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A Virginian

Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal, 12 March 1788

MR. PRINTER, It is no inconsiderable proof of the merit of the new Constitution, that the generality of its enemies have attacked it with falsehood and scurrility, instead of fair reasoning; these being the weapons with which people are wont to contend against truth.

There is no system of government, to which, plausible objections may not be made, while mankind labour under their present imperfections.—This, I imagine, will be found incumbered with as few as any yet formed: nevertheless, from the invidious and partial representations of one, who signs himself a Federal Republican, in your last paper, a person might be led to conclude, that the Hon. Convention had, in its formation, nothing but the slavery of the Thirteen States, in view.—There is an old proverb, which says, a fool may ask more questions in half an hour, than a wise man can answer in seven years; and I am inclined to believe, the Federal Republican can discover more defects in the same space of time than he will be able to mend in fourteen years.—How it was possible to vest Congress with a power of collecting the force of the States, to a point, and exerting it for their safety and dignity, in any other way, I cannot possibly discover; and if the Federal Republican can, and confines such an inestimable secret to his own breast, he deserves any thing better than the thanks of his fellow citizens. . . .

Again, when I contemplate the worthy characters who composed the late Convention, my breast is filled with indignation to find their labour for the common good requited by suspicion of designs equally iniquitous and improbable, and this chiefly by people in office, whose narrow souls are alarmed at the idea of having their imaginary importance diminished. But above all, I am shock'd at the monstrous absurdity of supposing that such characters as *Washington* and *Franklin*, who, by a long life of virtue and patriotism, have acquired reputations not to be extinguished but with the world, should now, in their old age, with their mental faculties unimpaired, lend the sanction of their names to establish a system of tyranny!

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