


# Remarker ad corrigendum □ Independent Chronicle, 3 January<sup>1</sup>

Mess'rs. Adams & Nourse, *By giving the following a place in your paper will much oblige a constant reader.*


To the REPUBLICAN FEDERALIST:

When any one whose depraved heart instigates him to an attempt of secret *villainy*, is about to palm upon the public a deceiving testimony of his patriotic spirit, he ought in good policy to ting[e] his observations as deeply with the colour of truth as it is possible. Do you not know that all counterfeits answer their purpose best, the more nearly they resemble the true? One would have supposed, that practice would have made you a complete adept in the art of dissimulation. But in the abundance of your wicked intentions you have committed too gross a violation of the suggestions of common sense to be ever believed. You have indeed set out with those soft strains, which are intended to convey poison under the delusive resemblance of honest concern. You can indeed spout wickedness with uncommon fluency. Your inclination to do it you derive from your malice, and your ability from the paucity of your ideas. The *volubility* of your tongue (for so we may speak) reminds me of Swift's observation, that people cannot issue so fast from a crowded

church as from one moderately full. I am well convinced that nothing can stop you but the red hot iron of public vengeance. To a black heart, a dark understanding, but a running tongue, nothing less can be opposed. Did you suppose that your ideas would have weight under the sanction of a fallacious signature? If so, number no more the problems of your cunning, unless you are willing to sear your character with the blackest marks of the fallen angel which inspires you. Do for once in pity to thyself, permit the pointed strokes of public contempt, so far to operate upon you as to restrain you from lengthening your catalogue of unprincipled enormities. In decrying the wisest measures, and in *sully*ing the fairest characters, we can allow you no station but the *van*. Do then for the sake of our freedom, our prosperity, our liberty and our peace, retreat and hide yourself from the world, that if it cannot trust your honesty, it may not have occasion to lament [608 ] your depravity. Is it the intrinsic ill nature of your constitution, or the hope of incurring the favour of some party, that spurs you on to a work which hath no object but the death of your fame, and the pity of your country? The first noxious effort of your skill, amounts to no more than this, that the convention went beyond the power derived from the act which appointed them. You have indeed begun unhappily for yourself, but fortunately for the public, and seem ignorant of that common observation, that the first impressions which the

public receive of any character or party, are those on which it principally grounds its judgement. It is truly a gentle story, but a false and malicious one. It is grounded upon this, that the original intention of Congress, and the spirit of the resolve of the State, consequent thereupon, was to appoint delegates for a Convention, whose sole and express business it should be to revise the present articles of confederation, and report to Congress and the several Legislatures those alterations & provisions therein, that should when agreed to by Congress, and confirmed by the States, render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the union.

Let me in the first place, guard you, my fellow-citizens, from an idea, which the Republican Federalist, chuses to take for granted, viz. — That this Constitution is totally different from the former, that is, — That the one does not preserve the Republican spirit and genius of the latter. But the fact is, that no such total difference exists. Every article of power, or provision in the former Constitution, that was found to be beneficial to our country, is transferred to the new one, under some shape or other. This Constitution, contains every privilege and advantage of the other, — it differs in some parts, and conforms in others. It hath only made such provisions, and such additions to Supreme power, as the united voice of the Nation testified were wanted. But if there were not a trace of the former existing in it, the Convention could not be charged with having gone

beyond their sphere. What do the terms *revise*, and *alter* import? The object of a revision, was to see what parts were unnecessary or defective, and which therefore should be amended. To alter, in consequence of this, was to correct or erase such parts as upon revision, it would be found necessary to do. Can we then, have the least ground for such an imputation to Convention? No, my fellow-citizens, — I flatter myself, that your wisdom will give sanction to their resolutions. The truth is, that the very spirit and genius of the former Constitution, is preserved as entire, as it could be with safety. The difference in many cases, is in expression only. I shall conclude therefore, with adding a word to the *Republican Federalist*, — Think not that the public will hearken to the disingenuous assertions of one, [609 ] whose sole motive is the gratification of malice; and whose sole object, is his private interest. Learn to know, that your reputation, in such cases, if you have any, lives indeed, a very *fast* life. Him, whom morality cannot hind, human policy ought not to trust. Whoever thou art therefore, repent and be forgiven, before you quit the theatre of human action, and art hurried upon one, where eternal justice shall pronounce to the harpies of ravenous ambition, their never-ending reward.

**1** “Remarker ad corrigendum” replies to “The Republican Federalist” I, *Massachusetts Centinel*, 29 December.

**Cite as:** *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition*, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan.

Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

**Canonic URL:**

<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-02-05-02-0002-0072> [accessed 09 Jun 2011]

**Original source:** Ratification by the States, Volume V: Massachusetts, No. 2