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Brutus

Virginia Journal, 22 November 1787 (excerpt)

To the Printers of the Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser.

Gentlemen, At this important crisis when we are about to determine upon a government which is not to effect us for a month, for a year, or for our lives: but which, it is probable, will extend its consequences to the remotest posterity, it behoves every friend to the rights and privileges of man, and particularly those who are interested in the prosperity and happiness of this country, to step forward and offer their sentiments upon the subject in an open, candid and independent manner.—Let the constitution proposed by the late Convention be dispassionately considered and fully canvassed.—Let no citizen of the United States of America, who is capable of discussing the important subject, retire from the field.—And, above all, let no one disseminate his objections to, or his reasons for approving of the constitution in such a manner as to gain partisans to his opinion, without giving them an opportunity of seeing how effectually his sentiments may be controverted, or how far his arguments may be invalidated.—For when a man of acknowledged abilities and great influence (and particularly one who has paid attention to the subject) *hands forth* his opinion, upon a matter of general concern, among those upon whom he has reason to think it will make the most favorable impression, without submitting it to the test of a public investigation, he may be truly said to take an undue advantage of his influence, and appearances would justify a supposition that he wished to effect, in a clandestine manner, that which he could not accomplish by an open and candid application to the public.

I expected, Gentlemen, that Col. Mason's objections to the proposed constitution would have been conveyed to the public, before this time, through the channel of your, or some other paper, but as my expectations, in that respect, have not yet been gratified, I shall take the liberty to send you a copy of them for publication, which I think must be highly acceptable to a number of your customers who have not had an opportunity of seeing them in manuscript.

*"Objections to the Constitution of Government formed by the Convention. . . ."*¹

Many of the foregoing objections and the reasonings upon them, appear to be calculated more to alarm the fears of the people, than to answer any good or valuable purpose.—Some of them are raised upon so slender a foundation as would render it doubtful whether they were the production of Col. *Mason's* abilities, if an incontestible evidence of their being so could not be adduced.

November 19, 1787.

1. At this point the *Virginia Journal* printed George Mason's objections.

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