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238. Albany Gazette, 8 November¹

The happiness of a state, says a correspondent, consists not in its number or wealth, but in the good disposition, wise regulation and good conduct of its inhabitants. Hence,

That state is happy, whose laws and rulers are good, and its inhabitants industrious, frugal and in a just subordination. And,

That state is wretched and miserable, where pride, idleness and dissipation prevail, men and not laws govern, and the rulers are ignorant, or wicked.

A government without a directing and controuling power, is like a ship without master, pilot or rudder.

A government without faith, is a government without credit; and a government without credit, is a government without energy; and a government without energy, is no government at all. And,

A government too popular borders upon tyranny.

1. Reprints by 4 February 1788 (8): Vt. (1), N.H. (2), Mass. (1), Conn. (1), N.Y. (2), Md. (1).

239. Brutus, Junior**New York Journal, 8 November**

The authorship of "Brutus, Junior" is uncertain. On 28 November Hugh Hughes asked fellow New York Antifederalist Charles Tillinghast "Are you not wrong as to the Author of Brutus-I supposed him to have been Brutus Junior, & Mr. A Y. [Abraham Yates] to have been the Author of Brutus" (CC:298. For "Brutus," see CC:178.). Almost identical passages and references to the same events appear in "Brutus, Junior" and Letters I and V of the "Federal Farmer" (CC:242).

"Brutus, Junior" was reprinted in the Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer* on 14 November. Ten days later "Plain Truth," writing in the *Gazetteer* (RCS:Pa., 292-93); recommended that "Brutus, Junior" be read to answer the "two fallacious arguments" he said Federalists used to urge the adoption of the Constitution: (1) that the great men of the Constitutional Convention favored it and (2) that any sort of an efficient government was absolutely necessary no matter how despotic it might be. Another Antifederalist, Samuel Chase of Maryland, employed "Brutus, Junior" to refute the Federalist argument that anarchy and confusion would result if the new Constitution were not adopted (Bancroft Transcripts, NN).

→ | MR. GREENLEAF, I have read with a degree of attention several publications which have lately appeared in favour of the new Constitution; and as far as I am able to discern—the arguments (if they can be so termed) of most weight, which are urged in its favour may be reduced to the two following:

1st. That the men who formed it, were wise and experienced; that they were an illustrious band of patriots, and had the happiness of their

country at heart; that they were four months deliberating on the subject, and therefore, it must be a perfect system.

2d. That if the system be not received, this country will be without any government, and of consequence, will be reduced to a state of anarchy and confusion, and involved in bloodshed and carnage; and in the end, a government will be imposed upon us, not the result of reason and reflection, but of force and usurpation.

As I do not find that either Cato or the Centinel, Brutus, or the Old Whig, or any other writer against this constitution, have undertaken a particular refutation of this new species of reasoning, I take the liberty of offering to the public, through the channel of your paper, the few following animadversions on the subject; and the rather, because I have discovered, that some of my fellow citizens have been imposed upon by it.

With respect to the first, it will be readily perceived, that it precludes all investigation of the merits of the proposed constitution, and leads to an adoption of the plan, without enquiring whether it be good or bad. For if we are to infer the perfection of this system from the characters and abilities of the men who formed it, we may as well determine to accept it without any enquiry as with.—A number of persons in this as well as the other states, have, upon this principle, determined to submit to it without even reading or knowing its contents.

But supposing the premisses from which this conclusion is drawn, to be just, it then becomes essential, in order to give validity to the argument, to enquire into the characters of those who composed this body, that we may determine whether we can be justified in placing such unbounded confidence in them.

It is an invidious task, to call in question the characters of individuals, especially of such as are placed in illustrious stations. But when we are required implicitly to submit our opinions to those of others, from a consideration that they are so wise and good as not to be liable to err, and that too in an affair which involves in it the happiness of ourselves and our posterity; every honest man will justify a decent investigation of characters in plain language.

It is readily admitted, that many individuals who composed this body, were men of the first talents and integrity in the union. It is at the same time, well known to every man, who is but moderately acquainted with the characters of the members, that many of them are possessed of high aristocratic ideas, and the most sovereign contempt of the common people; that not a few were strongly disposed in favour of monarchy; that there were some of no small talents and of great influence, of consummate cunning, and masters of intrigue, whom the war found poor, or in

embarrassed circumstances, and left with princely fortunes, acquired in public employment, who are at this day to account for many thousands of public money; that there were others who were young, ardent, and ambitious, who wished for a government corresponding with their feelings, while they were destitute of that experience which is the surest guide in political researches; that there were not a few who were gaping for posts of honour and emolument; these we find exulting in the idea of a change, which will divert places of honour, influence and emolument, into a different channel, where the confidence of the people, will not be necessary to their acquirement. It is not to be wondered at, that an assembly thus composed should produce a system liable to well founded objections, and which will require very essential alterations. We are told by one of themselves (Mr. Wilson of Philadelphia) the plan was matter of accommodation; and it is not unreasonable to suppose, that in this accommodation,¹ principles might be introduced which would render the liberties of the people very insecure.

I confess I think it of no importance, what are the characters of the framers of this government, and therefore should not have called them in question, if they had not been so often urged in print, and in conversation, in its favour. It ought to rest on its own intrinsic merit. If it is good, it is capable of being vindicated; if it is bad, it ought not to be supported. It is degrading to a freeman, and humiliating to a rational one, to pin his faith on the sleeve of any man, or body of men, in an affair of such momentous importance.

In answer to the second argument, I deny that we are in immediate danger of anarchy and commotions. Nothing but the passions of wicked and ambitious men, will put us in the least danger on this head: those who are anxious to precipitate a measure, will always tell us that the present is the critical moment; now is the time, the crisis is arrived, and the present minute must be siezed. Tyrants have always made use of this plea; but nothing in our circumstances can justify it.

The country is in profound peace, and we are not threatened by invasion from any quarter: the governments of the respective states are in the full exercise of their powers; and the lives, the liberty, and property of individuals are protected: all present exigencies are answered by them. It is true, the regulation of trade and a competent provision for the payment of the interest of the public debt is wanting; but no immediate commotion will arise from these; time may be taken for calm discussion and deliberate conclusions. Individuals are just recovering from the losses and embarrassments sustained by the late war: industry and frugality are taking their station, and banishing from the community, idleness and prodigality. Individuals are lessening their private debts,

and several millions of the public debt is discharged by the sale of the western territory. There is no reason, therefore, why we should precipitately and rashly adopt a system, which is imperfect or insecure; we may securely deliberate and propose amendments and alterations. I know it is said we cannot change for the worse; but if we act the part of wise men, we shall take care that we change for the better: It will be labour lost, if after all our pains we are in no better circumstances than we were before.

If any tumults arise, they will be justly chargeable on those artful and ambitious men, who are determined to cram this government down the throats of the people, before they have time deliberately to examine it. All the measures of the leaders of this faction have tended to this point. In Congress they attempted to obtain a resolution to approve the constitution, without going into an examination of it.² In Pennsylvania, the chiefs of the party, who themselves were of the convention, that framed this system, within a few days after it dissolved, and before Congress had considered it, indecently brought forward a motion in their general assembly for recommending a convention; when a number of respectable men of that legislature, withdrew from the house, refusing to sanction with their presence, a measure so flagrantly improper, they procured a mob to carry a sufficient number of them by force to the house, to enable them to proceed on the business.³

In Boston, the printers have refused to print against this plan, and have been countenanced in it.⁴ In Connecticut, papers have been handed about for the people to sign, to support it, and the names of those who decline signing it, have been taken down in what was called, a black list, to intimidate them into a compliance, and this before the people had time to read and understand the meaning of the constitution.⁵ Many of the members of the convention, who were charged with other public business, have abandoned their duty, and hastened to their states to precipitate an adoption of the measure. The most unwearied pains has been taken, to persuade the legislatures to recommend conventions to be elected to meet at early periods, before an opportunity could be had to examine the constitution proposed; every art has been used to exasperate the people against those, who made objections to the plan. They have been told that the opposition is chiefly made by state officers, who expect to lose their places by the change, though the propagators of this falsehood, know, that very few of the state offices will be vacated by the new constitution, and are well apprized, that should it take place, it will give birth to a vast number of more lucrative and permanent appointments, which its principal advocates in every state are warmly in the pursuit of. Is it not extraordinary, that those men who are

predicting, that a rejection of this constitution will lead to every evil, which anarchy and confusion can produce, should at the same moment embrace and pursue with unabating industry, every measure in their power, to rouse the passions, and thereby preclude calm and dispassionate enquiry. It would be wise in them, however, to reflect in season that should public commotion take place, they will not only be answerable for the consequences, and the blood that may be shed, but that on such an event, it is more than probable the people will discern the advocates for their liberties, from those who are aiming to enslave them, and that each will receive their just deserts.

1. See CC:134.

2. See CC:95.

3. See CC:125.

4. See CC:131.

5. Oliver Wolcott, Sr., the lieutenant governor of Connecticut, "heard that it has been proposed to send out Subscription Papers to be signed by those who may be for and against the Constitution." He hoped that "such a Measure will not be carried into Execution" (to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., 8 October, CC:141). No such petitions have been located. The Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 21 January 1788, reported that "before the people [of Connecticut] could possibly have time scarcely to read the new constitution, they were compelled to sign to their perfect approbation of it, or be posted in a black list. . . ." The *Gazetteer* item was reprinted eight times by 10 March: Mass. (1), Conn. (4), N.Y. (1), Md. (2).

240. Cato IV

New York Journal, 8 November

This essay was ready for publication a week earlier, but was "unavoidably postponed, for want of room" (*New York Journal*, 1 November). For a detailed criticism of "Cato" IV's objections to the executive branch as outlined in the Constitution, see "Americanus" II, *New York Daily Advertiser*, 23 November. See also "Americanus" IV, *ibid.*, 6 December.

"Cato" IV was reprinted in the *New York Daily Advertiser* on 9 November and in a two-page supplement of the *Albany Gazette* on 17 November. For a discussion of the authorship, circulation, and impact of "Cato," see CC:103.

To the CITIZENS of the STATE of NEW-YORK.

Admitting, however, that the vast extent of America, together with the various other reasons which I offered you in my last number,¹ against the practicability of the just exercise of the new government are insufficient to convince you; still it is an undeniable truth, that its several parts are either possessed of principles, which you have heretofore considered as ruinous, and that others are omitted which you have established as fundamental to your political security, and must in their operation, I will venture to assert—fetter your tongues and minds, enchain your bodies, and ultimately extinguish all that is great and noble in man.