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## A Real Old Whig

*Massachusetts Centinel*, 4 November 1789

Mr. RUSSELL, At delineating human nature, the immortal SHAKESPEARE most undoubtedly has the preminence, but in delineating *Political Characters*—their objects, views and operations, the palm is certainly due to the writer of M'FINGAL.<sup>1</sup> Evidencing this are the many extracts which have so often graced our papers; but if there were no other, the following, perfectly applicable to the RHODE-ISLAND MAJORITY, were sufficient to establish its superiority.

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To the RHODE-ISLAND MAJORITY.

AN EXTRACT.

“Ye dupes to ev’ry factious rogue,  
Or tavern-prating demagogue,  
Whose tongue but rings, with sound more full,  
On th’ empty drum-head of his skull,  
You do not know what noisy fools  
Use you, worse simpletons, for tools?  
For *Liberty*, in your own by-sense  
Is but for *crimes* a patent licence;  
To break of *law* th’ Egyptian yoke,  
And throw the world in *common stock*,  
Reduce all grievances and ills,  
To magna-charta of your wills,  
Establish cheats, and frauds, and nonsense,  
Fram’d by the model of *your* conscience,  
Cry justice down, as out of fashion,  
And fix its *scale of depreciation*.  
Defy all creditors to trouble ye,  
And pass new years of Jewish jubilee;  
And make the bar and bench and steeple,  
Submit t’ our sov’reign Lord, the people,  
Assure each knave his whole assets,  
By *gen’ral amnesty of debts*:  
By plunder rise to power and glory,

And seize all property before ye?  
Break heads, and windows, and the peace,  
For your own int'rest and increase;  
Dispute and pray, and fight and groan,  
For *publick good*, and mean your own;  
Prevent the laws by fierce attacks,  
From quitting scores upon your backs,  
Lay your old dread, the gallows, low,  
And seize the stocks your ancient foe.  
And when by clamours and confusions,  
Your freedom's grown a publick nuisance,  
Cry, liberty, with pow'ful yearning,  
As he does, fire, whose house is burning,  
Tho' he already has much more,  
Than he can find occasion for.  
While ev'ry dunce, that turns the plains,  
Tho' bankrupt in estate and brains,  
By this new light transform'd to traitor,  
Forsakes his plow to turn dictator,  
Starts a pretended *chief of Whigs*,  
And drags you by the ear like pigs."

The late defection of the little State mentioned, warrants the utmost severity—and when we reflect, that one reason the *late* Legislature assigned why they did not join the Union, was, their “*fear of losing*” their “*Liberty*,” we cannot help observing how perfectly applicable the above extract is—That it may do good, I wish you to give it circulation, and thereby oblige A REAL OLD WHIG.

1. The verse is from John Trumbull, *M'Fingal: A Modern Epic Poem, in Four Cantos* (Hartford, 1782). Trumbull, a cousin of the famed Revolutionary-Era painter of the same name, was associated with a group of Connecticut *literati* known as “the Connecticut Wits.”

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