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Tar and Feathers

Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, 2 October 1787

When we had the honor of addressing you a few days since, we hoped our caution to the modern TORIES, alias ANTIFEDERALISTS, might not be amiss. It has, however, attracted the notice of your correspondent, *Fair Play*, who observes that “we never made a convert, either in religion or politics.” Well sir, it is granted. We would ask this gentleman whether the sword, either of war or of justice, has ever made proselytes to any opinion? Certainly not in a greater degree than we have. Yet it is often found expedient to use these means (in punishing those on whom remonstrance and reason were thrown away) for the same purpose that Jehovah sent the deluge in Noah’s days. Laughable indeed would it be to suppose that no villain, however dignified among villains, ought to be punished, but with a view to reclaim *him*. There is a point of more consequence to be considered, and that is to expel from society a monster who is unfit to associate with men, and thereby *to deter others* from treading in *his* steps. That we have frequently during the Revolution terrified the *Tories*, or *Antifederalists* of those times, into a moderate line of conduct is well-known. True indeed, we did not make many converts to whiggism (although we have often decorated the backs of those gentry), neither did the sword.

If you trace our history, sir, you will find that we have been faithful allies to America throughout the late war; but were never well relished by the *Tories* and a few *sham* or *lukewarm Whigs*. Should our country again demand our aid, we shall cheerfully obey the summons. At the same time permit us to declare that we will never attack any *real friend* to *America*, however different his sentiments may be from the throng; nor will we ever assist in shackling the liberty of the press, but, on the contrary, will exert ourselves to the last in defense of *that most invaluable privilege of freemen*.

When on Friday last eighteen or nineteen human asses, who are a disgrace to Pennsylvania, basely deserted the trust reposed in them by an unwarrantable revolt from the Assembly, we confess candidly that nothing could have given us more pleasure than to have been employed in chastising these disciples of SHAYS: Wretches, who were not influenced in their defection by the laudable motives which actuated the citizens of Rome when they revolted and were appeased by the institution of those popular magistrates styled tribunes; nor by that patriotic spirit which prompted the illustrious English barons to extort Magna Charta from their tyrannical king, John. No sir, these *tools of sedition*, whose *ignorance* is still greater than their *obstinacy*, evidently copied after those despicable incendiaries, Jack Straw and Wat. Tyler,¹ in endeavoring to introduce *anarchy* into these states, that they might be an easy prey to *their lord and master*, DANIEL SHAYS. Against such traitors to their delegated trust, we would willingly be engaged.

To conclude, we cannot help lamenting the monstrous ingratitude of the Americans in neglecting many of the best friends of the Revolution, and among the rest, their faithful allies
TAR AND FEATHERS.

1. Jack Straw and Walter “Wat” Tyler were leaders of the Peasant’s Revolt in England in 1381.

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