useful knowledge, has, if possible, increased with the present generations; and this is the evidence, that there is scarcely a single one in the community, either male or female, who is not more or less interested in the College Lottery.

As we have said before, the Baker family, following dismissal from the Boston Theatre, appeared before the public in dramatic olios, a popular form of entertainment in Boston at the time. Many of these olios were advertised in the Orrery, and a sample is here given in illustration of the dramatic melange:

**Mr. Harper**

At the request of a number of respectable characters, is induced, Tomorrow evening --June 30, at the Theatre Hall, to present

A Dramatic Olio, or
A miscellaneous selection of Song, Dance, and Recitations from the works of the celebrated G.A. Stevens, Foote, Pilon, etc.

In the course of which will be introduced,

An introductory Address By Mr. Harper.

Dibden's song of "Father, and Mother, and Sue," By Mrs. Spencer in the character of a country lad.

The energetic Harangue of Gustavus Vasa to the Dalecarlians By Mr. Baker.

Glee, 'Sigh no more ladies' By Mallet, Grange and Harper.

---

The 'Covent Garden buck,'  
Mr. Baker.

Song, 'Tom Bowling'
Mr. Harper.

Duetto 'Rise, Cynthia, rise,'  
By Messrs. Mallet and Harper.

Garrick's Country-Boy's description of a Lord  
and an Alderman, a fine Lady, and a Poet  
Mr. Baker.

It will be noticed from the above, that Mr. Baker was still continuing with his dramatic presentations, the while he was employed as an hotel-keeper in Boston.

Indeed, it is even possible to trace in the Orrery's pages, the monthly occupations of Paine's father-in-law.

From hotel to hotel he passed, now owner and proprietor of one, now manager of another, but always he seems to have been one whose convivial spirits were sure to cut for him and for his family a wide swathe in the more bohemian circles of Boston society.

Occasionally, the Orrery contained notices of a more educational type, illustrative of Paine's love for his college and scholarly attainment in general. The first annual commencement of Williams College was announced in one issue of the Orrery; another contained a fuller description of the commencement program for Harvard in the year 1795.

1. Federal Orrery, September 27, 1795.
2. Ibid., July 13, 1795.
It was to be expected that a few of Paine's literary associates would take advantage of his occupation to advertise their own wares. The Orrery for January 25, 1796, contained the following enlightening prospectus, in which John Russel & Company sought to

...solicit the Patronage of the ladies and gentlemen of Boston, and the public in general to a New Evening Paper, which will be entitled

The Nightengale

An excerpt follows:

The names of Philenia and Menander, in some Society's literary lumber-hole, meet with no more respect from the corroding book-worm than the poetaster's nonsense, or some lovelorn Corydon's grievous complaints. Our pages, we flatter ourselves, will never be blackened with dust, festooned with cobwebs, or embrowned in the oven of an 'unmeeking' pastry cook. From the excellence of their contents, and the stile of elegance in which their typography will be executed, they will become ornamental volumes in the library of the man of taste and learning, and adorn the bookcases of the gay and thoughtless—who—never read at all.

That Paine never allowed the smallest item to escape his notice, while his interest in his paper lasted, is shown by the following rare paragraph which appeared in one number of his Orrery. It ran:

1. Federal Orrery. September 21, 1795.
To Correspondents.

The editor has received a typographical satire, entitled 'Homo sum—I am a Man or a Woman!' This bestial versatality of sex may be aptly enough described; but we think the author has prostituted his rare parts to unnatural situation and ludicrous effect! The Dead Sea is the only proper receptacle for the sins of Sodom; and the Muse, who records them, should, like the crimes she celebrates, be veiled in eternal infamy. Besides these, we have professional motives, which induce us to suppress the above mentioned production; for we may be apprehensive, that its publication would display so damnable a view of a certain printing-office lobby, that one, at least, of our brother printers would squint with a most horrible obliquity of vision.

We might continue to list many of these smaller aspects of a newspaper which give the Orrery a distinctive ton, were it not to repeat what we have already reiterated more than once concerning the devices by which editor and collaborators of the paper sought to enliven the quality of its articles. Instead, it seems wiser to attempt a summary paragraph of the Orrery, stating its significance in the period for which it was designed.

The Orrery had lasted for a year and a half; not too bad a record for a newspaper published at the time when like publications were springing up constantly, and as constantly, dying. Unlike the editor of the Emerald and Ordeal, of whom Paine himself said,

He possesses the greatest literary execution of any man in America. Two journals have perished under his hands in six months!

this editor was definitely able to boast of some literary achievement in his theatrical criticisms and not a few of his political articles. His satirical productions, too impassioned to be entirely just always, unfortunately bear little merit outside of their own period. Paine, however, was at all times sincere in his belief that his Orrery championed the better cause, and in this light, we may find justification for the crudest of his lampoons.

The Orrery passed on, leaving its editor at this low ebb in his career, to the kindly treatment of his theatrical acquaintances.
CHAPTER FOUR

The Dilettante (1796-1809)

Paine's expulsion from his home brought a new order of things in his life. His marriage to the actress, Eliza Baker, already touched upon in the preceding chapter, has achieved so much importance in his biography with the years that we may be thought guilty of gross neglect, if we do not at least consider the essentials of the case. The situation, by no means an uncommon one today, was unthinkable for the son of a Signer. To marry out of station was bad enough, but to marry an actress was infinitely worse. It was an affair to be whispered behind fans, to be inferred with raised eye-brows, and to be heartily condemned by every decent-thinking person. Friends who had formerly boasted of their acquaintance with the brilliant poet and editor now shunned him completely, and Paine, who, according to Prentiss "had neither stubbornness of pride to resist the blow; nor elasticity of character to recover from the shock," turned to other quarters for the companionship he must have.

Paine's father had definitely withdrawn his support and the Orrery was rapidly deteriorating, but the poet was

not wholly without position nor friendship for the moment. Major Wallach, upon hearing of the plight of his young friend, offered him the shelter of his home in Essex Street, for as long as he cared to remain with him. Here Paine now came to live with his wife, sharing both the protection and the friendship of Wallach and his family.

Prior to his sale of the Orrery, which, it has previously been stated, took place on April 18, 1796, the poet had accepted a new position, that of Master of Ceremonies for the Boston Theatre. His knowledge of theatricals and actors made him especially suited to the duties of this novel office, which, we are led to believe, were neither unduly strenuous nor particularly refined. He was expected to "keep silence in the box lobbies during the performance, to preserve, if possible, decorum among the bucks in the boxes, to keep gentlemen from wiping the mud of their boots upon the drapery of ladies who happen to be on the seat before them, to confine the grog-sellers to their north room, and to assist those young blades to find the outside of the theatre that have drunk too much to stay within." For this, he was given a comfortable,

1. Moses Wallach lived on Essex Street, Boston. The Boston Directory for 1796 lists Paine's address as the same, A Report of the Record Commissioners, City of Boston, Miscellaneous Papers, Boston, 1886, page 272.

if not liberal salary. With her marriage to the poet, Mrs. Paine had given up her life on the stage and thereafter seems to have become completely merged in her new position as wife and mother. Through her discreet and blameless behavior, she may be said to have merited a far more honorable name than her husband could at all times claim.

There were other ways in which Paine contributed to the support of his family during this period of temporary adversity. In July of 1795, six months after his untimely marriage, he had again distinguished himself in letters, by delivering another poem at the commencement exercises of Harvard College. Prentiss, who was at the time a candidate for his first degree there, has given us a full description of the occasion. In accordance with the usual practice, the Corporation of the College had assigned to Paine, then a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts, an English poem. Paine chose a theme for which he was admirably qualified at the time, a review of the press from ancient to modern times, and called his poem The Invention of Letters. We have already dwelt at some length upon the journalistic practices of the poet in reference to his strong defense of the principles of Federalism. As

was to be expected, he had written one bold stanza of this poem around the hated Jacobin element, asserting:

Envy, that fiend, who haunts the great and good,  
Not Cato shunned, nor Hercules subdued.  
On Fame's wide field, where'er a covert lies,  
The rustling serpent to the thicket flies;  
The foe of Glory, Merit is her prey;  
The dunce she leaves, to plod her drowsy way.  
Of birth amphibious, and of Protean skill,  
This green-eyed monster changes shape at will;  
Like snakes of smaller breed, she sheds her skin;  
Strips off the serpent, and turns--Jacobin.

President Willard, to whom Paine had submitted a preliminary draft of his poem, was quick to see that such a stanza would be detrimental to the neutral tone of the day's program, and accordingly, struck it out at once. But Paine, who was certain of the applause that these lines would receive among his federalist friends, refused to omit them, and declared as much to Prentiss, with whom he was rehearsing his piece at the time. The latter, also one of the speakers for the day, had been obliged to omit a part of his work because of its political significance, but when Paine made known his intentions to recite his piece as it was originally written, he too promised to follow suit. Willard, hearing of the intended rebellion, sent for the culprits. Prentiss answered the summons at once, was severely repri-

1. Paine's Works, pages xl-xlII.
manded, and sent to find Paine, who refused to come until it was too late for anything to be done about it. The lines had already formed and the audience was clamoring for the exercises to begin. We are at this point indebted to Mrs. Judith Sargent Murray for her description of the pandemonium which followed and of the effectiveness of Paine's delivery. In a letter to a cousin and niece she writes:

I have never before been a spectator of the confusion, which, on those public days, pervades the peaceful and hallowed scenes of Harvard; nor shall I be again solicitous to partake the pleasures of Commencement...In the afternoon I determined on securing a better stand, and accordingly I took a seat in the front gallery, an hour and three quarters before the commencement of the exercises. During this tedious interval the house was crowded and tumultuous. The theatre when compared thereto might be imagined a sequestered grot;--hissing, clapping, hallowing, stamping, shrieking,--but it is impossible for words to convey an adequate idea of the licentious and dissonant uproar which disgraced the sacred rites of Science. It was in vain that upon the entrance of the Governor, President, Clergy, &c., we had flattered ourselves with the return of the semblance of order. The wild indecent uproar still continued, and the President declared his apprehension that the exercises be suspended! The Governor arose and addressed the populace, but had he spoken in thunder he would not have been heard...Numbers were tumbled headlong from the eminences they had so unwarrantably seized, and many were turned neck and shoulders out of doors...The most dignified characters were assembled, and a kind of conspicuous pride

1. The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, Vol. XVIII, Boston, 1881, pages 210-211.
elates the heart while contemplating those personages, who are an honor to the species. But this was not all, Mr. Paine, the orator of the afternoon, at length mounted the rostrum, and his appearance changed the loud clamor of tongues and combination of discordant sounds into a kind of dying murmur, which may be poetically compared to the subsiding waves after the storm of the ocean is no more. But the effect of his exordium was truly astonishing; silence instantly pervaded the motley crowd, attention bent triumphant, and happy experience reminded us of those days in which a Demosthenes and a Cicero, arresting the frenzy of tumult restored an ungovernable populace to the exercise of reason.

Prentiss concludes his account of the event by stating that he and Paine did receive their degrees, despite the admonitions of President Willard. The latter's objection had arisen, not so much from a personal dislike of the verses, as from an unwillingness to have Governor Samuel Adams and others of his opinion believe that he had sanctioned them.

The Invention of Letters was immediately printed and passed through several editions. Its sale brought the author the almost unprecedented sum of fifteen hundred dollars as well as an exceptional amount of praise. An examination of the poem will better reveal the secret of this unusual achievement.

It is written in the familiar pentameter couplet

form, an admirable vehicle for the brand of political satire which it attempts. The vigorous and spirited phraseology is representative of the author's best journalistic style. Its aim is to impress rather than to charm the reader, and while one might easily lose the whole scheme of the poem after the first reading, he is not liable to forget the wit of its polished lines, or miss the quotability of its couplets. The following vivid picture of the Jacobin press is among the most daring of the poem's many political thrusts:

In yon drear garret, Faction's dark recess,
Her nightly daemons load the groaning press,
With cobwebs hung, she rubs her sleepless eyes,
While Norfolk spiders weave her half-spun lies.
Her motley brood by law nor gospel tied,
Whom honor cannot bind, nor reason guide,
The dregs of nature and of vice compose;
For Envy these creates, and Folly those.
In tricks expert, or buzzing on the wing,
Like apes, they mimick, or like insects sting!
And still another useless proof supply--
The sun that warms a monkey, breeds a fly!

That Paine was not oblivious to the literary virtues of his own age, the ensuing stanza testifies:

In strength of scene, delights a Ramsay's page;
With classick truth, a Belknap's charms the age;

2. Ibid., page 170, lines 17-24.
3. David Ramsay, "the historian of the Revolution." Among his works are: History of the American Revolution, A History of the United States, Life of Washington, A Medical Register for the Year 1802, etc.
4. The Reverend Jeremy Belknap, Boston, 1744-1798. In addition to his History of New Hampshire, he wrote that famous political allegory, The Foresters. He is also the author of several famous religious tracts and sermons.
In cloudless splendour, modest Minot shines
And Bunker flames, in Allen's^ glowing lines.
By sister arts, and kindred powers allied,
The Trumbulls^ rise, the lyre's and pencil's pride.
And every muse has carved Philenia's name
On every laurel in the grove of Fame.

As a literary production, the Invention of Letters has certainly no more merit than those poems which brought Paine less praise. It was dedicated to Washington and contained an eloquent tribute to that eminent leader. This last, coupled with the significant political character of the contents, seems to furnish a sufficient reason for the great popularity of the poem.

After the Invention of Letters, Paine lapsed into another of his quiescent states, during which little but sad news was heard of him. He now spent the greater part of his time in the theatre, attendant upon his duties there or tippling with its hangers-on, who were, for the moment, his companions. His father's sustained aloofness continued to set the pace for those of the poet's friends who might have befriended him.


2. James Allen, Boston, 1739-1808. He was the author of a patriotic epic entitled The Battle of Bunker Hill, the poem to which Paine is here referring.

3. The famous Trumbulls of Connecticut. John Trumbull, the poet(1750-1831) whose most noted works are M'Fingal (1775) and Progress of Dulness(1773); and John Trumbull, the artist(1756-1843). He painted such historical pieces as the Battle of Bunker Hill, Surrender of Cornwallis, and the Declaration of Independence.
Paine himself was too proud to complain, too proud to adjust his life to the prescribed social pattern or to admit the error of his ways. It was not long before he began to feel the "earnest of adversity." The prodigious sum of fifteen hundred dollars, brought by the sale of the late poem, did not bulk so large when measured against the increasing debts of the Orrery. In addition, drink and idle company made large inroads upon a salary none too liberal for squandering.

During this period, Paine seems to have had a near friend in his father-in-law, Mr. Joseph Berkeley Baker. It will be remembered that the latter, since his dismissal from the Boston Theatre in the summer of 1794, had been employed as a hotel-keeper in the town, advertising his wares "for the gentlemen of leisure" who might "in his coffee-house, find a pleasing remedy for that irksomeness, with which his time is too frequently laden."

The temptations of such an establishment as was Mr. Baker's could not be conducive to any poet's reform, nor could the friendship of so sporting a tavern-keeper add

1. Federal Orrery, November 13, 1794. Advertisement for the "Shakespeare Hotel and Coffee House" in Water Street, J.B. Baker, proprietor and owner. The Boston Directory of 1796 records that Mr. Baker was then keeping a "wine and porter cellar" at the South Side of Market Street. Mrs. Baker had returned to the theatre and played all of that year.
to the social prestige of the younger man.

Dissolute living could not always down the poet in Paine, however. It was in this period following his expulsion from home, after the sale of the Orrery, and while he was suffering most keenly the neglect of friends and family, that Paine wrote the most notable of his poems, The Ruling Passion. On June 21, 1796, he had been unanimously elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard. The year following, on July 20, 1797, he was asked to write a poem for the anniversary of the Society, to be delivered in the Chapel of the University in Cambridge. He responded with The Ruling Passion, the poem which betrays more of the real feeling of the author than any amount of contemporary opinion. All the bitterness of an injured pride; all the genuine fears of a brilliant mind humbled by poverty and disgrace; all the humiliation and remorse of a repentant spirit: these Paine reveals in the lines of his Ruling Passion with a pathos and sincerity which makes of his poem a masterly and finished work. Of political opinion and prejudice, experience had taught him to temper his ardor with caution and to strive for that time

1. Works, page 190, lines 3-4.
2. The device of the age-old Aesop's Fables.
The Ruling Passion

Rage we have Nature's social walks toscan That little world, that greater wonder, Man The Sage's study, which but few improve, Religion's mystery, which none remove Reason's proud toy, in his machine unite Powers, dense as earth, conceptions, rare as light Its wheels more complex than the central sphere Whose planet's a comet, while it would a tear It springs more subtly than the secret soul Which bids a world, an atom roll

Left by himself, than others, understand More led by sense, yet more with mind His Nature offers to our world at odd Than love, 'tis God's Green-Room of the sky

Since then the wise are as dull as we In one grave maxim let us all agree Nature near means her secrets should belain And Man's a middle, which Man must step
When every sect supports, with patriot zeal,
One universal creed, the common weal.

The classical construction and well-thought-out plan
of the poem are further indicative of Paine's maturi-
ty of thought and expression. His theme, by no means
an original one, he has derived from Pope's Essay on
Man. His philosophy follows the principles of Locke.
Here, the world of man, like "Egypt's Gods," is de-
picted, a "motley Pantheon of birds and beasts."
Their passions and their vagaries, their virtues and
their vices, their fancies and their foibles: these
are reviewed in the lines of the poem with color and

Were the wild brood, who dwell in glade and brake,
Some kindred character of man to take;
In the base jackall's, or gay leopard's mien,
The servile pimp, or gay coquette, were seen;
The patient camel, long inured to dine
But once a fortnight, would a poet shine;
The stag, a cit, with antlered brows content;
The rake, a pointer, always on the scent;
The snake, a statesman; and the wit, a gnat;
The ass, an alderman; the scold, a cat;
The wife, a ring-dove, on the myrtle's top;
The wolf, a lawyer; the baboon, a fop!

Frequently, the phraseology of the Ruling Passion de-
scends to that of the press, as the following stanza


2. Ibid.,
will illustrate:

Life is a print ship, where the eye may trace,
A different outline, marked in every face.
From chiefs, who laurels reap in fields of blood,
Down to the hind, who tills those fields for food.
From the lorn nymph, in cloistered abbey pent,
Whose friars teach to love, and to repent,
To the young captive in the Haram's bower,
Blest for a night, and empress for an hour;
From ink's retailers, perched in garret high,
Cobwebbed around with many a mouldy lie,
Down to the pauper's brat, who luckless wight!
Deep in the cellar first received the light;
All, all impelled, as various passions move,
To write, to starve, to conquer, or to love!

Fops, pedants, maids young and old, misers, dunces,
patriots and anarchists, following the medieval tradition
of Brandt's Das Narrenschiff, appear in scattered
array upon the illuminated screen of the Ruling Passion,
in outlines as bold and as deftly turned as those crea-
tures of the earlier poem.

That Paine was not for a moment insensible to the
unattractiveness of his condition at the time, is plain-
ly shown in several stanzas of his poem. Fear for the
future and the pinch of poverty made him cry:

Where you send genius, send a fortune too;
Dunces by instinct thrive, as oysters wool!
For ne'er were veins of ore by chymist found
Except like Hebrew roots, in barren ground!

Each scribbling wight, who pens a birthday card,
Was born, as grannams, say, to be a bard!
Which is, in prose, if rightly understood,
To chum with spiders, and catch flies for food.

2. Ibid., page 186, lines 3-10.
The doubtful blessings of Fame is another of the poet's plaints:

Fame, that bright phantom, flitting, vain and coy,
Is all the meed, which poet's e'er enjoy.
Nor e'en her fickle, short embrace possess,
'Till all her charms have lost the power to bless.

For the injury and disgrace, the insults and slights
he has suffered in the name of genius, Paine would cite
this moral to those who follow in his wake:

In Youth's gay flush, when first the sportive Muse,
Each bright ephemera of the brain pursues;
Ere Sobered Fancy, touched by Reason's ray,
Sees all her frost-work castles melt away;
Were, then, the enthusiast bard, like Moses led
To Pisgah's top, and life in vision spread;
There, while he blessed the promised land, were told,
The Canaan, he must ne'er possess, was gold;
How many minstrels of the classick lay
Had left the Appian, for the Indian way!
How few would lumber, negligent of pelf
The Printer's garret, or the Grocer's shelf.

The first printing of the *Ruling Passion* contained the following introductory note:

As some apology for the desultory construction of
the following Poem, the candid reader is informed
that it was written, *calamo currentes*, in moments occasionally sequestered from other concerns—in a period, too limited to harmonize its outlines, too interrupted to mature its materials. The flattering avidity with which the subscriptions were filled, necessitated its immediate publication; and it now issues from the press, in the same form in which it was spoken.

The sale of the poem brought Paine twelve hundred dol-

lars, an unusual amount of money for so short a poem. His reputation as the "Boston Poet" was now fairly well established, but the poem had not yet been written which would settle that enviable name upon him for the remainder of the decade.

Several of the Boston Libraries have catalogued Joel Barlow's Hasty Pudding as a poem of Robert Treat Paine's. The error seems to have come about through the edition of "The Ruling Passion" which was bound with Barlow's Hasty Pudding in the following manner:


Paine continued with his former wayward practices throughout the remainder of the year, neither shining by "flow of thought" nor pleasing by a return to decent living. Buckingham states that sometime in the year 1798, in more than one way a banner year for Paine, the enlargement of Russell's Gazette, attracted "a number of young men, who were ready with their pens to assist him with comments on politics, literature, the drama, &c." of whom Paine "was among the most constant" writers.  

Sometime in June of that year, Paine was asked to write a poem for the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Association, one of the philanthropic institutions by which Boston sought to relieve the needy of her town. Many of the most talented social leaders of Boston were called upon to assist in the success of the affair. Patriotic songs and speeches were the order of the day, for political affairs were still uppermost in the minds of New America. Adams had been elected to the Presidency of the United States in March of the preceding year, 1797, and Paine, the diplomat, celebrated the occasion in the lines of his new patriotic song, "Adams and Liberty." Prentiss has related the interesting details of the poem's first making, which, for better understanding of Paine's poetical proclivities, should not be omitted in our study. Paine had just finished writing the poem when Benjamin Russell, then editor of the Columbian Centinel, called for it. He read it over, commented favorably upon it, but added that he believed that it was not complete without some mention of America's former president, Washington. The poet was preparing to drink, but Russell stopped him.

declaring jokingly that he should not allow him to
drink before he had made the proper correction, where-
on the poet set to work and almost at once achieved
the most spirited stanza of the entire poem:

Should the Tempest of War overshadow our land,
    Its bolts could ne'er rend Freedom's temple asunder;
For, unmoved, at its portal, would Washington stand,
    And repulse, with his Breast, the assaults of the
    thunder!

    His sword, from the sleep
    Of its scabbard would leap,
And conduct, with its point, ev'ry flash to the deep!
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

With the publication of "Adams and Liberty," Paine's
reputation was indeed made. Within the year, several
broadside editions of the poem were printed; the song
was widely sung and played, and, according to Prentiss,
was "republished and applauded in Great Britain." The


2. "Adams and Liberty" Broadsides published by Ross and
    Tonsey, 121 Nassau Street, New York; printed and sold
    at the Bible and 
    Heart, Salem; same, printed with
    "Hail Columbia" and the "American Sailor:" same,
    alone, with music.

3. Clapp records in his Record of the Boston Stage, that
    the song was sung June 5, 1798, by Mr. Hodgkinson,
    at the Haymarket Theatre, President Adams in attend-
    ance, page 68. The Boston Gazette for June 11, states
    that Mr. Barrett will sing Paine's "Adams, and Lib-
    erty" at a performance of the West Indian to be held
    at the Haymarket Theatre. On July 23, the Gazette
    announces a similar performance to be given by Mr.
    Hodgkinson at a presentation of The Dramatist.

sale of "Adams and Liberty" bade fair to relieve the precarious finances of the poet and his family for a short time at least, but scarcely had the first printing of it issued from the press when the event occurred which was to reinstate Paine with his father.

During the latter part of July, a yellow-fever epidemic had been raging throughout Boston; and Robert, Paine's older brother and a promising young lawyer in the town, was one of those to be stricken. For days he lingered, while his doting father, in an agony of fear, called upon the most skillful of the town's physicians to aid him in bringing his beloved son to his senses. Nothing availed, however, and on July 29th, the young man died. The Signer was heart-broken, yet his grief could not prevent the habit of a lifetime, which brought him to record the sad event in his diary:

July 29, 1798. Very hot. last night & all this day. About 5 o'clock this morning the fever on my son took an alarming turn. His senses left him and Death came on with most distressing spasms and struggles toward noon and continued till 3 o'clock when my dear beloved son Robert left this transitory state of existence, I hope for a better....

The death of this favorite of sons, who, in the words

1. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine, July 29, 1798.
of one writer "was remarkable for the humanity of his disposition, the urbanity of his manners, the correctness of his taste, and the uncommon degree of his literary acquirements," seems to have wrought a change in the Signer's attitude toward his wayward son, Thomas. 2

Loring records that at a congratulatory party, the forthcoming sentiments were publicly advanced: "The love of liberty and the liberty of loving;" Champagne to real friends, and real pain to sham friends." The Signer had certainly grown more tolerant of the theatre since the year in which Paine had written his Prize Prologue, as the pages of his Diary will prove. Sometimes in the period of Robert's illness, Thomas Paine returned to live with his father, bringing with him his wife and little daughter, Elizabeth.

In February of the year 1798, a fire had broken out in the Federal Street Theatre, Paine's customary haunt, and burned it to the ground. Plans were immediately drawn up for the reconstruction of the thea-

1. The unknown writer of an article contained in the Emerald, (a newspaper published in Boston for 1807 and 1808) as an introduction to an Elegy written at the death of Robert Treat Paine, Jr., by his intimate friend, John Lathrop, Jr., cf. Appendix C.


3. MS Diary Robert Treat Paine, June 6, 1798, et seq.

4. Born August 9, 1796.

5. The Signer records in his Diary for that day, February 2, 1798, "P.M. A fire broke out in the Theatre federal street & burned it entirely. The wind calm no other buildings were burned."
1. A Record of the Boston Stage, pages 67-68.

2. Works, page xlvii.
ruffled feelings, but he angrily refused, stating that when the other had begun to work, he would begin to drink. Paine bent to his task and by eight-thirty of the evening had completed a poem which met the satisfaction of the actor who, on the following evening, recited it to a house crowded with the "kind patrons of the Thespian Art" for whom it had been designed.

Paine's *Dedicatory Address*, a poem of no unusual merit, is less of a dedication to the new theatre than a eulogy to President Adams, about whom it is, in part, written. The theme is the dramatic one of the recent conflagration, about which has been built a host of incoherent matter of minor significance, the reconstruction of the Boston Theatre, politics foreign and domestic, and the patriotism, manners, and culture of Americans in general.

Paine continued as Master of Ceremonies for the Boston Theatre to the end of that year. With his return to his family, he had apparently left off his vicious habits of the past few years and strove now to attain his former high position among his friends. These last, together with the members of his own family, urged him to sever his connections with the theatre and to enter upon some profession befitting his capabilities and
station. Accordingly, at some time in the next year, 1799, probably at the close of the theatre season in April, Paine removed to Newburyport to study law with Theophilus Parsons, that eminent scholar with whom so many of Boston's most successful lawyers had studied. Under the instruction of the latter, who, in the opinion of one biographer "was no more remarkable for his deep learning, than for the keenness of his wit," Paine made rapid strides in his legal studies. He was not, however, wholly unmindful of his literary career during this time.

On the 7th of July, 1799, America had abrogated her treaty with France; and a year later, the young men of Boston wishing to commemorate the occasion, called upon Paine for some expression of the popular feeling regarding the issue. On Saturday, July 17, 1799, the morning of the Commencement at Harvard for that year, Paine delivered his inspired address to the "Young Men of Boston." A copy of the oration was sent to Adams and to Washington, both of whom returned their hearty thanks to the "pregnant and prolific genius" of Boston.

1. A Record of the Boston Stage, page 68.
3. Prentiss includes a copy of each letter in his 'Sketch' in Paine's Works, pages xlix-li.
The Oration to the Young Men of Boston is one of the most remarkable examples of Paine's eloquence and certainly one of the most illustrative of his enlarged political spleen. Circumlocution, conceit, and bombast here unite to swell the theme of exultant Federalism.

The struggle between Liberty and Despotism, Government and Anarchy, Religion and Atheism, has been gloriously decided, declares Paine, the orator.

It has proved the victory of principle, the triumph of virtue. France has been foiled, and America is free. The charm of diplomatic policy has been dissolved; the severing blow has been struck; and the exulting Ocean, now rolls between our shores, an eternal monument of our separation.

We cannot fail to share in the spirit of this patriotic address. Stanzas, such as the following, will, despite their magniloquence, gain some measure of response in the hearts of the freedom-loving American citizen:

The soul of your ancestors, [he cries], still lives in the bosom of their descendants, and rather than submit this fair land of their inheritance to ravage and dishonor, from hoary age to helpless infancy, they will form one united bulwark, and oppose their breasts to the assailing foe. Not one shall survive, to be enslaved: for ere the tri-colored flag shall wave over our prostrate republick, the bones of four million of Americans will whiten the shores of their country! This depopulated region shall be as desolate as its original wilderness; the revegetating forest shall cover the ruins of our cities; and the savage will return to the

1. Works, page 301.

2. Ibid., page 323-324.
The Oration to the Young Men of Boston is one of the most remarkable examples of Paine's eloquence and certainly one of the most illustrative of his enlarged political spleen. Circumlocution, conceit, and bombast here unite to swell the theme of exultant Federalism.

The Struggle between Liberty and Despotism, Government and Anarchy, Religion and Atheism, has been gloriously decided, declares Paine, the orator.

It has proved the victory of principle, the triumph of virtue. France has been foiled, and America is free. The charm of diplomatic policy has been dissolved; the severing blow has been struck; and the exulting Ocean, now rolls between our shores, an eternal monument of our separation.

We cannot fail to share in the spirit of this patriotic address. Stanzas, such as the following, will, despite their magniloquence, gain some measure of response in the hearts of the freedom-loving American citizen:

The soul of your ancestors, [he cries], still lives in the bosom of their descendants, and rather than submit this fair land of their inheritance to ravage and dishonor, from hoary age to helpless infancy, they will form one united bulwark, and oppose their breasts to the assailing foe. Not one shall survive, to be enslaved: for ere the tri-colored flag shall wave over our prostrate republick, the bones of four million of Americans will whiten the shores of their country! This depopulated region shall be as desolate as its original wilderness; the rewegetating forest shall cover the ruins of our cities; and the savage will return to the

mountains, and again rear his hut in the abode of his forefathers. Then shall commence the millenium of political illumination; and Frenchmen and wolves, 'one and indivisible' nightly chant their barbarous orgies, to celebrate the Philosophick Empire of Democracy!

1. The Oration was printed at once, and may still be found in volumes of like address, all, an historical monument to the era for which they were written. The profits from his sale of the Oration, the returns from his theatre benefit, given sometime in February of that year, and his desultory literary assistance to the booksellers of Newburyport, did, we learn from Prentiss, support the poet and his family for the year.

On December 14, 1799, just prior to Paine's return to Boston, George Washington died, and the poet was again impressed into his country's service, this time to deliver a Eulogy on the life of the great American leader. "Americans," Paine cries,

The Saviour of your country has obtained his last victory. Having reached the summit of human perfection, he has quitted the region of human glory. Conqueror of time, he has triumphed over mortality; Legate of Heaven, he has returned with the tidings of his mission; Father of his people, he has ascended to advocate their cause in the bosom of his God. Solemn, 'as it were a pause in nature,'

2. Works, page xlviii.
3. Ibid., page lii.
4. Ibid., page 329.
was his transit to eternity; thronged by the shades of heroes, his approach to the confines of bliss; paeaned by the songs of angels, his journey beyond the stars!

There is nothing of simple thought or statement in the preceding paragraph, for such was not Paine's way. If he has outdone himself here, he was at least sincere in his desire to pen America's feeling of appreciation for all that Washington had accomplished. We are fortunate in having some contemporary account of the occasion on which Paine delivered his lengthy Eulogy. A historian of Newburyport records of the 1 memorial services:

The exercises at the meeting house were opened with prayer by the Right Reverend Edward Bass, bishop of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Thomas Paine, A.M., afterwards known as Robert Treat Paine, then delivered an appropriate and eloquent eulogy. One of Dr. Watts Lyric Odes, adapted to the occasion, was sung by a choir, and the exercises closed with prayer by Reverend Samuel Spring.

Another account is that told by Theophilus Parsons, Jr., in his Memoir of his father. He writes:

When Washington died, Paine was appointed to deliver a eulogy, and my father gave a large dinner on that occasion. The numerous guests were assembled, and the eulogy was praised emphatically and unanimously with one exception. The Reverend Mr. Cary had come, not to

2. Parsons, Theophilus, Jr., Memoir of Theophilus Parsons with Notices of some of His Contemporaries, Boston, Ticknor and Fields, 1849, page 135.
dine with the orator, but to protest against the oration. He was my father's minister and one of the best of men. His trouble lay with this sentence of the eulogy, 'Legate of Heaven, he has returned with the tidings of his mission; father of his people, he has ascended to plead their cause in the bosom of God!' My father did what he could to qualify or excuse these expressions; 'No, no, sir!' said the faithful minister; 'you cannot prove to me that there can be more than one mediator between God and man!'

"This splendid and powerful exhibition of oratory," to quote Prentiss further, "was received with the highest approbation; published and republished in the English language; and translated as widely as the name of Washington was known."

In the fall of 1800, Theophilus Parsons moved to Boston, where he planned to continue with the practice of law, and Paine returned to his home. The event of their departure from Newburyport was the signal for some demonstration on the part of the friends they were leaving, a detailed description of which is contained in Parson's Memoir.

When my father left Newburyport for Boston, gentlemen in that town gave him a farewell dinner, of which I never heard anything but the enthusiastic toast of Robert Treat Paine, the poet, who had been my father's pupil and continued to be, while he lived, his intimate friend: 'Theophilus Parsons, the oracle of law, the pillar of politics, the bulwark of government.' To which my father replied: 'The Town of Newburyport,--may the blessings of Heaven rest upon it as long as its shores are washed by the Merrimac!'

2. page 135.
For the next two years, the poet continued to apply himself to his studies, and in July of 1802, he was admitted to the Court of Common Pleas in the County of Suffolk. Paine's intimate friend and political associate, Thomas O. Selfridge, already mentioned in connection with a discussion of Paine's biography, writes of the poet at this period:

Probably no student had ever acquired a more ready precision of technical expression, or had better imbued his mind with legal forms. Few could have been more demonstrative in forensic argument and in the regions of eloquence, none could have wheeled his flight upon a bolder wing. Prompted by an ambition to shine, in his earliest assays at the bar, of the common pleas, he cited Horace to the court, and explained positions to the Jury, by mythological allusions; but experience soon taught him, that classical learning was an ill-assorted commodity, for the market in which he exposed it.

It was during this successful period of his life that Paine changed his name from Thomas to that of his father, and became, Robert Treat Paine, Jr. Tradition, of at least a hundred year's standing, has attached a good deal of importance to this act, which was, from the beginning, attributed to the poet's dislike for the infidel, Thomas Paine. According to the tradition Paine,


Note: Prentiss states (*Works*, page xvii) that Paine changed his name in 1801.
in making application to the Legislature of the state, asked specifically for a "Christian name." We have not been able to find any proof in support of the popular belief, other than the remarks of Theophilus Parsons, Jr., which are

When Tom Paine, the infidel, made that name infamous, he the American Thomas Paine had his name changed, and took that of his father. Soon after, an old friend, forgetting the change, called him by his old name. 'Don't call me Tom Paine any more,' said he; 'I have a Christian name now.'

Of writing, Paine had done very little since his Oration. Of course, there were many who called upon him for occasional songs, odes, and commemorative verse, the writing of which did not take an appreciably large part of his time. We must mention, in this respect, one poem in particular, that written to celebrate the anniversary of the coming of the Puritans to America. In his poem, written December 22, 1800, Paine uses the term "pilgrims" in connection with these pioneer fathers of America, for the first time in the literature of the country. The concluding stanza of the poem is an illustration of this:


Heirs of pilgrims, now renew
The oath your fathers swore for you,
When first around the social board,
Enriched from Nature's frugal hoard,
The ardent vow of Heaven they breathed,
To shield the rights their Sires bequeathed!
Manes of Carver! Standish! hear!
To love the soil you gave, we swear;
And midst the storms of state be true
To God, our country, and to you.

Chorus:

Sons of Glory, patriot band,
Welcome to my chosen land!
To your children leave it free,
Or a desert let it be.

Paine frequently attended the theatre and played
whist at the club in Concert Hall but showed no inclination to return to his former intemperate habits and immoderate hours. His period of reform was not without its attendant casualties, however. The poet's children now numbered three, Elizabeth, Maria Ann Smith, and Robert Treat, Jr. In November of the year 1802, two of these children, Maria and Robert, died of a "lung fever," after a very short illness. The poet does not seem to have been immeasurably affected by the sad event, nor does he anywhere mention the children in his poems. A year later, another son was born to the Paines and the following year, a third.

1. Paine Ancestry states that she was born on August 9, 1796.
2. The birth of this daughter does not appear in the Record of Boston Births. The Signer, in recording her death, states that she was six years old.
3. This third child's birth does not appear in the Records of Boston Births, but the Singer states that he was four months old when he died.
For a year following his admission to the bar, Paine continued assiduously with his law practice. In the summer of 1803, there returned to the Boston theatrical boards the talented English actress Mrs. Jones, whose initial appearance in Boston in the year 1800 had so completely charmed the public that she was everywhere hailed with delight. Paine, as far as can be discerned, had to this time been a model of faithfulness, if a poor provider. He now seems to have become quite dazzled by the brilliant charms and unusual acting of Mrs. Jones, in whose presence he spent an increasingly large part of his time. While we have no evidence to prove that the affair ever exceeded that of a passing fancy for a truly unique woman such as any man with Paine's predilection for the


2. Mrs. Edward Jones (1782-1806). Clapp has gone on to say that this distinguished actress was one of three daughters of a prominent London physician by the name of Granger. Before coming to America she was married to another actor, Edward Jones, who finally deserted her leaving her with four children to support. She died in New York in 1806 at the age of twenty-four.

(Notes brought forward from previous page)

4. The Signer records the birth of this son in his Diary for October 12, 1803: "This morning at half past 4 o'clock a son was born to my son Robert Treat." The child was also named Robert Treat, Jr.

5. Paine's last child whose birth the Signer records thus: "August 10, 1805. 4 o'clock P.M. my son R.T.'s wife brought a son James."
theatre might easily have, we cannot evade the fact that from now on to his death, the poet's ruin was inevitable.

In the autumn of 1805, Paine underwent a severe illness, which so nearly ended his life that for a time it was doubtful if he should ever again return to his literary pursuits. Prentiss, fortunate enough to secure the medical statement of his physician at the time, Dr. Edward Warren, has enlarged upon the nature of the poet's illness in an attempt to explain the disintegrated procedure of the latter's last few years. Paine, realizing that he could not live, drank the harder to drown the knowledge, and with his drinking, aggravated the course of the disease to a great extent. He would recover from a fit of illness and depression long enough to satisfy some burst of ambition, usually in connection with the theatre or literature, only to lapse again into his former low spirits. Paine, Senior, in the meantime had not been growing younger. His deafness had increased, and with it, the natural irritability of his petulant disposition. Never at any time distinguished for the suavity of manner which his son affected, the elder Paine seems to have allowed crudeness to dominate his conduct, rather than attempt to hide the fact as well as he might.

1. Works, Prentiss' 'Sketch', pages lxi-lxii.
Of his courtroom manner, Fisher Ames asserted, "no man could get on there unless he came with a club in one hand and a speaking-trumpet in the other". An amusing tale is that told in this connection by the author to whom we are already largely indebted for the more intimate details of young Paine's life, Theophilus Parsons, Jr. He writes:

My father, some years before he went on the bench, was arguing before Judge Paine, and did not speak so loud or so distinctly as the Judge's infirmity required, or perhaps as he should have done; and the Judge cried out suddenly, 'Mr. Parsons, Mr. Parsons, I tell you once for all, take that glove off your tongue!' 'Certainly, sir,' was the answer; 'and may I beg your Honor to take the wool out of your ears?'

It was not to be expected that the growing disability of the son would improve the disposition of the father, and Paine himself was none too open to adjustments of any sort. But this second break between father and son did not come until the poet had again descended to a condition which parallels, if it does not exceed, that of his early married life.

In the spring of 1807, Paine moved his family to Dorchester, where he had recently taken a house. There he languished in misery of mind and body, often without

1. Memoir, page 255.
2. Ibid., page 214.
the wherewithal for rent or food. Whenever his health permitted, he made the three-mile journey to Boston, to visit the theatre, or to contribute some literary tidbit to one of the newspapers. A few of his best pieces, written for the *Times* during this period, contained in the volume of his *Works*, bear out the proof of a contemporary remark concerning the journalistic ability of the poet, which asserts:

Whenever...a stage piece went off, the audience felt the flash, and Paine made the report.

From this period on to the end of his short life, Paine's life was a series of ups and downs, a life of momentary ambitions and long periods of illness and despair. Too broken to care what happened to him or his family, he resorted, when he could, to the contents of the brandy bottle, there seeking relief from the pain of living.


CHAPTER FIVE

Last Years and Summary

(1809-1811)

The last two years of Paine's life do not make a pretty story. They comprise the sordid details of a totally unhappy existence in which poverty and illness form the constant theme. Never again was the poet to boast of significant literary attainment, although his faculties were as keen, and the quality of his work as sustained, as in those earlier years of his career when the most trivial of his poems brought the widespread acclaim of his countrymen. There still remain for discussion, however, a few other important facts of Paine's short life, among them, his final literary efforts.

1

On January 24, 1809, the citizens of Boston gave a public festival in honor of Spanish valor and patriotism. Paine was asked to contribute to the success of the occasion and responded almost at once with an ode and a brief historical sketch of Spain, as a mark of his sound mental state and wide interest in local and national affairs.

2

The Sketch, a summary of Spain's military triumphs


2. Works, pages 409-421.
and glories from that country's birth to its modern period, is full of the bombast and affectation of style which characterizes most of the prose works of the poet, and in this respect it has no unusual literary merit. It is, however, remarkable for quite another reason, if we are to judge from Belcher's explanation of its history. "Mr. Paine," he asserts, "was now greatly depressed in his circumstances and his health was so much impaired that he was confined almost wholly to his house. He was not the owner nor possessor of a single historical tract; and, living out of town, he had not the means of consulting any, while writing, if it had been necessary to his purpose. The store-house of his memory alone supplied him with the materials." Although he has attempted none of the minutiae of Spain's history, Paine has achieved an adequate review of the high lights, a review which, in all respects, may be said to represent his unusual memory and wide knowledge of the general field. Regarding the Moorish invasion of that country, he is particularly informed.

A war of thirty generations, [he writes], was waged for Liberty, and confirmed the doctrine and appeased the manes of their slaughtered forefathers. Year after year the Moorish cres-

1. Works, page 408.
2. Ibid., page 415.
cent waned. At length it set in blood! The Mohametan power received a mortal blow at the terrible battle of Tariffa, in Andalusia, near the straits of Gibralta, in the year 1340; and in 1494, two years after the bold and ambitious genius of Spain had discovered a new world in the western hemisphere, she expelled the Moors from their last fortress, the city of Granada, and became sole mistress of her lawful domains.

The remainder of the piece is in keeping. The poet continues with his account in the spirit of one who has attuned his theme to the ardor of the Latin temperament and is seeking to excite a response in the breasts of those for whom his Sketch is written. Hence his lavish use of melodramatic phraseology, of which the following is but one instance:

In days of classick glory, Spain has been the thrifty womb of emperours, heroes, poets and philosophers. She was the augst mother of Trajan the good, and of Theodosius the great; the proud parent of Lucan, of Seneca and Quintilian. In modern time she and her sister Portugal have removed the 'ultima Thule' of commerce, by patronizing a Columbus and giving birth to a de Gama...

With such a title, she can claim the world for her friend, for she has been the friend of the world. Heroes are the native production of her soil for Italy and Greece are her kindred; and while the luxuriant plains of Campania and of Capua bloom anew in the verdure of her vineyards, and the fragrance of her groves, she can boast a Thermopylae, in every mountain, in every field a Marathon.

Paine's second contribution to the event was his

Ode, entitled "Spain, Commerce and Freedom." It was written in the popular manner of the patriotic song "Adams and Liberty," but although scarcely less inspirational than this last, it was not destined to gain for its author any of the applause with which that "Tremendous Ode" was favored. Prentiss states that both Ode and Sketch were later translated into the Spanish language and reaped a harvest for the Spanish booksellers. But it cannot be said that Paine had expected to profit greatly from this charitable work. In rejoinder to some adverse criticism of his Ode he is alleged to have remarked, "It is a commercial ode for a Spanish market. In the manufacture, I regarded more the gaudiness of the colors, than the texture of the fabric."

Two months after the Spanish Festival, Boston theatre-goers were flocking to see a new-comer who was then making his debut on the American stage; John Howard Payne, a friend and kinsman to the poet. The history of this youthful prodigy is of some interest to us, duplicating as it does, the early story of our own Paine. At thirteen, Payne had been put into a counting house in New York, but just as the poet had found the details

2. Ibid., page lviii.
of a mercantile business irksome to his nature, so did Payne soon turn from this employment to the publishing of a theatrical weekly paper, entitled The Thespián Mirror. Since childhood, the precocious youth had dreamed of a dramatic career which would surpass, if possible, that of the European actor Betty, whose triumphs in the characters of Hamlet, Romeo, Tanored, Norval and the like, were well known in America. Accordingly, early in the year 1809, he entered upon the New York stage and so delighted the theatre-lovers of that city that he was immediately hailed as "that engaging prodigy" whose "sweet voice, self-possessed yet modest manners, wit, vivacity and premature wisdom" would carry him to vast and brilliant theatrical achievements.

For his first appearance in Boston, on the evening of April 3, 1809, Payne had chosen the role of Young Norval, in the play of that name. The poet Paine wrote the prologue on this occasion, a short preface address in couplets, which did little more than

1. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, page 104.
2. Ibid., page 101.
more than to introduce the seventeen-year-old actor to his expectant Boston audience. Within a short while, Payne had departed this country in search of larger conquests, leaving the poet to contemplate anew the fiddle tricks of Fortune, thus suddenly turned from him to smile upon another of his name. Had the former remained long in Boston, he might have come to exert a considerable influence upon the dilapidated poet, if for no other purpose than to befriend and encourage him in his flagging literary interests.

Sometime later in the year, Paine made another attempt to reinstate himself with his declining theatre-public, this time by writing a Monody on the Death of Sir John Moore, to be recited by the popular American actress, Mrs. Stanley. The latter was undoubtedly, as Prentiss has attested, an intimate friend to the poet. He had written other prologues for her stage productions, the most creditable of which is that entitled "Epilogue to The Soldier's Daughter." In one of his


2. Ibid., pages 227-236.

Note: Sir John Moore (1761-1809), the Scotch patriot and soldier. He served in the American Revolution, in Corsica (1794), and in the attack on St. Lucia. In addition to the wars named, he also served with glory in wars with Ireland, Holland, Egypt and Sicily. His last victory was that of Corunna in 1809, where he died. His glorious career undoubtedly inspired the above-mentioned tribute.

3. Ibid., pages 209-211.
several tributes to her talent and beauty written for the Theatrical section of the Times, he asserted:

Mrs. Stanley exhibits new and almost unexpect-ed proofs of the diversity as well as the pow-er of her genius. In courtly or arch comedy, where taste requires elegance of dress, lan-guage and deportment, and wit needs a skilful archer to give wing and direction to her ar-row, the palm of preeminence has long been conceded to her by the general consent of all critical or fashionable tribunals. But in 'Orfilla' she combined such expressive simpli-city with such well delineated tenderness that we could not feel the conviction produced by her loveliness and interest in the character that she could never fail to excel in all trag-ick personations of love or sympathy, in which the picture is drawn from existing images; or rather, in which nature is permitted, to walk the stage in her own decent and graceful ap-parel, untortured by the bodices of folly, or the stilts of declamation!

If it be true, as has been said of Paine, that "he knew not a Tyrian from a Trojan," then there is small point to this royal appreciation of the charming actress. But if it is true, as we suspect it was, that the poet al-ways allowed himself to be prejudiced in favor of fem-

Note: John Bernard, the English actor, in his Retrospections of America (pages 284-286) states of this actress: "Mrs. Stanley as the Honorable Mrs. Twisleton was for a number of years well known in aristocratic circles in England as an amateur ac-tress. She appeared on the regular stage, in Bos-ton, Philadelphia and New York, as Mrs. Stanley. Her success in America was never very great, al-though she was beautiful in person and charming in manner," and later; "Mrs. Stanley was the only one of her profession that was ever admitted to the Pump Room at Bath, a distinction which many of the sisterhood envied and sought after, but none other attained."

2. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, page 97.
ine grace and beauty, then we may see in his relations with Mrs. Stanley, another of those friendly affairs which history has recorded to the discredit of Paine.

Shortly after the Monody had been written, Mrs. Stanley recited it to crowded houses in Canada, where she was then on tour. If Paine had expected to receive any other reward than the thanks of the person for whom the poem was written, he was to be disappointed. Prentiss assures us that the Monody scored no hit with the American public at its printing, and yielded little, if any, profit. Not much more than a year later, it was to serve as the model upon which Paine's own admirers were to base their respects for his memory.

Although illness, disgrace, and poverty kept the poet from indulging his tastes for high social entertainment, it cannot be said that they in any way weakened his passion for the theatre. Whenever health permitted, he attended the current performances of the Boston Theatre, following the progress of each player with interest and delight, and contributing, where possible, to the general support of actors and theatre

alike.

About this time Paine began to write for his theatrical friend William C. White, Esq., a young lawyer of the town whose predilection for the drama was quite as strong and quite as obstinate as his own. White's career as a lawyer and orator of Boston, we learn from Loring, was fully as promising as any other of the period. His inordinate fondness for the theatre, both in the writing and acting of plays, had brought about a sharp conflict with his puritanical father, the details of which parallel, in many respects, the conflict between Paine and his eminent parent. We are, however, more fortunate in knowing something of young White's difficulty. His father, who had but lately removed to New York, wrote lengthy admonitions to his son, stating his strong disapproval of the latter's theatrical interests, in the manner of one who sees in dramatic allurement, the hand of the devil himself.

Dear William, [he writes], for so I will still call you--my beloved son! Stain not the memory of your amiable and tender mother by your folly; break not the heart of your father,--bring not down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, but rouse yourself from this seeming state of insanity! Your youth will excuse you, for once, but for God's sake, and everything you hold dear, I pray you to refrain, and be not again seen on a common stage!....

1. Loring, The Hundred Boston Orators, Boston, 1855, pages 346-349.
2. Ibid., pages 346-347.
In another communication he pleads further with his son:

Let me enjoin it upon you, never to appear,—no, not for once,—in any comic act, where the mimic tricks of a monkey are better fitted to excite laughter, and where dancing, singing and kissing, may be thought amusement enough for a dollar. No, William; I had, much as I love you, rather follow you to the grave, than to see you, and myself and my family, so disgraced.

Far from alone in his position, Mr. White was but voicing the opinion of scores of parents who, like himself, feared for the reputation and morals of their sons who had once succumbed to the hideous fascination of the drama. The Signer, Paine's austere parent, was by no means the least of these. As we have previously stated, he did come to tolerate the theatre as such, but never, while he lived, did he forgive his son for disgracing him and his family by his unseemly marriage to an actress and his prolonged and intimate connection with the Boston stage. Never did he feel that in endorsing America's "right to enjoy the freedom of the earth" he was extending an equal privilege to a member of his own family.

Paine, for the time befriended and aided by a kindred soul, was encouraged to renew his literary prac-

1. Loring, The Hundred Boston Orators, page 347.
tices, and shortly produced two very respectable examples of his reviving interest. These took the form of epilogues, designed as introductions to the original plays of Mr. White. The first of these, "Epilogue to The Clergyman's Daughter," is reminiscent of the poet's best feeling for dramatic moment. Here he attempts, in the usual couplet form, a colorful resume of the sentimental theme and characters of White's play. So nearly does one of these characters fit Pre-

1. In his Retrospections of America, page 341, John Bernard, the English actor records of this play: Robert Treat Paine wrote a prologue for the Comedy (Clergyman's Daughter) in his usual inimitable manner which I agreed to speak; but, from Paine's negligent habit, I only received it on Saturday, and finding it one hundred and eighty lines in length I sent it back to him with an assurance that I could not get perfect in it so as to do it justice by Monday evening when the comedy was to be produced. Fennel (a tragedian of the Federal Street Theatre during the period) who happened to be with him when this message arrived, promptly offered to recite it himself, a proposal which Paine caught at with pleasure. Fennel took the prologue home with him to study, but when the evening came, did not know a syllable of it, and, coming forward to the audience craved their permission to read it. After some hesitancy, this was granted, and Fennel delivered the lines, sparkling as they were with wit and humor, with so much of the correctness of the scholar and the stateliness of the tragedian as to throw a gloom over the audience which it took the first act of the comedy to efface.
tiss' description of Paine at one period of his career, that we are tempted to quote it at this point:

Sir Foppling Classick is a wight, I ween,
Who reads to quote, and dresses to be seen;
The prince of folly, and the fool of wit,
He plots a dinner to campaign a hit;
With well-drest wisdom, tout a fait he looks,
The sage of fashion and bon-ton of books.
In scenick unities so strict is he,
Time, place and action—touch and take rappee!
Anon, heigho!—his critick sneeze emphatick
Proclaims the raptures of effect dramatick.
In life's great play—no Stagyrite to shine—
His plot is woman, and his moral wine.
Thus with a muse, a mistress and a bottle,
Gay Skeffington surmounts grave Aristotle.

Paine's other contribution to White's dramatic efforts, was the "Epilogue to the Poor Lodger." This last, based upon the "incidents of Evelina, an exquisite tale by Miss Burney," was another of the sentimental genre so popular with theatre-goers of the period; and Paine, realizing how much the success of his friend's work depended upon his own introduction, produced an elaborate and suitable epilogue. As with his Ruling Passion, he uses the characters of his poems as mediums to express his own complaints toward the shabby tricks Fate has played upon him:

Fortune who feeds all other fools on earth
Was never present at a Poet's birth!
The oaf of Nature all her care partakes!
The child of mind she smiles on, and forsakes,
And though each Muse has sought her fond regard—
She ne'er would stand godmother to a bard.

2. Ibid., pages 224-225.
The chief character of this second Epilogue, the 
"Poor Lodger," would seem to be Paine himself, who 
is begging a "garret" shelter among people of his own 
class and education. Secure in the knowledge of his 
superior birth, but quickened by a desire to ridicule 
those who have prospered at his expense, he proceeds 
with the following indignant rant:

Hence the wise world, not wiser than of old, 
That toiling chemist, still extracting gold, 
Neglecting still Wealth's noblest use and end, 
To polish man, and social life defend, 
Calls sacred genius Nature's waste of pains, 
The gift of Fortune cures the want of brains!

Paine appears to have spent an unusual amount of 
his time, at this period, with the versatile White, in 
whose company he may have seen a way to return to his 
old place in society. Dunlap has told an amusing 
story of these friends, which, though stretched to 
fit the particular prejudices of the dramatic histor-
ian, probably contains enough truth to warrant a repeti-
tion of it.

The English actor, George Frederick Cooke, had 
but recently arrived in Boston, an instance which, ac-
cording to Clapp, "marks an era in the dramatic world


2. Dunlap, Wm., *Memoirs of the Life of George Fred-
of this country" of a sort which can "scarcely obtain credence." On January 3, 1811, he made his first appearance at the Boston Theatre in the popular role of Richard the Third. All Boston turned out to see this noted actor. Receptions and banquets were given for him in numbers which would alone be sufficient demonstration of the regard in which he was held. Cooke was enjoying one day a quiet after-dinner conversation with a friend, Mr. Price, when the servant announced Mr. Robert Treat Paine and his friend, Mr. White. As the actor did not know either of these men, he looked to Mr. Price for some explanation of them. The latter expressed his dislike for both men, at once, but while he was vacillating as to the best means of getting rid of them, they appeared in the doorway. In Dunlap's own words, "Mr. Robert Treat Payne, with that confident ease which arises from a consciousness of superior worth, or superior talents, or many other causes, introduced himself and his friend White, and apologized for the visit, signifying his impatience to see a gentleman whose acting had given him such superlative delight. Cooke was not pleased with this trowel-plaistering and besides, was put upon his guard by the looks and behav-

I. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, pages 122-123.
lour of his companions." His attentions were kindly, but reserved, continues the historian, and he straight-way offered refreshment to his unwelcome guests. White took the proffered wine but Paine refused, stating his preference for brandy, and proceeded to the compliments for which he had come.

"'I thought, Mr. Cooke,'" he began, "'that I was pretty well read in Shakespeare; that I understood him well, few much better; but, sir, your Richard convinces me of my ignorance.'"

"'The stage does sometimes bring the truth home to a man,'" replied Cooke, dryly.

"'Ha, ha, ha! very well, sir--a fair hit--but, sir, the first beauty I shall mention was when the attendant informed you of your brother's death--the manner in which you received the intelligence--and the way you gave the passage--

Would he were wasted, marrowbones and all."

"'Marrowbones and cleavers, by God!'" suddenly roared Cooke, completely angered by this unwanted praise and the misquoting of his lines.

Paine was nonplussed for once, but joined the others in a hearty laugh. Cooke, noting that White remained apart, remarked, "'Pray, sir, help your silent friend to a glass of wine!'"
"'My silent friend,'" replied Paine, "'come, Mr. White, your glass. I'll assure you, Mr. Cooke, though Mr. White says little----'"

"'He thinks the more, I suppose--may be so.'"

"'Mr. White, sir,'" continued Paine, "'is a man of literature, a player, a poet, a dramatic writer, but sir, Mr. White is a modest man.'"

"'I wish the gentleman could say as much for his friend,'" replied Cooke, somewhat rudely.

"'Very well, sir,'" said Paine, anxious to get on with his speech. "'That's very well! Mr. Cooper is your friend, Mr. Cooke. When he first played here, I wrote a good deal for the theatre then; I gave him a lift; my opinion was of some consequence--but Mr. Cooper's playing--why--a--to be sure--but you know, Mr. Cooke, what playing is, and I must say, Mr. Cooper's attempting to represent such characters as.....'"

But Cooke could stand no more, and seizing one of the candles which stood by him, he started up before Paine, menacing wildly and pointing toward the door,

"'Good night, sir--good night!'" he cried, "'There's the

---

1. Thomas A. Cooper (1776-1849), the English tragedian whom America adopted as her own, shortly after his appearance in this country in 1796. Paine wrote some theatrical criticism of the actor.
door! good night! good night!" and continued in this manner until the disconcerted gentlemen were well out of the room. Then, turning to Mr. Price he joined that gentleman in a hearty laugh.

Thus did Paine, whose opinion had once "counted for something," come to be the laughing stock for those who formerly would have coveted his acquaintance and valued his opinion in matters of the theatre. No longer did his manners and attire form "the mark and glass, copy and book, that fashioned others." People saw in him but the pitiable husk of the once brilliant social leader, now an object of ridicule and contempt.

The time came when Paine, no longer able to pay the rent of his Dorchester house, or to find any lodging for himself and his family, was obliged to return to Boston. His wife, one child, and a part of his household belongings were sent to the house of their grandmother Mrs. Baker's, who was then, according to Prentiss, keeping a small shop in town. The poet, his two sons, and the remainder of his possessions went to his father's home on Milk Street, where they do not at first seem to have been too cordially received. There, Paine was given a small apartment, where "he was fed and lodged and in this feeble and emaciated state, walked
abroad, from day to day, looking like misery personified, and pouring his lamentations into the ears of his friends...."

In the autumn of Paine's last year, 1811, his friend Thomas O. Selfridge and other members of the Jockey Club of Boston, called upon him, to request that he write for their anniversary celebration—to be held October 21—a song befitting the merits of their admirable institution. Paine consented after a bit, but complained that he had neither place to write nor the necessary inspiration for such a poem. One of the number suggested that he go with them to attend the races at Medford that day, and stressed the exhilarating effects of a ride as well as the liveliness of the scene. At length Paine consented to the plan. Upon his return, he sat down and wrote the six long stanzas of his song, entitled "The Steeds of Apollo." Here we may sense the full vigour of the poet's keen imagination and partake of his splendid spirit, which resembles that of the early patriotic verses.

Although the unusual labor of writing had somewhat exhausted Paine, he was able to attend the banquet

1. Works, pages lxiii-lxiv.
that evening and to hear the gratifying comments of the club members for whom his poem had been designed. Prentiss remarks that he seemed almost happy again in the company of men whose wit and vivacity were suited to his own exacting tastes. This was the poet's last labor, however. Shortly he lapsed into his familiar lassitude, a condition from which nothing but the theatre could arouse him. On Monday, November 11, he attended his last performance at the Boston Theatre. His death occurred on Wednesday evening, November 13, at his father's home, from "hydrothorax or dropsy of the chest."

The poet's funeral service was conducted by the Reverend John Lathrop, of the Second Congregational Church of Boston, on November 16. The Signer records of the event:

Fair, cold air, pleasant. This afternoon the funeral of my son R.T. Paine was attended by a very honorable assembly of friends and his remains deposited in my Tomb in the Granary Burying Place.

Many and handsome were the tributes "of talent and feeling" which were paid "to departed genius and worth." It will suffice, however, to mention only

1. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine, November 13, 1811.
2. Works, page lxii.
3. Ibid., page lxvi.
4. MS Diary, Robert Treat Paine, November 16, 1811.
those which offer a variety of praise, and serve to indicate the esteem in which the poet was held. A contemporary issue of the Boston Gazette prints an extended obituary notice in praise of the "Splendid Poet of America" stating:

Sincere sorrow for the loss of a man so distinguished pervaded every heart, and was expressed by every tongue. What the splendid genius of our deceased Poet might have produced, under propitious circumstances, it is not easy to conjecture;--but what he has published, under the sanction of his name, what of his productions remain in manuscript, and what of his anonymous publications can be ascertained, it is the duty of his countrymen to collect and embody in an edition for the benefit of his widow and his orphans, who have no inheritance but their father's Fame. No man ever laboured more for others and less for himself. His reputation as a Poet has passed the ordeal of European criticism;--but it now remains to do Justice at Home--On this occasion our National Pride should dictate our National Duty.

"The gentleman whose death is now lamented," writes the New England Palladium, "has long been conspicuous for superiority of genius and poetic talent. His fame was a source of honorable pride to his countrymen."

On the day of Paine's burial, at the visitation of the Grand Lodge and in commemoration of their deceased

1. Boston Gazette, Monday, November 18, 1811.

2. This is probably a reference to the Sketch of Spain and the Spanish Ode.

3. New England Palladium, Friday, November 15, 1811.
brother, the Massachusetts Lodge of Masons sang the  
song which the poet had written for them as early as  
1796. Other poetic tributes were those appearing in  
the volume of the poet's Works, originally written for  
the newspapers of the period anonymously or over pseudo-
donyms.

Ne'er was a nobler spirit born,  
A loftier soul, a gentler heart;  
Above the world's ignoble scorn,  
Above the reach of venal art.

wrote one author of the period in a lengthy tribute to  
Paine.

Weep now, ye Muses, let your sorrows flow, 
For Paine, the pride of minstrelsy, lies low; 
Ye, who inspired his ever tuneful breath,  
Could not secure him from the shafts of death.

echoed another journalist in his Monody on the Death  
of Robert Treat Paine, Jr. And a third:

Haste thee, Spring! to deck thy bowers,  
Bid young Beauty dress the plain!  
Let thy fairest, sweetest flowers,  
Wreathe around the tomb of Paine.  
Columbia's Bard!  
May he, who bears his father's name,  
Possess his genius! merit all his fame!

As Paine had died intestate, his wife and a friend,  
Joshua Belcher, were appointed by the Suffolk County

1. Columbian Centinel, November 30, 1811.  
3. Ibid., page lxxxix.  
4. Written by an unknown correspondent of the "Charleston Currier."  
5. Works, page xc.
Court of Probate to administer his estate. All of his worldly goods were not of sufficient value to cover his outstanding debts, and but for the kindly assistance of friends, the widow and children of Paine 1 would have been without a penny. Shortly after Paine's death, the Jockey Club of Boston, "in behalf of the Massachusetts Association for the improvement of the breed of horses" presented Mrs. Paine with fifty dollars, "as a small testimonial of their grateful feelings" for the late services of the poet. The Boston Theatre, in its turn, paid respect to the family of Paine, and attempted to alleviate the misery of his family, by appropriating, shortly, a benefit performance for them, the last to be given in Boston. Announcements to the effect appeared in several of the current newspapers, among them the following:

We understand that Mr. Paine's Original Prize Prologue is to be spoken between the Play and Afterpiece, and that his last song, The Steeds of Apollo, will be sung by Mrs. Mills. We most sincerely hope, for the honor of the town, that the receipts of this benefit will be the most ample of any which has done honor to our metropolis. None has been so deserving. For it is the reward of genius. Every magnanimous mind glories in extending kindness to the widow and the fatherless.....

3. New England Palladium, Friday, November 22, 1811.
A later number of the Columbian Centinel informs us that the receipts of this performance, The Exile of Siberia, yielded some eight hundred dollars. Not all this amount was received by Mrs. Paine, however, as the managers of the theatre refused to relinquish their rent for the evening.

We have frequently remarked upon the deplorable condition existing between the poet and his father, a condition which seems to have remained until the death of the former. It is no more possible for us to explain the reason for it than it was for those friends of Paine's who were in a position to know. Prentiss could but surmise a reason. He writes of the matter:

> Whether the austerity of the father occasioned the incorrigible obliquities of the son; or whether the anomalies of the son provoked the untempered severity of the father; or whether they alternately operated upon each other as cause and effect, the writer cannot ascertain; nor is it his duty to decide.

One might suspect at once that it was the result of "too little confidence on the one hand, and an insufficient degree of respect on the other," as the biographer has gone on to suggest. Selfridge wisely attempts no explanation of the matter other than to re-

1. Columbian Centinel, December 7, 1811.
2. Works, page lxvii.
3. Ibid., page xi.
mark, casually, that shortly after the poet's death, Mrs. Paine and the children came to live with the poet's parents at the invitation of the Signer himself, an "act which" he adds, "will be long and gratefully remembered by the children of humanity."

But the story of Paine's uneven life does not end here. We have mentioned in our previous chapter the poet's three children, whose histories, in a large measure, reflect and color the story of their parent and serve to round out the somewhat irregular construction of his short life.

Of the oldest child, Elizabeth Cobb Paine, nothing much is known. In 1822 she was married to Nathaniel Prentiss of Boston, and she died about 1834, leaving one daughter, the wife of Erastus B. Claggett, of Lyndeborough, New Hampshire.

The poet's sons have a vastly more interesting history. Both were entered at the Boston Latin School according to the tradition of the family, but only one, Robert Treat, the older, went on to higher educational pursuits. In 1818, he entered Harvard and soon showed such marked ability in the science of astronomy that

his future success in that direction was even then assured. In this he was but indulging a natural talent, however. It will be remembered that his greatgrandfather, Thomas Paine the clergyman, had shown a decided proclivity for astronomy as early as 1717 and 1718. His grandfather, the Signer, had made daily observations of the weather and followed in other ways his love for this particular science. His own father, the poet, had not been without talent in this direction, as the Orrery and other of his literary achievements will testify. Although this Robert Paine studied law and received admittance to the Bar, he was always more interested in scientific investigations than in any other enterprise. For sixty-three years he made daily observations of astronomical phenomena, occasionally publishing accurate meteorological reports. He was ever interested in cultural pursuits, chiefly the arts and sciences, and at his death, left to his beloved Harvard, the sum of over three hundred thousand dollars, fifty thousand of which was to endow a Professorship in Practical Astronomy and the residue to be used for an Observatory.

James Paine, the poet's younger son, more closely resembles his talented father, in disposition, at least.
His is a curious and sordid story. "Grannams" would raise their hands and swear he had been "marked" by his father's drunken habits and dissolute life, and indeed it does look as if some twist of nature had chosen to carry on the warped threads of the poet's genius in the person of his younger son. Although he attended the Latin School with his brother Robert, James Paine appears to have his bohemian habits at a comparatively early age. In 1814 his grandfather, the Signer, died, leaving him an appreciable portion of his estate, which was a large one for those days. Thus provided for, he was free to begin his life of wandering.

From the start, we learn "the only pleasures of this son were music and money. His ear and taste for music was exquisite," but his "passion for hoarding money grew with years into a disease." And here is the unusual part of this son's history. It will be remembered that Paine, the poet, had ever abhorred miserliness, and it is not to be doubted that there was some reason for this uncommon hatred of an essentially unattractive quality. We have only to glance through his poems for a ready proof of this statement. There

1. Suffolk County Probate Records, Vol. 112, page 274. The amount of his estate was estimated to be $64,714.
is his picture of "Gripe," the miser, in his "Epilogue to The Clergyman's Daughter," and of all his kind, whom he describes in the following graphic manner:

Oh, what is man who thus debased by pelf,
All human nature sinks in human self;
Who basely pilfers, with unfeeling joy,
A mother's picture from an artless boy!
When man's deserting soul forsakes his breast,
To pine a death-watch in a miser's chest,
The starving hypocrite allegiance swears,
To gold, and grace, to poverty and prayers;
And, not one joy his flickering lamp to cheer,
Lives without love, and dies without a tear!
Such are the "Gripes," the meanest of their tribe,
Who cheat themselves, and chuckle at the bribe;
Who bury nature, ere her mortal doom
And drag existence in a living tomb.

In his "Ruling Passion," he has given greater length to his delineation of the miser than to any other of the creatures discussed in that poem,

The wretch, who dying, would not take one pill,
If living, he must pay a doctor's bill.

What then would he have thought to have perceived in his own son the most miserable of all miserly types?

Paine Ancestry records further of this younger son that he spent his last days in abject poverty "in conditions surpassing belief." Robert, believing that his brother was without money or help in New York, where

1. Works, pages 220-221.
2. Ibid., page 184.
3. Appendix, page 52.
he was living at the time, sent him a liberal allowance each month. Seventeen years before he died, James Paine brought a flat brown-paper parcel to his friend Charles Chickering at the latter's firm on Fifth Avenue, and asked him to keep it in his safe for him. Not until after the death of the former, in 1885 did Mr. Chickering remember the parcel. Believing that it contained old clothes, he was about to destroy it, but was suddenly overcome with curiosity and opened it, to discover roll upon roll of bank bills of every denomination, and amounting in all to about four hundred thousand dollars. This was finally placed in the hands of the Claggetts, to whom it really belonged, James' brother Robert having died earlier in 1885.

Rightfully, the sad story of Paine should end with the death of his sons, both of whom were without issue. There remain for consideration, however, a few more points in the poet's life such as will serve, perhaps, to strengthen the general impression of a study of this type.

We have hitherto made no mention of the physical appearance of Paine, and as no biography can be considered complete without some information concerning the

1. Paine Ancestry records that the Claggetts "took the estate after a fierce fight against a forged will, made by villains in New York."
"outer man," it seems fitting to insert at this point, such material as we have on the subject. When Paine lay dying, it occurred to those around him that they were totally without a likeness of their poet. It was suggested that the portrait painter Gilbert Stuart should be asked to come and correct the deficiency at once. At his arrival, the noted artist made a plaster cast of the poet's countenance, from which he later painted a faithful portrait. All trace of this has unfortunately disappeared. From it was made, however, an etching used as the frontispiece for Belcher's edition of his Works in 1812. This is supplemented by Selfridge's description of the poet as he saw him:

The stature of Mr. Paine was deceptive. His height was five feet, nine and a half inches; although, apparently, not more than five feet, eight inches. His bones were small; his fibres had little tension; and of course, his muscles but little compactness. His frame and movement indicated an absence of physical power. His hair was sandy and his complexion light. His forehead was high, remarkably wide, and clearly defined. His eyes were blue, very prominent, but inexpressive, except when he was strongly excited; and his nose was of the common size, slender and angular. His mouth was large, heavy and sensual; and his lips possessed an uncommon thickness, which extended to a considerable distance from the edges, which were not uncommonly protuberant. The lower part


2. Ibid., page lxviii.
of his face, in character, furnished a striking contrast to the upper; but there was nothing singular in its formation. The tout ensemble was not repulsive; nor could it be said

Vultus erat multa ac praeclara minantis.

There would be little purpose in summarizing the moral aspects of Paine's life. He was not a perfect man; few men of genius are perfect. But it is noteworthy that the volume of his works is a far greater monument to his memory than a vast amount of contemporary opinion. Beneath the elaborate affectation of his prose and the imaginative sprightliness of his couplets, there is a steady undertone of didacticism, all of a piece with the philosophy and literature of the period. No one could have been more sincere in his depiction of the ugliness of vice, in contrast to the beauties of virtue. Bigotry, pedantry and hypocrisy of any type are to him the most despicable afflictions of mankind. On the other hand, manners, culture, and freedom of thought and living are his almost constant plea.

So much for the man Paine. As a poet, we can but say that the wealth of his genius was never completely understood because it was never completely developed. His genius, such as it was, however, seems
to have lain in the multiplicity of his talents rather than in his one great talent, literature. It was not in the poet's power to produce masterpieces or even great works. He was not able to concentrate for a sufficient length of time upon any one subject. Even the best of his poems were written under extreme pressure, and often, extreme privation.

Many and varied as are Paine's actual literary accomplishments, it is certain that he never achieved all that he had planned to achieve, even for the short period of his life. Those who were most anxious to have him collect and edit his works in accordance with his talents, were doomed to disappointment. This negligence was thought by some to be the result of a natural indolence, and later a mental disintegration due to vicious habits of drink; but Selfridge, who probably saw more clearly into the situation than most any other of the poet's friends, has given us food for thought with the following enlightening remarks upon the subject. "Mental labor," he asserts, "induces lassitude of body and disinclination to exertion. When these are accompanied by illness, the stoutest resolution is appalled. How can those affirm, whose sails have always been prosperously filled, that, if their lives had been cheated by hope, and chequered

by misfortune, like his, they should have uniformly refrained from 'physical aid for their moral consolation?' Driven into scenes, for society, where virtue does not always wear her most forbidding aspect, what mortal can affirm, that he should have steadfastly preserved his stoical austerity?" Pren-tiss records that a few days before Paine's death, when it was apparent to all that he had not long to live, a friend inquired as to the promised edition of his works. To this the poet replied, "that is impossible. I have been too negligent of my fame, in not publishing under my own eye;—God knows who will do it now."

Paine was assuredly not a great figure in early American literature, but he was a significant one. During the period in which he was writing, this country was making rapid strides in literary achievement, and he, as a typical writer of his time, did much to further a national literature. His patriotism, of the emotion rather than the reason, was the vigorous, unrestrained expression of youthful ardor, but it served, in that era, to stimulate and strengthen the pride of an increasingly prideful country.

1. Works, page lxv.
As to his political works, Paine has presented in them the twistings and turnings of party strife, America's attempt to settle to a stable and practical governmental order. It was precisely this aspect of the nation's affairs which inspired the least attractive of the poet's literary qualities, his brutal political satire The Lyars for which, Churchill, that "semi-rebel" of eighteenth century literature in England, was the model. The boldness and injustice of his scourging sarcasm and the crudeness of his wit are here totally out of harmony with his splendid patriotism and the many other expressions of his national loyalty.

It was as a dramatic critic that Paine gained his greatest reputation. Contemporaries recognized in his work an earnestness of purpose, a keenness of observation and a critical justness that made him at a very early age indeed an authority in matters of the theatre.  

"He could predict with accuracy" states Selfridge, "the success of a play and the issue of a campaign, the turmoils of the green-room and the agitation of the republic." It is this very dramatic quality of Paine's work, whether found in his prose or in his poetry, which gives it the power and color it possesses. In every

enterprise he played to the galleries, and waited for the storm of applause. When this was no longer forthcoming, the spirit of the naive poet was broken and his terrible pride injured beyond repair. Even after Paine's death, his reputation as a theatrical critic lingered, witness the account of one newspaper writer, who, in advertising a forthcoming drama, The American Captive, asserts:

It is from the pen of a gentleman of this town and is his first attempt in the theatrical line. We are told he did not intend it for the public representation, but understood it merely as an amusement for a writer's evening;—having completed it, however, and in passing the circle of friends, it found its way into the hands of the late Mr. Paine, and it is in consequence of the flattering opinion he gave of its merits, together with the voluntary offer of an Epilogue, that it is now to be introduced on the stage. Having passed the ordeal of so able a judge, the author, we think, can have but little fear, even from the most fastidious.

In the conclusion of our study and in the absence of a more fitting epitaph to the life and career of the poet Robert Treat Paine, Jr., we feel at liberty to quote from his own poem, the Prize Prologue, a stanza which was written for the theatre but which seems to cover the chief aspects of his own character with admirable cogency:

Dear wild of Genius! o'er thy moulderling scene,
While Taste explores, where Time's rude step has been,
Thy marble fragments, and thy desert mart,
Frown Fate to Faction, and Despair to Art;
Alike they mark thy frenzy and thy fame,
Record thy glory, and confess thy shame!

1. Columbian Centinel, December 7, 1811.
APPENDIX A

Thomas O. Selfridge, Paine's friend and later the author of a biographical supplement to Prentiss' sketch of the poet, has a most interesting, and, in a measure, a most unfortunate, history. In 1806, during the period in which party feeling was at its height in Boston, Benjamin Austin, who has already been mentioned in connection with the Democratic organ, the Independent Chronicle, published some scurrilous remarks concerning a recent Federalist celebration. Selfridge, an enthusiastic Federalist and, at the time, a correspondent to the Boston Gazette, hotly defended his friends in an extended newspaper communication with Austin. Up to this time, Selfridge had been enjoying a considerable reputation as a law student in the office of Lemuel Shaw, the noted Boston lawyer of the period. He seems to have possessed much charm and talent and to have had a wide circle of friends. On August 6, Charles Austin, then a student at Harvard and the son of Benjamin Austin, was walking on State Street when he met Selfridge. According to Buckingham, who recites the story at length in his Newspaper Literature, no one was near enough to see what actually happened, but in less than a minute after the two men met, Selfridge drew his pistol and fired at Austin who struck out with a small stick he was carrying and fell to the ground.

sidewalk. He died at once. Selfridge was arrested on a charge of murder but was soon acquitted, the jury having found for him that in shooting at Austin he was but committing an act of self-defense. As many of the town’s most prominent Federalists came to the support of Selfridge at this time, it was no surprise to those who followed the proceedings of his trial that the affair had resulted in this way.

It is not known at what period Paine’s friendship with Selfridge began. As early as 1798, both of these men were among those corresponding with the Boston Gazette; both were Harvard graduates; both staunch Federalists and both lawyers of great promise. It is certain, however, that Paine knew Selfridge well, as the following letter to Joseph Dennie will readily testify:

My dear Sir,

The bearer of this is Thos. O. Selfridge, Esq.—the celebrated and the calumniated—the brave and the lettered—the persecuted and the triumphant.—As a gentleman and a scholar, he will receive your brotherly regards;—as a man who has loved his honor more than he has feared death, he is entitled to your admiration; and as a loyalist, who has sat a proud foot on the neck of party, I am sure you will be the last to accost him, ‘Quis novus hic hospes?’

I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere and affectionate

R.T. Paine, Jr.

As for Selfridge’s opinion of Paine, we have but to look

---
1. This letter is to be found in a collection of Isaiah Thomas’ letters in the American Antiquarian Society.
between the pages of his remarks, prefaced to the Works of Paine, to gain some idea of his love for the poet.

It is true that he has overlooked very few of his friend's faults, but it is also true that he has been equally quick to recognize his many virtues. Indeed, he has gone further than any writer of his own or a later period to dispel the curse which has hung about the name of the unfortunate Paine. In the concluding statement to his remarks, he says:

It is immaterial, to the present generation, whether the discoverer of a mariner's compass, or the inventor of the art of printing, lived morally or sensually. If irregularity of life overshadowed their fame for a season, they have since emerged from the cloud, in a blaze of glory, which has dispelled the mist, and will convey their names to the end of time, as the most illustrious benefactors of the human race.

In this, may not Selfridge be pleading for his own name as well as for that of his friend!
ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BOSTON THEATRE

"The theatre, in Federal Street, is a lofty and spacious edifice, substantially built of brick with stone fascias, imposts, etc. It is one hundred and forty feet long, fifty feet wide, and forty feet high. As it stands in a conspicuous situation, it has been thought necessary to observe a strict symmetry on the outside. It has the appearance of two stories in height; the lower a basement, with three arches in front and five on each side, the windows square. The second story is more lofty with large arched windows. The front and rear are decorated with corinthian columns and pilasters; and in front, a projecting arcade gives the convenience of carriages landing their company under cover.

In the construction of this house, every attention has been paid to keep the entrances of the difference parts distinct, and to afford numerous outlets. The doors to the pit and gallery are on each side; that to the boxes is in the front. This entrance is large and commodious. After landing under the cover, the company pass through an open waiting room to two stair cases, which lead to the corridors at the back of the boxes.

The form of the audience-part of the theatre is circular, one-fourth of the circle being cut off from the stage-opening. Four corinthian columns support the

I. Federal Orrery, Monday, November 10, 1794.
ceiling, which is formed of four large elliptic arches. One of these is the opening of the front gallery; two others, those of the side galleries or slips; and the fourth is the proscenium, or opening of the stage.

The columns, which support the ceiling, give the leading divisions of the boxes, &c. The pedestal continued forms the front of the lower boxes. The cornice of the establature and balustrade give the front and side galleries. The second row and boxes, is suspended between, without visible support. All the boxes are three seats deep; and it may be affirmed that there are fewer inconvenient seats, than any other form is subject to.

The back walls are painted with a light blue; and the front of the boxes, the columns, &c. are of straw and lilach color. The moulding, balustrades, and fret work are gilded. A crimson silk drapery, suspended from the second boxes, and twelve elegant brass chandeliers, of five lights each, complete the decoration.

The stage-opening is thirty-one feet wide. It is ornamented, on each side, with two columns; and between them, a stage door and projecting iron balcony. Over the columns, a cornice and balustrade are carried across the opening; and above, is painted a flow of crimson drapery, and the arms of the Union and of the state of Massachusetts, blended with emblems tragic and comic. A ribband, depending from the arms, bears the motto:
'All the world's a stage.' Under the stage, are a number of rooms for the convenience and accommodation of the players.

"(At the east end of the building, a noble and elegant dancing-room is continued. This is fifty-eight feet long, thirty-six wide, and twenty-six high, richly ornamented with corinthian columns and pilasters, and a ceiling 'en berceau', elegantly finished with stucco in compartments. The furniture of glasses, chandeliers, and girandoles, are very handsome, and promise much satisfaction to the lovers of innocent and cheerful amusement. There are also spacious card and tea-rooms, and kitchens with the proper conveniences."
ELEGY

occasioned by the death of Robert Paine, Esq.,
who died at Boston, July 29th, 1798, Aet. 28.

Manibus Date Lilia plenis,
Purpureos spargam flores, animamque
nepotis, His saltem accumulem Danis,
et fungar inani Munere.

Virg. AE 16.v.8.83.

Here Genius mourns; afflicted Friendship weeps,
For cold beneath this marble Pollio sleeps.
Hither, ye Graces, pensively repair,
A cypress wreath, with roses twin'd prepare,
Here strew the earliest flow'rets of the Spring,
And here, ye Muses, solemn dirges sing--
Soft be your lays to soothe his gentle shade,
Sweet, as the notes along the moonlight glade,
When Philomela or the widow'd dove,
Express their tender woes and pour the plaint of love!—

--Ah! what avail'd his elegance of form
His culture'd mind and heart with virtue warm,
Honour united with affections bland,
And patriot ardour for his native land!

Friend of my youth, adieu! Within this breast,
A brother's grief, shall be a cherish'd guest,
While busy memory to old Harvard strays,
And fondly lingers o'er our happy days.
'Twas then, the grove of Academus bloom'd,
And antique lights the classick walks illum'd,
Science thro' every maze our footsteps led,
And all her treasures wide before us spread;
There Plato's page was open'd to our view,
And there was taught all Aristotle knew,

There Maro sung and glowing Pindar fir'd,
And Tully charm'd, Demosthenes inspir'd:
There Locke explain'd the mental empire's plan,
Nature by Newton stood unveil'd to man,
While Gibbon, from the fall of mighty Rome,
Instructed nations to avoid her doom
And Blair, to whom the art divine was given,
With angel eloquence allur'd to heaven:
There in luxuriance mov'd the sacred bough,
Minerva destined to adorn thy brow.
Alas! how soon the dear illusions fly,
The prospect fades and tears its place supply,
Wake from dreams of bliss to real gloom
And lean my aching head on Pollio's tomb!

1. Original Poetry, for the Emerald, written by John Lathrop, Esq., published by Belcher and Armstrong, State Street, Boston, Massachusetts. (piece not dated)
But, thou blest shade, if in thy honest heart,
Among thy loves Eugenio bore a part,
Accept this tribute of unpolished lays,
Due to thy worth,—unequal to thy praise!
BIBLIOGRAPHY A

Works of Robert Treat Paine, Jr.

I. Poems.

A. College Exercises.


4. "A Valedictory Poem", delivered on June 1792, being the day when Mr. Paine and his class left College, cf. Works, pages 60-69.


B. Massachusetts Magazine; or, Monthly Museum of Knowledge and Rational Entertainment, Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, Boston, 1789-1795.

Contributions by "Aegon"


6. Translation of a Sapphie Ode, December, 1790.

Contributions by "Celadon"

7. "Such beauteous flowerets from so fair a hand", February, 1791.


10. "Ode to Compassion", April, 1791.
15. Solution to Charades of October, 1791 (written in December, 1791), printed March, 1792.

Contributions by "Menander"

17. "The star that paves the blue serene", February, 1793.

note: Other "Menander" poems of this order appeared intermittently throughout this year, 1793, in the Columbian Centinel.

C. Miscellaneous and Undated Poems.

1. "Ode", (Rise, Columbia), Massachusetts Magazine, May, 1795, (unsigned.)

D. The Mercury, Young & Minns, Boston, January 13, 1795.

1. "Cerberus."

Columbian Centinel, Benjamin Russell, Boston, January 5, 1799.

1. "Ode" (written for and sung at the Anniversary of the Sons of the Pilgrims, December 22, 1800, signed Thomas Paine, A. M.)
BIBLIOGRAPHY A

D. (continued)

The Polyanthus, J. T. Buckingham, Vol. 11, Boston, 1806.

1. "Ode" (written for and sung at the Anniversary of the American Independence, July 4, 1806.)

II. Editorial Work.

1. Federal Orrery, printed by Weld & Greenough, No. 42 Cornhill, Boston, October 20, 1794 to April 18, 1796. (Harvard Library Files.)

III. Theatrical Criticisms.

1. "Thespiad", Numbers One through Seven, Federal Orrery, printed intermittently from December 18, 1794 through February 3, 1795.


IV. Theatrical Prologues, Addresses and Epilogues.

1. "Prize Prologue", spoken in the character of "Apollo" by Mr. C. Powell, at the opening of the First Theatre in Boston, January, 1794, Massachusetts Magazine, January, 1794.


BIBLIOGRAPHY A

V. Occasional Poems, Orations and Essays.

1. "The Invention of Letters", a poem, written at the request of the President of Harvard University and delivered in Cambridge, on the Day of Annual Commencement, July 15, 1795, printed for the subscribers, July 27, 1795, Boston.

2. "The Ruling Passion", an occasional poem written by the appointment of the Society of the Phi Beta Kappa; and spoken, on their anniversary, in the Chapel of the University, Cambridge, July 20, 1797, printed for the author by Maning & Loring, Boston, 1797.

3. "Adams and Liberty", published by Ross and Tonsey, 121 Nassau Street, New York, sold at the Bible and Heart, Salem, Massachusetts, 1798. (Several editions of this broadside are at Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts.)

4. "An Oration", written at the request of the Young Men of Boston, and delivered July 17, 1799, in commemoration of the Dissolution of the Treaties and Consular Convention, Between France and the United States of America, printed by John Russell, Boston, 1799. (Essex Institute.)


6. "Communication, on the Boston Female Asylum", Boston Gazette, April 1, 1802.


VI. The Works in Verse and Prose, of the Late Robert Treat Paine, Jun., Esq., with Notes to which are prefixed Sketches of his Life, Character and Writings, Boston: printed and published by J. Belcher, 1812.

VII. Extant Letter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY B

Books of Reference


Adams, Charles Francis, Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife Abigail Adams, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1876.


Bernard, John, Retrospections of America (1797-1811), New York, 1887.

Boston Gazette, John Russell & Company, Boston, Monday, November 15, 1811
Monday, December 2, 1811.


Boston Public Latin School Catalogue (1635-1884), prepared by Henry F. Jenks, published by the Boston Latin School Association, Boston, 1886.


Collections of the Old Colony Historical Society, published by the Society, Taunton, Massachusetts, 1895.

BIBLIOGRAPHY B


Davol, Ralph, *Two Men of Taunton*, Davol Publishing Company, Taunton, Massachusetts, 1912.


Ellis, Harold Milton, *Joseph Dennie and His Circle*, University of Texas, Austin, 1915.


*Names Changed in Massachusetts, 1780-1892*, collated and published by Massachusetts, Secretary of the Commonwealth under authority of Chapter 191 of the acts of the year 1893, State Printers, Boston, 1893.

BIBLIOGRAPHY B

New England Palladium, Boston, November 15, 1811.
November 22, 1811.

Paine Ancestry, compiled by Sarah Cushing Paine, edited
by Charles Henry Pope, No. 16 State Street, Boston, 1812.

Paine Family Records, Vol. 11, No. 7, Whole Number XV,
Edited for the Family, Boston, July, 1882.

Paine, Robert Treat, MS Diary (1776--)
Paine, Robert Treat, Jr., MS Diary (1785-1792)

Both of these diaries are in the possession of Mr. Charles
Paine, Paine Estate, No. 10 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Parsons, Theophilus, Jr., Memoir of Theophilus Parsons
with Notices of some of His Contemporaries, Ticknor
and Fields, Boston, 1849.

Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard, Catalogue of, printed

& Inskeep and Inskeep & Bradford, New York, 1813.


Probate Records, Suffolk County, Vols. IIQ and 112, Suffolk
County Court House, Boston, Massachusetts.

Quinquennial Catalogue of the Officers and Graduates of
Harvard University (1639-1910), Cambridge, 1910.

Remarks on the Jacobiniad, published at Boston by E. W. Weld
and W. Greenough, 1795.

Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston,
containing Boston Births AD 1700-1800, Rockwell &
Churchill, 1894.

Report of the Record Commissioners, Miscellaneous Papers,
Vol. 22, Document 150, City Hall, Boston, October, 1886.

Seilhamer, G. O., History of the American Theatre, Vol. III,

Selfridge, Thomas O., Supplementary Remarks to Prentiss'
"Sketch", prefaced to Works, pages lxvii-lxxxiv.
BIBLIOGRAPHY B


POEMS NOT INCLUDED

IN

THE WORKS OF PAINE
Ode on Winter

Dread winter reigns; all nature fades
Beneath his savage sway;
Derk night the throne of sol invades,
And clouds the gates of day.
Thus glory's sons from fame are hurl'd;
One common grave awaits the world.

Stript are the bowers of vernal ease;
No fruits the trees adorn;
No fragrance fills the playful breeze,
And dreary is the lawn.
Thus beauty's fairest flowret fades,
When wintry age its bloom pervades.

No more the lucent grots among,
The silver streamlets rove;
Hush'd is the shepherd's artless song,
And still the notes of love,
For bliss destroying winter reigns,
The Lapland tyrant of the plains.

No more the nymphs trip o'er the field,
Nor from the crowded green
Fly to some grove, to lie conceal'd,
Yet hope their flight was seen;
No more amid the sylvan dance,
Smile round the soul subduing glance.

No more the birds attune their throats,
Nor twitter on the spray;
Nor warble their mellifluous notes,
To hell the rising day.
For musick's voice is heard no more,
When wintry storms their discord roar.

The crystal lake's unruffled stream,
Whose face serene as even,
Whose bosom, in the solar beam,
Shone with the smile of heaven,
Chill'd by cold winter's frigid sway,
No more reflects the realms of day.

Thus when a tyrant's lawless band,
Impell'd by sanguine thirst,
Hurls desolation round the land,
And cities in the dust;
Vain are the tears of beauty's eyes,
Vain all the charms, and vain her sighs.

Now sylvan pleasure's voice is hush'd,
And now the roseate dye,
Which on the cheek of nature blush'd,
No more delights the eye;
For winter clasps in icy arms
Fair vegetation's lovely charms.

See, the swift driving storm descends,
On wings of whirlwinds driven,
From its strong roots the forests rends,
And whirs aloft to heaven.
In mingled storm, snow, rain, and hail,
Ravage the meads, and sweep the vale.

But what are all the storms that rage;
The boisterous winds that blow,
In air continual conflict wage;
On what the mountains snow?
What is the dreary night of clouds,
Which the dreed face of winter shrouds?

Lo, in my humble cot I dwell,
Remote from pomp and state;
Ambition ne'er molests my cell,
Nor prompts me to be great.
No pageant splendor here, nor wealth;
Here are the joys of peace and health.

In Sylvia's love supremely blest,
No frowns our union roil;
Her voice can bid my soul to rest,
And bliss benign to smile;
Such soothing charms her cares bestow,
And make my cot a heaven below.

Thus under life's tempestuous sky,
Content each season cheers;
While spring and summer, autumn fly,
And winter's hoary years;
For soon shall wintry life be past,
And spring, in bloom eternal, last.

Geladon
To the Editors of the Massachusetts Magazine.

Gentlemen,

The following Song is composed to the tune of "Ma Chere Amie", and is humbly addressed to a Young Lady, who gave the author a waxen impression of a seal, beearing a pair of "Turtle Doves", and the word "Love."

I.

Ma chere amie of heavenly mold,
Thy virtues all thy charms refine;
As brightest gems, when set in gold,
With more refulgent lustre shine.

Ma chere amie, etc.

II.

Pure, as the limpid streams, that glide
Along the flower embroider'd grass;
Not Flora, deck'd in all her pride,
Can e'er thy beauteous form surpass.

Ma chere amie, etc.

III.

Thy seal, upon the wax impress'd
Leaves the soft name that soothes each smart;
Ph' may it, on thy bosom press'd
Leave the same picture on thy heart.

Ma chere amie, etc.

IV.

There, in thy soft congeniel breast,
The tender turtle doves may find,
A warm, secure, and peaceful nest,
The mansion of thy lovely mind.

Ma chere amie, etc.

V.

Would heaven a gracious ear impart,
Then chang'd, I'd live a turtle dove,
And dwell in that unspotted heart,
Where reign content, and smiling Love.

Ma chere amie, etc.

Celadon

Cambridge, April 28, 1791.

A Dialogue Between Horace and Lydia

Translation of the 9th Ode, Third Book of Horace

Horace

Erst when thy smile to me was given,
In love I found the bliss of heaven;
Then no fond rival's favor'd arms,
Enraptur'd clasped thy snowy charms;
Then blest I liv'd and envied none,
Not Persia's monarch on his throne.

Lydia

Erst did the cords of love unite
Our hearts in mutuel delight;
Then Lydia's smile allur'd thee more,
Then Cloe's sweet enchanting power.
Then too rever'd was Lydia's name,
And rivell'd Ilia's glorious fame.

Horace

Me Thracian Cloe now declaims;
In slavery's fascinating chains;
She tunes the harp's melodious strings
But with far sweeter musick sings;
To snatch the beauteous maid from death,
I'd glory to resign my breath.

Lydia

Me Calais to love inspires,
Our bosoms glow with gentlest fires;
In him has every grace combin'd,
But nobler charms adorn his mind,
If twice the pangs of death would bear
If fate the charming youth would spare.

Horace

If the fair Paphim queen again
Unite us with a stronger chain;
If former love again inspire,
And glow with an intenser fire;
If Thracian Cloe's charms I spurn,
Will Lydia to my arms return?

Lydia

Tho' light as cork, your passions reign,
More stormy, than the raging main;
Tho' Calais by far outvies
The great enlightner of the skies;
Yet from his eager love I fly,
With you to live, with you to die.

Celadon

[Massachusetts Magazine, June, Vol. III, 1791]
For the Massachusetts Magazine.

Gentlemen,

The following lines were written extempore on perusing Dr. Goldsmith's Animated Nature.

Pele Lezarus bow'd to Death's relentless sway,
And sought the mansion of corruptive clay;
'Till heaven's benignant Prince revok'd the doom,
And mock'd the greedy caverns of the tomb:
Thus Nature lay within a cloister'd cave,
Lock'd in the death cold slumbers of the grave;
'Till Goldsmith's voice above the vault was heard;
"Nature stand forth!"—and Nature's self appeared!

Celadon

Cambridge, 1791
1
Charades

1.

My first is misery complete
My second oft endures it;
When join'd, they both together make,
What often sweetly cures it.

11.

Many men my first will take,
Entirely for my second's sake;
But very few indeed there are
Who both together well can bear.

111.

When Strephon tells his tender tale,
To Cloe young and gay;
Without my first that tender tale
Would pass unheard away:
But when in love they both are fix'd
And mutual transports glow,
Oh! claim my second, lovely maid,
Or deep regret you'll know.
Secure in this, 'tis ten to one,
Before the month goes round,
Attending near your beauteous cheek,
My toute ensemble's found.

Ardelia

2
Solution of the Charades in the October Magazine

1.

Who is the certain doom of all
Who sojourn on this dreary ball,
And man its rigors must endure;
But nature still a balm doth deign
For all our wounds, for all our pains,
And woman is the magic cure.

1. This poem appeared in the Massachusetts Magazine, Vol. III, October, 1791, and is here quoted because of Paine's Solution.

Such is the state of earthly bliss, 
Man, void of love, will chase a Miss, 
Allur'd by fortune's tinsel charms; 
But should the two ingredients blend, 
And dread misfortune's cure descend, 
They quit the rifled virgin's arms.

When Stephon in the sylvan grove 
Pours forth the melting strains of love, 
The notes in Delia's ear resound; 
But tho' the swain so sweetly sing, 
Still claim, fair nymph, the nuptial ring, 
Let Humen's sacred rites be crown'd. 
Yield with a blush the willing kiss; 
Nor ah! the unhallowed herbage press; 
Then dazzling near your beauteous face, 
The ear ring shall your triumph grace, 
And nuptial joys your moments bless.

Celadon

Bridgewater, December 12, 1791.