

Letter LIII, *New York Daily Advertiser*, 9 May 1787

Mr. Adams, in his "Defence of the American Constitutions," page 362, treating of Congress, says—"The people of America, and their delegates in Congress, were of opinion, that a single assembly was every way adequate to the management of all their federal concerns; and with very good reason, because Congress is not a legislative assembly, nor a representative assembly, but only a diplomatic assembly. A single council has been found to answer the purposes of confederacies very well. But in all such cases the deputies are responsible to the states; their authority is clearly ascertained; and the states in their separate capacities are the checks. These are able to form an effectual balance, and at all times to controul their delegates. The security against the dangers of this kind of government will depend upon the accuracy and decision with which the government of the separate states have their own orders arranged and balanced. The necessity we are under of submitting to a federal government, is an additional and a very powerful argument for three branches, and a balance by an equal negative, in all the separate governments. Congress will always be composed of members from the natural and artificial aristocratical body in every state, even in the northern, as well as in the middle and southern states. Their natural dispositions then in general will be (whether they shall be sensible of it or not, and whatever integrity or abilities they may be possessed of) to diminish the prerogative of the governors, and the privileges of the people, and to augment the influence of the aristocratical parties. There have been causes enough to prevent the appearance of this inclination hitherto;—but a calm course of prosperity would very soon bring it forth, if effectual provision against it be not made in season. It will be found absolutely necessary, therefore, to give negatives to the governors, to defend the executives against the influence of this body, as well as the senates and representatives in their several states, the necessity of a negative in the house of representatives, will be called in question by nobody.

"Dr. Price and the Abbé de Mably are zealous for additional powers to Congress.— Full power in all foreign affairs, and over foreign commerce, and perhaps some authority over the commerce of the states with one another, may be necessary; and it is hard to say that more authority in other things is not wanted: Yet the subject is of such extreme delicacy and difficulty, that the people are much to be applauded for their caution.—To collect together the ancient and modern leagues—the Amphyteonic, the Olynthian, the Argive, the Arcadian, and the Achaean confederacies among the Greeks—the general diet of the Swiss Cantons, and the States General of the United Netherlands—The union of the Hansetowns, &c which have been found to answer the purposes both of government and liberty; to compare them all, with the circumstances, the situation, the geography, commerce, the population and the forms of government, as well as the climate, the soil, the manners of the people, and consider what further federal powers are wanted, and may be safely given, would be a useful work."

(This excellent political performance of Mr. Adams, comprized in 392 pages, 8vo. is now reprinting by Mr. [Hugh] Gaine,—and the American edition of this great American

author, it is expected will make its appearance in about thirty days.)

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