An American
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We have been frequently advertised in the public papers, that General Washington, when he set his hand to the proposed Constitution, uttered these words—"THIS IS, PERHAPS, THE LAST TIME THE *AMERICANS* WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY, COOLLY, TO SET DOWN, AND AGREE UPON A FORM OF GOVERNMENT."—The mode of expression from a Soldier,—from a Man, who, besides the CINCINNATI, could call out many followers—from a Man, who stands in the public eye, the sole candidate for Chief Ruler of all the States: From such a one, it was as void of prudence as it was of foundation.—This has alarmed many patriots, and given pain to many of his friends—but they all feel a respectful delicacy towards that Great Man, and have therefore been silent, while they might have observed, that, as the motion made by Virginia for a General Convention, was so readily agreed to by all the States; and that as the people were so very zealous for a good Federal Government, though this plan, which was aided in its birth by that Great Man, should fail, the people could again *set themselves down coolly, to make another.*—The mode of expression might have been animadverted upon. THE LAST TIME they would have an OPPORTUNITY!—From whom do they receive this OPPORTUNITY, but from Heaven?—And who shall withhold the boon?

Had not his letter appeared in the papers, fully explanatory of his ideas, still the regard all feel for him, might have constrained a decent silence. In this letter he says, "MY DECIDED OPINION IS, THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE BETWEEN THE ADOPTION OF IT (that is the proposed Constitution) AND ANARCHY." One would suppose it very strange, that a Convention of fifty members, however respectable, should have such an opinion of their own sagacity, that when they had performed a task *which they took upon themselves*, they supposed that three millions of people could not amend it, or wish an alteration! and that unless this identical System, with every letter and figure thereof should be adopted, all Government would be at an end, "Old Chaos would come back again, and nothing but anarchy ensue!"—No new Convention, no new set of men can ever agree again, why?—Because miracles have ceased.

But he goes on,—"If ONE STATE, however important it may conceive itself to be, or a minority of them, should suppose, that they can dictate a Constitution to the Union, unless they have the power of applying the ULTIMO RATIO, to good effect, they will find themselves deceived."—One expression more ought to be attended to, in order to find the General's meaning:—"GENERAL GOVERNMENT IS NOW SUSPENDED BY A THREAD—I MIGHT GO FURTHER, AND SAY, IT IS REALLY AT AN END."—The proposed Constitution, is by the recommendation of the Convention, to be in force when nine States shall ratify it; if seven or

eight out of 13 agree to it, yet the old Confederation remains until the people agree upon another.—But General Washington tells us, that the General Government is at an end already, and that unless the New Plan is adopted, anarchy and confusion takes place, and that a minority, unless they can apply the Ultimo ratio with good effect, will find themselves deceived. I do by no means wish to put an uncandid construction upon this letter, but I cannot resist the conclusion, that the General has declared, that this Constitution shall be supported by the ULTIMO RATIO, that is—by force.

What is a Tyranny, but a Government forced by the stronger upon the weaker?—How imprudent then must the General be to make these declarations?—Does our soil produce no more Washington's? Is there none left who would oppose the attempt to establish a Government by force?—Can we not call from the fields, the counters, the bar, and mechanics' shops, any more Generals?—Is our soil exhausted?—And does any one suppose that the Americans, like the Romans, will submit to an Army merely because they have conquered a foreign enemy?

The truth is that we cannot exist without a General Government, and that great thanks are due to the Convention for the plan they offer; but should the body of the people, or even a majority of the States, wish for alterations, before they ratify the work, surely they may be obtained without bloodshed, without the ULTIMO RATIO. And the majority with usual American candour, will yield to their brethren.

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