A Farmer
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PROPOSALS for a Literary Register.

In a commercial place like Savannah, where people of all descriptions and from all countries are mingled together both by chance and design, a continual revolution of characters must necessarily take place, and sentiments, opinions, and schemes will consequently vary as often as the wind which brings a vessel into port or that which carries one out of it; nor would this continual bustle and mutation be detrimental to a society organized and established, and which had ability to protect its own principles and institutions. But, in a government like ours, whose principles are not sufficiently defined, whose institutions are vague and loose, and which, whatever may be the causes, has not established a respectability, there is too great a door left open for every adventurer to disturb its tranquility and to frustrate the views of its real patriots; for it is a very unfortunate truth that the bulk of civilized society would much rather let a designing, specious demagogue think for them than either be at the trouble of thinking for themselves or letting those whose fortunes and happiness are combined with their own think for them. Amongst the different modes of imposture made use of by these adventurers, that of making your paper a vehicle of their seditious nonsense has grown most into use and therefore calls the most loudly for redress. They have nothing to do but to rake together a few inapplicable scraps of history, a few crude observations, a few innuendoes respecting their own sagacity and their love of their country, some suspicions of those in power, and a few blasphemous appeals to Heaven for the rectitude of their intentions; and, combining them all into a political hotchpotch, send it forth into the world through your paper as the immaculate offspring of prescience and patriotism; and, to make a greater impression upon the world, they never fail to sanctify their productions with some sacred, respectable, or specious signature. Thus we often see a living Catiline personating a dead Cicero and a modern Thersites assuming the ancient name of the sage Socrates or divine Plato, and reminding us of the story of the ass in the lion's skin or the expedient of the courtesan who placed over her door the portrait of the chaste Lucretia.

I would therefore propose, Mr. Johnston, as a remedy to this growing evil, that in future you keep a register or list of all your literary correspondents containing their real, not their assumed names, and make their acquiescence in this measure a condition of publishing their performances.

This register or list must be written in a legible hand, pasted on a board, and hung up in your office, in the manner that the list of persons intending to depart the state is hung up in the naval office, and should be free at all times for inspection. Among the many salutary consequences that would flow from this regulation, I dare say, Mr. Johnston, you would think it not

the least that it would save you a great deal of what must be a very irksome labor, publishing the lucubrations of knaves and blockheads; for who, knowing himself to be but a mere adventurer or bird of passage, or totally unqualified for literary labors, would have the impudence or stupidity to place his name in a public office as the father of a piece whose exordium would be a pathetic address to his *dear fellow citizens*, or that would dip into matters far beyond the reach of those powers which have been only cultivated in a drilling squad or behind the counter of a dram shop? If the author of a late piece under the specious signature of "*A Georgian*" had been subjected to this touchstone, perhaps the public would never have had his heterogeneous performance foisted upon them. My remote and retired situation in the country puts it out of my power to form even a reasonable conjecture with respect to the personality of this gentleman, but, as far as my small abilities enable me to form a judgment of him, he can be no tried friend to *Georgia*, nor no native of its soil; his sentiments proclaim the former, and his foreign idiom the latter. However, should I be mistaken, and he should be really what he says he is, if I knew it, I would even commiserate him in his madness and look with pity rather than contempt on that head which ought rather to be employed in the manufactures than in the politics of his country, and I would endeavor to convince him of his errors by fair argument and dispassionate reasoning; but if, on the contrary, he should be, instead of a fabricator, a supporter or a protector of that Confederation and those constitutions that he pretends to hold so sacred—if, I say, instead of this, he should be a person who crossed the great Atlantic and plowed the waves for the distance of 4 or 5000 miles for the express purpose of destroying them, and of obliterating their very remembrance with the blood of all *real Georgians*, as well as all other Whig Americans—one who pursued his bloody purposes for years and was only prevented from executing them by the virtue of the *real Georgians* and other virtuous Americans, and who, making a merit of necessity, thrust himself into our society after the arm of superior authority had lowered the point of his bayonet and arrested his hand stretched forth for plunder and pollution—if he should be this character, or one of a similar stamp, then, sir, it would excite in the public that indignation for the impostor that he would merit and would prevent the people from paying any attention to his arguments or compliments to his principles. I must repeat that my situation puts it out of my power to make a reasonable guess at the author; but the man of science, the respectable merchant, the ingenious artist, or the industrious mechanic, from whatever land he may come, must feel a consciousness of being above suspicion. Yet, if I were in Savannah, as great a stranger as I am there, and were to see *one or two* men *mouthing* in the marketplace, or holding forth in a hovel to the most ignorant and depraved part of society or pouring forth at early day deep libations to the Genevan Goddess in some sordid tippling house, and vociferating on politics with a frightful and obscene countenance and person, and with unremitting oaths, to his brother tipplers, I would say unto him immediately, as Nathan said unto David, "*Thou art the man.*"

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