

**JUNIUS, LORD CHATHAM: A BIOGRAPHY,
SETTING FORTH THE CONDITION OF ENGLISH
POLITICS PRECEDING AND CONTEMPORARY
WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY JUNIAN PERIOD,
AND SHOWING THAT THE GREATEST ORATOR
AND STATESMAN WAS ALSO THE GREATEST
EPISTOLARY WRITER OF HIS AGE**

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Junius, Lord Chatham: A Biography, Setting Forth the Condition of English Politics Preceding and Contemporary with the Revolutionary Junian Period, and Showing That the Greatest Orator and Statesman Was Also the Greatest Epistolary Writer of His Age by William Dove

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WILLIAM DOWE

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WAS ALSO THE GREATEST

Epistolary Writer of his Age.

BY

WILLIAM DOWE.

Search then the ruling passion; there alone
The wild are constant and the cunning known;
That clew once found unravels all the rest;
The prospect clears and Wharton stands confest.

POPE.

That terrible Cornet of Horse.

WALPOLE.

A trumpet of sedition.

GEORGE III.

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THIS ESSAY,

TOUCHING

THE MOST POPULAR ENGLISH WRITER OF A FORMER PERIOD,

Is Dedicated to

THE MOST POPULAR ENGLISH WRITER OF THE PRESENT,

CHARLES DICKENS,

By one repeatedly thankful to him for the pleasantest reading hours of his life—since the morning of *Ivanhoe*, and the *Bride of Lammermoor*—and a sincere admirer of the resolved and genial democrat, who, being the most famous and flattered author of his time, has always chosen to stand by the side of the people, laboring for and with them, and sympathizing with their wants, feelings and interests; and who now seems willing to advance a new claim to a more general applause, by the opinion that all his countrymen should learn the use of arms, and thus be enabled to stand erect, on a level with the people of other nations in the Old and New World.*

THE AUTHOR.

* See "Household Words," No. 319, p. 363.

PREFACE.

THE historic reader is struck—or should be—with the facts that Lord Chatham is represented as in some degree out of his senses—full of a certain perversity, secret, evasive, scowling, and implacable—during a portion of his career; and that the period of his strange, unexplained lunacy was the very period of the Junian epistles. In the earlier part of the *lustrum*, 1767–1772, the great baffled minister was doing something under a cloud, and behind a curtain; and Junius, at the same time, in all his fortitudes, girding at the king, lords, and commons of England. A remarkable coincidence; but not sufficiently remarked, we suspect, by those who meditate that Epistolary Sphinx of the last age.

The same reader has, probably, felt surprise that the orator, whose genius and audacity could raise the monotonous character of British eloquence to the old Greek level of the Agora—and the statesman, who, since the stronger times of the Wolseys and Burleighs, stands up alone to redeem the common run and fatal mediocrity of British statesmanship, should have such an indistinct and meagre

biography, and leave some of the best effects of his energetic life to the keeping of tradition; at a period, too, not beyond the memory of some men now living. This veiling of such a bust in the procession of the celebrities, suggests something, in the dispositions of the great man himself and in those of his compeers and countrymen, which does not show itself in a passing glance.

Along with these, there are two other striking considerations. The first is, the general appearance of dislike with which the great peers of that time—the Butes, Albemarles, Russels, Rockinghams, and others—allude to Lord Chatham, in their memoirs, or any letters having reference to that angry period; while their sons and successors continue to the present day the old impressions of aversion—an aversion which certainly seems too deeply rooted to have had its rise in the mere political feuds of the day. The next is, the curious anxiety of Lord Mahon—Chatham's descendant—and, along with him, Lord Brougham, Mr. Macaulay, and others, to make the world believe, against the most glaring contrary evidence, that the vehement orator and statesman was a poor hand at a letter, a feeble sycophant of George III., and, for the rest, a man of crotchets and oddities, which no one could rightly understand then, and which no one need try to understand any more.

Such considerations—calculated, perhaps, to excite certain doubts, and rouse curiosity—were those which first led, in this case, to the method of Lord Chatham's madness, and the conclusions shown in the following pages.

The writer has seen but one attempt to prove that Junius was Lord Chatham: that of Dr. Waterhouse,* of Cam-

* The Doctor's testimony, though garrulous and rambling, is not with-

bridge, Massachusetts, who published his book in 1831, and whose manner of treating the subject did his theory more harm than good. He confines himself to what may be called the classic series, rejecting the Miscellaneous Collection, which confused and puzzled him, and making that desperate which was difficult before. The Doctor, entering the arena, on which he was to cope with the most cunning strategist on record, is confounded by the fact that Poplicola begins by a terrible show of attack on—Lord Chatham! He gives up the Miscellaneous Series as something unaccountable, and rambles on his way to the conclusion with half the evidence. In England, Messrs. Swinden and another produced *rifaccimentos* of the Doctor's argument.

But the Chathamites are not the only inquirers who have stood puzzled before the Poplicolas and Correggios. The Franciscans, too, have flung doubts upon them—on some of them, at least—more disposed to give up the letters than give up their theory. The truth is, those searchers, from the beginning, have had an humble opinion of the Junian legerdemain, and thought they could circumvent that Ulysses of the pen with a few hours' felicitous thinking, and a nice balancing of the evidences discoverable in the letters themselves, and the tenor of the few years embraced by their publication.

The only man who could be Junius is presented in these pages; his life before and after 1767 being the best proof

out a certain merit. He was in his youth a cotemporary of Junius; and, as a medical pupil of Dr. Fothergill, of London, could gather enough from the gossip of the capital to produce the convictions of his after life. He had heard whispers of the truth long before those sectaries, the Franciscans and others, rose to corrupt and darken it with their devices, glosses, and heresies. In this respect, the opinion of Dr. Waterhouse is of higher value than people are disposed to think.