

lovers of mankind are affected." In his celebrated *Letter to the Abbé Raynal*, published in 1782, Paine had predicted that the American Revolution would influence England and France until "every corner of the mind is swept of its cobwebs, poison and dust, and made fit for the reception of generous happiness."

Paine spent four months in France at the invitation of Lafayette and Condorcet. He gave advice on the formation of a constitution, aided in drawing up the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and witnessed the uprisings to overthrow despotism and feudal privileges. His heart "leaped with joy" when he received from Lafayette the key of the Bastille for presentation to Washington. "That the principles of America opened the Bastille," he wrote in his letter forwarding the key, "is not to be doubted, and therefore the Key comes to the right place."

Even when he returned to England, Paine's mind was still riveted on events across the channel. He continued to send Lafayette suggestions to be incorporated in the new government, and reported on reactions in England to developments in France. "Here is a courtly and an aristocratical hatred against the principles of the French Revolution . . .," he wrote to William Short, American representative in France, from London early in June, 1790.¹⁴

In the fall of 1790 Paine returned to Paris where he mingled again with Brissot, Condorcet, Lafayette and other leaders of the Revolution. A business crisis sent him back again to England. In November he began work on his greatest pamphlet, *The Rights of Man*, in answer to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* which appeared on November 1, 1790.

Burke's speech "On Reconciliation with America" in 1775 had aroused Paine's admiration for the man who was considered America's greatest English friend. His personal contacts with Burke in England after the American Revolution increased this feeling, and he considered him "a friend to mankind." But he was both terribly shocked and speedily disillusioned after he read Burke's vicious denunciation of the French Revolution in his parliamentary speech on February 9, 1790. Soon after this Paine saw an advertisement of the forthcoming publication of

¹⁴ Paine to William Short June 1, 1790, Short Papers, Library of Congress. See also Harold W. Lardin, editor, "Some Letters of Thomas Paine and William Short on the Nootka Sound Crisis," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. XIII, September, 1941, pp. 357-374.