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## An Officer of the Late Continental Army Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 6 November 1787 (excerpt)

I pass over the sophistry of Mr. W[ilson], in his equivocal speech at the State House. His pretended arguments have been echoed and reechoed by every retailer of politics, and victoriously refuted by several patriotic pens. Indeed if you read this famous speech in a cool dispassionate moment, you will find it to contain no more than a train of pitiful sophistry and evasions, unworthy of the man who spoke them. I have taken notice of some of them in stating the objections, and they must, I am sure, have excited your pity and indignation. Mr. W[ilson] is a man of sense, learning and extensive information; unfortunately for him he has never sought the more solid fame of patriotism. During the late war he narrowly escaped the effects of popular rage, and the people seldom arm themselves against a citizen in vain. The whole tenor of his political conduct has always been strongly tainted with the spirit of high aristocracy; he has never been known to join in a truly popular measure, and his talents have ever been devoted to the patrician interest. His lofty carriage indicates the lofty mind that animates him, a mind able to conceive and perform great things, but which unfortunately can see nothing great out of the pale of power and worldly grandeur; despising what he calls the inferior order of the people. Popular liberty and popular assemblies offer to his exalted imagination an idea of meanness and contemptibility which he hardly seeks to conceal. He sees at a distance the pomp and pageantry of courts, he sighs after those stately palaces and that apparatus of human greatness which his vivid fancy has taught him to consider as the supreme good. Men of sublime minds, he conceives, were born a different race from the rest of the sons of men. To them, and them only, he imagines, high heaven intended to commit the reins of earthly government; the remaining part of mankind he sees below at an immense distance; they, he thinks, were born to serve, to administer food to the ambition of their superiors, and become the footstool of their power. Such is Mr. W[ilson], and fraught with these high ideas, it is no wonder that he should exert all his talents to support a form of government so admirably contrived to carry them into execution. But when the people, who possess collectively a mass of knowledge superior to his own, inquire into the principles of that government on the establishment or rejection of which depend their dearest concerns, when he is called upon by the voice of thousands to come and explain that favorite system which he holds forth as an object of their admiration, he comes—he attempts to support by reasoning what reason never dictated, and finding the attempt vain, his great mind, made for nobler purposes, is obliged to stoop to mean evasions and pitiful sophistry. Himself not deceived,

he strives to deceive the people, and the treasonable attempt delineates his true character, beyond the reach of the pencil of a West or Peale, or the pen of a Valerius.

And yet that speech, weak and insidious as it is, is the only attempt that has been made to support by argument that political monster THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION. I have sought in vain amidst the immense heap of trash that has been published on the subject, an argument worthy of refutation, and I have not been able to find it. If you can bear the disgust which the reading of those pieces must naturally occasion, and which I have felt in the highest degree, read them, my fellow citizens, and say whether they contain the least shadow of logical reasoning. Say (laying your hands upon your hearts) whether there is anything in them that can impress unfeigned conviction upon your unprejudiced minds.

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