

MISCELLANEOUS

AMERICA'S LAST HOPE

Friends, let us not break the *chain of Union*! PRISCUS is one of those who will risk every evil that an infatuated divided people can suffer, rather than not effect his purpose; the overthrow of *America's last Hope*, the proposed Constitution.

“Honorius,” Boston *Independent Chronicle*
3 January 1788 (RCS MASS., 606)

AN AMICABLE COMPROMISE

The proposed Constitution has been the result of the deepest investgn and deliberations on government suited to the various interests of the States. It is therefore an amicable compromise of the different parts of the Union.

From Henry Knox, New York
September 1787 (CC I, 279)

ARISTOCRATIC DELUSION

And we are well convinced that nothing less than a total recantation and annihilation of the proposed aristocratic delusion will appease the insulted and enraged defenders of liberty.

An Address to the Minority of the Pa. Convention
Pa. *Carlisle Gazette*, 2 January 1788 (CC 3, 229)

ASYLUM TO THE OPPRESSED OF ALL MANKIND

It may not be amiss, at this time, to make a few general observations on this subject; For their encouragement to persevere in completing this noble fabric as a temple to the goddess of Liberty—a relief from the

scourge of tyranny—the ill directed zeal of superstition and bigotry—and an asylum to the oppressed of all mankind.

Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*, 2 July 1789 (RCS N.C., 656–57)

BAR

I hope, e'er this, that the new constitution is adopted in your state, and that an eighth pillar is erected in support of a government which I conceive to be the only bar that *can* keep us from sinking into political destruction.

Charleston, S.C., *Columbian Herald*, 19 June 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1204)

A BLANK PAPER

Silence and blank paper neither grant nor take away any thing.

“A Citizen of the State of New-York” (John Jay)

An Address to the People of the State of New-York, 15 April 1788 (CC 5, 112)



[Quoting “A Citizen of the State of New-York”] “Silence and a blank paper neither grant nor take away any thing.”

“A Plebeian” (Melancton Smith)

An Address to the People of the State of New-York, 17 April 1788 (CC 5, 165)

A BLIND MYSTERIOUS FORM OF WORDS

This New Form of Govt is drawn up in so Artfull a Manner, Doubtfully Expressed In such a Blind Mysterious form of Words as is hardly to be Understood by men of the Best Sense.

Draft of a Speech by Benjamin Gale in a Town Meeting
Killingworth, Conn., 12 November 1787 (RCS SUPPL. CONN., #33-A, p. 44)

THE BOAST OF EVERY TRUE REPUBLICAN

It is sincerely hoped that he [John Hancock] will soon be able to attend the convention, and in that august assembly demonstrate his approbation of that constitution lately formed by the grand federal convention—a constitution which is the boast of every TRUE Republican.

Massachusetts Gazette, 11 January 1788 (CC 3, 563)

THE BOON

But however anxious we may be for the Pleasure of beholding him [i.e., Edmund Randolph] among us, we cannot, without Exultation, reflect on the profitable Sacrifice, which we have made of it this some time past: What VIRGINIAN'S breast glows not with the Expectation of the Boon, he is bearing towards us, when he considers, that its first Shoot sprung from this State.

Virginia Independent Chronicle, 26 September 1787 (CC I, 255)



Great numbers of families still continue to emigrate to the northward, as well as to the westward, from this State, Rhode-Island and Connecticut—so that Vermont, (which we hope will soon be admitted into the union) will be a very good exchange for our little froward neighbour, should she in her folly reject the boon now proffered her.

Massachusetts Centinel, 19 March 1788 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #112, p. 106)

BOON THAT IS OFFERED US

I cannot help flattering myself with the prospect of better times which will certainly happen if we are wise enough to take the boon that is offered us.

Lambert Cadwalader to George Mitchell, New York
8 October 1787 (RCS N.J., 138)

BOSOM OF LIBERTY

The dagger of ambition is now pointed at the fair bosom of Liberty; and, to deepen and complete the tragedy, we her sons are called upon to give the fatal thrust.

“A Real Federalist,” N.Y. *Albany Register*
5 January 1789 (supplement) (RCS N.Y., 2557)

CARTE BLANCHE

The new constitution is in fact a *carte blanche*, a surrender at discretion to the will and pleasure of our rulers.

“Centinel” IX (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
8 January 1788 (CC 3, 309)

A CONSPIRACY

Even the better antif—I writers call the new Constitution a conspiracy, and show the public snares and chains in every section of it.

Nicholas Collin to Matthias Hultgren, Philadelphia
29 March 1788 (CC 4, 503)

CONTAINS THE SEEDS AND SCIONS OF SLAVERY AND DESPOTISM

We are in a state of anarchy beyond redemption, unless we adopt, without any addition or amendment, the *new* constitution proposed by the late Convention; a constitution which, in my humble opinion, contains the seeds and scions of slavery and despotism.

“Alfred,” Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
13 December 1787 (CC 2, 433)

DARLING OBJECT

But the conspirators trust to their success in the other states for the attainment of their darling object, and therefore all their vigilance is exerted to prevent the infectious spirit of freedom and enlightened patriotism communicating to the rest of the union.

“Centinel” XVIII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
9 April 1788 (CC 4, 581)

DARLING OF THEIR BOSOM

All other nations are more or less in a state of slavery—they owe their constitutions partly to chance and partly to the sword; but that of America is the offspring of their choice—the darling of their bosom; and was there ever an instance in the world, that a people in this situation, possessing all that heaven could give on earth—all that human wisdom and valour could procure—was there ever a people so situated as calmly and deliberately to convene themselves together for the express purpose of considering whether they should give away or retain those inestimable blessings.

James Lincoln, Speech in the S.C. House of Representatives
18 January 1788 (RCS S.C., 156; RCS SUPPL. S.C., #II, p. 46)

DEATH WARRANT OF HIS COUNTRY'S LIBERTIES

On Dr. FRANKLIN's shedding a TEAR at signing the DEATH-WARRANT of his COUNTRY'S LIBERTIES.

The worn-out SAGE too full his joy to speak,
 The puerile tear stole down his wrinkl'd cheek;
 He paused a moment—but alas, too late,
 He lent his Signet to his Country's fate,
 He grasped the trembling quill and signed his name,
 And damn'd the Laurels of his former fame.

Boston *American Herald*, 19 November 1787 (CC 2, 454)

A DEEP CONSPIRACY

It is to be observed that the manners of these good people are very plain; they have no constitution, but are entirely governed by their usages—they are as perfectly ignorant of the science of government as is possible; they have been told by their leaders it is an excellent form of government, given from heaven, and they have believed it; but when they find they have been deceived, that it is a deep conspiracy (and we are told the opposition encreases daily) they will be the foremost in standing forth in defence of their liberties.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 21 January 1788 (CC 3, 570)

THE DREAD AND MODEL OF THE WORLD

Proud Europe hence may learn, and see,
 A Constitution self-controul'd;
 By wisdom balanc'd, firm and free,
 The dread and model of the world.

"A Federal Song," N.Y. *Albany Journal*, 4 August 1788 (CC 6, 320)

EXCELLENT WHOLE

And shall we now wrangle and find fault with that *excellent Whole*, because, perhaps, some of its parts *might have been* more perfect?

"Cæsar" I (Alexander Hamilton?), New York *Daily Advertiser*
 1 October 1787 (CC 1, 288)

FAIR OFFER OF PERMANENT SAFETY AND HAPPINESS

Should Heaven, in its wrath, inflict blindness on the people of America; should they reject this fair offer of permanent safety and happiness;— to predict, what species of government shall at last spring from disorder, is beyond the short reach of political foresight.

“Aristides” (Alexander Contee Hanson):
Remarks on the Proposed Plan of a Federal Government
 31 January 1788 (CC 3, 548)

A FATAL TENDENCY

I observe we have our doubting, fearful, and procrastinating brethren; those who, in the profundity of their penetration, not from interested motives, but a laudable zeal to serve the public, have discovered, and pronounced the new proposed Fœderal Government to be of the illegitimate and monstrous kind, like Pandora’s box, pregnant with every evil, full of design, a fatal tendency, and diametrically repugnant to the true interests, happiness, and safety of the United States.

“A Slave,” *New York Journal*, 25 October 1787 (CC 1, 480)

THE FLAGITIOUS MACHINATIONS OF AN AMBITIOUS JUNTO

But this impotent attempt to degrade the brightest ornament [George Washington] of his country to a base level with themselves, will be considered as an aggravation of their treason, and an insult on the good sense of the people, who have too much discernment not to make a just discrimination between the honest mistaken zeal of the patriot, and the flagitious machinations of an ambitious junto, and will resent the imposition that Machiavelian arts and consummate cunning have practised upon our *illustrious chief*.

“Centinel” XII (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
 23 January 1788 (CC 3, 447)

A FLIMSY VEIL OVER THE REALITY OF TYRANNY

The new instrument of government does indeed make a fallacious parade of some remaining privileges, and insults the understandings of the people with the semblance of liberty in some of its artful and deceptive

clauses: which form but a flimsy veil over the reality of tyranny, so weakly endeavored to be concealed from the eye of freedom.

“Centinel” IX (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
8 January 1788 (CC 3, 309)

GILDED BAIT

The gilded bait conceals corrosives that will eat up their whole substance.

“Centinel” VI (Samuel Bryan), *Pennsylvania Packet*
25 December 1787 (CC 3, 99)



The Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, New-York and New-Hampshire have by their wisdom in taking a longer time to deliberate, in all probability saved themselves from the disgrace of becoming the dupes of this gilded bait, as experience will evince that it need only be properly examined to be execrated and repulsed.

“Centinel” VIII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
2 January 1788 (CC 3, 233)

GLORIOUS BASIS

May that union be as lasting as its basis is glorious.

Toast, Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*
28 December 1789 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #386, p. 268)

GLORIOUS BOON

Ye brave COLUMBIANS (if you *now* can claim,
The glorious boon, to bear so great a name),
Arouse! Let all that’s dear to men inspire
Those breasts which *once* display’d a gen’rous fire;
Secure that Empire firm, for which you fought—
Which many lives and free-spent treasure bought.

“An American”: The Crisis, *Massachusetts Centinel*
17 November 1787 (CC 2, 130)

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Let us then be of one heart, and of one mind. Let us seize the golden opportunity to secure a stable Government, and to become a respectable nation.

“Curtius,” New York *Daily Advertiser*
29 September 1787 (CC 1, 271)



Heaven, to all its other favours, now presents the golden opportunity—
“A greater gift not God himself can give.”

Boston Gazette, 12 November 1787 (CC 2, 92)

GOLDEN PHANTOM

A golden phantom held out to them, by the crafty and aspiring despots among themselves, is alluring them into the fangs of arbitrary power; and so great is their infatuation, that it seems, as if nothing short of the reality of misery necessarily attendant on slavery, will rouse them from their false confidence, or convince them of the direful deception.

“Centinel” VI (Samuel Bryan), *Pennsylvania Packet*
25 December 1787 (CC 3, 98)

A GRAND POINT

I think if they are able to lay a plan for securing what little we have got, it will be a grand point at present; and if they should be so happy as to point out a method for getting more, I hope the indolent will never be the objects of their consideration—for if I had the abilities to become a politician, and had the planning of any thing material for our happiness, as a collective body.

“A Thinker” I, *Virginia Centinel*, 2 April 1788 (RCS SUPPL. VA., #182, p. 61)

THE GRAND SECRET IS OUT

The grand secret is out and we have the new system laid open for the examination of the public.

Newport Herald, 1 November 1787 (CC 1, 586)

A GREAT BONE

I cannot see why we need swallow a *great* bone for the sake of a *little* meat, which if it should happen to stick in our throats, can never be got out.

William Widgery, Speech in the Massachusetts Convention
25 January 1788 (RCS MASS., 1353)

THE GREAT MEASURE

I will hope that the consideration of this point which we have taken together, will remove your fears, and open the door to comfortable

hopes, rather than to apprehensions, from the great measure now waiting the Fiat of the people of the United States.

“A Freeman” III (Tench Coxe), *Pennsylvania Gazette*
6 February 1788 (CC 4, 52)

GREAT WHOLE

As matters now Stand we are upon par, & I make no doubt but that both of them [i.e., North Carolina and Rhode Island] will soon find it for their advantage to accede to the wishes of their Sister States, & become worthy members of the great whole.

Jeremiah Hill to George Thatcher, Boston
6 September 1788 (RCS R.I., 406)

A HEAD, WE MUST HAVE

“We have to chuse good, or evil; either the eligible happy state of freedom, or the infernal state of anarchy; and with it, the galling chains of slavery. A head, we must have; to that end, many of the most respectable characters among us have been delegated to form an assembly, which, if their salutary measures be not frustrated by the caprice of the States, will complete the foundation on which our political happiness is to be erected. Let us, then, divest ourselves of every frivolous objection to the wholesome amendments, which the event will prove they intend to make to our continental form of government.”

Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 13 July 1787 (RCS SUPPL. MD., #10, p. 6)

THE HETEROGENEOUS PHANTOM

A variety of objections to the *heterogeneous phantom*, have been repeatedly laid before the public, by men of the best abilities and intentions.

“A Columbian Patriot” (Mercy Otis Warren): *Observations on the Constitution*
Boston, February 1788 (CC 4, 277)

LABOUR OF PUBLIC LOVE

It seems highly probable, that those who would reject this labour of public love, would also have rejected the Heaven-taught institution of trial by jury, had they been consulted upon its establishment.

“Fabius” IV (John Dickinson): *Observations on the Constitution*
Pennsylvania Mercury, 19 April 1788 (CC 5, 182)

LITTLE ARTICLE OF HOPE

It appears to me, Mr. *Schism*, and to almost all my neighbours, that the American Constitution is that *little article* HOPE, left at the bottom of *Pandora's* box of evils, which are so thick upon us at this day.

A Dialogue Between Mr. Schism and Mr. Cutbrush
Boston Gazette, 29 October 1787 (RCS MASS., 165)

THE MEASURE

Some Symptoms of opposition have appeared in New York & Pennsylvania—in the latter it was, as probably, occasioned by the intemperance of the most zealous friends of the measure, as, objections against the plan.

Edward Carrington to William Short, New York
25 October 1787 (CC 1, 469)



If the opponants in the *same* State cannot agree in *their* principles what prospect is there of a coalescence with the advocates of the measure when the different views, and jarring interests of so wide and extended an Empire are to be brought forward and combated.

George Washington to Edmund Randolph, Mount Vernon
8 January 1788 (CC 3, 288)

MEDITATED, GILDED MISCHIEF

His [Luther Martin] public spirit has drawn upon him the rage of the conspirators, for daring to remove the veil of secrecy, and announcing to the public the meditated, gilded mischief.

“Centinel” XIV (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
5 February 1788 (CC 4, 32)

THE MILLENNIUM OF VIRTUE AND WEALTH

Last week, the convention of Connecticut, by a very large majority, ratified the new constitution.

Many people look upon the adoption of the new constitution, as the millennium of virtue and wealth; indeed its auspicious dawn argues

much, but it should be remembered, that much depends on our own conduct.

Northampton, Mass., *Hampshire Gazette*
16 January 1788 (RCS SUPPL. CONN., #71, p. 96)

A MODEL OF PERFECTION AND SECURITY

I placed an unbounded confidence in some of the characters who were members of it, from the services they had rendered their country, without adverting to the ambitious and interested views of others. I was willingly led to expect a model of perfection and security that would have astonished the world.

“Cato” II (George Clinton?), *New York Journal*
11 October 1787 (CC I, 370)

NEW APPARITION

I presume you have had hot work in Congress about this new *apparition*. Some I suppose are frightened and others see it as a guardian angel.

Richard Butler to William Irvine, Carlisle, Pa.
11–12 October 1787 (RCS PA., 177)

NEW-BORN RULER

Whether the *bantling* would be *black* or *white*, was not to be a matter of *free* discussion with the people, but *they*, forsooth, must at all hazards *adopt* and *foster* the new-born ruler, in whatever *garb* it might come attired.

“Vir.,” Providence *United States Chronicle*
13 December 1787 (RCS R.I., 73)

ONE FEDERAL HEAD

The moment the English know we can retaliate, that moment they will relax in their restrictions on our commerce—and that moment will never arrive until our *union* is *consolidated* under one FEDERAL HEAD, possessed of powers adequate to the exigencies of a nation.

New Jersey Journal, 18 June 1788 (CC 6, 185)

ONE OF THE MOST AWFUL SUBJECTS THAT WAS EVER PROPOSED

Under the conviction of my present sentiments, that the security of every thing dear to us depends on our adoption of the proposed constitution, I consider it one of the most awful subjects that was ever proposed for the consideration of a free people.

James Iredell: *Address to the Freeman of Edenton, N.C.*
c. 28–29 March 1788 (CC 4, 498)

ONE WHOLE

To form a national government, sufficiently energetic to coerce obedience, and at the same time to leave such a degree of independent sovereignty to the states individually as would prevent a complete consolidation, was no easy task. Local interests and prejudices, the pride of state sovereignty, an aversion to innovation; these, and such like considerations, had well nigh rendered abortive the labours of our genuine and best-informed patriots. Yet the features of the new Constitution are, I trust, so happily blended as to produce one WHOLE which, for strength and beauty, I may venture to call unrivalled.

John Stevens, Jr., to Richard Price
Spring 1788 (RCS SUPPL. N.J., #35, p. 53)

THE ONLY CENTER OF HARMONY AND PUBLIC HAPPINESS

The American Constitution will be found upon a fair Discussion, the only Centre of Harmony and Publick Happiness.

“Union,” *Boston Gazette*, 12 November 1787 (RCS MASS., 221)

THE ONLY ULTIMATUM

Since their measures have become public, I have taken pains to mix among the different classes of mankind, and I am happy to assure you, the enthusiasm is general, and determined to support the constitution they offer us, as the only ultimatum upon which our commercial and political existence rests.

“Extract of a Letter from North-Carolina”
Virginia Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal
7 November 1787 (RCS SUPPL. VA., #19, p. 10)

OUR ONLY HOPE

May that Being who has brought us thus far into maturity dispose every heart with firmness to embrace cheerfully our only hope, is the ardent prayer of, dear sir, yours, &c.

“Extract of a Letter from North-Carolina”
Virginia Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal
 7 November 1787 (RCS SUPPL. VA., #19, p. 10)

A PLOT OF SOME ARISTOCRATS

The Delegate [Luther Martin] from the State of Maryland who did not sign the new plan [with?] his Colleagues, in some way [described?] it to the legislature of his State as a Plot of some Aristocrats.

Antoine de la Forest to Comte de la Luzerne, New York
 18 February 1788 (CC 4, 138)

POPE’S PICTURE OF VICE

You have, Sir, grossly traduced my friend, by telling us that he called the federal convention *a set of jockies*, that they wished to get *a halter* round the necks of the people, that the proposed constitution was like Pope’s picture of *vice*, and that he should consider himself a *traitor* if he did not then and always oppose it.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 31 January 1788
 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #395, p. 853; CC 3, 414n)

THE PRESENT CONSPIRACY

The present conspiracy is a continental exertion of the *well born* of America to obtain that darling domination, which they have not been able to accomplish in their respective states.

“Centinel” IX (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
 8 January 1788 (CC 3, 309)

THE PRESENT HOUR OF DELIVERANCE

You cannot expect any alteration in the private systems of these states, unless effected by the proposed government, neither to remedy the evil can you command trade from the natural channels; but must sit down

contented under the burden, if the present hour of deliverance be not accepted.

“The Landholder” XI (Oliver Ellsworth), *Connecticut Courant*
10 March 1788 (CC 4, 368)

THE REAL VOX POPULI

I sincerely congratulate the citizens of America upon the fair prospect which now presents itself to their view; and promises a long reign of virtue, happiness, and glory, as the result of a constitution which is the real *vox populi* so often ardently desired by mankind, in vain, and now, for the first time, discovered by the patriotic sages of America.

“A Real Patriot,” *Pennsylvania Mercury*
26 February 1788 (CC 4, 119)

THE RECITAL, OR PREMISES ON WHICH THIS NEW FORM OF GOVERNMENT IS ERECTED

The recital, or premises on which this new form of government is erected, declares a consolidation or union of all the thirteen parts, or states, into one great whole, under the firm of the United States, for all the various and important purposes therein set forth.

“Cato” III (George Clinton?), *New York Journal*
25 October 1787 (CC 1, 474)

A REFUGE FROM ANARCHY

The new constitution was viewed in Massachusetts through the medium of a SHAYS, the terrors of HIS insurrection had not subsided; a government that would have been execrated at another time was embraced by many as a refuge from anarchy.

“Centinel” XVIII (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
9 April 1788 (CC 4, 580–81)

A SPECTACLE OF COMBINED STRENGTH IN GOVERNMENT; AND GENUINE LIBERTY

It will not probably be too much to flatter ourselves with, that it may present a spectacle of combined strength in government; and genuine liberty in the people the world has never yet beheld.

“Marcus” V (James Iredell), *Virginia Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal*
19 March 1788 (CC 4, 429)

A TOTTERING PILE

The present generation have too strong a sense of the rights of nature, of the sufferings experienced for their re-establishment, to set down passively under a tottering pile, erected on pillars of porcelain.

“Helvidius Priscus” II (James Warren?), Boston *Independent Chronicle*
10 January 1788 (RCS MASS., 684; CC 3, 332–33)

TRUTH

It is not my design Mr. Printer, to enter upon a vindication of the new Constitution; much abler pens have done it in the amplest manner; in fact, it needs none; for, like truth itself, it requires being only well understood to be embraced.

“A Virginian,” *Virginia Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal*
12 March 1788 (RCS VA., 481)

YOUR DARLING POSITION

This, and the like is the argument you made use of to support a proposition that was tottering and just ready to fall from its rotten foundation—that sovereign powers had never been tame spectators of invaded sovereignty; and when you could not answer the facts I produced to disprove your assertion, you advanced others, which had you not clothed them in a false garb, would have completely overturned and confuted your darling position.

“Agricola,” *Newport Herald*, 20 May 1790 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #562, p. 385)