

Democritus, *New York Journal*, 14 December 1787

To the Examiner, in [the] Register of 11th inst.

I really pity you, sir, I pity you when I consider the herculean task which you have undertaken; a task infinitely above your abilities; a task which all the aristocrats in America cannot execute: I allude to your promise of refuting the republican writers; it shews great vanity, but little sense.

You say "the antifederalists have made a great deal of bustle and noise against the new constitution," that republicans have condemned it. I grant; that they have condemned it without reason, has not been proved; and that they will continue to point out its defects, and oppose its adoption, aristocrats will experience to their great mortification. The able writers, on the side of liberty, have opened the eyes of the deluded votaries of tyranny, have convinced every reflecting man, that the proposed government will blast the rights of mankind, will annihilate those inestimable liberties, for which we have suffered, for which we have bled; and for which, many of our brave countrymen, have sacrificed their lives.

You proceed in that style of candor, which so eminently distinguishes your party, to assert, that the republicans are convinced that the government, which they oppose, is the best that ever was framed; this is as much as saying, because you think like a blockhead, every other person must be of your opinion.

While, sir, I disapprove of your sentiments, I admire the elegance of your language, and the acrimony of your wit; *hodge podge*, is a polite, a happy expression; how fortunate are some people in possessing brilliant talents, and great knowledge? hodge-podge is alone sufficient to immortalize your name; I suppose it is a word of your own coining; O the force of genius! hodge-podge!

What a severe stroke you gave the fellow, who attempted to prove that light was darkness; it is so good that it cannot be too often repeated; here I set it down, as one of the most extraordinary effusions of wit, with which the world ever was gratified; "I replied, sir, you do not possess a single grain of understanding, inasmuch as all that region is closed upon you which is above the sphere of rationality, and that only is open to you which is below the rational sphere." Mr. Examiner, this was too sarcastic; no wonder the poor man "turned from you in a furious passion." it might have metamorphosed him into a statue.

You are, sir, unmercifully severe upon these republican writers; how angry must they have been when they read that bitter simile, wherein you compared them to owls: I, however, cannot perceive any similarity between a writer and an owl, unless, indeed, the former, like yourself, be destitute of every particle of good sense, and consequently resemble the latter in irrationality.

I cannot take my leave of you, sir, without giving you credit for the only candid observation in your work. You deny the partiality, attributed to the editor of this paper, by persons who endeavour to palliate their own, in fixing a similar imputation upon him. I will not (like the boyish Cæsar) promise to follow you, least your future productions (as

is very probable from a consideration of the present one) should be so excessively foolish and weak, that it would be highly disgraceful to honor them with notice; indeed I should not have noticed you at all, if I had not accidentally felt an inclination to be merry at the expence of your absurdities.

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-02-19-02-0002-0154> [accessed 06 Jan 2011]

Original source: Ratification by the States, Volume XIX: New York, No. 1

