

**Nov. Anglus , *Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal*, 12 December 1787**

*To the VIRGINIANS.*

It is easy to perceive, that a number of Writers in the different newspapers on this continent (with whatever caution their first performances have been brought forward), aim at nothing less in reality, than a dismemberment of the American Union. Jealousy is a political virtue—and though I would not hence accuse any class of people of treachery, however prone to it; or of meanness, however consistent with their character; yet I can readily believe them capable of both, when experience has demonstrated their inclination, and indisputable circumstances prove it to be their interest.

That there are a set of men now resident in this country, who are enemies to its political happiness, and who anticipate with horror a permanent national government, is a fact known to every man of observation. A want of energy in the laws of some States, and a want of their execution in others, has unfortunately cultivated this evil, until its reformation has become a business of both difficulty and danger; and it may now perhaps be questioned whether, the liberal spirit of Americans since the conclusion of the late war, has not proved *unfortunately* superior to a suspicion of characters.

If men will not leave their national prejudices behind them, it is better for them to continue in a country where they can exercise them with impunity.—The Spy, whose danger is the condition of his subsistence, deserves pity; but there is no apology for the man who betrays the country to which he professes allegiance, and in which he obtains his bread.—The want, and necessity, of an immediate and efficient National Government, is known, or felt, by every inhabitant of this country. The flowing sophistry of the designing Attorney sinks under the feeling oratory of the private Herdsman—The language of distress is unequivocal.—A man's reason may be diverted or deceived, but there is no deceit in misery. The solemn fact is—THIS IS THE DAY OF PROBATION WITH AMERICA; and our salvation depends, not only on the measures to be adopted, but on those we adopt soon.—Our political night, is perhaps at hand, in which no man can work. I have ever observed, that Divine Providence justifies its ways with men as well in their collective, as in their individual capacities, and leaves them this humble retrospective lesson—*I might have this day been happy, but it is my own fault.*

These, my Countrymen, are serious reflections, and ought to put you on your guard against every insinuation tending to obstruct your national happiness. The enemies to the proposed constitution, advance no system in its room; and it should not be forgotten, that it is easier to censure than amend, much less originate a form of government suited to the exigencies, and habits, of a Great Country. Perfection is the peculiar province of the Supreme Being: the institutions of men are only excellent in proportion as they resemble the wisdom, and justness, of the Divine government. Whoever is capable of taking an unprejudiced, comparative view, of the proposed constitution, and of the different governments that have existed, as well as those now existing in the world, must derive the clearest conviction of its being by far the best plan ever yet offered to humble society: It is the result of a spirit of reciprocal good will

among men; and which is worth remarking, is founded on the very principles with Christianity itself. But, notwithstanding the purity of its principles, the opposition it has met with was not unexpected; the interests of many individuals will be affected, and the ambition of many disappointed. That men, in pain for their prospects, or their interests, will complain, is neither surprising or unnatural; yet the former will [l]ose what they only enjoyed as a favour, and the latter be disappointed only in what they had no right to expect. These, however, are but an underclap of enemies to the Fœderal Government; men, whose principles may become corrected, when time shall have effaced the immediate impressions of self-interest.—The most dangerous enemies to this government, are those, who consider it in the effects it must inevitably have on the political situation of Great-Britain. The most hardened writer has not pretended, that if established (with all its faults) it would not give immediate respectability to the United States as a nation; and, consequently, obtain weight in the political scale of the commercial Powers of Europe.

For what reason this event is dreaded by men who are rather friends to Great-Britain than America; and in what important points the Fœderal Constitution will affect the interests, and power, of that country, shall be the subject of my next letter, in which some light will be thrown on the probable springs that animate the labours of the Anti-Fœderalists; and some account given why those papers, in general, are divested of candour, and so strongly marked, rather with the effusions of passion, than the dictates of reason.

*Hampton, December 5, 1787.*

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