

## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

THOMAS PAINE'S writings have been before the world for the past hundred years, and as long as men love liberty and earnest, straightforward speech, so long will the words of Thomas Paine be read.

The task of editing this issue of the *Rights of Man* has not been exactly a light one, for on comparing the modern editions with one of 1791 I found them very faulty; words are left out altogether, wrong words substituted for right, whole paragraphs (amounting in all to several pages) omitted, and even a sentence interpolated. The interpolated sentence was evidently originally intended as a footnote, but in printing it became carried into the text, where, as an utterance of the year 1791, it is singularly out of place. On comparing some of the early editions I found that these also varied a little, the variations in some cases being due to Paine's own corrections. In order to present the best reading possible, I have consulted the 1st edition (Johnson's, 1791), the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, and 8th (Jordan's, 1791 and 1792), Symonds' cheap edition (1792)—which I am informed by M. D. Conway was carefully revised by Paine himself—a Dublin edition (P. Byrne, 1791), the 2nd French edition (Buisson, 1793), Carlile's (1819), a New York edition (1830), a Glasgow edition (1833), Cousins's (1837), Edward Truelove's, James Watson's edition (published by himself, Holyoake & Co., and Frederick Farrah), the Freethought Publishing Company's (1883), J. M. Wheeler's (1891), and M. D. Conway's (1894). Fourteen of these I have compared word for word, and the remainder I have looked through most carefully. The earliest in which I found verbal alterations (probably for the most part due to careless press reading) was the Watson edition; those which followed

(I do not include Mr. Truelove's, which is undated, nor Mr. Conway's) contain not only the errors of the Watson edition, but variations peculiar to themselves, of which the most remarkable is the omission of most of the notes and a number of paragraphs from the text. I have noted in their places the more important variations, but I began to find the words "This paragraph [or "this note"] omitted from the modern editions" become very irritating to the eye, and therefore after and including p. 102 all such omissions are simply marked with an asterisk.

The present issue is based upon the Johnson, Jordan, and Symonds editions. I have given due regard to Paine's own corrections, but in those cases where the strength of the passage seemed rather to lose than to gain by the alteration I have adhered to the original text, following the author's inspiration rather than his reflection. The original orthography, the characteristic punctuation, and the use or absence of capital letters, is restored in order to put the *Rights of Man* before its readers to-day as nearly as possible as it appeared in 1791. The construction of sentences could not be modernized without destroying the power of the book, and eighteenth-century construction wedded to nineteenth-century orthography did not make a harmonious whole. By restoring the original spelling and the original phrasing the general effect is altogether strengthened, and the reader is brought more closely in touch with the times in which the book was written.

In Part II. I have indicated all the passages included in the Attorney-General's Information upon which Paine was tried in 1792. This, as far as I am aware, has never been done in any previous edition.

I am indebted to John M. Robertson and others for the loan of rare editions of the *Rights of Man*.

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