

Roderick Razor, *New York Daily Advertiser*, 11 December 1787

Mr. PRINTER, I am a worthy and deserving citizen, which has supported or underwent as you may say, several important and fruitless State offices; but being now out of place, I would be willing to undergo, or be located to some snug birth in one of the *street Sovereignties*, which is like to be soon erected and accommodated in and about this city, as I am informed.

I beg therefore humbly to put *myself up* (as we do some times for Semblymen) for Norotor General, to any pretty large and populatious street that is going. Thank Heaven I have good lungs, and I have kept company so long, with our most learned and most virtuous, and most wisest men; that I can say off about standing armies, and juries without trial, and the extinguishing the liberty of speaking and printing, and excise, and all them things, as well as my betters; whose betters I expect one of these days to be. Turn and turn about, Mr. Printer, is fair play. In all well manufactured free Governments, there is a lively and pleasant kind of a circum rotation as it were, like unto the whirling of a squirrel's cage; the top goes quick to the bottom, and the bottom to the top; which is a much seemlier and juster comparison, than that of the boiling of a pot and the scum's rising up, which is only a kind of a jumblication; whereas your circum rotation is a much pleasanter motion, and gives a chance to all to come in for a cut of what is going; bottoms, tops and middles. Some say there a'nt to be such a place as what I am asking for; that is all a hum; and they are only bamboozling us; but I know better. Mr. Latner is one of our family, and he is certainly *of our side*; for he has got *our* watch word or counter-sign, which is Stocracy; and there is Montesque in another mightily used by us. I asked *Squire Sour Crout* (who was one of our head men) what this same *Stocracy* was? And he told me "it meant the same as tho' you should say, such a one is *not of our side*. He said it was a marvellously useful word; he took the first notion of it from *Domine Van Wrangletext*, who calls all that come to hear him, and that are willing to contribute *to the support of the gospel, Our-to-dox, or our side*; and those that go to hear other Domines, and squander their money upon them, he calls *Etterodox, or otherwise*; which means *t'other side*. When *Domine Van Wrangletext* find his parish following after *strange Domines, and wasting their substance*, he cries lustily. *Etterodox! Etterodox!* the *Etterodox* will all be damned! eternally damned! The Church is in danger! and maybe sometimes he will throw The State too into the bargain to make an alarm, and scare away them who would overthrow *the Christian religion*." Sometimes it is good policy to bring in politics with religion; and sometimes religion into politics. Now there is your *Centry*, the great Philadelphia writer *in our cause*; he has found out more than our ninny's here. They have made a noise about there being no security in the new fangled Government, for the liberty of the press; but he has found out, that the liberty of religion is in danger; which is a most excellent discovery, because it will larum and terrify a great many who know nothing about politics, and strengthen the *true cause*. *Squire Sour Crout* says, "that there is a deep laid scheme to establish unidelity, which is the wickedest of all religions, because it has no religion at all in it. He says there is to be no tests under the new Government. No man is to be obliged to say his prayers, or his

creed, and tell whether he believes in the Devil, or the doctrine of chance. This is the work of the haughty Southern Nabobs, who have no religion, and want to spend all the public money on Barbers to powder their hair, and for silk stockings and fineries. Says he yarn ones are good enough for me or any body. They are warm in winter, and in summer *they soak up the sweat*, at which I suppose your Southern Dilly Daiseys would be ready to faint, and say it should be called *upsorping the pusfiration*, but I am for the plain humspun neighbor Razor. I hope to see the day when trade will be at an end, and there will be no foreign luxuries imported but striped blankets—when ancient simple manners will prevail, and he that can't make his own moccasons may go barefoot, and he that wont build his own wigwam, why let him set out of doors."

These Nabobs are so monstrous proud, because they command a heap of negroes. That is one thing makes them so much for Slavery and Stocracy. Now if you can find in Duchess and Albany counties, any of our friends and the opposers of the new tyranny, who have half a dozen big negro slaves, I will believe that his Honor Squire Clip Purse Van Clink de Gelt loves money, and made a snatch at the *Congress Treasury*. He has been very ill used, good and worthy man! He stood stout against voting away the public money, for a heap of useless offices in the new *Hio lands*.⁷ He buffed or bucked at the *katteract* of corruption as long as he could, for there was no Loan-offices made for honest men to encourage them; but at last, some how or other his strength failed him. "This worthy Patriot was not, neighbour Razor (says the Squire) pleasantly paddling his canoe between the Over-Slaugh and Albany, against the freshes of the Hudson, in the delightsome sport of taking its favorite fish the Sturgeon: but it was the mighty Southern torrent of luxury and boundless profusion; deep, wide and rapid as the Ohio, whose lofty and tossing billows he buffeted, until he became faint and weary, and drowsiness began to steal upon him." I says to the Squire not to interrupt you, I suppose sir, that he leaned poor man a little upon one side; and so did the canoe; and then he nodded, and so off went his hat, and *that fine new wig*. For the Albany canoes are many of them very narrow and tottlish. "I wish that had been all my friend, but to proceed says the Squire, the paddle with which he has so long and dextrously steered both his canoe, and our state, dropped out of his hands; and souze went he into the mighty waters, which to him will be ever waters of bitterness and affliction. A huge wave struck him on the head, stunned him, and canted him round; and he drove senseless down the stream *only a little way*, and the Southern Lords, what should they do out of spite, but whip abroad, and call every body to see the poor old gentlemen caught as it were — — but I shall not use the expressions unlucky boys are wont to do when they *suddenly surprize* some profound Philosopher or great Statesman, like our patriot in his *most retired place of meditation*; suffice it to say he was shamefully exposed in an unlucky moment; and in a posture not only unseemly, but comical, and most melancholy withal.

"The moment he waked, *he cut and run for it*; and while he stays at home drying himself, I hope he won't be idle; but will stir his stumps against *our enemies and their schemes*; and that no infernal plots will be hatched *by those he has run from*, while this *our honest and sharp sighted State pilot and watchman, is absent*: and that we shall shortly see him here again, with a new paddle, and *a better pair of spectacles*." Ah, Mr. Printer, it is melancholy, very melancholy indeed! when the righteous stumbleth, the

wicked always rejoice and laughs them to scorn. We think it is the work of some of the party of that little D—I who deserves to be hanged for signing, and *that alone too*, the dead warrant of our *State Sovereignty*. We shall never do cleverly while he lives. I wish he was put out of the way. It would be as good a deed as to drink, to do it. I am sure I should not stick at either a rope or a razor, if I had a chance. He tossed the heads of our staunchest men last winter, and staggered them so confoundedly, he almost made them believe, there was *one* honest man *of that side*, that did not mean to ruin the State. Ifackins if *our side had not cunningly taken to the bush*, where his business went so well let him follow us, it might have gone hard with us. He may be as knowing as a serpent, but I'll be hanged if he is as harmless as a sucking dove, for he stings most consumedly. If he should find out *the right way to get in* (and we know how the trick is done) and set his cap that way. Egad I am afraid we should all *be in the suds*; the Philistines would be upon us. *Squire Sour Crout* says, "it was meant at first to have tried and hanged him for high treason *against the State* and all the rest who spoke or wrote for overturning *the State Constitution*. For tho' it gives liberty of speech and the press, yet it is meant he says *only on such matters, and at such times, as the best men in the State think proper and for the good of the State*: and if we could have been sure of a pretty large majority, we should have tucked up all who were enemies to its Sovereignty; and might have done it under the Constitution, just as handily as we voted out the general impost by it. But as matters now look, the Squire says he is sorry the cat was unluckily let out of the bag—that it was unwarily mentioned by some of our side, that signing the Convention was treason against the State; because our adversaries may take handle against us, and say mere declarations are not a full security; for a prevailing State or national faction, having both inclination and power, will not suffer *words* (which they can construe as they like) to defend those they have marked out as victims. "A Bill or Rights or Constitution, *in suitable hands and properly managed*, is a very useful and pliable convenience, said he. That of Pennsylvania, when in the hands of the true friends to *equal* liberty was most excellent; but now it has got into other hands, it is abominable. That a *majority of bad men* should govern, is contrary to all sound *republican* doctrine; which teaches that when an *impious majority* bear sway, the *virtuous minority*, when they cannot seize the reins of Government into their own hands, should like Sampson pull down its pillars, and bury themselves and their enemies under its ruins; as was bravely attempted by the Sixteen *true and virtuous Republicans* in Pennsylvania: and it would have been done too, had it not been for the villainous Philadelphia populace. If," says the Squire, "the *new scheme* goes down, it will be the confoundedest bite that ever happened; he and the rest of our side laughed, he says, heartily, at the notion of a number of grave noddles getting together to alter and mend *the old thing*. Let them have turned it, or altered the cape, or the cuffs, or have cut the skirts shorter, it would make it no better; and if they had put two or three good new strong patches into it, the stitches would not hold in the old cloth, but it would tear the more and the faster for the new pieces; but as to making an entire new coat, they never dreamt the plaguy fellows would attempt it. Zounds! if the people wear it now it is made, neighbour Razor," says he, "it will be the most infernal take-in that ever we were bamboozled with."

A fig, and a fiddle-stick's end, Mr. Printer, for your fidderal or fodderal nonsensikalities. "Every tub stand on its own bottom; every dog shake his own paw; the hardest send off; let him laugh that wins; and the like, his honor Squire Clip Purse Van Clink de Gelt says, "these is the maxums and axums of true state policy." A good night's rest to his pious soul, whenever we must lose him. A customer of mine, a young Lawyer, who writes politics, and makes poetry too, says, "He is sure the Angel in Heaven that keeps the Records, or is Clerk of the Court of Oyer and Terminer there, will drop a tear on the word Felony, in the indictment which the Treasury Board Nabobs have sent up against him, and blot it out for ever. So that it will be squashed, and he never be called upon to plead to this one, if he can but keep his fingers still, and will go and do so no more." Mr. Printer, I speak it with reverence and submission, I humbly conceive I can smell a rat as quick, and see as far into a mill-stone as some others. I do now smell a plot; nay, I smell two plots. The southern bashaws are for establishing unfaithfulness; the eastern saints, double distilled high wine piritanism. Every body knows they once punished a sea-captain just come home, for kissing his wife on a sabbaday, as he met her in the street. Now the squire, who is "as deep as Chelsea," as the saying is, "says that all men love power; that the supreme Fedderal court may go from one step to another, until they get to try justice cases; and may in time set here in the room of our magistrates, and send any one they call antifederal to bridewell. In like manner the saints will proceed, as you may say, progressively; and tho' from the time, place, and other circumstances, the squire says it is presumed the kissing aforesaid was not more, or other, than simple *osculation*, or lip salutation upon the *sabbath*; yet it may in process of time be artfully extended to kissing in every manner and form, and of every kind, degree, grade, and species; upon any day, or hour of the day in the whole week; nay, even to the night, and not only to the night, but to every hour in the night: And what then, says he, neighbour Razor, in the name of procreation! is to become of the human specie? The world will be at an end! it will become *destinct!*"

I do declare and affirm, and avow, that it is a crying sin, that there is no Bill of Rights to the new Scheme—I have heard that there was once a bloody war between the big Endians and little Endians, because their Bill of Rights did not say they might break their eggs at which end they pleased. I have heard it said, and that too by *credulous* men, that by a jury of Cockneys, a sort of people that live in Lunnon, a man would be hanged, that boiled a leg of mutton without turnips: but there is no security in the new Constitution, that in their own free country a Lunnoner may either eat potatoes or carrots with his mutton if he chuses, or let them alone. Another monstrous danger has been mentioned by some *interested* friends, who are not one bit affected by the trade or malufactory. I shall briefly discourse of some who are aboveboard, and doing very well for themselves. Thank Heaven, they have good snug births *for themselves*; I say, for they have been unfortunately *separated from their wives and children, ever since they were born*. Every one must allow, that *the trade of Dungarvan*, which is the malufactory of feet for children's stockings, of all trades ought certainly to be free. No imposts, duty, or excise on it; yet they shake their heads, and have great jealousy on this business: "First, says they, neighbour Razor, perhaps comes a small duty *on stockings*; then if the people will bear it, a stout import *on legs*; and last of all brings up the rear, a swinging excise, or

impost or some accursed prohibition, on the malufactures themselves. They have declared they will oppose every infringement on this business, tho' they never have followed it; nor ever expect to follow it;" which I think is very generous *in them* indeed. Should a standing army be raised in time of peace, and under pretence of guarding the frontiers, be marched to stop this trade; I'll be hanged if your old continentals would not quit the ranks the minute they smoaked the business; and if we wanted help (which I don't think we should) why I dare say the volunteers of Ireland, who took up arms, they say, for liberty and *a fair and free trade*, would come over to help us, and their countrymen here would, every man and mother's son, join them; so that the new Constitution won't be able to take away our dearest rights and privileges. Let them set it to work then if they will, Mr. Printer, as Kecksey says in the Play, "who's afraid?" and so Mr Printer, I am your humble sarvant, RODERICK RAZOR.

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