

feat the Jeffersonians. Hence the Federalist press began a campaign of vilification that probably has no equal in our history. As one student has put it, "the reactionary press exhausted the resources of the dictionary to express the unutterable, only to sink back at last with impotent rage." These newspapers called Paine "the scavenger of faction," "lilly-livered sinical rogue," "loathsome reptile," "demi-human archbeast," "an object of disgust, of abhorrence, of absolute loathing to every decent man except the President of the United States." "What! invite to the United States that lying, drunken, brutal infidel," cried the *New England Palladium* of Boston, "who rejoices in the opportunity of basking and wallowing in the confusion, devastation, bloodshed, rapine and murder, in which his soul delights?" The Philadelphia *Portfolio* urged "every honest and insulted man of dignity . . . to shake off the very dust of his feet and to abandon America" the moment "the loathsome Thomas Paine" started to express his views in this country.<sup>28</sup>

Even Paine's former friends in America began to avoid him. Samuel Adams broke off his friendship and Benjamin Rush refused to have anything to do with him, both giving as their reason that the principles set forth in *The Age of Reason* were too "offensive." For a time Paine even thought that Jefferson had turned against him. When the President postponed their meeting after his arrival in Washington, Paine wrote to Jefferson asking him to return his models. He had hoped, he added, to discuss his scientific plans with the President: "But you have not only shown no disposition towards it, but have, in some measure, by a sort of shyness, as if you stood in fear of federal observation, precluded it. I am not the only one, who makes observations of this kind."

Jefferson replied immediately assuring Paine that he was mistaken and only the fact that he had been busy had prevented their meeting. Praising his models, the President went on: "You have certainly misunderstood what you deem shyness. Of that I have not a thought towards you, but on the contrary have openly maintained in conversation the duty of showing our respect to you and of defying federal calumny in this as in other cases by doing what is Right. As to fearing it, if I ever

<sup>28</sup> For interesting accounts of Paine's return to the United States, see G. Adolph Koch, *Republican Religion*, New York, 1933, pp. 130-146; Frederick Sheldon, "Thomas Paine's Second Appearance in the United States," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. IV, July, 1859, pp. 1-17, and Dixon Wecter, "Hero in Reverse," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, vol. XVIII, Spring, 1942, pp. 243-259.