

Philadelphia Freeman's Journal, 31 October 1787

A late letter from Boston to a gentleman in this town says, "Matters have been carried with a high hand here, in regard to the discussion of the new form of government—*Mum* is the word—I am sorry to say that the sentiment of a Roman poet may be applied with too much justice.

'Stranger to flattery and to fear

With pure unsullied honour bright

VIRTUE disdains to lend an ear

To the mad people's sense of right.'

Some of the Newsprinters in this city, to their eternal disgrace, have refused to publish any pieces tending to examine that new code, unless the name of the author or authors be left with them, which at present is as much as to say, Give me a stick, and I will break your head.—At the same time they, very impertinently, take upon them to style all such productions 'wicked, rascally, malicious,' &c.—I had hitherto supposed a printer ought to be above prejudices of this nature, and not capable of being so easily actuated by the popular frenzy of the hour.—One poor gentleman having attempted to discuss the matter in the Massachusetts Gazette, was glad to withdraw in time, assuring the public that he would not trouble them or himself with any more observations on the subject. My own idea is, that popular opinions, as being for the most part suddenly taken up, are not always the criterion of truth. A man of sense expects some other proof of a paper being impious, heretical, or treasonable, than merely that of its being burned by the hands of the common hangman.—How happy would it be for the honest part of mankind were the whole race of cowards, sycophants, and blockheads extirpated from this earth—farewell."

Cite as: The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Canonic URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-03-13-02-0135> [accessed 18 Jul 2011]

Original source: Commentaries on the Constitution, Volume XIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, No. 1