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Rusticus

***New York Journal*, 13 September 1787**

MR. GREENLEAF, I cannot but express my indignation at the many illiberal publications, which constantly crowd our newspapers, on the subject of politics.

It seems, by these publications, to be highly criminal, especially at this particular period, for any man to differ in opinion from a certain Aristocratic junto, who appear determined, by their writings, to silence, and traduce every person who will not subscribe to every part of their political creed.

In a free country, as this is, every man has an indubitable right to think for himself, and to express his approbation or disapprobation of public measures, when ever he supposes them consistent or inconsistent with the interest and happiness of the people. If this is not the case, then have we been fighting for a shadow, and lavishing our blood and treasure to very little purpose.

We are frequently informed by this junto, or their adherents, that the present Convention, in Philadelphia, is composed of the wisest and best characters in the United States, and that it is next to high treason to lisp a suspicion, that such a band of patriots can possibly recommend any system, or measure, inconsistent with the liberty, interest, and happiness, of those whom they represent. I am very sensible that there are many such characters in that honorable assembly as these writers have mentioned; but at the same time, it is well known, that there are too many of a very different character; perfect Bashaws! (saving a want of power) who would trample on the most sacred rights of the people, without the least reluctance or remorse; men who are possessed of the highest opinion of their own superlative, excellence, and importance; and who have worked themselves into a belief, that Heaven hath formed the bulk of mankind, to be mere slaves and vassals, to men of their superior genius, birth, and fortune.

The greatest part of the publications alluded to, are artfully calculated to prepare the minds of the people, implicitly to receive *any form* of government that may be offered them. If this is not the design, why anticipate? If the Convention recommend such measures as are not inconsistent with the union, but those that will promote the general interest of the confederation, and secure the essential rights of the people, every good and virtuous citizen will not only subscribe to them, but use all his influence; nay, strain every nerve to carry them into effect.

A paragraph has been introduced, as an article of intelligence, into the Daily Advertiser, and the papers published in this city, which was said to have been received from one of the counties in Pennsylvania, asserting, that the good people of that state are ready to receive, and implicitly

acquiesce, in any kind of government that may be offered them by the Convention.—This is paying but a poor compliment indeed, either to their understanding, or patriotism; and although it is asserted with so much confidence, I have too good an opinion of them, and the rest of my fellow-citizens, on the continent, to suppose, that such an enlightened people, who made so many strenuous exertions during the late war, to free themselves from the tyranny of Britain, can possibly be sunk into such a state of supineness, and so regardless of the essential interests of themselves, and their posterity, as to receive any form of government, that will not effectually secure their just rights and privileges, let it be recommended by any man, or, body of men, however wise, learned, or dignified.

Queens-County, *September* 10, 1787.

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