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William Stuart to Griffith Evans, New York, 11 July 1788 (excerpts)

Dear Evans,

I have received your welcome favor giving a partial account of the Procession in your City on the 4th. inst. in honor of our *Intended*.—Critics might perhaps sneer at this Phrase and ask how can it mean the New Constitution? You I am convinced will not imitate such examples, but agree with me, that the great Body of the People in every Free Government, must always be considered as the Husband of the Constitution thereof, and consequently that as long as such Constitution performs the duties of Love Honor and Obedience to Her great Constituent Body, or Political Husband, She is entitled to be Kept both in sickness and in Health, with all possible Love and Fidelity by such her said Husband and that on a breach of her Duty she must expect to incur the Pains and Penalties of Divorce. Allegory having been much exhausted, in explaining and discussing this grand, National Question, nothing unhackneyed, struck me at present, but the one I have Introduced, which, to pursue a little further, may we not reasonably conclude that the *Anti-Federalists*, are a train of Hen-pecked Husbands, who having surrendered the Breeches to their dear Domestic *Ribs*, through want either of skill, or Courage, to Know or defend their own Rights; are led to suppose that the great Body of the People, like unto themselves, will surrender the political Breeches, and suffer themselves to be Beaten, *scolded & Cuckolded* thus passing off, Generation after Generation, contentedly to Heaven—I have a better opinion of the Understanding & spirit of my Country men, and rather fear, that instead of suffering their Political Rib to *Attalantus* them—they on their Part will sometimes Play the Infidel, and scold and Cuckold their faithful Wife, which should She at any time attempt to retaliate, They deaf to the doctrine of *Lex Talionis*¹ would instantly tear her in Peices! . . .

1. “Lex talionis” or “The law of retaliation; which requires the infliction upon a wrong doer of the same injury which he has caused to another. Expressed in the Mosaic law by the formula, ‘an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth,’ etc.” (Black’s Law Dictionary).

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