Rusticus
New York Journal, 23 May 1788

Mr. GREENLEAF, In discussing the merits of the new constitution, one of the most favorite, and indeed one of the most plausible arguments the anti republicans adduce in support of their tenets is, the celebrity of the characters that composed the convention and their unanimity in signing the constitution—this, as the Plebeian well observes, "provokes to an investigation of characters which is an invidious task." I believe, however, upon a candid investigation, we will be convinced that some of them, during the late war, "were hidden in the corners of obscurity," some of them "speculating for fortune by sporting with the public money;" and that others are "more remarkable for their ambition and cunning than their patriotism;["]—it would however be the height of injustice to deny the greatest merit to a few who signed the constitution—but the most knowing and patriotic may undesignedly do the greatest disservice to their country, and it is highly inconsistent with the dignity of a rational and independent man to give his implicit assent to a constitution of government, merely because it is gilded with the tinsel of great names.

I think with Levy, that "a free people have no greater enemies than those who, created for the purpose of establishing a government for the good of the community, deprive the state of every part of its rights, who take away annual magistracy, and the certain vicissitude of authority without which equal liberty hath no existence." As to the boasted unanimity of the Philadelphia convention, I shall only observe in the words of a judicious writer, that "unanimity is in itself an indifferent though a specious quality—Fools may be unanimous in the pursuit of a silly end, or of a right end by silly means. *Knaves may be unanimous to cheat, pirates to plunder, assassins to destroy, even good men may be unanimous in a mistake*—but it is not surely for wise or honest men who see the *mistakes, the folly, the crimes, who felt the danger* to be *unanimous in supporting*, because others have been *so wicked, so unwise or unfortunate*—as to be unanimous in committing them."

Goshen, Orange County, May 14.

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