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DEDICATED TO ALL PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS &
SUPPORTERS OF THE SOCIETY.

Contents

The Iron Bridge Designed by Thomas Paine.....	5
Extracts from an Interesting Letter.....	8
The New Paine Biography.....	9
Thomas Holcroft.....	11
Forgotten Pages of English Poetry: The Poetry of the Corresponding Societies.....	18
Book Review.....	26

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THE IRON BRIDGE DESIGNED BY THOMAS PAINE
by D. T. Edwards

A PERSON OF EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY, intelligence, and extremely utilitarian ideas, left England in October 1774, and arrived in Philadelphia November 30, of the same year. He bore the following letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin to his son-in-law, Richard Bache:

London, Sept. 30, 1774.

The bearer, Mr. Thomas Paine, is very well recommended to me as an ingenious, worthy young man. He goes to Pennsylvania with a view to settling there. I request you to give him your best advice and countenance, as he is quite a stranger there. If you can put him in way of employment as a clerk, or assistant tutor in a school, or assistant surveyor, all of which I think him very capable, so that he procures a subsistence, at least till he can make acquaintance and obtain a knowledge of the country, you will do well and much oblige your affectionate father.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

On March 4, 1775, Paine writes to Dr. Franklin from Philadelphia, telling him that he has accepted a position as assistant to Robert Aitkin, printer and bookseller, and publisher of the Pennsylvania Magazine or American Museum.

Although a comparative stranger, he became at once the most active and powerful factor in the revolutionary cause, and the first man to advocate complete independence from Britain.

He does more than this - he enlists in the Continental army - shares the crust and the cold with Washington and his men; and sometimes on the head of a drum, or by the midnight fire, or amid the corpses of the dead, he writes those soul-stirring pamphlets called Crisis, the first number of which begins with these extraordinary words:

SUNSHINE PATRIOTS

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of the country, but he that stands it now deserves the love and the thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation with us, the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph."

After fighting for seven long years as a private* in the army, he issued his last Crisis, which opens with these words: "The times that tried men's souls are over, and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever knew, gloriously and happily accomplished."

The name of this author/soldier does not appear in any of the histories of the United States, nor in one of the text books in our public schools. At the termination of the war Paine writes: "At the conclusion of it every man returned to his home to repair the ravages it had occasioned, and to think no more of war. I returned with them to the re-enjoyment of a quiet life, and, that I might not be idle, undertook to construct an iron bridge of a single arch for this river (Schuylkill). Our beloved general (Washington) had engaged in rendering another river, the Potomac, navigable."

Paine sat one day in front of an open grate in his lodgings on Second Street, Philadelphia. The idea of constructing an iron bridge seized him from studying a spider's circular web of which it resembled a section; and from a conviction that when nature empowered that insect to make a web, she also instructed her in the strongest

mechanical methods of constructing it.

The quantity of iron he has allowed in his bridge was 520 tons, to be distributed into 13 ribs in commemoration of the 13 United States, each rib to contain 40 tons. The models for the bridge were made at the workshop of John Hall, a native of Manchester, England, but who had come to Bordertown, New Jersey. Paine had built for himself a small cottage here, but he boarded at the house of Colonel Josiah Kirkbride. This was early in 1787.

In the fall of the same year he exhibited his model in the house of Dr. Franklin, and in Peale's Museum in the State House yard, now Independence Square, in 1803. A committee of citizens that were selected to view the bridge, reported that iron was too expensive, but adopted Paine's idea of a single arch wooden bridge. This was done to avoid a centre pier.

VISITS AGED PARENTS

The manuscript diary of John Hall is full of details regarding the construction of the models. It gives the names of distinguished guests who called upon them to inspect their work. John Fitch, designer and inventor of the steamboat; Rittenhouse, the astronomer; Dr. Priestly, Francis Hopkinson and General Washington, who used the experiment with Paine on marsh gas at Rocky Hill, near Princeton, N.J.

Paine invented two types of iron bridge, one of wrought iron, with a single arch, and the other of cast iron blocks or arches, put together like stones. This bridge was also exhibited in Dr. Franklin's yard, corner Fourth and Chestnut streets, Philadelphia, and it received special mention from the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, and the French Academy of Sciences. Paine held several prominent positions of trust with the government from time to time, and won the esteem and admiration of all who came into contact with him.

Owing to some delay in receiving the remuneration for his services from the government he was unable to proceed with the erection of his bridge as he first intended. He, therefore, concluded to pay a visit to his aged parents in Thetford, Norfolk county, England. He had expressed a desire to do this in a letter addressed to Elias Boudinot, dated June 7, 1783, but said he was short of means.

ABSENT FIFTEEN YEARS

Conway, in his life of Paine, said: "It is to be deeply regretted that Thomas Paine did not remain in his beloved Bordertown. There he was the honoured man, his striking figure decorated with the noblest associations was regarded with pride; when he rode the lane on his horse Button the folk had a pleasant word with him; the best homes prized his intimacy and the young ladies would sometimes greet the old gentleman with a kiss. From all this he was drawn by the tender letter of a father he was never to see again. He intended to be absent one year - he remained away 15."

The historian "Oldys" says that Paine arrived at the White Bear, Piccadilly, London on the 3rd. September, 1787, just 13 years after his departure for Philadelphia. On his arrival in London he gave some manuscripts to a printer and left at once for Thetford. His father had died the year before, his mother was now in her 91st year, living comfortably on the remittances he had supplied.

LETTER TO JEFFERSON

He soon proceeded to secure patents on his iron bridge, and he declares he received his license from George III. The specification, dated August 28, 1788, declares his invention to be on principles new and different to anything hitherto practiced. The patents for England, Scotland and Ireland were granted in September. The Encyclopedia Britannica remarks that

Paine's "daring in engineering does full justice to the fervor of his political career." Paine and his bridge came to England at the proper time, for the Blackfriars Bridge and two over the Tyne had collapsed on account of their piers resting on quicksand. Paine, seeing that his opportunity to fill a long desired want had arrived, proceeded at once to find some responsible parties to erect his bridge. He soon succeeded in interesting Messrs. Walker of Rotherham, Yorkshire, in his enterprise, and they fitted up a workshop for Paine's use in their famous factory.

In a letter dated February 16, 1788, written to Thomas Jefferson, who held the position of American Minister in Paris, Paine says that he intended to construct an experimental arch 250 feet long, but had to change his plans owing to the weather and his inability to erect an arch within doors, and furthermore, there was a prospect of a real bridge 90 feet long being erected in the neighbourhood.

HONORED GUEST OF NOTABLES

The person who wanted the bridge was a Mr. Foljambe, a member of Parliament for Yorkshire. He lived three miles from Rotherham iron works, and the river Don flowed in front of his house. These circumstances led Paine to decide to erect an arch 90 feet long with an elevation of five feet. This could be managed by working indoors, half the arch at a time.

After the work had begun it went on rapidly without any mistakes, or any changes. Paine stood at the works until one half of the rib, 45 feet, had been put horizontally together, and went up to London to visit Parliament on the 4th. of December. The other half was got together in short order.

On February 26 he received a letter from Mr. Foljambe in which he says, "I saw the rib of your bridge. In point of elegance and beauty it far exceeds my expectation and is certainly beyond anything I ever saw." The bridge, 110 feet long, was erected at the village of Paddington near London, 1789, and here above all other places in the world a tablet should be placed in memory of the man who first suggested that bridges could be constructed out of wrought and cast iron. Paine was visited by some famous engineers and political personages in his workshop at Rotherham, and he was also the honored guest of notable persons. He visited Lord Fitzwilliam at Wentworth Castle often. He was entertained and consulted by Fox, Lord Lansdowne, Sir George Staunton and Sir Joseph Banks. He spent considerable time with Edmund Burke, and with the Duke of Portland at his country seat.

HIS BONES PURLOINED

The late Professor P.J. Lesley of Philadelphia said that he visited Rotherham in early life and Paine's workshop and the very tools he used were pointed out to him. He talked with an aged man who worked under Paine as a lad. The professor, who was prejudiced against Paine, was favourably impressed by the words of the old man. He said that Thomas Paine was the best man he ever knew. The Walkers and all their workmen looked up to him and honored him. He knew the people around for miles and went into their homes; his benevolence, his friendliness, his knowledge, made him beloved by all, rich and poor!

The man that wrote as follows to Thomas Jefferson could not be the kind of person that he has been pictured by some historians:

"Accept, my dear sir, my most hearty thanks for your many services and friendship. Remember me with an overflowing affection to my dear America - the people and the place. Be so kind as to shake hands with them for me, and tell our beloved General Washington, and my dear old friend, Dr. Franklin, how much I long to see them."

In a letter to Washington dated May 31, 1790, he says: "In a small box which contains the key of the Bastille I have put just half a dozen razors made of cast steel, where my bridge was constructed. I request you to accept these as a token from a grateful heart."

Such is a brief outline of the construction of the first iron bridge in the world.[@] And what of the subsequent history of the renowned inventor? This is the answer from an old record in the Franklin Library, Philadelphia:

"The country for which he laboured and suffered knows him not. His ashes rest in a foreign land. A rough grass grown mound, from which the bones have been purloined, is all that remains on the continent of America to tell of the author, the soldier, the statesman and the friend of man, the immortal Thomas Paine."

Reprinted from the Pittsburg Dispatch, 6/3/1904

Notes (not in the original article).

* Paine was an officer, holding the rank of Brigade Major.

† Spiders are not insects.

@ The first iron bridge in the world, or at least the first accepted for it has been claimed that the Chinese erected the first iron bridge, was actually erected at Ironbridge, Shropshire in 1779. It is still standing and preserved as an ancient monument. At the time of writing a large sum of money is being spent on restoring it.

EXTRACTS FROM AN INTERESTING LETTER

The following extracts are taken from letter dated August 6th., 1909, from George Reynolds to the Paineite, W.H.Bartlett. It deals with several items Reynolds had in his collection, and which he had passed to Bartlett. Those marked * are now owned by the Thomas Paine Society.

Dear Sir,

It is with great pleasure that I send you a lock of the Hair of the late Thomas Paine as it was taken from the Head by Mr.Oldfield, who was Mr.Cobbett's Publisher. This is uncleaned, just as it was taken from the skull. Also a small portion of the hair * as cleaned by Mr.Monsieur Conway, when it was lent to him for the Exhibition at South Place, Finsbury.

I also send you a photograph of the face of Paine* taken in wax to refute a slander that Mr.Cobbett had taken up the body of a nigger, instead of that of Mr.Paine.

I send also a few pamphlets by my old friend - Mr.J.Hunns (who wrote as "The Old Daylighter" - ed.), which appeared in a Norwich paper* in relation to what became of the bones of Paine.

Mr.Conway believed that you knew something of what became of them. My own impression is, that they got divided, and so fell into various hands, and that this fact accounts for the diverse statements that have been made in respect of them.

.....I obtained the Hair of Paine from Mr.Timothy Ginn, of Green Street, Bethnal Green, in 1879.

Mr.Ginn married Miss Ada Lane, servant to Miss Tilly, a niece of Benjamin Tilly (close friend and secretary of Cobbett, and who acquired the bones of Paine - ed.).

That she obtained all Mr.Tilly's belongings...

That I asked for the bones sometimes afterwards...when I discovered they in Tilly's possession. I was told that Mrs.Ginn had cleared up the room, and that the bag containing the bones had been taken away with the rubbish... The explanation of the fact of Mrs.Ginn letting the bones go out of her possession is...that she was not aware that Ginn had taken

Continued on page 9.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE NEW PAINE BIOGRAPHY - REVIEWED BY F.A.RIDLEY

Thomas Paine, His Life, Work and Times by Audrey Williamson. George Allen and Unwin, £4.85.

"Of making many books there is no end", wrote, 2000 years ago, an anonymous biblical author, long before the invention of printing so facilitated book production! This biblical axiom applies also to the biographies of Thomas Paine (1737-1809), biblical critic, radical reformer, and social theorist. In general, his successive biographies have become more favourable as time went on, and as the memories of the bitter controversies in both church and state, in which Paine was involved, gradually faded away. Since the monumental biography of Moncure D. Conway (1892), that may be said to have put Paine on the map, his greatness as a major figure in both politics and religion, in again both English and cosmopolitan history, has become generally accepted: only the degrees of importance to be assigned to the various activities of this versatile man, remain for comparative assessment.

A NEW BIOGRAPHY

A major contribution to this fundamental reassessment is provided by a new biography: Thomas Paine, His Life, Work and Times by Audrey Williamson, which presents a very lucid and comprehensive account of the chequered fortunes and varied vicissitudes of this hero of three revolutions, actual revolution in America and France, and potential revolution in England; where, from the time of its initial publication in 1791-2, down to the Chartist movement in 1884, Paine's Rights of Man represented the revolutionary handbook for all advanced movements of their era. Audrey Williamson gives us interesting facts about Paine himself and his radical contemporaries - most of whom crossed Paine's path, and of many of whom, she presents a comprehensive portrait gallery. With regard to Paine himself, she gives us much critical assessment, plus a good deal of new material, particularly in connection with his early career as an excise officer in Lewes, Sussex; of this formative stage in his career she has unearthed much useful material in the local archives. With regard to Paine's contemporaries, I confess that I did not know prior to reading this book, that the author of Rights of Man had previously been on friendly terms with his later bitter rival Edmund Burke; to the anti-revolutionary polemic of whom, Reflections on the Revolution in France, Paine's bestselling Rights of Man formed the effective radical rejoinder. Nor did I know previously that Maximilian Robespierre had written a moving letter of condolence to his later arch-rival and most famous victim in the Jacobin terror, on the occasion of the latter's domestic bereavement. Not only on Paine himself, but also on his times, and his contemporaries, both English and foreign, the biographer has managed to shed a good deal of new light, no mean feat surely of scholarship at this time and day?

Continued on page 10.

AN INTERESTING LETTER continued from page 8.

the bones out of the box (in which Cobbett had them -ed.), and supposed they were still there.

The only other supposition is, that the Ginnns may have disposed of the bones some other way, and that the explanation given me was only a subterfuge.

George Reynolds.

The original letter is owned by the Thomas Paine Society.

The new Paine biography continued from page 9.

A PERCIPIENT PROPHET

A most important point; one indeed made before; but here reiterated with exceptional emphasis, is the remarkable manner in which this 18th. century writer yet managed to anticipate ideas due to emerge only long after his times. As is widely known, Paine, in both Rights of Man and some other works, advocated a programme of social reform, old age pensions etc. at home, leagues of nations abroad, that did not become viable until the 20th century. While in a totally different sphere, Paine's pamphlet on yellow fever, based on research in which George Washington participated, proved to be a pioneering effort towards the scientific treatment and eventual cure of this then terrible "scourge of God" and of man. But perhaps, as this biography brings out very aptly, the most striking evidence of Paine's gift for percipient prophecy, is to be found in his second major work, The Age of Reason, Paine's counterpart in radical religion to his Rights of Man in radical politics. Thomas Paine was a deist, not an atheist, he wrote The Age of Reason in a French prison, primarily to rescue, what he conceived to be, the sublime god of nature, from the misrepresentations of his biblical detractors. In the course of this ambitious undertaking, he managed in the course of his detailed analysis of the biblical documents, to anticipate many of the critical conclusions later arrived at by biblical scholarship. But he speculated even further! As his latest biographer aptly demonstrates he anticipated the cosmopolitan speculations made at the present day about the diffusion of intelligent life throughout the universe at large in our contemporary space age. Though here, to be sure, he had already been anticipated by that equally bold earlier heretic and bete noire of orthodoxy, Giordano Bruno (1548 - 1600).

A HISTORICAL WATERSHED

Actually, Paine represented a kind of historical watershed in relation to three consecutive revolutions, between radical republicanism and socialism, between radical religion and atheism, and between the national revolutions of his own day and the international revolutions of our century. Paine himself at a banquet in Paris, first proposed the toast "the revolution of the world", and thus may be accurately termed the first international revolutionary, the forerunner of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Che Guevara. It is above all, his universality that makes Paine a major figure, not only in English but in world history. We cannot know too much about him, and this latest biography adds greatly to our knowledge, on the man himself, of his times, and of his contemporaries.

THOMAS PAINE, HIS LIFE, WORK AND TIMES by Audrey Williamson

The Thomas Paine Society can supply copies of this important new work price £4.85 plus postage.

THOMAS HOLCROFT

by

Audrey Williamson

OF ALL THE RADICAL WRITERS who knew Thomas Paine, the one whose work is among the least known or read today, but whose career was the most varied and striking, was Thomas Holcroft: Newmarket stableboy, schoolmaster, actor, playwright, novelist, Paris correspondent for the Morning Herald, acknowledged mentor of William Godwin, victim of the 1794 treason trials and diarist whose entries for the year 1798 provide a fascinating picture of London celebrities, the frequenters of Debrett's, and rumours about Napoleon then freely proliferating about London.

All the admirers of Paine must know that Holcroft, with William Godwin and Thomas 'Brand' Hollis, helped to see Rights of Man through the press while Paine was in France, and greeted the arrival of the book from the printers with the historic and indeed, in its way, prophetic: 'Hey for the New Jerusalem! The Millenium! And peace and eternal beatitude be unto the soul of Thomas Paine!' It is less well known that Holcroft, even before Lanthenas whose translation of Part 2 of Rights of Man Bonneville published in Paris in 1792, may have provided the link between Paine and Nicolas de Bonneville that ended in Paine's lodging with the French editor of Bien Informe for five years, from 1797 until his return to America in 1802.

Holcroft was born in December, 1745, the year of Culloden, and was thus almost nine years Paine's junior. Baptised at St. Martin-in-the-Field's, he was the son of a London shoemaker of somewhat feckless application to his trade, which ended in his becoming a pedler roaming the English countryside, and not helping his fortunes by an enthusiasm for the racecourse which he transmitted to his devoted son. 'The whole scene was like enchantment', Holcroft wrote in his Memoirs fifty years later of a visit to Nottingham races in 1756, when as a boy of ten he watched a match between two horses, Carahess and Atlas, then considered the greatest since Flying Childers (still famous today in books on racing, and a legend of forty years before when the boy Holcroft tasted the delights of the Nottingham course). In 1757, at the age of under twelve, he entered a stable near Newmarket, to which town his father had been drawn as by a magnet, and in fact the whole of his Memoirs are devoted to his life there (he wrote them virtually on his deathbed, and his life story was continued by William Hazlitt).

They are of great interest historically to anyone interested in racing and training methods, especially as in view of Holcroft's eventual fame in totally different directions, they are little known in racing circles today ('Heavens, they were really tough in those days. I cannot help wondering what some of our modern horses - or trainers - would think about the sort of methods used' was a typical comment - from John Oaksey - when I sent a few extracts to one or two racing writers).

It should be explained the toughness applied to the prolonged hours (beginning at 2-30am in summer) of training horses and the style of training details, not to cruelty as such: indeed Holcroft, who adored horses all his life, paints a picture of stables and trainers singularly free from bribery and inconsideration, and (a revealing touch from a boy who had known only the life of the eighteenth century poor) he is more enthusiastic about the meals and treatment of the 'lads' than are some writers of social conscience in the pages of Sporting Life today. When he fell from a difficult mare he was nursed back to health in the home of his employer with genuine kindness, and although he lost his job he soon found an

even more celebrated trainer, under whose guidance he became a first-class and valued rider. Once again his enthusiasm points the changed conditions of his life:

'Now I was warmly clothed, nay, gorgeously, for I was proud of my new livery, and never suspected that there was disgrace in it; I fed voluptuously, not a prince on earth perhaps with half the appetite, and never-failing relish; and instead of being obliged to drag through the dirt after sluggish, obstinate, and despised among our animals, I was mounted on the noblest that the earth contains, had him under my care, and was borne by him over hill and dale, far outstripping the wings of the wind.'

In the interim he mentions being briefly at the stables housing the thirteen racing horses owned by the Duke of Grafton, who was the 'squire' of Paine's home town, the 'rotten borough' of Thetford, but he gives us no recollections of the young 'Sporting Duke', afterwards so maligned by Junius, and owner of the 1810 Derby winner, Whalebone (possibly named, I have suggested in my biography of Paine, in commemoration of the notorious Thetford staymaker's son),

Holcroft, nevertheless, had brains and vision beyond the scope of his fellow stableboys. While at Newmarket he began to read voraciously, starting with Gulliver's Travels, and intent on improving his education he went to study in his spare time with a schoolteacher named Langham, who was also the local maker of leather breeches. Langham was so impressed by his quickness that he gave him free lessons, and Holcroft soon outstripped his master. Having a good treble voice and a feeling for music, he also sang in the choir at one of Newmarket's two churches (this love of music he retained all his life, and as late as 1784 he took the tenor part in the Handel celebrations at Westminster Abbey).

In many ways, Holcroft was never to experience again times as happy and, within their limits, affluent as those at Newmarket. He left in 1760 to follow his 'rolling stone' father to London, and perhaps with a sense already of wider and more literate horizons. He had begun by being only 'horsestruck'; he was soon 'stagestruck' too, and although for ten years he scraped a living as a shoemaker and schoolmaster, by 1770, at the age of twenty-four, he had turned strolling player and was acting in Dublin with the great veteran actor, Charles Macklin, whose fame had been partially eclipsed by David Garrick but who lived to an enormous age, still churning out performances the length and breadth of England and Ireland, including a celebrated Shylock in The Merchant of Venice. It is estimated that he was still acting at well over ninety.

Holcroft never made much headway as an actor; as with so many with intellectual interests and accomplishments, he was best at characters requiring the assumption of old age or characteristics outside the sweep of emotion which is always a major factor in carrying the really great actor to the top of his profession. But he had taught himself several foreign languages and made an expert study, too, of vocal and instrumental music, and it was through this that he at last succeeded, in 1776, in getting an engagement at Drury Lane under Sheridan's management, at 20s. a week. As many of the plays performed had incidental music, he was able to sing in the choruses as well as to play very small parts. Only when Sheridan saw him play a character called Mungo, was he impressed enough to raise his salary to 25s.

Although Holcroft was obviously already interested in writing for the theatre - before Sheridan engaged him as a actor he had sent a farce (oddly, to Paineites, called The Crisis) to Mrs. Sheridan to read - and his own years of poverty must have set his mind in politically questioning directions, there is little doubt the association with Richard Brinsley Sheridan helped to consolidate both Holcroft's radical interests and ambitions as a dramatist. 'Sheridan had been drawn to politics long before he started to write plays', writes his most recent biographer; 'and there exist fragments of various political essays which were written

Anna St. Ives, in Holcroft's own words, was intended 'to develope (Holcroft's own spelling) certain general principles by exhibiting imaginary characters' and to depict 'the vices and distresses which are generated by the existing institutions of society'. Ibsen or Shaw could not have put it more clearly. Hugh Trevor, a novel in two parts published in 1794 and 1797, continued this doctrinaire philosophy of novel-writing. Crabbe Robinson once wrote that Holcroft's novels had been a mental introduction to the reception of Godwin's Political Justice (which, in 1793, could well have been true of Anna St. Ives).

Holcroft was very active in the Constitutional Society, sitting on its committee and at one time edifying its members, but also probably much holding up its business, with 'a dissertation on the human mind, which continued until the meeting broke up'. He shared with, and indeed perhaps helped to form in Godwin a strong sense of human perfectibility; and with Shaw - at least the Shaw of Back to Methuselah - he believed mind was all-important, and could conquer anything. His mind cast an unconscious shadow on the future in another theatre direction, for in his play The Deserted Daughter he anticipates Pirandello's moral theme, in Six Characters in Search of an Author, about a father who encounters his own daughter in a brothel (J.B. Priestley also used it in his play, Johnson Over Jordan). He also had his censorship problems: there was a trying bother over the line in Love's Frailties, 'he was bred to the most useless, and often the most worthless, of all professions, that of a gentleman'. Paine would undoubtedly have relished this.

When, in 1794, the Government decided to try and put a stop to the growing revolutionary societies and arrested most of Holcroft's associates on a treason charge, Holcroft, knowing his turn would come, turned the tables of public sympathy by courageously giving himself up. Thomas Erskine, the great lawyer who had defended Paine in 1792, immediately offered his services free of charge, and Holcroft in fact was never brought to trial. He was released when it became clear to the Government (which had been grossly misled by its spies) that none of the accused could be proved guilty of the charge on any evidence. Holcroft resented his release without official 'pardon', as it cast a shadow on his name that he had no means of repudiating, unlike those who had actually been brought into court; and in fact his political enemies so powerfully attacked his works from then on that eventually he took to a pseudonym, thus achieving his only play success thereafter.

Yet although his fortunes were fading he remained bravely in London among his friends, frequenting Debrett's (which was virtually a social club as well as booksellers) and recording in his Diary meetings and comments of considerable interest. His visitors in 1798 included Mrs. Reveley (once courted by Godwin and later a friend to his daughter Mary and Shelley in Italy) at a musical evening devoted to Mozart and Haydn; James Barry the painter (whose attractive young self-portrait is in the Tate Gallery close to where I write this); and a child pianist prodigy, John Field, who later became famous in Russia as an antecedent of Chopin in the composing and playing of Nocturnes. Benjamin Disraeli's father (still calling himself D'Israeli), the painter Richard Wilson, Horne Tooke, Benjamin Franklin, Sir Joseph Banks, James Boswell ('a pompous egotist, servile, selfish, and cunning') flit across his canvas, and he pins down Tooke (who turned his coat twice to desert two former allies, John Wilkes and Thomas Paine) like a butterfly with a reference to a discussion of the 'misapplication of his powers, the sacrifice of wisdom and virtue to the pitiful triumph of the moment' (Miss Banks also takes tea with Tooke's two natural daughters, living with him at Wimbledon and known euphemistically as 'the Misses Hart'). William Sharp, the engraver of Romney's portrait of Paine, who had been introduced into the Constitutional Society by Horne Tooke, is shown to be an eccentric believer in the 'Grand Millenium': 'The earthquake is still to happen, and the peaceable, even if uninspired, are all to be saved', as Holcroft puts it. 'Last summer he retired to a lonely place...and there he himself had been absolutely favored with a revelation, communicating to him personally, beyond all doubt, the revolutions that are immediately to happen'. One can imagine what would have been the

reaction to all this ^{of} the author of The Age of Reason!

At Debrett's he meets Erskine and records the great lawyer's opinion that 'it was wrong to give up agitating the question of reform without doors, i.e. out of the House of Commons. He had before remarked that the people had lost all spirit, which I denied, and, on this occasion, reminded him that the leaders of the people had abandoned them in a cowardly manner, and then had called the people cowards'. He adds that Sir Francis Burdett 'is inquiring into the number of persons imprisoned on suspicion, and their treatment, meaning to state the particulars to Parliament. Erskine, as a lawyer, has great talents, quick conceptions, acute feelings, and uncommon power over juries, he is far from ranking in the first class'. Which in view of Erskine's offer of his services without fee four years before, seems perhaps a little ungrateful.

It is revealing of the rumours besieging London in 1798 that on 26th. July he heard 'Buonaparte and his whole fleet were taken' (a rumour which proved wishful thinking) and on 14th. December records 'the assassination of Buonaparte the subject at Debrett's', although the next day this, too, 'was much questioned at Debrett's'. Among references to other friends or acquaintances of Paine, he reports on 15th. November: 'Johnson the bookseller sent to the King's bench Prison for selling Wakefield's pamphlet', and also 'Read at Debrett's, in the papers, the manly behaviour of Tone, tried at Dublin, and cast for high treason'. It was the year of the great Irish rebellion of 1798, in which Paine's friend Lord Edward Fitzgerald also lost his life, and the Irish question, then as now, persistently obtrudes.

By 1799 his funds were so depleted that he had to sell his fine collection of pictures and his library (he was a connoisseur of taste in both, and his Diary includes the acquisition of surprising items, such as 'the bible in Welsh, Polish, Danish and Swedish: likewise Novelle di Salernitano (scarce) and other books'). The loss of the library cost him bitter pangs. He left for Hamburg and voluntary exile in Europe until 1802. In Paris, as Professor Aldridge's researches have recorded, he again met Paine, but in October 1802 he returned to London. Success eluded him and in 1807 he was forced to sell a new collection of books and pictures. He died in poverty on 23rd. March 1809, the same year as Paine.

His life had been overshadowed by personal tragedies. The first two of his three wives died young, and in 1789, the year which should have been a beacon for all lovers of liberty and equality, his sixteen-year-old eldest son, on some slight family altercation, had run away with £40 and tried to sail on a vessel to America. His anxious father, ready to forgive all, had found the ship through police efforts, but as he was descending to the cabin to fetch his son, the boy threatened to shoot himself if taken. Believing, as most parents would, this was merely adolescent histrionics, Holcroft had continued to descend, only to hear his son fire the pistol. When he reached him the boy was dead. This tragedy shattered his life, and for a year he scarcely went out of doors.

Francis Place, years later on the death of James Stuart Mill, wrote: 'He was all the time as much of a bright reasoning man as ever he was, reconciled to his fate, brave and calm to an extent which I never before witnessed, except in another old friend, Thomas Holcroft, the day before and the day of his death'. Holcroft, like Sheridan, had known poverty, and like Sheridan at the end he returned to it. Neither man forgot that it is the poor that must help the poor. As Holcroft's little Song of Gaffer-Gray has it:

'The poor man alone,
When he hears the poor moan,
Of his morsel a morsel will give,
Well-a-day.'

It was a philosophy Paibe, too, understood.

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1. Holcroft, Thomas. Life and Memoirs. Edited by E. Colby. 1925.
2. Bingham, Madeleine. Sheridan. The Track of a Comet. Allen & Unwin, 1972.
3. Rae, W.F. Wilkes, Sheridan, Fox: The Opposition Under George the Third. 1874.
4. Ibid.
5. Brown, P.A. The French Revolution in English History. 1918 (republished by Cass, 1965).
6. Burdett, a distinguished radical Member of Parliament, four years later, in 1802, joined Rickman in seeing off Paine to America at Le Havre.
7. Dr. Gilbert Wakefield, a classical scholar, had published a pamphlet replying to one by the bishop of Llandaff on the French Revolution. He was sentenced to imprisonment in the common goal of Dorchester for two years, and died fourteen weeks after his liberation. Llandaff, who also crossed swords with Paine, had tried in vain to prevent Wakefield's being prosecuted, 'thinking the liberty of the press to be the palladium of the Constitution' (Rae. Wilkes, Sheridan, Fox).
8. Aldridge, A.O. Man of Reason. The Life of Thomas Paine. Cresset, 1959. It would be interesting to know if he lodged again with Bonneville, with whom Paine was then living

Thomas Paine Society / Shaw Society

Joint Meeting

'THOMAS PAINE AND EARLY
RADICAL REFORM'

SPEAKER -

Audrey Williamson

MARCH 22nd. 7-00 p.m.

St. Pancras Library Hall,
100 Euston Road,
London, N.W.1.

Admission Free

FORGOTTEN PAGES OF ENGLISH POETRY.The Poetry of the Corresponding Societies.by A. Nikilyukin.

The popular poetry created in England during the period of the industrial revolution has, up till now, been not only not studied, but not even collected. Folklorists and students of English literature alike have forgotten its existence. Bourgeois scholars who devote special research to minor problems of the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries pass over in silence the existence of the poetry in the popular newspapers and journals, and also in the numerous pamphlets and broadsheets issued during the widespread democratic movement of the end of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth.

The authors of most of the songs, satires, epigrams and other popular verse are unknown. Some of the songs which persisted among the people, acquiring numerous variants, have become folk songs. Popular poetry stands on the line dividing literature from folklore. It played an important role in the social struggles of the period and exerted a definite influence on the revolutionary romantic poetry of Shelley and Byron and is today part of the literary heritage of the past.

A major contribution to the study of English literature has been made by the collection of articles "From the History of Democratic Literature in England from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century", edited by M. P. Alexev and published in 1955 (Russian publication. ed.). O. Kovainitskaya, in an article in the collection written on the basis of new material discovered by her in Leningrad libraries, analyses many forgotten forms of English satire at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.

The present article is written on the basis of the very rich collection of English democratic periodicals and broadsheets of this period preserved in the library of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. This new material has hitherto been unknown to historians of English literature both in our country and in England itself.

English popular poetry of the period of the industrial revolution shows a clear division into two periods: the first embraces the popular poetry of the Corresponding Societies of the end of the eighteenth century, and the second the popular poetry of the tens and twenties of the nineteenth century.

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The beginning of the English working-class movement goes back to the nineties of the eighteenth century, a period when for the first time in history there appeared political societies created by the workers and artisans themselves - the Corresponding Societies. The history of the English working-class movement during the period of the French Revolution has for a long time been subjected to falsification by bourgeois historians. Study of this early period of the working-class movement in England has made it possible to present in an historically concrete manner the development of the poetry of the Corresponding Societies, as a reflection of the English workers' struggle for their rights.

Popular poetry is found in the periodicals published by the leading figures of the Corresponding Societies in London and the provinces - Thomas Spence, John Thelwall, James Montgomery and others. The verses which appear in their journals - Pig's Meat (1793-95), Politics for the People (1793-95) - comprise the central core of all the popular democratic poetry of England of the nineties of the eighteenth century, and are remarkable for their very pronounced political trend.

The poetry of the Corresponding Societies was influenced to some extent by old folk songs and the songs of the workers' trade unions. Popular poetry was also affected by the many-sided influence of the literature of enlightenment, which was widely publicised in the newspapers and journals of the Corresponding Societies. Excerpts from the literature of the age of enlightenment - both English and French - and references to it occur in literally every one of their publications. The publicist literature of the English revolution - Milton's poetry, Swift's pamphlets, excerpts from Harrington's Oceana and from the works of Paine, Godwin, Priestley, Price, Fielding, Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu - was constantly being printed, especially in Pig's Meat. The majority of the verses and articles were anonymous, or were written under pseudonyms, since any one of them could have become the object of legal proceedings, which happened in fact on more than one occasion. As a result of one of Thelwall's more "daring" articles printed in No. 8 of Spence's Politics for the People the editor was taken to court. But Spence used such occurrences to popularise the struggle for freedom of the press and still further.

The poetry and publicist literature of the Corresponding Societies reached its peak during the years when the revolutionary mood of the people was on the upsurge (1793-95). The basic themes of this democratic literature were the wretched condition of the mass of the people and exposure of the ruling class; the revolution and the people militant; praise of the American and French revolutions; a vision of the future; the events of the democratic movement; and the image of the fighter for the people's rights.

The most frequent theme was exposure of the ruling classes and of the whole state machine of parliamentary monarchy from a republican standpoint. The poets wrote of the rightless condition of the popular

masses in England at the end of the eighteenth century, especially of the urban proletariat. Here already we see the full variety of the genres of this literature: the solemn ode and the little satirical song of the tune of 'Malbrook', the parody of the litany and the short catechism for democrats, the verse epistle characteristic of the eighteenth century, the satirical fable in the spirit of John Gay, the biting epigram and the topical impromptu. Satire is particularly characteristic of the verse of this cycle. Satirical portraits of the despotic monarchy, of the merciless landlord driving the peasant from the land, of the venal parliamentarian, judge or priest, constantly recur. One of the finest examples is the 'New Vicar of Bray'. The poet ridiculed political trimming and venality, and in a new and up-to-date version of the old song created a biting satire on the clergy and, in general, on all the lackeys of English reaction. For the new Vicar of Bray was ready even to make friends with foreign invaders: the very thought of English democrats filled him with dread:

When London corresponding Folks
 Set up the Rights of Man,
 My anger glow'd like red-hot cawks (a)
 Against the desp'rate plan.
 For help then trembling P-----t apply'd
 Lest hanged he should be,
 And I stepped forth, and boldly cried,
 Sirs, wha wants me ? (b)

While drawing a picture of the ruin of the people, the poetry of the Corresponding Societies was not confined to complaints about their hard lot and to anti-militarist declarations. High civic feeling led the poet to turn from exposure to revolutionary protest, to the image of the people militant.

There were two wings among the democrats, differing in their view of the way to transform society. The journals of Spence and Thelwall, although not always consistent, took up a revolutionary standpoint on the question of methods of struggle. The group around Francis Place and William Godwin advocated peaceful 'petitioning' as against revolutionary agitation. Most of the popular poetry which has come down to us reflects the former point of view. In a number of poems written at the end of 1793 and the beginning of 1794 there appears a direct call to rebellion. Only the guillotine can cleanse the whole world of oppressors. A parody on the national anthem, performed at one of the theatrical shows organised by the Corresponding Societies, ended with the glorification of the guillotine:

Long live great guillotine,
 Who shaves the Head so clean
 Of Queen or King:

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- (a) A Scots word signifying red-hot embers. (Note by Editor of Politics for the People).
 (b) Politics for the People. Part 11. No. 10.

Whose power is so great,
That ev'ry Tool of State
Dreadeth his mighty weight.

Wonderful Thing !!! (a)

The guillotine is the symbol of the approaching vengeance of the people. No wonder the reactionary parodies of The Anti-Jacobin attempted at the end of the nineties to blacken this image of democratic poetry, representing it as incitement of the rabble to bloody debauchery. We must also include in the popular poetry of the Corresponding Societies the revolutionary song with the chorus "Come rouse to arms !" which was sent from the provinces to Thomas Hardy, secretary of the London Corresponding Society, and which was found among his papers at the time of his arrest. In an amended version this song is still attributed to Burns ("Why should we idly waste our prime...") (b). Burns's work in the nineties was closely linked to the democratic upsurge in the country. Such political songs as "The Tree of Liberty" and "A man's a man for a' that" prove ^{that} Burns, in essence, shared the views of the Corresponding Societies and spoke out in passionate defence of democratic principles. It is no accident that it was precisely the radical-democratic press of the nineties that popularised his poetry, and that the popular verse of the beginning of the nineteenth century contained an extensive group of Scottish songs and verses, using Burns's rhythms, melodies and peculiarities of style down to direct borrowing of the poetic structure of Burns's poetry.

The song was the most 'plebian' genre of this type of poetry; it made possible a swift and instant response to all the events of the day.

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- (a) A broadsheet of 1793 - "A Cure for National Grievances. Citizen Guillotine. A New Shaving Machine".
- (b) In the text of the song published in the complete works of Burns, two verses are omitted, the second and fourth, which expose the legalised robbery of the people in England, and in which the anonymous poet calls for the cleansing of the Augean stables of the English state:

The starving wretch who steals for bread
But seldom meets compassion,
And shall a crown preserve the head,
Of him who robs a nation ?
Such partial laws we all despise:
See Gallia's bright example:
The glorious sight before our eyes,
We'll on every tyrant trample.

Chorus: Come rouse in arms, etc.,
Our Juries are a venal pack,
See Justice topsy-turvy;
On Freedom's cause they've turned a back,
Of Englishmen unworthy;
The glorious work but once begun,
We'll cleanse the Augean stables:
A moment lost, and we're undone,
Come strike while we are able.

Chorus: Come rouse in arms, etc.,

Another constant theme of civic poetry was the glorification of the French and American revolutions, linked to the general theme of revolution and the people. If the themes of revolutionary retribution were distinguishing features of the poetry of the Corresponding Societies, then praise of the great French Revolution was characteristic of all English democratic literature. The Corresponding Societies undertook the defence of the basic principles of the French Jacobins and welcomed the Jacobin terror. The English democrats, however, had their own aims in the struggle, their own programme, reflecting the strength and weakness of the English democratic movement. All attempts at representing the English democrats as mere imitators of the French stem from the bourgeois historians' hoary but still practised endeavour to falsify the history of the democratic movement by explaining it away as a phenomenon not at all typical of England and due to foreign influence.

As an example of revolutionary poetry we may mention the "Patriotic Song" published in the democratic newspaper SHEFFIELD REGISTER by the young Corresponding Society poet James Montgomery. For publishing the poem, which exposes foreign intervention against revolutionary France, Montgomery was imprisoned. The court objected in particular to those words of the song which ^{declared} that the fate of European freedom depended on the victory of the French Revolution

The democrats of the end of the eighteenth century conceived the future as a utopian realm of liberty. Typical of this point of view is Tom Paine's "Tree of Liberty", written during his participation in the American Revolution but popular in the Corresponding Societies and later in the nineteenth century. A more complete vision of the future freedom is expressed in the song "The Triumph of Liberty, or the Rights of Man", sung to the tune of "Hearts of Oak". The chorus sounds a note of firm confidence in the final victory of the people; the poet vows that he will go on fighting until oppression has been driven from the land (a).

Revolutionary protest and songs of the future realm of freedom frequently appear in the poetry of the Corresponding Societies in a religious form. The true character of this religiosity, which had nothing in common with the official English Church, becomes clear when we consider the popular parodies on church litanies printed in Spence's papers. There is no doubt about the freethinking, enlightened tendencies of the anti-clerical song-parodies. In contrast to parodies of the biblical style, we also find elements of a new style taking shape in the songs. Comic over-exaggeration of the biblical style produced a satirical style of its own which in the nineteenth century more than once attracted the democratic-poet-satirist William Hone and many Chartist poets.

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- (a) LOOSE MEAT FOR PIGS - the poetical supplement to the PIG'S MEAT, published in the form of broadsheets which are the rarest editions of the popular press in England.

An important place in the poetry of the Corresponding Societies is occupied by songs which paint a picture of the fighting democrat and the events of the democratic movement. In them we find a reflection of the people's sympathy for the courageous fighter who, for the sake of the people's cause, suffered imprisonment, penal servitude and death. There was a particularly strong reaction to the legal proceedings against the leaders of the London Corresponding Society. The names of Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, John Thelwall and the playwright Thomas Holcroft became symbols of the struggle for democratic ideals. The image of the democrat appears in relation to concrete events in the struggles of the Corresponding Societies. Side by side with this there are attempts to create a more generalised image of the fighter-democrat and the poet-democrat.

The poetry of the Corresponding Societies is a literary trend distinguished by common ideological and artistic peculiarities. Having adapted the ideals of Reason, Light and Liberty, it lends them a democratic character which is most consistent for the eighteenth century. Apart from this, it represents a point transition in English literature from instructive realism to revolutionary romanticism. Its exposure of the existing political and social system can be classed as enlightened realism, while its comprehension of contemporary cataclysms and the prospects of their outcome is in the spirit of revolutionary romanticism. In this respect the poetry of the Corresponding Societies is close to the romantic work of William Blake, whose rebellious fantasy is interwoven with social exposure.

The basic genres of Corresponding Society poetry are the political appeal in song, the solemn ode or hymn, the political fable, the topical satire and the epigram. The publicist style of popular poetry also determined the form of the images: we get frequent personifications of social and political conceptions (Freedom, Oppression, Truth, Falsehood, Peace, Destruction, and so on). Typical of the songs is their mixture of the old with the new, of traditional literary forms and the living language of the people. In the odes and epistles the style is close to the literary, rationalist language of classical poetry; in the songs and epigrams one often meets simple colloquial language close in spirit to folksong and satirical couplets. Folksong - its rhythm and form - had a very direct influence on the democratic poetry of the masses.

One of the major poets and publicists of the Corresponding Societies was the fiery orator John Thelwall (1764-1834). Thelwall began writing poetry during the 1780's, when his verse was strongly influenced by the style of the Gothic novels. This early poetry as yet lacked revolutionary feeling. In 1793 Thelwall joined the London Corresponding Society, and his poetry developed a militant political flavour. The best collection of his poems - POLITICAL SONGS (1794) - is an outstanding example of the kind of poetry we are studying. They are full of original revolutionary feeling, though typical of the age of enlightenment: even here we find the contradiction between the call to decisive action and the assertion that the writer's pen is capable of transforming the world,

which is a peculiarity of the whole ideology of the Corresponding Societies. Thelwall draws a picture of the appropriation of the country's wealth by the ruling circles, and turns to the oppressors with a grim warning:

But cease ye fleeting Senators
Your country to undo-
Or know we British San Culottes
Hereafter may fleece you,
For well we know if tamely thus
We yield our wool like drones
Ye will not only fleece our backs,
By God you'll pick our bones. (a)

Many of Thelwall's songs and verses were first published in his TRIBUNE which became the focal point of the literary struggle of the Corresponding Societies after the political trials of 1794.

Paine's RIGHTS OF MAN and Godwin's POLITICAL JUSTICE had a tremendous influence on Thelwall's outlook and on the whole ideology of the Corresponding Societies. Thelwall owed his understanding of how the character of man was determined by the world around him entirely to Godwin. From it Thelwall drew the revolutionary conclusion that it was necessary to change the social conditions of life, thus differing sharply from Godwin. While popularising POLITICAL JUSTICE in his lectures, Thelwall at the same time pointed out its shortcomings, among which he numbered first and foremost its advocacy of passivity. Thelwall's political lectures, in which he proclaimed the necessity of Universal Suffrage and reform of Parliament, Godwin considered dangerous and incitement to open rebellion. It is not surprising then that after 1794 Godwin left the London Corresponding Society, because he saw in it a dangerous similarity to the French Jacobins. Even then, however, Thelwall continued to defend the more democratic ideas of POLITICAL JUSTICE (for example, the critique of private property) from attempts by reactionaries to blacken this outstanding thinker.

The poet, publisher and publicist James Montgomery (1771-1854) took an active part in the social and political struggles in the provinces and became one of the leading members of the Sheffield Corresponding Society. In a hymn written for Sheffield democrats, Montgomery called upon them to break their fetters and free themselves from the oppression of despotism. The paper which he edited, IRIS, was in fact the organ of the Sheffield Corresponding Society. Montgomery was twice imprisoned because of the verse and articles printed in it. It was while in prison that he wrote his most significant poetry of the nineties - the verses which make up the collection PRISON AMUSEMENTS. In one of the finest poems of this collection, the satirical "Monologue of a Wagtail", he ridiculed the haughty gentry who lived on the people's labour, and parodied the idealist philosophising of the aristocracy. In the satirical poems of the collection we can clearly discern the traditional social exposure of the literature of enlightenment, which in Montgomery

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(a) TRIBUNE, No.8. May 2nd. 1795.

is blended with elements of revolutionary romanticism in a series of his pantheistic poems, close in many respects to Shelley's cosmic lyrics. His dream of mankind's bright future is embodied in allegorical images of the forces of nature, "light" and "darkness", "good" and "evil".

The traditions of the political songs and satires of the Corresponding Societies were continued in the popular poetry of the beginning of the nineteenth century. Among the new generation of English democratic poets there were many veterans of the struggle for the rights of the people. Montgomery, whose most significant creative period was the first decade of the nineteenth century, depicted the national liberation struggle of the Swiss people against the Napoleonic invaders in his poem "The Wanderer of Switzerland" (1806). Anticipating the revolutionary romantics, Montgomery developed this theme in a militant democratic manner. His poem soon became an object of conflict between the two camps of English literature. The EDINBURGH REVIEW published a biting article comparing it with the crude farce of vulgar plays. Byron, who prized "The Wanderer of Switzerland" highly, spoke out in defence of the freedom-loving poetry of the "Bard of Sheffield", contrasting Montgomery's poem with the mystic ballads of the Lake poets (a).

Another important poem by Montgomery, "The West Indies" (1809), was devoted to exposure of the English colonial system. The new element Montgomery introduced into English abolitionist literature was his portrayal of the slaves in revolt, driving a road to freedom and happiness through revolution. The heroic figure of the negro fighter, leading the coming revolt of all African peoples, occupied a central place in the poem and was close in spirit to the romantic hero of Byron's poems. Romantic images of the risen people and of the young rebel leader, however, exist side by side with lifeless allegories. The passionate publicist monologue is interwoven with a poetic didacticism drawn from experience of the descriptive didactic poetry of the age of enlightenment.

The ideological side of the poem is no less contradictory. The poet believed that Africa would throw off the yoke of the European colonisers, and dreamed of a happy future for the people of Africa and the whole world. However, he regarded a flowering of science and art and spreading of enlightenment the prerequisites for this.

The struggle over the poetry and publicist activities of the Corresponding Societies sharpened at the end of the 1790's in

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(a) Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" was not the only defence of democratic literature. A few years earlier Thelwall had published his "Reply to the Calumnies, Misrepresentations and Literary Forgeries contained in the anonymous observations on his Letter to the Editor of the EDINBURGH REVIEW" (1809), in which he protested angrily against the dominant position in literature held by the reactionary Edinburgh critics.

connection with the slanderous parodies of The Anti-Jacobin. The radical democratic paper BLACK DWARF wrote in 1823 of how reaction had feared the establishment of a direct link between the Corresponding Societies and the people. Right up to the period of Chartism their poetry remained a real weapon in the hands of democrats and evoked the fury of reaction.

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BOOK REVIEW

RADICALS, REFORMERS AND SOCIALISTS from the Fabian Biographical Series. Edited by Michael Katanka with an introduction by Dame Margaret Cole. Charles Knight & Co., £3.80.

IT WOULD BE POINTLESS to attempt to review the content matter of these pamphlets here reprinted, for they have been in circulation far too long to require critical comment. It is, though, a pity that the editor could not have added some notes correcting some of the more obvious errors which appear in certain of the biographies such as, for example, that Kier Hardie opposed the 1914-18 War, whereas in fact he spoke at army recruitment meetings, details of which have appeared recently in the Socialist Standard.

This book reprints the pamphlets on Hardie, Paine, Burns (John not Robert), Lovett, Place, Owen and the Webbs, and so has particular value to students of Paine. It is, though, a great pity that the essays on Carlyle and Cobbett could not have been included, perhaps instead of those on Hardie and the Webbs, for they complement that on Paine and would have given this volume more of a historical balance.

Margaret Cole, current President of the Fabian Society and author of the extremely dull and long-winded essay on those greatly over-rated figures Sydney and Beatrice Webb which is reprinted in this volume, contributes an introductory essay mainly concerned with the story behind the publication of the original series. The editor presumably is responsible for the bibliographies, and here, at least in the case of Paine, we discover some very slipshod work indeed. Only one specific Paine title is given, the Penguin edition of Rights of Man, incorrectly given as The Rights of Man. No mention is made of the fact that the four volume Conway edition of Paine's Works is available only in an expensive German reprint and is not actually a 'complete collection'. Mention is made of the Foner edited Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, which is by far and away the best collection, but not of the fact that it was reprinted in 1969 and is still in print. It is absurd to describe, as the editor does, the Howard Fast edition of The Selected Work (not Works) of Tom Paine and Sydney Hook's The Essential Thomas Paine as containing 'all the important works' of Paine as the former omits not only the highly important Agrarian Justice but all Part 2 of The Age of Reason, while the latter omits The Age of Reason completely!

To damn by implication early biographies of Paine such as those of Rickman, Sherwin and Vale is to display ignorance of their contents, but the mind fairly boggles when we are informed quite blandly that Fast's scurrilous diatribe on Paine, Citizen Tom Paine (even the abbreviated 'Tom' is really an insult) 'is also of interest'. We are not told for what and so I suggest the trash can.

I can only hope the other bibliographies were drawn up with more care, but space prohibits examination. It is also a pity that no portraits appear, as the original pamphlets carried one on their covers. One also thinks it sad that the book appeared before the truly splendid new biography of Paine by Audrey Williamson was published. This is essential reading for all students of Paine and his ideas and influence. Reservations apart, however, this is a very welcome book and I look forward to seeing the remaining Fabian biographies in print in due course.

R.W.Morrell.