A Citizen
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I have with the greatest attention and patience read several publications in your late papers, hoping thereby to have gained such information, from the reasoning and arguments which I expected would have been made use of by the Federalists and antifederalists, as would have justified my approbation or disapprobation of the new Federal Constitution. But how egregiously have I been mistaken; instead of that cool and dispassionate inquiry, those wise and learned arguments, which I expected, and which ought to have taken place, on discussing a subject of such magnitude and importance, what have we been presented with but personal abuse and scurrility as though there were no other mode of proving the goodness of the proposed plan of government than by calumniating and vilifying the characters of its opposers, or as though the gentlemen were fonder of displaying their wit and talents for satire (or rather calumny and detraction) than of defending the Constitution they have undertaken to support; for they appear absolutely to have deserted the original question, meanly to attack the private character of an individual. What, in the name of God, has the poor Georgian been guilty of to call forth such a torrent of abuse? Is it so great a crime for a citizen in a free country to publish his sentiments? For my part I always thought it not only the indubitable right, but the bounden duty, of every good citizen freely to declare his sentiments when anything of consequence to his country was in agitation. The Georgian has done so and, in doing so, has but performed his duty to himself and his country. If his objections are not well founded, they might with ease, but ought with decency to be refuted, for abuse never yet made a convert to any cause. But if, on the contrary, his objections are unanswerable, and the gentlemen cannot refute them by a candid and fair discussion, why abuse the author? Why step aside from the question and attack the private character of the man? For, if the objections are good, it matters not a straw who or what the author is, whether a king or a cobbler. Nor do I think it so great a piece of *arrogance* in the Georgian, whoever he may be, to endeavor to instruct his fellow citizens, and warn them against what he supposes to be an evil, although he may even be mistaken, than it is *blasphemy* in Demosthenes Minor to damn everyone who should presume to differ with him in opinion. But, says the Farmer, the Georgian is not a *real native Georgian*, and therefore he means to infer he ought to hold his tongue—a most extraordinary argument indeed. I know not how the gentleman means to draw the line of distinction between the native and the emigrant. I will only ask, is not the foreigner who, from the expectation of living free, quits his native country, settles here, pays his taxes, bears his proportion of the public burthen, and performs every other duty of a citizen as good and useful a man as him whose only merit perhaps consists in his being accidentally

born here? Besides, can it be thought that the foreigner who has taken up his residence among us has not as great a regard for his family, his property, his liberty, as the native? It would be madness to suppose the contrary. But, again, the Farmer says, or means to say, that the Georgian came across the great Atlantic four or five thousand miles for the express purpose of destroying those very liberties which he now pretends to hold sacred. Were I the Georgian (though I might not wish to copy the scurrility of either Demosthenes or the Farmer), I would draw a comparison between myself and the Farmer, that is, merely a [suppositious] comparison. For instance, I would suppose the Georgian to have been born the subject, or rather the slave, of an arbitrary prince, that he was dragged by despotism into a military life, sold to a tyrant to fight against a virtuous race of men struggling for liberty, that after his arrival in this country he learnt the difference between slaves and freemen, and therefore solicited and obtained an honorable discharge from what he conceived to be a dishonorable service, and, sacrificing his native country, his friends, and kindred, to his liberty, came to reside and end his days in Georgia. Next, I would suppose the Farmer to be a native Georgian, that in the hour of distress and adversity he turned his back upon his *native* country, betrayed his trust, became an apostate, forswore the sacred cause of freedom, took the oath of allegiance to his *native* country's enemies, drew his sword in defense of tyranny, and perhaps stained it with the blood of his *native* fellow citizens; that when he found the virtuous perseverance of his countrymen had got the better of their enemies, he made a virtue of necessity, and, "lowering the point of his bayonet," begged mercy of his injured country. As I can with *truth* declare that I do not know, nor can make a probable guess at the author of the Farmer, I do not pretend to say that he is such a character as the latter, but only mean to ask, if he is such a one, which has the advantage, the native or the foreign Georgian?

When I sat down to write, I did not intend by any means to go into the merits of the proposed Constitution. I leave that to abler pens, though, were I not afraid of Demosthenes and the Farmer, I would venture to say that I think it might be a little amended. I only intended to recommend to your correspondents, as I doubt not but that they have all the good of their country in view, to reason and debate like gentlemen, without passion, rancor, or prejudice, carefully avoiding all personal reflections as a thing totally foreign to the dispute.

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