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Constitution as an Instrument of National Damnation

Thomas Wilson to Archibald Stuart 4 November 1787 (excerpt)

The right-hand edge of the first page is missing thus causing the loss of one or two letters at the end of most lines. The second page of the manuscript is torn. The place of writing does not appear in the letter.

. . . I spent three days last week in Staunton (saltans ut solebam) where I was very industrious to find the general, as well as private opinions of individuals concerning the proposed Constitution; and I was surprised to find it well aproved of almost without exception—I say I was surprised because a few days before in Rockbridge I had heard it characterised as one of the most villanous peases of arbitrary usurpation tending directly to the overthrowing of all liberty among Citizens [&?] quickly terminate in absolute monarchy introduced by some blood thirsty Precedent [President] who will swim to the t[h]rone [---] [---] [---] his Vessel guided by the [---] [---] [---] Seals streached with a [---] [---] [---] [his trusted?] Soldiers who [---] [---] [---]der the defensless in hopes of obtaining plunder, and being applauded by their aspiring Leader, who is aiming at power, no matter how it be obtained—O! tempora, O mores shall we who a few years ago so unanimously engaged in warding off British usurpation, now tamely submit to the home bread Monster of a form equally detestable if viewed when striped of its disguise—surely the God of heaven has forsaken us because of our many fold iniquities, and we blind Mortals are suffered to precipitate ourselves into temporal misery, which will probably terminate in eternal perdition; for the Constitution is de[i]stical in principle, and in all probability the cumposers had no thought of God in all their consultations, eaven the oath that binds the Precedent [President] does not mention his name, & it appears as if we were hereafter to depend upon the honor of infidles in affairs the most interesting; and when the wicked are high in place then inniquity doth rais its deformed head, and walks in open day with haughty looks—O Lord of heaven we intreat that thou in thy infinite goodness wouldest ward off the impending stroke—this Sr. is the genuine language of Rock. or at least as much of it as I have had an opportunity of conversing with—Vale Domine—

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