THE CLASSICAL ORIGIN OF
"MAD ANTHONY" WAYNE'S SOBRIQUET

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THE Oregonian once carried an editorial entitled "The Madness of Mad Anthony," written in answer to a correspondent's request for "more . . . concerning the eccentricities of Wayne." The purport of the reply was to set forth a modern-day explanation of Wayne's sobriquet, with intent to refute the myth that it was given him because of any madcap soldiery or temerity in strategy. The pertinent portion of the editorial is appended:

One fact related to his celebrity, however, may be worth comment. That is that "Mad Anthony," who every schoolboy has been led to believe was a wanton and reckless fighter who plunged into the fray with never a thought for its consequences, actually got his famous sobriquet in quite a different fashion. Charles J. Stillé, former state historian of Pennsylvania, who is perhaps General Wayne's most careful and sympathetic biographer, has punctured the myth in a note-worthy account of the life of his hero derived largely from original and documentary sources. What actually occurred, according to the newer version, was that a half-demented camp-follower was once arrested by order of Colonel (afterward General) Wayne, and, on being twitted by his associates, replied that he hadn't done anything to deserve punishment but had been put in the guardhouse "because Anthony was mad." And "mad," as may be verified by any one who will brush up on his old English, was formerly used as a synonym for "angry." The appellation stuck, for no reason associated with Wayne's want of military prudence, but because nicknames have a way of doing just that.

The remainder of the editorial is a summation of General Wayne's activities and achievements, in which, as can most hap-

1 Read before the Classical Association of the Pacific States, Northern Section, Portland, Oregon, Dec. 28, 1934.
pily be proved by reference to all available data, there is not a jot of that fool-hardiness popularly ascribed to him, the paragraph ending with: "So another historical legend goes by the board."

The popular misinterpretation of the nickname does not preclude the possibility that, perhaps, after all, here is one myth, if a myth, which may survive scrutiny. For the "madness of Mad Anthony" could have been ascribed to him, not from any absence of rationality or soldierly acumen, not from any mental disorderliness or rattle-brainedness, but from a characteristic dash and abandon, a fearlessness in the face of death or danger, in intrepidity which was an inspiration to his troops and assurance of eventual success. We may imagine that Caesar's men often thought him "mad," as at the Sabis or at Munda. Alexander's staff chided him more than once for his lack of all care for self in many an encounter. The "madness of Mad Anthony" may have been nothing more than an earlier outcropping of that same brusqueness and dare-devil bluffness which made contemporaries call Andrew Jackson "Old Hickory." I still believe that Anthony Wayne was "mad"—mad with the fervor of absolute fearlessness, and that his soldiers gloried in his "madness."

As to the anecdote quoted by The Oregonian from Mr. Stillé's biography, there is no reason to question its authenticity. But that it was wholly responsible for the persistence of the nickname is a matter of conjecture only, as Mr. Stillé confesses. At least another guess is possible and this may be gathered from contemporary literature centered about General Wayne's famed namesake Mark Antony, whose name became popularly Anglicized as "Anthony." It was this celebrity who was the original "Mad Anthony"—"Antonius Furiosus."

It was after the assassination of Caesar that the high-handed despotic conduct of Mark Antony evoked the scornful denunciation of the Republic's last diplomatic defender. Cicero dubbed him by all the epithets that connote "madness," whether of uncontrollable temper or of mental aberration, and the "madness of M. Antonius" became a by-word. It is not essential to diagnose the wisdom or the misappropriateness of the term, or to discuss the occasion for its use. Cicero's own convictions need not be analyzed, or his policies, or his statecraft. It is even extraneous that Cicero employs these phrases as synonyms with a score of opprobrious epithets, such as "abandoned," "accursed," "cut-
throat," "ruffian," "rebel," "pest," "stupidest of men," "brute beast," "glutton," "buffoon," "barbarian." Even though he may be employing "madness" in the sense of "impotence in the control of one's temper," it is sufficient that he wrote and spoke of the "madness of Antonius" and by-named him "furens Antonius."

A glance through the Philippics and the later volumes of the Correspondence reveals a steady employment of the idea. In a letter, written long afterwards to Brutus, as if a dying echo of the phrase that had become so current in his orations, he sums up his battling for a lost cause in the sentence: "So soon as I reached Rome, I immediately hurled myself against Antony's criminal behavior and 'madness'."4

The First Philippic is indeed zephyr-like in comparison with the hurricane of those that followed. Despite Antony's abuse and threats following Cicero's failure to be present in the Senate when summoned, the nearest approach which the latter makes to the phrase under discussion is "quite angrily—and with too great show of temper."5

In the lengthy interval that preceded the actual publication of the Second Philippic, a letter written the latter part of September of the year 44, to Cassius, fellow conspirator of Brutus, then operating in Southern Italy, reveals the first intimation of the later frequent phraseology.6 He here speaks of Antonius as "homo amens et perditus." "Amens" is, literally, "mindless," "out of one's head," "mad."

The next two utterances of such phrasing were prompted by the honorary epithet which Antony caused to be inscribed upon Caesar's statue on the Rostra. This was at the beginning of October of that chaotic year 44, and Cicero therefore, in the next following letter again wrote his indignation to Cassius, bursting out with the sarcastic fling: "Auget tuns amicus furorem in dies,"7 which Schuckburgh translates: "Your friend daily becomes madder."8 Here we have the noun "furor," "madness," but, before the first sentence of this letter is rounded off to a period, occurs the phrase "ille furiousus," "that mad fellow."

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4 Cicero, Epistulae ad M. Brutum. 1, 15, 6.
5 Ibid., Philippicae I, 5, 12.
6 Ibid., Epistulae ad Familiares, XII, 2, 1.
7 Ibid., Epistulae ad Familiares, XII, 3, 1.
And now we come to that immortal Second of the Philippics in whose merciless fusillade we can readily foresee Cicero's own mortality. We do not have to read far before we find Cicero apostrophizing Antonius as "audcior quam Catilina, furiosior quam Clodius," which latter phrase King renders "more insane than Catiline." And here another, shortly after, "te . . . convinco non inhumnitatis solum, sed etiam dementia." Another adjective is shortly thereafter introduced, "excors." When we revert to the confusion, even among the agents, of head and heart, the synonymity of "amens" and "excors" is readily perceptible.

It would prove a tedium to reiterate the passages in the Second Philippic in which Cicero plays upon the synonym, derivatives, and superlative degrees of "dementia," "amentia," "furor," or where, in order to emphasize the contrast, he ironically employs the rhetorical figure known as litotes.

A rather interesting problem in textual criticism is centered about the phrase "violentus et furens." A variant reading has "vinolentus et furens," which, as King shows in a footnote (ad loc.) is colorfully corroborated in one of the Letters, by "vino lentum furorem," "drunken madness," and the inverted phrase later in this same Second Philippic, "furiosam vinolentiam," "mad drunkenness."

The Third Philippic increases the list with at least eight passages which by no means decrease the mounting madness of Mark Antony. The Fourth Philippic, which was a repetition of the Senatorial speech now delivered to the people, curiously enough, repeats but two of the phrases of the Third. The latter of these two, reading "May the penalty for such madness fall upon his own head and his family," is a curse which may have induced Fulvia, the wanton, later, to hold Cicero's severed head in her lap and stick a hair-pin through its tongue.

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9 Cicero, Philippicae, II, 1, 1.
11 Cicero, Phil. II, 4, 9.
12 Ibid., Phil. II, 8, 18.
13 Cf. Ibid., Phil. II, 8, 19; 17, 42; 26, 65; 28, 68.
14 Cf. Ibid., Phil. II, 13, 31; 37, 96; 38, 97.
15 Ibid., Phil. II, 28, 68.
16 Ibid., Epist. ad Fam. XII, 54, 7.
17 Ibid., Phil. II, 39, 101.
18 Ibid., Phil. III, 1; 2, 3; 2, 4; 2, 5; 2, 6; 17, 7, 17 (bis.).
19 Ibid., Phil. IV, 1, 3; 4, 10.
The Fifth Philippic marshals nine to swell the list of passages and adds two more adjectives to the category of invectives, viz: "vehemens" and "impotens," the latter conveying the idea of "powerlessness over one’s passions."^20

Right at the close of Philippic VI, is the phrase "M. Antonii conatus avertere a re publica, furorem exstinguere, opprimere audaciam". And here in the Seventh is a characterization of Antony quoted as in the words of some opponent of Cicero in senatorial debate: “Antonius should not have been irritated (inri-tatum); he is a reckless, bold man (nequam . . . atque con-fidens).”^22

It happens that the later Philippics have less of direct invective against Antonius and more citations of parliamentary decretals, the formal reading of senatus consulta, so that the “madness of Antony” ceases almost altogether, until, in the Twelfth. Cicero, in picturing a meeting with Antony, foreshadows his own death in a magnificent outburst beginning with, “Novi hominis furorem, novi effrenatam violentiam,”—“I know the fellow’s madness, his unbridled violence.”

In the Thirteenth is also one lone passage which is a reverberation of the impetuous tirade of the earlier “Antoniacs,” “Inde se quo furore, quo ardore ad urbern, id est, ad caedem optimi cuius-que rapiebat.” And then, as if in a triumphant finale, almost at the very close of the last of the Philippics, in apostrophe to the One Legion that had defied Antony, he cries: “You it was who turned aside Mad Antony from the city,” (“furentem Antonium”).^25

The thesis, if it be true, requires a corollary postulate, that some one or some group of men, conversant with the classics and particularly with a current translation of the Philippics in which Antonius was called “Anthony,” and “furens” or “furiosus” was rendered “mad,” applied the epithet to their own Anthony Wayne, whose dash and sheer abandon made the nickname peculiarly appropriate. Such a possibility could not exist today, for our latter

^20 Ibid. Phil. VI, 7, 18.
^21 Ibid. Phil. VII, 1, 3.
^23 Ibid. Phil. XIII, 8, 18.
^24 Ibid. Phil. XIV, 12, 33.
day generations obtain but the smallest modicum of Latin. But in the days of the Founders, the Humanities formed the basis of a liberal education and a University man could quote the classics as we do Kipling or the Saturday Evening Post. As a further possibility, the anecdote quoted by Mr. Stillé and *The Oregonian*, may have been the application of Mad Anthony Wayne's accepted nick-name to a show of temper—a flash of wit by a drunken private in the "hoosegow." And what is to prevent the possibility that this supposed nit-wit may have been a classical student himself, enough to sense the appropriateness of his colonel's sobriquet?