JUNIUS, CASCA, COMMON SENSE, AND THOMAS PAINE.

A long foot-note in Mr. Conway's "Life of Thomas Paine" concerning myself and the Junius question requires my notice. Every point of argument in the note has been repeatedly refuted and now I proceed to demolish them once more. He says:

> Mr. W. H. Burr maintains that Paine wrote in the English *Crisis* (1775) under the name of "Casca." As Casca's articles bear intrinsic evidence of being written in London, the theory supposes Paine to have visited England in that year. But besides the facts that Rush had an interview with Paine near the middle of March, and Franklin in October, the accounts of Aitkin, preserved in Philadelphia, show payments to Paine in May, July, and August, 1775. As Mr. Burr's further theory, that Paine wrote the letters of Junius, rests largely on the identification with Casca, it might be left to fall with disproof of the latter.

Answer: Paine was undoubtedly in Philadelphia in March, and had an interview with Dr. Rush; but there is no proof that he met Franklin in October. What Paine said in *Crisis*, No. III, is this: "In October, 1775, Dr. Franklin *proposed* giving me such materials as were in his hands toward completing a history of the present transactions." That pro-

posal I claim was not made at an "interview." The two men were in continual correspondence, most of the time being separated by the ocean. On March 4, 1775, Paine wrote from Philadelphia to Franklin in London as follows:

> Your countenancing me has obtained for me many friends and much reputation, fcr which please accept my sincere thanks. I have been applied to by several gentlemen to instruct their sons on very advantageous terms to myself, and a printer and bookseller, a man of reputation and property, Robert Aitkin, has lately attempted a magazine, but having little or no turn that way himself, he has applied to me for assistance. He had not above six hundred subscribers when I first assisted him. We now have upward of fifteen hundred and daily increasing. I have not entered into terms with him. This is only the second number. The first I was not concerned in.

The first number of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* was January. Paine tells Franklin that he was not concerned in that. And yet in the first number there appeared several anonymous contributions which were undoubtedly written by Paine—to wit: one on surveying, signed "P," another on a new electric machine, signed "Atlanticus," a third on the utility of magazines, without signature; and it is supposed that he may have written a brief "Introduction to the *Pennsylvania Magazine*," dated January 24th.

The February number, which Paine says he *was* concerned in, has three articles believed to have been written by him, one signed "Atlanticus," another "Esop," and a third an unsigned poem.

The March number has three articles signed "Atlanticus," two of them being poems.

In the April number I find but one probable contribution by Paine, namely "Cupid and Hymen," by "Esop."

During all the rest of the year I discover only two contributions by Paine, both poems, by "Atlanticus," and both in the July number.

None of these anonymous contributions after the March number required the presence of the writer in Philadelphia. And the same is true of any other communication that Mr. Conway or anyone else can identify as the production of Paine.

The theory that Paine was the paid editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* is untenable for the following reasons:

1. The work of editing was next to nothing, the only article of an editorial nature being a brief introduction to the first number, which Paine says he was not concerned in.

2. What, then, was the "assistance" he began to render after the first number? Was it not probably canvassing for subscribers? With that kind of assistance the number was increased more than nine hundred in one month. For that work Paine would be entitled to commission, even before entering into terms with Aitkin; and as late as March 4th, when he sends to Franklin the second number, and the time has come for printing the third, he has not yet entered into terms for the assistance he has begun to render.

3. The entries in Aitkin's account book of pay-

ments to Paine in May, July, and August do not prove that Paine was present to receive them.

4. That his contributions were gratuitous was in keeping with all his other literary performances, it being an unswerving principle with him to take no pay for and make no profit from his literary work.

5. Whatever engagement he may have made with Aitkin after March 4th, his sudden departure from this country before the middle of April was a thing he would strive to keep as secret as possible, and if, as was quite likely, Robert Aitkin was a Scotch tory, Paine would have had the strongest motive to hoodwink him with the understanding that he would soon return and attend to his work in person.

The identity of Casca with Paine was discovered by me in October, 1880, when I first saw an American reprint of the *Crisis* of 1775. Four days later, as I was examining Sherwin's "Life of Paine" in the Congressional Library, I came to a note concerning an edition of Paine's Political Works published in England in 1796 in which the first number of Paine's *Crisis* was a reprint of "A Crisis Extraordinary," signed "American C. S." (Common Sense, the first publication of which was in London, August 9, 1775, signed "Casca." The biographer Sherwin was puzzled, saying: "It could not have been written by Paine, and its insertion in the edition published by Eaton can only be attributed to the ignorance of the person who furnished him the copy."

But I was still more astonished to find penciled

on the margin of the same page this note: "It *is* by Paine, but does not belong to the *Crisis*."

That penciled note I soon discovered was made by Librarian Spofford. He had no doubt that Casca was Paine, though he had never thought of identifying either writer with Junius. This identification by the learned librarian of Congress, who was yet unwilling to believe that Paine was Junius, ought to have weight with those who rely more on authority than on their own judgment.

Paine's departure from America in March or April, 1775, I apprehend, was not to write articles for the (English) *Crisis*, but to procure saltpeter, gunpowder, and munitions of war for the impending revolution. In October, 1775, General Washington's army, near Boston, had not five rounds of powder, and dared not advance one step against General Howe. In December, Franklin sent a letter to M. Dumas, in France, by a Mr. Storey, inclosing £100 to defray expenses in procuring a shipment of small arms, ammunition, and saltpeter. Previously, Charles Biddle was sent to France to procure munitions of war, and in January, 1776, he returned with a cargo of saltpeter. Hence I infer that Paine, first of all, went on a like mission in March or April, 1775, and returned about the end of the year, having secured a supply of war materials, and ready to put to press his "Common Sense." And I now challenge the discovery of evidence that he was in America during the greater part of the year 1775.

Junius, in his "Dedication to the English Nation,"

said: "The remedy will soon be in your power. If Junius lives you shall often be reminded of it." Did he not fulfill that promise three years later, when, as "Casca," he fomented revolution in both England and America; and when again, from 1776 to 1782, as "Common Sense," he helped to achieve the independence of this country? All three writers were anonymous, all three did their literary work avowedly without pay or profit.

The internal evidence of the identity of Casca with Junius is even stronger than that of Paine with Junius. Their style was varied to suit the circumstances. Junius wielded a Damascus blade; Casca a butcher's cleaver; Common Sense a broadsword. There is no fact to be found incompatible with the identity of the three.

Another of Mr. Conway's objections to the Paine-Junius theory is as follows:

> During the period of Junius's Letters (Jan. 21, 1769, to Jan. 21, 1772) Paine was occupied with his laborious duties as exciseman at Lewes, and with the tobacco mill from which he vainly tried to extort a living for himself and wife, and her mother. Before that period there was no time at which Paine could have commanded the leisure or opportunities necessary to master the political and official details known to Junius.

Answer: For two years before the date of the first Junius letter, as now appears from his secret letter to ex-Premier Grenville, Oct. 20, 1768, the same writer, under various other signatures, had been agitating the public. The "Letters of Junius" aggregate about three hundred book pages; his

"Miscellaneous Letters" not so much. The period covered is more than five years. Only a few of the letters were elaborated and the average work was about one hundred and twenty pages a year.

Paine had nothing to do with the tobacco mill before 1770, or more likely 1771, when he married the daughter of the deceased tobacconist Ollive, and helped the widow and daughter carry on the business, which was presumably small.

His duties as exciseman did not occupy half his time, and from the time of his first discharge as exciseman at Alford in 1765 until he reëntered the service at Lewes in 1768 his only employment seems to have been as assistant teacher in London. And Paine himself says: "I seldom passed five minutes of my life, however circumstanced, in which I did not acquire some knowledge."

Though stationed at Lewes he spent much of his time in London. He passed the whole winter of 1772–1773, says Mr. Conway, trying to influence members of Parliament in favor of the cause of the excisemen. And in a letter to his superior officer, dated March 24, 1774, he says: "I was in London almost all last winter" (1773–1774). Furthermore, we have evidence of his being much of the time in London in 1769 and subsequently. In 1813, Mrs. Olivia Wilmot Serres attempted to prove that her pious uncle, Dr. Wilmot, was Junius. She says that in 1769 he frequently resided at the house of his brother-in-law Captain Payne, with whom an American named Fretland was on terms of intimacy. Fretland had concerns in the West Indies and fre-

quently sent to Dr. Wilmot various productions of that climate. Her uncle Wilmot had a servant named Middleton, and Captain Payne had a wife spoken of indifferently by the name of Olivia and Olive, suggestive of Miss Olive, who was married to Paine in 1771.

Now, the private letters of Junius to his publisher Woodfall, first published in 1812, disclosed to Mrs. Serres two names by which the printer was directed to address his unknown correspondent, to wit: "Mr. William Middleton" (Priv. Let. No. 3, July 15, 1769), and "Mr. John Fretley, at the same coffee-house, where it is absolutely impossible I should be known" (Nos. 3 and 27). This coincidence of names, together with some mysterious entries in her uncle's notebook in which the word "Ju—s" occurs several times, caused her to believe that Dr. Wilmot was Junius. But now the evidence points to Thomas Paine, the meagerness of whose biographies prior to his coming to America render the gaps more important than the facts. How long Paine was a privateersman we do not know; and the fact that he was an expert seaman and was called "commodore" implies that much of the unknown gaps in his life was spent on the ocean, whereby he may have acquired a "moderate independence," without which, says Junius in a private letter to Woodfall, "no man can be happy nor even honest." I myself have not the least doubt that such was Paine's condition from the time he quit the sea. Hence his ability to write without pay or profit.

Mr. Conway further argues that Paine could not have been Junius, because:

> He declares that he had no interest in politics, which he regarded as a species of "jockey-ship."

Answer: The "Political Works" of Paine, incomplete, make two large volumes; the "Theological," one small one. The "Letters of Junius" are political. But both writers were avowed non-partisans, and what Paine stigmatized as "jockey-ship" was partisan politics.

The next objection of Mr. Conway is as follows:

> How any one can read a page of Junius and then one of Paine, and suppose them from the same pen, appears to me inconceivable.

Answer: Which one of all the writers suspected to be Junius approaches him so nearly in style as Thomas Paine? Said Lord Brougham in 1839 or 1840, never dreaming that Paine was Junius: "His style was a model of terseness and force. In this respect he comes nearer to our own remarkable Junius, than any known writer in the English tongue." And Dr. Denslow in his "Modern Thinkers," 1880, speaking of Paine's letter to Washington, 1796, says: "It is so identical in style with portions of Junius that we cite parallel passages for comparison, though the unhesitating conviction that Paine wrote Junius will better result from the use of hundreds of passages than of two or three."

Did Mr. Conway expect to find in Paine's writings a literal repetition of the language of Junius,

who had promised, if he lived, to come again, and yet that his secret should die with him? In "Junius Unmasked," 1872, a multitude of passages from Junius and Paine are paralleled, to show similarity of style, sentiment, opinion, conduct, and character. These parallels number more than three hundred, and in the two or three instances where a difference in opinion appears, we have happily from Paine himself the proof of a change of views after 1772.

Twice only do I find any allusion by Paine to Junius. In Casca's "Epistle to Lord Mansfield," 1775, he uses the expression, "galling Junius;" and in an anonymous tract entitled "Prospects on the War," 1787, detected five years later to be by Paine, he speaks of "the brilliant pen of Junius," which "in the plenitude of its rage, might be said to give elegance to bitterness." "The generous rage of Junius" is an expression found in that writer's private note to his publisher, first brought to light in 1812.

And now Mr. Conway has discovered and published in his book a letter from Paine to an apostate friend in 1795, never intended for another's eye, in which scathing epistle "the generous rage of Junius" reappears "giving elegance to bitterness."

Lastly, to prove that Paine was not Junius, Mr. Conway says:

> The reader need only refer to the facts of his life before coming to America to acquit him of untruth in say-

ing that he had published nothing in England, and that the cause of America made him an author.

Answer: Did Junius publish his own letters? Woodfall and others who printed them never knew the author. And Junius says: "I did not expect more than the life of a newspaper." Nor did Paine himself publish "The Case of the Officers of Excise." This is admitted by Mr. Conway, who naively tells us that the printing of four thousand copies by William Lee of Lewes in 1772 was not a publication (!) because "it was a document submitted to Parliament but never sold." Furthermore, Mr. Conway says that "the song on Wolfe and other poetical pieces, though known to the Headstrong Club in Lewes, were first printed in Philadelphia." The fact is that Paine's Ode on General Wolfe was composed in 1759 at Sandwich, and was soon after published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* set to music, and became a popular song.

In regard to the cause of America making Paine an author, that cause crops out from first to last in the Junius letters, even in the earliest of the miscellaneous ones, and is the principal theme of Casca.

I have skipped and reserved for a finale Macaulay's summary of the facts discoverable concerning the personality of Junius, quoted by Mr. Conway. Only three of the five alleged facts need notice, to wit: That he was acquainted with the technical forms of the secretary of state's office; also with the business of the war office; and that he at-

tended the debates in the House of Lords and took notes of speeches.

Answer: Whatever Junius may have known of the business of the departments of government, it is a common error that he was so intimately associated or connected therewith as to be able to acquire much knowledge of state affairs. Junius in his seventh letter said, "I am a plain unlettered man," but nobody believed him. A little later, in a private letter to the printer, which was published by mistake, he speaks of his "rank and fortune," manifestly ironical. A year later he opened a secret correspondence with John Wilkes. From these letters, first published in 1812, it appears how difficult it was for Junius to get information. He says:

> I speak from a recess which no human curiosity can penetrate. No man writes under so many disadvantages as I do. I cannot consult the learned; I cannot directly ask the opinions of my acquaintance, and in the newspapers I am never assisted.

No wonder that the late James Parton, in gathering material for a life of Franklin and becoming familiar with the lives of the men whom Junius descanted upon, "discovered that he knew them not; that he was not within the circle of the well informed." Mr. Parton might have learned as much from the private letters of Junius to John Wilkes; and the fact is further confirmed by the more recent discovery of secret letters of Junius to ex-Premier Grenville, in one of which he says: "Until you are Minister, I must not permit myself to

think of the honor of being known to you;" and begs him "to make allowances for a man who writes absolutely without materials or instruction." This was three months before the signature Junius appeared. And when the Junius series was completed he wrote to Lord Chatham, "most secret," saying, "Retired and unknown, I live in the shade and have only a speculative ambition."

But now I hear the objector say: "How is it possible that the lowly exciseman of Lewes could have attended debates in Parliament?" I answer: We have his own word for it that he did. In *Crisis*, No. VII, "Common Sense" says:

> I remember the late Admiral Saunders declaring in the House of Commons, and that in the time of peace, that the city of Madrid laid in ashes was not a sufficient atonement for the Spaniards taking off the rudder of an English sloop-of-war.

Turn to Junius's private letter No. 29, dated Jan. 31, 1771, and you read:

> We hear that the ministry intend to move for opening both Houses of Parliament on Tuesday next, in the usual manner, being desirous that the nation should be exactly informed of their whole conduct in the business of Falkland island.

Again, in a postscript to same letter, written "next day:"

> We hear that the ministry intend to move that no gentleman may be refused admittance into either House on Tuesday next. . . . If they were to do otherwise it would raise and justify suspicions very disadvantageous to their own reputation and to the king's honor.

What was the cause of that tremendous agitation? It was "*the Spaniards taking off the rudder of an English sloop-of-war*" in Port Egmont, West *Falkland island*, between Keppel and *Saunders* islands.

Turn now to Junius's public letter No. 42, dated Jan. 30, 1771, and you will find the whole affair discussed in the same spirit that it is treated by "Common Sense" seven years later. The two passages are paralleled in "Junius Unmasked," and in reverting to the subject I have unexpectedly found in the private letter of Junius to his publisher strong presumptive evidence that on Tuesday, Feb. 5, 1771, Junius heard Admiral Saunders speak in the House of Commons the words quoted by Common Sense in *Crisis*, No. VII.

The affair at Port Egmont is further discussed by Junius in two letters signed "Vindex," a part of the first one being suppressed by the publisher as too violent; but the suppressed portion has recently been brought to light in manuscript. It reflects severely upon the king, characterizing his surrender of the rights and honor of the crown of England as "*magnitudo infamiæ*," and the king himself as a "stigmatized coward."

And here also I find that Woodfall apologized to "Vindex" for the suppression, directing his letter to "Mr. John Fretley" (Priv. Let. No. 33, Feb. 21, 1771, note by Woodfall).

The Spanish outrage was discussed by Junius under five or six other signatures, namely "Domitian," "Philo-Junius," "Vindex," *et al.*

The House of Lords had excluded the public, apparently in consequence of a ludicrous report in the *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 7, 1770, of Lord North's loose and droll style of oratory, by Domitian. (See Misc. Let. 79, 80, and 81, all by the same writer, who was Junius.)

Thanks to Mr. Conway for causing me to discover the important fact that on Feb. 5, 1771, the speech of Admiral Saunders in the House of Commons was listened to by Junius, who reappeared in America as "Common Sense." W. H. Burr.

Washington, D. C., Aug. 23, 1892.