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An Observer

New York Journal, 19 November 1787

MR. GREENLEAF, A writer, under the signature of PUBLIUS, or the FEDERALIST, No. V. in the Daily Advertiser, and in the New-York Packet, with a view of proving the advantages which, he says, will be derived by the states if the new Constitution is adopted—has given extracts of a letter from Queen Anne to the Scotch parliament, on the subject of a union, between Scotland and England, and which I shall also here insert.

“An entire and perfect union will be the solid foundation of lasting peace: It will secure your religion, liberty and property, remove the animosities among yourselves, and the jealousies and differences betwixt our two kingdoms. It must increase your strength, riches and trade; and by this union the whole island, being joined in affection and free from all apprehensions of different interest, will be enable[d] to resist all its enemies.” “We most earnestly recommend to you calmness and unanimity in this great and weighty affair, that the union may be brought to a happy conclusion, being the only effectual way to secure our present and future happiness; and disappoint the designs of our and your enemies, who will doubtless, on this occasion, use their utmost endeavours to prevent or delay this union.”

I would beg leave to remark, that Publius has been very unfortunate in selecting these extracts as a case in point, to convince the people of America of the benefits they would derive from a union under such a government, as would be effected by the new system—It is a certainty, that when the union was the subject of debate in the Scottish legislature, some of their most sensible and disinterested nobles, as well as commoners (who were not corrupted by English gold) violently opposed the union, and predicted, that the people of Scotland, would, in fact, derive no advantages from a consolidation of government with England, but, on the contrary, bear a great proportion of her debt, and furnish large bodies of men to assist in her wars with France, with whom, before the union, Scotland was at all times on terms of the most cordial amity. It was also predicted, that the representation in the parliament of Great-Britain, particularly in the house of commons, was too small;—forty-five members being very far from the proportion of Scotland, when its extent and numbers were duly considered; and that even they, being so few, might (or at least a majority of them might) at all times be immediately under the influence of the English ministry; and, of course, very little of their attention would be given to the true interests of their constituents, especially if they came in competition with the projects or views of the ministry. How far these predictions have been verified, I believe it will not require much trouble to prove; as it must be obvious to every one, the least acquainted with the English history, since the union

of the two nations, that the great body of the people in Scotland, are in a much worse situation now, than they would be, were they a separate nation. This will be fully illustrated, by attending to the great emigrations which are made to America; for if the people could have but a common support at home, it is unreasonable to suppose, that such large numbers would quit their country, break from the tender ties of kindred and friendship, and trust themselves on a dangerous voyage across a vast ocean, to a country of which they can know but little, except by common report. I will only further remark, that it is not above two or three years since a member of the British parliament (I believe Mr. Dempster) gave a most pathetic description of the sufferings of the commonality of Scotland, particularly on the sea coast, and endeavoured to call the attention of parliament to their distresses, and afford them some relief, by encouraging their fisheries. It deserves also to be remembered, that the people of Scotland, in the late war, between France and Great-Britain, petitioned to have arms and ammunition supplied them by their general government, for their defence, alledging that they were incapable of defending themselves, and their property, from an invasion, unless they were assisted by government. It is a truth that their petitions were disregarded, and reasons were assigned, that it would be dangerous to intrust them with the means of defence, as they would then have it in their power to break the union. From this representation of the situation of Scotland, surely no one can draw any conclusion, that this country would derive happiness or security from a government which would, in reality, give the people but the mere name of being free; for if the representation, stipulated by the constitution, framed by the late Convention, be attentively and dispassionately considered, it must be obvious to every disinterested observer (besides many other weighty objections which will present themselves to his view) that the number is not, by any means, adequate to the present inhabitants of this extensive continent, much less to those it will contain at a future period.

I observe that the writer above-mentioned, takes great pains to shew the disadvantages which would result from three or four distinct confederacies of these states. I must confess that I have not seen, in any of the pieces published against the proposed constitution, any thing which gives the most distant idea that their writers are in favor of such governments; but it is clear these objections arise from a consolidation not affording security for the liberties of their country; and from hence it must evidently appear, that the design of Publius, in artfully holding up to public view such confederacies, can be with no other intention than wilfully to deceive his fellow citizens.

I am confident it must be, and that it is, the sincere wish of every true friend to the United States, that there should be a confederated national government, but that it should be one which would have a controul over national and external matters only, and not interfere with the internal regulations and police of the different states in the union. Such a government, while it would give us respectability abroad, would not encroach upon, or subvert our liberties at home.

November 13, 1787.

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