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## Senex

### *New Hampshire Gazette*, 19 June 1788 (excerpts)

*To the Printer.*

Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.

*Those whom God wills to destruction he first makes them act like madmen.*<sup>1</sup>

God forbid that this grammatical translation of a well known latin distich, should be the unhappy lot of the inhabitants of this State; but if infatuation, madness, and the most shameful want of public virtue, are the criterions of the displeasure of Heaven, surely we may expect destruction soon to come upon us like a whirlwind. No hopes will remain unless a kind Providence will once more miraculously appear for us, as he has often done before. We have seen his almighty power supporting us at an hour of danger and distress, when our enemies were ready to destroy us, and spread desolation amongst our dwellings—At the commencement of the late contest, crowds of patriots then appeared, to offer, not only their lives but their all in its defence; a truly noble emulation then took place, who should most serve the common cause.

But where is this patriotism, now? It is become a rara avis in terra,<sup>2</sup> and in its stead arises enmity, self interest, depravity of morals, and in short, a most unmanly, unnatural, and ungenerous dereliction of public safety, in hesitating to adopt a Constitution which is recommended to us by the Guardians of our country, as the only means of keeping us together as a people.—All the engines of perdition, with all their infernal abettors, with all their arts and cruelties, would not weaken the American Independence, so much as we ourselves would do, if we should finally reject it.—It is apparent to every sensible, reflecting man, that if it is not adopted by us, our enemies need do no more than lay still, and be the spectators of our ruin, they will see it done by ourselves, to a greater degree of desperation, than could ever be expected by them. A house divided against itself, we are told, cannot stand,<sup>3</sup> we have been sowing the seeds of envy, malice, private revenge, party spirit, seeking of places of honour and profit, and we shall, most assuredly, reap the production of these, when they come to a state of maturity—It will be too late to shut the stable door when the steed is stolen—We seem to be so lost to ourselves and our posterity, so unconcerned about consequences and events, that the most pressing recommendations of our wisest men, after a solemn discussion and deliberation, seem to have no more effect upon some, than the Pope's bulls. They raise imaginary spectres, and frighten themselves with hobgoblins. A few enthusiastic high-flyers, and artful imposters have deprived us of the honour and glory of being foremost in adopting this important and truly grand Constitution: but a ray of hope arises, that we shall still be preserved from ruin, by its opponents

being convinced of their error, and at the present session, may lay their hands upon their mouths, and be struck dumb with silence, stand still and see the salvation of their country. We want but one Pillar more to compleat the mighty Fabrick, and let New-Hampshire have the glory of finishing it;—and tho' four more pillars will make it still more glorious, of which three will undoubtedly be added, yet New-Hampshire seems to be thought in a state of doubt and despondency—and may a great majority eternize their names to the latest posterity. It has been objected, that this Constitution is only intended as a support to great men, in procuring them great emoluments and perquisites, places and pensions. We need not fear such bugbears. . . .

1. Often associated with Euripides.

2. Latin: A rare bird on this earth (Juvenal, Satires, VI, line 165).

CITE AS: *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, ed. John P. Kaminski, et al., Ratification by the States, Volume XXVIII: New Hampshire, (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2017), 347-48.