

Burke's pamphlet, and promised his friends in France that whenever it appeared he would answer it.<sup>15</sup>

Paine finished the pamphlet in February, 1791, and turned it over to a friend, Johnson, to have it published. After a few copies were issued, this publisher became frightened. Paine then gave the pamphlet to a committee consisting of William Godwin, Thomas Holcroft, and Thomas Hollis, and left for France. From Paris he forwarded a preface for the English edition, and the work appeared on March 13, 1791. The pamphlet sold for three shillings, the same price as Burke's *Reflections*, and it was believed in Tory circles that this expensive format would give it a limited circulation.

The pamphlet immediately gained a wide circulation. Within a few weeks the book sold fifty thousand copies, and on April 5th, Sir Samuel Romilly wrote to a friend in France that "in the course of a fortnight it has gone through three editions; and, what I own has a good deal surprised me, has made converts of many persons who were before enemies to the revolution." The Society for Constitutional Information and other popular societies in England, to whose support Paine gave the large income from the sale, distributed the book all over the British Isles. Soon Englishmen were quoting passages from the *Rights of Man* with as much fervor as Americans had once recited sections from *Common Sense*. Workers, small farmers and liberal members of the middle and upper class used Paine's words to deny Burke's contention of the right of the Parliament of 1688 to bind posterity forever to their settlement, to defend the French Revolution, and many even quoted him to urge Englishmen to follow the example set by their brothers across the channel.

While popular societies in England sang Paine's praises, toasted his name and adopted resolutions thanking him for his "most masterly book," the author himself was busy in France fighting for Republicanism. Louis XVI had been intercepted in his flight to join the royalist émigrés and had been brought back to Paris. On July 1, 1791, Paine and Achille Duchâtelet placarded the streets of Paris with a manifesto

<sup>15</sup> Burke's impassioned *Reflections on the French Revolution* also called forth replies from writers like Mary Wollstonecraft, James Mackintosh, Joel Barlow and William Godwin. All of them like Paine argued that governmental institutions were not sacred and unalterable. For a discussion of these booklets, see Walter P. Hall, *British Radicalism, 1791-97*, New York, 1912 and C. H. Lockett, *The Relations of French and English Society, 1763-1793*, London, 1920. See also Frederick Sheldon, "Thomas Paine in England and France," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. IV, December, 1859, pp. 690-709.